

# CINEFANTASTIQUE®

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Volume 10 Number 2



ALFRED  
HITCHCOCK'S "The Birds"



# 'HARRYHAUSEN & THE GORGON'S HEAD'



Next in CINEFANTASTIQUE, an exclusive, full-color preview of Ray Harryhausen's **CLASH OF THE TITANS**, the heroic legend of Perseus and the gods and monsters of Greek mythology. You can't see **CLASH OF THE TITANS** until the summer of 1981, but you can step behind the scenes this fall and visit Harryhausen's special effects studio as he brings the film's fantasy to life, frame by frame. You'll see Calibos, the cloven-hoofed Lord of the Marsh; Pegasus, the magnificent winged horse that carries Perseus to adventure; The Kraken, a primordial sea monster; Medusa, the Gorgon beheaded by Perseus; Dioskilos, the two-headed wolf dog; and Bubo, the Owl of Brass, the mythological equivalent of R2D2, and Perseus' helpful friend. You'll also meet producer Charles H. Schneer and screenwriter Beverly Cross, as they tell you the story behind the film's creative genesis. See the making of Harryhausen's greatest stop-motion adventure, by special arrangement with MGM, only in the pages of our October issue! And if you subscribe now, you can still get your issues of 1975 prices, as little as \$2.08 per copy, more than 40% off the regular newsstand price! You must postmark your order before October 1 to take advantage of the old rates, so order your preview of Harryhausen magic now!

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"The review of horror, fantasy and science fiction films"

FALL, 1980

If I drew up a list of the '60s top ten horror, fantasy and science fiction films to parallel my "Best of the '70s" list earlier this year (9:3/9:4:72), there would be two Hitchcock films on it: *PSYCHO* (1960) and *THE BIRDS* (1963). Both films have been a seminal influence on the development of horror films during the past twenty years, but we chose to retrospect *THE BIRDS* because it stands alone among Hitchcock's distinguished *oeuvre* as the Master's only science fiction film.

That's how Hitchcock referred to *THE BIRDS* when we interviewed him in 1976. Hitch wouldn't call it fantasy, though that seems to be a more convenient place to pigeonhole it—if you'll forgive the expression—because its attacking birds are never rationally explained. But Hitch *had* a rational explanation, though he never mentioned it before to anyone of record. "It's rabies," he said, dressed—as always—in formal black, sitting comfortably in his elegant suite at Universal as tour buses glided past with clockwork precision. "I based the film on information I got about bats in Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico." Screenwriter Evan Hunter confirmed that he and Hitchcock quite purposely left out *any* explanation of the bird behavior because they were wary of the science fiction label, afraid that it might cheapen the film.

Hitchcock's work on *THE BIRDS* is a tribute to his genius for innovation and experimentation, a legacy that will enrich and inform *cinefantastique* for many years to come. The single most important element of modern horror films was established by *THE BIRDS*—that horror, especially of a fantasy nature, is most effective when it evolves slowly, in natural, familiar surroundings, and that it need not be explained.

Author Kyle B. Counts began work on our Retrospect of *THE BIRDS* in June, 1975. When we finally slated this issue for its publication back in April, we called Alfred Hitchcock to ask a few, final questions. We were saddened to learn from his secretary, Marion Price, that the director was too ill to talk to us. Three weeks later he passed away. This issue, then, is a memorial to his work and memory. Hitch knew how to thrill us better than anyone. *Frederick S. Clarke*



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It was the only journey into science fiction/fantasy the "Master of Suspense" ever made, and it became one of Hitchcock's most controversial and critically divided films. This exhaustive retrospective features interviews with art director Robert Boyle, bird trainer Ray Berwick, make-up artist Howard Smit, screenwriter Evan Hunter and—of course—the late Sir Alfred himself.

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# RESURRECTION

The flip-side of **THE OMEN** asks what if Jesus Christ came back as a woman?

by Paul R. Gagne



"What if Jesus Christ came back today as a woman in the San Fernando Valley?" That was the original premise posed by coproducers Renee Missel and Howard Rosenman for **RESURRECTION**, due from Universal later this year. "We really wanted to do the flip-side of **THE OMEN**," said Missel, who previously teamed with Rosenman on the Barbra Streisand vehicle, **THE MAIN EVENT**. "This woman becomes a saint and can do miracles and is filled with good. She attracts evil, and evil wants to destroy her."

But Ellen Burstyn, who was asked to play the feminine Messiah, had other ideas. "I was interested in the basic idea," Burstyn said, "but I thought the script needed to be completely rewritten."

Burstyn (who starred in **THE EXORCIST**) was intrigued by the possibilities, but didn't want to appear in another film smacking of religion and demonology. But Missel and Rosenman were hooked on Burstyn, and traveled to Greece where she was working on **A DREAM OF PASSION** to discuss her ideas about the film, including psychic healing and "life after life" phenomenon.

"I thought the idea of Jesus Christ coming back as a woman was a good idea," she said. "But in order to create Jesus Christ as a woman, you have to *be* Jesus Christ, and we're not! But we found that we could



create a character who was in the process of going through a spiritual evolution. She starts out as a very ordinary woman, but through her experience of dying and being re-born—and the healing powers she develops—she becomes an enlightened being."

Burstyn's input shifted the movie towards a more meaningful storyline. Out went the Stephen Geler screenplay, the epic struggle between good and evil, and the mass-market sensationalism movie-goers have come to expect from Universal. In came Lewis John Carlino (writer/director of *THE SAILOR WHO FELL FROM GRACE WITH THE SEA*) to write a new screenplay.

What's left is a spiritual story about Americana, love and values. It's the serious, emotional and sensitive story of Edna McCauley (Burstyn), a woman who "dies" on the operating table after an auto accident. She revives, but she's come back with the power to heal.

"We felt very strongly that this 'healing power' should be awesome and realistic, but not frightening," Missel said. "So we tried to incorporate it in folklore. It's much more real this way. It's less sensational, of course, but that's the way we wanted to tell the story."

Carlino spent three months researching the psychic subject matter, and weeks with Burstyn working out the details of her character. "It was wonderful working on a character who is a positive and beautiful human being," said Burstyn, whose previous roles include her Oscar-winning performance in the title role of *ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE*.

With the script completed, and Universal head Ned Tanen backing the project, Daniel Petrie (*SYBIL*) was chosen to direct the film because he, like Burstyn, was committed to the subject matter. "He fell madly in love with the script," Missel said. "He was dying to do it."

Other key members of the production team include cinematographer Mario Tosi and designer Paul Sylbert, who combine to give the film a pastel quality, with golden hues and giant landscapes (filmed among the rolling hills outside Shiner, Texas). The cast features Sam Shepard (*DAYS OF HEAVEN*) as Burstyn's lover and Eva La Gallienne, a noted



Effects designer Richard Greenberg is suffused with light from the "tunnel" of Universal's *RESURRECTION*

stage actress in her screen debut as Burstyn's grandmother.

It's hoped that Burstyn's performance is as shining as the film's special effects promise to be, for when she "dies" and leaves her body, the audience will travel with her. Such out-of-body-experiences have rarely been attempted on film (Sunn Classic's *BEYOND AND BACK* being the most notable disappointment), and for *RESURRECTION*, a plethora of effects were attempted to create the glowing "tunnel of light" common to first-person accounts of "life-after-life."

Missel and Rosenman looked into lasers, blue-screen matte processes, miniatures, computer effects and videotape, but none of these techniques worked; each produced an effect that was too harsh, too real and too modern. "We wanted warmth, darkness and the light," Missel explained. "The important thing was not to frighten the audience, but to soothe them and make them feel that they wanted to jump into that tunnel also."

Missel and Rosenman approached Bob Greenberg and Tony Silver,

who produced the incredible title graphics, trailers and television commercials for *SUPERMAN* and *ALIEN*. With Greenberg as producer, his brother Richard as production designer, Silver as director and Joe Masfield—currently adapting Stephen King's *CHILDREN OF THE CORN* (10:1:39)—as production manager, the sequence was filmed full-scale to get the ethereal, subtle and mystic quality everyone had envisioned.

"Constant forward movement was the essence of the concept," Tony Silver explained. "We built a tunnel set about 160 feet long, 20 feet high and 40 to 50 feet wide out of velour on a New York City pier. We were able to blow smoke, which was made with standard effects smoke machines, in and out of the tunnel very quickly by building it out of velour. We layed down walls of smoke, which created a tremendous feeling of depth in our shots." The forward motion down the tunnel and the sudden pullback (as Burstyn "revives") were achieved by simply dollying the camera in and out. After experimenting with rear-projected abstract film patterns, a

simple theatrical light called an "ultra arc" was used as the light source at the tunnel's end.

For shots where light seems to emanate from the people in the tunnel, an optical effect called "streaking" was used. "Streaking" (used in *STAR TREK* to create the effect of the "wormhole" on the crew) involves taking a sequence frame by frame, panning and zooming while the shutter on the optical printer is open. This creates an image "trail," and a computer system is used to keep the "trail" constant from frame to frame. The "trail" is then double-exposed with mattes onto the original image, creating the effect of emanating light.

"When we previewed the film and asked questions of the audience, such as, 'Did you like the special effects?', the answers were that they did not perceive them as special effects," said Missel proudly. "They perceived them as an integral part of the film."

"There's really nothing you can compare it to in the past 10 years, and maybe more," she boasted. "It's a movie that's *about* something. It's a movie that gives hope, and it stays with you. It may just be the right thing at the right time." Added Burstyn: "People sort of find themselves crying out of control. Men cry and are surprised by it."

Universal plans to release the film in the South this September, followed by a general nationwide release in November. It will be interesting to see how audiences react to *RESURRECTION* as well as to Universal's *SOMEWHERE IN TIME*, which will also use genre elements to tell a story that is more drama than simple horror or fantasy. At least Ned Tanen, the head of the studio, believed in and nursed along a project that doesn't have the existing mass audience Universal usually aims for, a hopeful sign for the company's future product. □



**Left Color:** Edna McCauley (Ellen Burstyn) dies from a car accident and feels her body drifting through a tunnel of light. She sees her mother Oma (top), who died when she was a little girl, and her brother Sam (bottom), who was killed in Vietnam. They seem to be composed of the light and greet her joyously, leading her to its source. **Inset:** Edna, who comes back to life with the power to heal, cures Louise (Sylvia Walden) of torsion dystonia, a crippling muscle disease. **Near Left:** Filming the tunnel of light effects with fog machines and an ultra arc, under the supervision of Bob Greenberg and Tony Silver of Silvergreen Productions.



# COMING



Ringo gets tasted by man-eating plants in *CAVEMAN*, a prehistoric comedy featuring animation by Jim Danforth.

## Danforth, Allen to animate *CAVEMAN*

Principal photography has been completed on *CAVEMAN*, a prehistoric comedy starring Ringo Starr and Barbara Bach (who announced their engagement shortly after filming wrapped). Directed and co-written by Carl Gottlieb, screenwriter for both *JAWS* films and co-writer of Steve Martin's *THE JERK*, *CAVEMAN* will feature the work of model animators Jim Danforth and David Allen with help from Randy Cook and Peter Kleinow.

The script, co-written by longtime Mel Brooks associate Rudy De Luca, centers on the misadventures of Ringo Starr as he manages to invent fire and language, as well as battle a variety of prehistoric creatures. Gottlieb spent three months filming at primitive locations in

Durango, Mexico, and fully 10 months have been set aside to film five stop motion dinosaur sequences, to be played strictly for laughs. Jim Aupperle is handling the opticals, making VistaVision background plates from 35mm footage shot on location. Roger Dicken, who built and operated the three smaller models of the *ALIEN*, was also reportedly involved, though no full-sized dinosaurs were built.

The film, due for release in April 1981 from United Artists, will also feature some elaborate physical effects by Roy Arbogast, a longtime Universal effects technician who handled similar chores on *CE3K*. John Metuszak, Avery Schreiber, Shelly Long, Dennis Quaid and Jack Gilford co-star. **Paul M. Sammon**

## CARPENTER SCRAPS SECRET FILM; WILL SHOOT 'ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK'

Shortly after our recent interview with John Carpenter went to press (10:15), the lineup of his upcoming films changed.

The highly secret project Carpenter was developing as his next film has been shelved. Written under the working title *THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT*, the script concerns an incredible, but supposedly true, historical incident. In 1942, the Navy is said to have tested a device which could render a destroyer-sized craft invisible using intense magnetic fields and sound waves. The experiment worked, it is said, but when the test ship was made to re-materialize, all those aboard were permanently insane.

"I did a screenplay," Carpenter told us, "and it still remains a fantastic idea that has no third act." The great secrecy around the project was to guard against possible quickie rip-offs of the subject matter, currently in the public domain. Avco publicist Mick Garris is currently working on a new draft.

Instead, Carpenter and Avco will team up to produce *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK*, an original story set in 1997 written after he finished directing *DARK STAR*. "It was my first attempt to get into Hollywood," said Carpenter of the adventure saga. "No one wanted to make it then."

In the story, to begin filming this summer for a 1981 release, the President's plane crashes on Manhattan Island, which is now an immense walled-off maximum security prison whose vicious inmates are left to do as they wish. Kurt Russell (star of Carpenter's *ELVIS*) is a master criminal recruited to get the President out. The cast also features Adrienne Barbeau, Lee Van Cleef, Donald Pleasance, Ernest Borgnine and Isaac Hayes.

Carpenter's first all-union production will be co-produced by long-time collaborator Debra Hill and Larry Franco, assistant director on *THE FOG*. Nick Castle (the killer in *HALLOWEEN*) is co-writing the screenplay with Carpenter. Joe Alves (*JAWS*, *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS*), a newcomer to Carpenter's troupe, will be responsible for production design. **Jordan R. Fox**

## MIRROR FRIEND, MIRROR FOE

*A Ninja assassin looks for happiness, adventure and TV residuals*

"I'm a killing machine," he said. "It's a family business, and I was raised into it. For me, it's as natural as breathing. But I'll tell you this much, James, I'm not particularly happy with what I do."

*Hosato, a futuristic Ninja assassin, in Mirror Friend, Mirror Foe*

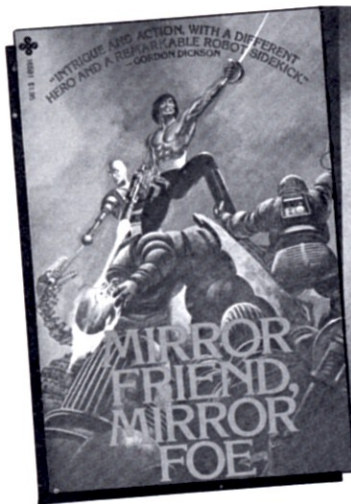
The Star Trek convention had ended, and George Takei was relaxing with a few friends over a bottle of Chivas Regal in Toronto's Royal York Hotel. The conversation drifted to childhood memories, and Takei began talking of the Arkansas detention camp his family was forced to live in during World War II.

"After the Saturday meal, the tables in the mess hall were cleared away, the benches were lined up and they showed movies," said Takei. "Among the movies they had were the Ninja movies, the assassin saboteurs. I can still vividly remember enjoying the films as a kid."

After Takei finished the story, Robert Asprin, a writer working at the convention, put down his Scotch and told Takei he should tell the story of the Ninjas as science fiction. "That's a good idea," said Takei. "I'll do it if you help me." Asprin readily agreed.

Thus were the humble beginnings of *Mirror Friend, Mirror Foe*, published by Playboy Press early this year. Collaborating over an eight month period, Takei and Asprin successfully wedded the Ninja and science fiction genres, updating the classical Ninja's arsenal to include an electronic invisibility suit and a cute robot sidekick.

Hosato is a Ninja who travels the galaxy as a professional swordsman. He is hired by one robot manufacturer to infiltrate the plant of a rival



In "Mirror Friend, Mirror Foe," George Takei blends his memories with Sulu's swordsman fantasy (above) to create a futuristic Ninja assassin.

firm, but the robots there have a secret of their own; they've learned to kill humans. Hosato must maintain the Ninja tradition of fulfilling his contract, and manage to save humanity at the same time. But Hosato is a reluctant hero, taking little joy and even less pride in the violent job he must do.

According to Takei, Hosato's actions and philosophy represent a little of George Takei and a little of helmsman Sulu thrown together. "I guess the fencing aspects of Hosato is a little mirroring of Sulu's fencing interests," he said. "I think there is also a goodly portion of me reflected there in Hosato. You see, Hosato (which means "the village of the bountiful harvest") is also my middle name."

The book, Takei's first, is seen as the first in a series of about Hosato.

And if dreams could make wishes come true, that series will someday be translated to television. "It was written with a film translation in mind," he said. "It's very cinematic."

And who could produce such a series of action, adventure and philosophy? Who else? "I hope [STAR TREK creator] Gene Roddenberry would find his way to consider it," said Takei, who not surprisingly sees himself as the daring, yet humble, Ninja. "He would be a marvelous person to do it. He would bring that kind of integrity and that sense of style and imagination that a project such as this would require."

Takei and Asprin are currently working on the outline for their second book, under the alternate working titles of *My Sister, My Foe*; *Mirror Retaliation*; or *Mirror Retribution*. **Richard R. Messmann**



# THE FINAL CONFLICT

*There's two down and one OMEN to go, and this time, the good guys finally win*

By Robert Alan Glover and Mike Childs & Alan Jones

*"And a Beast arose from the sea, with 10 horns and seven heads and a blasphemous name upon them. And the Beast fought with the Saints, and was allowed to exercise authority for 42 months."*

The "Beast" described in this passage from the Book of Revelations is Satan himself, confronting mankind as the Anti-Christ in producer Harvey Bernhard's *THE OMEN* (1976) and sequel *DAMIEN—OMEN II* (1978). Damien was a box-office sensation as he passed through infancy and puberty in the first two films. Now a mature 30 years old, and a powerful economic, industrial and political figure, Damien Thorn is out to conquer the forces of good—and the hearts of movie-goers—in *THE FINAL CONFLICT*.

Filmed in secrecy this spring at England's Elstree Studios for release early in 1981, the final chapter in the *OMEN* trilogy brings the story back to England where the seven daggers of Meggido (unearthed seven years after the climax of *OMEN II* by a construction crew digging a Chicago subway extension) finally play their crucial role in the demise of the Anti-Christ.

Shot on a relatively low budget of \$6 million, *THE FINAL CONFLICT* features an unknown screenwriter (Andrew Birkin), an unknown director (Graham Baker) and two unknown stars (Sam Neill and Lisa Harrow). "It's not a horror film, not a thriller, nor a chiller. It's all three rolled into one—and then some," Bernhard said with the skilled understatement common to successful movie producers. "It certainly isn't what people are expecting if they associate this film with the previous films or if they have any ideas about what Armageddon will be like."

In the story, Damien has been relatively safe from detection after killing all those who stood in his way. He has also been able to utilize to good advantage the "land acquisition project" introduced in the last film—a

project that espoused the sale of revolutionary new fertilizers to Third World nations in exchange for land purchases.

Thorn Industries' economic aggression has made it the world's leading supplier of foodstuffs, and has given Damien virtual control of the nations of Africa, fulfilling prophecy by sowing the seeds for Armageddon on the continent where life began. But even as he guides the world towards the ultimate war (the Anti-Christ, according to the Bible, will lead Satan's armies "in their last formidable offense"), forces are at work to put a stop to him.

The daggers have made their way to the monks of San Benedetto monastery, where Ambassador Thorn came in the original film seeking evidence of Damien's identity. The monks have been following the Anti-Christ's progress, and send seven men to London to eliminate Damien. The details of the climax are shrouded in mystery, but Damien's death by the seven daggers in All Saints Church stretches over 15 pages of the screenplay.

Originally, the series was to span four films, but Bernhard, prompted by reactions to the first sequel, changed his plans. "At one time it was going to be four," he said. "That was one of the problems with *DAMIEN*. Richard Donner [director of *THE OMEN*] and I wanted to make him a teenager, but Laddy [Alan Ladd Jr., then head of 20th Century Fox] insisted he had to be a boy of 12 or 13. Making him that age fitted in with the course of the projected sequels, but we wanted him to date girls and have music. What the hell could a boy of 12 do apart from play with himself?"

"You didn't have the mystery that you had in *THE OMEN*," Bernhard went on. "So the second film turned out to be a series of incidents, albeit exciting and dramatic, with a thin story. It got to the point where I wanted it to end. I felt the public would not handle any more sequels."

So Bernhard and screenwriter Andrew Birkin will wrap up the loose ends of the demonic tale. But to hear Bernhard talk about Birkin, you'd think there's something as demonic about his screenwriter as there is about Damien.

"I was in England looking for writers and I had talked to about 40 people when an agent called me and said I just had to meet Andrew Birkin," Bernhard said. "I was greeted by an apparition like you have never before seen in your life. He hadn't slept in four days, was filthy and smelled. It looked like I should have given him a couple of dollars and sent him away."

"But he is the most brilliant person



Sam Neill as the mature Anti-Christ, maintaining the *OMEN* trilogy's tradition of killing everybody off, tosses aside Lisa Harrow's double with a wave of his finger.

I have ever met. He is also the most decadent and, in his decadency, evil. He dwells in the macabre and has read every decadent philosopher. I tried to read some, but I couldn't get past the first few paragraphs," said Bernhard, who was impressed enough with the script to make Birkin an associate producer. "The first draft he wrote was so highbrow and so involved in what evil actually was that it didn't have enough action. So we wrote a second draft. Some of his ideas were too far out for me."

Birkin's script takes a chilling, omnipresent view of evil, according to Bernhard. "You don't think the meek are going to inherit the earth do you?" he asked. "*THE FINAL CONFLICT* is the way it would probably be if it really did happen. We are trying to put infinite evil up on the screen. Evil not like a Frankenstein, Lucrezia Borgia or even Idi Amin, but what it is *really* like."

Except for Damien, none of the characters from the earlier films have been carried over, and *THE FINAL CONFLICT* (Bernhard winces in disgust at the title *OMEN III*) shuns the big-name, big-budget stars of the two earlier films. "I wanted to have a fresh look, one that I could only achieve with new talent," Bernhard said. "The studio wanted a star, and would have paid any amount for a star, but I didn't want one. Anyone who was recognizable would never have been accepted by the audience. But there wasn't anyone who I could believe as Damien, who could have

this great charm and yet whose eyes could melt you to ice water. It isn't acting. It has to come from inside."

Bernhard finally found his Damien, New Zealand actor Sam Neill who impressed critics in the Australian *MY BRILLIANT CAREER*. Neill also impressed actor James Mason, who personally paid for Neill's flight to England for a screen test when the studio wouldn't (Mason was later paid back). Other members of the cast include newcomer Lisa Harrow, Rossano Brazzi, Don Gordon and Mason Adams, LOU GRANT's managing editor.

Director Graham Baker, making his feature debut, comes out of the same BBC background that nurtured Ridley Scott (*ALIEN*). Ian Wingrove will handle the film's special effects and Jerry Goldsmith (who earned his first Oscar for *THE OMEN* after 10 nominations) will once again compose the score, this time for Dolby release.

Is Bernhard worried that audiences have had enough of *THE OMEN* and the countless rip-offs that followed? Absolutely not, he said. "I don't think people have enough of anything that's good. You just have to make them better. You can't keep giving them the same old crap," he said. "There has never been a picture like this one. I know that's a dangerous thing to say but I really cannot think of anything that is like this movie. I get a thrill just watching a few of the scenes cut together. And that's saying something." □

Producer Harvey Bernhard





# GHOST STORY

Lawrence D. Cohen (who wrote the screenplay for *CARRIE*) adapts Peter Straub's complex novel into a coherent two hours of fright

By Paul R. Gagne

Peter Straub's *Ghost Story* is one of those rare gems that is as well received by literary critics as by the general public. But rarely is an intelligent, complex novel brought successfully to the screen.

But the welcome news for fans of Straub's novel, now in preproduction as a major release from Universal with British director John (DOGS OF WAR) Irvin, is that the task of adapting the book has gone to Lawrence D. Cohen, whose reworking of Stephen King's *CARRIE* stands as one of the best screen translations of a genre novel in recent years. Cohen—not to be confused with Larry Cohen of *IT'S ALIVE* or Lawrence J. Cohen, who wrote *THE BIG BUBS* and *START THE REVOLUTION WITHOUT ME*—was sent a galley of the novel by producer Burt Weissbourd. "I read it straight through," Cohen said. "It scares the hell out of you."

The story centers on a small group of men who, through events earlier in their lives, bring the wrath of a supernatural being on a small, upstate New York town. Structured along the same lines as Stephen King's *Salems Lot*, ("I borrowed his way of organizing the town," Straub admitted. "It helped keep things in line."), the novel skillfully weaves

and intercuts the stories of the town's inhabitants as they battle the evil lurking nearby.

"Peter Straub is extremely gifted at setting up the original ideas of the old men and the town. He's also extremely adept at terrifying, visceral scenes and at piling story upon story upon story," Cohen said. "The thing I liked and admired most about the novel was Straub's central invention, which was the group of old men, the so-called 'Chowder Society' who'd grown up in this town of Milburn and had lived there and been friends for over 50 years.

"Straub has exceptional sleight of hand, so that when you read the book you don't really think about what the bottom of all these stories is," he said. "When you're faced with adapting it, you realize that it doesn't pay off in the most satisfying, 'meat and potatoes' kind of way. You get to the bottom of the piece and it's almost anti-climactic."

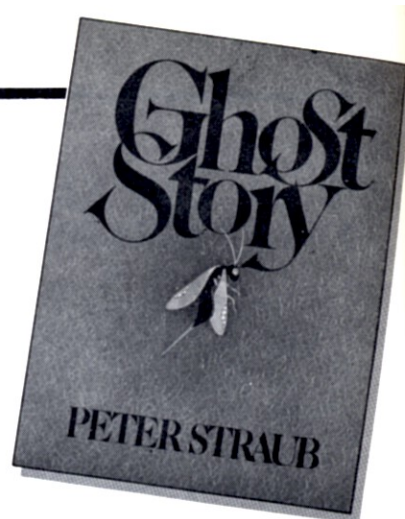
Cohen's solution was to strip the book down to what he said was, "the basic Freudian notion that repression—particularly sexual repression—and horror are intrinsically linked and the horror will return, if it's buried long enough, with a vengeance. We then put back on top of that everything that we felt was non-negotiable about the book"

Cohen somewhat adapted Straub's

concept of unchanging evil to make it more workable on screen. In the book, a woman (the source of the evil) enters the lives of each of the main characters in a somewhat different form—grown woman or little girl—but having the same initials, "A.M." In the film, the woman will always look the same, and will be played by the same actress. In addition, the woman will not be a "shapeshifter" (in the novel, the entity is capable of changing from human to animal to insect). Cohen declined to reveal exactly how the concept has been changed, other than to say, "We've come up with something quite different for that idea."

Most of the other changes involved in adapting *GHOST STORY* are similar to those involving *SALEM'S LOT*: compressing the characters, subplots and events to a workable length. One of the four original members of the "Chowder Society," ladies man Louis Benedict, has been eliminated, and the book's young hero, Don Wanderly, is now the son, rather than the nephew of Edward Wanderly.

"In the first 30 minutes of the movie, Don returns from California to Milburn to bury his brother (who died at the hand of the evil woman)," Cohen said. "He is not in town for more than 24 hours when his father



jumps off a bridge [in the novel, Edward Wanderly has been dead for nearly a year when the story begins]. If you're familiar with the book, that will give you some idea as to the kind of compressing and re-assigning of functions we've done."

It's expected that much of the film will be shot on location in the northeast, though much studio work is expected for the book's fantasy sequences and other special effects. Cohen confirmed that one of the book's most powerful scenes, where the three surviving protagonists enter a house to confront the evil and are subjected to a form of psychological warfare in which they are each cast into separate fantasies, will be included in the script.

And what does author Straub feel about the possibilities of his horror book turned horror film? "It will make a wonderful movie," he said. "But the scares will have to be really big and splashy. Otherwise, the whole point is lost." □

## THE SCORE / Greg Oatis

"John Williams strikes back, unfortunately."

The *STAR WARS* saga has often been compared, for better or worse, to a cinematic comic book. Now, if you accept that metaphor, it's not much of a strain to think of the score of *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* as the transitional captions that cue the audience, musical meanwhiles and presenties appended to the sound striping instead of the top of the comic panel.

The Empire has struck back and so, unfortunately, has John Williams. For all its plush Dolby upholstery, Williams' score stands as the cosmic, monolithic, almost

intergalactic example of what a movie score shouldn't do: watch the movie for you. An image appears on the screen, and Williams tells you in no uncertain terms how to react. Strangeship on the galactic horizon? The soundtrack knows everything and will tell you if it's friend or foe. Even the suspense sequences in the corridors of Lando Calrissian's Cloud City palace are suspenseful, not because Luke Skywalker is going to get plugged by one of the white plastic Empire drones (we know his departure will be under more spectacular circumstances than that), but because Williams' skittering violins and whinneying brass are enough to make *anybody* nervous.

One would think that, faced with the limitlessness of space and the multiplicity of life forms Williams would explode with ideas. But in composing the sound to go with the future, Williams doesn't look to any of the "avant-garde" composers like Varese or Cage who tried to give voice to the future by

dealing realistically with the pressures and aesthetics of the present. Instead Williams looks to the major-key flourishes of Wagner (particularly in the transparently Third Reich-evoking "Imperial March" that serves as the Darth Vader theme) and Tchaikovsky (for Yoda's theme) and the swash-buckling *CAPTAIN BLOOD* and *ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD* soundtracks of Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

It seems that when he's faced with the task of making the outrageous seem everyday—as in *SUPERMAN* and *STAR WARS*—Williams comes up with outrageously excessive fanfares. But in the films set in everyday reality, where one aspect of the landscape happens to go berserk—as in *JAWS* and *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS*—Williams opts for a less cluttered, more subtle approach. *JAWS*, of course, consisted largely of the relentless, percussive shark theme, and *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS*, the most ambitious and sophisticated of Williams' efforts, was structured

around permutations of the mystical visitors' chant. But with the exception of *CE3K*, Williams hasn't shown himself capable of creating an original, coherent, variegated film score.

But Williams, ever the orchestrator and never the innovator, leaves us with pedestrian mood pieces that pander to our movie emotion prejudices. There's little here that wasn't done before—and better.

It's ironic—but perfectly appropriate—that Williams, the new conductor of the Boston Pops, will hereafter concern himself with presenting "The Sidewalks of New York" and "Mame" for audiences of elderly easterners. Here, clearly, is where his talents can be best appreciated, since he's just been rehashing the most accessible of the classics in his film work all along. He brings a special ear for pops to the post, the ear of an unimaginative hack. No doubt he will be a tremendous success. □

Greg Oatis will be writing a column on film music to appear each issue.

Williams conducting Boston Pops





*Mario Bava,  
leading Italian  
horror director,  
dead at 65*

Mario Bava, the most original contemporary genre filmmaker in Italy, died of a heart attack in Rome on April 25, 1980. Bava, the son of Italian silent filmmaker Eugenio Bava, was 65 years old.

Mario Bava broke into the film business in 1943 as cinematographer of *L'AVVENTURA DI ANNA-BELLE* and remained a cameraman through 1959, working with such directors as G. W. Pabst, Raoul Walsh, Riccardo Freda and Jacques Tourneur. When Tourneur walked off *THE GIANT OF MARATHON*, Bava (who had been known to direct scenes now and again "while the director took his siesta") shot the film's crucial battle sequences—rescuing Galatea Films from a potential fiasco. As a reward, the studio gave Bava the chance to make his own film. The property he selected was Gogol's story "The Vj" (which he had been serializing for his children at bedtime). The result was *LA MASCHERA DEL DEMONIO* (1960), known here as *BLACK SUNDAY*, which launched Barbara Steele's career as a cult star and was soon hailed as a minor horror classic.

In the next 20 years, Bava made 24 known films, among them: *BLACK SABBATH*, his personal favorite (1963); *BLOOD & BLACK LACE* (1964); *PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES* (1965); *DANGER: DIABOLIK* (1967); *TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE* (1971); *BARON BLOOD* (1972); and *BEYOND THE DOOR II* (1977).

One of his better recent films, *LISA & THE DEVIL* (1973), was pulled out of circulation immediately and replaced with an inferior re-edited version known as *HOUSE OF EXORCISM* (1976), with additional footage shot by its producer, Alfred Leone. Sadly, several of Bava's most recent films were not released and may never be seen: *CANI ARABBIATI (WILD DOGS, 1976)*; *LA MARCO MALOCCHIO (THE EVIL EYE, 1977)*; and his last film, *LA VENERE D'ILLE* (1978), which was made for television.

A self-confessed misanthrope who shunned personal publicity and regarded his own celebrity with humor and disbelief, Bava died while in the preproduction stages of a new film, *IL VAGABONDO DELLA STELLE (THE SPACE BUM)*, a science-fiction comedy.

Bava is survived by his son Lamberto, who functioned loyally as his assistant director since *KILL, BABY, KILL!* (1966), possibly Bava's finest film. Lamberto Bava has recently directed his own first film, *MACABRO*, set for U.S. release this winter.

Tim Lucas



Insidiously evil Dr. Fu Manchu (Peter Sellers) in his laboratory, an intricate set built at France's Boulogne Studios.

**THE FIENDISH PLOT OF FU MANCHU**

*Peter Sellers is both the nemesis and his own adversary in a not-so-fiendish portrayal of the most charming arch-villain of all time*

By Frederic Albert Levy

The futuristic realms of Sir Hugo Drax, built for *MOONRAKER* at France's Boulogne studios, are gone now, replaced by Asiatic temples and Oriental paraphernalia. These new surroundings belong to a character so insidious he makes Drax look like a boy scout, yet so comical he makes Peter Sellers look like, um, er, Peter Sellers. That's because after several years of big-budgeted films bringing old heroes back to life, *Playboy* magazine and Orion films have revived the most likeable evil hero of all: Dr. Fu Manchu is back.

Though Fu Manchu has been the subject of films since the early '20s, *THE FIENDISH PLOT OF FU MANCHU* is probably first to play the evil super scientist for laughs. The big-budget production starring and largely written by Peter Sellers, is scheduled for release this summer. At one point, Sellers also considered directing the picture himself, but turned the production over to Piers Haggard, whose British miniseries *THE QUARTERMASS EXPERIMENT* has recently been released in feature form in Europe.

"The story is not that fiendish! It's a fantastical comedy. Magical and crazy," said Haggard. "I had never read the Fu Manchu books [by Sax Rohmer] or seen the previous films. I just knew they existed. But this film

is quite different in tone and atmosphere from the originals. The books are sort of horror adventure, but the film will be a surreal and poetical comedy."

In the film (the first Fu Manchu film in more than a decade) Dr. Fu Manchu is now 160 years old and fading fast, and his servants are busy trying to find the ingredient he needs to make the necessary Elixir of Life. Meanwhile, he's cooked up a plan to steal a valuable diamond from the Tower of London, and creates an assortment of tricks and crafty devices to help him carry out the theft. Working to stop Fu Manchu, as usual, is Chief Detective Nayland Smith, a character also played by Sellers.

Peter Sellers as Nayland Smith



"Fu Manchu is a man you really rather like," Haggard said. "He has a lot of charm. It is only suggested that he might punish or torture you. He is a very friendly and likeable villain, like in happy fairy tales. I think he is even more attractive than the detective who is meant to be on the side of right. The two characters [Fu Manchu and Nayland Smith] meet only at the end, but they have a very close relationship; intimate at a distance. It's a challenge for Peter Sellers to play two characters, but I think he does it remarkably well."

In sharp contrast to the most recent Fu Manchu films, a series of low-budget productions in the '60s starring Christopher Lee, *THE FIENDISH PLOT OF FU MANCHU* features elaborate interior sets constructed at Boulogne, and an assortment of special effects filmed there and in England, including a flying cottage.

The decision to film in France was Sellers' (influenced by a variety of personal and tax-related reasons), but the tone of the film is decidedly British. Still, it's an American production, backed by that most American of institutions, *Playboy* magazine, which initially developed the script several years ago. Publisher Hugh Hefner is credited as the film's executive producer, but a corporate spokesman said Hef had no direct involvement with the film. □



## Terence Fisher, noted director of Gothic fantasy, is dead at 76

The obituary in *Variety* ran just four paragraphs, and identified Terence Fisher as "an international cult auteur via the low-budget horror genre for Hammer Films," the faint aura of disreputability ("cult," "low-budget") still clinging to him more than 20 years after *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. More than the B-grade filmmaker *Variety* made him out to be, Fisher left behind one of the greatest collections of fantasy films in the history of the genre. He was 76 years old.

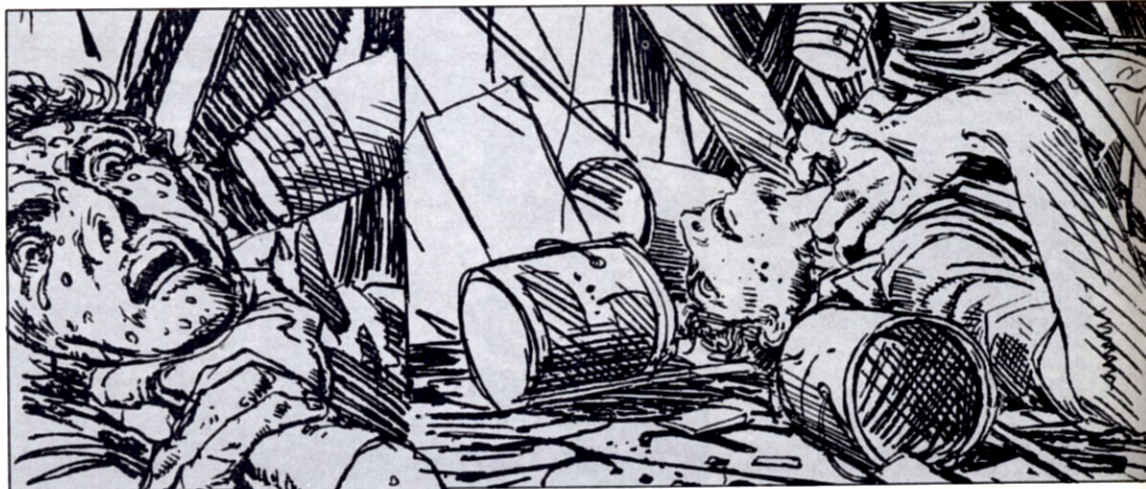
A film editor since the 1930s, Fisher directed his first films in the late 1940s, but is best known for a series of elegant Gothic fantasies made during the 1950s and 1960s for Hammer Films, under whose aegis he flourished. Fisher's films were rousing entertainments, stylish exercises in color, composition and craft. Some of his pictures are surpassed by only a handful of works in the genre: *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1956), *HORROR OF DRACULA* (1958), *FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN* (1966), *THE DEVIL'S BRIDE* (1968), and that "Vertigo" of horror films, *THE GORGON* (1964).

As Fisher aged into his 60s, his films got consistently deeper, more assured, more emotional than when he was younger. Even in the low-budget *FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL* (1973), his last picture, there are scenes directed with such pinpoint timing and authority that you want to stand up and applaud. Fisher made at least two genuinely great horror films in his career. *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (1962) stands as a tribute to Fisher's humanity, one of the purest and most moving fables of sacrifice and redemption that we have on film. The other, *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED* (1969) contains a vision of life so bleak and harrowing that few "realistic" films could ever hope to match it.

Fisher gave us some of the most savage and unsettling images in cinema (the first famous closeup of a bloodied Dracula), but his true greatness is that these nightmare scenes were balanced by images of poignance and beauty (a single tear falling from the eye of the *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*). His films showed how good the genre could be.

At the time of Fisher's death on June 18, which followed a lengthy bronchial illness, he was planning on returning to work for the first time in seven years. He had been slated to direct one of 13 hour-long films being produced by the Hammer Studio for British television.

Paul Petlewski



A storyboard sequence from

**THE HAND**, showing Michael Caine attacked by his own severed limb.

**THE HAND** is a variation on an old horror theme—a disembodied hand with a life of its own—directed by Oliver Stone from his own script. Michael Caine stars as an unfortunate comic strip artist who has his hand severed in an accident, only to have it come crawling back, repeatedly, in various attempts to murder him. The picture began shooting March 3 in Los Angeles for release in February, produced by Edward R. Pressman in association with Jon Peters and Orion Pictures.

Stone won an Academy Award in 1979 for his screenplay of *MIDNIGHT EXPRESS*, and has written

the script for *CONAN*, which Pressman plans to shoot in Yugoslavia. Though Stone directed an outstanding low-budget horror film in 1974 called *SEIZURE* (4:233), he refers to *THE HAND* as his "directorial debut" because of dissatisfaction with producer interference on that earlier film.

Two-time Oscar winner Carlo Rambaldi is in charge of the film's elaborate special effects. On a recent visit to his studio, he demonstrated three amazing remote-controlled hands, sending them twitching and crawling across the floor with a smooth and natural motion. One of

the storyboarded effects sequences for the picture (shown above) calls for the hand to jump at Caine in his garage and strangle him. During the course of the action, Caine impales the hand with a steak knife and cuts off one of its fingers.

The subject matter has been filmed at least three times before: in 1946 by director Robert Florey, in the superbly atmospheric *THE BEAST WITH FIVE FINGERS*, starring Peter Lorre; in 1963 as the low-budget *THE CRAWLING HAND*; and in 1964 as a segment of *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS* starring Christopher Lee.



Make-up artist Jim Suthors puts a glisten on the Syngenor, an admitted bargain-basement steal of H. R. Giger's *ALIEN* design.

**SCARED TO DEATH** is the first film by Bill Malone, formerly the chief designer at Don Post Studios, which supplies filmmakers and film fans with masks and props. Malone has teamed with effects whiz Bob Short (himself a Don Post alumnus between assignments for *STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE* and the re-issue of *CE3K*) to shoot a low-budget horror film best described as *ALIEN* meets the Los Angeles sewer system. Using actual sewers as shooting locations, the

film tells the simple story of a Syngenor, a government-sponsored Synthetic Genetic Organism, on the prowl. Malone admits his scaly, exoskeletoned monster (pictured above) bears more than a slight resemblance to H. R. Giger's design for *ALIEN*, and was designed to cash in on the success of that film. The strategy worked, as Malone quickly sold the project to Lone Star Films for release in August. Somewhat appropriately, the film's premiere is scheduled to take place in an LA sewer.

**RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK** began filming June 23 in England for Lucasfilm Ltd. under the direction of Steven Spielberg. The Lawrence Kasdan screenplay is the story of Nazis who plunder the wealth of an Egyptian tomb in the early '30s to finance Hitler's rise to power. An elaborate prologue set in ancient Egypt sets up the film, the first part of a trilogy. Harrison Ford stars for a Paramount release in June, 1981...

**I GO POGO** is a stop-motion puppet feature based on the cartoon strip by the late Walt Kelley, about a possum whose swampland home represents a microcosm of American politics. Film is the work of Virginia based producers Kerry Stowell and Mark Chinoy who recruited local art students and amateur filmmakers to complete the 10 months of animation involved. The film, which features the voices of Jonathan Winters, Vincent Price and Ruth Buzzi, is to be released by 21st Century Communications in August...

**NIGHTSHIFT** stories by Stephen King will be the subject of the next anthology film by Milton Subotsky's Sword & Sorcery Productions. Edward and Valerie Abraham have scripted three of the stories, "Quitters, Inc.," "The Ledge," and "Sometimes They Come Back." Remaining stories in the King collection will serve as the basis for additional films...



# HAWK—THE SLAYER

*It's the first entry in the Sword & Sorcery sweepstakes, and trying to be the Bond of S&S*

By Alan Jones

With CONAN undergoing a major budget reassessment, THONGOR IN THE VALLEY OF DEMONS still searching for a backer, and the monumental task of building a life-size dragon for DRAGON-SLAYER continuing, the first of what is being touted as the next big genre trend—the Sword and Sorcery film—was shot at England's Pinewood Studios this spring.

HAWK—THE SLAYER, first in what is hoped will be a series of HAWK films, is slated for an October release from Lew Grade's ITC Entertainment. A tale of Good and Evil in the classic tradition set in a fantasy landscape, the film is the story of two brothers: Hawk, strong and destined for greatness, and Voltan, hideously deformed and the practitioner of legendary cruelty. Hawk has sworn to avenge Voltan's murder of their father, and armed with his magic mind sword and his faithful companions—Gort, the giant; Crow, an elfin Bowman; and Baldin, the dwarf—he sets off for the forest of Weir, where the epic conflict begins.

HAWK—THE SLAYER is the brainchild of producer Harry Robertson and director Terry Marcel, who wanted "something to top Spaghetti Westerns and Kung Fu films." "Gambling that Sword and Sorcery was going to be the next 'big thing,'" they decided to throw their gauntlet into the fray.

"Sword and Sorcery is quite a simple formula. It's like a cowboy story; a man to man confrontation. We wrote it in a month," said Robertson, who composed several scores for Hammer films in the early '70s under the name Harry Robinson, the name that appeared on his first paycheck due to a pay clerk's mistake early in his career. Being broke at the time, that's the name he took, at least when writing anything musical.

"At first we were going to be backed by private money with Roger

Corman distributing when Lord Grade said he would guarantee the movie," Robertson said. "Perhaps he could see the trend coming, and knew we would have at least a six-month advantage on all the others."

The film's low budget allowed it to go before the cameras quickly, while other big-budgeted productions have been stalled for lack of funds or other production problems. "There are instances where you do need excellent special effects, like ALIEN for example, but in other areas you can do just as well by lateral thinking," said Marcel, who began his career in the Pinewood mailroom, and worked up slowly through the ranks. "The other day we filmed a storm created by a wizard in the church interior, and we had to show a snowstorm pre-empted by hundreds of colored comets firing everywhere. To do this in the now accepted way [sophisticated opticals and motion control photography] would have cost \$600,000. I did it for \$3,000 and it looks startling. We covered ping pong balls with reflective 3M tape."

Being the first S&S film isn't just a matter of pride, it's a matter of money according to Marcel. "Our character is somewhat akin to James Bond, in so much that he was the first spy and everyone went to see a James Bond picture as opposed to a spy picture," he said. "I would like to see HAWK as the Bond of the '80s. We could be a total failure, of course, but at least we are having a go."

Playing the evil older brother Voltan is Jack Palance, cast by Robertson because of his performance in the classic western SHANE. "The image of him as the gunfighter, Wilson, getting down from his horse has always stayed with me," said Robertson. Other members of the cast include Patrick Magee as the High Priest, Shane Briant, Harry Andrews, Patricia Quinn (THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW), Bernard Bresslaw and Warren Clarke (A CLOCKWORK ORANGE).

The title role of Hawk fell to newcomer John Terry, whose screen debut was 47 words in a phone booth in Marcel's previous film, THERE GOES THE BRIDE. The chief requirement: he had to look like a hero. "I needed someone who could stand there and look the part," said Marcel. "He moves like a cat, has that deep voice that women love and he did all his own fights. He is potentially big box office."

But Terry's original reaction to the script was not, well, very heroic. "I told them I didn't want to do it. I had a lot of blood and guts in it and I didn't find that particularly exciting," he said. "When they changed the script to have a broader appeal, I agreed to do it. I liked the very black and white elements in the script—the good that was very good, and the evil that was obviously evil. I found the magic mind sword very intriguing too."

At first the long sword was in a sheath on Terry's back, but it couldn't be drawn smoothly enough. Marcel came up with the idea of a magic sword that immediately appeared in Terry's hand whenever he wanted it.

Though the sword's magic was not a danger to the film's cast and crew, the sword fights could be. "On the set, you find you are hampered by space or thick snow or the props being shifted around to suit

the camera angles," said Terry. "The sword itself is difficult to handle, and what with the confined space, it can be dangerous, as Bernard Bresslaw found out. He got hit in the face and had to have a few stitches."

But the major opponent for Terry was not an enemy's sword, but the director's camera and the newfound role as star. "Now I'm relaxing into it, but having little acting experience and playing the lead surrounded by not only professionals, but award winners too, was unnerving to say the least. Now I see myself as the glue cementing the—at times—larger than life characters together."

Terry's jitters were short-lived, which is fortunate considering Marcel's plans for the young actor. "HAWK was conceived as a saga based around the Sword," said Marcel. "It has five jewels missing from its hilt, and each jewel has a certain power, which means a quest [and presumably a different film] for each one. Everything has come off on this one better than I expected, so as soon as I'm finished, I'll be going on a trip looking for locations for the next one. Whether ITC does it or not, we will be making HAWK—THE DESTROYER in February." □

Right: The noble hero: John Terry as Hawk, his magic mind sword in hand. Left: The cast: Ray Charleson, Terry, Bernard Bresslaw, Morgan Sheppard; director Terry Marcel in front. Bottom: Warren Clarke setting fire to a defenseless woman of the forest. New World Pictures has picked up film's release.





# COSMOS

## Carl Sagan takes you on an odyssey through time and space



In the PBS television series premiering this fall, astronomer Carl Sagan uses George Pal's time machine (left) and his own Spaceship of the Imagination (far right) to take you on a wondrous journey. Sagan travels to a planet in space where our own Milky Way galaxy can be seen rising, much like a sunrise on Earth (top right), passes through a quasar (middle right) and makes stops along the way for close observation of phenomena like Saturn's rings (bottom right). The true wonder of the universe turns out to be even more startling than science fiction.

By Jordan R. Fox

Until recently, scientists believed a visitor to Venus would see a stunning vista: the ground distorting and curving upward to the horizon because of the peculiar atmospheric conditions. So when the crew of COSMOS, a new PBS series set to debut this fall, decided to build a model of the Venusian surface, that's what they built.

But before shooting began, information came in from the Pioneer and Venera probes—sent by NASA and the Soviet Union, respectively—that altered theories on what the surface of the planet looked like. The COSMOS crew scrapped their model and started over, adding thick clouds, lightning, volcanos and other details.

But in the middle of building the second model, still *more* information was relayed from Venus, which made the COSMOS crew start over again, changing the colors and brightness of the model to better match the planet surface.

Certainly, the model could have been built easier. Perhaps a handful of people in the world—no more—would have noticed the flaws. But they won't. The changes were made. And that, in a nutshell, is what COSMOS is all about.

"Being so accurate could be a real pain in the ass," admitted series producer Greg Andorfer. "Our changes made the shot less dramatic. But we were making a different point; we're going to the *real* planet."

Such devotion to astronomical detail is unheard of in motion pictures, where style over substance is the general rule. But it's just part of the day to day struggle to bring the universe, the *real* universe onto television screens this fall.

"COSMOS is everything that ever was or ever will be," or at least that's the conceptual framework Cornell astrophysicist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Dr. Carl Sagan uses to describe the 13-part series he wrote, narrated and helped create. COSMOS is a costly gamble (at \$8 million, the most expensive project ever attempted by the Public Broadcasting System) to combine education and entertainment, and will cover a wide range of topics: from the vastness of the universe to the minutia of a single cell, from the origin of myths to the origin of life here and

elsewhere. And it will all be *science-fact*, not fiction, yet with an ingrained sense of wonder eclipsing most written fiction, and with the promise of a visual scope unmatched by any big-budget space opera.

"Astronomy is a science that has always been at the leading edge of man's knowledge," said Andorfer, explaining how a series covering neutron stars, antimatter and alien worlds can also encompass the life of a cell, talking whales and ancient Hindu beliefs. "If you study a planet, it's made of something, so you need geology. It has a particular atmosphere, so you have to know chemistry. It operates according to certain laws, so you have to understand physics. And the response to the mystery of the heavens has always been an important motivator in man's attempt to figure himself out, and has played a great part in his religion and ritual. We've attempted to go from the grandest scale we know *that way*—the edge of the universe—down to the smallest scale we know in the other direction."

In the course of visualizing this grand journey from the depths of inner space to the farthest reaches of outer space, COSMOS utilizes the Cosmic Zoom and the Cosmic Calendar. The latter compresses the 15 billion years of known time into a single year. On this scale, humanity shows up as a minor footnote in the closing seconds of December 31.

The Cosmic Zoom is a 25-minute, 10 billion light-year ride through the universe that kicks off the first episode, and it represents one of the longest continuous effects sequences ever filmed. The audience travels with Sagan aboard the Spaceship of the Imagination, a glowing, ethereal ship devoid of hardware which looks like a spartan cathedral. But the view on the giant screen is a bit more heavenly, as a plethora of effects techniques simulates the passage through clusters of galaxies, past the heart of the Milky Way and towards Earth itself.

The Cosmic Zoom accounts for just a small slice of the 2½ hours of effects footage in the series, an awesome total that surpasses CLOSE ENCOUNTERS and the two STAR WARS films combined. Just realizing the Cosmic Zoom required motion control, cel animation and multiplane, model animation, process photography, rotoscoping,

models, mattes, tank work, smoke rooms and other special photographic effects. While other films have tried to show such a voyage, COSMOS' Zoom needed a verisimilitude and a sense of dimensionality—a feeling of actually *visiting* stars, planets and the building blocks of life. Since the Zoom is portraying reality, it had to be *believed*.

Andorfer credits a group of eight astronomical artists—John Allison, Jon Lomberg, Adolph Shaller, Rick Sternbach, Don Davis, Susan Brown and Annie and Ernie Norcia—for the astounding visuals that will highlight the series. "They were the core group," said Andorfer. "Their input was crucial because they understood the science."

But the eight not only were scientists and artists, but before long, effects technicians as well. "There was no one person we could have brought in [as an effects designer]. There are very few 'major generalists' around—people like Doug Trumbull and John Dykstra," Andorfer said. "We were dealing with so many different types of effects that it was just a hell of a lot easier to learn it ourselves and integrate things as we went along. The artists came here to paint, and ended up becoming expert model builders, knowledgeable programmers and able to shoot and composite multiple-pass elements."

The production originally contracted STAR WARS alumni Rob Blalack and Jamie Shourt—now with their own firm, Motion Pictures Inc.—to handle the effects chores. MPI set up the COSMOS team with motion control equipment and shot about half of the Zoom, but not without certain problems. "It turned out the only ones who really knew what was going on were the artists themselves," Andorfer said. "The programming didn't work. We ended up figuring it all out ourselves in longhand."

Eventually, motion control work shifted to Universal's Hartland facility, including the part of the Zoom through our solar system, which featured a complicated pass of Jupiter and its moons. With COSMOS' typically painstaking approach, John Allison discarded the stock Hartland starfields, and with another artist made new ones precisely duplicating just what an observer would see on that particular course. "It may not

seem that big a deal," said Andorfer, "but *we* know it's there." The pride is echoed by chief artist Allison discussing another Zoom shot. "This is the only time you've ever seen Saturn the right way, because astronomically, from the back side, the rings are *dark*," he said. "Just another subtle point."

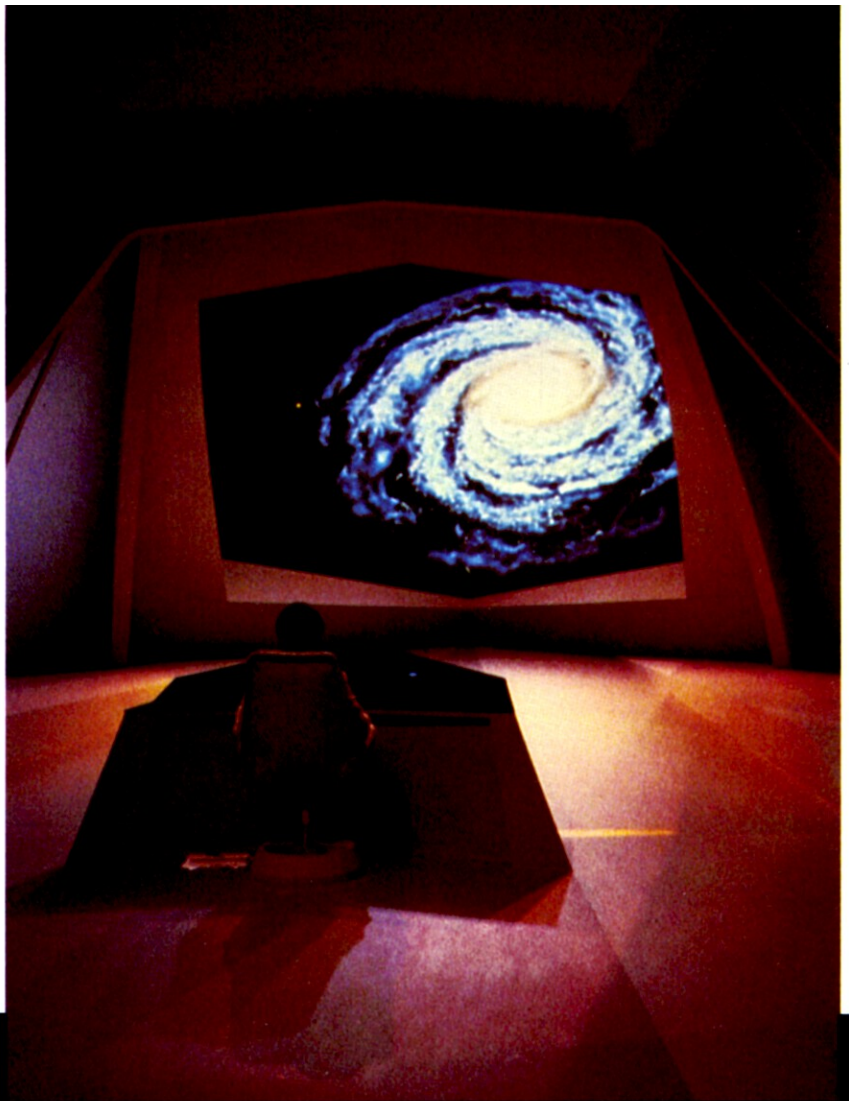
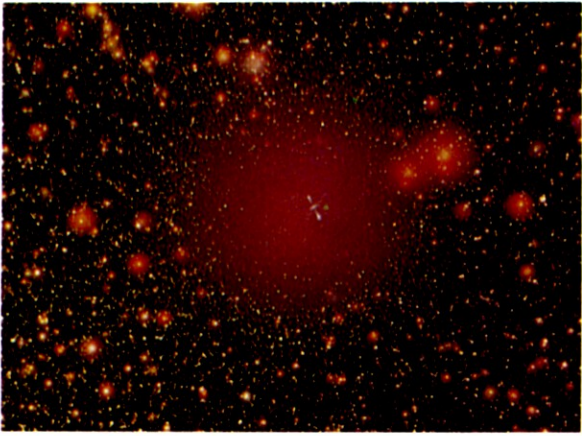
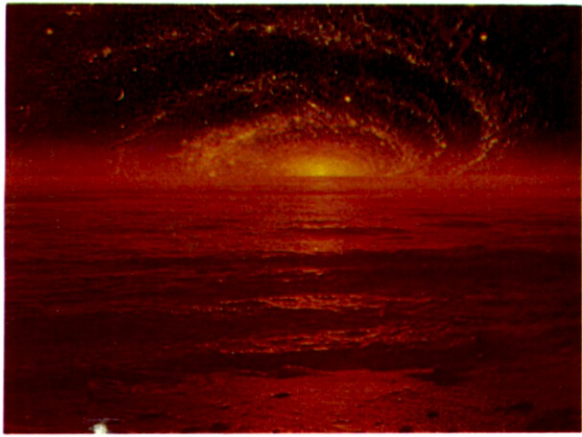
Other work was completed at the Los Angeles PBS affiliate KCET under the direction of Adrian Malone, and several models (including the interior of the brain and five tabletop models of Mars) were built and photographed at the Magicam facility. In each case, the quest—perhaps obsession—for perfection made the task of the effects technicians that much more difficult.

Even many of the effects techniques developed specifically to more faithfully reproduce the look of outer space were scrapped. Starfields were shot on a multiplane camera, but unlike a similar technique in SUPERMAN, stars won't fly off the screen a dozen at a time in parallel lines. Also rejected was Doug Trumbull's method for shooting planets: projecting artwork onto a spherical surface (also used for the moiré patterns on the underside of the CE3K Mothership). "It didn't work well for our purposes. We wanted to come up on an object and be able to swing right around it," explained Andorfer. Instead, planet surfaces were painted directly onto large globes.

The distance between imagination and reality will also be touched upon in brief clips from science fiction films. "We have a segment on the Hollywood aliens, basically showing them as a very chauvinistic idea. Though they have long ears or green skin, they're usually humanoid types," Andorfer said. "We use that to establish that life on any other planet would be very, very different from us, because we're the product of a rather long and tortuous evolutionary process."

So what would life on a planet like Jupiter be like? Sagan and artist Adolph Shaller postulated huge, kilometer-wide hot-air balloons floating around on the convection currents, feeding off organic molecules. Predators might be sail-like stingray-like beings. "Any aliens we find," Andorfer said with a smile, "are definitely not going to be like Gumby giving the boy scout sign in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS." □













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## THE MAKING OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S

# THE BIRDS

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The complete story  
behind the precursor  
of modern horror films

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**By Kyle B. Counts**

Additional interviews by Steve Rubin

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### The Genesis

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'In one test of the mechanical birds, they released these strange looking creatures that looked like model airplanes with wings that moved up and down. There was also a glider type of bird that was just about as laughable.'

**Assistant Editor Bud Hoffman**

It was the fall of 1960. Executives at Paramount Studios were basking in the box office success of their latest Alfred Hitchcock production, *PSYCHO*. But Hitchcock was not prone to such feelings of complacency. He needed a suitable property for his next film, something befitting of his reputation as the "Master of Suspense." He briefly considered Winston Graham's novel, *Marnie*, but shelved it, concluding that his league of followers would expect something to top *PSYCHO*.

In the summer of 1961, while reading a copy of one of the short story collections published under the *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* banner, Hitchcock found what he was looking for: a story by Daphne du Maurier (author of *REBECCA*, which he had adapted to the screen in 1940) called "The Birds." Essentially a mood piece, du Maurier's story chronicles the struggles of a peasant farmer and his family when their quiet Cornish village suddenly comes under attack by murderous birds.

The story immediately suggested a myriad of cinematic possibilities that stirred Hitchcock's creative instincts. Financed by the success of his television show, and filmed with equipment borrowed from the Revue Studio (where his television shows were shot), *THE BIRDS* became Hitchcock's first—and only—horror/fantasy film. (Hitchcock had briefly toyed with filming H. G. Wells' *WAR OF THE WORLDS* in the 1930s, but was dissuaded by Wells himself, who felt the book was dated.)

**The master** Alfred Hitchcock directs the dressing of the studio set of the bird-laden Brenner home for the film's finale, an angle never seen in the film. Though *THE BIRDS* was Hitchcock's most technically complex motion picture, screenwriter Evan Hunter noted during visits to the set that "Hitch was always in complete and affable control of any and all problems that came up."

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Though Hitchcock later maintained he gave no special consideration to the enormous technical problems the project would involve, late that summer he put in a call to art director Robert Boyle (the first crew person hired) to get Boyle's assistance in determining just how—if at all—the film could be visually realized.

Hitchcock wanted Boyle, who served as art director for *SHADOW OF A DOUBT* and *NORTH BY NORTHWEST*, to determine what processes were available to realistically combine birds with actors. There was as yet no screenplay from which to work, so Boyle read the du Maurier story to get an idea of what might be required.

"We knew it was going to be difficult to put real birds into the situations suggested by the story because of certain problems involving traveling mattes," said Boyle. "While I think that a space opera like *STAR WARS* is an extraordinary technical achievement, it had access to means that were not available to us in the early 1960s. Working around model ships is one thing, but in *THE*

*BIRDS*, we were faced with superimposing living, moving things around our characters. Using the usual blue screen process, sometimes 'fringing' occurs—shadowy lines created when the two matrixes [the birds and their mattes] are not exactly aligned."

In the beginning, Hitchcock was sold on the idea of using artificial birds—mechanical replicas with motorized wings. More than \$200,000 was reportedly spent building and testing the models. Only a handful ever made it into the film.

"Some tests had been done at Universal using mechanical birds, but they were very phony looking," said Bud Hoffman, a former member of the special effects department at 20th Century Fox, who was hired as an associate editor. "In one test, they put some young people on a treadmill to simulate the crow attack in the picture. Then they released these strange-looking creatures that looked like model airplanes with wings that moved up and down. There was also a glider type of bird which came down on wire that was just about as laughable."

When cameraman Robert Burks saw the crude designs, he agreed with Hoffman that the mechanical birds would have to be abandoned. Ultimately, Hitchcock agreed, though a few automatic models were used in scenes where bird training was not possible, including the leaning lovebirds in Tippi Hedren's car and the gull that pecks the little girl at Cathy's birthday party.

Burks (working on his eleventh film with Hitchcock) and Hoffman thought real birds and optical effects were the answer, and tried various temporary methods to produce test footage to show Hitchcock. Working with Universal's optical department, they modified existing footage to create a few shots of birds and people intermingled that looked "passable" according to Hoffman. Hitchcock was sufficiently convinced that the idea would work, but many refinements would clearly have to be made.

Meanwhile, in the course of his research, Boyle came upon the sodium vapor process, a system developed by the Motion Picture Council, an organization which had since disbanded. Sodium vapor was found to be superior to the conventional bluescreen process because it utilized a prism that split off the yellow sodium beams to create an original negative (or first generation matte) at the same time the positive image was exposed, which meant that troublesome fringing problems could be virtually eliminated.

At the time, the prism was housed in Walt Disney's Burbank studio under the care of Ub Iwerks, one of the founding fathers of the Disney empire. Ub and Walt met in Kansas City in the early 1920s and their combined efforts brought Mickey Mouse to life and skyrocketed Disney into the national limelight. According to Dave Iwerks, one of the two Iwerks sons employed at Disney, the original sodium vapor system did not work particularly well and was on the verge of being abandoned when Ub took possession of it, modified the basics and made it into a sophisticated, reliable process. (Iwerks was awarded a "special" Oscar in 1959 for "Improvements in Optical Printing.")

Hitchcock personally contacted Ub (who died in 1971) to see if he would be interested in assuming responsibility for the film's

complex visual effects. Iwerks conferred with Disney, got the go-ahead and immediately went to work. Meetings between Hitchcock and Iwerks occurred on an almost daily basis. As it was outlined, all special effects and combination printing were to be executed under Iwerk's supervision, with special design work and all the first generation optical printing his prime responsibilities.

## The Location

**'We didn't want it to be colorful. We weren't making a 'Bright Day at Malibu' type picture.'**

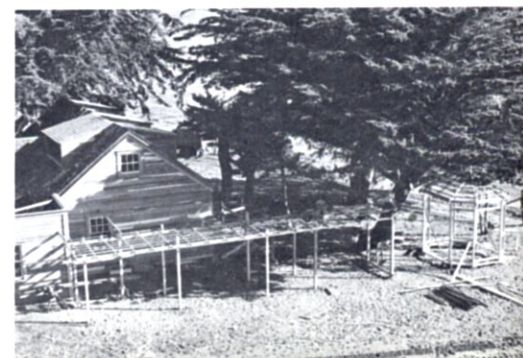
**—Art Director Robert Boyle**

Hitchcock decided early on to drop the Cornish village milieu of du Maurier's story. What audiences wanted, he felt, was a movie featuring good-looking, city-bred types, not simple, inarticulate peasant characters. Thus the locale was moved to San Francisco, and at Hitchcock's suggestion, 60 miles further north to Bodega Bay, a Pacific-front hamlet that Hitchcock had grown quite fond of while shooting *SHADOW OF A DOUBT* in nearby Santa Rosa.

"*THE BIRDS* needed a present day atmosphere," Hitchcock said. "And in order to get the photography of the birds in the air, we needed an area with low land, not high mountains or a lot of trees. In a pictorial sense, it was vital to have nothing on the ground but sand so that we had the entire sky to play with. Bodega Bay had all of that."

Boyle agreed that Bodega Bay had much that was required geographically, but there

**Suitable property** The facade for teacher Annie Hayworth's house (top) was constructed alongside an actual Bodega schoolhouse, which was due to be demolished until it was refurbished by the crew. The Brenner house was a facade built around an existing property in rundown condition. The crew landscaped the grounds and also added the gazebo, dock and barn.



## Cast & Credits

**THE BIRDS.** A Universal film. 4/63. 120 minutes. In Technicolor. Produced and Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Screenplay by Evan Hunter, based on a story by Daphne du Maurier. Director of Photography, Robert Burks. Special Photographic Adviser, Ub Iwerks. Special Effects, Robert Hoag, L.B. Abbott, A.S.C., Linwood Dunn, Lawrence A. Hampton. Art Director, Robert Boyle. Set Dresser, George Milo. Film Editor, George Tomasini. Associate Editor, Bud Hoffman. Pictorial Designs, Albert Whitlock. Sound Consultant, Bernard Herrmann. Electronic Sound Production and Composition, Remi Gassmann and Oscar Sala. Sound Recording, Waldon C. Watson and William Russell. Bird Trainer, Ray Berwick. Credit Sequence, James S. Pollak. Assistant Director, James H. Brown. Assistant to Mr. Hitchcock, Peggy Robertson. Ms. Hedren's Costumes, Edith Head. Makeup, Howard Smit. Hair Stylist, Virginia Darcy. Wardrobe Supervisor, Rita Riggs. Script Supervisor, Lois Thurman. Production Design, Norman Deming.

Mitchell Brenner	.....	Rod Taylor
Lydia Brenner	.....	Jessica Tandy
Melanie Daniels	.....	Tippi Hedren
Annie Hayworth	.....	Suzanne Pleshette
Cathy Brenner	.....	Veronica Cartwright
Mrs. Bundy	.....	Ethel Griffies
Sebastian Sholes	.....	Charles McGraw
Mrs. MacGruder	.....	Ruth McDevitt
Traveling Salesman	.....	Joe Mantell
Deputy Al Malone	.....	Malcolm Atterbury
Drunk	.....	Karl Swenson
Helen Carter	.....	Elizabeth Wilson
Deke Carter	.....	Lonny Chapman
Fisherman 1	.....	Doodles Weaver
Postal Clerk	.....	John McGovern
Man in Elevator	.....	Richard Deacon
with	.....	Bill Quinn, Doreen Lang

**Authors notes** Special effects man Lawrence Hampton died in 1972. Optical effects advisor Ub Iwerks passed away in 1971. Editor George Tomasini died in 1965. Cinematographer Robert Burks perished in a tragic fire at his home in 1968. Composer Bernard Herrmann died in 1975, shortly after work for this article began. I'd like to thank Peggy Robertson and Marion Price of Alfred Hitchcock Productions; Steve Jaffee, Tippi Hedren's agent; Randy Emerian, Don Shay and John Chambers for the loan of stills; Steve Rubin for interviewing Hitchcock and Tippi Hedren; Paul Sammon for information on Ub Iwerks; and Bill Malone for special photography. A special note of thanks to those who were interviewed, often repeatedly: Bob Boyle, Bud Hoffman, Ray Berwick, Bob Hoag, L. B. Abbott, Howard Smit, Dave Iwerks, Tippi Hedren, Edith Head, Al Whitlock, Evan Hunter, and most of all to the man who made it possible, Alfred Joseph Hitchcock.

Kyle B. Counts is a graduate of the University of Michigan, now living and writing in Los Angeles. He first saw *THE BIRDS* at the age of 11 during its original engagement at the Admiral Theater in Detroit, in April, 1963, and credits the picture for sparking his interest in films.



were two flaws. First, the existing community was very small, basically composed of a fishing pier, a motel and a few other structures. Eventually three neighboring areas—Bodega, Bodega Bay and Bodega Head—would be incorporated to make several villages into one.

Secondly, Bodega Bay and the surrounding environment was simply too sunny, too pretty, too *nice* to serve as a proper backdrop for the eerie series of events that comprise the film. "I remember some of the reviews criticized us for not playing up the beauty of Bodega Bay, but we didn't want it to be colorful. We weren't making a 'Bright Day at Malibu' type picture," said Boyle.

"I wanted it to be gloomy," Hitchcock remarked. "It was necessary to subdue the color of many of the scenes in the film lab to get the proper effect."

While making a thorough study of the Bodega topography, Boyle found two existing buildings that lent themselves to use in the film: a schoolhouse in Bodega and the Tides restaurant, located in Bodega Bay. The schoolhouse was boarded up and had long been condemned as an unsafe structure. A crew repaired it and added a fence and playground equipment, which would figure in later in the crow attack. A facade was erected a short distance away to serve as Annie Hayworth's home, and was dismantled once filming was complete. Only the exterior of the Tides was used in the film, as was the pet shop in San Francisco, located on Grant Street. Interiors were constructed on sound stages at Universal.

Finding a suitable property to represent the Brenner farm was the most difficult of all locations, as a house was needed that had an entrance road and that could be reached by boat. The ideal building turned out to be on Bodega Head, where an elderly lady named Rose Gaffney had recently made headlines by battling the local power company's plans to build a power plant on her land. Rose won the battle, and was therefore a bit leery when she was approached about renting the property out to Universal. "But," said Boyle, who was kiddingly referred to as 'The Silver Fox' by the crew because of his snow-white hair, "we charmed her into it."

As ideal as the location was, the condition in which it was discovered made Boyle shudder. "The house was nothing but a shack when I first saw it," he said. "Rose used it as extra property and hadn't kept it up very well over the years. We had to literally make a new house out of it by building over it." Additionally, the out buildings and barn in back were considered too far from the house for filming purposes, so an exterior barn was put up to group the reconstructed structures closer together. A small pier was added to the front of the property, a gazebo built for the party sequence and the overgrown grounds and trees generously trimmed.

Someone was needed not only to tie the multiple locations together, but to keep the look of the picture consistently ominous. Hitchcock turned to matte painter Albert Whitlock.

Whitlock had previously worked with Hitchcock in their native England on *THE 39 STEPS* and *THE LADY VANISHES*, painting signs for street scenes and other artwork. He left England in 1954, eventually



**On location** Director Alfred Hitchcock, screenwriter Evan Hunter (far left), assistant director James Brown (behind Hitch) and members of the cast and crew arrive for filming at the Rose Gaffney property in Bodega Head, used as a location for the Brenner house because it had both a visible entrance road and could be reached by boat.

taking a job with Disney, where he did matte paintings for live action features. He left the studio in 1961 and moved to Universal, where he subsequently devastated Los Angeles in *EARTHQUAKE*, recreated old-time Chicago for *THE STING* and painted the mattes for *HIGH ANXIETY*. Mel Brooks' *homage* to Hitchcock (Whitlock also played a cameo role as a corpse at the end of the film).

"The first matte used," Whitlock said, "was in the scene near the beginning where Tippi Hedren looks out from the post office to see the Brenner house across the bay. That was done above the hills, above the Tides restaurant. I painted the foreground in on a reverse angle. It was really just a hole in the middle of the shot with the Tides and the motorcars all around; the sides, bottom and top were painted into this along with the sky."

Traditionally, Whitlock renders his impressionistic paintings from photographs, but for *THE BIRDS* he researched locations with Boyle and made a series of sketches from which to work. His 12 mattes, painted without the help of an assistant, took more than a year to complete.

"When the girl is going across the bay in a motorboat," Whitlock continued, "the sky was repainted in a couple of different angles to give it mood; the weather that day of shooting was clear, and the sky was bald. When you see her coming in the boat towards the house, the background—the hills and sky—is a matte shot, grouping it all together in one piece and making a township around the Tides where previously there was none."



## ALFRED HITCHCOCK 1899-1980

Alfred Joseph Hitchcock died on Tuesday, April 29, 1980, at his Bel Air, California home. His wife, Alma, and his daughter, Patricia, were at his bedside.

In a career that began in 1921 and spanned 53 feature-length films, Hitchcock will long be remembered for his supreme technical mastery, his cynical, lugubrious sense of humor and, of course, his fine works as a director.

This writer—and those everywhere interested in the art of motion pictures—owes him a debt that can never be repaid. To paraphrase a comment made by William Wyler upon the death of Ernst Lubitch:

"No more Hitchcock."

"Worse than that—no more Hitchcock films."

—K.B.C.



## The Script

**'I don't think Hitchcock was fair to my script. Robert Altman to the contrary, I still feel writers should write and actors should act and directors should direct.'**

**—Screenwriter Evan Hunter**

While Hitchcock was still at Paramount, he had obtained the services of author Evan Hunter to fashion the screenplay for *THE BIRDS*. Hitchcock was well acquainted with Hunter's work, as Hunter had previously adapted another short story, "Appointment at Eleven" for one of the half-hour segments of Hitchcock's television show. Hunter was first contacted late in the summer of 1961.

"My agent called one day and said, 'How would you like to do the screenplay for *THE BIRDS*?' I asked my agent, 'Why me?' I later asked Hitch that same question. Actually, I think Hitch may have known when he hired me that he would need something more than birds coming down a Cornish chimney for a feature length film. I guess I was hired to be the plot man," Hunter said.

Hunter, a successful writer of short stories and novels (including *THE BLACKBOARD JUNGLE* and *LAST SUMMER*), discussed various plot ideas with Hitchcock over the phone before leaving his East Coast home in September, 1961, to meet with the director to finalize the script.

"I spent about a month just talking the screenplay," said Hunter, "nine-to-five,

**Gilded cage** Rod Taylor, Jessica Tandy, Tippi Hedren and Veronica Cartwright (recently the grown up star of *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*) listen intently as Hitchcock's electronically intensified bird sounds signal another attack. As Taylor frantically attempts to shore up the house against the birds' entry (below, discovering the door slowly disintegrating) Hitchcock powerfully drives home the notion that it is now mankind who is caged.

lunch in the office, talk, talk, talk about *THE BIRDS*. Those day-long discussions, frequently carried over into dinner at night, and brandies following that at Hitch's home in Bel Air, were the most rewarding part of the experience. Hitchcock is a most attentive and appreciative audience and an astute critic."

The actual screenwriting began in October of that year. Hunter moved his family out to the coast and wrote the script in about 10 weeks, without any supervision from Hitchcock. The director asked for only minor changes after it was handed in shortly before Christmas, 1961. Upon returning east, Hunter was asked to write one additional sequence, and then wrote what he felt was his best scene (as opposed to *Hitchcock's* best scene) where patrons of the Tides restaurant—a drunk, Mrs. Bundy, the ornithologist, Mitch Brenner and Melanie Daniels, among others—debate the bird crisis. "Good writing, solid dramaturgy, and splendid acting when it was finally shot," said Hunter.

Some scenes in Hunter's final script, dated January 26, 1962, show the influence of du Maurier's novella: birds invade the farmer's house (similar to the finch-down-the-chimney scene), a neighbor is found dead after a bird assault (the farmer with his eyes pecked out in the film) and the conclusion which finds the protagonist and his family barricaded inside the house as the birds group to converge upon them. But with the exception of adhering to the Bodega locations, Hunter was given wide latitude in creating the characters and situations.

"Hitchcock gave me a free hand in the conception," Hunter said. "Nothing would be too difficult to shoot, he assured me—hence scenes like the gull swooping down on the gas station attendant and the following fire and havoc. I never again gave a thought to the technical problems that might lie ahead. I understand there were plenty. But while I was on the set during the shooting, everything seemed to be going along quite smoothly. Hitch was in complete and affable control of any and all problems—including technical ones—that came up. I think the special effects were terrific, by the way."

Although Hunter was not aware of it at the time, Hitchcock was not entirely satisfied with elements of his storyline. Critics echoed the sentiment, calling the film's plot nothing more than a "pretext" for the bird attacks.

"It seems indigenous to all genre stories like *THE BIRDS* to put the personal story in second place," Hitchcock said. "It's the event that takes over. True, I wasn't too keen on the girl's [Melanie Daniels'] story. The personalities of those that were involved, and their fates, it was not all that effective. But I didn't worry about it too much, because I had devised the basic shape of the film far in advance—making the birds gradually increase in number.

"I think it was Fellini who remarked about *THE BIRDS*, 'I don't know why Hitchcock made us wait so long before the first bird attacked.' That was deliberate, of course."

Hitchcock felt most "catastrophe" films, like *ON THE BEACH*, failed to touch upon the stories of the central characters, to show that they are still living and emoting while

involved in bigger-than-life situations. He was careful to bring this quality to *THE BIRDS*. "That's why I started with a very light beginning, for purposes of audience identification," Hitchcock said. "I felt it was vital to get to know the people first, to take the time to get absorbed in the atmosphere before the birds came. That's why I gave the audience a sock now and then—the bird against Annie Hayworth's front door, the birds up on the telephone wires. The attack on Melanie in the boat was the first drop of rain before the storm.

But Hitchcock said he did not get everything he wanted from the screenplay. "Like all pictures of this nature, its personality didn't carry," he said. "If the picture [he always said "picture," never "film"] seems less powerful today than it did in 1963, that's the main reason, that the personal story was weak. But don't tell that to Evan Hunter.

"Hunter wasn't the ideal screenwriter," Hitchcock later admitted to us. "You look around, you pick a writer, hoping for the best."

But Hunter feels the blame for the film's shortcomings should be shared by Hitchcock and the actors, and not placed solely on him. "If there were weaknesses in my screenplay," Hunter said, "they should have been pointed out to me before shooting began, and they would have been corrected. I feel the weaknesses were manifold, but only some of them were in the script. The concept of the film was to turn a light love story into a story of blind, unreasoning hatred. Since Hedren and Taylor could not handle the comedy at the top of the film, the audience became bored. They had come to see birds attacking people, so what was all this nonsense with these two people, one who can't act and the other who's so full of machismo you expect him to have a steer thrown over his shoulder? Bad acting and—for Hitchcock—incredibly bad directing.

"I don't think Hitchcock was fair to my script," Hunter added. "Robert Altman to the contrary, I still feel writers should write and actors should act and directors should direct. I think Hitch allowed his actors outrageous liberties with what I had written, and he juggled scenes and cut scenes and even *added* one scene—the writer of which still remains unknown to me."

The scene in question precedes the gull attack at the birthday party. Melanie and Mitch wander up to the dunes with a bottle and two glasses whereupon Mitch pours drinks and they proceed to psychoanalyze Melanie. The purpose, apparently, was to add substance to Melanie's character through melodramatic disclosures about her broken home and well-intentioned efforts to put a Korean child through school.

"I have the feeling Tippi Hedren ad libbed her way through this one, because I can't believe anyone actually *wrote* such inane dialogue," Hunter said. "Someone *did* write it, however. I saw the script. When I got there to discuss *MARNIE* [Hunter wrote two drafts, but was dropped by Hitchcock due to creative differences], Rod Taylor took me aside and asked me if I knew anything about the scene. I read it and told him I'd never seen it before. He said, 'We're shooting it tomorrow morning.' I called Hitch at home and told him I thought it would be a bad mistake

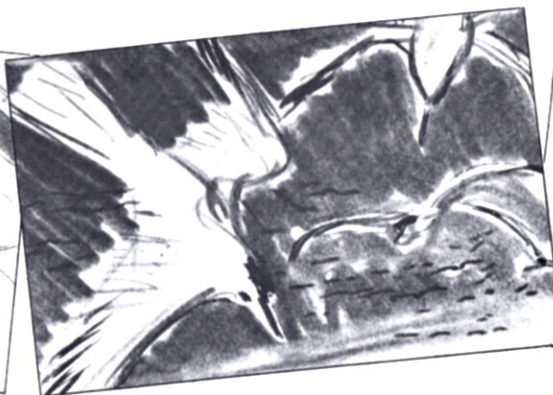
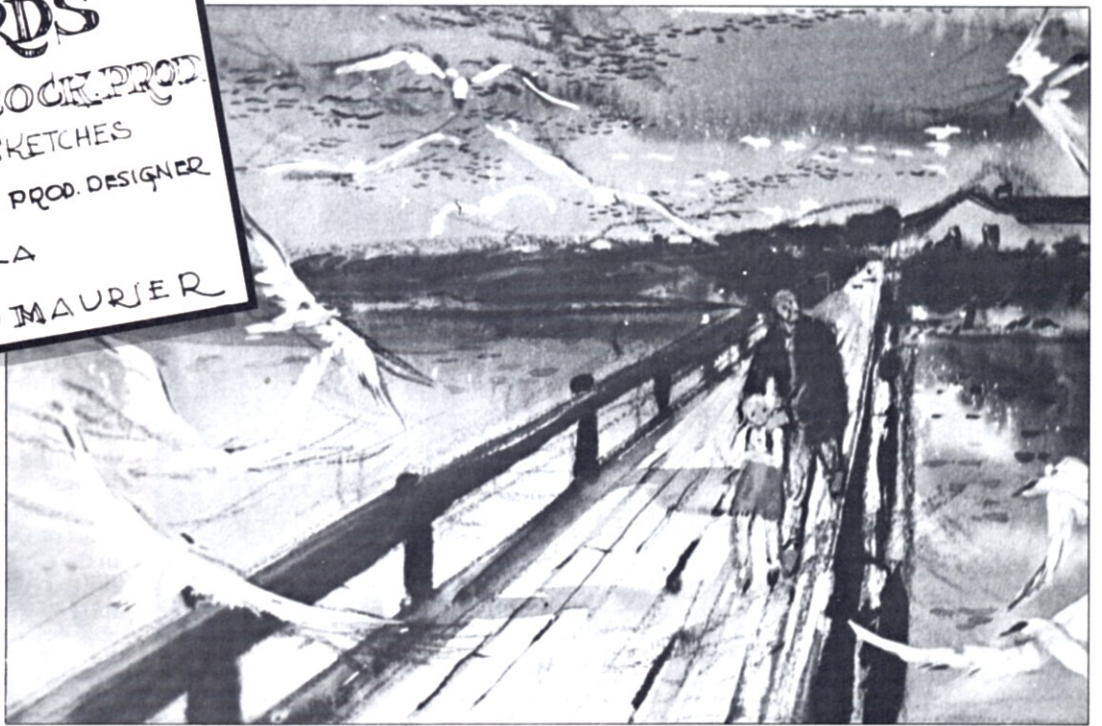




**'THE BIRDS'**  
 AN ALFRED HITCHCOCK PROD.  
 PRELIMINARY SKETCHES  
 BY ROBERT BOYLE, PROD. DESIGNER  
 FROM THE NOVELLA  
 BY DAPHNE DUMAURIER



Art director Robert Boyle



Before Hitchcock decided to change the setting of du Maurier's story from rural England to northern California, art director Robert Boyle did a series of preproduction sketches based on the novella's ominous feel.

"When I first read the du Maurier story," Boyle said, "I immediately thought of a painting by Edvard Munch called 'The Scream,' which shows a woman standing on a bridge holding her head and letting out a terrified scream. I wanted to capture that same despairing mood in THE BIRDS, keep it gray and cloudy, and tone down the warm colors."

These early sketches show the influence of du Maurier's and Munch's work. Top and Bottom: Done in watercolor wash, these show a farmer and child crossing a bridge over a murky body of water as crows nest among the reeds and seagulls hover in the overcast sky. Center panels: Three smaller sketches, done in charcoal, reveal the intent of the birds as they dive to attack.







**Mechanical birds** The birds in Jessica Tandy's hair during the action of the finch-down-the-chimney attack are a good example of the few mechanical birds used in filming the picture (note three wires running along her neck at left). For the sequence as seen in the picture (inset) the wires are fully concealed, and additional birds have been optically printed into the foreground.

changes in his screenplay considerably weakened its overall impact. "The thing is, *THE BIRDS* just misses," he said. "It comes *that* close. It could have been great, but in my opinion, it's only barely good. I believe *JAWS* is the film *THE BIRDS* might have been. Steven Spielberg might have made a very good film of it." [Hitchcock acknowledged the comparison between the two films, adding that "JAWS was well made, but a bit oversized as far as the shark was concerned."]

"There are no stars in this picture, Evan," Hitch used to say when I was writing the screenplay. "The *birds* are the stars. *I'm* the star." And as an alterthought, "You're the star." He was right. But in a grimmer sense than I think he intended. There *were* no stars in that film. Given Grace Kelley and Cary Grant, we might have pulled it off—even with all the changes.

"But as Hitch was fond of saying [about the impermanency of film], 'A hundred years from now, it'll all have turned to cornflakes in the can.' I was very fond of that man, and I enjoyed working with him immensely. I'm sorry the picture we made together could not have been a great one."

## The Birds

'Pound for pound, I think the raven and the cockatoo are the most intelligent beings on Earth.'

—Bird trainer Ray Berwick

Aside from his meetings with Hunter on the script, okaying Boyle's locations and discussing optical problems with Ub Iwerks, Al Whitlock and Bob Burks, another preproduction problem was gnawing at Hitchcock—the birds themselves. Hitchcock was anxiously awaiting word from animal trainer Ray Berwick, a former writer for the *LASSIE* TV series and bird trainer for *BIRDMAN OF ALCATRAZ*, who was on location scouting birds. Berwick, who was hired after the mechanical birds proved unusable, was forced to round up birds when attempts to gather various species locally proved largely unsuccessful.

"We used dummy birds and opticals for the mass scenes and background stuff, but all the stuff in the foreground with the birds was the real thing," said Berwick, who recently trained the ravens in *DAMIEN—OMEN II*. "The ideal way would have been to get babies and raise them from birth, but there simply wasn't enough time for that for all the birds. Except for a few young ravens, we had to trap and gather adult birds. The problem was catching ravens and crows. We devised various kinds of traps, but once we caught one or two, the flocks would invariably post a sentry and that would be the end of it."

A distress call was put out to professional trappers across the country, with an offer to pay \$10 for every bird brought in. "They all told me, 'Better get your checkbook ready, cause we'll be bringing them back by the truckload,'" said Berwick. "Not *one* trapper came up with a single bird!"

The biggest bird-trapping success came in Arizona, where Berwick and an assistant located a rookery of some 20,000 crows. "We followed this flock until we discovered

to include this scene in the film. Hitch said, 'Are you going to trust me or a two-bit actor?'"

Another of Hunter's missing scenes helped explain possible motivations for the bird attacks. "In the screenplay, on the morning after the finch attack, Mrs. Brenner yells to Mitch that she's going over to Dan Fawcett's farm, and Melanie in her nightgown looks through the window and sees Mitch burning the finches in the backyard," Hunter explained. "She throws on a mink over the nightgown, a humorous poor-little-rich-girl touch, and goes down to talk to him. They begin speculating on the cause of the attacks, making jokes about a bird leader urging the other birds to rebel, and then suddenly they realize that the finches came down that chimney in fury. There is nothing funny about this; the birds are attacking in hatred. Like frightened children, they cling to each other—and they kiss. And that's when Mrs. Brenner races back and spots them in embrace through the windshield."

"In the film, all you see is Mrs. Brenner (Jessica Tandy) racing back from the farmhouse where the farmer had his eyes pecked out," Hunter added. "As she approaches the Brenner house, we see Melanie and Mitch embrace through the windshield of the pickup truck. Until this point, they've been snarling at each other and we have no indication that they even like each other. In the scene that follows, where Mitch goes off to check things out at the farm, he and Melanie are exchanging 'darlings' about each other. Like the embrace, this is unfathomable in terms of their previous behavior. That's

because this scene is missing from the film."

For Hunter, the changes meant a movie he could no longer call his own. "I saw the film at an invitational screening at the Four Seasons in New York. That very hip and sophisticated theatrical audience was, to say the least, somewhat glacially polite in its reception. Later I saw it during its second release, on a double bill with *PSYCHO*. The audience laughed throughout. I was so embarrassed, I nearly burst into tears. The last time I saw it was on television, with the script in my lap. I felt a little better after that. It wasn't, after all, what I had written."

However, Hitchcock denied that another writer worked on the picture or that dialogue was ad-libbed. "No," Hitchcock said. "Hunter wrote the whole thing. Don't forget, he was suffering a little from a bad story notice. He came up to me the night we showed the film in New York and said he'd read that *Variety* had called the story the weakest thing in the picture. He said to me, 'You'll have to help me through this.'"

The scene on the dunes was flawed not only by the mawkish dialogue, but also by the glaringly artificial set. Explained Robert Boyle, "There's no way you can do a set like that and make it look real. You're talking about trying to get sunlight from arc lamps. Sunlight is a single source and impossible to recreate."

Then why try, especially when the scene could have easily been filmed on location? "There may have been numerous reasons," Boyle said. "Was the actual hill too steep to climb? Did Hitchcock want to get back to Hollywood? I have been on many locations with Hitch where he gets very impatient. He'd *rather* work on a sound stage."

In Hunter's opinion, such unauthorized



where they roosted at night," said Berwick. "By then we were pretty desperate to catch some birds, so we were *very* quiet and *very* careful. First, we made some nets and put on blackface and black clothing. Then we'd literally crawl on our hands and knees across the field to where the tree was—it would sometimes take half an hour or more—and I'd grab the sentry and put my hand over his beak so he couldn't squawk and alert the others."

Berwick would wait until a group of birds would fly up and back down again. "When they would land, we would throw the nets over them," he said. "We got to know the leaders of the flock well and learned to respect their intelligence. Pound for pound, I think the raven and cockatoo are the most intelligent beings on Earth."

All told, Berwick spent four months in preproduction, followed by four additional months of on the set training, from

March through June of 1962. Hitchcock arranged for Berwick to have a set a minimum of three weeks before shooting began to rehearse the birds and get them conditioned to the enclosed environment and bright lights. Extras were even brought in to simulate the movements of the actors. "It was unquestionably the best working conditions I ever had on a film," Berwick said.

Lunches for the film's "stars," who were housed in more than 40 large pens on the lot, cost an estimated \$1,000—the tab for 100 pounds of bird seed and 200 pounds of shrimp, anchovies and ground meat. The latter was smeared on the hands of the actors to entice the birds to come at them, an illustration of which can be seen in the final reel, where Rod Taylor gets his hand nipped by a crow (named Nosey and Berwick's pet during production) as he creeps outside to Melanie's car.

"Rod fed him little pieces of meat to give him the idea, and though I had my doubts, Nosey bit his empty hand on the first take

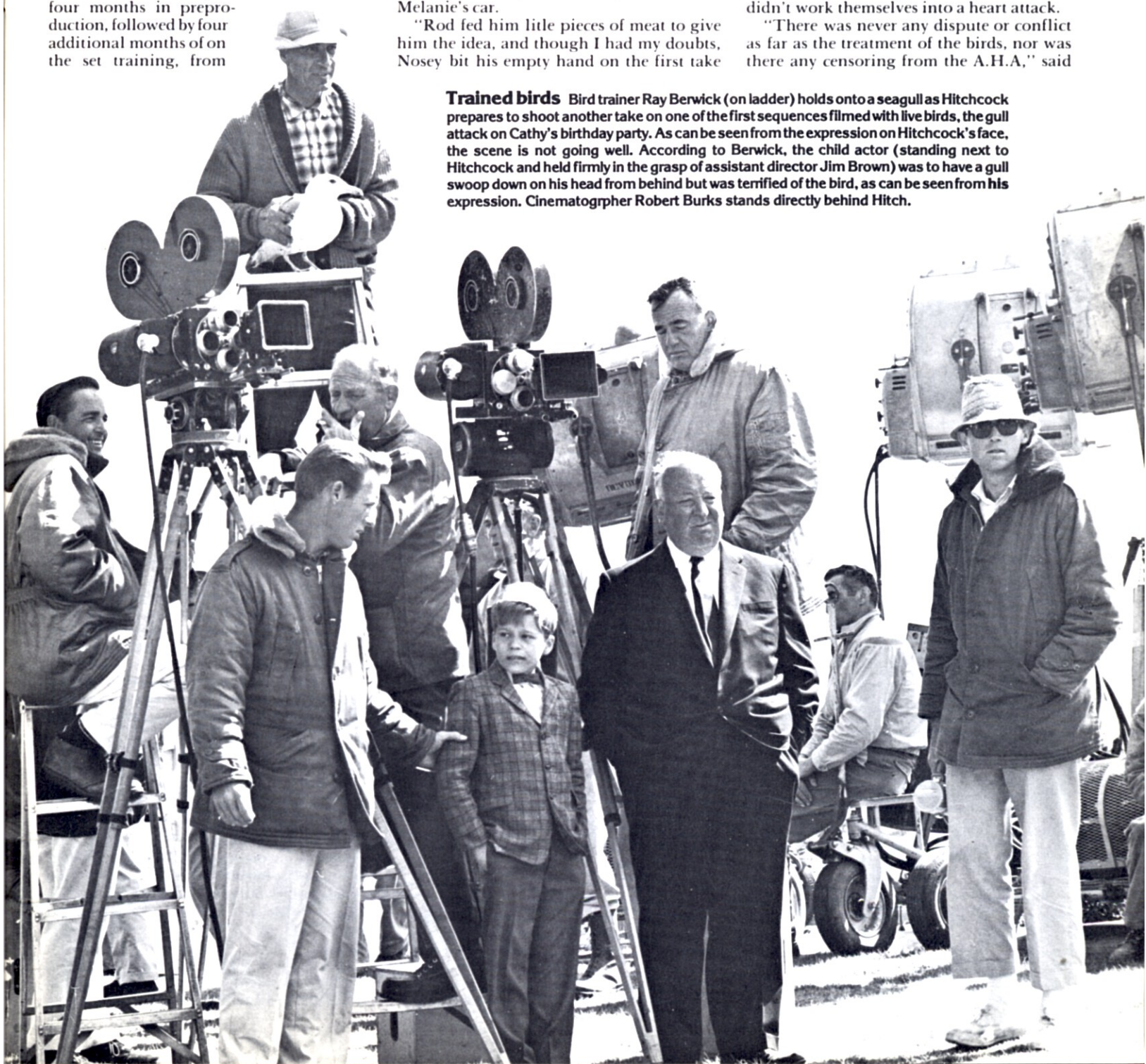
very well," Berwick said. "Almost too well."

Few of Berwick's birds needed encouragement to bite an actor or a crew member. "We had about 12 or 13 crew members in the hospital in one day from bites and scratches," Berwick recalled. "Some of them were absolutely terrified of the birds and with good reason. They always talk about the danger to your eyes when birds are involved. The seagulls would deliberately go for your eyes. I got bitten in the eye region at least three times, and Tippi got a pretty nasty gash when one of the birds hit her right above the eye."

Although it seemed that the cast and crew were the ones most in need of protection, the birds were looked out for too. Paul Ridge, a representative from the American Humane Association, was always on the set to see that the birds had enough air and water, and didn't work themselves into a heart attack.

"There was never any dispute or conflict as far as the treatment of the birds, nor was there any censoring from the A.H.A.," said

**Trained birds** Bird trainer Ray Berwick (on ladder) holds onto a seagull as Hitchcock prepares to shoot another take on one of the first sequences filmed with live birds, the gull attack on Cathy's birthday party. As can be seen from the expression on Hitchcock's face, the scene is not going well. According to Berwick, the child actor (standing next to Hitchcock and held firmly in the grasp of assistant director Jim Brown) was to have a gull swoop down on his head from behind but was terrified of the bird, as can be seen from his expression. Cinematographer Robert Burks stands directly behind Hitch.







FRAME BLOW-UP SEQUENCE BY GREG FERET

Berwick—this despite the fact that some birds' beaks were wired shut for safety reasons, and others were tied in place or tranquilized to prevent them from flying away during outdoor shooting.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was not so forgiving. During the third week of shooting in Bodega Bay, Berwick was caught for exceeding his legal limit of trapped birds. The fine: \$400.

## The Blonde

**'I had no idea that I would be associated with THE BIRDS. I thought perhaps there would be a couple of years of acting on Hitchcock's TV shows.'**

**—Tippi Hedren**

Tippi Hedren, born Nathalie Hedren in Lafayette, Minnesota, came to California from New York, where she had established herself as a successful model. Tippi, an affectionate Swedish nickname given by her father meaning "little girl," was cast in *THE BIRDS* largely on the basis of a commercial she made for a dietary product which Hitchcock saw on the *TODAY* show. In the ad, Tippi turns to acknowledge a young boy's wolfish whistle (the same expression she would use in the opening scene of *THE BIRDS*). The look caught Hitchcock's eye.

Like many of Hitchcock's previous leading ladies—Madeleine Carroll, Grace Kelly and Kim Novak—Hedren was a statuesque blonde with a cool, sophisticated manner. "Hitch always liked women who behaved like well-bred ladies," explained Robert Boyle. "Tippi generated that quality. He was quite taken by the way she walked."

So taken, in fact, that Hitchcock arranged for the model to take a screen test. "I think it was October the thirteenth, *Friday* the thirteenth [1961], that I first heard that a producer was interested in seeing me," recalled Hedren. "They didn't tell me who the producer was, even when I got to Universal." Hedren went through several meetings with high-level executives before finding out it was Hitchcock who was interested in her. Even so, she wasn't told *why* the director was so anxious to meet with her.

"I had no idea that I would be associated with *THE BIRDS*," Hedren said. "I knew that it was being made, but it never occurred to me that I would be in it. I thought perhaps there would be a couple of years of acting on Hitchcock's TV shows or some kind of dramatic training."

"I felt that one should have anonymous people," Hitchcock replied when asked why

**First victim** Only one bird casualty is ever shown close up, and Hitchcock makes the most of the death of farmer Dan Fawcett, teasingly avoiding the body the audience knows is there. The broken cups are reminders of the cups shattered when the sparrows flew down Jessica Tandy's chimney. Broken furniture and the dead bird in the window also serve to increase the tension. Finally, Hitchcock reveals the corpse, then shocks the audience with quick cuts closing on the farmer's face. (For the final shot of the sequence, see back cover.)

he chose to cast an unknown as the lead in *THE BIRDS*, "because the subject matter was not as facetious as some of my other films. Anyway, the stars of the film were the birds; anyone else was secondary."

Hedren was given an extensive color screen test that lasted two to three days and cost \$25,000. Martin Balsam was flown in from New York to play her leading man and Edith Head designed her lavish costumes. Afterwards, Hitchcock and his wife invited Tippi to join them and Lou Wasserman, now head of Universal, for dinner at one of Hitchcock's favorite restaurants, Chasen's. There she was presented with a small gold pin with three birds in flight, adorned by three tiny seed pearls. It was then that Hitchcock asked her to play Melanie in *THE BIRDS*.

"Well, I cried, and Alma, Hitch's wife, cried—even Lou Wasserman had tears rolling down his face," Hedren said. "It was a lovely moment."

*THE BIRDS'* lengthy shooting schedule was especially grueling for Hedren, who was required to be in almost every scene. During the six months of principal photography—two months on location around Bodega Bay in March and April 1962, followed by four more at the studio—she was given only one afternoon off, which she used to go to the dentist.

"I probably learned in three years what it would have taken me 15 years to learn otherwise," said Hedren, who sat in on meetings concerning all phases of the production. "I learned so much from Hitchcock. He's an absolutely fascinating person. He has a mind like an IBM computer. He can pull from his past any number of things he has learned and apply it to a particular scene or character. He's a very psychological director. He works on you like putty."

Critics complained that Hedren's glacial exterior made it impossible to relate to her, but Hedren said the development of her character demanded that the audience initially view her as "cold and aloof." Hitchcock saw a parallel between Melanie and the Tallulah Bankhead character in *LIFEBOAT* as "starting out as a jaded sophisticate and becoming more natural and humane in the course of her physical ordeal."

Hedren agreed that her character was perhaps a bit jaded, but added, "There's a great need in people like Melanie. She was a very hurt girl and therefore did things to cover up that hurt, like practical jokes."

Hitchcock kept tight reins on his actress and denied rumors (and charges by screenwriter Hunter) that Hedren ad-libbed her lines. "She wasn't what you'd call a regular commercial actress at all," Hitchcock said. "She was a girl out of a TV commercial!"

Hedren acknowledged Hitchcock's control over her characterization and her contribution as a creative actress. "Melanie Daniels is *his* character," she explained. "He gives his actors very little leeway. He'll listen, but he has a very definite plan in mind as to how he wants his characters to act. With me, it was understandable, because I was not an actress of stature. I welcomed his guidance."

Hitchcock's "guidance" even extended to personally selecting the jewelry Hedren wears in the film: one good bracelet, a ring



and a single strand of baby pearls. "Hitchcock has a fondness for simple and elegant things like scarves and mink coats," said Oscar-winning designer Edith Head, "so these things also became a part of her wardrobe."

Hitchcock felt there was something about Tippi that suggested a certain withdrawal, a chaste, cool quality, thus Head created the soft green suit Melanie wears throughout most of the film. Hitchcock has a very psychological approach to costumes," Head added.

The movie makes a darkly humorous point about Melanie's materialist nature when, after suffering her traumatic attic attack, she is led outside with her mink coat—now a hollow reminder of her status, a privileged position which has failed to protect her from the wrath of the birds—wrapped protectively about her shoulders.

## The Opticals

**'With 412 outstanding shots to be kept track of, I'm amazed the damn thing ever pulled together.'**  
—Ass't Editor Bud Hoffman

Ub Iwerks was known as a meticulous craftsman who did not like to be rushed in the course of his work. He spent several weeks experimenting with his optical printer in his office at Disney before he was satisfied with what was to be his first major contribution to *THE BIRDS*—the scene where sparrows (actually a combination of swallows, finches and buntings) fly down the Brenner chimney.

The living room set was enclosed by a polyethylene wall (used so that lights could penetrate it to illuminate the set) to prevent the birds from escaping Berwick's protective custody. The birds were then placed in opaque cages which rested atop the prop chimney. On cue, trap doors were opened in the cages and, spotting the light below, the birds flew down the chimney. Air hoses handled by grips kept them from roosting.

**Down the chimney** Hundreds of finches, sparrows and other birds were released onto the living room set, which was wrapped in plastic (note upper left corner) to keep the birds in and let light pass through. Since Hitchcock wanted the effect of thousands, not hundreds of little birds, Ub Iwerks superimposed other birds into the scene (note number of birds in final composite, inset).



Iwerks had previously engineered sodium vapor process photography of a large group of the tiny birds flying about a glass-enclosed booth, making it possible for him to optically multiply the number of birds in the living room through double, triple and quadruple printing.

As seemingly harmless as the birds appeared to be, they created a wealth of headaches for the cast and crew. The birds were infested with lice, and before long, everyone was contaminated by the parasitic insects. Many of the birds flew up into the rafters on the set and could not be coaxed down or caught. According to Bud Hoffman, tiny chirps can still be heard on the same Universal sound stage.

With a relatively short sequence such as this requiring weeks to realize, there was little doubt that the 412 planned optical effects shots would take more time than originally anticipated. A projected Thanksgiving release date in 1962 was immediately pushed back to spring of 1963, then moved forward by Universal executives, who wanted to meet the April 1st tax deadline date (the time by which a film negative must be transported out of state or face taxation).

The accelerated release date would prove more costly, but Universal anticipated a healthy Easter box office to offset the expense. Looking for help to complete the special effects work, Iwerks turned to some of Hollywood's optical experts: Bob Hoag, at that time in charge of photo effects at MGM; Linwood Dunn, founder of Film Effects of Hollywood, recruited to work on the film's final action sequence, Melanie's encounter with birds in the Brenner attic; and L. B. Abbot, A.S.C., head of special effects at 20th Century Fox, to work on the opticals for the crow attack on the school.

Lawrence Hampton, given sole screen credit for the film's special effects (Iwerks was credited as Special Photographic Advisor), built the prop birds, generally made from papier-mache, used in some sequences. Hampton, who died in 1972, may have also

helped build the electronically-controlled mechanical birds which were largely scrapped.

Hoag and his crew of 30 did many of the dissolves, blue backing and sodium matte shots. He also orchestrated the photographic effects for the scene where Tippi Hedren is trapped in a telephone booth that comes under attack by sea gulls, which many, including assistant editor Bud Hoffman, felt was the best special effects work done in the film.

"At that time, Fox had a developer called Solution Q or something equally as secret sounding," Hoffman said. "It was a very fine grain developer, and they were able to put together a series of matte shots with an excellent matching quality."

Not all the independent houses' work met with such resounding approval. Hoffman and photographer Robert Burks spent almost four months after the picture had wrapped production early in December, 1962, submitting the completed footage to various optical houses for final printing. Burks, a brilliant technician who demanded perfection, continually rejected much of the work for not looking "real" enough. His contribution prompted Hoffman to say, "In my opinion, this picture could never have been made without Bob. It was his persistence in doing these shots over and over that made *THE BIRDS* the classic it is today."

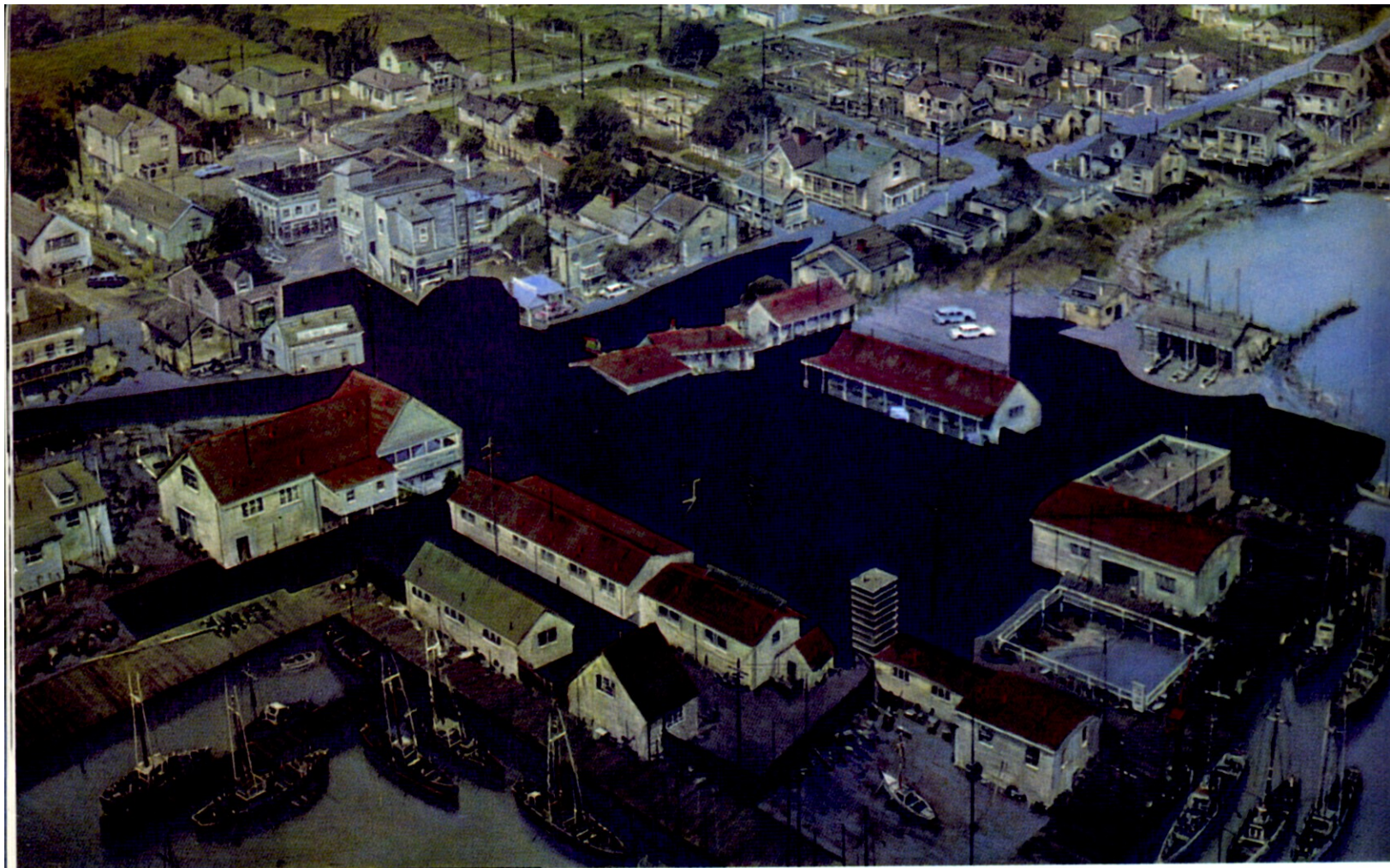
Added Hitchcock: "If Bob Burks and the rest of us hadn't been technicians ourselves, *THE BIRDS* could have cost five million dollars rather than three million."

Just keeping track of the thousands of shots contained in the film was a job in itself. "Bob and I tried keeping track of all the shots on paper," explained Hoffman, "but that got totally out of hand, so we put a big slate up on the wall. There was so much erasing that we had to drop that idea, too."

Eventually the pair settled on what Hoffman calls a "coloring book" method. For every shot requiring birds, Hoffman made a black and white dupe. When the shot was







completed, a color shot was substituted for the one in black and white. When the sequence was all in color, they knew it was complete. "With 412 outstanding shots to be kept track of, I'm amazed that the damn thing ever pulled together," Hoffman said.

One of Hoffman's most arduous duties was sifting through bird footage shot at the San Francisco city dump. In February 1962, a crew spent three days at the dump stockpiling miles of footage for use by the special effects department.

"The crew went to the dump area and raked together all the garbage they could," Hoffman recalled. "There were a large number of gulls that regularly scavenged there, and when they saw what had been laid out for them, they dove right in for it. The camera crew photographed reel after reel of birds: individual birds, birds flying in the air, sitting on the garbage, and so on. I think it would be safe to say that some 20,000 feet of film was shot.

"I went through this film a foot at a time and categorized it according to the action it contained: single bird flying in from left to right and right to left, birds milling about, two birds flying off, that kind of thing. It took a long time to run through it all, but it was rewarding in the long run because we were able to find a lot of good footage without any land in it, and some with birds looking as if they might be ferocious."

Al Whitlock also assisted in reviewing the available footage, as one of his crucial matte paintings used in the picture required gulls to drop into the frame. "I recall that we sat through what seemed to be miles and miles of bird footage to get something we could

**Bird's eye view** Al Whitlock's matte painting of an aerial view of Bodega Bay (above) was composited with live action footage of a gasoline fire filmed on a newly asphalted parking lot at Universal (top left). To add gulls swooping into the frame, Whitlock had gulls filmed from atop the cliffs of Santa Cruz Island, then rotoscoped them one by one into the shot (middle left). Hitchcock also used Whitlock's talent in subtle ways. For two shots of Melanie crossing the bay to the Brenner house in a motorboat (shown below), Whitlock painted in the sky and far shore, to add mood and suggest a town where none existed. Explained Whitlock, "The weather that day was clear and the sky was bald."





# THE BIRDS

## Special Effects

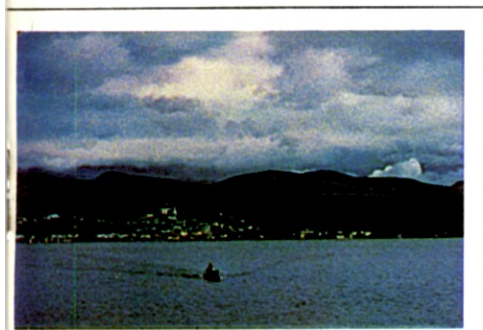


**The apocalypse** Al Whitlock's matte painting for the film's ambiguous finale (above) suggests hope—sunlight streaming through the clouds. The painting was used in three shots: top right, Mitch's point of view as he opens the door—the bird flying in from above was roto-scoped into the scene from gull footage shot at the San Francisco city dump; middle right, Melanie's point of view as she is escorted to the car by Mitch and Lydia—the camera trucks-in on this shot, a move simulated on the composite with the optical printer; bottom right, the film's final image as the car drives away, a composite requiring 32 separate exposures. Hitchcock called this "the most difficult shot I've ever done."

use," he said. "The fundamental problem with getting any bird activity on film was getting close to them. The only thing that induces them toward you is food, and even their hunger is overruled by their fear of man."

Ray Berwick decided to go along with the crew to the garbage dump to catch gulls and experiment with teaching them simple tricks. "I found the gulls on the whole to be vicious and ornery, not very intelligent at all. I never came across one in all the time we were shooting that was affectionate, either towards another sea gull or a human being. But they could be quite easy to trap and in some ways easy to train. They responded quite quickly to the food reward system, and the rest was patience on my part. I could trap a bunch down at the San Francisco garbage dump and by the end of the day have them doing stunts."

As associate editor, Hoffman was in charge of the editing of the effects sequences, whereas George Tomasini principally handled cutting chores on dailies and principal photography—though he closely collaborated with Hoffman throughout the production. All the effects scenes were cut in advance of any matte work or print-overs. It was necessary to go through all the footage shot at the garbage dump and select the right birds to be added optically—as many as seven different layers at a time to create depth. Unlike the average Hitchcock movie, where only scant remains of unused footage could be found on the cutting room floor, there was a good deal of excess film shot for *THE BIRDS* that never made it into the final print.





## The Story

**'I think Hitch is putting the world on when he pretends there is anything meaningful about THE BIRDS. We were trying to scare the hell out of people. Period.'**

**—Screenwriter Evan Hunter**

"Even the most extraordinary events in our story have a basis in fact," Hitchcock boasted to the press while filming *THE BIRDS*. In fact, there had been numerous reports of unusual bird behavior in the media, and future irregularities would inevitably be tied in with the film. In 1961, a La Jolla, California family was shaken when hundreds of sparrows, apparently nesting in the living room chimney, flew out into the house, upsetting furniture and smashing windows. Residents in a quiet Midwestern town—the quintessential American Hitchcock setting—suddenly found themselves under invasion by a covey of barn swallows, who seemed to delight in dive-bombing newsboys on their paper routes. (Children, usually spared violence out of sentiment for their helplessness, are also victims in *THE BIRDS*.) Flocks of screeching sea gulls were reported to be terrorizing fishing ports along Germany's North Sea coast, pilfering piles of fresh fish and attacking fishermen and chimneysweeps. And a Bodega Bay farmer approached Hitchcock during filming to report that he was having trouble with birds pecking out the eyes of his young lambs.

Ornithology experts say that such deviant bird behavior can usually be attributed to natural causes: the quest for food, a recent

**Hitchcock's cameo** Audiences would be so interested in spotting Hitchcock's cameo, he began making appearances at the very start of his films so the audience could relax. To film him passing Tippi Hedren as she enters a San Francisco pet shop, Hitchcock hid the camera in a van disguised as a delivery truck. The prize Sealyham poodles were Hitchcock's own pets, Stanley and Geoffry.



lack of enemies to battle with, or a form of rabies (Hitchcock's personal theory). Faced with such rational explanations, Hunter and Hitchcock decided from the outset not to offer a specific reason for the bird attacks.

Hunter does, however, playfully bat about a few possibilities in the scene in the Tides where customers expound their own personal theories. The drunk (rendered in the style of Sean O'Casey, an Irish playwright whose *JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK* was filmed by Hitchcock in 1930) sees it in biblical terms, crying, "It's the end of the world!" Mrs. Bundy (Ethel Griffies, in her 101st motion picture), an ornithologist conveniently present, firmly rejects the notion that birds could mastermind a mass attack ("Their brain pans aren't large enough"). Melanie Daniels proposes the most unsettling—and irrational—reason of all: the birds are acting with the intent to kill.

Clearly, the adults in the cafe are more alarmed by what is happening than the two children present, who merely express fascination that they might become lunch for the preying birds. ("Are the birds going to eat us, mommy?" one asks with wonder in his eyes.) Like toddler Gary in *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*, they are perfectly willing to accept the reality of the situation, whereas the reactions of the adults—panic, skepticism and a diminishing sense of well-being—are filtered through debate and Bloody Marys. In a world where "seeing is believing," they are ill-equipped to surrender to circumstances so abstract.

Whatever the actual reason, *THE BIRDS'* refusal to force a pseudo-scientific explanation on the audience is indicative of its admirable attempt to reject commercial conventions. Hitchcock allows the narrative to advance under the assumption that we will accept the film's basic premise. "We figured that we would offer possible reasons," said Hunter, "but we would never tell the audience why. We did not want this to become a science fiction film. We were both a little nervous about this, even given Hitch's stature. We did not want this scene where the guys are all peering into microscopes examining a bird feather and they decide the movement of the Polar Cap or an underground explosion or a low flying saucer has caused a change in metabolism, thereby causing our feathered friends to desire human \*FLESH\* instead of chicken feed and bugs."

Explained Hitchcock: "I was interested in making the film because it was a horror film—horror coming from a different quarter. It wasn't science fiction at all. I treated the subject naturally and quite straightforwardly."

Were Hitchcock and Hunter trying to make a statement in *THE BIRDS*? It depends on whom you ask. Hunter scoffs at the idea that the film represents the classical furies or is intended to be a vision of Judgement Day. "I think Hitch is putting on the world when he pretends there is anything meaningful about *THE BIRDS*," said Hunter. "We were trying to scare the hell out of people. Period."

But Hitchcock *did* feel the film had a message to offer. In a trade ad he wrote, "There is a terrifying menace lurking right underneath the surface shock and suspense of *THE*

*BIRDS*. When you discover it, your pleasure will be more than doubled."

Hitchcock may have been aiming a bit over the heads of his audience when he penned this profundity, since the "terrifying menace" he speaks of is complacency, not something likely to be discovered in a cursory viewing of the picture.

"Generally speaking," Hitchcock said, "I believe that people are too complacent. People like Melanie Daniels tend to behave without any kind of responsibility, and to ignore the more serious aspects of life. Such people are unaware that catastrophe surrounds us all. But I believe that when catastrophe does come, when people rise to the occasion, they are all right. Melanie shows that people can be strong when they face up to the situation, like the people in London during the wartime air raids. The birds basically symbolized the more serious aspects of life."

The opening of the film establishes Hitchcock's view of our complacent society. It is midday in downtown San Francisco. Tourists are enjoying a cable car ride, and shoppers and businessmen line the busy sidewalks. As Melanie Daniels stops to vainly acknowledge a passerby's whistle, she notices a flock of sea gulls circling ominously overhead. Hitchcock introduces the anxious presence of birds before a single word of dialogue is spoken.

Tippi Hedren's entrance into the pet shop affords Hitchcock a choice cameo, as he walks out with his two prize Sealyham poodles, Stanley and Geoffry. For this location shot, a camera was placed in a van disguised as a furniture delivery truck with a built-in glass partition used for the filming.

The prologue of *THE BIRDS* corresponds almost exactly to the first part of *KING KONG*. Nothing much *appears* to happen, yet significant groundwork is laid in the area of characterization. When Melanie Daniels—at once a well-to-do woman who appears to have nothing better to do than spend the day browsing for gifts for her Aunt Tessa—and Mitch Brenner, a solidly middle-class man (well-played by Rod Taylor) meet in the pet shop, the film engages in a little light comedy of the "boy meets girl" tradition. What may seem to be mere fluffy exposition is more correctly an expression of the duality Hitchcock sees as a particular element of life. The brightly lit, antiseptic setting of the pet shop—the birds chirping melodically, as if their very existence depended upon it—foreshadows the sinister forces that will soon befall the characters. By the film's end, the innocuous bill and coo of the birds has been transformed into a war cry; their human oppressors are now prisoners inside industrial cages while they maintain omnipotent rule outside. Melanie Daniels finds herself a victim of her own "gilded cage" of luxury and frivolity, a metaphor brilliantly visualized by Hitchcock by showing her trapped in a telephone booth during a gull attack on Bodega Bay.

As Hitchcock kiddingly put it, "Birds make excellent heavies. After all, they've been put in cages, shot at and shoved in ovens for centuries. It's only natural that they should fight back."

But though the birds fight back, the audience is spared the full fury of their power. Hitchcock, the master of psychologi-



# Creating the film before the camera even rolls

He cuts the film before the first frame is exposed, sketching shots in detail. For Hitchcock, once the storyboards are done, the film is finished

Unlike other directors who would shoot a sequence different ways and decide which shot to use in the editing room, Hitchcock invariably walked on the set knowing basically what he wanted. For *THE BIRDS*, every sequence that required special effects, opticals, birds or special camera moves was pre-planned and storyboarded in detail. Hitchcock and art director Robert Boyle would sit down with the script and break down each of the sequences involved. The director would verbalize how he envisioned the scene—shot for shot—and Boyle would make quick charcoal sketches, or "scribbles," as he termed them. Hitchcock, himself an artist, would occasionally take his own piece of paper and create his own "scribbles" if Boyle wasn't quite drawing what Hitchcock wanted.

First came the "key sketch," a detailed illustration which set the general mood of the scene, and established the lighting, time of day and color. Next came sketches for "form" and "angle," which were concerned with image size and camera placement.

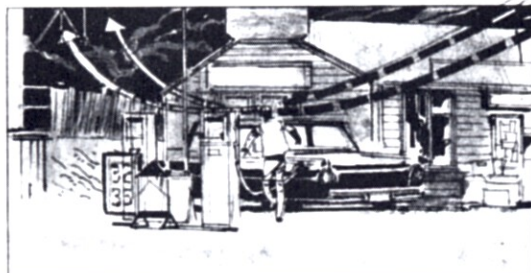
Boyle's roughs were then turned over to Harold Michaelson (now a major art director in his own right whose credits include *STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE*), who actually drew the final storyboards for Hitchcock's approval. Michaelson would occasionally consult Boyle on changes he felt would improve the shot and add them into the finished panels for Hitchcock's approval.

Sequences were often storyboarded more than once to get the feel Hitchcock was after, but when the director was finally satisfied, the drawings became the blueprints for the film. All that remained, Hitchcock liked to say, was the technical process of transferring the storyboards to celluloid.

In the sequence shown at right (the beginning of the mass attack on Bodega Bay that ends with the famous "balloon" shot of the town in flames), it can be seen how the drawings were used as a guide: the gull knocking out the gas station attendant, the gas flowing down the street, cries of alarm from Melanie Daniels and the unfortunate fellow with the matches.



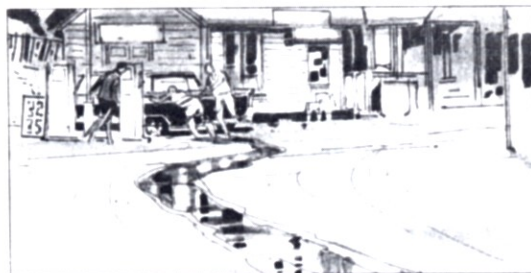
475- GROUP AT WINDOW



476- GULL HIT ATTENDANT



479- CLOSE SHOT-GASOLINE



481- PAN BACK TO STATION



482- MELANIE TURNS BACK TO CAR PARK



483- MAN LIGHTING CIGAR-MELANIES V.P.





cal—unseen—violence places little emphasis on bloodletting. Howard Smit, a former make-up artist at Republic Studios (known for its violent westerns) who had worked on episodes of Hitchcock's TV show, was hired to handle make-up duties on the film, with supplementary work done by Bob Dawn. Smit agreed with Hitchcock that the makeup should look realistic, yet not repulsive.

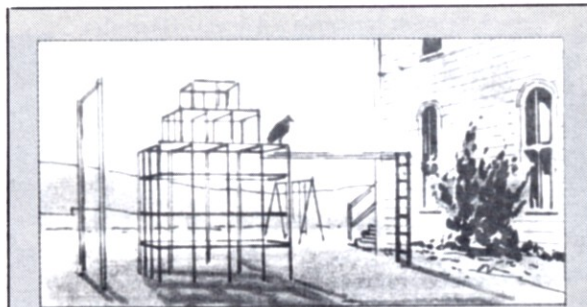
"Up until the last 10 years or so, you were quite restricted as to the things you could get away with on screen," Smit recalled. "Violence had to be toned down to be acceptable to the general audience. Studios were also worried about losing a subsequent sale to television if you showed too much in the way of blood and guts."

Over a period of weeks, Smit and Dawn devised a series of tests using different types of makeup to show Hitchcock how human skin would look and photograph after being pecked at by bird beaks. Prosthetic pieces made of latex and cast from molds were attached to models' bodies to create the illusion that their flesh had been punctured. Smit also used his own brand of home-made coagulated blood. "If you can't make blood look real in my profession," he added, "you'd better get the hell out. Believe me, if you didn't do it realistically, you weren't with Hitchcock more than 24 hours."

One outstanding example of Smit's makeup in the film can be seen in the Dan Fawcett sequence, where Mrs. Brenner (Jessica Tandy) stumbles upon his mutilated corpse as she opens his bedroom door. A stunt man played the role of the dead farmer and sat for ninety minutes as Smit applied his bloody makeup. His pajamas were shredded and strips of coagulated blood added to his legs and upper body. To make it appear as if his eyes had been gouged out, dumold, an undertaker's wax, was added around his eye sockets and the area heavily blackened with makeup.

Smit worked directly with Hedren on her makeup, since she would be transformed from glamorous to gory during the film's climax. Smit applied her preliminary makeup at the Santa Rosa Motel (located an hour's drive from Bodega Bay, the motel was taken over by the cast and crew during location shooting) and added touch-ups on the set, as in the scene where she is hit by a gull as she coasts across the bay in a motorboat. The first bird attack in the picture.

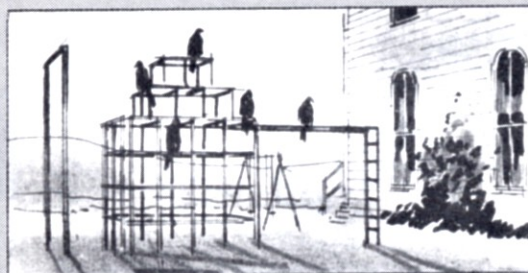
**Crow attack storyboards** These storyboards, covering just a few seconds of screen time, show how carefully Hitchcock preplanned his film. The sequence begins with a medium shot of Melanie waiting for Cathy to come out of school, then alternates between Melanie and the crows gathering silently on the jungle gym, with the camera moving closer to her with each shot. Finally, when the audience knows the jungle gym is covered with crows, there's a long close-up



417c



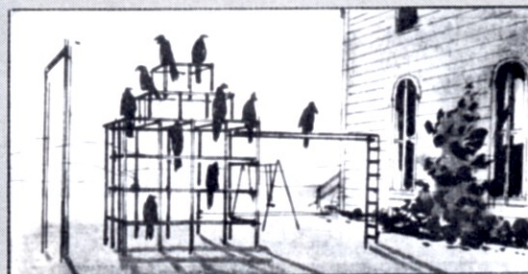
417d



417e



417f



417g 5 MORE CROWS - TOTAL OF 10-



417h - HOLD FOR 20 OR 30 FEET.

According to Hedren, "I did the reaction shot of the gull hitting me in the boat on location in Bodega Bay. Back in the studio, they put up a bright blue background to later print in rear projection of the bay. Up in the rafters they had a wire on a slope and, on top of it, a dummy sea gull. [For long shots, Berwick trained a live gull to land on Hedren's head]. A tube was run from a sort of bicycle pump through my dress. The hairdresser then did my hair, spraying it very tightly except for one little piece in front, which is where the end of the tube came. They synchronized it with footage of a gull shot at the San Francisco garbage dump so that when they let go of the dummy bird to swoop down at me, they hit the pump, which blew my hair up, and it looked as if the gull had actually hit me. At the same time a trickle of blood was released to create the illusion that I'd been cut. I thought it was very clever."

More than being merely clever, the execution of the scene is representative of Hitchcock's stylized approach to the film's violence: doing the minimum on screen to get the maximum audience effect. Thus, when the gulls attack the children at Cathy's birthday party, the only resulting injury is a scratch on a little girl's face (not shown). As crows besiege the school children, we are treated to various views of the birds pecking and biting them, yet no noticeable blood is drawn; the child who must be later hospitalized is given medical aid for facial lacerations caused by falling down and breaking her glasses.

As testimony to his belief that an audience should "work" while watching a movie, the deaths of Annie Hayworth and Dan Fawcett occur off screen. When Mitch covers Annie's mangled face with his hand, he is not only shielding Melanie from the horrific sight, but the audience as well. It is obvious that she has met the same bloody fate as Fawcett did earlier, but as we have already been witness to the aftermath of one death, Hitchcock encourages us to use our imaginations to complete the picture.

Certainly, it would have been easy for Hitchcock to capitalize on the "squeezed grapes hanging on the cheeks" concept he kidded *Time* magazine about using, but self-mockery could not override his desire to see screen murder handled delicately. Why else would Melanie's attic ordeal leave her with only assorted cuts and a chic bandage about her brow?

of Melanie's face (417h). "We will hold that close-up," Hitchcock told art director Robert Boyle, "until the audience can't stand it." [20 to 30 feet of film as indicated would be between 15 and 22 seconds!] "However, the way Hitch described it in our sketch session," Boyle said, "was more chilling than the way it finally came out." In the actual film, Hitchcock framed the scene so that you could see Melanie and the jungle gym together, then picked up the action as story-



## The Score

'When you put music to film, it's really sound, it isn't music per se.'

—Alfred Hitchcock

"Conventional music usually serves either as a counterpoint or a comment on whatever scene is being played. I decided to use a more abstract approach," Hitchcock told us, explaining his unusual decision not to use a conventional score for *THE BIRDS*. "After all," he said, "when you put music to film, it's really sound, it isn't music *per se*."

The soundtrack for the film was created on a machine called the Studio Trautonium, a keyboard instrument named after its inventor, Dr. Frederick Trautwein, and designed by Remi Gassman and Oscar Sala for creating atonal sound compositions, first used commercially by the New York City Ballet. Late in 1961, Hitchcock spent a month in West Berlin with long-time collaborator Bernard Herrmann, who supervised the film's final soundtrack.

Through the use of the Trautonium, natural sounds were stylized to give them greater resonance and power. Bird caws are used to underscore the action on screen with the same effect a crescendo of violins might produce, or introduced like musical cues to contrast screen images.

To emphasize the starkness of the soundtrack when Lydia runs out of the Fawcett house, a faint echo was added to Jessica Tandy's footsteps. Hitchcock has her run from a long shot to a close-up and open her mouth to scream, but where we logically expect sound, he offsets the cliché by having her emit only guttural noises—silence, in effect. A similar contrapuntal use of sound occurs when the birds lash out at Melanie in the attic but do not cry out. Hitchcock said he wanted a "silent murder."

For the last scene, when Mitch opens the door of the house and sees the incredible array of birds covering the area, Hitchcock asked his sound technician for an electronic silence, a sound which might suggest the birds' thoughts as they rest before preparing to attack again.

Hitchcock's manipulation of the soundtrack gives additional shading and irony to *THE BIRDS*. As Melanie waits for Cathy's class to recess, children sing a nonsensical song—a favor-

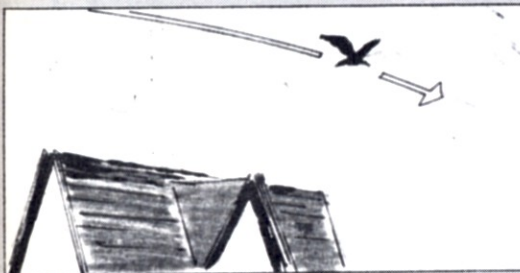
boarded by 418, as Melanie's eye follows a flying crow to its perch on the crowded gym bars. (Boards 426-437a, showing Melanie alerting schoolteacher Annie, are omitted.) For the climax of the sequence, it was planned to move in and hold on successively closer shots of the roosting birds (437b), then pan up as they fly away to attack (437c), an idea that was also abandoned. But while details changed, Hitchcock never varied the storyboard's master plan.



418



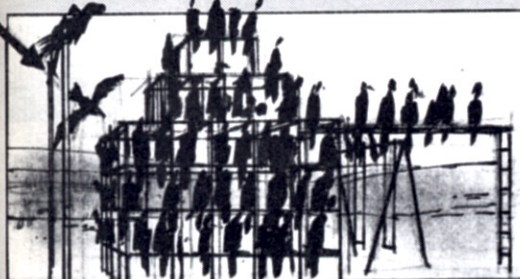
419



420



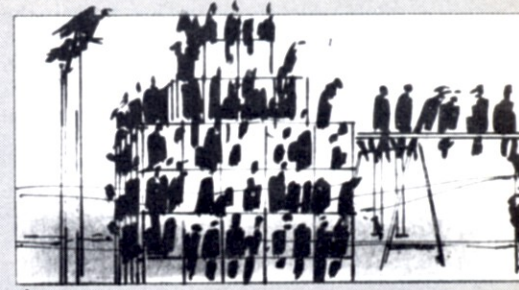
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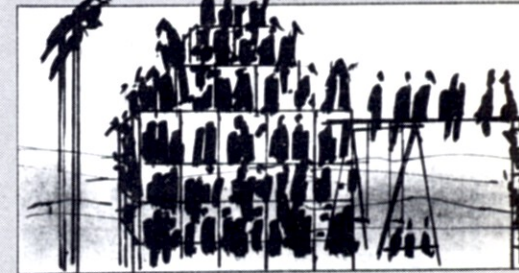
423 CAMERA WHIPS UP AS MELANIE LEAPS TO HER FEET



424



425



425A



437B- 12 FEET



437C PAN UP AS CROWS FLY UP AND OVER CAMERAS



ite of Evan Hunter's own children—as the crows gather silently behind her. Later in the sequence, while we wait to see the children run out of the school, Hitchcock disregards obvious cross-cutting and holds the shot of the jungle gym, not allowing us to hear the sound of the children's running footsteps. What follows is a cut-away, with the children already halfway down the road. The vibrations of flapping wings are intertwined with the screams of the children for greater emotional impact.

Certainly the film's definitive use of sound is the attack on the Brenner house. In his lengthy interview with Francois Truffaut, Hitchcock said that this scene was largely improvised, a statement his assistant Peggy Robertson later told us was a "mistranslation". The sequence leads off with shots of Melanie, Mitch, Lydia and Cathy seated quietly, waiting for a lull between attacks to end. Hitchcock's pacing of the action—Lydia carrying out the coffee tray, Cathy rushing to the bathroom to throw up—conveys their vulnerability and heightens our anticipation of the birds' arrival.

"It was one of the most satisfying scenes for me personally," said Hitchcock. "You have a boarded up room with four people in it, sitting there in silence, just waiting for the birds to come. I kept the silence going quite a bit."

Eventually, the stillness gives way to distant bird noises: first only a peep, then muffled chirps, then a frenzied crescendo of screams and abstract noises as the birds hurl themselves against the house, cutting off the lights, pecking holes in the front door with their beaks and breaking through a window shutter, the only birds seen throughout the entire sequence, since Hitchcock is again relying on the audience to use their imaginations. To simulate the birds breaking

**Bird sounds** Hitchcock works with composers Remi Gassman and Oscar Sala at the keyboard of the Studio Trautonium, the instrument used to create the film's soundtrack—from the birds' shrill caws to a subtle, electronic silence as they prepare to attack. The variety of tonal elements that could be orchestrated on the Trautonium made Hitchcock confident that he could use it instead of music.

through the window, candy glass—made from spun sugar—was inserted in the window frame. What appears to be Rod Taylor's hand being gnawed at by a gull is really Ray Berwick's hand, devoid of makeup since the gull's razor-sharp beak drew real blood on the take. And to simulate the birds pecking through the door, hammers and chisels were used on a balsa wood prop.

As suddenly as they have come, the birds retreat, their cries fading in the distance. We see Mitch step into a low-angle closeup, the ceiling framed oppressively over his head ("home sweet home" becomes the ultimate cage). Then, similar shots of Melanie and Lydia, each entering from opposite sides of the frame for visual symmetry. Finally, a masterful truck back for a shot of all three (Cathy is seated nearby), standing motionless, listening to the birds trail off, hoping that the danger has passed.

To set the mood of this sequence, Hitchcock brought in a musician to play for his actors. "When we arrived on the set," recalled Tippi Hedren, "we saw this drummer sitting there with a huge drum. We didn't know Hitch had planned this. In the scene, the tension is supposed to slowly build as the birds start to attack the house. Even Hitchcock, as fine a director as he is, couldn't get a bunch of birds to act that way, so he got the idea of using the drum roll to help us react and to build up the tension. For me, it was the most effective scene in the film."

## The Effects

**'Hitch is willing to stretch the limits of possibility in order to get a gut feeling in a film. If it doesn't always quite come off technically, it doesn't disturb him.'**

**—Art Director Robert Boyle**

"There are many things in a Hitchcock film that will not stand up over the years if you're going to criticize it from a standpoint of technical perfection," said Robert Boyle, responding to the criticism that time has dated the impact of much of *THE BIRDS'* special effects. "Hitch is willing to stretch the limits of possibility in order to get a gut feeling in a film. If it doesn't always quite come off technically, it doesn't disturb him."

It is clear that *THE BIRDS* has been surpassed in the area of optical effects. It is not difficult for today's sophisticated audiences to spot the process shots or the optically inserted birds. The film's subtle and restrained texture looks almost old-fashioned beside the bloody excesses of current genre films like *ALIEN*, *THE FURY* and *DAWN OF THE DEAD*. But there are sequences in the film that are still technically remarkable today, a testament to the skill of Hitchcock and the technicians he brought together.

L. B. Abbott recalled that coordinating the special effects for the crow attack was a "tedious chore," requiring five to six weeks of round the clock labor. He and his crew had to literally bridge reality and fantasy by taking Iwerks' footage of crows shot in a wind tunnel and optically adding them to Bob Burks' completed photography of children

running on a treadmill. "If my memory is anywhere near correct, there were about 60 cuts in that one sequence," Abbott recalled. "The first thing we had to do was look at the film as it was put together by the editorial department for ideas on how to move the birds in, how to time each shot and how to match the angles dictated by the cuts. Our two biggest problems were perspective and size-ratio; we had to optically make the birds appear to be swooping down at the kids by moving them into the frame at the same time adding a slight zoom to bring them in closer. We had to play around a lot with increasing and decreasing the size of the birds to make them look right in relation to the children. They also had to be optically multiplied, to make the mass appear larger than it was."

Real birds, trained to land on the necks and shoulders of the children, were used in the foreground of the shots, with a hand-puppet standing in for shots of birds biting the children in close-ups. Shots of the children running down the road (actually located miles away from the school house) were skillfully intercut with the completed studio photography of children running on a treadmill with dummy birds overhead on wires.

To add to the effects nightmare for Abbott, Iwerks' footage of the crows was slightly underexposed. To bring out the full shape of the birds in order to get a solid matte outline meant losing all detail in the birds' bodies. Short of re-shooting the bird footage (unrealistic, considering the pressure to complete the opticals) these "silhouette crows" were the best that could be managed.

For the sequence of the crows massing on the jungle gym, Berwick trained about two dozen birds to land on the bars. Later, working on a Universal stage, he trained an additional 125 crows to roost on a duplicate jungle gym. Opticals and matte work combined the two shooting locations and seemingly multiplied the number of birds. There's a slight jump cut just before the birds take off, caused when a couple of eager birds missed their cue and flew off ahead of the others. To make it look as though all the birds had flown away together, 15 feet of film was removed from the sequence.

However, there were no such problems (though there were plenty of others) shooting the film's most spectacular effects sequence: the mass attack on Bodega Bay, featuring the stunning aerial view of the town in flames as more gulls swoop in.

The sequence begins immediately after the crow attack on the school. Melanie's alarmed state instigates a round of discussion between customers in the Tides as to what should be done to deal with the birds. A testy traveling salesman (Joe Mantell) suggests that everyone get guns and "wipe them off the face of the earth," an idea scoffed at by Mrs. Bundy, who reports that there are more than a hundred billion birds in the world.

The conversation ends as another avian assault commences. An approaching gull knocks the gas station attendant unconscious—achieved by training the bird to fly closely over the head of a stuntman, who faked the blow just as a fighter might react to a deliberately mistimed punch. As men from the restaurant rush out to the attendant's aid, Hitchcock uses the expanded time to show the spilled gasoline advancing towards a





# Makeup: less is more, for Hitchcock

Hitchcock and makeup artist Howard Smit got maximum effect with minimum blood

In keeping with the pattern set by his prior films, Hitchcock placed little emphasis on actual bloodletting in *THE BIRDS*, letting the imagination of the audience fill in most of the gruesome details. Top Right: Hitchcock indicates to makeup artist Howard Smit how large a gash to place over Suzanne Pleshette's right eye as screenwriter Evan Hunter looks on. As with the other principal victims of bird attacks, Smit let Hitchcock choose between several different makeup concepts for Pleshette, including one (bottom left) that called for more bloodshed and her dress to be shredded. But ultimately, the audience saw none of Pleshette's wounds. Bottom Right: Hitchcock tells Rod Taylor how to react for the scene in which Pleshette's body is discovered. Taylor's hand not only prevented Tippi Hedren from seeing the wounds (as shown below), but kept the audience guessing as well.



Additional makeup tests of bird attacks, see back cover



## The Attic

'I said, "Uh, well, what are we going to use?" He answered, "There's a bunch of ravens and crows."'

—Tippi Hedren

One could interpret the extraordinary attic sequence as a showdown between humanity and the violent external forces which threaten to overthrow it. Melanie's decision to venture into the room alone—she decides to let the exhausted Mitch sleep—may be part naivete, part death-wish, but her courage is undeniable. According to Evan Hunter, Hitchcock originally intended to show Melanie opening several doors in the house, but abandoned the idea somewhere along the line.

"Contrary to what he sometime says, Hitchcock is *very* concerned about the logic of a character's actions," said Hunter, commenting upon Hitchcock's statement to Truffaut that he finds logic "boring."

"I had her going up to the attic after she heard a bird peeping," Hunter said. "Hitch asked, 'If she hears birds in the house, why doesn't she wake Mitch?' I said, 'Because she's not sure there are birds in the house.' Hitch persisted. 'But if she thinks there are birds in that room, why would she open the door?' I had no answer. He said, 'All right, it's a good scene, but let's take the curse off it. Let's have her open a *lot* of doors and find no birds anyplace and therefore opens the last door believing it's safe to do so.' In the filmed version, even though the opening of the doors was added to the script, Melanie opens just that one door after all."

Hitchcock has been quoted as saying that, at one point, the script called for Annie Hayworth (Suzanne Pleshette) to be attacked in the attic, not Tippi Hedren. Hunter, however, stated that no such plot change ever took place.

"Never, in any version of the script, was a supporting character even considered for such an important scene," Hunter said. "I can, in fact, remember him asking me for a line of dialogue to explain why Annie was not present during the finch-down-the-chimney attack whereas she *was* present during the earlier birthday party attack. When Hitch asked me for this line, I told him no one would ever question her absence. But he's a stickler for detail and wanted it explained. [Rod Taylor mutters something about Annie having gone home to take a call from her sister in San Francisco.] Never, I repeat, *never* was she to remain at the Brenner house throughout the film. Why, this would have necessitated a major rewrite after the first draft, and no such major overhaul ever took place. Besides, the scenes following it are all predicated on Tippi Hedren being attacked."

Until the day of filming the attic scene, Hedren assumed that most of the birds she'd be facing in the attack would be mechanical. After all, she must have reasoned, the bulk of the birds could be added optically, as they had been for many of the scenes. But for the effect Hitchcock was looking for, fake birds wouldn't do, so unbeknownst to Hedren,

man who is lighting up a cigaret. Melanie and the others attempt to shout him a warning through the window (unfortunately, their overlapping dialogue is not well timed) but he drops the match, igniting the gasoline and setting off a series of fiery explosions [see sequence illustrated page 27].

High above, a squadron of sea gulls is watching. Attracted by the activity below, they begin to descend upon the town for purposes of destruction.

This so-called "balloon shot" allows us for the first time to experience a viewpoint that is other than human in form. Bodega Bay now seems but a tiny, desolate wasteland, wide open to the ravages of an out of synch physical universe.

"Hitchcock likes to put actors into situations he identifies with," said Robert Boyle. "He himself suffers from acrophobia, so he takes the audience high above the town in a 'balloon' shot, which he called 'God's point of view.' Many people thought that it was supposed to represent a bird's eye view, but it was not intended to be from any particular point of view. It was supposed to take you away from all the confusion below and re-establish the audience."

Aside from the burning cars and buildings and the running people, the entire shot is a matte. At the time of production, a new parking lot had been asphalted on the studio back-lot, making it ideal for filming purposes. Al Whitlock laid out the matte by putting a camera on a hill overlooking the parking area and did a sketch, delineating it so that it could be fit into the live action.

To obtain this particular bird footage, Whitlock sent two cameramen, Ross Hoffman (a relative of Bud) and Jon Hall (the former actor), and a non-union crew to Santa Cruz Island. "I knew there were gulls nesting in the cliffs there," Whitlock recalled. "The crew charmed them out of their nests by throwing fish out to them. Back in the lab, we lifted the bird images off the black and white film it was shot on and roto-scoped them one by one into the matte."

The roto-scoping took two female assistants three months to paint the birds frame by frame in order to get a matte of the birds for the required black and white traveling matte. A print and a negative of the birds on a clear cell provided the "male" matte to allow the birds to be lifted off the film and all extraneous background (water and cliffs) eliminated. The birds would then be put in the new scene with a "female" matte—blacked out film with clear areas representing the birds. Finally, the traveling matte of the birds was printed in over the matte painting of the town. First, a single gull comes in from right to left. Then, by optically flopping the shot over, the gull moves from left to right into the frame, appearing as if it is another bird.

**The attic** It took seven grueling days to shoot Melanie's encounter in the attic, seen by some viewers as a showdown between man and nature. Grips, wearing thick leather gloves, spent days hurling live birds at Hedren, who broke down and cried under the strain. Tippi just naturally assumed the scene would be filmed using opticals and effects as had most of the film up to that point, and was told she was about to face real, live gulls only the morning before shooting began.





birds were trained and a special set constructed for the sequence.

"The morning we were to start the scene," said Hedren, "the assistant director, Jim Brown, came into my dressing room and seemed to be avoiding looking at me. I said, 'What's the matter with you?' and he mumbled, 'We can't use the mechanical birds.'

"I said, 'Uh, well, what *are* we going to use?' He answered, 'There's a bunch of ravens and crows.'

"When I walked out on the set, I saw that they had built a huge cage around it—to keep the birds from flying up into the rafters—and inside the set were prop men with big, thick leather gloves up to their elbows to protect themselves from being bitten when they held the birds and hurled them at me."

What adds up to less than a minute of screen time required seven days of rigorous shooting. Ray Berwick related how he trained the birds for the scene: "For the first few days, we trained the birds to land on Tippi and she would push them away. We finally exhausted that, since the birds began to get the idea and wouldn't go near her anymore. Then we'd have to hold the birds at a distance of maybe eight or ten feet and just sail them right at her. In that close-up where she's bitten, we put a little rubber tip on the bird's beak." Air jets were used to keep the birds from flying into the camera lens, and grips kept them back and forth with food. Some dummy birds were also used, specifically when Melanie swats a gull away with a flashlight.

After two days of shooting, the strain began to show. "By Wednesday of the shooting week, I was tired," Hedren sighed. "By Thursday, I was noticeably nervous. On Friday they had me down on the floor with the birds tied loosely to me with elastic bands, which were attached through the peck-holes in my dress. Well, one of the birds clawed my eye and that did it; I just sat and cried. It was an incredible physical ordeal. It was very hard for Hitch at this time, too. He wouldn't come out of his office until we were abso-

lutely ready to shoot because he couldn't stand to watch it.

"I'll never forget the day Cary Grant came on the set during a break from shooting *THAT TOUCH OF MINK*. He was stunned by what I was going through and said to me, 'You're one brave lady.' I then considered the possibility that maybe this was one of the reasons why Hitchcock had chosen an unknown for the part—there *was* an element of danger in it, since the birds were not all nice guys."

As complicated as this short sequence was to shoot, the film's final shot, showing the Brenners and Melanie slowly making their way across the bird-littered landscape in her sportscar as the skies of morning break overhead, was even more complicated to realize.

This breathtaking image, a combination of 32 different exposures and Albert Whitlock's stunning matte painting, has been referred to by Hitchcock as, "the most difficult single shot I've ever done." Approximately a third of the birds in the shot were dummies, mostly used in the background and on the barn roof for atmospheric purposes. A few were chickens and ducks which had been purchased from a local slaughterhouse, and dyed to mask their natural color. The foreground was shot in three panel sections; the few live sea gulls available were shot and re-shot for each piece. Just above the heads of the crows was a long, slender middle section with more of the same gulls spread apart. The car going down the driveway, with the birds on each side of it, was another piece of film, as was the barn, and so on.

Many of the birds seen as Mitch pulls the car out of the garage were tranquilized to temporarily suspend their flying abilities. The crows could be taught to perch (or would stay in place, thanks to the miniature binders they wore, which were designed by Bob Dawn), but the gulls had to be tied in place atop the house and barn to prevent them from flying away. Stagehands were often required to rescue birds when they lost their footing and fell over the sides, leaving them hanging upside down by elastic bands.

## The End

**'Excuse me Mr. Hitchcock, sir. You mean, "The Birds are Coming," don't you sir?'**

**—A 'Young Turk' at Universal**

Universal's backing insured that *THE BIRDS* would have a costly and well-orchestrated media campaign. Substantial word of mouth was generated by the Hitchcock-derived catch-phrase, "The Birds is Coming," a line which, at the very least, made grammarians bristle with fear. As Evan Hunter recalled, "When Hitch told the assembled Universal advertising masterminds that the headline on the ads would be 'The Birds is Coming,' surely a goddamn stroke of genius, one of the young Turks cleared his throat and said, 'Uh, excuse me Mr. Hitchcock, sir. You mean, 'The Birds *are* Coming,' don't you sir?'"

To launch the film, Hitchcock participated in a coast-to-coast pigeon relay, with prizes awarded to the first pigeon arriving in New York, where the movie was scheduled to open March 28th at the RKO Palace. A less successful media event took place in New York's Central Park, where a model was dressed up as an ornate bird and paid to toss bread and fish to the local bird populace. Her outlandish costume only succeeded in scaring them away. Ray Berwick was also heavily involved in promoting the film with Hitchcock, traveling with several of his trained crows to theaters set to open the film.

Theatrical trailers and short, punchy radio commercials, written and narrated by the portly director himself, helped ignite public enthusiasm. "If you have ever eaten a turkey drumstick, caged a canary or gone duck hunting, *THE BIRDS* will give you something to think about," Hitchcock says in one radio spot. "If you are the type of person who goes to a bull fight and roots for the bull, you'll love *THE BIRDS*."

*THE BIRDS* was selected to lead off the 1963 Cannes Film Festival and went on to enjoy a healthy but unspectacular, box

**Crow attack** Filming a traveling matte as Tippi Hedren and the children flee from the crow attack on the school, using mechanical birds suspended from wires. In the final composite (inset), birds in the distance were added to the background plate of the school by optical expert L. B. Abbott, using sodium vapor traveling matte footage of crows flying in a wind tunnel, filmed by Disney's Ubwerks.





office. But save for a handful of raves from such noted critics as Andrew Sarris and Vincent Canby, the press gave the film a decidedly frosty reception. Comments ranged from "dull and plotless" (Judith Crist) to "pointless and incomprehensible" (Pauline Kael). To add injury to insult, *THE BIRDS* lost its single Oscar nomination—for Best Optical Effects—to *CLEOPATRA*, Joseph Mankiewicz's overblown historical spectacle.

When the film was first previewed, audiences reacted negatively to the ending, which shows the sportscar with Melanie and the Brenners inside driving off in the distance. Originally, there was just a fade to black, with no end title. But audiences, expecting answers to the questions posed by the film, misinterpreted the blank screen as a break in the reel. To avoid confusion come release-time, Bud Hoffman had Technicolor do an overlay clearly announcing that it was, in fact, "THE END." As it was too late to add the title to the original negative, the title had to be overlay printed on every existing copy of the film.

But something of far greater importance than an end title was missing when the film premiered: Evan Hunter's original ending.

"I don't know why Hitch did not shoot the ending as we'd discussed it and I wrote it," said Hunter. "At least 10 pages, and perhaps more, of the screenplay were not shot. In those ten pages, the Brenners and Melanie leave the house and drive through the town, where we see absolute chaos and realize the

**Have bird—will travel** To get publicity for the opening of the film, bird trainer Ray Berwick took his trained birds on the road, visiting theaters set to open *THE BIRDS*. Though Berwick wasn't as photogenic as either Tippi Hedren or Hitchcock, Berwick's birds were, and newspaper photographers delighted in posing them together.

bird attacks are not a personal vendetta on Melanie and the Brenners but a widespread calamity (a possible uprising, as explored earlier in the romantic scene between Melanie and Mitch that was cut).

"They are about to leave Bodega Bay when they come to a police department roadblock. A patrolman is draped over it, dead. Birds are perched on the telephone wires overhead, watching. Mitch gets out of the car, moves the roadblock aside, gets back in, starts the car forward again. The birds take flight, attacking the car. You'll remember that Melanie is driving a convertible throughout the picture—and for good reason. As Mitch maneuvers the car out of town on winding roads, we cut to a helicopter shot, and the birds—as is their nature—are taking the "as the crow flies" route, going in a straight line while the car makes all those hairpin turns. Result: they are upon the car in an instant, tearing apart the canvas top with their beaks. As the top rips back at last, we see all these damn crows hovering over the people huddled inside crying—suddenly the road straightens out, Mitch steps on the gas and the car outdistances the birds.

"The road ahead is clear. Cathy asks Mitch if he thinks the love birds can breathe. Mitch replies, 'I think they'll be all right, honey.' They stare ahead through the windshield at the magnificent sunrise over the hills beyond and Mitch says, 'It looks... it looks clear up ahead.' That was the end of the film.

"I think this was a much stronger ending than that mosaic of three thousand four hundred and seven pieces of film that ended the actual movie. When I saw it for the first time in a theater, people turned to each other and mumbled, 'Is it over?' 'Is that it?' 'Huh?' and words to that effect. I hastily departed before they realized I was the man who had written the screenplay and mistakenly assumed the ending they had just seen had been concocted by me.

"The Hitchcock ending," Hunter maintained, "conveyed the impression, except for a brief news report on the car radio, that what happened at the Brenner farm may have been an isolated experience brought on by God knows what—Melanie's flighty earlier days? Lydia's rejection of her? Who knows? By extending the screenplay to show havoc wreaked in town, we dismiss any possibility of this having been a personal bird vendetta against a small group of people."

Early in production, Hitchcock told reporters that the birds would win the battle with the humans. "Our main characters manage to escape," Hitchcock was quoted, "but nothing is said about what dangers they face."

But when we spoke to Hitchcock, he told us his intent was to depict the attacks as an isolated phenomenon. "It seemed more real to me that it occur in one locale," said Hitchcock. "I toyed with the idea of lap dissolving them in the car, looking, and there is the Golden Gate Bridge covered in birds. Later when someone asked me if I was really going to do it, I said, 'Look, if you go that far, where do you end? Los Angeles? New York?' I would say that ending was more an element of the du Maurier concept; that birds had taken over the world."

Hunter insists that a massive attack was what he and Hitchcock had in mind all

along (though he said the concept of birds lining the Golden Gate Bridge was never even discussed with Hitchcock), and that the eliminated pages of his screenplay changes the entire tone of the film.

"By ending the film on a shot of the birds after the car has moved away from them, it seems clear that they are being left behind," said Hunter. "This was not the original intention. I don't feel the new ending is ambiguous. I feel it is simply puzzling. With such a large question looming, it seems to me the end of the film should have at least been decisive."

Hitchcock explained why he did not find it necessary to film Hunter's final pages. "I excluded those scenes because I felt they were superfluous," he said. "Emotionally speaking, the movie was already over for the audience. The additional scenes would have been playing while everyone was leaving their seats and walking up the aisles. We used to call these hat-feeling scenes."

Actually, it is only after you have seen the film a few times that Hitchcock's ending seems, if not complete, then at least artistically correct. While certainly puzzling, the ambiguity of the final shot may be seen as a thematic element of the film, that facile endings are often misleading in their attempts to pacify audiences. Perhaps more birds will be waiting in San Francisco; or we may assume that what is happening in Bodega Bay—with reports of scattered attacks in the nearby communities of Santa Rosa and Sebastopol—is part of an isolated occurrence, rather than one of world-wide proportions, as du Maurier's story seems to indicate.

Infinitely more valuable than any pelucid denouement *THE BIRDS* might have offered is the thought that lingers after its final images have faded. Mitch verbalizes it in one scene when he weighs the risk in dealing with an upcoming attack, saying, "It's just a chance we'll have to take." If *THE BIRDS* has anything life-affirming to tell us, maybe it is that taking this chance, gambling on the less than absolute, and overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds through our faith and love, is a fundamental step toward understanding life: its compulsions, its punishments, its true value.

**POSTSCRIPT:** And what became of the "stars" of the picture, the birds? As Ray Berwick told me, "I realized that if the really vicious birds, the ones who did the biting in the film, like the gulls, were returned to their flock, they would revert to being wild, so that's what we did with a lot of them. I later heard reports that gulls were landing on people's heads at the beach! The ravens we took back to Arizona and the finches we sold to a local pet store."

Bud Hoffman offered this slightly more colorful explanation: "Some of the birds escaped and are now populating the San Fernando Valley. About 50 of the crows decided they liked it at Universal and made a perch on the tree outside Hitchcock's bungalow, where they proceeded to go to the bathroom all over his car. We sent a crew out there to spray repellent, but they liked the stuff and wouldn't leave. They threw rocks at them and even considered getting guns to shoot them down. They finally solved the problem nonviolently by cutting off the tree limbs they were roosting on." □





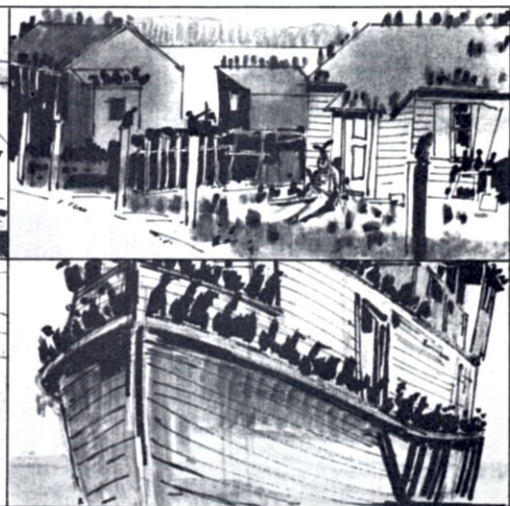
# The end you never saw—and why not?

The ambiguous ending of **THE BIRDS** was never meant to be. The answers—at least some of them—were in the unfiled pages of Evan Hunter's screenplay.

Sometime during the course of production, Alfred Hitchcock decided not to film the ending originally scripted by Evan Hunter. According to Hunter, at least 10 pages at the end of his script were simply dropped, leaving behind a puzzling conclusion he felt diminished the impact of the story.

The film currently ends with Melanie and the Brenners driving away in her convertible through a mass of birds as the sun symbolically breaks through Albert Whitlock's painted clouds (shown right; additional photos on page 25). But the missing pages of the screenplay—the final three of which are reproduced below—took the four survivors through the chaos and devastation of Bodega Bay and one final bird attack before escaping. As the storyboards shown indicate, the attackers are everywhere: birds are seen through the car windows walking defiantly on the road, covering a dead man on the beach, and perching on an abandoned ferry.

Though Hunter's ending left open the possibility of further bird attacks, as did Hitchcock's, it showed conclusively that Melanie and the Brenners were not the sole targets of the birds' fury, a concept Hunter said was crucial, but Hitchcock felt was better left unfiled.



PROD. #9402      THE BIRDS      FINAL January 26, 1962      179

678 CLOSE SHOT - MITCH  
wrenching at the wheel again, another bend.

679 HELICOPTER SHOT - THE CAR  
navigating the sharp bends in the road as birds streak at it in straight lines.

680 TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MELANIE  
in the back seat as several slashes appear in the roof over their heads, letting in more light.

681 CLOSE SHOT - THE ROOF  
More slashes, more light in scattered beams.

682 CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE  
her fear growing as the scattered light beams bring back the memory of the attic room and her flashlight battle with the owl.

683 CLOSE SHOT - THE ROOF  
more slashes, building, the beam thrusts combining with the incoming beams of light in a weirdly horrifying way.

683A CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA  
LYDIA  
(almost in prayer)  
Dear God... dear God... please,  
please, what have we done? Please,  
(and then in anger  
at the roof and the  
birds)  
Can't they leave us alone?  
(shrieking it)  
**LEAVE US ALONE!**

684 MID. SHOT - THE CAR INTERIOR  
all the passengers, as the roof suddenly rips back.

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685 PULL SHOT - BIRD  
from inside the car, hovering over it the moment the roof tears back.

686 CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE  
This is too much for her. She screams at sight of the birds, and then turns her face into Lydia's shoulder.

687 TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MELANIE  
as Lydia recognizes Melanie's need. She puts her arm around Melanie's shoulder and holds her close.

688 PULL SHOT - THE CAR  
racing along as the birds hover over it.

689 CLOSE SHOT - MITCH  
his face screwed in anguish, tears rolling down his cheeks as he grips the wheel and hits the gas pedal.

690 PULL SHOT - THE OPEN CAR  
streaming canvas ribbons behind it. It turns another bend in the road.

691 PULL SHOT - THE ROAD AHEAD - (THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD)  
It is arrow-straight, no curves.

692 PULL SHOT - THE CAR  
in a burst of speed as it hits the straightaway. It begins to outdistance the birds. The gap widens. A flock of birds attacks it from the side of the road, but it speeds into them and through them. The gap grows wider and wider.

693 CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA  
LYDIA  
We're losing them.

PROD. #9402      THE BIRDS      FINAL January 26, 1962      181

694 CLOSE SHOT - MITCH  
only a nod, his face streaming tears.

695 LONG SHOT - THE CAR (BIRD'S P.O.V.)  
as they fall way behind now, the car moving swiftly into the distance.

696 TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MELANIE  
on the back seat. Melanie begins sobbing in a sudden release of tension. Lydia, in compassion, and tenderly, cradles Melanie's head on her shoulder. Melanie, her eyes glistening, looks ahead through the windshield.

697 PULL SHOT - THE CAR INTERIOR  
all their faces visible.  
CATHY  
Mitch? Do...do you think they'll be all right? In the trunk? Can they breathe?  
MITCH  
(with the faintest smile)  
I think they'll be all right, honey.  
There is hope on their faces as the car streaks into the wind. But a wild exuberance, but a relaxation of tension. They stare ahead through the windshield, and then they squint their eyes against the sudden sunrise ahead, and Mitch reaches up to turn down the sun visor.  
MITCH  
It looks...it looks clear up ahead.

698 PULL SHOT - THE CAR  
moving AWAY FROM THE CAMERA FAST into the magnificent sun-flare over the crest of the hills. Further and further into the distance it goes.  
FADE OUT

THE END



# GALAXINA



Dorothy R. Stratten (left), *Playboy's* Playmate of the Year, appears in her first starring role as the titular comic book heroine of *GALAXINA*, a PG-rated spoof of space fantasy films to be released by Crown International this August. Below: In a send-up of *ALIEN*, Captain Butt (Avery Schreiber) swallows a mysterious egg and has this little creature pop out of his mouth. It thinks Butt is its mother! Christopher Walas designed, built and operated all of the various alien creatures seen throughout the picture.



Left: The *Infinity*, a police space cruiser designed by Tom Turlley. It's organic look was inspired by the shape of a Jerusalem artichoke. Below: The crew hibernate inside their Cryosleep chambers during interstellar flight, amid a water vapor enriched atmosphere.





# In space no one can hear you laugh

By Adam Eisenberg

Who is the sexiest android in the 28th Century? Who can find the famed "Blue Star," a mystical gem with the power of the stars? And who can win a dangerous laser battle in an alien city and save the free universe?

"Who cares?" you may ask.

Crown International Pictures, that's who, the producers of GALAXINA, which happens to be the answer to all those burning questions. The film is the brainchild of writer/director William Sachs, whose previous credits include THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN, VAN NUYS BOULEVARD and a documentary, THE FORCE BEYOND.

The film is about the crew of an intergalactic police cruiser who are sent on a mission to Altar I to find the "Blue Star" before it falls into enemy hands. En route, they get in trouble with enemy troopers, stop off at an orbital house of ill-repute with the most unusual ladies of the evening, meet a group of motorcycle riders in the middle of a strange desert, and Galaxina, Playboy's Playmate of the Year, Dorothy R. Stratton, learns how to love and feel human emotions.

Fortunately, Sachs has the good sense not to take any of this too seriously, and plays it for laughs. One of his running gags is a takeoff on ALIEN, when Avery Schreiber (Captain Butt) foolishly swallows a mysterious egg. Needless to say, strange things begin to happen to him, climaxing with a little monster that shoots out of his mouth and scurries off. Throughout the rest of the film, the monster keeps reappearing, bigger each time, and always in search of Captain Butt whom it believes is its mother.

While GALAXINA does rely heavily on other films for material to spoof, Sachs said the film will also introduce unique effects of its own. "We shot a great deal of it, particularly the exterior of the planet (Altar I), with infrared Ektachrome film," he said. "They used it for one night shot in APOCALYPSE NOW, but other than that it hasn't been used."

Because of the infrared film, the sky turns green, the ground turns yellow and the vegetation turns different shades of red. The faces of the actors change as well. "We had to do makeup tests to make sure they would look somewhat normal," Sachs said, "although we didn't want some to look normal so we didn't put makeup on them."

But while Sachs found the infrared ideal for producing a very alien looking landscape, the film stock itself presented countless problems. "Since no one had ever used it before, even Kodak wasn't sure what would happen," he said. "We did a lot of tests, but still the infrared film was affected by the time of day, the amount of clouds, the temperature and every other variable possible. Apparently, that's why no one else has ever used it before!"

In addition to the use of infrared film, GALAXINA's special effects team—headed by George Mathers of STAR WARS fame—took pains to film several hologram sequences live, much as they were done by Disney technicians for THE BLACK HOLE. This method is more effective than traditional post-production optical techniques because it allows the performers on the set to interact with the holographic images.

Holograms were simulated by first photographing the desired image in 35mm panavision against a black background. This footage was then transferred to videotape so that technicians could use electronic filtering and distortion techniques to get the desired shades of blue, purple and green associated with the monochromatic laser light of real holograms. On the set, the holographic image is projected into the camera off a semi-transparent mirror (known as "ghost glass"). Since the camera can see through this mirror to the actors beyond, it combines their image with that of the hologram. A video monitor hooked up to the camera shows the scene to the actors as they perform, and enables them to interact with the hologram as if it were really there. Postproduction opticals

were still used for some hologram shots in which the camera angles involved made it impossible to use the more effective live action method.

Sachs filmed the spaceship interiors using fog machines to provide the diffused lighting effects seen in ALIEN, but carried the idea one step further by actually incorporating it into the plot. Sachs reasoned that on long space voyages, the crew might need a heavier atmosphere enriched with water vapor to aid breathing and protect their skin.

"The fog was torture to work with," complained Sachs, "because of the chemicals in it. The manufacturer said it was non-toxic, but by the end of the day we found that our teeth felt like they were coated with something!" The cast had to suffer with it, but some of the crew started wearing masks. And oxygen was brought in periodically for the actors, to pick them up after particularly long takes.

Sachs emphasizes a sleek, comfortable, "organic" look for the production. "I didn't want a lot of lights and buttons because the film takes place a thousand years from now and I think that by then, one will probably only have to think and the computers will know what you want. So instead of the high technology look, we have a feeling of a biological organism, with rounded corners that suggest, but don't look like, ribs."

Sachs' "organic" approach is considerably toned down from the stark, boney, organism-like derelict spaceship in ALIEN, and it is reflected in every facet of the production—from the sleek, comfortable costumes, to the curved, smooth sets. Sachs got his inspiration for the film's spaceships while grocery shopping when he picked up a Jerusalem artichoke.

"I saw one in the supermarket," Sachs said. "I was looking for an organic shape for a spaceship, and the artichokes look like roots. I found one with an incredible shape and that's what we based the ship on, although it has changed a lot. When I brought it in everybody had a laugh, and after a few days it got

soggy so we had to throw it out."

The film climaxes with a laser battle on the streets of an alien city, which bears a striking resemblance to a town out of the old American West. Sachs tries to make the best out of budget limitations, like this use of a standing set, calling GALAXINA "in a sense, a space western. Most science fiction films are westerns," said Sachs, who obviously hasn't seen much besides STAR WARS. "I think science fiction is taking over for the western for a while."

And what are space western costing these days? Surely less than space science fiction, one would think, but not according to Sachs, who professes some ignorance about the specific figures. "We're still cutting and I don't know what the final budget will be. It is a lot of millions, I know that!" he said, managing to keep a straight face. "The special effects are the expensive part."

Sachs enjoys working with the effects, but expresses some frustration over the trial-and-error, time consuming nature of the business. One shot, for example, which would normally take their computerized camera six hours to shoot frame by frame, had to be done over several times for a variety of reasons. Once, right in the middle of shooting, the door to their room opened up and the janitor walked in to clean. Does this ever happen to Doug Trumbull?

GALAXINA is currently scheduled for release in August, following a revealing pictorial spread devoted to Dorothy Stratton in the July Playboy. Stratton, who had a small part in the film SKATETOWN U.S.A. and played a galactic beauty contest winner, Miss Cosmos, on TV's BUCK ROGERS, was the August 1979 Playmate of the Month and is the 1979 Playmate of the Year. With those kind of qualifications, what more can be said.

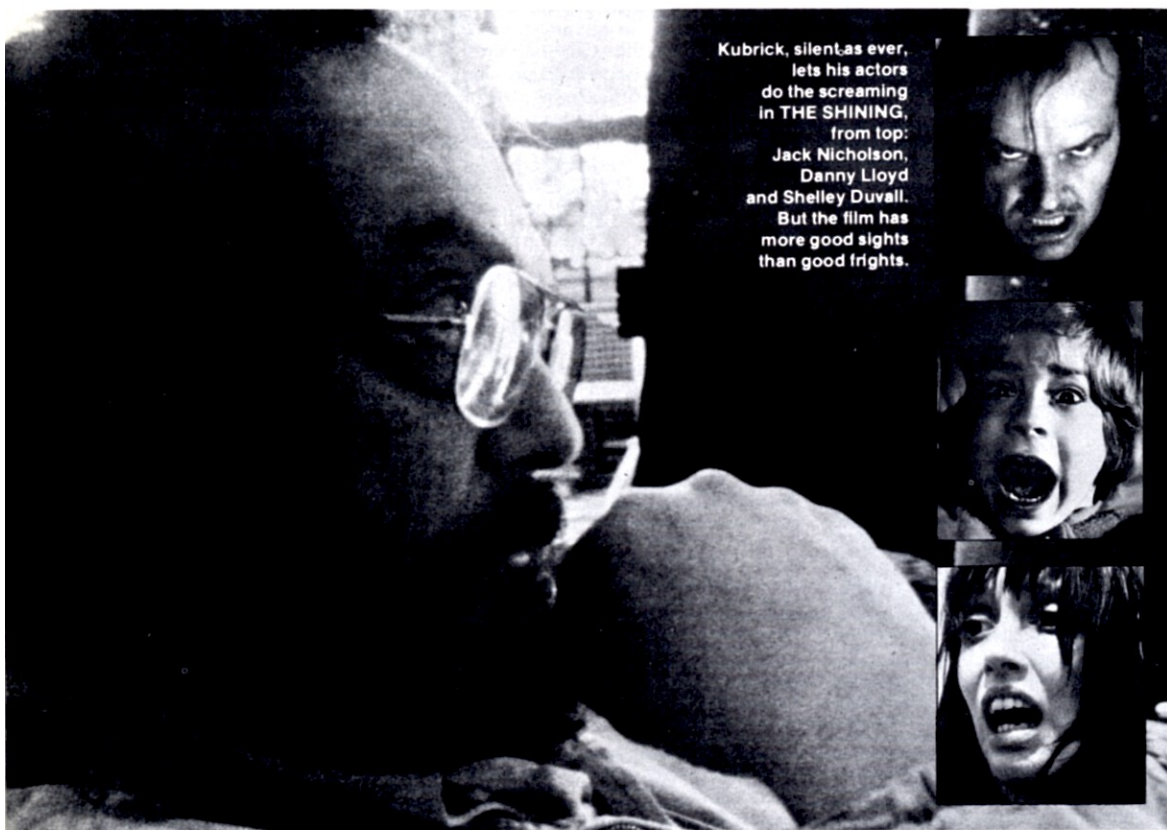
Sachs is quick to point out, however, that there is no nudity in the film, and that GALAXINA is in search of a PG-rating to capture both children and adults. Well, so much for truly organic effects. □



Left: William Sachs directs James David Hinton, Dorito's commercial spokesman Avery Schreiber, and Stephen Macht in a fight scene. Note candles and candelabra—in a space movie? Sachs is making the most out of obvious budget restrictions in trying to play the film for laughs. You may recall that he disposed of THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN, his genre film debut as director, by having its residue swept into the nearest garbage can. Right: Sachs, with midget Angelo Rossitto and giant Ronald Knight unmasked. Rossitto plays a larger version of the alien shown inset, puppet operated by Ken Meyers.



# REVIEWS



Kubrick, silent as ever, lets his actors do the screaming in *THE SHINING*. From top: Jack Nicholson, Danny Lloyd and Shelley Duvall. But the film has more good sights than good frights.

## THE SHINING “A big-budget, elaborately shot ‘Movie of the Week.’”

**THE SHINING** A Warner Bros. release, 5/80, 146 minutes. Produced and directed by Stanley Kubrick. Screenplay by Stanley Kubrick and Diane Johnson, based on the novel by Stephen King. Executive producer, Jan Harlan. Cinematographer, John Alcott. Production Design, Roy Walker. Editor, Ray Lovejoy. Assistant director, Brian Cook. Steadicam Operator, Garrett Brown. Art Direction, Les Tomkins. Makeup, Tom Smith. Costumes, Milena Canonero. Music, Bela Bartok.

Jack Torrance .....	Jack Nicholson
Wendy Torrance .....	Shelley Duvall
Danny .....	Danny Lloyd
Halloran .....	Scatman Crothers
Ullman .....	Barry Nelson
Grady .....	Philip Stone
Lloyd .....	Joe Turkel

Before *THE SHINING* was released, a film critic in a national magazine complained of its “pulp novel” origins, the implication being that no horror novel can be any good—but don’t worry—Stanley Kubrick can fix anything. What has happened is that Kubrick and co-screenwriter Diane Johnson have taken a good, reasonably complex book and turned it into a big-budget, elaborately shot *Movie of the Week*.

The success of Stephen King’s novel lies in the beautifully constructed tensions within the slowly and carefully constructed relationships of his focal characters: Jack Torrance, an alcoholic teacher; Wendy, his wife; Danny, their son;

and a sympathetic outsider, Halloran, the Negro cook who perceives Danny’s precognitive powers, the “shining.” Ultimately, the reader understands that the power of the Overlook Hotel is a power that Jack and his family are helpless against. The novel contains numerous moments of graphic horror, but its greatest impact comes from Torrance’s struggle against the evil which surrounds him. He fights until the last, but when the evil takes total control it has no time to gloat, for the untended hotel boiler reaches its limit and the Overlook is destroyed. Kubrick ignores King’s boiler metaphor, and a lot of other elements which could have made Torrance a believable and sympathetic character, and made the film as involving as it should have been.

Though Kubrick’s canon is diverse, his films generally emphasize theme over character. 2001 is the most obvious example but the same applies for his finest film, *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*. In each case, however, Kubrick’s source has been thematically very heavy, so his adaptations have been apt. King’s *THE SHINING*, despite its length, is not a highly symbolic epic suited for the broad treatment Kubrick has given it. The director has let characterization slide, throwing away dramatic possibilities and, worse, audience understanding and involvement.

Torrance wears a Stovington sweatshirt, but we are told nothing about his dismissal from the school. His desire to create a serious piece of writing is barely hinted at—all that we see are terrible, irrational temper fits at being interrupted. Kubrick works with the character’s most melodramatic aspects only, and what emerges is not a real person we can care about, but an unlikable sketch.

Likewise, the hotel itself is not sufficiently developed. The hideous ax murder of 1970 is well delineated with a series of appropriately ominous quick cuts to the little girl victims, but the rest of the hotel’s history is only vaguely alluded to. Who is the coy lady in the bathtub? What are those big books of clippings next to Jack’s typewriter—a central element in the novel—and why do they appear for just a few moments? The Overlook’s power hardly seems sufficient to affect Torrance as profoundly as it does. What is missing, then, is rationale.

Kubrick’s admirers (and I am one) will be pleased to discover his visual flair in evidence, and in this aspect *THE SHINING* is a notable achievement. His cameras pan, sweep, and glide through the sumptuous, disquieting sets. Certain moments, such as Danny’s flight through the snowy hedge maze and Torrance’s discovery of the woman in the bathtub, are stunningly good set pieces.

The opening helicopter shots of Torrance’s car as it winds up the mountain road to the hotel are at once breathtaking and ominous. And in some instances Kubrick’s originality and grasp of the inherent differences between the novelistic and film forms shine through. He wisely offers the hedge maze instead of the shrubby animals of King’s book (visualized, such creatures could have turned out to be comically benign), and invents a fine moment of horror when Wendy picks up her husband’s manuscript and finds page after page of the idiotic sentence, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” It is a brilliant moment from a brilliant auteur, and reminds us that the keenest horror is usually the most understated.

Why, then, does Kubrick allow Jack Nicholson to overact so shamelessly? Torrance capers, chuckles, pouts, drools and simpers unrelentingly. This isn’t horror, it’s a baggy-pants burlesque of it. I saw *THE SHINING* with a young, reasonably hip audience and at key moments the people laughed—I imagined the same sort of laughter going on in the cars at the nearby drive-in, where *VAMPIRE PLAYGIRLS* was showing. There is no reason to believe a homicidal maniac can’t make a fool of himself but, dramatically, such behavior is sheer death. Nicholson, once he gets going, rarely lets up, and his sweat and effort becomes meaningless. The concept of using banal dialogue (“Honey, I’m home!”) in a horrific context is fine, but its overuse turns the idea into a dumb joke. Other roles, however, are nicely underplayed, particularly Shelley Duvall’s Wendy, and this makes Nicholson’s unrestrained performance even more irritating. Tension builds well time and time again, but the inevitable payoff is slobbering and eye-rolling.

Big budget, big director, big star, big buildup: *THE SHINING* is a paradoxically prosaic exercise. After Wendy and Danny anticlimactically drive away from the Overlook and leave Jack to freeze to death, Kubrick brings up the period music and cuts to a photograph cunningly dated 1921. Standing in the center of the quaintly-dressed hotel guests is Jack Torrance. This lame device is apparently intended not only as a satisfying cap to a couple hours of motivationless carryings-on, but as an adequate explanation of the events, as well. Pretension would have been better—this is pure dopiness. If Kubrick cares to attempt horror a second time, he would be well advised to go with an original screenplay, or to at least adapt a novel sufficiently inferior so that his expansive touch makes for improvement, rather than muddled mismanagement.

David J. Hogan



## DEATH SHIP

**"A shoddy film that mistakes mild repulsiveness for genuine horror."**

**DEATH SHIP** An Avco Embassy Pictures release. 3/80. 91 minutes. Directed by Alvin Rakoff. Screenplay by John Robins. Produced by Derek Gibson and Harold Greenberg. Executive producer, Sandy Howard. Associate producer, Adrian Hughes. Director of photography, Rene Verzier. Production manager, Roger Heroux. Art directors, Chris Burke, Michel Proulx. Editor, Mike Campbell. Special effects, Mike Albrechtsen. Makeup, Joan Isaacson.

Ashland ..... George Kennedy  
Trevor Marshall ..... Richard Crenna  
Nick ..... Nick Mancuso  
Margaret Marshall ..... Sally Ann Howes  
Sylvia ..... Kate Reid  
Lori ..... Victoria Burgoyne  
Robin ..... Jennifer McKinney  
Ben ..... Danny Higham  
Jackie ..... Saul Rubinek

A festively lit ocean liner sits in the sea looking smug and overfed as Alvin Rakoff's **DEATH SHIP** bears down on her like a hungry shark. Ten minutes later all hell breaks loose as the producers squeeze every last cent's worth out of what looks like outtakes purchased from **THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE**. Tables turn, bodies tumble and engines explode, but only for a few seconds: "Bloodstar" Productions had only so much money to fork over for the obvious stock footage. All too soon the nine main credit actors are lying in a dinghy, waiting for the next disaster the story will throw at them. And it, too, is not long in coming.

**DEATH SHIP** is an hour and a half of short cuts and cut corners, of quick solutions made by fast buck artists. The cinematic short changing appears in many places, from large sized plot holes to small details in editing. The death ship is a Nazi torture chamber steaming around the Atlantic in aimless circles, emptied of passengers and crew and powered by nothing but the memory of its past. That much we're told and nothing more, as the film sets sail for the foggy bottoms of plot incoherence. It's easy to figure out what happened to the passengers, with hundreds of corpses rotting in abun-

continued on page 42

It's not certain what caused the foul stench aboard the **DEATH SHIP**, the rotting skeletons (below) or the script.



Bette Davis' makeup was the only interesting facet of **WATCHER IN THE WOODS**, Disney's dismal attempt at adult fantasy, which was released—embarrassingly for the studio—before crucial sequences involving an alien landscape were finalized.

## THE WATCHER IN THE WOODS

**"An excruciating example of the Disney Studio's severe growing pains."**

**THE WATCHER IN THE WOODS** A Walt Disney Production. 5/80. In Technicolor and Panavision. Dolby Stereo. 108 minutes. Directed by John Hough. Screenplay by Brian Clemens, Harry Spalding and Rosemary Anne Sisson, based on the novel by Florence Engel Randall. Produced by Ron Miller. Co-producer, Tom Leitch. Associate producer, Hugh Attwooll. Director of photography, Alan Hume, B.S.C. Music composed and conducted by Stanley Myers. Production designer, Elliott Scott. Art Directors, Alan Cassie and John B. Mansbridge. Editor, Geoffrey Foot, G.B.F.E. Special effects, Art Cruickshank, A.S.C., Danny Lee, John Richardson. Matte artist, David B. Mattingly. Costumes, Emma Porteous.

Mrs. Aylwood ..... Bette Davis  
Helen Curtis ..... Carroll Baker  
Paul Curtis ..... David McCallum  
Jan Curtis ..... Lynn-Holly Johnson  
Ellie Curtis ..... Kyle Richards  
John Keller ..... Ian Bannen

The Disney organization is very busy trying to grow up, and **THE WATCHER IN THE WOODS** is a particularly excruciating example of its severe growing pains. John Hough's new film is caught uncomfortably between the kiddie movie smarminess of the usual Disney film and the honest genre shocks of a supernatural thriller.

Lynn-Holly Johnson and Kyle Richards are good natured and bright eyed as only Disney moppets can be. A square-shaped and rather matronly Carroll Baker presides over these kids, and David McCallum's Dad is pleasant, even tempered and very forgettable. The perfect couple with the perfect kids—four normal people miscast in the faintly unpleasant world of a Brian Clemens ghost story. Not surprisingly, it's the angry intensity of Ian Bannen and the extravagant, witch-like lunacy of

Bette Davis' make-up jobs that puts any character zap in this otherwise wimpy movie.

The family arrives in the English countryside and rents an Old Dark House from a very mad old lady. Promptly and predictably, strange things begin to happen. A younger daughter slips into trances at the drop of a hat, and her older sister is beset by ghostly winds, smashing glass and a mysterious blindfolded girl who takes her place in the mirror. The old woman's daughter disappeared under peculiar circumstances nearly 30 years before, and she—or something else—is communicating from the dark beyond.

What's so unexpected in this shiny new movie from the sunny shores of Buena Vista is the trademark of Brian Clemens on the screenplay. The very sour sensibility of this writer is the very antithesis of the technicolor rainbows of Walt, Mickey and **FANTASIA**. A specialist at twisting predictable happy endings into equally predictable anti-climaxes, Clemens populates his screenplays with bitter people being further and more deeply embittered. Lies are always the key to a Clemens script, and it's part of the submerged ugliness in the film that the children are being deceived.

However, the spoiled innocence of Clemens is at odds with the false innocence of Disney, and so director John Hough and script doctors Harry Spalding and Rosemary Sisson busy themselves removing the sting from the screenplay. Hideous old crones are turned into ministering angels in disguise, and a heavy atmosphere of impending disaster ends in a cheery mood and happy endings for all. It's as if **THE WATCHER IN THE WOODS** could not quite forget the bright

world of Uncle Walt and enter the '80s as a full blooded horror movie.

The circumstance for the girl's disappearance is eventually revealed: an occult initiation ceremony in the abandoned ruin of an ancient church. The ritual mumbo-jumbo and the paraphernalia that surrounds it, oblique triangles repeatedly etched in glass, circles and rings overlapping like hermetic symbols, are neurotic fetishes, good luck charms against a guilty conscience. Thirty years later the girl's three surviving friends are still haunted by childish guilt, three tormented people, obvious newcomers to the wonderful world of Disney.

Also new to the studio is the embarrassing position of releasing a film which has not been completed. An entire three minute sequence featuring an alien landscape was finalized too late and it was decided that the film could open without it. It couldn't, the world premiere in New York was a disaster, and the film was quickly pulled from theaters with a new release scheduled for fall, presumably with the additional scenes included. A winged alien, looking like a large version of Harryhausen's homunculus, is introduced at the end, but the missing scene renders the story pointless.

**THE WATCHER IN THE WOODS** was shot at a place called St. Hubert's Manor in Buckinghamshire, England, a genuinely magical location the film exploits to disappointingly little effect. Dense woods with gnarled trees and twisting roots are caught by cinematographer Alan Hume in a delicate, pale green monochrome. But visual imagination in this film is in short supply, a stingy dividend thoughtlessly tossed in, and Hume's deft hand is seldom employed.

John Azzopardi



# THE EMPIRE STRIKES GOLD

George Lucas does for dry goods what Madison Avenue did for breakfast cereals.

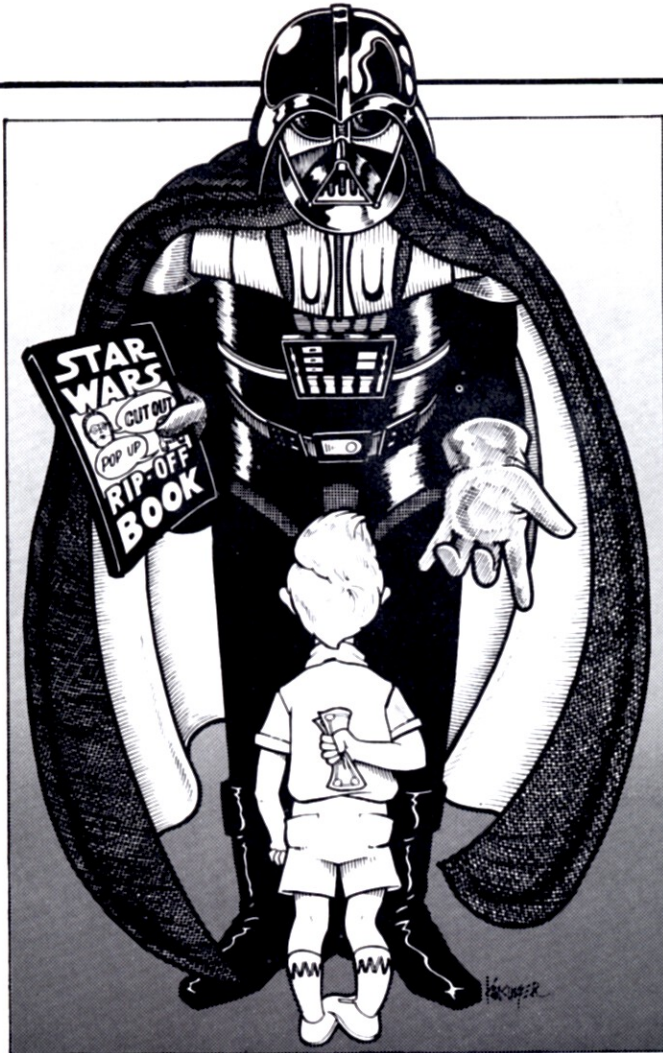
By Bill George

The time is 1980. The place: Chicago's premier department store, Marshall Field's. The occasion: a pitch for Levi Barnstormers, a line of durable children's jeans, officiated by that fastidious fashion critic, that doyen of dungarees—Darth Vader.

Wait a minute. Darth Vader? How, you may ask, does Mr. Vader—whose own wardrobe is largely basic black—qualify as the Mr. Blackwell of the Levi trade? We asked a representative of Levi Strauss in California. "Marshall Field's is using Darth Vader, not Levi Strauss," he replied. "We never made the connection." Our inquiry was then relayed to the Merchandising and Youth Forum Division of Field's, where we were told "No comment." Silence is golden, and so are the profits on STAR WARS merchandise.

How profitable? About \$300 million worth by the end of this year according to executives of Kenner Toys, which acquired the rights to the film after industry leader Mattel turned down George

Darth: the doyen of dungarees?



Lucas' ideas of R2D2 mugs and little windup robots. And that figure is just for the toys and "action figures," and doesn't include the millions of books, records, masks, t-shirts, posters, bedding, food, toothbrushes, rugs, sunglasses, calendars, models, lunchboxes, underwear and yes, R2D2 mugs, that have been snapped up by an eager public.

We asked the H. E. Harris company, manufacturers of something called, believe it or not, "The Star Wars Postage Stamp Collecting Kit," whether there wasn't some form of exploitation going on here. "We hate to use the word exploitation," said a company representative. "It has a negative connotation, like getting your hand caught in the cookie jar."

Using movies to sell toys isn't a new idea (in 1915, there were lines of Charlie Chaplin merchandise), but Lucasfilm Ltd. is the first producer to form and operate its own fan club (50,000 members at \$5 apiece) to help keep interest high and sales booming. And booming is the word. All told, STAR WARS and THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK could rack up as much as \$800 million in sales of related merchandise, a phenomenon which makes the combined spin-offs of Batman, Davy Crockett and Mickey Mouse look like small change. That's a force to be reckoned with.

So Darth Vader's appearance in an ad for Levi's should not come as any great surprise. Sellers of every conceivable product, no matter how unrelated to outer space, have jumped on the STAR WARS bandwagon, hiking prices for anything they can affix a decal to. For example, Saturday morning cartoons were repeatedly interrupted this spring by *Underoos* commercials, with BVD-clad youngsters hoofing it with Darth Vader, Boba Fett, R2D2 and C3PO, complete with the Anthony Daniels' voice-over: "Don't be silly R2, Underoos are for Earthlings." For half the price of the Underoos, a parent can buy more Fruit of the Loom, but after a dozen commercials or so, most kids insist underwear's just not underwear without Darth and Boba Fett stuck on it.

It's even hard for adults to avoid thinking, talking or buying STAR WARS at one time or another. During a week plagued by the polemics of the Vatican, the takeover of the Iranian embassy in London and the deteriorating economy, guess who made the cover of *Time* magazine May 19? None other than Darth Vader himself, boosting the popularity of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, not to mention newsstand sales. Actually, we're surprised Darth had time to pose for the cover. We figured he'd be too busy, what with plugging all that underwear.

## THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

"A lifeless copy of STAR WARS propelled chiefly on the momentum of that earlier film."

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK 20th Century Fox. 5/80. 124 minutes. In 70mm Scope. Dolby Stereo. Executive Producer, George Lucas. Directed by Irvin Kershner. Produced by Gary Kurtz. Screenplay by Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasden. Story by George Lucas. Production designer, Norman Reynolds. Director of photography, Peter Suschitzky B.S.C. Edited by Paul Hirsch. Special visual effects, Brian Johnson, Richard Edlund. Associate producers, Robert Watts, James Bloom. Music by John Williams. Design consultant and conceptual artist, Ralph McQuarrie. Art directors, Leslie Dilley, Harry Lang, Alan Tompkins. Makeup and special creature design, Stuart Freeborn.

Luke Skywalker	Mark Hamill
Han Solo	Harrison Ford
Princess Leia	Carrie Fisher
Lando Calrissian	Billy Dee Williams
See Threepio (C-3PO)	Anthony Daniels
Yoda	Frank Oz
Darth Vader	David Prowse
Chewbacca	Peter Mayhew
Artoo Detoo (R2-D2)	Kenny Baker
Ben (Obi-wan) Kenobi	Alec Guinness

It's hard to argue with success. In a summer of boxoffice doldrums that is seeing many potential hits playing to near empty auditoriums, *this film* is packing full houses. If the downturn in film business is indeed being caused by the current recession as many suspect, then audiences are getting by with less somewhere just to go out and enjoy THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. In the hardest of times people can eat less, stay at home, and wear their clothes longer, but they can't survive without a dream.

Considering the impact THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK is having, it's probably irrelevant whether it's a good film or not. With some form of merchandising, tie-in or promotion connected with the picture striking you in the face at every turn, it's difficult to perceive the movie as anything more than a two hour commercial specifically designed to sell more model kits, action figures and comic books. Before I could reach my seat, ushers had twice thrust a copy of the "official collector's edition" program book in my face, hawking it like carnival barkers. I later examined a copy and found that some 37 pages—more than half its contents—consisted of a plot synopsis, a real handy thing to have. (Incidentally, the book is published under exclusive license from Shorebrook S.A., a Swiss company, which probably indicates George Lucas is trying to shelter some of his STAR WARS lucre in a tax haven.)

But despite its pervasive impact and obvious success, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK is a lifeless copy of STAR WARS propelled chiefly on the momentum of that earlier film. Without the likes of a Peter Cushing or Alec Guinness to add some dignity and solid support, Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher and Harrison Ford flounder in roles that are certain to doom their careers regardless of the

ILLUSTRATION/CHRIS KINSINGER



series' success. Critics who labeled this film "better than STAR WARS," must have been watching the audience instead of the performance.

What's at fault is an atrocious script which marks time for most of its length, then winds up unresolved, leaving the audience dangling on a plot contrivance. I fail to see the contribution of a fine screenwriter, not to mention fine science fiction writer, like Leigh Brackett in any of it. I assume the comedy patter which passes for dialogue was the work of co-credited Lawrence Kasden. What, after all, could Brackett, or director Irvin Kershner for that matter, do with a non-story like that supplied by Lucas? When it turns out that Han Solo has flown his ship inside a slow moving space slug, and we see it narrowly escape from the jaws of what looks like a kid's hand puppet, this is surely the most ludicrous science fiction seen since the days of live television in the '50s!

In this film it's often impossible to figure out whether audience laughter is unintentional or not. And it doesn't seem to matter. Whether laughing at it or with it, people are having a good time. The fun, the generally high production values, some remarkably convincing and imaginative special effects, and most of all that momentum from STAR WARS, manage to carry the script's dead weight.

The use of stop-motion animation is a tremendous plus and provides the film its single most outstanding sequence, when Imperial walkers attack the rebel base on Hoth. The animated Tauntauns also delight and amaze audiences and further demonstrate that dimensional animation is indispensable in putting across this kind of screen fantasy. Use of the technique in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK with such outstanding results is going to prove to be a boon to the field. Surely Hollywood, if not Dino De Laurentiis, will now sit up and take notice!

Other effects are equally eye-opening. Frank Oz uses muppetry to bring Yoda to life to a degree I would not have thought possible, an achievement that bodes well for The Muppets' own fantasy themed feature THE DARK CRYSTAL. And even though it's an old cliché when Han Solo runs into the ever present asteroid field, the wonders of motion control photography can visualize the dizzying excitement as it's never been done before.

But, as in any performance, the play's the thing. And in that department THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK is not nearly so wondrous. It's at its apex when the opening reprise of John Williams' STAR WARS theme blares out over the loudspeakers, and from there it simply runs down like a big wind-up toy, in fits and starts, until it jerks to a halt. The bad pacing is the direct result of a script which at its core has no story to tell. At fault is the basic premise George Lucas devised for the sequel, to do it like a twenty-minute serial

chapter ten times over. If that's his idea of an "epic," I suggest that after all nine chapters are filmed he sit down with his wife Marcia at the editing bench and do one of those 90-minute condensations for those of us who don't want to be bored silly. An hour and a half should be more than adequate to contain his epic story once he cuts out all the pointless running around.

Although we're continually being told by studio p.r. that Lucas has a grand design for the series, I get the distinct impression that he's bluffing his way through, making it up as he goes along. The result is that what little story development we get in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK often seems at odds with what we know from the first film.

It's a fact that Lucas decided at the last minute, during filming, to kill off Ben Kenobi in STAR WARS. Maybe this was before he had his plan jotted down? In any case, it's a decision that's literally come back to haunt us, as Kenobi now pops up in the sequel at the oddest times like some spectral Greek chorus, dropping pearls of wisdom or just providing a little stage direction ("Go to Dagobah."). Somehow I found his disembodied voice in STAR WARS less troublesome. Now that I can see as well as hear him, the question of what actually happened on the Death Star, when Ben miraculously dematerialized out of his clothes, is starting to nag. Apparently he went back and picked up his duds because he's wearing them again. And you'd think Luke would do some head scratching about it too, after all, he thought Ben was dead. Now he has regular conversations with him.

I'm troubled too by the type of Emperor Lucas introduces in the sequel. I distinctly remember Governor Tarkin telling Darth in STAR WARS, "The Jedi are extinct. Their fire has gone out of the universe. You, my friend, are all that's left of their religion." So naturally, I was a bit surprised in the sequel to see the Emperor phone up Darth long distance and complain about a disturbance in the Force? If any more practitioners of this extinct religion turn up they're going to have enough to form a congregation.

The Force itself isn't quite so interesting either, now that Lucas has begun to elaborate on exactly what it is. It was a simple but intriguing idea in STAR WARS, "an energy field created by all living things that surrounds us, penetrates us, and binds the galaxy together," according to Ben. In THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK it somewhat disappointingly turns out to be just your basic telekinesis. In a conclusion best described as CARRIE meets STAR WARS, the script has Darth Vader mentally hurl all the loose furniture at Luke in order to defeat him. This is a good example of the tendency Lucas has of lifting ideas, often inappropriately, from other sources.

The big puzzle is the film's "big revelation," when Darth Vader tries

to work up some family feeling with Luke after cutting off his hand! Bad timing, to pick that particular moment to confess his little indiscretion with Luke's mother and call the boy "son." But then Darth has always shown very little tact in dealing with people.

Actually though, the script made him do it. You just need to have some kind of big pay-off for these penultimate light-sabre duels. Unfortunately, George Lucas doesn't have the heart to kill off any of his characters, so he's been forced to come up with some pretty convoluted resolutions. I suggest he just suspend dueling, before it gets too confusing. After all, the duel in STAR WARS turned Obi-wan into a ghost, and now the duel in this one turns Luke into a bastard. This latest development is getting a bit chancy on a PG-rating.

Actually though, there's probably another explanation. Could it be that Darth Vader and Mr. Skywalker are one and the same person? I suppose this is what Luke himself has in mind when he shouts his reply to Vader's revelation in the film: "That's impossible!" Sure as hell seems to be, judging from what we've seen in STAR WARS. Ben tells Luke in that film, "A young Jedi named Darth Vader, who was a pupil of mine until he turned to evil, helped the Empire hunt down and destroy the Jedi Knights. He betrayed and murdered your father." It's the scene, you'll recall, when Ben gives Luke his father's light sabre.

So, if you ask me, Luke's got to be a bastard—Vader's illegitimate son, perhaps as a result of rape? That would certainly be in character for Darth and would add a new dimension to the catch phrase "seduced by the dark side of the Force." I guess we'll just have to wait for Lucas to consult his master plan and have old Ben Kenobi's ghost explain it all in the next film. Somehow, I get the feeling watching THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, that it's not going to be a very convincing explanation.

Frederick S. Clarke

## Another Hope?

"That boy is our only hope."  
"No, there is another."

Yoda's reply to Obi-wan

Now that Lucas has started to drop clues with all the subtlety of an exploding cherry bomb, it's interesting to speculate where he's headed. The other "hope" Yoda refers to in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK may well be Princess Leia, who is probably Luke's (half-?) sister. Note how this blood tie neatly clears the way for the consummation of her romance with Han Solo.

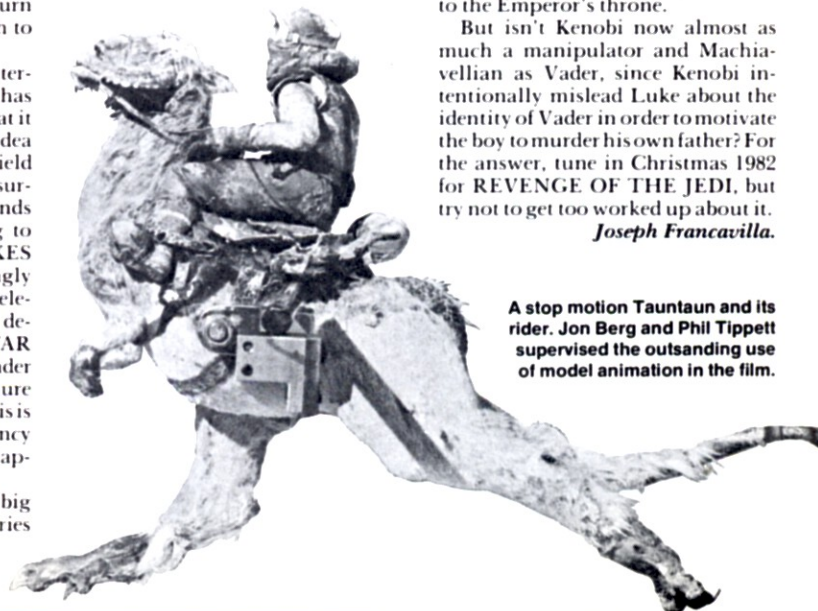
Consider the following scenario: Vader's son and daughter are separated from him during the Clone Wars and entrusted to Kenobi's care. After Vader is swayed by the Dark Side and is defeated by Kenobi, Ben brings the daughter to the royal family on Alderaan for adoption and lets Luke's uncle and aunt care for the son on Tatooine, where Ben watches over him until he can become a Jedi. Leia is roughly the same age and stature as Luke, and visual clues of her sisterly affection for him have already been planted.

In Lucas' novelization of STAR WARS, Ben says that Luke has inherited his father's special traits. If the potential to use the Force is inherited, then Leia shows this inheritance when Luke establishes telepathic contact with her at the end of the sequel. No other character who is not a Jedi can perform this type of communication. And when Kenobi feels a disturbance in the Force during the destruction of Alderaan in the first film, he is most likely receiving involuntary telepathic transmissions of Leia's strong, empathic feelings.

Lucas has admitted he steeped himself in fairy tales and mythology while writing STAR WARS, and the Greco-Roman myths often focus on violent family conflicts. Darth Vader's name is a cross between the symbols "dark" and "death," and the German word *vater*, meaning father. Luke's mother will most likely turn out to be of royal blood, making it her son's destiny to ascend to the Emperor's throne.

But isn't Kenobi now almost as much a manipulator and Machiavellian as Vader, since Kenobi intentionally mislead Luke about the identity of Vader in order to motivate the boy to murder his own father? For the answer, tune in Christmas 1982 for REVENGE OF THE JEDI, but try not to get too worked up about it.

Joseph Francavilla.



A stop motion Tauntaun and its rider. Jon Berg and Phil Tippett supervised the outstanding use of model animation in the film.



## FRIDAY THE 13TH

"As disorganized as a film can be; more the end product of steady shooting than involved construction."

FRIDAY THE 13TH A Paramount Pictures release. 5/80. 93 minutes. In Panavision. Produced and Directed by Sean S. Cunningham. Written by Victor Miller. Associate producer, Stephen Miner. Director of photography, Barry Abrams. Music by Harry Manfredini. Art director, Virginia Field. Special makeup effects, Tom Savini.

Mrs. Voorhees ..... Betsy Palmer  
 Alice ..... Adrienne King  
 Bill ..... Harry Crosby  
 Brenda ..... Laurie Bartram  
 Ned ..... Mark Nelson  
 Marcie ..... Jeannine Taylor  
 Annie ..... Robbi Morgan  
 Jack ..... Kevin Bacon

After a brief lakeside hootenanny set in 1958 which ends in gruesomeness *coitus interruptus*, FRIDAY THE 13TH accelerates into modern day. Friday, June 13, to be exact, when eight young people converge on the scene of the 22 year old murder, Camp Crystal Lake, to reopen its facilities and lay public superstition to rest. The bloody story that follows is uninteresting enough to make one wonder, among other things, why FRIDAY THE 13TH was released in May (just one month short of an actual Friday, June 13th), and why Paramount, supposedly a reputable distributor, should have released it at all when there are so many *unconscionable* grindhouses around.

What we are given in Sean S. Cunningham's new film are enough tried-'n-true horror movie situations that horror should, or so the director believes, naturally germinate—like roses from miracle manure. We have the cursed camp resort. We have the local villagers who fall dumb at the mere mention of the place. We have the demented drunk who wags his finger as he chants to the doomed, "Yooooou are all doooooomed!" And then we have the stereotypical macho, sensitive and sexy teenage counselors who have taken it upon themselves to renovate this creaky oasis. They, in turn, are given a "revenge-crazed maniac" and every

possible turn of bad luck—the failed power generator, the cut telephone cord, the car that runs out of gas, etc. All this during (what else?) the worst thunderstorm Camp Crystal Lake has seen in years.

Though Paramount has touted FRIDAY THE 13TH as the work of "The Maker of LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT," it is hardly the work of that film's director Wes Craven, who, while being far from an important director, at least makes films that are marked by honest and personal impulses. Cunningham, who produced LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT (a wobbly concoction that tried juggling hick horror and hick humor, a formula that made it the Gideon's Bible of Midwestern drive-ins), has made a few miserable attempts to establish a directing career since that film's release in 1972. His first, SCUM OF THE EARTH (1976)—quickly retitled POOR WHITE TRASH, PART TWO to avoid the obvious jokes—was given a grim ad campaign and scored a minor success. Since then, he has made two juvenile pictures in the "Bad News Bears" mold, HERE COME THE TIGERS (1978) and KICK (1979), a kind of "Bad News Bears Go Soccer" which was never actually released. While crude fast-buck attitudes may serve Cunningham well in the kiddie arena, it cannot orchestrate any command of pyrotechnics in the horror genre.

FRIDAY THE 13TH is as disorganized as a film can be, more the end product of steady shooting than involved, dedicated construction. The film has more to do with the films of Carpenter, Romero, and DePalma than with Cunningham's own ideas, and has the pallid look and stale smell of a property that meant less to its maker than those films he was seeing during and prior to production.

The film places heavy emphasis on visual gore and *because* of this is not psychologically overbearing. Make-up artist Tom Savini, harnessed here in an R rating that forbids his being too repulsive with his effects, runs somewhat less rampantly through Camp Crystal Lake

than he did through Romero's DAWN OF THE DEAD. But in FRIDAY THE 13TH, his work is so frequently overapplied (one poor guy is found nailed to a cabin door with arrows poking out of his eye, heart and groin, and his throat slashed) that the effect is embarrassingly cosmetic, and Barry Abrams' lingering camera doesn't help.

Given the overall impotence of Victor Miller's screenplay and the general fatuousness of its characters, the film's success depends almost wholly on the taut execution of the makeup sequences. But judging from the miscalculations we have here, Cunningham either did not realize... or knew *too* well. Hiring Savini is one thing, but Cunningham apes Romero, Carpenter and DePalma (*themselves* imitators of others) right into the ground. Just as he misinterprets Romero's success in thinking that "the blood is the life," Cunningham similarly misemploys certain signatures of Carpenter's HALLOWEEN: the prowling camera which may or may not be subjective; the victims that hide in the most preposterous, dangerous places; the killer who operates without governing laws of existence, though only at first, raising up every time we think it's just been killed; and, lastly, a framework that depends more on the blurt of surprise than on the building of suspense. Cunningham also falls back on DePalma's CARRIE, the film that proved that, if an audience can be deceived into sitting a film out, one good scare is all that a film (read: boxoffice smash) ever needs. But it isn't enough for Cunningham to steal the essence of CARRIE's last laugh—in a desperate attempt to impose his own clouded thumbprint on the proceedings, he rides his film past this pointless ripple until it is all but forgotten and new depths of redundancy have been mined.

But this mostly bad film isn't all bad. There are two memorable instances of startling visual beauty (the killer's tainted recollection of a child's drowning at the camp in 1958, and a nice shot on Saturday the 14th, with the evening's sole survivor floating aimlessly but alive through a patch of pink and green foliage in a canoe), but cinematographer Abrams' bag of tricks relies perhaps too readily on stock television nonsense. The music of Harry Manfredini is perhaps a microcosm of Cunningham's stylistic larceny, lifting themes from Herrmann and Williams unashamedly, while throwing in occasional whiffs of Carpenter's electronic music.

From the strip Monopoly Game in which no one strips past a teasing layer of underclothes, to the cop-out identity and *raison d'être* of the killer, FRIDAY THE 13TH is no more than hack work (no pun intended) dished up by someone with more business connections than actual ideas up his sleeve. *Caveat emptor*: there's more ham this time than cunning.

Tim Lucas

## DEATH SHIP

continued from page 39

dance, but one wonders what happened to the crew. Dozens of frozen sailors are found hanging in a meat locker, but we're never told who they were or how they got there. Are they the crew? I'm not sure. But it seems Alvin Rakoff isn't sure either.

To be fair, this may not have been the director's fault, nor that of his numerous writers, John Robins, Jack Hill and David P. Lewis. Horror movies at the nickel and dime level of "Bloodstar" are all too susceptible to post-production "improvement," cosmetic surgery performed by blindfolded editors who hack out necessary exposition to keep the shock scenes moving in a continuous bloody flow, making a clear plot line become the movie's first victim. In at least one scene in DEATH SHIP the gory suture marks show through the re-editing, leaving no doubt that someone has been performing cruel experiments on the body of the film. Two men, driven berserk by the ship's horrors, are trapped inside the ship's screening room during the night as an inexplicable noise splits their ear drums. With equally inexplicable suddenness night turns instantly into day, and sense into nonsense. A manic Nick Mancuso is taking a swing at mad Captain George Kennedy, and more horrors ensue, followed by yet another inexplicable cut. Now a righteous Richard Crenna is berating the mad Kennedy as the filmmakers bring back their piercing whistle, sticking it in everybody's ear. Three separate sequences have been garbled, reduced and reshuffled into one long, loud and meaningless scene, in order to keep the movie moving mindlessly forward, like a producer lurching toward a cash register. And what difference does it make, the producers will ask? It's only a movie.

This is not to say that the uncensored works of Rakoff are sacred texts made by a great master. DEATH SHIP is a shoddy film that mistakes mild repulsiveness for genuine horror, a twinge of disgust for the grimace of fear. Rotting cadavers constantly show up with boring frequency, and as two castaways desperately clamor up the side of the hull, the ship's drain spits a shit-like ooze over them. Excrement is the reigning metaphor of DEATH SHIP, an excellent one that did honors for Martin Luther, Dean Swift and even William Burroughs. It does nothing for Mr. Rakoff.

George Kennedy, a good natured expert at gentle giants and hard nosed blue collar types, is absurdly miscast here as a goose stepping martinet. He seems such a nice man that he's barely credible even when he's trying to scare kids. One wonders why they wanted Kennedy, but one doesn't have to wonder long. They didn't want him, they wanted his Oscar winning name. And unfortunately for Kennedy, they got it.

John Azzopardi

To end FRIDAY THE 13TH, director Sean Cunningham lifted directly from Brian De Palma's CARRIE; the long-dead camper surfaces to take his final revenge.





# SHORT NOTICES

## DRESSED TO KILL

Directed by Brian De Palma. Filmways. 8/80. 105 minutes. Color. With: Michael Caine, Angie Dickinson, Nancy Allen, Keith Gordon, Dennis Franz, David Margulies

De Palma performs the unique public service of revitalizing PSYCHO for the generation that met it first on television—years after legend and notoriety had made the surprises of the Bates Motel feel like predictable courses of action. In this uneven, often irritating, film, De Palma shows signs of finally walking out from under Hitchcock's wing, only to tuck himself neatly but resolutely underneath it again. Still, there is evidence of a weaning, of a potentially great filmmaker one step nearer his potential. **Tim Lucas**

## THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Directed by Don Taylor. United Artists. 8/80. 105 minutes. Color. With: Kirk Douglas, Martin Sheen, Katherine Ross, James Farentino, Ron O'Neil and Charles Durning.

The idea of a nuclear aircraft carrier entering a time warp to find itself hours before the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 is a good one, but this movie is so flatly executed, so trivial in its logic and so banal with its twist ending that it's doubtful whether 1980 will see a more pointless film. Director Don Taylor tries to make up in hardware what he lacks in other departments but succeeds only in making the most expensive U.S. Navy recruitment commercial ever. **Alan Jones**

## THE GOLD BUG

Directed by Robert Fuest. ABC-TV. 2/80. 50 minutes. Color. With: Roberts Blossom, Geoffrey Holder, Anthony Michael Hall, Robert Moberly, Sudie Bond, Ann Haney.

Robert Fuest's telling of this classic pirate fantasy is perhaps the most vital addition to the Poe filmography since Fellini's TOBY DAMMIT (1969). Fuest obviously worked hard against a small budget to convey not only period atmosphere but a fine sense of wonder in this tale of a living gold scarab that leads a group of adventurers to the buried treasure of Captain Kidd. But ABC succeeded in scuttling whatever impact it might have had by running it in two half-hour installments a week apart! **Tim Lucas**

## HUMANIDS FROM THE DEEP

Directed by Barbara Peeters. New World Pictures. 5/80. 80 minutes. Color. With: Doug McClure, Ann Turkel, Vic Morrow, Cindy Weintraub, Anthony Penya, Denise Galik.

A schizoid mixture of '50s sf, soft-core porn and mad rape fantasy, as hopped-up DNA spawns a colony of homicidal humanoids with libidos as overdeveloped as their rubbery arms. To show us they're not exploiting women, the filmmakers throw in Ann Turkel as a liberated female scientist who talks tough and looks



HUMANIDS FROM THE DEEP

THE ISLAND

ZOMBIE

like she's stepped off the cover of *Vogue*. Rob Bottin's creatures and gore effects are well-conceived, but the film's conclusion is a shameless rip-off of ALIEN's chest-burster. **David J. Hogan**

## THE ISLAND

Directed by Michael Ritchie. Universal. 6/80. 114 minutes. Color. With: Michael Caine, David Warner, Angela Punch McGregor, Don Henderson, Frank Middlemass, Dudley Sutton.

All those mysterious disappearances (610 boats, 2000 people) in the Bermuda Triangle have been due to a lusty, bloodthirsty band of 17th century pirates, untouched by time? Director Michael Ritchie manages to drag us, screaming along the way, into believing what upon later reflection is pure nonsense. It's designed solely as a popcorn muncher, and as such it's extremely enjoyable. **David Bartholomew**

## THE PLUMBER

Directed by Peter Weir. Australia. 2/80 (© 1978). Screened at Filmex. 76 minutes. color. With: Judy Morris, Ivar Kants, Robert Coleby.

Though uninvited, the Plumber turns up to fix the bathroom pipes of a university medical researcher and his wife. The unnecessary job drags on and on, turning their bathroom into a nightmare maze of makeshift piping and making the wife feel personally threatened. Is this brash, dis-

turbing young man an ex-convict, a prankster, a borderline psycho—or perhaps some combination of the three? Peter Weir (of LAST WAVE fame) made this strange, dark comedy for Australian TV, milking the sinister in "ordinary" events and getting in some comment on the precariousness of modern life. Still, this is more a well-developed anecdote than a story. **Jordan R. Fox**

## THE SPACE MOVIE

Directed by Tony Palmer. Virgin Films Ltd. 2/80. 80 minutes. In color and Dolby stereo.

This British company, a subsidiary of Virgin Records, has unearthed previously unseen footage from NASA vaults and the National Archives and fashioned it into a documentary with minimal narration and a wealth of cuts from the Mike Oldfield discography. The results range from draggy and repetitive to a truly stunning, sometimes stirring sense of wonder. Some of the cuts actually look unconvincing, like effects work gone weirdly awry; but a lot of it is beautiful and breathtaking, at once quite different and better than what Hollywood has managed to do. Though a part of our past, the film celebrates and reminds us of the proudest moment in human history, and shines a tentative beacon of hope from the midst of our contemporary despair. **Jordan R. Fox**

## THE VISITOR

Directed by Michael J. Paradise. International Picture Show Company. 3/80. 90 minutes. Color. With: Mel Ferrer, Glenn Ford, Lance Henriksen, John Huston, Joanne Nail, Sam Peckinpah.

If you value horrendous movies, see this. It not only draws heavily on Hitchcock, it commingles incongruous elements from almost every successful science fiction, horror and occult movie made in the past 20 years. The end product is an absolute triumph of incoherence, artlessness and bad taste. It's produced and co-written by Ovido Assonitis, who directed BEYOND THE DOOR and TENTACLES. Stanley Kubrick once remarked that much can be learned about film by studying terrible movies. Assonitis offers up an encyclopedic amount of information here. **Dale Luciano**

## WHEN THE SCREAMING STOPS

Directed by Amando de Ossorio. Independent Artists. 6/80 (© 1974). 94 minutes. With: Tony Kendall, Helga Line, Silvia Tortosa.

The legend of the Lorelei, mermaid-like sirens supposed to inhabit the Rhine, is updated with a dash of mad labs science fiction and gory low-budget Spanish horror. The legend gets maimed in the process. Here, there is but one Lorelei, a stunning beauty that somewhat laughably turns into a scaly reptilian creature during the full moon and proceeds to rip out the hearts of local villagers. This bit of open heart surgery by talon and claw, inflicted chiefly on naked women, is shown repeatedly in gruesome detail. The creature is dispatched to Valhalla by a hero wielding a fragment of the sword of Siegfried, given to him by the town's nutty professor. Filmed as LAS GARRAS DE LORELEI (The Lorelei's Grasp), the film exhibits not even basic competence let alone the stylishness seen in director Ossorio's early tetralogy devoted to "The Blind Dead." **Frederick S. Clarke**

## ZOMBIE

Directed by Lucio Fulci. Jerry Gross Organization. 7/80 (© 1979). 99 minutes. Color. With: Tisa Farrow, Ian McCulloch, Richard Johnson, Olga Karlatos, Al Cliver.

Originally titled ZOMBI 2, this Italian import is a followup of sorts to Romero's DAWN OF THE DEAD (released as ZOMBI in Italy), though there is no real connection. To explain its invasion of living dead, it falls back on tradition and points to voodoo as the key. The expected graphic violence, a veritable orgy of cannibalistic dismemberment, makes Romero's use of gore effects look restrained. For laughs, the director throws in an underwater sequence that turns the tables on JAWS. Is this then the *ne plus ultra* of gore? No, ZOMBI 3 is already in the can. **Frederic Albert Levy**





# THE MONSTER CLUB

*A musical about things that go bump (and grind) in the night*

By Mike Childs & Alan Jones

*I was necking with my ghoul friend when she just snapped out the light saying "Fangs for the memory" as she took a bigger bite (Chomp!) Then there's blood (Blood!) Welcome to The Monster Club.*

With these lyrics, the curtains will close on Milton Subotsky's fortieth film, **THE MONSTER CLUB**, a musical comedy horror film based on the stories of British author R. Chetwynd-Hayes. Budgeted at \$1.7 million, the ITC production, shot in 24 days this spring at England's Elstree Studios, is scheduled for a spring 1981 release. Directed by veteran Roy Ward Baker after a six year absence from the screen doing television films and industrial shows (his last credit was **SEVEN BROTHERS MEET DRACULA**, a.k.a. **LEGEND OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN VAMPIRES**), the film brings together—in some cases for the first time—many of the genre's best loved stars.

"My original idea with this picture," said Subotsky, "was to put the top six horror names in it: Vincent Price, Donald Pleasance, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, John Carradine and Klaus Kinski. I wanted the ultimate horror film."

But Kinski wanted too much money, Lee wasn't interested and Cushing turned down several of the film's choice roles. "Cushing said he didn't like the subject matter," said Subotsky. "Perhaps he thought it was going to be gruesome and disgusting. I told him it was a joke and supposed to be funny."

The music and the comedy largely take place at The Monster Club itself, an eerie nightclub of sorts catering to the fang, cape and claw set. Eramus, a vampire (Vincent Price), has invited author Chetwynd-Hayes (John Carradine) to the club after snacking on his neck in a nearby alley. Between the pop music and the nightclub acts (including a stripper who removes her skin as well as her clothes), Eramus tells three tales. That's where the horror comes in.

"What intrigued me about the book was the novelty of the idea, that Chetwynd-Hayes was creating new

monsters," said Subotsky, who took three options on the manuscript before finding production funds. "The title was very commercial and I liked the ending where man is shown to be the worst monster of all.

"It's a brand new type of picture," Subotsky boasted. "I can't think of anything like it apart from **THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW**." Edward Abraham, who wrote the script with his wife Valerie, was due to make his directorial debut on the film. But Subotsky had to forgo his penchant for developing new talent when he was forced to cut the budget to satisfy ITC. "When I found I only had a 24-day schedule," explained Subotsky, "I knew I needed an experienced director like Roy Ward Baker."

Joining Price and Carradine in the film are Donald Pleasance, Britt Ekland, Simon Ward, Stuart Whitman and Barbara Kellerman. The crew includes cinematographer Peter Jessop, art director Tony Curtis (a long-time Subotsky associate) and makeup artist Roy Ashton, a veteran of Hammer, Amicus and Tyburn films. Ashton's work was simplified by outfitting most of the monsters in masks and filming them in long shots. But he was called upon to melt Barbara Kellerman after she suffers the wrath of a Shadmoock's piercing whistle.

This isn't the first time Chetwynd-Hayes's stories have been brought to the screen. Four stories from *The Unbidden* were used by director Kevin Connor in **FROM BEYOND**

**THE GRAVE** (1973), an Amicus film and also a Subotsky production.

"I think *The Monster Club* is the best thing I've ever written," said Chetwynd-Hayes, who sent galley proofs of the book to Subotsky. "I knew one day he'd make it and from what I've seen of the rushes, I really believe that Milton has an enormous hit on his hands. The originality of the idea and the pop music are merging together really well. In fact, Milton has already mentioned the possibility of a sequel."

**THE MONSTER CLUB** marks the first time Vincent Price and John Carradine have worked together in a horror film. The masters spent about a week on the production, doing most of their scenes in Tony Curtis' lavish nightclub set.

"I haven't been offered a script as good as this for years," said Price, who once played a fang-less vampire on the TV series, **F TROOP**. "It's neat, precise, very funny and it's got music. What else does it need?"

"I'm offered countless scripts, of course, which I've turned down because in trying to be modern, they became pornographic and had a lot of dirty language," said Price. "I won't do smut because a lot of people are offended by it and the ideal audience for these films is children. There is no graphic blood and gore in this at all. In fact, it's quite moral, or to quote a line from the film, 'No nudity, no sex...a little violence perhaps.'"

Without mentioning them by name, Price took a swipe at Kinski,

Lee and Cushing, as well as other actors who have tried to leave their genre roots behind.

"Other actors seemed to have turned their backs on these sort of films," Price said. "It's very silly to turn your back on something that has made you extremely successful. It would be like if John Wayne had said he'd never play another cowboy. For heaven's sake, they aren't all the same part! They are different characters, and as often as not, the films aren't even horror stories, they're Gothic tales!"

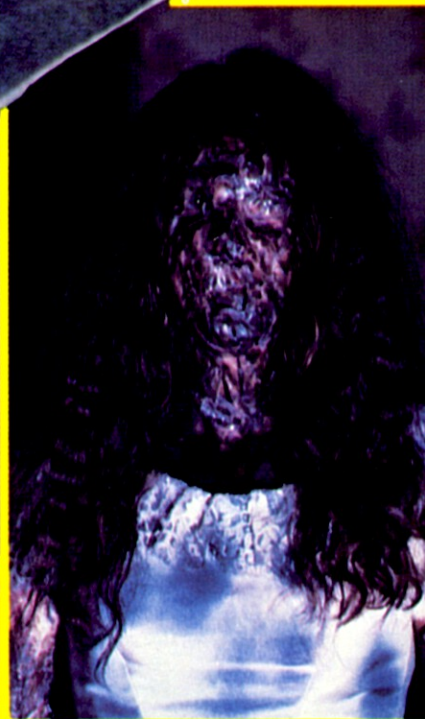
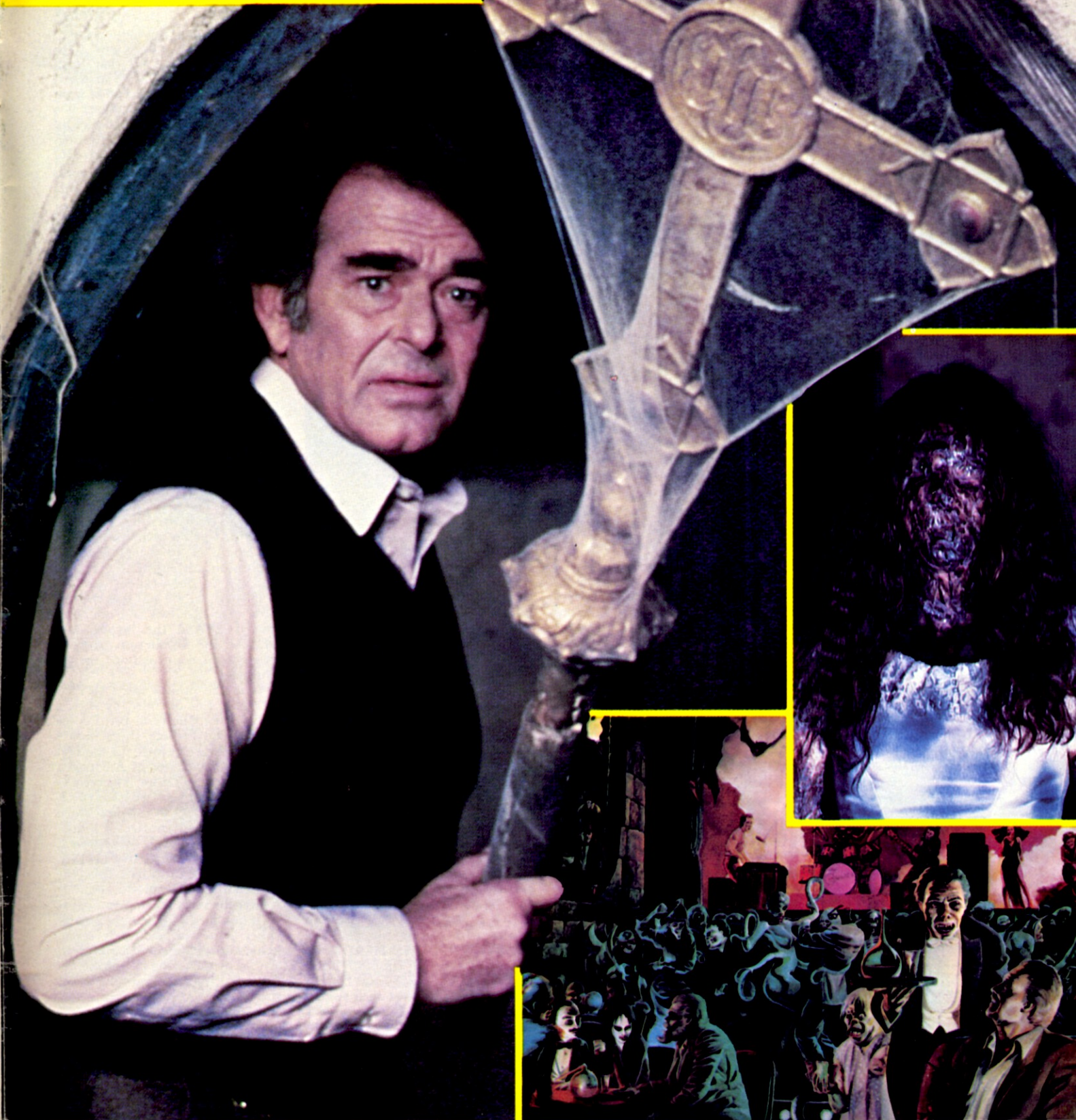
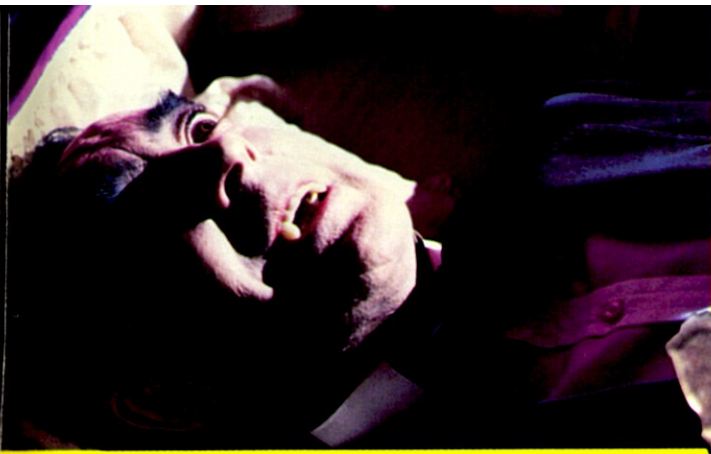
The music for **THE MONSTER CLUB** was coordinated by Graham Walker, in charge of ITC's internal music company. "As I talked with Walker," Subotsky said, "I saw more and more places in the picture where I could use music. I found places for four songs, one at the beginning and end and between each story."

Musical groups in the picture will perform their own material, with such inspired titles as "Monsters Rule O.K." by the Viewers, "I'm Just a Sucker for Your Love" by B. A. Robertson, "The Stripper" by Knight and "The Monster Club" by The Pretty Things. The score for the horror tales is being filled with classical music as well as pieces by classical guitarist John Williams and his group, Sky. "There will definitely be a soundtrack album released," said Subotsky. "I think there will be other tie-ins like masks and a game," he added, delighted with the possibilities. "I've never had a film this prone to merchandising before!" □



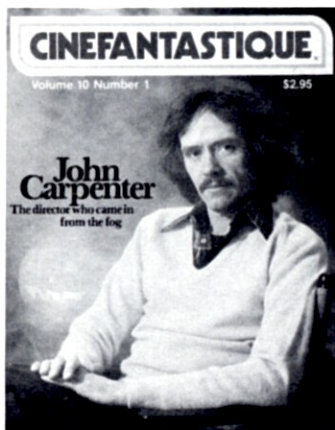
Left: Vampire Vincent Price explains the genealogy of monsters to John Carradine, playing author R. Chetwynd-Hayes. Above: One of the club's many diversions, preproduction art by John Bolton. Right: Stuart Whitman uses the cross to ward off ghouls in a deserted churchyard in the second tale, about an encounter with a Humgo. Inset top: Richard Johnson in the third and last story, about a vampire raising a family. Inset right: Barbara Kellerman begins to melt after hearing the whistle of a Shadmoock in the anthology's first tale. Inset bottom: Bolton's concept of the club interior, the cover of a limited edition comic book given away to film executives at the Cannes Film Festival.







# LETTERS



## ROSEBUD WAS A SLED

How dare you give away so many of the exciting surprises of movie plot in your pre-review of **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK** (10:1:39). If I hadn't seen the movie opening night it would have been absolutely ruined for me. I just barely managed to see it before I got to your article. Even so, I was thoroughly disgusted. The thought of how close I came to accidentally having the movie I eagerly waited three years for ruined at the last moment makes me shudder. At least *Newsweek* and *Time* in their blundering giveaways didn't blow it completely by revealing the single most important shocker in the whole movie.

Sherry L. Katz  
Highland Park, Illinois

In the article dealing with **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK** (10:1:39) we question your journalistic methods in making public certain key points of the film. If we wanted to read everything that happened in the film before we saw it, we would have purchased the book. You have a certain responsibility to your readers to show a little discretion in what you choose to reveal. Had we not seen the film before reading the article, we would have been even more outraged than we already are. If you remove the mystery from a film, you detract from the film.

Bernie Ciarlo  
Warren Sorich  
Rick Lasher  
North Hollywood, California

Why all this negativism toward the greatest gift to *cinefantastique* and "sense of wonder" (or whatever you want to call "leaving the theatre smiling")? **STAR WARS** and now **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**, as you've pointed out *ad nauseum*, have their deficiencies as stories, but visually and energetically they are just as *wonder-full* as anything in cinema history.

Just look at the audiences' sparkling eyes and smiles the next time you see **SW** or **TESB**. Lucas is the

inheritor of Disney's role as filmmaker of the fabulous—mixing humor and warmth with the best in visual splendor—an important role in these callous times.

In addition to a general condescension and cynicism toward the film, you unscrupulously reveal what is becoming known as the greatest surprise in a film since **CITIZEN KANE** and "Rosebud." I hope you discontinue your personal vendetta against George Lucas and the **STAR WARS** epic. You're only serving to alienate your readership. Condescension, vindictiveness, poor judgement, a film-lover craves not these things, especially when there are far less original, far less intellectual, far less "wonder-filled" movies out there to criticize than **STAR WARS**.

David Bonner  
Staten Island, New York

## DO MARTIANS JOG?

The dissection you did on the televised version of **THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES** was certainly thorough (10:1:19). But was it really necessary to go into such detail? To appreciate the taste and intelligence with which the Ray Bradbury classic was handled, one has only to recall the scene where the Second Expedition arrived on Mars. When the Earthmen took their first historic steps on a new world, they were wearing jogging shoes.

Christopher Martin  
St Clair Shores, Michigan

## ET TU, CFQ?

Don't you think it's about time to call a halt to your stomping on Dan O'Bannon? It's starting to take on elements of persecution, and looks very obvious from here. In your interview with Carpenter (10:1:5), he goes to great pains to praise Dan and his abilities. Yet the only quote you extract and put in a box is the single negative thing Carpenter had to say about Dan. Why didn't you use quotes like "There's not a doubt in my mind that he's a genius in certain areas of drama and screenwriting."? Or "He is truly one of the best editors I've ever worked with"? Or the quotes on page nine, where he takes CFQ to task for its blatantly obvious hatchet job on O'Bannon in the **ALIEN** issue? It seems, just from reading the issues, that what you have against O'Bannon is that he didn't consent to be interviewed by you. It's obvious you don't take refusals lightly.

**CINEFANTASTIQUE**, is and always has been a good magazine, but lately you seem to be indulging in pointless muckraking. Reporting and muckraking aren't the same thing, honest. This vendetta against O'Bannon is begun to be noticed by

the damnedest people, and it is (from what I can tell) beginning to damage the reputation that CFQ has been slowly building.

Bill Warren  
Hollywood, California

*You're right, Bill, there is a difference between muckraking and journalism. But we're not out for O'Bannon's head. The point we were making in our ALIEN issue (which was what Carpenter was referring to) was that O'Bannon was no more deserving of sole screenplay credit than were Hill and Giler. As to our choice of quotes to highlight, it's pretty simple. When dog bites man no one cares, but when man bites dog, that's news. And printing Carpenter's surprise that O'Bannon took so much from DARK STAR, instead of a bland pat on the back, is just good journalism.*



Director John Landis in **SCHLOCK!** Rick Baker, then only 21, built the suit.

## SORRY, BUT THEY ALL LOOK ALIKE TO US...

I very much appreciate being included in the review of "Beauty and the Beasts" (10:1:27). However, I would like to make one small correction. Schlock was played by me and not Rick Baker. Rick, as you know, was the star in Dino De Laurentiis' **KING KONG**. He was also the gorilla with two heads in **THE THING WITH TWO HEADS**, the destructive gorilla Dino in **THE KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE** and he has just performed in the most sophisticated suit he has ever built as the gorilla Sidney in **THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN** with Lily Tomlin. I am also delighted to

announce here for the first time that Rick Baker will be in charge of all the extremely elaborate makeup special effects for my next film, **AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON**, which I am shooting in January, 1981 in England.

I don't wish to appear nit-picking, but wearing that God-damned suit in 115 degree weather in Agoura, California and having all that foam rubber glued on my face is an experience I won't soon forget and I want some credit for it. Rick Baker is a brilliant artist not only in the field of makeup, but also as a performer. Confusing us does neither one credit.

John Landis  
Universal City, California

*Sorry about that John, but we goofed twice with Rick Baker last issue. Not only did we confuse your roles in **SCHLOCK!**, but we didn't completely mention his contribution to the construction of the ape suit from **TANYA'S ISLAND** (10:1:25). Baker not only designed the suit and mask, but also the complex double-hinged jaw mechanism that gives the costume its remarkably realistic quality.*

## LESS SEX, MORE TEXT

Sure, CFQ was a bit stuffy and cramped, but why this sudden vulgar layout with its outlined and tilted photos? Why this desire to be indistinguishable from *Starlog* or *Fantastic Films*? The new format may be "easier to read" for some, but that's no virtue when it involves reducing the length of an issue's text. My impression was less of an easy read than of a fast one—expensively fast. In fairness, let me add that the features were excellent and the cover attractive. And the layout does improve the distinction between reviews and continuations on the same page.

As to the pinups for **TANYA'S ISLAND**, I'm offended by such a waste of expensive-to-print color pages. Those three shots hardly deserved to be printed in the first place, probably not as full pages, absolutely not in color. You seem to have a strange idea of what your readers look to CFQ to provide. Much better to have given over the luxury of color to illustrating the reviews of **BRAVE NEW WORLD** or **LATHE OF HEAVEN**, or to have filled the pages with additional features.

Over the years the impression has built up that CFQ is run by and for rather repressed, definitely sexist, teenage boys. One could parody your reviews by including in each one the aside that the film was only worth watching when the leading actress took off her clothes. Although I think Preston Jones misunderstood the sarcasm of Steve Dimeo's remark, his letter last issue about sexist



## LETTERS

reviews points out a failing in CFQ that is both real and unpleasant.

David Balsom  
West Lynn, Oregon

### DOUBLE ISSUE DEBATE

I disagree with anti-double issue feelings of John Thonen and Ted DiPaolo (10:1:46). Your double issues are spectacular! You include photos and information unavailable elsewhere. **THE BLACK HOLE** was a failure, yet you showed me the amount of work that went into it, and I was very interested in the interviews. I hope you will continue to present the story behind film magic.

Gregory Dritschler  
Hauppauge, New York

For some time now I've been following the discussion in the letter column of CINEFANTASTIQUE regarding your policy of devoting two issues to the biggest of the big-budget sf movies. Admittedly, there are some valid points to be made, but I find myself in favor of the double issues. *Starlog* magazine is just a showcase for studio PR. I've never seen them give an sf film a negative review (they even did a glowing feature on Roger Corman's films) and the articles are uniformly short, superficial and sugary. I find CINEFANTASTIQUE's articles, on the other hand, to be very well researched, full of informative and fascinating detail, demanding in their critical standards, excellently supplemented by photographs and very well written. Definitely not the product of some studio PR flack. And, while I often disagree with the reviewers, at least I'm given the reviewer's reasons for forming his particular opinion. I have yet to have my intelligence insulted, and I'm looking forward to your double issue on **STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE**, even though I fully agree with your reviewer's largely negative review.

J. Owen Hanner  
Libertyville, Illinois

*We feel our double issues offer the most comprehensive coverage possible, allowing us to run more text, photos and color material. There's just not enough room in a average issue to properly cover productions like STAR TREK (we'll be publishing our double issue devoted to that film in December). While we do occasionally find fault with the films we devote such extensive coverage to, we can still admire—and write about—the talented artists, technicians and engineers who display their creativity and ingenuity on the screen.*

### AND IN THIS CORNER...

Your report in Volume 10 No. 1 regarding the **PHOBIA** title problem, is only two-thirds complete. There's a *third PHOBIA*, in the works by the Canadian consortium TOFCO. And this third one precedes the other two. I know, because I wrote what I like to think is the original **PHOBIA**. Mine deals with the

life—not necessarily the works—of Edgar Allan Poe, and I couldn't come up with a better title than **PHOBIA** for a biography of that shocking genius. I came up with it a good five years before the other two, in 1971, when I was delighted to find that no one had used it before for a film. My treatment, under that title, was registered with the Writers Guild of America (West) on March 11, 1971.

It took a long time to get someone to option material and finance my screenplay, but on March 19, 1976, I copyrighted the completed screenplay under the title **PHOBIA** at the U.S. Copyright Office. Through an unbelievable lapse, TOFCO has never registered the title with the MPA. When, about two years ago, I heard that something called Borough Park Productions was using the title **PHOBIA**, I called their Los Angeles office to learn whether they might have made some co-production with TOFCO—like them, based in Canada. No, I was told pleasantly enough, but they sure were glad to have seen my **PHOBIA** being marketed in Canada, because it was a hell of a title, and Borough knew they would beat TOFCO to the screen. However, my novelization of the Poe screenplay, being published in England, may well beat all novelizations to the bookstores. Which is not too much consolation.

Win some, lose some. But **PHOBIA** as the title of a film about Edgar Allan Poe is a hell of a tough one to lose.

Robert Bles  
Beverly Hills, California

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So this summer, after you've seen the second installment in the **STAR WARS** saga and the new "special edition" of **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS**, find out how it was done, and who did it. It's all in CINEFANTASTIQUE, the magazine that continues to ask:

"Where's Your Sense of Wonder?"





# THE MAKING OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S THE BIRDS

Before and after, Tippi Hedren poses in makeup tests (above) for the sequence (inset) in which she is trapped and attacked in an attic full of ferocious crows and gulls. Makeup artist Howard Smit toned down the makeup seen in the film (right) from earlier, more graphic tests (left). Smit, a veteran of Republic studios, devised his most effective makeup for the corpse of a dead farmer (below).

... see page 15

