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JEWELL ENTERPRISES, INC. PRESENTS

TRASH CITY



— A UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL RELEASE —

Starring

MARA CORDAY

BARBARA BOSTOCK

LITA MILAN

MARK RICHMAN

Directed by **PAUL HENREID** • Screenplay by **ALAN FRIEDMAN, DOROTHY RAISON** and **ALLEN RIVKIN**
Produced by **HARRY RYBNICK** and **RICHARD KAY** • Associate Producer **EDWARD B. BARISON**

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50P

TRASH CITY - Issue 2

August 1989

'Trash City' is a 'zine devoted to life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, exploitation in entertainment, beauty, death, splatter movies, computer games, Inter-rail holidays, UFO's, general weirdness and anything else the editors see fit to print. The style is best described as 'conversational' and 'informal' - the emphasis is very much on the words, our method of production makes art tricky and photos almost impossible.

It is most easily available from me, and it's cheaper to subscribe, at least if things stay as they are at the moment ; you'll only pay the postage, plus an almost nominal fee. If you bought this from a shop, you'll have had to pay more for it - understandably, shop-keepers aren't keen to stock things there's no profit in! If you want to be sent future issues, send us 40p per issue in cheques/p.o./cash (made payable to Jim McLennan where appropriate) along with your name and address - we'll then send them to you until your money runs out. This offer expires and goes to heaven whenever we decide. If you're already a subscriber, the number next to your name on the envelope (the one you've just thrown in the bin) tells you how much of your sub is left - if it's less than 40p, think about renewing it.

Articles, artwork, etc are also extremely welcome - get in touch for more details.

Issue 0 is out of print, but is being redone in the same format as last/this issue. 50p, but don't hold your breath!

Issue 1 (Black Sunday, Kinski, Half Way to Heaven, Salo & DIY flame-throwers) is still available - 50p including p&p.

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Editor, publisher, general chief of staff : Jim McLennan

Texts : in alphabetical order; Des Lewis, Andrew McGavin, Jim McLennan, our correspondent in Sheffield, Per Porter and Rob Williams.

Artwork : The Plagiarist's Republic (from clip art by Jim, Per and Steve Welburn).

Back Pic : So exploitative, so trashy, so bad. The video cover for "Reform School Girls", nicely done in soft focus with added Sybil Danning.

The views expressed in this 'zine are not necessarily those of the editor or publisher, and may well be an attempt to fill a blank sheet of paper with the deadline approaching at a rate of knots. It's no fun being an editor...

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ANTHONY PERKINS on his EDGE (OF SANITY)

"You didn't think I was a drug smuggler, did you?"

THE EDITORIAL

Mutter, mutter, fume, mutter. An entertaining three months, much of it spent either looking for accomodation or moving between accomodations. However, by the time you read this we will hopefully be firmly ensconced in our new address given opposite.

The house is big. Lots more room than 81 Cheyne Way, and a great deal closer to work too. We're toying with the idea of using this space to organise, at some point, Trashcon 1, which will be an excuse for you lot to visit London, kip on our floor, watch a large number of films, drink a lot and (hopefully) have a good time. Not sure when it would take place, probably over a weekend in November. Anyone interested should get in touch NOW, since there's a limited amount of floorspace - suggestions for viewing, offers of films, etc would also be appreciated. I imagine the films will be a mix of trash and 'rarely seen classics'...

Another highlight of the past quarter was nearly getting arrested for criminal damage after venting my frustration on a non-working choccy machine on the Tube. These devices are designed purely as a means of gambling - after inserting 20p, you generally get nothing, occasionally a bar of chocolate, and VERY infrequently, more money than you put in (up to 1.20!). On the whole, you're better off putting it on a horse. If you're ever in London, avoid them. Giggle of the month was produced by a clip of 'A Cry in the Dark' - Meryl Streep's "Australian" accent, closer to a South African with a speech impediment, fairly made my day!

At time of writing, Steve has failed to come up with the promised comics article for the second issue on the trot (too busy looking for someone/thing in black to chain him to the bed no doubt). This is probably a good job too, given the severe lack of room; at our current rate, by publication day we'll have enough for about 110 pages. You may have noticed the lack of the Video Nasties piece - said space deficit meant a lot of stuff had to give and, on reflection, it'd been done to death everywhere else. It may well be resurrected when we come up with a new/unusual angle. Many other bits were written and discarded to make room for better/fresher things - hopefully this will make it a more interesting read all round.

Thanks to all and sundry, especially the fanzines that have mentioned us, not to Fear, though, since they put our advert in the wrong issue and claim we were full of 'crash'!! Back to schedule next time, all being well - until mid October, remember :

"You can hear all the compressors and the pneumatic drills - they sound right here in the room."

Update :

Flicking through the Cannes film programme, my eyes caught the title 'Acque di Primavera'. My, I thought, sounds like a film Nastassja did ("Symphonia di Primavera" aka Spring Symphony). Hang on - starring Nastassja Kinski? Yes, on closer inspection, it's from a story by the Russian author Turgenev and also stars Timothy Hutton and Valeria Golino. As I write this, I know nothing else about it at all. It was in the competition there, so keep an eye out for it.

Bibliography :

Surprisingly little has been written about Ms. Kinski in English - she's always been a bigger star on the continent or in America and Japan than here. The main source for this series was a French book, "Nostalgie, hors serie no. 1" which covers both Klaus and Nastassja. Of course there is the slight problem of it being in a foreign language. At least it's in one I can read, unlike the Japanese book I possess which has a large number of very attractive photos and completely undecipherable text. Other books used include "Hollywood Lolitas" by Marianne Sinclair (see TC 0) and most biographies of Roman Polanski have a section about her. Magazines have been a fairly fruitful source of information, with Video World and the March '86 issue of 'Look Now' being especially useful. According to a friend who wishes to remain anonymous, there was an article on her in the Nov. 88 issue of "Club International" - fifty quid in used notes will ensure that anonymous is how he remains...

Discography :

Conversely, I keep coming across songs with some connection in title and/or lyrics to her. Three definite hits and three possibles are :

1. "Have a Cigar, Miss Kinski" - Extrabreit (from the LP "Europa"). Found in Vienna - "Living in Los Angeles, millions flying for your kiss".
2. "That's not Nastassja" - Sparks (from the LP "Whomp that Sucker"). The problems of being an internationally recognised film starlet and being copied by everyone. "She was on the news again tonight/Someone looking like her stole a bike."
3. "Nasti Kinki" (sic) - Robby's Hobby. Tedious disco/soul junk.
4. "Be a Boy" - Gina X (B-side of the single "No G.D.M."). There is a reference to "Kinski's nose" - given the title of the song, this might well be about Klaus! (Trivia time : Gina X's real name is Gina Kikoine, not a million miles away from that of Gerard Kikoine who directed "Edge of Sanity" - no idea if there's a connection!)
5. "Up on the Catwalk" - Simple Minds.
6. "Watching the Detectives" - Elvis Costello.

These last two have been claimed as having a mention of NK in the lyrics - I've not been able to track them down yet, they remain unconfirmed. There is also, apparently, a band in Norfolk called Passion Flower Hotel - can't think what sort of music they'd play!

Quotes :

1. "You would be surprised by the power a girl of 13 or 14 can have over a man."
2. "I go up and down all the time." [!]
3. "I'm fascinated by older men... and what they can teach me."
4. On Polanski - "People had warned me about him and young girls, but he was always so nice to me."
5. "I don't understand acting, except when I'm actually doing it. And sometime I don't even understand it then."
6. "For a while, I wanted to be a ballerina and then later, for a long time, a vet."
7. "I'm fanatical about privacy - I can understand why to be alone is one of the great gifts of life."
8. On "To the Devil a Daughter" - "When I see the film, I'll probably cover my eyes"
9. "It wouldn't surprise me if I left the earth early because, even though I've lived so little, there are moments when I think I'm actually ready to go."
10. On Dudley Moore - "I've never seen anybody who could be so flexible," [!]

3 products advertised at some point by Nastassja :

1. Lux soap.
2. Senso perfume.
3. Evian mineral water.

That story in "Sunday" magazine :

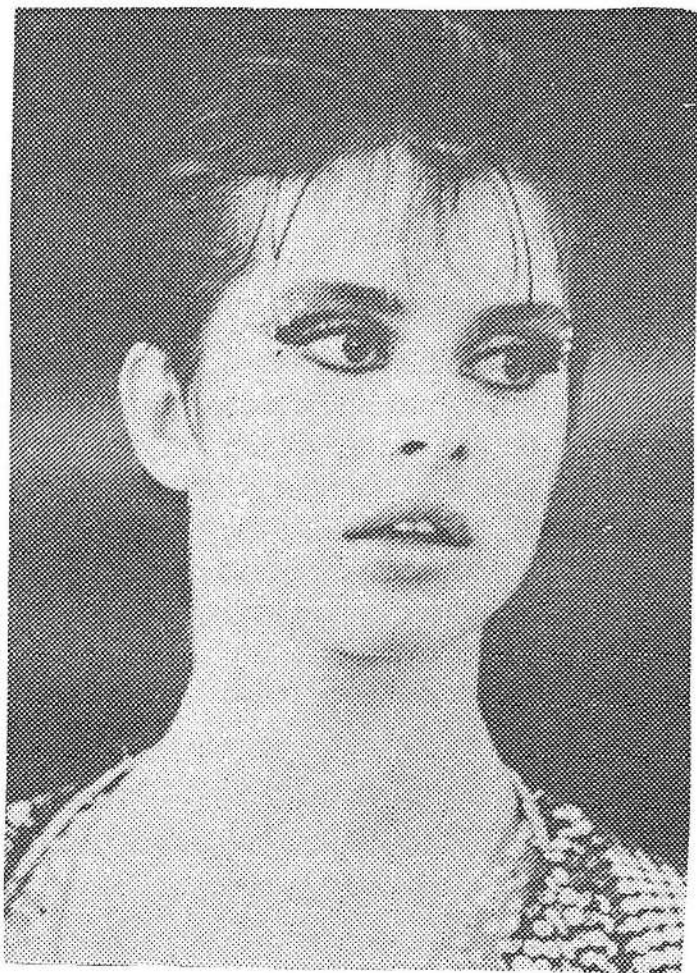
For those of you who missed it, the News of the World's "Sunday" supplement recently carried a story (and I use the term advisedly) about Nastassja. In case you missed it, here are the captions, as printed, that went with the pictures :

1. Marriage on the rocks after 4 stormy years of possessive Ibrahim Moussa.
2. Her megarich husband's millions can't buy lonely Nastassja love, just booze.
3. She takes refuge in the bottle yet she just can't hide the despair in her eyes.
4. An ex sex symbol, now frustration leaves her a far from pretty sight [!].
5. Then out of the blue Nastassja meets up with her original love, Roman Polanski.
6. That new kiss has stirred old memories, but, alone again, she hides her tears.

Given quote seven above, the pictures seem to me to say "Oh hell, here's ANOTHER bloody photographer" just as much as they do "My marriage is on the rocks so I'm hitting the bottle". As for the text, here's an example : "Her beauty, super-sexy body and innocence were exploited in explicit scenes - but her life was a loveless sham". Pulitzer-prize winning stuff. The rest of the article is composed of 'quotes', supposedly from 'close friends', where they're attributed at all, and pure speculation. Of course, it COULD all be true - personally, I rate the "News of the World" about as highly as a political party broadcast as a source for the truth, the whole truth & nothing but the truth.

An Anecdote :

Nastassja Kinski was dining at an outdoor restaurant in New York, and doodling on the tabletop as she did so [don't try this in your local Wimpey, kids!]. When she left, six diners got into a bidding war over it. In the end, a couple forked out 200 dollars for the table and headed for home lugging it between them.



HALF-WAY TO HEAVEN ON THE GLACIER EXPRESS

[Last time, we left our hero in Nice, having just had his passport, travellers' cheques & Inter-rail cards stolen. With a sleep on the beach in prospect, read on.]

On previous nights, I'd seen quite a few people sleeping rough - one of the beaches looked more like an open-air pop concert - I sort of envied them, at least until one night there was a massive thunderstorm, with lightning, torrential rain, the works - all of a sudden, I was glad to have a roof over my head! Luckily, the weather was good, and I managed a fair nights sleep, clutching tight to my ruck-sack, disturbed only by the odd vagrant, and the street-cleaning lorry.

The next day, I phoned the British consulate in Marseilles to see about getting a replacement passport - I couldn't get a new Inter-rail card without one - but they were closed till Monday. However, American Express came up with the replacement cheques, and I managed to cash them using my drivers' licence; I could now afford a room for the night and found one, through the Tourist Information Office, in the Hotel Sybill. Ha,ha,ha, I thought, as I went up to my room - even though it was a 2-star place, this'll be just like Fawlty Towers, . I was wrong. It was a LOT worse.

There wasn't really a carpet on the floor. The mattress on the bed had been rolled up against the wall, perhaps to avoid the plaster that was falling from the ceiling. The floor was littered with empty wine bottles, as well as a couple of cans of empty bug spray. Someone had moved a large chest of drawers in there, and added a trunk to the top of it for good measure - this took up most of the floor-space. The bed-linen had been thrown on the bed, along with a few miscellaneous towels, none of which looked as if they'd been near a washing machine for months. The window didn't close either, and there was a distinct sound of something scuttling behind the walls...

It was NOT a nice room. I've stayed in some dives in my time - this was a Grade A, five-star pit. I did consider complaining but spending the previous night on the beach had lowered my standards a lot and, besides, my French isn't quite up to 'My room has been hit by an Exocet'. I spent the rest of the day back on the beach. It was at this point that Fate stopped kicking me in the head.

At about 9 p.m I headed back, not looking forward to a night in a room with noises from the walls. By now the manager was on duty at the desk, and I asked him for the keys to my room, 509. He went an odd colour and asked if I was sure of the room-number. I assured him I was. He then asked if I had already moved in. I said I had. He flinched noticeably and said that he already had 'one or two bits and pieces' in there. I told him I'd noticed.

To cut a long story short, I'd been given the key to the attic by mistake. I should

Bruce Campbell demonstrates how NOT to smuggle weapons through Customs.



have been given the keys to 510 instead, which was a very nice room. I'd recommend the Hotel Sybill to anyone, though if you get put in Room 509, make your excuses and leave. To their credit, they WERE extremely apologetic - don't know who was more embarrassed, them by their mistake, or me by their over-enthusiastic attempts to make up for it. "Would m'sieur like another croissant? Perhaps another cup of coffee? Or maybe he would enjoy the use of the managers' daughter for an hour or two?". Ok, I exaggerate - not much though!

Monday morning, I was up bright and early, to go to the British consul in Marseilles for my replacement passport. I had to BUY a ticket there, which cost me 130 Francs ; a pretty good illustration of how good value the Inter-rail card is, since it's only about a 2 1/2 hour journey. I phoned up beforehand to check what I needed to take with me, and then got the photos required from one of those machines - as ever, they looked absolutely nothing like me, and I wonder how I ever got through the border checks with my temporary passport.

Didn't think much of Marseilles. I found it very noisy, crowded and dirty especially after the comparative peace of Nice. There seemed to be cars EVERYWHERE. The British consulate was on the third floor of a building, just above a doctors' surgery, and there were several other people there, most of whom had also lost their passports. It was a very quick and painless process ; if I hadn't been who I claimed to be, it would have been quite easy to get a passport, as long as I had some examples of whoever I was pretending to be's signature, and could forge it. However, as it had to be handed in on my return to Britain, I suppose it wouldn't have been much use.

Although the train I was catching went via Marseilles, it got there at about midnight - I didn't fancy hanging around for seven hours, so I came back to Nice and spent the evening there, before finally catching the train for Switzerland. And this time I managed to go further than one stop!

On the train I met three totally lunatic Englishmen - by now it was nice to speak English again, no matter who it was with. They got off at about 4 in the morning, in Grenoble, looking unhappy. Given the temperature, I can't blame them.

I slept on for another few hours before arriving in Geneva. At first, it struck me as a dull place, with every second building a bank or other financial institution; when I got into the older parts, I realised it was really a very nice town. The view from the top of the tower in the cathedral was quite beautiful; you could clearly see the enormous fountain on the edge of Lake Geneva, which at over 400 ft tall, is far bigger than any fountain has a right to be. The weather had improved, it was another warm and sunny day, which always helps!

Spent the night in Basle, at the youth hostel. Apart from Amsterdam, it's the only

place to have been visited on all four Inter-rails, though I never see much of the city since it's position makes it an excellent base from which to tour. This year was no different. One night there, and it was off into the Alps, heading to Zermatt.

Some people think Switzerland is a boring place. This may be true - you don't go there for the nightlife - it's more than made up for by the scenery, which is just superb. Words can't describe how beautiful it is ; huge gorges, towering mountains and little villages precariously perched half up the sides of them, rushing streams where the water is so pure it looks strange and a sky blue enough to hurt.

The main reason for the trip to Zermatt was to take the cable car up to the top of the Kleine Matterhorn (Kleine means small in German - at 12,500 ft tall, it's quite big enough, thank you!) - I'd wanted to do this last year, but I didn't have the time, and couldn't afford the 40 Swiss Francs (about 16 pounds) fare. This trip, I'd come prepared. Unfortunately, by the time I arrived, I only just had time to go up and virtually straight down again - maybe some year I'll get the chance to get out at one of the midway points and go for a stroll.

However, it was more than enough. The trip up was incredible ; I saw my first glacier (disappointingly grey) and the views of the Matterhorn itself were wonderful. At the top, the air was thin enough that I felt dizzy to start with and any exertion made you breathe hard. I filled a water bottle with the snow at the top - unfortunately, I left it on the counter of a bank when I went in to cash a cheque. Wonder what they thought of it?

The youth hostel in Zermatt was placed at the top of a long, very steep hill that no normal Inter-railer would have tried to climb with a rucksack on. However, "normal" is not something I get - accused of being very often, so I struggled up there - unsurprisingly, it was half empty!

The next day saw me on the famed Glacier Express, which runs from Zermatt to St. Moritz. If it's possible to overdose on beauty, I think I did it that day. For eight hours I just stared out of the window and drank it all in - by the end of the trip, I was just about reduced to thinking "that's nice" having gone through the most beautiful landscape in the world, and run out of appropriate adjectives.

On arrival in St. Moritz, I dumped most of my stuff in a locker, and headed off to the youth hostel. Even though I'd lost my membership card, both Basle and Zermatt hostels had let me stay with no hassle, but to my annoyance St. Moritz demanded the police report! Of course, this had been left in the locker which meant I had to buy a guest card. Scratch three quid from my rapidly shrinking supply.

Zurich. The third last day of my holiday and I discover my German is more rusty than

I thought - I ask for a hot-dog at a stand in the street and am given a bottle of mineral water! However, later I manage to find a special offer outside some store - a sausage, hunk of bread and a glass of beer for the equivalent of 60p, which for Switzerland (where things like food are very expensive) isn't bad. I thought about going round twice - every wasp in Central Europe was also there, so I went and sat down by the lake instead, where they were slightly less numerous. Finished the day sitting listening to a concert of Swiss brass bands - not what I'd normally choose to listen to, somehow it was an appropriate way to end my time in Switzerland.

The journey to Amsterdam was probably the least comfortable of the ones I had - seven of the eight seats in the carriage were occupied. Still managed to get a fairly good night's sleep - after a while you can sleep anywhere!

I don't know why I always seem to go to Amsterdam. It's a thoroughly maddening place - it's reputation means that everyone ought to be spaced out of their mind all the time, however the Amsterdammers are the NICEST people in Europe. Even the drug dealers are polite - "Would you like to buy some acid? No? Oh well, never mind". I want to claim a record - I managed to walk the whole length of the main street, the Damrak, without being offered any illegal substance. Any other questions as to what I did in my time there should be directed to my solicitor - I deny everything!!

The boat trip home was fairly dull - fortunately there was a cinema on the boat, which I spent most of the time in. Saw "Beetlejuice", which was quite entertaining, although the poor sound system made it tricky to hear some of the dialogue, especially Michael Keaton's. The other film on offer was 'Robocop' which I'd seen before and was just as good this time around.

Why do I always feel guilty going through the customs, even when I'm carrying nothing even remotely illegal? Clearly, I can't LOOK guilty, as I've never been stopped, but it's no fun. The train to Liverpool Street had been cancelled due to engineering work and they'd laid on a bus instead, which wasn't as good. Did the job though. Timed my arrival perfectly - I caught the hourly train to Farnborough with just 6 minutes to spare. However by the time I struggled off it at the other end, all the taxis had been taken, which meant I had a nice two-mile walk, laden down with all the junk I'd accumulated over the two weeks...

Now I find myself back at work, with a chance to reflect. Did I enjoy it? Yes, for the most part. I did a lot of things I hadn't done before, went to places I'd not been before, some of which (Monte Carlo) I'd like to go back to, others (Marseilles) I'll avoid. Looking forward to next time - roll on Inter-Rail '89!!

Another issue, another sack o' mail. Crank letter of the year to date:

Gustav Gustavsson, Iceland - "We have Trash City in our school library for public [!] reading. Last week we had "Man Eaten by Polar Bear" and "Penguins from Outer Space Raped my Daughter" stories in the Daily Nordvik Icicle. Very much we like the back cover. We go everywhere by train now [???]. Trash City would be even better if it wasn't printed entirely upside-down"

Something causes me to doubt the authenticity of this letter. Perhaps it was the 19p stamp on it, perhaps the Basingstoke post-mark... Onto reality. The new format was welcomed all round and there were plaudits generally for the piece on "Gwendoline" :

Glyn Williams, Mickleover - "The most polished and entertaining piece of writing I've read in ages."

Ben Gruber, New York - "Gwendoline [is] 'The Perils of Gwendoline in the Land of Yik Yak' over here"

Figures - we British always seem to end up with duller titles than abroad, e.g. "View to a Kill" became "The Indestructible Iron Man Fights Against the Electronic Gang" by the time it got to Hong Kong. More mixed reactions for 'Nightmares...' :

BG - "A good takeoff".

Alun Fairburn, Ammanford - "...pretty enjoyable, a great idea".

Richard Owen, Skewen - "Just dreadful, get rid of it quick!"

"Half-Way to Heaven" also got a variety of responses :

GW - "...remember how you feel when everyone in the office starts arriving with their packets of holiday photos..."

AF - "Your vacation story was well written and a welcome change."

The opinions on Film Blitz were almost neatly divided down the middle. Some people wanted longer reviews, others liked the short ones. Personally, very few of the films that I see NEED pages of reviews - however, last time I did feel I had to write no more than three lines, which in some cases was just too little. I've now loosened the restrictions - where a film deserves more, it's got it & where three lines are enough (you try writing any more on "The Streetwalker"!), I've said no more. Speaking of which :

GW - "The idea of selecting short quotes from letters is interesting, but may in the future stop the development of interesting points of vi..."

That's quite enough there, Glyn. Since his letter came in at 10 sides of thoroughly enjoyable A4 plus appendices, I sympathise with him. Most other letters, though, are very much a series of short points, which is only to be expected when I ask for people's opinions on a collection of articles. No-one should refrain from expressing longer viewpoints since if they're too long for the letters page, I can just as easily strip them out and use 'em as articles. Onto the back-handed compliments section :

Simon Wood, Blewbury - "...pleased to see that you are as opinionated as ever!"

Hmmm. I prefer to think of it as having the courage of my convictions - at least, I've got the courage, Steve's got the convictions [society's to blame, Steve?]. I'll forgive him since he enclosed five pages of Nastassja-pics, always a good way to get into my favour. A couple of people still don't quite seem to have grasped this trash thing QUITE right :

Andrew Jones, Huddersfield - "More articles on Trash Music i.e. Stock, Aiken and Waterman."

Claire Blamey, Norwich - "I am a [Dustin] Hoffman fan..."

Oh dear. At this stage I might venture to suggest they are subscribing to the wrong magazine, except that since they represent about 8% of our readership, I don't want to lose them - I'll just grit my teeth, smile sweetly and recount the apocryphal tale about Hoffman taking a girl back to his apartment. He suggests putting a film on, she agrees. Turns out, not only does it star Dustin himself, but he insists in fast-forwarding through the scenes he doesn't appear in. Finally, for those of you who missed out on the free video offer, here's a selection of comments from those who got the films:

GW - ["Virgin Among the Living Dead"] "The end came as a blessed relief. No sex, no blood, no point."

Tommy Campbell, Glasgow - ["Queens of Evil"] "Almost managed to stay awake...very dull."

SW - ["Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue"] "...wasn't the greatest but provided a few laughs, especially the awful accents and flares!"

I DID warn you! Keep them coming, in any case. All letters will be considered as publication material, unless you say otherwise. The more controversial the contents, the better. Send an SAE if you're in any hurry for a reply, otherwise I tend to wait until you're getting sent the next issue. And the used stamps on your letters go to buy a guide dog or something, so you can feel morally superior, too!

In the beginning was the word, and the word was 'A-wop-bop-a-loo-bop-a-wop-bam-boom' Bad lyrics are an endless source of fascination to me, summing up the pure essence of pop - there's a strange similarity between the feeling I get watching a truly bad film, and the one I get hearing an infinitive split in a particularly brutal manner.

What makes a bad lyric? Lack of meaning, strangely enough, isn't necessarily that important - John Foxx produced an entire LP, "The Garden", without coming up with very much intelligible to the average listener : "Do you get the smell of burning metal? / Can you feel the heartbeat under the sea? / Well, it's just me and Oppenheimer waltzing / The crowded streets in chromakey" is a typical example, from the peculiarly named "Dancing Like a Gun". Strangely, it works, probably because the words do fit the tune and have a rhythm, even if they are total gibberish.

Banal lyrics aren't necessarily bad either, as long as you're expecting them. Patsy Kensit & Eighth Wonder produce music for happy bimbos, and the lyrics reflect this : "When I see the front page/It makes me worry/In a world full of outrage/The future looks blurry" ("My Baby's Heartbeat"), may not be totally appalling, but it's not far off. In terms of childishness, Jonathan Richman is the king here ; "Abominable Snowman in the market/That's right, you heard me right, gang/And the housewives, they all remark it/Looks like a dirty marsh-mallow with fangs". If you buy an LP with titles like "Here Come the Martian Martians" and "I'm a Little Dinosaur", what do you expect?

The lyrics most likely to make me wince are those that attempt to make a serious social or moral point, and sink into sub-nursery drivel. Transvision Vamp came up with a beauty in "Revolution Baby" - "We're all on the same side when the mushroom hits the sky". Really, Wendy? You don't say! Hard to beat that for reducing the complicated subject of nuclear disarmament to the level of a three year old.

The WORST lyrics I've heard in a good while come from a group called The Bolshoi. Their song, "Away", boldly goes where no song has gone before in terms of sheer badness (and I don't mean bad as in good). "When you were at school, you were a honey/The boys all loved you, you loved their money" deserves to be nominated for the 'Worst Couplet of the Year' award. The author has no hesitation is shoe-horning words into a line or adding exclamations as he sees fit if there are too few syllables. I think it wise to finish by stepping back, leaving a blank line and letting you read an example for yourself - come back, Kylie, all is forgiven!

"Yeah, one day you had a baby,
It was painful, it was worth it."

FILM BLITZ

The Accused (Jonathan Kaplan) - It's tough to give this film a bad review without seeming unsympathetic to rape victims, but it has to be done even if it's hard to convey just how loathsome it is. With a tediously obvious and laughable plot (a witness is traced by his name in a video game hi-score table!), it's sensationalist nature makes it as much a serious film about rape as "Fatal Attraction" was a serious film about marital problems. The rape scene is leeringly shot and pointless since by the time it happens, you have no sympathy for the victim. Jodie Foster emotes a lot to minimal effect (a Sympathy Oscar if ever I saw one) and Kelly McGillis seemed to think she was still in "Top Gun"...

The Adventures of Baron Munchausen (Terry Gilliam)

1. A lot of money, a lot of hype - is it worth it? Nooooo, not quite, considering that for the same money Fred Olen Ray could have made about 400 films, each as much fun. There are some truly jaw-dropping moments, the effects ARE remarkable; in fact, there's very little I can complain about, really, except the ten year old sitting behind me who punctuated every five minutes with "What's he doing?", "Why's he doing that?", "Can I have an ice-cream?", "Can I have another ice-cream?", "I'm going to be sick!", etc. Any film that introduces to me to a new stunning beauty (Uma Thurman) has to be fairly worthwhile; unfortunately, it's otherwise very much a case of good, but not THAT (for 'THAT', read \$40 million) good.

2. Terry Gilliam's latest offering, which can be roughly described as a 'buddy' film about a very old man and a very young girl, would have to do a great deal to fulfil what people have come to expect of him. Massively over budget and beset by catastrophes, the miracle is more that the film was ever completed than that it is at the least a half-decent film.

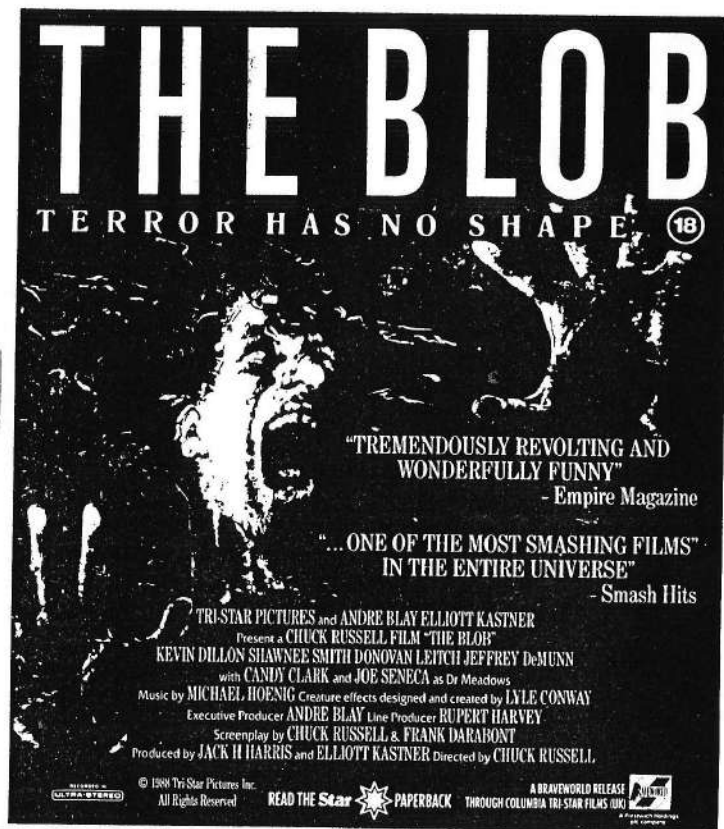
For those of you who have missed the many publicity blurbs, the plot is basically that of Baron Munchausen, infamous for his many tall stories, attempting to raise the Turkish siege of a town that he had caused long enough ago for most of the town's population not only to forget that he was the cause, but also to forget that he actually exists.

He escapes the town by talking all the women of the town into relinquishing their underwear in order to build a hot-air balloon (a feat which many of my male friends seem eager to emulate), and proceeds to search for his trusty servants, without whom he appears to be absolutely useless. Watch out for Sting in his cameo role and for Robin Williams for his uncredited [though every review seems to credit it!!] performance as King of the Moon.

The film's only problem is that the stunts are so well done as to cease being

spectacular. Still, it's an entertaining film, with morsels of violence and nudity for the more bloodthirsty/lustful among you, and just the right attention to detail. If you liked "Brazil", you'll probably like this, but considering the budget, the overall assessment is 'Could do better'.

Angel of Vengeance (Abel Ferrara) - Mr. Ferrara has had an interesting career, ranging from the notorious (and highly tedious) "Driller Killer", to TV movies such as "The Gladiator", recently shown here. This film (also known as "Ms. 45" & not to be confused with "Avenging Angel") falls in the middle, chronologically, and is a lot better than either, thanks mostly to a great performance from Zoe Tamerlis as the mute who is raped twice in one day, which causes her to wreak revenge on every man who looks at her. She overcomes the difficulty of having no dialogue very well and Ferrara does what he does best, painting a picture of the City as Hell on Earth. One supreme moment with Ms. 45, dressed as a nun, kissing the bullets as she loads them up, which is simultaneously the stuff of fantasy and nightmare.



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Executive Producer ANDRE BLAY Line Producer RUPERT HARVEY
Screenplay by CHUCK RUSSELL & FRANK DARABONT
Produced by JACK H HARRIS and ELLIOTT KASTNER Directed by CHUCK RUSSELL

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READ THE **Star** PAPERBACK

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TRI-STAR

Bad Girls Dormitory (Tim Kincaid) - Great title, disappointing film. Women-in-prison piece goes for 'realism' rather than tackiness and suffers as a result. The music's better than "Reform School Girls" to my ears - in all other categories, it loses. Watch out for one of the worst choreographed fight sequences it has been my misfortune to endure.

Beneath the Valley of the Ultravixens (Russ Meyer) - Third in his Vixens series, taking his breast fixation to extremes with Francesca 'Kitten' Natividad. Nudity in abundance, I don't share Russ's fetish, the humour's my style instead. Acceptable.

Betrayed (Costa-Gavras) - Deborah Winger plays a CIA agent who goes undercover to track the White Power killers of a radio show host. Generally gripping; even if it does occasionally descend into sentimentality, some scenes made the hairs on the back of my neck stand. Superior to many films about The Land of the Free - if the South IS like that (I don't know), I don't think I want to go there.

The Blob (Chuck Russell) - More proof that throwing money at a film doesn't always work. The effects are acceptable, the acting corny and the characters cliched. I can't help wondering what the money was spent on - certainly, the sections I enjoyed most, such as "Garden Tool Massacre", the film-within-the-film parody of the Friday the 13th genre, showed no sign of the budget. Nice to see a movie with a message these days. And the message is 'If you put your hand down a girl's blouse, her face explodes and strangles you.' After "Nightmare 3", strike 2 for Chuck, I'm afraid.

Crazy Love (Dominique Deruddere) - Dismantles the 'romantic' view of love and life with clinical precision and inspects it in an unflattering, cynical light. The three stories concern the same boy/man at different ages: the first sees his instruction in the facts of life, the second has him having to cope with SERIOUS acne and the third has him stealing a corpse for a joke and falling in love with it. Bitter-sweet stuff, often accurate to the point of being squirm-inducing, funny and sad in equal quantities. Excellent.

Demons (Dario Argento) - Argento is supposedly the master of the Italian horror film - if this is so, what're the amateurs like? Minimal plot, a ludicrous climax, bad dubbing/acting and the gore that might have made it tolerable removed. Rotten.

Drowning by Numbers (Peter Greenaway) - Surreal weirdness from the director of the very odd "Zed and Two Noughts". Surprisingly, it works; a bit like an "Alice in Wonderland" for adults, it has an internal consistency which makes sense after a while. Here, we have three generations of women who drown their husbands and use their sexual wiles to bribe/blackmail the coroner into covering up. Visually striking, try and understand it at your own risk. Includes an imaginative new use for an ice-lolly...

Friday the 13th Part VII - The New Breed - Every other review of this latest Jason flick has been totally negative ("It blows dead ghoulies in hell" - Chas Balun). I don't see why - it seemed no worse than the last two and, unlike "Jason Lives", it offers an action packed extended climax, though Jason's actual demise is pathetic. Four and a half out of ten.

Ghosts of the Civil Dead (John Hillcoat) - Australian film, set in a prison of the near future, detailing the events leading up to a 'lockdown', when the prisoners are confined to their cells. Minimal dialogue, told mostly in voiceover, it's not an easy film to watch. It's worth the effort, though it's completely pessimistic and brutally realistic nature makes it very different from other 'prison' films. Nice cameo from Nick Cave as a psycho and great stuff for paranoiacs. See it if you can.

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Hands of the Ripper (Peter Sasdy) - One of the better late Hammer films, with Angharad Rees giving an excellent performance even by Hammer standards, as the daughter of Jack the Ripper who occasionally slips into psychotic frenzies herself. Surprisingly bloody for a '15', especially a nasty bit of eye-violence.

Hellbound - Hellraiser II (Peter Atkins) - As promised, a re-review of this one, and a report on how it's done at the BBFC. I stand by most of what I said in TC 0; it is nowhere near as good as "Hellraiser", the dialogue is rotten as is most of the acting and the story line is weak involving a lot of running about. The hell scenes are impressive, on the other hand and the FX are astonishing - if the original wasn't one of my favourite films, this would be quite tolerable. As for the cuts,

scratch almost the entire mattress sequence, reduced to about three shots from about 90 seconds, both Pinhead and Channard's cenobitization are cut, as is the scene where the Channard slaughters his ex-patients and the one where he loses his head. None of these, except the first one struck me as being too blatant and the editing has been done well. Overall, it could have been a whole lot worse...

The Howling II (Phillippe Mora) - Now out on budget video. It never takes itself seriously enough or QUITE slides into total parody - either way might have been better. Christopher Lee does his best against some crass Americans and appalling werewolf FX (to be fair, some of the other pieces are OK) and Sybil Danning turns in her usual, er, fine performance. Watch the end credits for an example of sheer overkill as the same shot of SD whipping her top off is used at least twenty times!

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (Steven Spielberg) - I have to admit to being disappointed by this one. Apart from a wonderful performance by Sean Connery, this is little more than a remake of the first in the series; Jones vs. Nazis, religious imagery, a long chase, etc. Unfortunately, it doesn't work this time - even the chase is too long (I fell asleep in the middle!). Some nice ideas aren't fully developed and there are gaping holes in the plot. The climax felt like something out of a bad fantasy game and I would have been much happier all round if it had stopped after The Temple of Doom.

Kamikaze (Didier Grousset) - Impressive French film, about an unemployed guy who gets so annoyed at TV announcers he invents a gun to kill them by remote control, and the policeman who has to track him down. It loses it's way a little in the last third, when it gets too wordy for it's own good, though the climax is chilling stuff. The best foreign film for a while and the sooner someone really invents a gun like that, the better!

Licence to Kill (John Glenn) - I go into each Bond film wondering how they're going to surpass the previous one and come out in a daze. This one was no different, easily living up to "The Living Daylights" with astonishing stunts. Timothy Dalton is perfectly acceptable as Bond - you don't go to these films for the acting! It does deserve it's '15' certificate with blood and a nasty bit involving someone in a decompression chamber. The climactic car chase, or rather, tanker chase may well be the best one of the year. Add two cute bimbos and a very funny performance by Q and you have an excellent piece of expensive trash!

Nightmare on Elm Street 1, 2, 3 & 4 (Wes Craven, Jack Sholder, Chuck Russell and Renny Harlin) - I've never been a great fan of the Nightmare films (any series with a child killer as a hero is on dodgy ground - a Freddy fanclub for chrissake?) but when Wimbledon Odeon put on all four for a fiver, it was too cheap to miss and I have to say I was surprised how well-made at least three of them were. The plot is

the same in all four : Freddy comes back from the dead and slaughters a few teens before getting destroyed, though within this framework, each director has a style all his own. The first one is a straight horror story, done well, though Wes Craven has the easier task of not having earlier films to live up/down to. Tense and effective stuff. NoES 2 has come in for some flak, mostly for the Freddy-by-the-pool scene - fair comment and a shame, as up to then it had been better than NoES 1, with more believable heroes and the border between dreams and reality less explicit. NoES 3 was, for me, the worst, and a real turkey - what's all this "in my dreams, I can be a wizard" crap? No mention of this in the first two films! Schmaltzy and cute, more like a kiddies' TV series than a horror flick. Finally, the new one - NoES 4. It's a little cracker. Renny Harlin, who gave us "Prison", one of 88's best, has given us one of 89's best too. ANYONE can die at ANY time - I was onto my third choice heroine by the end. Although a couple of the dream sequences don't quite work perfectly, this scarcely matters and we have the first horror pic of the year that even makes an attempt to kick ass. I, for one, can't wait to see the result when Renny Harlin directs a William Gibson script for "Aliens 3" [STOP PRESS - Harlin's dropped out]. What odds it'll be one of 1990's best? Oh, keep an eye out for the name of the cafe, where much of the action takes place...

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Parents (Bob Balaban) - The director claims it's not a horror story - I beg to differ. It IS relatively restrained; it's plot about a boy who comes to believe his parents are cannibals can hardly be described as romantic comedy though. Deviation behind a facade of normality is the theme and the performances from Randy Quaid and Mary Beth Hurt as the parents bring this out, with a lot of black humour. Even if the climax owes more than a little to 'Halloween' and other unkillable killer flicks, it is still one of the most original & enjoyable horror films so far this year.

Patty Hearst (Paul Schrader) - For those of you too young to remember, Patty Hearst was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army and held to ransom. She was next seen helping her kidnappers rob a bank. Finally, the FBI caught up with her and she was sent to jail, though she is now free. This film is based on her book - surprise, surprise, she comes up smelling of roses! It was all the evil SLA's fault because they brainwashed her, raped her and were generally nasty to her (I remain unconvinced she wasn't just a rich bitch out for kicks). Paul Schrader directs with a severe lack of lustre - the first half an hour or so seems to take place in a cupboard, which isn't very exciting. Only in odd moments does the pace or the acting rise above the pedestrian.

The Seven-per-cent Solution (Herbert Ross) - Surprisingly entertaining film, with Nicol Williamson (who played Merlin in John Boorman's "Excalibur") playing Sherlock Holmes as a cured coke fiend. Part-parody, part-homage, it might have been a disaster, instead it stays entertaining and frothily on track until the 'surprise' ending, which is telegraphed a long way in advance.

The Strangeness - Takes the second half of "Alien" and relocates it to a desert mine. The monster, here, being an ancient Indian folk-lore demon, is stop-motioned and is barely glimpsed until the last ten minutes. It's dull - didn't deserve to be placed in Shock Xpress's 50 most boring movies list, though.

Street Trash (Jim Muro) - This movie has as much chance of winning an Oscar as Salman Rushdie has of being given the Nobel Peace Prize. The word "Trash" is very apt for this movie - it's the cinematic equivalent of a Big Mac; the acting is non-descript, the plot is more flimsy than the baggage inspection at Heathrow and the FX are totally gross. I love it! The film is set in the gutters of a USA inner city; scum & lowlife roam the streets and live on a liquid lunch(bit like a Napalm Death gig). A local store-keeper finds a case of liquor in his cellar, gives it a dust down and ships it out at a dollar a throw. No harm in that you might think, the problem is that the beer contains something very unpleasant(no, it's not Hofmeister) which makes the consumer, well, MELT... This is when the fun starts, one poor chap melts into the toilet (must have had Tandoori chicken), all that's left is his deformed head peering out of the porcelain god. Add to this a deranged Vietnam vet,

a stupid cop (aren't they all?) and a sex mad scrap yard owner who likes to indulge in a spot of necrophilia. The film does tend to drag it's feet a bit in the middle, but it's still a great piece of sleaze - the highlights have to be a chap getting his head and most of his upper torso blown off and a game of 'piggy-in-the-middle' with a poor individual's love truncheon... Why Barry Norman never included this in his Top Films of '88 I'll never know!

The Streetwalker (Walerian Borowczyk) - Sylvia Kristel and Joe d'Allesandro in the current leader for the Film With Least Plot prize. Life in the Paris red-light area sums it up. Not as good as some of his films - far too 'normal' to be interesting!

Supervixens (Russ Meyer) - Superb stuff. Part 'Carry On' film, part psycho killer, a weird mix, but it works. A guy argues with his wife - by coincidence, she gets slaughtered by a cop (in a scene short on gore, none the less nasty for it). He's suspected and goes on the run to be waylaid by ANY & EVERY female he meets, until he meets the cop again... Reality takes a back seat permanently in this one, which may be Meyer's best and is certainly the most entertaining to watch.

The Tall Guy - Better than I expected, from the man at least partly responsible for the appalling "Morons from Outer Space". Never hysterically funny, never dull either - a few nice moments, though the much-touted sex scene isn't very sexy or funny. Wait till it's on TV.

They Live (John Carpenter) - Further evidence of a return to form, following the under-rated "Prince of Darkness". Roddy Piper is a surprise as the labourer who puts on cool sunglasses and discovers the earth has been invaded by aliens. The action sequences are, as ever from Carpenter, excellent; he will insists pointless scenes that are nothing more than blatant attempts to give the characters character, instead of letting their actions speak for them. Candidate for line of the year : "I have come here to chew bubble-gum and kick ass. And I'm right out of bubble-gum."

Terror on the Menu OR Terror at the Red Fox Inn, (depending on whether you believe the video box or the film titles respectively) - This is a trashless American drive in movie - 'trashless' via it's lack of gore, horror and (needless to say) sex. It was produced in the mid-70's and involves a pretty young student winning a holiday at a countryside inn which is owned by a group of cannibals. An endless dinner sequence (lots of closeups of mouths chomping away) deep-sixes this movie early on. To be ignored and forgotten.

Vixens (Russ Meyer) - First in Meyer's top-heavy trilogy, probably the duller of them, despite some odd moments when it starts getting political, with a communist hijacker. Wafer-thin plot about, er, I'm not sure what, does little to hold the interest and, unsurprisingly, the acting is awe-inspiring awful.

EDGE OF SANITY

This film has come in for heavy flak from certain quarters; Time Out described it as "tawdry", Fear said it was "aimed at the loony slicing up Madonna clones crowd". I'm going to stick my neck out and disagree with both these august publications. I think it's a good film, not without flaws I admit, but better than the reviews would have you believe. [If you're sensitive about such things, I'm about to reveal the plot].

Dr Jekyll (Anthony Perkins) is a successful doctor who is developing a new drug, with uses as an anaesthetic and a, er, stimulant (Somewhat ironic in view of recent events!). Unfortunately, an accident brings him into contact with a 'mutant' variety of it which changes him temporarily into a killer. His alter ego, Jack Hyde, slaughters prostitutes, due in part to an incident from his childhood when he was caught indulging in a spot of voyeurism. His wife (Glynis Barber), finally realises he isn't working nights at the hospital and tracks him down. She is nearly killed, escapes and returns to her home where she hides until she hears her husband returning and the sound of a shot. Hehehe! Jack's not finished ("You didn't think I was DEAD, did you?") and merrily slits his wife's throat before returning to his normal self, for the moment...

Some people have chosen to point out the anachronisms - a BOY belt buckle, a pound coin, etc. Though I'm no fashion victim, even I saw that most of the prostitutes' costumes are not very Victorian. The story seems to take place in a twilight world where the 'nice' women wear demure crinolines and the 'naughty' ones are dressed in Madonna gear (who better to epitomise 80's female sexuality?). I think we are dealing with an allegorical update here (yo!) - whinges about the costumes are thus about as justifiable as complaining those in 'West Side Story' aren't medieval Italian. The 'Madonna clones' comment is more reasonable since the woman he kills do have a certain similarity, though since they also resemble the girl involved in the childhood incident, it's justifiable.

The acting is generally solid, with two major exceptions. Glynis Barber is out of place and looks uncomfortably wooden. This is more than made up for by the superb performance of Anthony Perkins when playing psycho-Goth & Peter Murphy clone Jack Hyde. He conveys all the depravity of Jack Hyde with a single twitch and loads a simple phrase like 'Our lucky day' with enough menace to fuel an entire series of mundane slasher pics. The director (Gerard Kikoine on his debut) shows plenty of neat touches and novel angles. Unfortunately, the BBFC in it's infinite wisdom decided to cut some scenes, which leaves them looking jagged in places.

Overall, highly impressive stuff and deserving of praise, especially for not trying to produce a 'happy ending'. Perkins' performance alone is worth the rental price.

SHERLOCK HOLMES - THE MUSICAL

It has to be said that I rarely go to the theatre. That's "rarely", as in twice in the past six years (and that was to "Allo 'Allo" and a university charity show). However, when a friend of mine got tickets for a preview of "Sherlock Holmes - the Musical" at the Cambridge Theatre in London, I thought it might be fun to go along, not least because at a cost of 2.50, I had nothing to lose. To me, 'musical' is inexorably linked to things like "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" so I wasn't expecting too much - I must admit that I enjoyed myself more than I thought I would.

It stars Ron Moody, famous for playing Fagin in "Oliver!", as the great detective and starts just after his battle with Professor Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls. He returns to London, where Bella, the Professor's daughter, has worked out a fiendish plan to incriminate Sherlock Holmes in a 'orrible murder. This, basically, is the plot. Around this are arranged about 20 musical bits and a few standard Holmes jokes - the disguises, the displays of deductive power etc. Not an awful lot to go on, especially when the music is not the sort I'd normally listen to.

On the plus side, we have the atmosphere of the theatre. It's like the difference between watching live football and a match on the telly - I can't be any more explicit than that. Ron Moody is quite excellent as Sherlock, showing real stage presence; most of the other actors are also good. The sets were impressive and the scenery changes extremely slick and a lot less noticeable than this cinefreak expected. Even the songs were ok, as long as there was an accompanying dance routine or something else interesting - when it was just one singer standing in the centre of the stage, it wasn't too exciting.

The first half was noticeably better, probably thanks to the lower musical content, and a couple of scenes were well up to anything I've seen recently in a movie - the murder especially chilled the blood. Things did get a little dull in the second half, which was mostly songs, and ones we'd heard before too - it seemed noticeably shorter, though since the whole thing came in at about 2 1/2 hours including the interval, this is no bad thing.

Criticisms? I'm a very amateur theatregoer and can't compare it with anything in order to say how good or bad it is. However, Liz Robertson seemed ill at ease when acting compared to the easy manner of Ron Moody and after a while, the continual cheerful Cockney chirpiness (rhyming slang, etc) begins to grate - perhaps the show is aimed at the coming summer tourist market. Nevertheless, I had a very entertaining evening for my 2.50 at this trash musical - whether it's worth paying eight to twenty pounds for a 'real' seat, I'm not so sure.

THE INCREDIBLY BAD FILM SHOW

Bad films are an international thing. In this series to date, we've had films from Germany ("Passion Flower Hotel"), Italy ("Return of the Barbarian Women") and France ("Gwendoline") - now we add two more countries to the list. Later on we'll be taking a look at a real Hammer Horror, first we cross the Atlantic to America to meet some bimbos behind bars.

REFORM SCHOOL GIRLS (Tom de Simone) - Sybil Danning, Wendy O. Williams, Pat Ast.

"Pridemore Juvenile Facility - a world of caged terror without windows, without the possibility of escape and without hope. Jenny Williams, a young first-time offender, learns hard and fast [??] that the rules of the outside world don't apply. Warden Sutter rules with a fist of iron, Edna dictates sadistic order and Charlie, the unofficial head of the cell-block preys on the weak - beatings and sexual abuse run rampant in the cell-blocks. Will any live long enough to tell the horrible truth of Pridemore's atrocities?" ---- Video box blurb

The women-in-prison film has had a long and dishonourable tradition, going all the way back to the 1950's when 'bad girl' (or indeed, 'bad boy') pics joined the beach party movie and the high school film as staples of the cinemagoer's diet. They're still with us today - "Chained Heat", "Caged Heat", "Bad Girls Dormitory", etc, of varying quality and content. I'm not an especial fan, since I tend to find them depressingly unescapist and even a shade nasty - "Reform School Girls" is the exception, having absolutely no connection with reality whatsoever.

Our heroine, Jenny (Linda Carol), is sent to reform school after driving the getaway car in a robbery - no mucking about with setting up things, three minutes into the film, she's on her way to the slammer. In the van she meets up with Lisa (Sherri Stoner) and Nikki - the latter is the streetwise chick going back behind bars again while Lisa is a runaway in for her first time. She clutches a toy bunny rabbit and whimpers a lot.

On arrival, they are processed by the system, providing de Simone with his first chance for a shower scene which, needless to say, he grasps with both hands. We meet two major characters, Edna (Pat Ast), the horrendously evil matron and Dr. Norton (Charlotte McGinnis), the horrendously nice prison psychiatrist who isn't wearing a placard with 'Wooly Liberal' on it, but might as well be. Lisa has her bunny rabbit taken away by Edna.

The girls are taken to their dormitory. Here is one of the great moments in trash cinema history. The prison uniforms they have been given are brown, shapeless and dull. Oddly enough, when the doors open, the other inhabitants are wearing a fine

selection or exotic lingerie; stockings, suspenders, basques, lacy nighties and assorted frilly things more suited to a Janet Reger fashion show than a corrective institution. No explanation as to WHY this is the case is ever given.

Jenny meets Charlie (Wendy O. Williams), Edna's 'friend' ("I don't know what's going on between you two, but it's PERVERSE!") and general hard-case. They do not get on with each other (cat-fight time!). Night falls. Lisa goes to try and get her bunny rabbit. Edna catches her. Bunny gets torched. Edna laughs evilly & Lisa is taken to the psychiatrist. The film nearly slips at this stage, as Sherri Stoner ACTS, describing how she used to get locked in an ice-box, and thus is now claustrophobic. However, she's up against Charlotte McGinnis, a monumentally appalling actress who seems to be having difficulty reading her cue cards. No contest. This was a clever move by the director - using such a bad actress makes the rest of the cast look excellent by comparison.

Most of the rest of the film deals with 'life in prison'. The incidents all have one of two things in common; they involve what American Football fans describe as 'unnecessary roughness', or take place in the washroom - these are without doubt the CLEANEST bad girls ever. An example which comes into both categories : Charlie has taken a shine to Lisa and wants her to be one of 'the gang'. She is initiated by being dragged into the toilets and branded with a hot wire (the video is cut at this point - at the cinema you see the burning take place, but as in "Videodrome", the BBFC decided such things on tape might corrupt or deprave us).

Other highlights: Lisa befriends a kitten as a pet, Edna squashes it. Jenny tries to bribe a prison worker with her body, in order to escape. He quite happily accepts the bribe, then turns her in. Food fight in the mess hall, when Warden Sutter (Sybil Danning in full black gear, leather boots and a riding crop - Ms. Danning should be well up anyone's list of discipline queens, even if they, like me, have no interest in S&M!) tries to make a speech. Some shots featuring a boom microphone. Lisa leaping off a watch tower to her death, precipitating a mini-riot. As you can see, prison life is dull and humdrum stuff.

While all this is going on, Dr. Norton is trying to complain about Edna's 'methods'. Sutter fires her and she goes to the press with her story. An enquiry is set up, though naturally Jemmy is not permitted to testify (she's in the hospital following an especially unnecessary bit of roughness) and the other girls are all too scared. Heroically, however, Jenny climbs from her bed, overpowers the guard and leads a rebellion - not too difficult since there only seems to be four or five warders. Edna goes insane, climbs a watch tower while blasting away with a pump-action shotgun and is finally nailed by Charlie driving a bus into the tower, both of which then explode.

The film ends very suddenly, shortly afterwards, with Jenny being released. My guess is that the budget had given way under the pressure of buying fake silk underwear...

A mere synopsis isn't enough to give the true flavour of the film. It does sound highly dodgy, but the style from start to finish is pure pantomime. The acting is completely OTT (except for Sherri Stoner, who seems to be a refugee from a SERIOUS movie), the direction is lightning fast, with some superb shots and never a moment or change for nudity wasted, and the characters are such stereotypes that you've got to cheer or hiss them as appropriate. The dialogue is brilliant; some examples :

Warden Sutter to Edna : It's time you put on your Fuck You boots & started kicking!

Edna to Charlie : You're just a shit-stain on the panties of life!!

Edna : The name of the game is Control, ladies; COMPLETE Control...

Charlie : She was a Wanker! You're ALL wankers!!

INTELLIGENT and SUBTLE dialogue, isn't it? Virtually every sentence seems to end with an exclamation mark (much like Trash City, really!). Throughout the film, it's the little things hidden in the background that make it all work; a sign saying "Don't Throw Food" which has a large splat of something on it; Sybil Danning's heels which are SEVERE; and a Goth prisoner called Andrea Eldritch...

There is a strong element of parody throughout. Other women-in-cages films have ONE shower scene and ONE cat-fight, "Reform School Girls" scatters them about with reckless abandon every three minutes. Casting Wendy O. Williams as a teenager was an inspired move - older readers may remember her as lead singer of a punk group called The Plasmatics, who had a minor hit in 1978 or so with "Butcher Baby". She must be nearly thirty in this film; she's the only teenager with wrinkles I know...

If you read the video box blurb, you expect something one step above "Ilsa, She-Wolf of the SS", which is a shame, 'cos what you get is one of the purest examples of Bad Cinema I've seen. We are talking loud music. We are talking gratuitous nudity. We are talking gratuitous violence. We are talking Trash.

LUST FOR A VAMPIRE (Jimmy Sangster) - Yutte Stensgard

Between 1957 and 1976, the Hammer film company was THE producer of horror. At least 90% of their product was excellent, but in the last few years as the competition increased, they resorted to souping up their product with sex. Sometimes this worked well ("Vampire Circus"), sometimes it didn't. "Lust for a Vampire" was easily the tackiest product they made, gleefully sacrificing their entire vampire mythos in exchange for some soft-porn.

It all begins quite promisingly and with no hint of what was to come. A standard

Hammer peasant wench wandering through the woods is picked up by a mysterious figure in a cloak and taken, screaming, to a castle where her throat is slit and her blood used to resurrect a skeleton. The first cracks show here - it's not Christopher Lee, instead it's some blonde bimbo.

Switch to the village inn, where Richard Lestrangle, a writer of dodgy novels is staying while on a research trip. The innkeeper warns him about Castle Karnstein, home of Carmilla Karnstein and family. They're all dead now, but this doesn't stop them from coming out, every 40 years or so, to munch on the local virgin girls. Mr. Lestrangle laughs heartily and goes up to take a look. He is surrounded by menacing hooded figures - in a plot twist unworthy of Friday the 13th, they turn out to be pupils at a nearby girls' school out with their history teacher, Giles Barton.

They all return to said school, carefully failing to remark on the fresh blood-stains covering the altar. The other girls are having PE, which consists of dressing up in scanty Greek type gowns and waving your limbs about to the sound of a harp. [The PE mistress is called Miss Playfair!] Lestrangle offers his services as an English teacher and is rejected since there's one on the way. However, he does meet the 'Countess Herritzen' and her niece, Mircalla (one of the most blatant anagrams ever devised, rivalling even 'Johnny Alucard' for naffness).

In a dormitory, where the girls are getting ready for bed (removing what little clothing they were wearing to start with), Mircalla has made friends with an American girl, Susan Perry, and gets her shoulders massaged. Her dress falls off and they arrange to go for a midnight swim.

Meanwhile, back at the inn, Lestrade meets the English teacher and tricks him into going to Vienna instead before going up to the school and taking over the post. Mircalla and Susan go for their swim (nude, naturally) and indulge in a bit of French kissing before Mircalla gets hungry... Lestrade sees her coming back and is so struck with lust he fails to ask why she's been wandering the grounds at midnight dressed in her negligee. Susan's disappearance is noticed, and covered up by the headmistress to prevent a scandal.

Giles Barton has discovered Mircalla's murky past, thanks to her picture in a book, and he confronts her with the evidence (she has a lot of front to con, too). By happy chance, he turns out to be a student of Black Magic and begs to be her servant. She says "Fang you very much" [the editor wishes to disclaim absolutely any responsibility for the preceding pun] and nails him with her teeth. His body is discovered, fortunately while the Countess H. is visiting - her personal 'physician' certifies the death as a heart attack.



Miss Playfair reveals to Lestrade what's been going on. While looking through Mr. Barton's notes, he finds Mircalla's picture - he also discovers the fang-marks on the teacher's corpse. Undaunted, he also confronts Mircalla and shows a severe lack of originality in wanting to meet her at Castle Karnstein, in the middle of the night. They make love, even though Mircalla says it will kill him (accompanied by one of the all-time WORST movie songs - "Strange Love..." moans the singer). Guess what? For some unspecified reason, it doesn't, and he survives with little damage apart from a couple of love-bites.

Miss Playfair plays fair and tells the police of the missing girl and dead teacher. Inspector Heinrich arrives, tells the headmistress to write to Susan's father and has a nasty accident involving a well. Miss Playfair tells Lestrade her suspicions of Mircalla, unfortunately within the latter's hearing; her attempted desanguination of the teacher is foiled only by the cross Miss Playfair wears. Mr Perry arrives, digs up his daughter's coffin and finds it full of daughter, thanks to the Countess H. The fang marks are a bit of a give away, though...

In less time that it takes to say "Burn them!", a rampaging peasant mob, led by a handy priest, has gathered, the castle is set on fire and Mircalla has the bad luck to be impaled on a burning beam that falls from the roof. Playfair and Lestrade live, we assume, happily ever after.

As a sexploitation film, it's pretty good. Lots of cleavage, even if I'm sure school uniform in the 1830's would have been more demure, plenty of blood and some great images. What makes this such an Incredibly Bad Film, then? History mainly. Forget all the things you thought you knew about vampires. Daylight? No - a schoolgirl who spends the day locked in the closet would be TOO suspicious even for this film. So daylight has no effect. What about water, as in "Dracula, Price of Darkness"? No, that'd get in the way of the swimming scene - out it goes, too. The plot is laden down with so much coincidence; luck, chance and fortune rule at every turn, enough to stretch anyone's credibility. A perfect example : when Mr. Perry is discussing his daughter's death in the village inn, his friend says "You don't need a doctor, you need a..."; at that very moment, a priest arrives. Fortunate, huh? The hero isn't your average hero either - lusting after school-girls is just not Hammer!

Hell, it's fun. If nothing else, it's a good reminder that even better film companies can make Bad Films - just don't rely on it for anything other than a good time and some female flesh.

Q. What's red and lies in the gutter?

A. A dead bus.

Firstly, a quick return to 'Repo Man', discussed last time. I shot a letter off to the BBC complaining about the hatchet job they'd done on it, and I received this reply, which is exactly the same one they printed in the Radio Times in response to a similar letter :

"It is BBC policy to remove certain words considered unacceptable from the soundtracks of films, and in the case of "Repo Man" there were over 70 uses of 'f...'. This work was done with the approval of the director Alex Cox, who personally found the substitution 'flippin' melon farmer' surreally funny"

I remain unhappy. Clearly BBC policy isn't fixed (as in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest") - what decides when it is acceptable? Why did the BBC bother to buy a film with over 70 naughty words in it? I daren't think what "Blue Velvet" would sound like - "Don't you flipping look at me!!". Shudder.

Onto better things. I'm not a great fan of George Bernard Shaw, though I do like "My Fair Lady" [??]. I might be converted now, having seen "Arms and the Man" on BBC2 a while back - cynics might suggest that the presence of Helena Bonham-Carter and Patsy Kensit (in a dark wig) have something to do with this... Naturally, I dispute these vicious slurs, even though I have to admit that Miss Kensit in a maid's uniform has been one of the brighter points of recent TV.

Almost as good as Annabel Croft, up to her neck in a pile of foam balls. "Treasure Hunt", for our foreign readers, is a game show where the contestants, in a studio have to solve clues and direct a runner around a scenic stretch of British countryside, to try and find the prize. The program has taken on a whole new interest since Anneka Rice left and was replaced as the runner by Annabel Croft, former number one British ladies' tennis player (and thus, about 581st in the world). She adopts a Dr Who assistant approach (pre-Bonnie Langford) - running about a lot and screaming. This is what they (or at least, I) want. The director seems to have the right idea - barely a week goes past without Miss Croft getting wet...

A letter from Dave Goodfellow asks for a beginners guide to trash films. I'd be interested to hear how everyone else got into them - personally, three things got me involved : my parents' purchase of a video, seeing 'Re-Animator' at the cinema and reading the "Incredibly Strange Films" book. As for suggestions, most of the films in Incredibly Bad Films would do - 'The Hitcher', 'Return of the Living Dead', 'One Million Years B.C.' and 'The Hidden' (when it appears!) would also do and should be easyish to get hold of. Anyone have any other thoughts?

TRASH LITERATURE
(and literature about trash)

"Joe Bob Goes to the Drive-In" - Joe Bob Briggs. Penguin Originals. 5.95.

'Let's take a look at "The Evil Dead" on the old barf meter and I think you'll agree that this is the paint-the-room-red vomit champion of 1983. Cherry Dilday went along for the ride, lost her lunch in the first half hour, tossed her cookies all over the upholstery, ended up so trashed she forgot to take her clothes off until the second feature. This baby is off the scale.'

The drive-in is a strangely American institution, with no real British equivalent. Even cinemas like the Scala, in London, which show a lot of sex 'n' violence, mix in a good few 'classy' films. Joe-Bob Briggs is a connoisseur of the drive-in - his criteria for deciding how good a film is include breast count, whether heads, or other body parts, roll and the number of monsters. This book is a compilation of his newspaper columns, which were syndicated for a few years in the States, until numerous complaints and letters to the editor forced it's death.

If it was just a straight review column, it might be pretty dull reading, even given Joe Bob's, er, innovative style. However, about half of each column is devoted to his latest escapades, whether they involve a trip to France for the Cannes film festival or, more mundanely, the hassle he has with the various "bimbos" in his life (Cherry Dilday, May Ellen Masters and Wanda Bodine); this moves it from the realms of film into that of soap opera.

As a pure film book, there are two severe problems. A lot of the movies he discusses will be unavailable in this country or have a different title, and the censor will have (literally) ripped the guts out of those you can see. It's therefore of limited reference value, but as a fun read and a guide to life in the Deep South, it's highly recommended - T.C. says check it out!

"Republican Party Reptile" & "Holidays in Hell" - P.J. O'Rourke. Picador. 4.99.

These books remind me a little bit of Ben Elton, though with the big difference that P.J. is roughly as far right as Ben Elton is left. This is a breath of fresh air; it's a nice change to see someone slagging off trendy lefties, etc rather than the continual socialist whinging that too many 'alternative' comedians try to pass off as humour these days. He writes on a variety of subjects - the first book contains essays on, amongst other things, driving a Ferrari across America, getting stoned on Ecstasy and living in a small country town while the second is a collection of travel articles from assorted trouble spots; the Lebanon, Northern Ireland, South Africa and anywhere else where man is currently being inhuman to man.

His style is abrasive, none the less well-written for it. In the introduction to "Republican...", he cites his dislikes; they include "aerobics, being a pussy about nuclear power, seat belts and all tiny Third World countries that don't have banking secrecy laws". Meanwhile, his likes include "guns, drugs, fast cars, free love, a strong military with spiffy uniforms and Nastassja Kinski" - how could I possibly fail to like this man?

I think I preferred "Holidays in Hell", since it seemed to be more international in outlook, while "Republican..." was a little too American for me. Both books did entertain me, however, and got the supreme accolade of being read at other times than my journey into work. Probably the best way to decide if you'll like them is take a look at the list of likes and dislikes and see how many you agree with!

DFL II

He was known as Dickfixer Lawkins but, needless to say, that wasn't his real surname. His Christian name was passed down from his father (and from many generations before him) who followed an occupation which, until recent years, had fallen into disuse, subsequent to its earlier malpractice.

Some thought the job must have been something to do with baiting our loyal servants the police, whose powers, because of their monopoly in legally stopping people in the street for no reason at all, once needed curtailing by the Dickfixers. Others, in their wisdom, often though he derived from an arcane stock of statue trimmers, since market squares in the Vind Valley catchment areas advertised their conveniences with prominent mock-ups of the male form.

If the truth were known, the Dickfixers WERE a secret society, but one of sharp medical practitioners learned in the Ancient lore of venereal disorders affecting those of an indiscriminate cast.

Our man Lawkins, at the end of his line of such fiddlers with the enthighed sanctities, was only too pleased to come out into the open at the very same time when the range of such nagging recoils again invaded, with renewed force, prized areas of carnal existence. He knew he would have to do a good job for, being of a fastidious nature himself, he had no son to carry it on. Either rid the Vind Valley in one fell swoop or just let the police have their own way and keep everyone indoors.

He has been seen often traipsing the high-sided alleys, where even the kerbside gutters were overflowing with a substance he suspected to be more than just melting snow... You couldn't miss his characterful presence.

Arriving now at the sadness of the tale, Dickfixer Lawkins was, however, clean mad, but equally sane enough to conceal his background for shame of such madness, with the alias Lawkins. The statues outside the public letting-houses bore the brunt of his single-minded surgery (some said it was needful for him to practice first and the stone appendages were as good as any). But, it did tend to make him a trifle heavy-handed when it came to the real men upon whom he pounced within the dripping walls that the statues seemed to guard.

The thaw had set in. The spring was just round the corner. And it dawned on Dickfixer Lawkins that his job must be at an end. The lambing session was an area of time when he could hibernate, perhaps forever, sheep shears on the pillow beside him. In his fruitful madness, he began to consider other worthy causes (like doctoring the town's drainage systems) - and, as he aimed against the brown-mottled enamel wall with his own stiff-brushed luggage, he placed the blades of his scissors at the optimum angle and snipped proudly with the merest crunching sound just once, like all good surgeons worth their salt (without even first testing the lie of the land with the more precise tweezers).

FUTURE SCHLOCK

No mess, no padding, no flimflam, no sell-out, no chance! TC3 will contain, if all goes more or less to plan, the following :

- * A bit on Linnea Quigley. We tried to get a bit Of her, but the chainsaw wouldn't start, so you'll have to make do with a filmography - we were pretty surprised at how many movies she's been in, though not at their quality...
- * Bad films. "Revenge of the Teenage Vixens from Outer Space", a movie that adds an entirely new dimension to the word 'juvenile'.
- * Steve's comics piece, if he isn't being tied to the bed post for the entire three month period.
- * Possibly something about 'The New Avengers'. Joanna Lumley is soon to be seen in a film where she plays a high-class prostitute. Say no more.
- * A lot of lists, covering every subject from my ten favourite T-shirts to the most disgusting female nude scenes. We're looking for plenty more, though - any and all subjects, film and non-film, welcome.

And lots of stuff as yet unwritten...

The night was an excitement vacuum.

I pulled up the collar on my trenchcoat to exclude a greater part of the winter chill. Also because it looked real mean in the shop window across the street. So there I was, sucking the end of this pen, which would have been OK had I been the first person to do so. It was the kind of pen that runs out when you're writing important cheques for impressive people and it's previous owner was clearly the kind who leaves two million personalized Biros as a legacy. But then, who cares? You leave your mark, where is not important...

Anyway, I was still there, in the neon glitter and the Mazda glare, washed up above the city's tidal restlessness and questions were forming themselves in my mind. Kinda irritating questions. The kind that grab your foot when you kick them. Questions like why most people trade their dreams in for security. Why nothing makes sense when you look at it hard enough. And why I couldn't get the cling wrap off Travellers Fare sandwiches in under a minute.

Ghandi, when asked about Western civilization, replied that it would be a good idea. Nice turn of phrase, but this close to the ground it was alive and kicking, you could hear it breathe, and read it's droppings. It had a heartbeat too, the kinda slowed down sound you hear on Hammer horror film soundtracks as Dracula creeps up on the girl. Or at least, the cameraman does.

I rifled through the absurdly large number of pockets in my trenchcoat, seemingly designed so that whatever you leaned against or sat on coincided with some lumpy object secreted beneath, looking for a pen to chew, when I realised that really big inside pocket was designed for a Filofax. Somehow, I figured that the average private investigator would rather walk around with his trousers rolled up than carry a personal organiser.

I reckoned that the more you classified, pigeon holed, timetabled and generally scheduled your life, the less you lived it, the more of a passenger you became in your own existence and the less likely you were to actually spot any patterns, any outline to the big picture. That would, I guess, be a nice theory if the obverse were true, but it would be like saying that because BR trains always seem to be late it would be a good idea to turn up late to catch them.

Thankfully, I was rescued from that train of thought by the girl in the short leather skirt I had been tracking walk down the street to her car. Her body reminded me of the Porsche 911, whose curves seemed to be a triumph of form over function. Not exactly Nietzsche, but exactly nice. She was hotter than leather underwear, more

provocative than Cadbury's and it wasn't difficult to see why. Hobbling was sexy.

But which car was hers? It was not the BMW, that much was certain. After a decade and a half of relentless marketing, a BMW gives off very safe aromas. It's drivers inhabit a world of ski holidays and dry cleaners. The pleats and folds perfectly complement the executive suit.

She got into the BMW. Good name for a band that, Blue Mercedes, smooth and sensual, the dolphin of the automotive zoo. All I needed to know was how dolphins give birth underwater or for that matter why all the lightbulbs I replaced said "Woolworths" on them. As she drove off in a car that holds the line like a yuppie with a straw up his nose and sticks to the road like eggs on a supermarket shelf, I was left with an itch I couldn't scratch. I may have more flaws than the Empire State, but something was telling lies, and I didn't mean the hands on my Timex.

But what I couldn't see was how images differed from reality. If instant coffee sex, spring-fresh (what?) fabric softener and pension plans were real then there was no distinction, and it won't be long before cars are sold in supermarkets next to microwave ovens, probably with modular interiors by brand names like Benetton, Next, Levi's. Reality was no better, as that guy who paid a prostitute to stand naked on the other side of the room while he threw cellophane wrapped kippers at her would surely agree. Something round here smelt mighty fishy.

If the battle for our minds was being fought in the videodrome, where the spectator is inside the arena, then who was fighting the contest and whose side was trash on?

Perhaps trash set out to peddle an aesthetic, a notion that the colourful, the cheery flux of symbolism (guns, stars & stripes, peroxide) represented a victory over the grey, the product marketing world where you are what you drive because you drive what you are. Trouble was, that the high impact multi-sensory overload / multi media infiltration ended up functioning blankly, without recourse to discourse, no statement of intent and no hairs in the bath. I reckoned what I needed was a drink. I also reckoned that a nation of kids consuming other people's technicolour imaginations was one hell of a timebomb.

The girl in the leather skirt, now I had time for her. A friend of mine said once that she wanted the kind of guy who looks like he has just got out of prison, and has a lot of catching up to do. I replied that I wanted the kind of girl that would get you IN prison.

The guy who approached with a puzzled expression on his face was looking for something too. He was looking for his car.

A quick flick through the pages of Screen International's special Cannes edition reveals several films, in various stages of completion, that might be of interest. Most of the main ones are sequels, following in the current American trend of "It worked last time" (not to be confused with "Let's catch this passing band-wagon", last seen going past the prison on the way to the sea bottom). First up, and most promisingly, we have "Highlander 2020" (what happened to numbers 2 to 2019, I hear you cry?). At least it's directed by Russell Mulcahy and starring Christopher Lambert again; hopefully Queen won't be available to provide the music. Secondly, and winner of the 'Better Late than Never' prize, we have "Scanners II - The New Generation". David Cronenberg won't be seen anywhere near this, it does at least have the same producers. Next up, and most worrying of the lot - what do you reckon is THE successful horror pic, dearly beloved by the fans, yet unsullied by a crap follow-up? Ladies and gentlemen, get ready for "Re-Animator II - The Sequel". Brian Yuzna moves over from producing to directing this one, and no Jeffrey Coombs either. Another Charles Band-ish sequel is "Trancers II" - Jack Deth returns in this follow up to Kim Newman's fave B-movie of the 80's. Whaddya mean, you hadn't seen "Trancers" till it was on TV? As for 'Films you hoped never to hear of again', how about "Graveyard Shift II - The Understudy". At least that's one that can't possibly be any worse than the original.

Nice to see Gerard Kikoine getting another film to direct after "Edge of Sanity" (see elsewhere). This time, it's Edgar Allen Poe's "Buried Alive" starring Robert Vaughn and Donald Pleasance - hopefully with more Madonna clones being slaughtered. In pre-production, we have Stuart Gordon's version of another Poe story, "The Pit & the Pendulum", which should include Peter O'Toole and Jeffrey Coombs. Beginning principal photography in the autumn, there's "Night of the Living Dead". Yep, that's right - directed by Tom Savini this time, from a screenplay by George Romero based on the 1968 'classic'. Michael Winner has found time, between sponsoring the Guardian Angels, to plan "Bullseye", written by Leslie Bricusse (he was responsible for "Sherlock Holmes - the Musical"). Stars Roger Moore & Michael Caine, starts filming in October. Going against what I'd heard elsewhere, Peter "Bad Taste" Jackson's next production isn't "Brain Dead" at all, but a "scandalous 'spluppet' saga" called "Meet the Feebles".

Finally, there are always a couple of strange titles to be found - the best ones I could see were "Mutant [sic] on the Bounty" and "Revenge of the Radioactive Reporter", though on past performance ("Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-O-Rama" becoming "The Imp"), who knows what titles they'll be playing under by the time they reach our shores!

IT MUST BE TRUE

Slightly different format this time, as we concentrate on some peculiarly nasty accidents that people have managed to survive and give a special round of applause to the careless people who have proven beyond all shadow of doubt that they are not vampires...

Or maybe the pictures accompanying this article demonstrate that jumbo tooth-picks can damage your health if used incorrectly. The first gentleman shown was in the front passenger seat of a taxi when it pulled out to overtake a trailer carrying tree trunks, some sharpened into stakes. Unfortunately, there was a lorry coming and the taxi driver had to swerve back, straight into the back of the trailer... One of his lungs collapsed, though miraculously the stake had missed all major arteries and organs and had acted like a swab to prevent the bleeding. Three weeks later he was back at work.

Given earlier caustic comments about it, I ought to mention that this story, too, comes from the News of the World. However, the sheer POINTLESSNESS of making it up and faking the piccie encourages me to believe that it was that week's grain of truth.

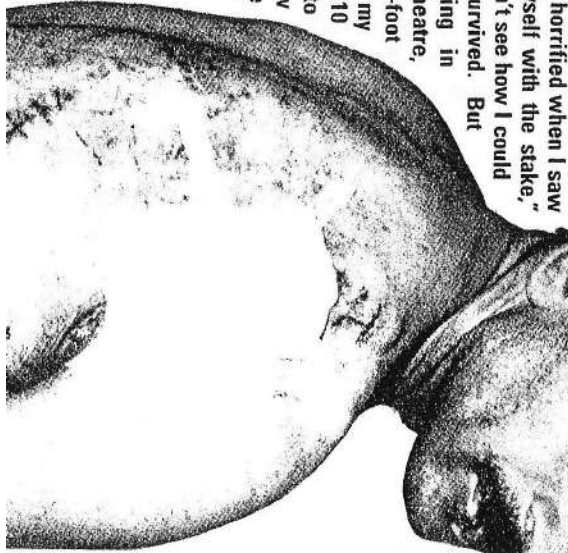
No such doubts about the spear-gun in the head picture (a bonus point for each film you can name to use one as an ABOVE sea-level weapon!), which appeared in several papers over Easter. The imbecile was trying to load the gun by pressing on the spear with the end of a can when it went off. He was rushed to hospital with five foot of metal sticking out of his head and a fair bit inside - miraculously, he is expected to make an almost full recovery. Reports that he now enjoys listening to Kylie Minogue have been denied...

Chainsaws. There, that made you sit up. How about "Man Cuts Throat with Chainsaw and Lives"? Forthman Murff, 74, was cutting wood near his home in Mississippi when a large branch fell from a tree and knocked him into a ditch on top of the chainsaw he was using. It severed his windpipe, most of the neck muscles and three major blood vessels, leaving only his spine and carotid artery intact. Astonishingly, he crawled to his truck and drove several miles to a neighbour's who then took him to the nearest hospital, a further hour away. The blood for the cut veins was pouring into his lungs all the time which meant that every so often, he had to stop, hold his head way over and let the blood run out of his lungs. "I knew I had to get the blood out so I could breathe", said Murff later. "The Lord left me here for a reason and I can tell you that it wasn't to chase widow women".



PHOTOGRAPHS: REX FEATURES/SIPA PRESS

And I'll always have the scars to



"I was absolutely horrified when I saw this picture of myself with the stake," says Adem. "I didn't see how I could possibly have survived. But there I was, lying in the operating theatre, still with the six-foot stake through my chest. Yet, within 10 days, I was able to stand up and now me and my wife Dondu have our gruesome trophy of our long day of horror - these two halves of the stake that had impaled me."



Room now for a brief sweep through some odd stories from the Weekly World News; I think we'll start off with a few more messy ones :

BARBER SNEEZES - AND SLITS CUSTOMER'S THROAT.

KILLER WHO ATE GIRL GOES FREE - A truly international one this. Japanese student of literature in Paris, shot his Dutch girlfriend after she rejected him. Then he "flayed Renee's flesh into long, thin strips, stopping from time to time to photograph his horrible handiwork". This was back in 1981 - he spent three years in a French jail, five more in a Japanese insane asylum, and is now "a changed man".

HEALTH FOOD NUT EATS SO MUCH FIBER - HIS STOMACH EXPLODES! - "It was an awful sight" according to the policeman who found him. "There was blood and half-digested food splattered all over the room". Doctors speculated that his intestines somehow became blocked. As he continued to eat high fiber foods, his stomach got bigger and bigger until it popped.

ANIMAL LOVERS OUTRAGED AT HORSE - THAT EATS CATS!

FLY LAYS EGGS IN WOMAN'S THROAT! - A 38-year old woman who accidentally swallowed a fly almost choked to death after it laid eggs in her throat and clogged it with maggots. Dr. Okulov, in a letter to the Soviet journal "Pathology" said he removed the equivalent of a heaped tablespoonful of squirming maggots from the woman's oesophagus.

SPACE SHUTTLE ATTACKED BY 200-FT. UFO! - "Bug-eyed aliens invaded Discovery and terrified crew" is how this one starts. The WWN gets this story from "a respected London newspaper" with a circulation of 1.3 million (it's the Daily Star, in case you were wondering), based on a tape of an exchange between Houston and Discovery. An astronaut supposedly says "Houston, we have a fire" - "fire", it seems, is a code word for a UFO...

ATLANTIS FOUND ON MOON! - well, makes a change from World War II bombers, Hitler, Elvis Presley or Marilyn Monroe, I suppose.

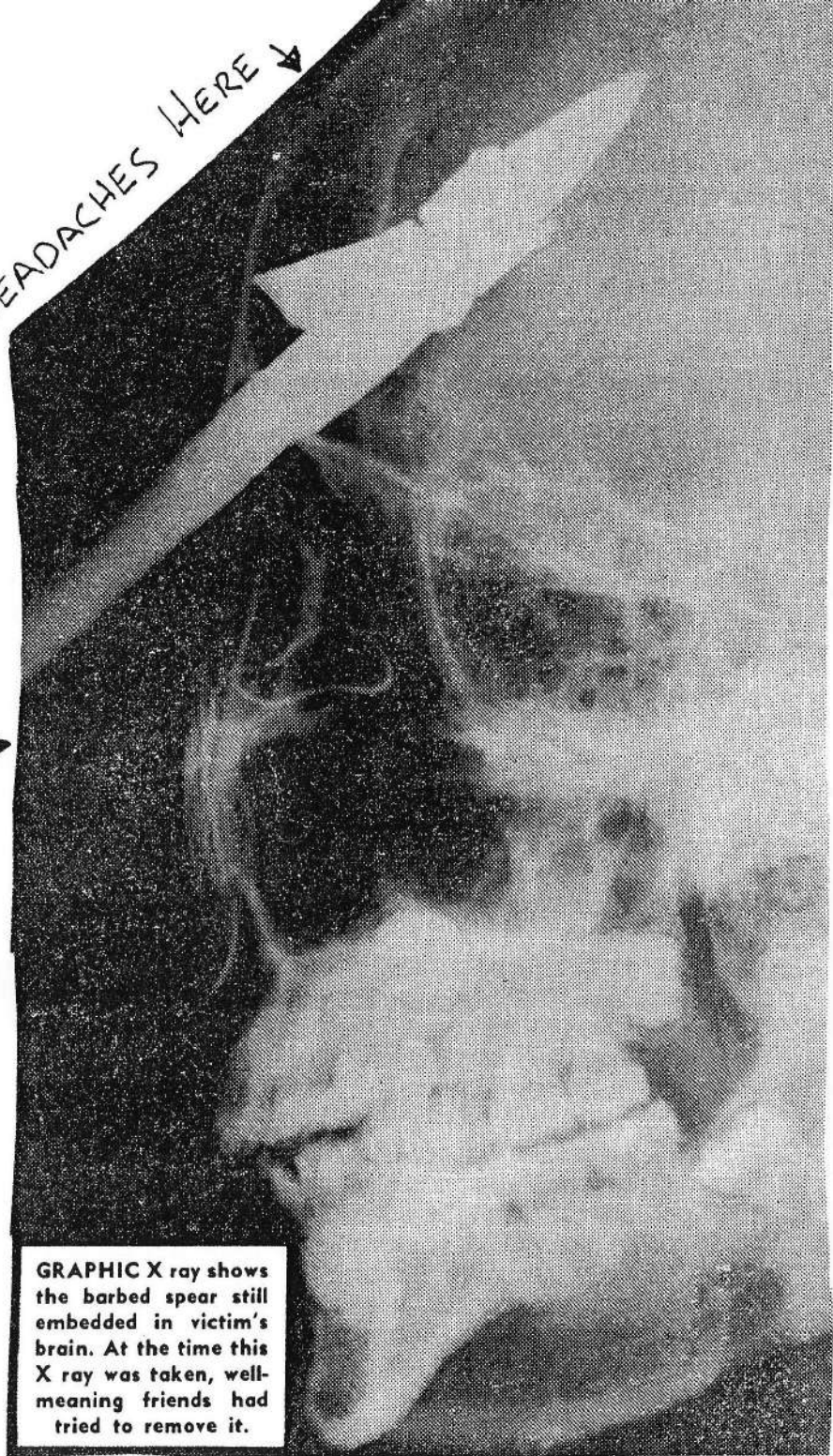
WARNING SHOT KILLS 2 PEOPLE - Not, oddly enough, in Peking...

KARATE FANATIC TAKES ON 4 LIONS - AND IS EATEN ALIVE! - "All that remained of the man were his black karate pants and belt, his head, his shoulders, and portions of his arms, one hand and one leg."

EVIL STEPMOM GIVES TOT BOILING WATER ENEMA - There's sick and there's sick; however, this beats the lot. Perhaps she should have given one to the exploding health-freak?

TENSION HERE →

HEADACHES HERE ↓



GRAPHIC X ray shows the barbed spear still embedded in victim's brain. At the time this X ray was taken, well-meaning friends had tried to remove it.

THE SECTION WITH NO NAME

I never cease to be impressed with the quality of virtually all the amateur publications and fanzines that I've been sent. I think, to a large extent, it's to do with the enthusiasm for their subjects that they all show. Hack writers are paid for what they do, and tend not to care as much as people who do it for the fun that get from it - this comes through in a lot of the writing, even if the presentation can be a bit naff! Here's a selection that I've enjoyed most since last time:

BLEEDER'S DIGEST (22 pages A4, 50p) - Large format 'zine with plenty to read, most of it on the more obscure subjects. However, it's hard to give any sort of objective review of a 'zine whose editor liked "Graveyard Shift"! Aaargh...

CREEPING UNKNOWN (28 pages A5, 50p) - One of the leading lights of the horror zine scene, having now reached issue 9. Report on Black Sunday, lots of reviews, film news and an interview with Clive Barker. Solid stuff, some nifty illos.

DEATH BANE (28 pages A5, 100p) - This is quite an excellent magazine, by far the best on the market. It is of course pure coincidence that the editor lives a mile from me and has threatened dire reprisals in the event of a bad review... Sleazy, lots of bad quality pics (nice fold-out centre tho'), manic style.

FIEND (6 pages A4, 10p) and **SQUIRM** (4 pages A4, 5p) - What were you doing when you were 15? No, APART from that! Mark Stevens is editing these two 'zines, the former about horror films (tsk, tsk - 18 certificates??), the latter literature. The price (or lack) offsets the lack of experience.

GORE GAZETTE (7 pages A5, ???) - Nearly all reviews in this one, with a certain abrasive style that appeals to me. American in origin, which is both good (you get warning of films to watch out for when they come across here) and bad (too many obscurist Ameri-references).

IMAGINATOR (40 pages A4, 60p) - Probably the best 'zine in terms of value for money, on the market today. Well printed, with some of the best illustrations I've seen, it's pretty difficult to find other than minor faults.

PRISONERS OF WAR (48 pages A5, 50p) - Not a filmzine, but continues serenely on, having published more issues, and of a better quality than most too. Should be required reading for all 'zine editors to give them something to aim for.

BLEEDER'S DIGEST - Paul Higson, 63 Geoffrey St, Chorley, Lancs, PR6 0HF.

CREEPING UNKNOWN - Nick & Cath, 29 Westland Ave, HUCKNALL, Nottingham NG15 6FN.

DEATH BANE - Just, 77 Crystal Palace Park Road, LONDON, SE26 6UT.

FIEND/SQUIRM - Mark Stevens, 141 Montague Rd, BILTON, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 6LQ.

GORE GAZETTE - Try Stefan Kwiatkowski, 2A The Mount, Erdington, Birmingham B23 7NG.

IMAGINATOR - Ken Miller, Brands House, Kingshill Road, Four Ashes, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP13 5BB.

PRISONERS OF WAR - Wallace Nicoll, 48 Broughton Ave, Glasgow, G52 3RU.

* MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

(Sound : Only background noises. No FX.)

WIDE AERIAL SHOT : Car park bathed in sunshine from bright blue sky. Pale blue open '65 Ford wafts towards toll booth, gently comes to halt.

CLOSEUP, GROUND LEVEL : White-haired single male occupant pays attendant (out of shot). Car moves forward.

RETURN TO AERIAL & PAN : Drives between rows of similar Detroit Americans. Goes directly to empty slot. Stops. Gent in perfect Worsted-Tex suit gets out.

CLOSE ON DOOR : Door clicks shut under firm hand.

OVER SHOULDER : Enters empty phone booth. Searches for a while without bending down. Pulls miniature reel-to-reel tape deck and A4 envelope from under desk.

CLOSEUP HAND : Presses PLAY and opens envelope, fans b/w photos for camera (PROPS : head/shoulders guerilla leaders)

CLOSE UP SPINNING TAPE REELS FOR DURATION OF VOICE

VOICE (featureless baritone, mid-Atlantic accent) : "Your mission, Jim, should you choose to accept it, is to discover the number of Colonel Fernandez's Swiss bank account before election day. As usual, should you, or any member of IMF be caught or captured, the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions. This tape will self-destruct in ten seconds. Good luck, Jim..."

An incredible 171 fifty-minute episodes of this television series were made between 1966 and 1972. Quite how it has missed the award of cult status I don't know, but when I asked around for info on it, the reply was "What? That crap TV series?". So how could a program which always repeated the same great opening line, followed through with an ingenious and dedicated crew of specialists fighting subversive elements (and always winning out) be, in my opinion, such quality trash?

ACTING - NONE. Perfectly dressed and shaven, driving clean cars (slowly), facial expressions kept to a minimum. Perhaps a hint of a knowing smile on Jim Phelp's (played by Peter Graves) face the only concession to acting. Leonard Nimoy,

as Paris, is perfectly at home here!

UNDERLYING MESSAGES - NONE. It could easily have been used to reinforce the triumph of American 'values' and 'freedom' over inferior citizens of banana republics and Balkan states. Most of the bad guys stole nuclear secrets, embezzled the funds of some poor third world nation, or rigged elections. Fair game really!

PLOTS - LUDICROUS. I mean, honestly, convincing an enemy agent that he has slept for three years and failed his mission ("Operation Rogosh"), convincing a nuclear scientist that it is now the year 2000 to learn where he hid some plutonium ("Two Thousand") or that World War III has started ("The Numbers Game") do stretch credibility just a little bit. My fave concerns putting a maritime criminal into a submarine mockup and pretending the war is still on (including making him look 30 years younger) and that they are all about to be killed when the sub is depth-charged. One by one the IMF team leave by the torpedo tubes or hatches and walk to a waiting car. The guy cracks!

STARS - William Shatner, Robert Reed (star of "The Brady Bunch"), Roddy McDowall ("Fright Night") and, of course, Leonard Nimoy (his first major part after "Star Trek").

TRADEMARKS - Safebreaking, impersonation, electrical wizardry and split second timing. How about breaking in from BEHIND a safe to fit a false back, alerting the guard to open the safe while being watched by a remote camera to record the combination, and, when the General turns up to investigate the apparent theft, ensuring that his superiors arrive simultaneously, the combination is now in his drawer and the contents have returned to the safe. So you can't catch him embezzling money, but for a frame-up that no court would believe, the IMF never fails! Throw in a perfect vocal impersonator (Rollin' Hand, played by Martin Landau), rubber masks that instantly transform his face into that of anyone else, an electronics expert, Barney (Greg Morris) and a selection of 60's beauties (Barbara Bain, Lesley Warren) and you have a Mission Impossible.

MUSIC - The music just has to be my favourite of the TV themes; the tense alarm-like ringing, confident brass and wickedly hooky achromatic melody are combined to perfection (it says here). Do check out the James Taylor Quartet EP "Mission Impossible" for the worst rendition of this (or indeed any) TV theme I have ever heard. Well rehearsed? Get outta here!

All in all then, a fabulous escapist series that somehow managed to pull off the most far-fetched plots, stretch the credibility of the viewer while keeping tongue planted firmly in cheek. Perhaps the fact it was entirely free of car chases, gun battles, helpless blondes and the standard devices of other TV series didn't help!

The company Troma has become a legend in film circles (or at least the sort I move in), thanks to their technique of churning out low-budget exploitation movies with titles like 'Stuff Stephanie in the Incinerator' and 'Surf Nazis (Must Die)'. Their most renowned product is probably 'The Toxic Avenger', which gained notoriety when the BBFC demanded 15 minutes of cuts before release - it says a lot that the result was still perfectly intelligible! Here are some of their 'forthcoming attractions' :

THE TOXIC AVENGER, PART 2 - (Kurz & Weil, 1988). The much awaited sequel to their international hit about a nerd who falls into some chemical waste and mutates into a superhero who wreaks revenge on his tormentors and any other bad people. Even the cut version was superbly tacky and tasteless, with guide dogs getting shot, old ladies dry cleaned and kids run over. Unfortunately, Part 2 has very little of this sort of thing, probably due to it being a co-production with Lorimar (makers of 'Dallas' - or is it 'Dynasty'?), who presumably demanded reducing the blood until it resembles a Saturday morning cartoon for kids. Toxie, as our hero is known, is unemployed since he cleaned up Tromaville, and heads off to Japan to seek his long lost father. This leaves the field clear for Apocalypse Inc to move in and turn Tromaville into a chemical dump. Toxie returns, having killed his father after finding him smuggling drugs, mops them up and discovers his real father.

The problem is that the messy splatter of the original has been replaced with funny fight sequences; Toxie is now little more than a Mr. T clone. Even his blind, blonde bimbo, one of the highlights last time, is played by a different actress (Phoebe Legear) and she's far too twee. Despite a couple of promising moments, the overall result is something that makes you want to stick a mop down your, or Lorimar's, throat. "Toxic Avenger 3" has been shot; one glimmer of hope is it's subtitled "The Last Temptation of Toxie" - surely not a Lorimar co-production with that title!

TROMA'S WAR (Kurz & Weil, 1989) - A plane of tourists crashes on a Caribbean island to discover a group of terrorists are preparing to conquer the US. Naturally, the tourists can't let that happen and take on the bad guys. "Makes Rambo look like 'Lassie Come Home'", said Variety. There certainly is a lot of blood here, 99% of it in the form of squibs going off after people get hit by bullets. There's not a great deal else - gun battles occupy at least half the picture so if you liked "Commando", this might well suit. There are some moments of BAD taste; a tongue pulling, a girl being raped by an AIDS sufferer and a Siamese twin getting, er, de-Siamed - how much of all this will survive on the video is a moot point. The characters (including ANOTHER blind bimbo!) are total stereotypes and the whole thing has an aura of heavy parody, which is generally unsuccessful since no-one of any intelligence took "Rambo" seriously to start with. Acceptable rather than brilliant.

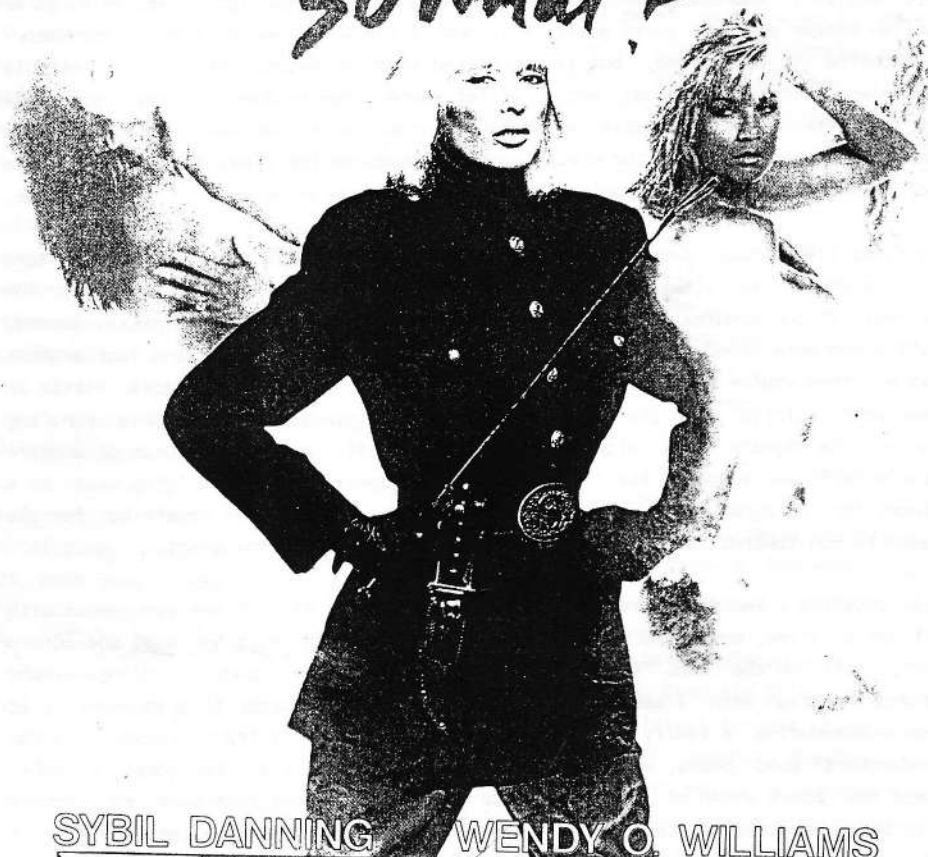
EVIL CLUTCH (Andreas Marfori) - Troma also buy in foreign films; this is an Italian horror pic, and guess what? It is one of the WORST movies I have ever seen - I expected it to be bad, but it surpassed even my fears. The plot is totally incoherent (couple in woods, horror writer warns them of danger, they ignore him and are attacked by a 'zombie' whose makeup looks more like sun-burn), the cast numbers five and the director clearly got a Steadicam for Xmas; there is barely a shot without the camera swooping, swaying or disappearing up it's own backside.

The first five minutes promise a lot of squirms, with a guy having his genitals torn off by a woman with claws in an unusual place (presumably Miss Evil Clutch). For the next 70-odd minutes though, there's nothing except cliches, pointless scenes, dry ice and more bloody Steadicam shots. The end is gory enough - it's just a shame that by then you're so cynical that even the sight of a chainsaw does little to raise your spirits. The characters wander about aimlessly - the zombie runs on, removes the hero's hands with a rock and runs off, and Miss Clutch disappears totally half way through the film, only to reappear at the end lying next to a bridge, for no apparent reason other than to give the director something for the camera to run towards. The biggest pile of garbage I've seen for years.

RABID GRANNIES (Emmanuel Kervyn) - Up until last year, Belgium was synonymous with dullness in films, music and football. Now, all of a sudden with New Beat and 'Crazy Love', it's on the map. 'Rabid Grannies' continues the trend - judging by the audience reaction when I saw it, it's the best European horror film in years . It takes place during a family reunion - everyone is there to try to crawl into the grandmothers' good books, who are rich and about to snuff it. Everyone, that is, except the black sheep of the family, Christopher, who was sent away in disgrace after being involved in black magic. He sends a peace offering of a carved box - the bad news is that it turns the grannies into demons...

From then on we're deep in 'Evil Dead', spam-in-a-castle country. The family and staff are slaughtered in astonishingly messy ways : limbs, blood and internal organs fly, an 8-year old is dismembered, a fat guy has his legs eaten when he gets stuck trying to escape, a woman is ground head-first into railings. That the overall effect is entertaining rather than sickening (even the non-horror fan I dragged along enjoyed it) is tribute to the style and directorial stance. An example : a priest blows his head off with a shotgun, unusually not in close-up. Then, a few scenes later we pass the same location and see a goblet of flesh with a few teeth attached casually draped over the set... Sure, there are cliches, there are holes in the plot - you just get no time to think about them and since all the characters are unpleasant, you 'enjoy' their revolting fates. I honestly can't remember the last time I was as sorry to see a film end - partly perhaps because there's little chance of seeing it all again. That the censor won't like it is certain; it's not even "thoughtful" gore a la 'Hellraiser'. Mind you, if "Bad Taste" can survive..!

SO YOUNG... SO RAD...
SO WHAT?



SYBIL DANNING WENDY O. WILLIAMS

REFORM SCHOOL

GIRLS



NEW WORLD PICTURES AND INTERNATIONAL CINEVISION PRODUCTIONS, INC.
IN ASSOCIATION WITH BALCOR FILM INVESTORS PRESENT A TOM DESIMONE FILM
"REFORM SCHOOL GIRLS" STARRING WENDY O. WILLIAMS-PAT AST-LINDA CAROL
AND SYBIL DANNING AS "SUTTER" DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY HOWARD WEXLER
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS GREGORY HINTON AND LEO ANGELOS
PRODUCED BY JACK CUMMINS WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY TOM DESIMONE



NEW WORLD VIDEO

Shock Around the Clock 3

**Saturday July 29th, 1989,
The Scala Cinema, 275 Pentonville Rd.,
King's Cross, London.**

Doors open at noon

No refunds. No admission without tickets. Tickets not transferable.

Admit One

It's currently 5.31 pm on Friday night and I'm sitting in the office at the keyboard with tears streaming down my face. No, I've not been overcome with emotion at the occasion, I acquired my first pair of contact lenses today...

Welcome to the Trash City "Shock Around the Clock" supplement, a little later than anticipated thanks to my company choosing this week to send me on a course which has left me with no time until now to write this up. With my memories failing fast, I'm in for a long session. Any factual errors are my fault since I don't have any books with me in which to check things...

Before we start, a few things that have come up since finishing the main event. And where better to start than Annabel Croft. Her new programme, 'Interceptor' basically reverses the idea of "Treasure Hunt" - the contestants run about the country and she sits in the studio giving them instructions on how to meet before they get shot by the Interceptor. Since Miss Croft is sitting in the studio, we don't get to see her bum so the only saving grace of the programme is said Interceptor himself, who deserves a series of his own for impersonating a Glaswegian Rutger Hauer. Since the contestants are always loathsome, I find myself rooting for him and wishing he was armed with something better than a light gun. Like a bazooka.

Also fun was Roger Cook's report on satanism, which went on at great length about how evil these people were, relied far too heavily on inference, second-hand reports and gossip, balanced with an array of astonishingly boring Christians and the overall effect was to leave me with a strong desire to nail someone to a cross.

Transvision Vamp's second LP hit the shops. Perhaps the best way I can review it is

to tell you that I listened to Side A two weeks ago and haven't yet summoned up the enthusiasm to try Side B. On the literary front, I have to report, sadly, the decline of "Network Video", praised last issue for it's attitude. Since then, it's become tediously mainstream, started carrying ads for 0898 phone numbers and 'glamour' videos (totally counter-productive - what they gain from advertising will be lost in family readership) and the final straw was a sermon on not buying pirate videos. Personally, while companies charge exorbitant prices for their product, delay it for months, and willingly act as slavering lapdogs to the BBFC, I can see why people do use Dodgy Video Inc. The only part that's not decayed is Nick Cairn's Video Vault which remains a model of wit among the sycophancy.

Right, enough of this malicious libel. Onto Shock Around the Clock. Laden down with food & drink, the five of us arrived at the Scala just on 11 o'clock to discover a long queue already straggling around the building. Never mind. We were quite happy to stand around discussing films, computers and the precise reasons why Steve had only managed three and a half hours sleep the night before...

We were finally let in and joined the mad rush for seats, ending up with some fairly decent ones near the front. Then we went to claim our T-shirts (not a patch on last years') and picked up a programme. No such event would be complete without a couple of late changes - in this case, "contractual obligations" meant that "Santa Sangre" could not be shown, though the general view was that this was no great loss. The usual introductions from Alan Jones and Stefan Jaworzyn, and we were off...

MONGOLITOS (Stephane Ambiel, France 1989).

A load of crap. Literally. "A day in the life of a French public toilet". We have drug addicts, trans-sexual nuns and any number of sleazy low-lives. Fortunately, it was only ten minutes long so there's not a lot I can say about it, and I'm sure you don't really want me too...

HARDCOVER (Tibor Takacs, USA 1988). Jenny Wright, Clayton Rohner.

Originally known as "I, Madman", Jenny Wright ("Near Dark") plays a bookshop assistant who finds real life parallelling the book she's reading, which is a little unfortunate since it tells the story of a psychopath who cuts his face off to prove his love for a girl and then goes round slaughtering people to rebuild it.

Overall, the film comes across as unsatisfactory. The plot has holes in it large enough to drive a truck through - for example, the heroine believes that the next victim is going to be a librarian so the police stake it out (her boyfriend's a cop - handy, eh?). She takes the place of said librarian, who's fainted just before going to lock-up, and manages to find all the light switches without being told

where they are. A minor point perhaps, though if even my gullibility was breached enough to notice this, it can't be all that minor!

Occasionally some tension is built up by Takacs (who directed "The Gate"), only to be thrown away in a cliché. The idea is a novel one and the make-up for the murderer is pretty startling - this isn't enough to hold the film together as the blatantly semaphored storyline wends its way to the predictable climax and ending, which leaves all the interesting questions unresolved and answers only the dull ones.

LIFE ON THE EDGE (Tom Burman, USA 1989). John Glover, Nancy Mette.

This is the first film as a director for Tom Burman, though his name may well be familiar to you as a special effects man, most notably (from my, Nastassja Kinski obsessed, viewpoint anyway) on "Cat People". This is a difficult film to classify with any precision - I'm sure a group of psychologists would have hours of fun trying to analyse Mr Burman on the basis of it!

To some extent, it resembles an episode of "Terry and June" (it's OK, only to SOME extent!) with the Hollowheads, a nuclear family of wife, husband and kids. It's the "father-takes-his-boss-home-for-dinner" scenario - there (fortunately), the resemblance to "Terry and June" ends, for the setting here is not Surbiton, but some weirdly futuristic planet where all necessities are piped directly to your home. Add to this that the boss is at least a winger short of a Subbuteo team and latches wildly after Mrs. Hollowhead - here you have a fascinating opportunity for mayhem of various sorts.

The sets make the film worth-while by themselves. If you can imagine Salvador Dali and Andy Warhol working for Habitat, you might get some idea of the sort of thing - all bright colours, chrome plating and large numbers of wriggly things. The performances are just as good, with Nancy Mette taking a "Parents" style approach as the dutiful mother, left to cope with the disasters of everyday life that gradually push her ever closer to the Edge.

95% of the film is fascinating to watch - the remaining 5% takes place outside the Hollowhead home in the 'real world', which looks like a scrap-yard; those scenes add very little to the film for me. The only other criticism I can make is the music, which too often sinks into American pap-rock when it could have been used to add to the air of surreal weirdness that pervades the rest of the film. Overall, probably the most pleasant surprise of the whole festival and one I would recommend if you want something a little (a little? A whole lot!) out of the ordinary.

NIGHT LIFE (David Acomba, USA 1989). Scott Grimes and a lot of other Americans.

Archie Melville is a teenager with a problem. He has to work in his uncle's morgue or he won't get to go to college. Four of his class-mates (two bimbos, two bozos) delight in making his life hell, at least until they are involved in a car accident and killed. By a quirk of fate (!), the truck they were hit by was carrying some nasty chemicals and before you can say "Return of the Living Dead ripoff", they're back, they're hungry and they're not worried about getting sued for violation of copyright.

That's actually a little unfair. The zombie don't really get their rotting act together until the last third of the film - the first third is almost standard high school fare with the usual assortment of sexual innuendo, etc. Enjoyable enough, if a little too well-worn to be more than fast-food film-making. Then, suddenly, CLICK! We switch to Morgue Mode and a few scenes in the mortuary which, while not especially bloody, have a nasty edge to them that wouldn't be out of place in one of the tackier Italian movies and is completely at odds with what's gone before. Gloomy stuff.

Finally, just as you realise it's the American version of "Nekromantik", CLICK! The zombies are out, roaming the streets and after our hero. Although there's just the four of them, which might seem a little cheap-skate, good use is made of them and we get the first real gore of the festival; power-drill through the eye, exploding body and sundry other juicy bits of entertainment. This is probably when the film is at it's best as the director finally pushes his foot to the floor to give us the excitement that is a little lacking in the film.

The ending is pretty much as you would expect from a teen-age horror pic, though for one glorious moment I thought the director was going to give us a real downbeat finish. He wimped out, which just about sums up the tone of the movie. If it had tried to be just one thing it would have worked better - still, I enjoyed it as a whole, and you can't say fairer than that!

[At this point we got a brief chat from Clive Barker. He showed us a short clip from "Night Breed", with David Cronenberg looking suitably psycho and answered a few questions from the audience. The most interesting things to come out of this were :

a) No, he didn't like "Hellbound" either.

and b) All he's made from the series is 21,000 pounds. And that's all he will do. Even Clive Barker gets ripped off now and again! Oh, while we're on the subject, I credited Peter Atkins with directing "Hellbound" in the main section - he wrote the script, it was really Tony Randel who's the guilty party!]

MONKEY SHINES (George Romero, USA 1988). Jason Beghe, John Pankow.

You may have heard about the program in America where paraplegics are given trained

monkeys to help them with everyday tasks like fetching things, dialling phones, etc. This film uses that idea as it's central premise, beginning when Allan Mann (Beghe) is hit by a truck and paralysed from the neck down. His best friend Geoff (Pankow) gives him a monkey, Ella, without telling him that she has been experimented on by Geoff, trying to develop her intelligence.

Things go well for a while, while the man/monkey pair becoming closer and closer, until Allan realises that when he has nasty thoughts about people, they tend to die 'accidentally' shortly afterwards. Could Ella be to blame?

The plot sounds silly and the climax is even sillier, with Geoff and Allan chasing round the house after the syringe-wielding Ella. However, I have to say that it does work despite this. Romero proves that he doesn't need Savini's splattery effects to produce an interesting film - even if parts of it do drag a little, there is a continual gradual build-up of tension that makes the whole thing seem very plausible. Pankow turns in a sterling performance as the half-mad Geoff, who shoots up with drugs to avoid going to sleep and is a much more interesting character than Jason Beghe, who is tall (Boring!), athletic (yawn!) and blond (Zzzzz...).

This film provided the highlight of the festival for me - there is one moment of sheer shock in it which, cliched though it undoubtedly is, managed to make EVERY SINGLE person I could see jump. You have been warned!

THE CHURCH (Michelle Soavi, Italy 1989). Thomas Arana, Barbara Cupisti.

My opinions on Italian horror films are pretty well known to readers of this 'zine, so I didn't approach this with much enthusiasm, especially when I heard it was going to be shown in ITALIAN, with no dubbing or sub-titles. I have to admit that this was a pleasant shock - it's nice to see that they can make a decent movie now and again that doesn't value intestine-chomping zombies/demons/cannibals or hysterical women being stalked by misogynistic killers above things like plot or characters.

It begins in the Middle Ages, when a band of Teutonic Knights go on a witch-hunt and massacre the inhabitants of a village, burying their bodies in a pit under a stone cross. 850 years later, a cathedral has been built on the site to commemorate the incident. Thomas Arana plays an archaeologist who is studying the cathedral and discovers the cross, only to unleash a malignant force that has been waiting for centuries...

It's difficult to truly criticize this film because I can't say whether or not the apparent shortcomings in the story (what IS the force?) would have been clarified if I had understood the dialogue. Let's be charitable and assume it is, since the visuals are very impressive and it does at least make an attempt to justify the more

blatant holes; there's none of the "all the doors are suddenly locked for no good reason" approach, so beloved of Dario Argento. Two memorable deaths involving a tube train and a pneumatic drill and very little to detract from the overall doom-laden feel leave this one film that I'll certainly make an effort to see in English.

Though the burning question has got to remain, "Why does every Italian film look as if it's been dubbed, even if it's in Italian?"...

THE FLY II (Chris Walas, Canada 1989). Eric Stolz, Daphne Zuniga.

While "Life on the Edge" showed that being a special effects man is no barrier to becoming a good director, "The Fly II" shows that it is equally no passport either. Not much of the blame for this ill-conceived movie can be laid directly at his door since the script, written by a committee judging from the credits, turns the gut-wrenching love story of Cronenberg's original into a six-legged remake of "The Incredible Hulk".

It begins with Brundle Junior's birth - he rapidly grows into a precocious brat at the hands of the Bartok Corporation, a multinational conglomerate. This series of scenes that have little discernible point. He befriends a dog, only to have it go through his father's matter transporter and come out the other side looking like a creature from Fraggle Rock. On his 5th birthday (he's now fully grown), the president of Bartok Corp. gives him a home of his own and tells him about Brundle Sr. Bravely, son decides to take up where father left off, meets his love interest and decides that he doesn't want to be an insect. But the Bartok Corporation are having none of it.

The last 30 minutes show HEAVY Walas influence as they throw special effect after special effect at the camera in a game, ultimately failed attempt to make this anything other than a Hollywood product. It's straight-down-the-line goodies vs. baddies - none of the complexities of the original. The ending will rot your teeth.

Cronenberg should sue.

SOCIETY (Brian Yuzna, USA 1989). Billy Warlock (I think - can't read my notes!).

From an effects man turned director, to a producer turned director. Yuzna is best known as the power behind "Re-Animator" and "From Beyond" - he's also slated to direct the sequel to the former [???], "Bride of Re-Animator", so this was always going to be an interesting try-out.

Once again, it's a film that tells us quite a lot about the psychology of the man who directs it. Billy plays a boy called Billy, a child of the upper classes in West

Coast America who believes that there is Something Nasty Going On in his town. He thinks his family are aliens, that his sister's coming-out party degenerated into an orgy (he wasn't there) and that anyone who knows about this conspiracy has an 'accident'. Normal teenage angst I'd call it.

The problem with this film is that for the first hour, nothing happens. Once it's been established that he is having these 'delusions', the story goes round in circles marking time until it's time for the big finale, when everything is revealed and, guess what, there really IS Something Nasty Going On in his town.

Having said that, the last 25 minutes are ASTONISHING stuff. Sick? Perverted? Gross? A little bit of all three, leaving us with the impression that the sooner the men in the white coats come for Mr Yuzna, the safer we'll all be. I can understand why it, ruffled a few feathers in America - the idea behind it, that the upper classes are literally sucking the rest of us dry (and I can say no more than that) won't win you many friends in Hollywood. It may not be "Ferris Bueller meets The Thing meets Debbie Does Dallas" as Alan Jones said, but it's not bad!

There is hope for the Re-Animator sequel. If Yuzna can just sustain the pace of the last 25 minutes for an entire film, then it could well be up there with "Evil Dead II" in the rare category of follow-ups that rival the original.

BAD TASTE (Peter Jackson, New Zealand 1988) - Peter Jackson, Mike Minett.

At last. Six months after being seized by the Customs, the BBFC have passed it uncut (credit where credit is due, that must have taken some bravery!) and I finally get to see it. See TC 1 for a full synopsis, briefly summarised the plot is 'Aliens land on Earth to harvest people for hamburger meat'.

The best word to summarise this film is 'messy'. It's part SF, part Stallone & Schwarzenegger piss-take, with a lot of heavy weaponry being wielded by complete jerks with spectacular results. Heads explode, cars explode, houses explode and all this on a budget of truly minute proportions.

It's all good, dirty fun. Tongue is well in cheek and the effects are well up to standard. The aliens run around in human form for most of the film (obviously to save money), though when they do change, it's done well. No sensibility is left unhit - those fond of animals will LOVE the splattered sea-gull and sheep hit by an anti-tank missile; those with a weak spot for vomit will... Well, let's leave THAT one as a surprise, shall we?

The only fault is a dull gun-battle part way through which has been done so many times before it's not funny or interesting, even as a parody. Against this, we must

set the new and novel deaths. Ever seen anyone chainsawed through the top of their head and drilled out like an apple core? Wow...

Splatter at it's most delinquently stupid, this may well be the standard that Trash films will have to match in the future. See it. Just don't eat first.

THE CARPENTER (David Wellington, Canada 1988). Wings Hauser, Lynn Adams.

Woman is released from the loony bin, taken off to a country house by her husband and they start renovating it. It's got a ghost - a mass-murdering carpenter (Hauser if you hadn't guessed) who seems very nice and helpful at first...

Can't really comment much since even I fell asleep in this one. The odd bit of blood didn't keep me awake - the most memorable thing about this film was when the sound got of sync with the picture and the carpenter was busy banging away with his hammer and the noises were following about half a second later.

THE VINEYARD (James Hong and Bill Rice, USA 1989). James Hong, Karen Witter.

INGREDIENTS :

1 mysteriously youthful wine-grower
One handful bimbos with names like Celeste and Jezebel
One handful bozos with equally stupid names
Plenty of cheesy dialogue ("Mysterious on-goings"???)
Plot (optional)
A light sprinkling of nudity
Some mild violence, including a decapitation (bloodless).

METHOD :

Mix together well and flush down toilet. A bad film. Not trashy, just bad. Something to do with an elixir of youth, that the bimbos are part of the ingredients for, Rent at,your own risk, I can't see THIS one ever getting a a cinema release!

* * * * *

There you have it. Not as good as last year, only "Bad Taste" living up to the standard of "The Seventh Sign" or "The Hidden", and a couple of real dogs. Some I'd make the effort to go and see again, but I can't help wondering were these REALLY the best ten films that they could track down? "The Vineyard"??? Gissa break!

Time to stop. Apologies for the speliing mistakes, time is of the essence. It's now 8.26 pm. Anybody fancy Trash City going weekly??!???

Trash City

Oh, Sh*t!

247 Underhill Rd,
E. Dulwich
LONDON
SE22 OPB.
20th August

Dear Reader,

Er, a little embarrassing this one. Goes back a little way to when I'd just finished writing up TC2 - as usual, I ran off a draft copy which I took home and proof-read. All well and good, except that a couple of pages from it managed to escape, and make their way into the final version that I duplicated for your copies. This means that there are a couple of rather glaring errors in it, and being the perfectionists that we are, rather than waiting 3 months to correct it, decided to admit our guilt and add another supplement to TC2!

Two major cock-ups. One, page 5, the Nastassja Kinski discography - the Elvis Costello song was not "Watching the Detectives", but "I Don't Want to Go to Chelsea", the line in question being "They call her Nastassja but she looks like Elsie / I don't want to go to Chelsea".

Secondly, and probably worse, page 15 blames Dario Argento for directing "Demons". This is not, shall we say, totally correct. It was in fact Lamberto Bava who was to blame, a tad unfortunate since most of the review slags off Argento something rotten - please delete that review & insert :

Demons (Lamberto Bava) - Lamberto's father, Mario, must be turning in his grave at this ridiculous film. A plot with no logic (helicopters conveniently crashing through the roof), actors with no talent, direction with no skill, and all the gore removed by the BBFC. Avoid.

Dario Argento gets freed on bail. You may be wondering why I thought he was to blame - there were several reasons, which I list below :

- 1) You mean you didn't know Lamberto Bava was one of Argento's pseudonyms (along with Enrico Caruso, Paolo Rossi and Moto Guzzi...)?
- 2) It was Steve's fault.
- 3) Who gives a damn, it was such a naff film?
- 4) Well, he DID produce it, and it DOES say "Dario Argento's Demons" on the box...
- 5) It was a typing error.
- 6) Terminal brain death.

Sorry, anyway!

Oh, and before I go, look out in your local video shop for a film called "Beauty of the Barbarian" which I spotted in the Virgin sale for 3.99. It's "Return of the Barbarian Women" under another name...

Cheers till next time,

Jim McLennan

Jim McLennan.