



£1.25

Bambi

Traci Lords

Film comics

Oriental horror

Blade Runner uncut

TRASH CITY 8

WINTER 1990

Trash City - Issue 8

Winter 1990.

TC-shirts! Been spending most of my spare time trying to get this 'zine ready, so they're not a great deal further on than they were in the last issue. An estimate is currently being prepared, but I'd like to try and get a couple of others, just for the sake of argument and to assuage my perpetual paranoia that'd tell me I was being ripped off even if someone was doing them for free. It'll definitely be the Nastassja pic and will be in a strictly limited edition of about 50.

Welcome to TC8, the only printed publication in Britain not to give a damn which of the three Conservative leadership candidates won. Or maybe it just seems this way. We will, however, lend our support to anyone in favour of Nastassja Kinski, oriental movies, Indian takeaways, Belgian chocolate, French teenage girls, American comics, Swiss scenery, Norwegian chainsaws, Finnish film directors (but only those with unpronounceable names), Japanese anime, Italian game-shows and Irish Guinness.

CREDITS

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The bits between the pictures: Des Lewis, Andrew McGavin, Jim McLennan, Martin Murray, Per Porter, David Thompson, Steve Welburn.

Printing, coloured paper suppliers, tidying up round the edges and so on: Copyprint, London.

Sub. rates (min. 2 issues) are 60p/issue UK, \$1.50 Europe, \$3 elsewhere. A label on the envelope tells you the last one you'll get + how much is left over after it. This is slitting my own throat and doesn't even cover production costs let alone postage, but goes back to when I produced TC on the computer at work. Single issues are £1 (\$2,\$4), including postage - this just about breaks even. I sell copies to shops for 75p, so a £1.25 shop price seems fair. Cheques/PO's to Jim McLennan. Contributions are welcome, and I reserve the right to publish correspondence unless specifically asked **not** to. Send everything to :

Jim McLennan, 247 Underhill Road, E.Dulwich, LONDON, SE22 0PB

though a change of address is probably due soon, and will probably screw up the scheduling for TC9. No matter, I'll make sure things get forwarded if I do move. At least, all envelopes without cute little windows in the front...

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¹ The set of points for which the function $z_{n+1} = z_n^2 + c$ converges, where z_n are numbers in the complex plane and c is a complex constant ($-0.5 + 0.06i$ in this case)

Welcome to the Videodrome

What a tumultuous couple of months for our country: in roughly ascending order of importance, Thatcher lost her job, Arsenal got docked two points and TC caught up most of the slippage we'd lost over the past year. Things won't be the same without Mrs.T, it has to be said (they'll be a bloody sight better!) - the last time we had any other PM, I'd just turned 13 and politics was the adult equivalent of football, you supported a party in much the same way you did a football team (ask my sister, who still remembers me scrawling 'SNP' over her possessions when I was ten or so!). Meanwhile, the Football Association redefined justice to mean making the punishment hit those who are least guilty - the fans, who have fought less off the pitch than the players have on it. Still, it's a funny old game, innit Saint?

So, about two months after last time, TC8. This assumes everything goes to plan - there is a very precise schedule which means I hand it into the printer and then head off home for two weeks, leaving Per to collect and stuff them into the envelopes I'll have left behind (you'll probably see the finished issue before I do!). If there's any slippage (which is possible - I'm writing this on Saturday 15th December, it's due to go into the printers on Monday and there are lots of pages I haven't even seen yet!), things start to get hideously complex. Having four weeks fewer than normal means less time to check spellings, etc so apologies for any typos. Similarly, apologies to all the people who've written recently, you'll get replies once I've worked through the huge backlog of movies awaiting my attention. The bag I'm taking home is crammed full of tapes, and that's discounting all the films on TV over Xmas - highlights for me are C4's Chinese Ghost season, **Jean de Florette/Manon des Sources** and **Daughters of Darkness**. I'm taking two weeks off to rest, recuperate and lie slumped in front of the TV eating brandy butter with a spoon. Which is, after all, what the festive season is all about, isn't it? [16/12/90: Steve's comics piece has appeared - something of a relief! However, it's not quite correct to claim there have been no Kinski comics as I've got a German photo-comic adaptation of 'Tess' - such is the lot of the obscurist obsessive...]

No festival reviews this time, and there probably won't be any in future. Endless repetitions of "We arrived at X and joined the queue..." were getting tedious to write and probably to read. Also, I wouldn't waste any room on 'Dark Side of the Moon' or 'Never Cry Devil' in the normal run of things, so I don't see why I should do just because they were seen as part of a marathon session. The best & most interesting films will still be reported in Film Blitz, so you can work out which fest's best, and other odd happenings may get reported, but the days of four-page articles are gone.

The Revco concert cancelled from earlier this year (see TC7's editorial) has been re-arranged for January 4th so a report on it will appear in TC9. My sense of self-preservation is telling me to stand at the back in case they try and drive livestock into the audience again. I think I'll listen. TC9 should be ready about the end of March or the beginning of April and promises to kick-ass in a number of as yet uncertain ways, but you'll see what I mean when it appears. About the only thing I can predict is that it will contain a piece on the ten greatest shower scenes in cinema history, apart from the obvious one!

TC7 was available in Forbidden Planet, London and Cardiff, Psychotronic Videos, London and Artware of Germany. Apologies to D.F.Lewis for breaking the habit of TC's lifetime and not having one of his stories in this issue: next time, Des! Thanks to Spencer "T-shirts" Hickman, Paul "Sexy Dozen" Higson, Damien "No FP, no comment" Drake, Paul "Chained Heat" Mallinson, Anthony "The Face" Cawood, Steve "Zombie '90" Aquilino, S.C.Dacy (our not-so-secret agent!), Stefan "JCFC" Kwiatkowski, George "Legend" Houston and the highly animated Dave Bevan!

BLADE RUNNER

In adapting Philip K. Dick's somewhat whimsical novel to the screen, director Ridley Scott and screenwriters Hampton Fancher and David Peoples have crafted a masterful narrative combining elements of 40's film noir and visionary hardcore futurism. On first viewing, it is the sheer power of Scott's visuals which impress. Every frame is a delight, an artist's vision. LA2019 is Metropolis, awash with rain, smog and human detritus, laden with a wealth of detail that almost convinces us that we are seeing the future. On second viewing, it is a different experience, the plot exploding with a sub-textual richness which forces the viewer to examine the very essence of humanity. Love, sex, death and religion are all here; vibrant, excessive and hopeless. There are no heroes in the future, only the hunters and the hunted. Blade Runner is, quite simply, a masterpiece.

The shooting script, page dated Feb 23rd 1981, contains a number of interesting ideas which never made it into the film. Some dialogue has been removed in favour of those stunning FX sequences (costing 2.5 million in total!), a few midnight rewrites are evident, and of course the ending is not as intended following some post production interference when the film was badly received at previews in the US. The importance of Deckard's emotions and Gaff's origami messages are lost in the inane and illogical "open ended" replacement. Here are the diversions in the script and the original ending reproduced in full...

1 Scene 2. Holden interviews Leon using the V-K machine. He asks Leon to describe "only the good things that come into your mind. About your mother" Leon looks shocked, surprised. But the needles in the computer barely move. Holden goes for the inside of his coat. But big Leon is faster. His laser burns a hole the size of a nickel through Holden's stomach. Holden survives this (we are told in the film). After watching the computer records of Roy, Leon, Pris, Mary and Zora, Deckard visits INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT and talks at length to Holden in his hospital bed. HOLDEN "Its all over, it's a wipe out, they're almost us, Deck, they're a disease".

2 Rick Deckard is ordering sushi from an elderly, and seriously short-sighted Japanese counterman when Gaff approaches. Gaff speaks to Deckard in Japanese. Deckard doesn't understand Japanese, thinks the man wants a seat. The counterman translates very badly while Gaff refers to Deckard as The Boogeyman and says "After the slaughter at the steel shop they called you Mister Nighttime". The Voice Over from Ford is a later addition to cover the change in ending. We don't discover Deckard's "memories" until Rachael's Chopin wakes Deckard. DECKARD "Me and my dad" RACHAEL "Do you love him?" DECKARD "He's dead". Rachael indicates the pictures of Deckard's wife. RACHAEL "Do you love her?" DECKARD "She left me. (pause) Went offworld. Wanted the good life".

3 Deckard (still eating his sushi) sits in the spinner beside Gaff. GAFF "I told Bryant I could take care of this myself. Just move me up. I'll do the job, I told him. Five phonies. I just air 'em out. Bow! Bow! Bow! But no, he says. Bryant thinks you're hot shit, smartest spotter, baddest Blade Runner. You don't look so hot to me. Don't even shave. Bad grooming reflects on the whole department. You don't dress well. That reflects on me... makes the whole department look like shit"..."The skin jobs look better than you do! What's the point of wiping out skin jobs if they look better than Enforcement? Pretty soon the public will want skin jobs for Enforcement. I guess you'd prefer that, huh? That why you quit?"

4 In Bryant's office, Bryant asks for the old Deckard magic. BRYANT "I got six skin jobs walking the streets". The six has been crossed out and "FIVE" written over it. This is a typo, and the only reference to a sixth replicant. In the film, Bryant says "four" since he knows about the fifth (Mary) being fried. Having got that right, he then says "Six of 'em jumped a ship offworld". Oops!

5 After Deckard V-K's Rachael, Tyrell explains why Rachael doesn't know what she is. The last bit of dialogue - TYRELL "It's the dark corners, the little shadowy places that makes you interesting. Deckard.... gusty emotions on a wet road on an autumn night.... the sweet guilt after masturbation" DECKARD "Jesus Christ, Tyrell!". The last thing he says to Tyrell is "I saw an old movie once. The guy had bolts in his head".

6 Deckard's hygiene standards are described in the next scene, where he finds Rachael outside his apartment. The kitchen is a disaster area, dirty dishes overflowing from the sink... He rummages among the dirty dishes for a glass that doesn't actually have fungus growing in it. He finds one that is only greasy, wipes it with a dirty towel (making it greasier) and pours vodka into it.

7 Deckard visits Holden in hospital again and describes Leon's death. DECKARD "I thought you'd..." HOLDEN "You don't revenge a machine, asshole! Your slicer cuts your finger, whaddya do? Punish it?". Then he guesses that Deckard's emotions are involved - HOLDEN "The tit job, the one with the snake. You stuck it in, didn't ya?"..."You got the feeling pal, not her. You fucked a washing machine... then you switched it off. So what? You cry when you turn the light out at night?" Gaff and Bryant are spying on them via a monitor in Bryant's office, and criticising them for Metaphysics. To their astonishment, Deckard and Holden are getting somewhere - HOLDEN "Don't you see what they're after, who they're looking for?" DECKARD "No, who?" HOLDEN "God!" BRYANT "God?".

8 Roy and Deckard fight in INT. TENTH FLOOR HALL - NIGHT. Deckard manages to hit Roy above the eye with a shot. BATTY "What's wrong? Don't you like me? I'm what we've made! What's wrong? Aren't you a lover of Faster, Bigger and Better?!". Batty pulls a ten-penny nail from the wall and throws it to Deckard. BATTY "That's for you. Stick it in your ear and push. If that doesn't work, try the eye. Believe me, it'll be better for you than what I'm about to do".

9 After Roy's moving death on the roof, Gaff commends Deckard - **GAFF "You did a man's work. But are you sure you are man ?" (sic) "It's hard to be sure who's who around here".** The tin foil sculpture left at Deckard's apartment to indicate that Gaff has been there and knows what we don't counterpoints his advice - **"I wouldn't wait too long. I wouldn't fool around. I'd get my little panocha and get the hell outta here. It's too bad, she don't last, eh!".** All the clues are there. Time for the ending...

EXT. WOODS - DAY

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Deckard's car bullets through the woods in a fury of speed and MUSIC.

We BACK OFF IT AND UP, PAST whizzing branches, OVER the treetops, losing the car as we SOAR over what is suddenly a vast forest spreading to infinity.

Enormous MUSIC!

Deckard's voice over.

DECKARD (V.O.)

I knew it on the roof that night.
We were brothers, Roy Batty and I!
Combat models of the highest order.
We had fought in wars not yet
dreamed of... in vast nightmares
still unnamed. We were the new
people... Roy and me and Rachael!
We were made for this world. It
was ours!

Trees explode PAST US in a rage of branches as we DIP and SWERVE and that's when the spinner looms INTO VIEW zooming RIGHT AT US, then tilting and yawing off in hot pursuit with Gaff at the controls.

CREDITS ARE ROLLING, God help us all!

FADE OUT.

THE END



BAMBI

While there is little argument that Walt Disney's feature length animated movies are the greatest ever produced, there is no agreement over which picture is his best work. Some people think it's **'Snow White'**, the first cartoon movie ever made, others prefer **'Fantasia'** and it's pre-psychedelic atmosphere & unequalled use of classical music but my personal favourite, because of it's superb handling of emotions, has got to be **'Bambi'**.

The rights to Felix Salten's book were first picked up by Sidney Franklin of MGM who originally planned it as a live-action movie. After some tests and trial footage, he realised this would be impossible and contacted Walt Disney who was excited by the idea, scheduled it to be his studio's second animated feature and the rights to the movie were transferred to him in April 1937.

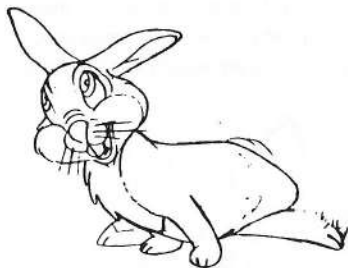
The first task was to convert the book into storyboards and the two men in charge of this were Bernard Garbutt, a specialist in drawing animals and Marc Fraser Davis, who had less formal training but was a genius at bringing life and feeling into his drawings. The job proved more difficult than had been imagined, and gradually **'Bambi'** slipped down Disney's schedule as first **'Pinocchio'** and then **'Fantasia'** overtook it. This was no bad thing, as the experience gained in giving animals character was vital to **'Bambi'**.



Dave Hurd was brought in as supervising director and he turned the screws on the storyboard team, who'd otherwise probably still be polishing their ideas! He demanded more human elements in the animals, a more caricatured approach and to help the audience identify with Bambi and his friends in the later scenes, the first part became "about a group of children who happened to be animals".

O

f the supporting characters that were added, Thumper rapidly became the most well-loved - this nearly proved fatal to his health when Sidney Franklin, who'd been retained as a consultant, suggested that it might be a good move if Thumper was killed by the hunters, as the audience would feel it more. This idea was eventually dropped, though not without regret!



The section that posed most problems was the death of Bambi's mother, without doubt the most heart-rending moment in cartoon history (I have a theory that someone's attitudes to hunting largely depend on whether or not they saw 'Bambi' as a child!). In the first treatments, the writers had difficulty establishing her as a character making her death seem just like another occurrence in Bambi's life. Gradually, however, these problems were overcome, though the eventual version was toned DOWN - it was planned to go back to where

she'd been shot and show the marks of her having been dragged away, but this was altered after the following conversation between Walt Disney and two story directors:

Walt Disney: He doesn't know where she is and starts coming back, but you don't come back to her do you?

Larry Morey: We come back to the image in the snow.

WD: Do you have to do that?

Perce Pearce: It's powerful.

WD: I was just wondering if we even had to do that?

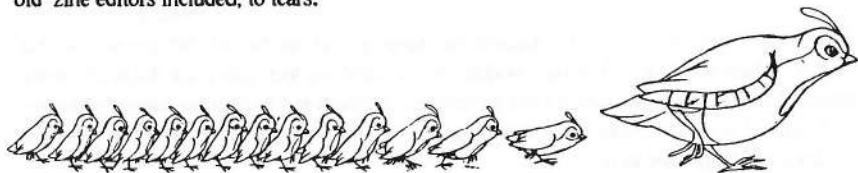
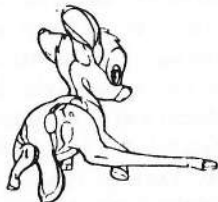
LM: It sounded pretty good, Walt.

WD: No blood.

LM: No, just the imprint.

WD: You know she's dead, but the little guy just comes back...and the snow begins to pick up and he's crying, "Mother!" and it would just tear their hearts out...this little fellow in the blizzard - and right out of the blizzard comes this stag you know. You never come back and show the imprint of the mother. It's all by suggestion...I just wonder if coming back and seeing her form isn't just sticking a knife in their hearts.

Despite this display of moderation the agreed sequence, where Bambi's father tells him "Your mother can't be with you anymore", is still capable of reducing most people, 24-year old 'zine editors included, to tears.



The animation work on **'Bambi'** is superb, even more so when you realise that the drawings were done freehand, without rotoscoping (tracing live action footage), although the animators had two real live deer, named Bambi and Faline naturally, to draw from. The only exception to this was the antlers on the Great Stag - test drawings all looked fine individually but when animated the horns wobbled as if made of rubber. The solution was to make a model head, take photos of it at the appropriate angle and copy these onto animation film.

The backgrounds in **'Bambi'** are different from most of Disney's features, being rendered in a less hyper-realistic way, with expressionist shading to create the atmosphere of the forest. This was thanks to Tyrus Wong, who'd come up from being an in-betweener (artist who 'fills the blanks' between master frames), and helped give the forest a 'magic' feel, though it's been argued, with some justification, that this magic was due to the reality - you feel as if you could walk into it.

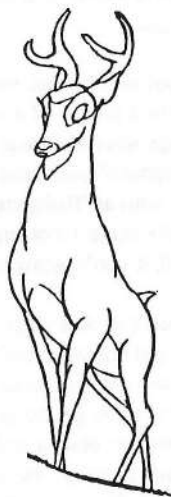


Despite the wonderful sequences that were being produced, the movie had problems. Animation is expensive work and when **'Pinocchio'** flopped on release and **'Fantasia'** was also looking like coming up short, cuts had to be made. Entire sequences went: there was one scene with Bambi and his father finding the corpse of a hunter, killed by the forest fire but test screenings showed people didn't like this at all! Another scene not included was one that had two leaves contemplating death and the hereafter before being swept

off their branch, and overall the length of the film was reduced from over 9,000 feet to 6,259. The finished film opened on August 13th, 1942, more than five years after the project began.

It's undoubtedly a masterpiece, although it took ten years to recover all its costs. Thanks to infinite repetitions on 'Disney Time', Bambi on ice has become part of everybody's subconscious but even beyond that, it still has to be regarded as one of the best cartoon films of all time. The video recently went on sale in the States and when it does the same over here, no prizes for guessing that I'll be near the front of the queue!

[For further information, readers are recommended "Bambi - the story and the film" - Ollie Johnston & Frank Thomas, published by Stewart, Taborin and Chang. It comes complete with an animated flip book!]





SLEAZE CITY

Q. What's the difference between Traci Lords and a bowling ball?

A. You can only get three fingers in a bowling ball.

In the summer of 1986, Nora Louise Kuzma was a big adult movie star. She'd been in movies such as **'The Graffenberg Spot'**, **'Talk Dirty to Me, Part III'** and **'Hollywood Heartbreakers'**, raking in over \$30,000 a month including the fees from personal appearances. But the roof on this pleasant little enterprise was about to come crashing in, for despite having been in porno flicks for the past three years, Miss Kuzma, or as she is better known, Traci Lords, had only just turned 18 years old.

Describing Traci Lords' life and career as 'chequered' is being polite. Born on May 7th 1968, she grew up in Steubenville, Ohio and hated the place. Her father left home at the age of 12. She got pregnant the first time she had sex. She dismisses her schoolmates at Redondo High as 'clueless'. She left home at the age of 15, changed her name (the Lords bit is in homage to a character from **'Hawaii 5-0'**) and got a job at a modelling agency in California, where she rapidly gained a reputation for refusing to fake anything...

From here on, she was, shall we say, laughing all the way to the bonk. At this point, logic states there should be a review of a couple of Traci's films but the problem with them is that because she was under age when she made them, they're technically child pornography, mere POSSESSION of which is a criminal offence liable to some quite severe penalties. Strikes me as a bit unfair to group a movie as innocuous as **'Hollywood Heartbreakers'** with the REAL video-nasties; no coercion needed with Traci! She doesn't look underage - if she did, the appeal of her movies would be severely diminished and, hell, if you're going to start banning films like that, there goes most of Brooke Shields' career.

However, I think it's safe to say that Traci's movies contain pretty much the sort of things that you'd expect, just not the sort of things you'd expect a teenager to do. At least not on film. Not of course that I'd know anything about that anyway [Sound FX: author desperately trying to extract foot from mouth] but you get the picture. Or rather, you don't and nor do I, because her films are banned so... [Shall we just draw a veil over all this and move on? Ed.] As an approximation, three days after her eighteenth birthday, she was back in the saddle, as a legal performer this time, for **'The Trials of Traci'** (cf. TC7 - aka **'Talk Dirty to Me, Pt. 3'**, aka **'Sensual Mermaid'**), guaranteed a huge success on advance orders alone, tho' most of the film doesn't involve her directly.

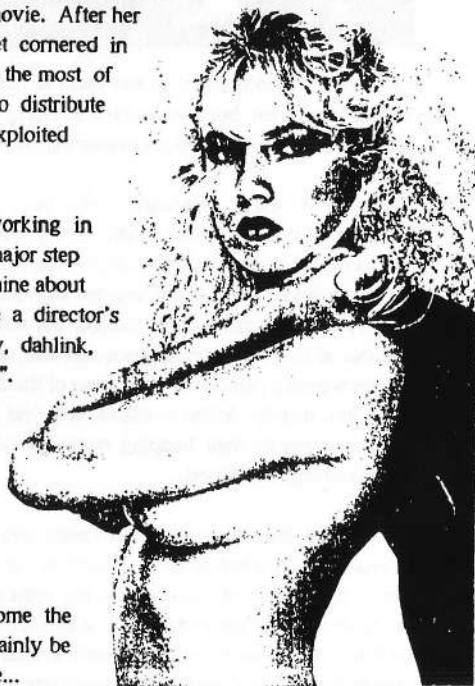
But then it all hit the fan. No-one is sure who threw down the penalty flag: theories include Traci's parents, a disgruntled ex-employee of the production company and even Traci herself. Whoever it was, the end results were severe. The man at the modelling agency got a five-figure fine. The distributor got a year in prison. The authorities swept her movies off the shelves and held her up as a prime example of the depths of depravity to which the pornography industry would sink, etc, etc. Traci escaped scot-free, save the occasional rumour about the Mafia putting out a contract on her, took acting lessons and got herself an agent. Jim Wynorski cast her in **'Not of This Earth'** as a publicity stunt, only to discover the girl's acting abilities went further than expected! John Waters, another fellow traveller on the road from sleazedom to stardom, also pounced after his original choice for the role of Wanda in **'Cry Baby'** proved unavailable (Jessica Rabbit, in case you're wondering).

So what differentiates Traci from all the other starlets? First up is probably her individuality. While undeniably pretty, she isn't from the production line mould of blonde bimbos in heat favoured by the industry to such an extent that it's very easy to start getting confused who's who in a film because they all look alike, especially when they all 'act' in...the...same...manner. No risk of this with Traci, whose absurdly bee-stung, I've-been-sucking-lemons pout is uniquely hers and who can actually act - no fake Australian accents or tortured Vietnam vets here perhaps, but there are a lot less competent people out there!

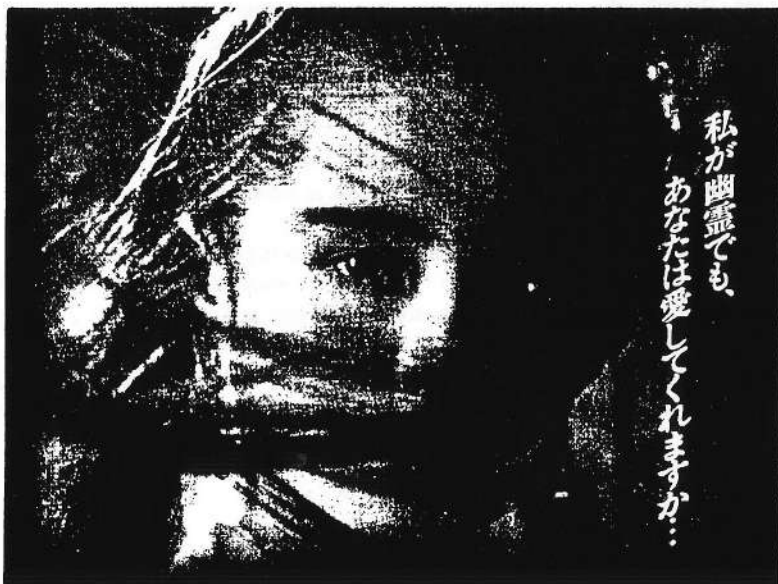
Secondly, all the world loves an anti-establishment figuré (except the establishment, naturally) and Traci is again unique in being a rebel in that most anti-establishment of genres, the porno movie. After her faux pas was revealed, she naturally had the market cornered in Traci Lords movies, and wasted no time in making the most of the opportunity, setting up her own company to distribute future product. Traci had turned the tables and exploited the exploiters.

You also have to admire anyone who regards working in John Waters and Roger Corman productions as a major step UP the ladder of respectability. Some actresses whine about typecasting but it doesn't take much to imagine a director's reaction when Traci turns up at an audition: "sorry, dahlink, I don't think you quite the type we're looking for". Not that Traci can be accused of being too serious about herself after **'Cry Baby'** where Wanda was simply Traci taken to ludicrous extremes (especially the pout!), her nymphomaniac virgin proving a highlight of the movie.

What happens from here on is uncertain. Will it be up and away to mega-stardom? Will Traci become the Meryl Streep of the 90's? Who can say, but I'll certainly be keeping a close watch on her for some time to come...



Some Chinese Ghost Stories



With 'Ghost', Hollywood would seem to have discovered the ability of the dead to be big box-office, but film-makers in Hong Kong have been aware of this for far longer, and regularly produce interesting and exciting films.

The dead in Oriental mythology seem to be much like the living, and there lies the problem. Because you can hardly distinguish between ghosts and real people, until the former start showing off their powers, it's very easy to make the mistake of, say, falling in love with a ghost and this can cause no end of difficulties. Breaking up with a vengeful girl is bad enough, but when she possesses supernatural powers capable of blowing holes in space and time, things are even more tricky. Cute female ghosts are only part of the population of the underworld. Rather less pleasant are the vampires, usually skilled in martial arts - no Bela Lugosi lookalikes these, they may be recognised by their hopping motion which may seem comic, at least until they start draining your blood...

Fortunately, humans are not defenceless and certain measures are effective: there are phrases which when spoken or written, can provide protection - in extreme cases, these may be written on the skin but great care must be taken to cover the whole body or you will suffer the fate of a character in '**Kwaidan**', who neglected his ears and had them ripped off as a result. Priests are also of use, though there is little similarity to their Occidental counterparts - these men of the cloth are just as likely to decapitate as exorcise, and are capable of hurling bolts of force from their fingers.

Of all the films of this genre to have come out of the Far East in recent years, one of the best is universally agreed to be **'A Chinese Ghost Story'**. This was produced by Tsui Hark (who was born in Vietnam but studied at the University of Texas before going to Hong Kong), the director of a string of successful movies beginning with **'The Butterfly Murders'**, the proceeds from which were used to set up the Film Workshop production company with his wife. This specializes in films combining traditional and modern elements - stories are often based on Chinese folklore while the camerawork is straight out of the box marked 'Sam Raimi'.

Director Ching Siu Tung had no formal training, but worked his way up the cinema ladder, beginning as a stuntman, then being given his own action sequences to direct before finally graduating to a fully fledged feature with **'Duel to the Death'**. While there may remain a nagging feeling that Tsui Hark is as much responsible for the final product as Ching Siu Tung was, it's all totally irrelevant to anyone's enjoyment!

As you might expect from a film which credits five action choreographers and four cinematographers, it's both action-packed and visually stunning. The pace gradually accelerates in each fight scene from the first, which is almost standard kung-fu material, to the last, a climactic battle in hell itself which is unlikely to resemble anything you've seen in a Western movie. Gravity rarely seems to operate in the same direction for two successive camera shots, and the editing is absolutely lightning-fast - fifty or sixty cuts per minute is not uncommon. All of this takes place in a curiously indeterminate era, only to be found in the movies - it's generally historical but with just enough anachronisms to make you wonder.

The story is from a collection of Ming Dynasty tales, which also provided the inspiration for the earlier **'A Touch of Zen'**. A traveller, in the film a tax-collector, spends the night in a disused temple and sees a beautiful girl there. Unsurprisingly (if you've read the second paragraph), she turns out to be a spirit and the rest of the movie concerns his struggle to allow her soul to rest in peace. He is helped and hindered by a Taoist priest, an odd bloke with serious sword skills and a tendency to rap Taoist philosophy. He's played by Wu Ma, a director in his own right - his films include **'The Dead and the Deadly'**. The hero Leslie Cheung, on the other hand, is in 'real life' a pop idol with a slightly effeminate image - the local equivalent of Jason Donovan, say. Anyway, if there's one thing that Hollywood and Hong Kong have in common, it's their belief in sequels, so it was no surprise to learn of the imminent arrival of

A Chinese Ghost Story 2

A Chinese Ghost Story 2 (Ching Siu Tung) - Leslie Cheung, Joey Wang, Jacky Cheung, Wu Ma.

Our heroic tax-collector, Ning Tsai-Shen (Leslie Cheung) is still unable to stay out of trouble for long! His first encounter is with the bounty-hunters seen in the original, who mistake him for a wanted criminal and haul him off to jail despite his protests. He is thrown in beside Elder Chu (Ku Feng), a philosopher and author who has found he has less trouble with the authorities if he just stays in prison. When Tsai-Shen is about to be executed, Chu helps him escape through a tunnel - outside, he steals a horse belonging to Autumn (Jacky Cheung), a Taoist priest who follows using his favourite mode of travel, underground!

The two meet and sort out the confusion at the ill-named Righteous Villa, containing eight coffins, which gives Tsai-Shen bad vibes. Justifiably so, it seems, as a coffin lid starts to move... Tsai-Shen runs into the forest, where ghost-like forms appear, but after Autumn demonstrates his ability to freeze people with a spell, the pair discover the spirits are a guerilla band, led by two girls Windy and Moon Fu, the former of whom (played by Joey Wang) bears an uncanny resemblance to Tsai-Shen's love in the first film. They're trying to rescue their father Lord Fu, who is being taken in chains to the Emperor. They mistake Tsai-Shen for Elder Chu in disguise, mis-interpret a poem he's carrying as instructions on how to rescue their father and rush off to do so.

Ning and Autumn are left behind - Autumn tries to teach Ning how to use the Freeze! spell, but Ning gets it slightly wrong and manages to paralyze Autumn instead - unfortunate, as this is the moment the creature from the coffin, looking a little like Rawhead Rex, chooses to appear. This leads to a hysterically funny scene where Ning tries to discover from Autumn, who can only communicate with his eyes, how to dispel the magic while simultaneously trying to avoid the monster.

All the plot elements come together, as the guerilla band, the soldiers transporting Lord Fu, Autumn and Ning and the Emperor's High Priest all arrive at the villas at more or less the same instant. To give away much more of the plot would be a heinous crime (ok - I fell asleep and missed a bit, c'mon, it was a late-night showing!), but it includes demonic possession, vampirism and an enormous centipede.

Virtually all the cast are back, together with director Tung, producer Tsui Hark and a \$26 million dollar budget, and the results are suitably spectacular if perhaps a little lacking in the 'narrative coherence' department (the resume above was the result of combining two people's interpretations and extracting common factors!). Unlike the original, which built steadily to a climax, this one plunges in at the deep end and this does mean that the ending is something of a let-down. It's still breath-taking stuff, however, with all the elements we've come to expect from Tsui Hark movies. Relentlessly entertaining, let's hope it gets a better release than the original did.

Tsui Hark directography

1979 - The Butterfly Murders	1984 - Aces Go Places III
1980 - We Are Going to Eat You	aka Our Man From Bond Street
Dangerous Encounter of the 1st Kind	Shanghai Blues
aka Don't Play With Fire	1985 - Working Class
1981 - All the Wrong Clues	1986 - Peking Opera Blues
1983 - Zu: Warriors from the Magic Mountain	1989 - A Better Tomorrow III
	1990 - Swordsman (line dir)

High Weirdness by Mail



This letter column is brought to you under the influence of some industrial strength throat lozenges, though I'm feeling a lot better since I phoned into work and told them I wouldn't be coming in today... Let's start with other things clearly written under the influence of something...

Ronan Farrell, Drogheda, Eire - We just had our presidential elections the other day - I voted for a puppet that appears on kids' television over here. He's a turkey and his name's Dustin Hoffman and he appears with two others called Zig and Zag. This isn't what you think, they really are brilliant, not like that stupid fucking duck of Gordon the Goper [??] you have over there. These three get away with murder, their humour is better than Python at it's best. Dustin was running for president and was going to change the National Anthem to Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline". I can't do them justice here, next time you meet a Paddy emigrant over there, ask him/her about Zig and Zag and Dustin. Unless they're humourless bastards, they'll be able to fill you in on how dangerously funny they are.

Pete Sheppard, London - What do the letters ACME stand for in the Roadrunner cartoons? I have seen one of them in which the full name was given and thought "Ah, that's what they stand for". Unfortunately, that's all I remember (all I remember about ACME that is, I can remember loads of other stuff like my name, date of birth, etc...).

Andy Allard, Hull - You have my vote on a T shirt...How about a pic of her [Wendy James] and Winona Ryder (who I personally thought was fucking gorgeous in 'Great Balls of Fire' when Dennis Quaid takes her cherry at the age of 13) in some form of lesbian sex act? How about Miss Ryder, legs splayed with Wendy going down on her and lots of love juices flying all over the place? If you go for that idea, put me down for half a dozen before the respective lawyers take you for every penny you've got.

Mick Slatter, Crawley - It seems we're fated to disagree on just about everything... I hated the Guinness ads, loved 'Carnival of Souls' and was singularly unimpressed with 'Miracle Mile', but the worst is yet to come. Steel yourself, 'cos in all honesty I ner liked Ms.Kinski, sorry, she just does nothing for me, though her father is sexy as hell [??]. Linda Blair and Claudia Christian are my kinda girls (just to give you some ammunition for revenge). By the way I don't have two heads, but I do have three tongues.

Tim Paxton, Oberlin, Ohio - Loved Trash City, especially what's her name on the back cover - Mark E. Smith's ex, right? I can't recall her name, I even have some of her records. Of course, my imagination could be running away with me.

That was Nastassja Kinski, Tim - the letter bomb's in the post. As usual, people have kindly [grits teeth] been filling in gaps in the filmographies in TC6.

Dan Pydynkowski, Danvers, USA Monique Gabrielle has appeared in: Electric Blue 32, 33, 35, Return of Swamp Thing, Love Scenes, Fantasies: Romantic Moves (2 vignettes), The Big Bet, Playboy's Private Party Jokes, Young Lady Chatterly 2, Chained Heat [+Sybil in these 2], Hollywood Erotic Film Festival ("He Believes" segment), Penthouse Video:Penthouse Love Stories (2 vignettes), Cheap Trick video "Up the Creek", Transylvania Twist and Silk 2. And she was a centrefold in 'Playboy' - Dec.82, I think.

Julian Grainger, Yalding, Kent - As to the Hauer films, the most obvious omission is the M.Caine/S.Poitier movie 'The Wilby Conspiracy' - 1975.

Glyn Williams, Derby - The filmography has omitted a 1974 German soft-porn movie called 'Dandelions' in which Hauer played "a cold, sadistic leather boy in search of his fantasy girl". The film stayed buried until 1987 when it was dubbed into English and released in the US to cash in on his success with 'The Hitcher'... I found Andrew McGavin's horror cliches amusing, although I'm sure there are plenty of others...

a) The opening minutes of the film show massive Stalk 'n' Slash carnage in which the entire cast are apparently disposed of, even before the opening titles have appeared. And then there's the inevitable out of shot cry of 'Cut!' and the camera pulls back to show that we've been watching the action taking place on a filmset. This, of course, means that all of the cast have the opportunity to die twice during the film.

b) The heroine is suddenly confronted by a man with a gun. As her eyes grow wider, he slowly raises the gun, points it at her head and - BANG! Behind, the girl a snake, poised to strike, explodes.

c) Girl trying to escape from the killer desperately hides in a wardrobe, under a bed, inside a rickety old outhouse, etc. As the killer draws near, the body of a minor cast member (who disappeared from the action half an hour ago) slowly topples out of the surrounding shadows...

d) Girl kills killer. Girl has to step over bullet-riddled form of obviously dead body. Hand grips ankle.

...I will, however, leap to the defence of Ms Kinski: if she wasn't very nice during the filming of 'Revolution' [letters, TC7], it was probably because (a) she wasn't very well and (b) she was probably aware that she was involved with a major cinematic turkey which wasn't going to do her career any good at all.

And finally, evidence sanity has returned to at least one of our readers.

Ronan Farrell - P.S. Jesus, I can't believe I wrote that bit about Zig and Zag!



Three-Pin Plugs

Hugh Gallagher, of Main Force Pictures, Illinois, sent a flyer for a movie he's writing, producing and directing. Rejoicing in the title of '**Gorgasm**', it's about a detective working on a homicide case which leads him "into a dark world of sadism and torture". It stars Rik Billock and Raisa Hebra, the latter of whom appeared in '**Easy-Riders Centrefold**'. Some instinct (not to mention the stills they sent) tells me it'll be pleasantly sleazy... More info: Main Force Pictures, PO Box 115, Moro, IL 62067, USA. On the cultured side, the Edinburgh Film Guild is holding a course of evening film-study session for five weeks from January 17th. It's examining the work of Val Lewton, producer of many cult classic movies for RKO in the 40's, including the original '**Cat People**' which was remade in the 80's, starring some German actress whose name escapes me for the moment... Nine films are going to be shown, the cost is £12.50 and there are only thirty places available. More details from Jim Dunnigan, Education, Edinburgh Film Guild, The Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ. Tel. 031-228 6382/3.

Malibu Graphics keep sending me promotional material at regular intervals for no apparent reason, so they deserve a mention. Let's advertise their series '**Dead Walkers**', which I guess is a follow-up to their zombie comic, '**The Walking Dead**'. It sells in both gross and not-so-gross covers, depending on your taste, a nice twist on a theme, since the same company are responsible for '**Leather and Lace**', for some time available in adult and regular versions. That comic, together with '**Black Kiss**', were seized by police during a raid on Birmingham's Nostalgia & Comics bookstore, who have stocked TC. This raid was provoked by a typically scandal-mongering local rag, the Birmingham Daily News - never mind that the comics in question were only on sale to adults and came in sealed plastic bags! Predictable reactions of shock and disgust from local MP, Clare "I don't like it so let's ban it" Short followed. N&C deserve your support if you're in the area, and are at 14-16 Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham.

If you want your own copy of '**Zombie 90**' (see Film Blitz) or '**Violent Shit**', send £19.99 for the former, £17.99 for the latter or £35 for both to Reel Gore Productions, Steve Aquilina, Rudolf-Kinau Weg 1, 2082 Uetersen, W.Germany. This includes p&p, payment by cash or Eurocheque and delivery is from England in about 14 days. And **Black Sunday 5**, the Manchester/Edinburgh version (generally regarded to be the better half, going on the B.S. 4's) is on for February/March. That's the word from Dave Bryan, who phoned to let me know about it and promised a press release - it hasn't arrived yet so this'll have to do! Send an SAE to 51 Thatch Leach Lane, Whitefield, Manchester, M25 6EN.

Samhain is a 'zine I rarely mention here because it seems perilously close to bum-licking since you're probably aware of it already. In the past a significant number of TC's readers have said to me that since the demise of **Shock Xpress**, Samhain has gradually drifted downhill - I tended to disagree, but must admit the issue 24 is of a seriously lower standard (lack of competition perhaps?), the nadir of which is the phrase in a review, "**anyone who can honestly say they enjoy this...must be mentally retarded**". Scarcely film journalism at it's best, I'll take author Ian Calcutt on at Trivial Pursuit any day! Elsewhere, they slag off a 'zine for printing a year-old interview while themselves running a Rob Bottin piece dating from before '**Legend**', have a chat with Phoebe Legere which reads like treacle (in 3 consecutive sentences, "and" occurs a total of twelve times!) and otherwise, after removing competitions and other ephemera, there's not much left. There's still some excellent sections and it looks great but it doesn't seem as good as it used to. It'd be a shame if it went the way of a certain American magazine.

Having blown our hopes of a mention the next issue (hell, the last one they included was TC5 anyway!), let's look at the publishing empire of Tim Paxton, who sent a whole load of stuff from his high-school project of 10 years ago up to copies of his current publications **Monster** (8 A5, \$11/yr = 24 issues) and **Naked! Screaming! Terror!** (24 A5, \$2 + 2 IRCs) which look at (surprise!) monster movies and films of the 70's, though I suspect the latter has a different theme every issue. Both are nicely written, with an informal feel I like, even if the man needs his eyes tested - see the letter column! Getting their bribery in early, **Psychotic Reaction 2** (18 A4, 50p?) is the first 'zine I've seen to review illicit pharmaceuticals. There's also a load of film reviews and books too, not to mention the nifty Psychotic Reaction T-shirts which I possess one of and it's a fine substitute till those TC-shirts are sorted out!

Douglas Angel goes back to his past, reprinting **The Absolute 1** (12 A5, 20p - that may be the original price!) from the start of the 80's. A braver man than I am (TC0 is firmly out of print) but then, this is certainly looks nicer than TC0. Comics-oriented, it includes his list of desired issues, now presumably hideously incorrect! After some time, Rick Sullivan's **Gore Gazette 102** (10 A4, \$1 or so) makes a welcome return - slagged off in the Village Voice for supposedly racist views, Rick decided to jack it in but wiser forces prevailed and he's continuing for the moment. The best of the US rant-zines, no contest.

Strange Adventures 22 (20 A4, 95p) is the usual eclectic mix of books, films, comics, videos and TV, best summed up by adjacent reviews of **'The Little Mermaid'** and **'Meet the Feebles'**! Bound to be something of interest in this for everyone. After what seems like forever, **Fantasyopsis 3** (56 A4, £1.95) is here, taking 'infrequent' to new dimensions. But it's worth the wait - glossy, lovely picture quality (jealousy!) and in-depth articles on **'Don't Look Now'** and **'Manhunter'**. Most improved layout goes to **Bloody Hell 2** (24 A4, £1.50), doing their bit for the rain-forests by printing on both sides of the paper this time round. Concentrating on Abel Ferrara's films this time, something of a mixed blessing since it means a **'Driller Killer'** piece as well as one on the wonderful **'Ms.45'**. BH tries to defend the entire genre as artistically worthy, a bravely stubborn stance beyond my comprehension!

The first half of **Sheer Filth 9** (32 A5, 75p) is worrying, reviews of performance artists and that sort of thing. The second half is fortunately the SF we know & love, philosophical discussions on unmentionable topics, reviews of weird product and a letter page that defies description totally. Vital reading for sleaze-hounds. **Norma K 2** (32 A5, £1) is devoted to the works of Traci Lords - Steve Rag knows his stuff and it's got a good selection of pictures. I admit ripping off one for our article, in desperation - sorry, Steve, I'll buy you a pint some time! So as a deadline breathes down my neck, **Midnight in Hell 5** (20 A4, £1) is a victim of it's own quality: there's no way I can read it before the deadline catches up wi...

The Absolute - Douglas Angel, 69 Chestnut Ave, Bradwell, Gt.Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR31 8PL.

Bloody Hell! - David Prothero, 11 Clos-Yr-Wenallt, Rhiwbina, Cardiff, CF4 6TW.

Fantasyopsis - Paul J.Brown, 1 Bascraft Way, Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 8EG.

Gore Gazette - c/o Sullivan, 469 Hazel Street, Clifton, N.J. 07011, USA.

Midnight in Hell - George Houston, The Cottage, Smithy Brae, Kilmalcolm, Renfrewshire, PA13 4EN.

Monster + N!S!T! - Kronos Publications, MPO Box 67, Oberlin, Ohio 44074-0067, USA.

Norma K - Steve Rag, 118 High Street, Eastleigh, Hants, SO5 5LR.

Psychotic Reaction - Spencer Hickman, 50 Wingfield Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B42 2QD.

Sheer Filth - 39 Holly Street, Offerton, Stockport, SK1 4DP.

Strange Adventures - Tony Lee, 13 Hazely Combe, Arretton, Isle of Wight, PO30 3AJ.

THE TRASH CITY FILM AWARDS 1990!

The votes are in, the envelopes are ready and the audience waits in hushed anticipation for the announcements that can make or break careers: the TC Top Ten Films of 1990!! The awards will be presented by the winner of the Kathleen 'Crimes of Passion' Turner Cup, awarded annually to the Actress with the Most Outstanding Nipples. Last year's Top of the Paps, Patsy 'Lethal Weapon 2' Kensit, was a hard act to follow but in 'Wild at Heart', Laura Dern stood up magnificently to the task [that's enough smutty jokes - Ed].

No surprises as to the film of the year. '**Miracle Mile**' ran me through an emotional spin cycle not once but twice, thanks to an absolute sucker punch ending, which you could see coming but just couldn't believe. Apart from it, most of 1990's best were pure entertainment, '**Tremors**', '**Darkman**' and '**Gremlins 2**' being the pick of the bunch; the last named was the only one of the summer blockbusters I felt lived up to it's budget. At the other end of the scale financially, Peter Jackson, Aki Kaurismäki and Frank Hennenlotter led the low budget mob, with '**I Bought a Vampire Motorcycle**' and '**Hardware**' (narrowly eliminated) proving we can still join in. An international selection this year, six countries being included - Canada, Japan, Finland and New Zealand as well as Britain and the States.

Top 10 Films of 1990 (chronological order)

Jesus of Montreal

I Bought a Vampire Motorcycle

Tremors

Miracle Mile

Frankenhooker

Akira

Meet the Feebles

Gremlins 2

Darkman

I Hired A Contract Killer

As well as the new films, there were plenty of old ones to discover. 'Heathers' is an exception in that it was seen in 1989, but it just gets better every time I see it (and that's no small number!). While the 'new' list was male-dominated, the 'classics' had a large number of actresses, led by Zoe Tamerlis whose performance in 'Special Effects' was the best of the year. 'Date With an Angel' and 'Not of This Earth' were both lust-rentals but contained surprisingly good performances even if Emmanuelle Beart had little to do! For sheer stupidity, 'Deathstalker II' was impossible to beat while at the other end of the spectrum was 'Henry', hammering another nail in Freddy's coffin...



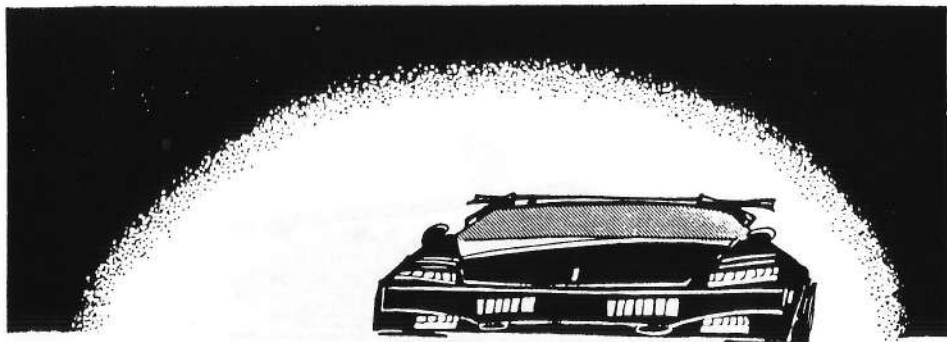
- Top 10 'Classics' of 1990**
- Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer
 - Not of This Earth
 - Queen of Outer Space
 - Deathstalker II
 - Dead Man Walking
 - A Chinese Ghost Story
 - Date With an Angel
 - Heathers
 - Special Effects
 - Raising Arizona



Honorary mentions:

Hardware, Faceless, Wild At Heart, Psych-Out, Last Exit to Brooklyn, The Kiss, Bride of Re-Animator, Black Rain, A Short Film About Killing, Bride of the Monster, Night Hawks, Revenge of the Nerds, TCM III, Xtro, Mr Vampire Pt 4, The Killer, In the Line of Duty 4, Blind Fury, A Chinese Ghost Story 2 and Celia.





DRIVING AMBITION

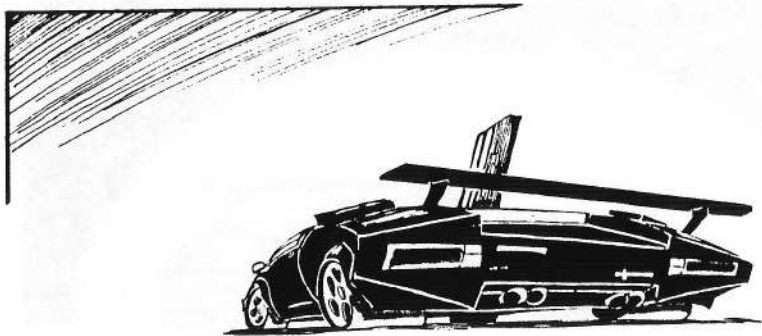
"Name me, if you can, a better feeling than the one you get when you're half a bottle of Chivas in the bag with a gram of coke up your nose and a teenage lovely pulling off her tube top in the next seat over while you're going a hundred miles an hour down a suburban side street...If you ever have much more fun than that, you'll die of pure sensory overload, I'm here to tell you."

--- P.J.O'Rourke.

I've had something of a hatred of cars for as long as I can remember; when I was young, I used to start suffering from motion-sickness as soon as I got into a car. The record was three times in five miles - not so much a journey, more a remake of **'The Exorcist'**. Though it is some time since I have been so afflicted - getting a Walkman proved the final solution as it give my mind something to concentrate on apart from trying to decide if I felt sick or not - it will come as no surprise to learn that I don't possess a car and, in fact, don't even have a driving licence.

"You don't drive????", say most people in London. "How do you get about?". Quite easily. London Transport is pretty good, compared to the services in other places I've stayed - Farnborough being the classic example of a town without, well, pretty much everything, least of all any public transport. Nowadays, from the end of the road, I can hop on one of three buses - the 12 to Piccadilly Circus, the 78 to Liverpool Street (where I work) and the 63 to King's Cross (the Scala) - which I'd guess cover me for at least 90% of all journeys I make. Ok, it might be a little slower than the car but not much - the average speed of all traffic in London is 3 mph higher than it was in Victorian times. In any case, I catch up when the driver is looking for somewhere to park.

Let's not forget the opportunites for people-watching (ok, let's be honest: girl-watching) that the bus provides. Not the tube, mind you, as catching someone's eye on the Underground is virtually a capital offence: "Officer, officer! That man looked at me!". "Right then, you're picked, my son!". I'd rather travel by bus given the opportunity - their major disadvantage is that they are so unreliable you have to allow about twice the journey time if you actually have to be somewhere by a given hour. It also allows me to go out of an evening, get happily plastered, fall on a bus, go to sleep and wake up in Catford, Streatham or East Ham. It's a great way to discover parts of London you wouldn't otherwise see...



It's interesting to note the different attitudes countries have to transport. Crossing the road in Amsterdam is a dangerous business; cars go one way, trams another and bicycles exhibit Brownian motion - I keep expecting to see one shooting up out of the sewers - Teenage Mutant Ninja Tandems. The tourists are recognisable because of their harassed expressions and the bike tracks up their backs. The locals still have the tracks, but their expression is the normal benign happiness only to found in the sort of liberal country where Traci Lords videos are legal. Speaking of which, in the red-light area, things are worse; the streets there have a canal running down the middle making them so narrow that when a car passes you have the choice of flinging yourself into said canal or pressing yourself against a window beyond which, naturally, is a semi-clad brazen hussy. You rapidly learn the international sign language for "No, but thanks for the offer". You don't have this problem in The Hague, admittedly. However, you don't have anything in The Hague - it's the Farnborough of Holland and whoever made it the capital city was clearly a Ruud Gullit short of a national team. Now that Bonn is heading out of the competition, it's probably the dullest capital in the world - I saw everything it had to offer inside ninety minutes and spent the rest of the day sulking in a cinema. Lots of pedestrian precincts, always a worrying sign since past experience has shown me that these only appear in places no self-respecting car-driver would be seen dead in.

While this could arguably be considered a dull form of pedestrian heaven, France is without a doubt hell for the visitor on foot. The best advice I can give to anyone trying to cross the road in Paris is "Don't", if you can manage without leaving the block your hotel is on, you might just survive. Only might, as Parisian drivers think of pavements the same way Palestinians regard the West Bank; moderate ones believe it's an area for mutual settlement while the more militant regard it as occupied territory, with the scum i.e. pedestrians to be driven from it in a Holy War. This aggressiveness can be their undoing - I once saw a traffic jam at the Arc de Triomphe where all the cars were stuck solid but were still leaning on their horns. It wouldn't surprise me to learn it was all caused by a car with a flat battery from excessive horn-blowing.

If you must cross the road, try and find two locals to do it between. Again, this is easy. All Frenchmen look like Gerard Depardieu. All French women under the age of 30 look like Isabelle Adjani (except the ones that look like Emmanuelle Beart). All French women over 30 also look like Isabelle Adjani, but after a very nasty industrial accident involving a blow-torch, an angle grinder and some nitric acid. French women do not, on the whole, age well. They are still capable of moving like greased lightning to get across the road, but they need to be - the only reason France has no world-class sprinters is because the width of the Champs Elysees is not an official recognised distance.

Certainly, if you push your luck on a pedestrian crossing there, you'll get half way across, look to your left and see the fearsome vision of a row of Citroens driven by proto-Alan Prosts bearing down on you from the next crossing up (the lights are staggered so they have about 100m of clear road to get up speed). They could easily remove the green from all the traffic lights in France as no driver hangs around long enough to notice: even the red light translates as "rev your engine frantically, while inching forward and trying to psych-out the pedestrians".

My dislike probably partly stems from sour grapes - I've failed the driving test twice. The first time was seven years ago, the summer I turned seventeen - my driving instructor was a lady called Margaret, possessor of sharp temper and semi-chain smoker (she's since died of cancer). My test took place on the hottest day of the summer, adding to the nervous sweat pouring off my brow into my eyes, and leaving me driving around with my eyes shut which seemed to un-nerve the examiner. "Incorrect use of gears" was the phrase she chose to describe my failure, there not being a space on the form for "driving with his eyes shut".

There then followed a seven-year hiatus. The first four years I was at college and had far better things to do with my money, most of them involving...well, let's draw a veil over that era. The past three years I've been down here and not really too bothered about driving, for the reasons above. However, since there is a plan to head off to the States for a while at some point and by all accounts public transport over there isn't so hot, I decided it'd be nice to be able to drive. Rather than try to learn in London traffic, I took two weeks off, went home to Scotland and took an intensive (let's not use the word 'crash') course of lessons. My instructor this time was an ex-Army sergeant, who would occasionally relate tales of his time spent Commie-killing in Malaya. Despite this, we got on well, but it was always an uphill struggle to reach test standard in less than two weeks, given that in the preceding seven years' my sole experience of driving was the odd game of Pole Position in the local amusement arcades.

I failed. "Driving too close to parked cars" was the reason this time - from where I was sitting I thought I was giving them plenty of room, but then, the examiner was a little closer to the situation than I was. Personally, I'd rather give the room to the moving one - when was the last time you saw a parked car swerve to avoid something?

So now, despite all my best efforts, I'm learning in London. A different driving style altogether is required - give a driver an inch here and he'll try and park in it - and it takes a bit of getting used to. I thought I was doing brilliantly when my instructor told me to put in for my test after just three lessons but the card with the test date arrived last week and it's some five months away... No matter, sooner or later I WILL get my licence, and then, tube-topped teenage lovelies, here I come!



Film Blitz

Bloodhounds of Broadway (Howard Brookner) - Flinging together nearly every genre under the sun, and possessing a different subplot for each, this musical-comedy-drama-gangster-melodrama movie takes place on Broadway on New Year's Eve, 1928. An all-star cast: Rutger Hauer, Matt Dillon and Madonna (who could do with singing less and acting more) but Randy Quaid steals the show as a perpetual loser who hits a winning streak just after selling his body to a mad doctor. While I can see why this was an expensive flop in the States, it's still a lot of fun, with snappy dialogue and a nice sense of period. Let's be charitable, assume it's not intended to be serious and give it 7/10.

The Brave Little Toaster (Jerry Rees) - Cutesy cartoon feature, in which a group of household appliances embark on a quest to find their master. The animation is simple but really quite effective, managing to give inanimate objects more personality than certain actors I could name, making the idea of a desk-lamp having a flashback plausible enough. Despite possibly religious subtexts, about the appliance which died in order to save us, and did rise again, it rarely descends into schmaltz. Be warned: the musical numbers totally overload the soundtrack! 7/10.

nikita

"France's answer to
PRETTY WOMAN"

the sunday correspondent
"an exceptional film
there hasn't been,
nor will there be,
a better thriller all year."

melody muller

jean-baptiste
tondreau
special guest appearance
jeanne morlé

Still
"THE HOTTEST MOVIE IN TOWN"

CANNON
CAMDEN PLAZA
CAMDEN TOWN 071 483 2443
1 25 3 30 6 15 8 40

CANNON
TOTTENHAM CRT. RD.
2 25 5 15 8 10 Late Sat 11 00 pm

CANNON
PREMIERE
2 25 4 55 7 35 10 05

The Exorcist III (William Peter Blatty) - Based on Blatty's 'Legion', this follows the trend, started in TCM III, of pretending part II didn't exist (probably wisely here). And while it ain't up to the original there are some neat moments, including probably the shock moment of 1990, albeit accompanied by more cliches-per-minute than any recent movie. One benefit of devil-movies is that divine (or other) intervention solves a lot of plot problems: how else could an audience swallow a serial killer taking over a priest's corpse and using it to possess nurses? The ending might just remind you of another movie... 6/10.

Ghost (Jerry Zucker) - All my fears about this film were confirmed with the opening shot: Patrick Swayze without his shirt on. Things didn't get better - the only saving grace of the celebrated 'potting-wheel' scene was that it's the closest we'll ever get to seeing Demi Moore mud-wrestle. Then Swayze's character, Sam Wheat, gets shot and things, understandably, begin to improve. I'm no real fan of Whoopi Goldberg, but as the fake psychic Sam uses to contact fiancée Molly

(Moore) is really very good and with a great sense of timing. A few problems with the plot (if ghosts float through walls without trying, how can they sit on chairs and stand on raised floors?) are niggling, but overall it's not nearly as bad as I feared it might be. 6/10.

The House Where Evil Dwells (Kevin Connor) - Susan George and Eddie Albert move into a Japanese house where, unbeknownst to them, the previous occupant had committed murder i.e. finding his wife in bed with his best friend, hubby chops off both their heads and kills himself. When Doug McLure turns up, history looks like repeating itself... A good story is drawn out too long, and the ending is hardly worth the wait. 3/10. (MM)

Hell Island (Dimitri Logothetis) - Low-grade, low-budget, mutilate-the-teenagers movie but possessing some charm, a few messy effects and an irreverent atmosphere. For reasons too complex to explain, a group of kids end up on Alcatraz getting offed by the spirit of a cannibal who has possessed one of their number. Toni Basil plays a dead rock star, Devo provide the music, the teenagers bicker realistically and the BBFC take out 1 min 14 secs. Nothing spectacularly new but pretty good for the genre. 7/10.

I Hired A Contract Killer (Aki Kaurismäki) - Those expecting the follow-up to 'I Bought A Vampire Motorcycle' will be disappointed, as this is no gore-fest. Instead, it's a quite wonderful, dotty little black comedy about a French clerical worker in London who hires an assassin to help him commit suicide. Jean-Pierre Léaud is superbly dead-pan as the clerk and Kaurismäki has a good foreigner's eye for London, which never looked so grimy. Hearing some of the stories about the film's making (Ken Colley, who plays the assassin, claims tongue-in-cheek that the only directorial instruction he got was "Act better"), you wonder how it got made at all - alcohol apparently played a large part! Unlikely to get the release it deserves, Channel 4 helped fund it, so it'll probably turn up there at some point. Definitely worth watching. 9/10

In The Line of Duty (Yuen Wo Ping) - Those in the know predict Donnie Yen may be to the 90's what Jackie Chan was to the 80's and Bruce Lee to the 70's: the martial arts star. On the evidence of this film, originally titled 'In the Line of Duty 4' (confusing, huh? The first three didn't get released here), they may well be right as it's serious kick-ass, beating-up-the drug-dealing-CIA-agents, which keeps the plot zipping along on a stream of incredible action sequences. But never mind Donnie, even more impressive to this novice was Cynthia Khan, known to her friend as 'Sheer' (ok, she's not, I made that up). Forget Cynthia



"China O'Brien" Rothrock. Cynthia Khan (are all Cynthias experts in Martial Arts?) is prettier and a far more entertaining fighter. Perhaps this movie should be retitled 'The Wrath of Khan'? 8/10.

Night Sun (The Brothers Taviani) - Nastassja's latest movie confirms her post-"**Revolution**" retreat from Hollywood, with another classy French-German-Italian co-production. Also starring Julian Sands (dubbed into Italian), the first third is the part of most interest to Kinski-watchers as she plays the woman who causes Sands to enter a monastery. The rest of the film deals with his struggle to achieve peace and tranquility in the face of all that fortune can hurl at him, as despite his efforts he becomes a living saint. Art-house fodder, certainly, and while more Kinski and less clothes might have helped, it's another film she needn't be ashamed of and should help her commercial rehabilitation.

ART : ** ENTERTAINMENT : *** KINSKI CONTENT : ** FLESH : None!**

Nikita (Luc Besson) - After the big yawn of '**The Big Blue**', Besson goes back to his '**Subway**' roots with this thriller, which could easily be titled 'Assault of the French Killer Bimbos on Smack' for the video market, tho' to be honest there's only one bimbo. Her death is faked by the government, who train her as an assassin and then let her hang around for months between hits. Very stylish, as you'd expect, very blue (in the colour sense - the nipple count, at one, is the lowest in ages for a French movie), a little overlong at 116 minutes and nicely violent with a warped twist, as with the government's 'cleaner' who carries a case of sulphuric acid around to help tidy up the corpses... 7/10.

Sex Androide (Alain Braud/Marina Weingarten) - French, low-budget, sex 'n' death film in several segments, of greatly varying quality. The first takes voodoo as it's theme, with a man stripping and abusing a Barbie doll, while a woman in a bar suffers the effects - it's neatly handled, with nice camerawork. In the most effective one, which after a slow start is the best bit of low-budget nastiness I've seen, a zombie mutilates, bends, folds and tears a victim (female and without much clothing, naturally!). Eye gouging, breast slicing and tongue piercing are among the delights on offer, and provide a highly dubious 20 minutes with the unsynched sound and cheap video working to provide a grimly realistic feel. The zombie make-up gradually started to look like an executioner's mask: it was a great relief when the corpse of the victim sat up at the end, and the two zombies wandered off arm in arm. Unfortunately the following piece is just stupid - a grieving widow at her husband's coffin is attacked by his vampiric corpse, has her clothes ripped off and is bitten in the neck. She then becomes a vampire (or at least, gets some white makeup on her face) and does a sexy dance to two Tina Turner songs. Absolutely pointless, though after the preceding segment anything would be an anti-climax. 2-10/10 for the varying segments.



Cynthia Khan high-kicks ass In The Line Of Duty.

Stripped to Kill (Katt Shea Ruben) - Take your pick, this is either a murder thriller with gratuitous strip-tease sequences, or a soft-porn video with "subliminal plot" [phrase courtesy D.Drake]. Even if they stop before things get too steamy, it's probably better to concentrate on the nekkid ladies since the identity of the murderer is obvious from the video box. Average thriller with nothing to recommend it beyond the bimbos. 5/10.

Zombie 90 (Andreas Schnaar) - '**Zombie 90**', subtitled 'Extreme Pestilence', is no '**Nekromantik**' - it's not even '**Rabid Grannies**' - yet as an exercise in Euro-excess it has some cheap & cheerful charm and thankfully lacks the misogynistic feel of their earlier '**Violent Shit**'. Undead on the rampage is a full plot description, and the movie is very nearly sunk early on by the worst dubbed soundtrack I've ever seen, which tries to be funny and fails miserably. Fortunately, after about 30 minutes, nearly all the dialogue stops and the rest of the film is a series of set pieces of effects work, of varying effectiveness from laughable to impressive, all of which use a lot, and I mean a lot of arterial spurting. The camerawork is shaky, with things and people getting in the way too often, but hell, it's heart's in the right place - right out in the open being waved at the camera and chewed on by zombies. Don't expect '**Total Recall**' and you'll quite possibly enjoy it. 7/10.



We should point out that this still of NK isn't from **Night Sun** at all... but it's still very nice, isn't it?

mondo mov

The Case for (the) Prosecution

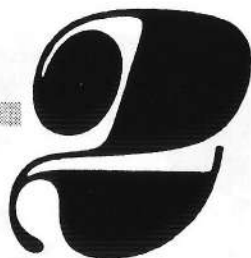
Ok, so let's be perfectly open about this. Assuming it's all real (a point open to some doubt), '**Faces of Death**' contains the following 'highlights': lots of autopsies, a man being eaten by an alligator, concentration camp footage, car accidents, people committing suicide, seal clubbing, more autopsies and criminals being executed by gas, electric chair and beheading. This is accompanied by a thin veneer of philosophical moralising on the voice-over and a jokey music track that ranges from 'Peer Gynt' to 'Old MacDonald had a Farm' (for the headless chicken sequence). This is all real, folks, and it's supposed to be entertainment. Stop the human race, I want to get off.

My first grouch is on artistic grounds. **IT TAKES ABSOLUTELY NO SKILL AT ALL TO MAKE A MONDO MOVIE.** A good documentary can make a dull subject interesting by visual skill and intelligent interpretation but the leaden style of Mondo makes even the most interesting of subjects, life itself, dull. Anyone can make a Mondo - all you do is find something unpleasant and point a camera at it. They're not judged on plot or characters, because they don't have any. The only thing that people are interested in is the depiction of the most gruesome, grim and downright sickening sights, no matter how pedestrian the technique or leaden the commentary and that's what distinguishes the most notorious Mondos from the also rans. They are exploitation at it's most crude - you don't have to pay for a script, you don't pay for any actors, all you need is access to newsreel footage. '**Faces of Death**' is so crude, it fails to even make it into the so-bad-it's-good category (and if you want that sort of thing, there's plenty of examples of schlock cinema out there that don't find it necessary to torture animals), it just becomes sad.

The crucial thing that distinguishes Mondo from documentary is the sense of purpose possessed by the latter. While Mondo is there primarily to 'entertain', a documentary's first priority is informative or educative, though as mentioned above, the best do so in an interesting manner. Far too many Mondo movies tell us nothing that we didn't already know or couldn't work out for ourselves. They have a sense of gratuitousness missing in real documentaries: no doubt a Mondo about child abuse would feature **actual footage of a child being abused!!!**, albeit with a disapproving commentary.

This doesn't stop documentaries being graphic. I recently came across a newsreel, dating from the very end of World War II, rejoicing in the title of '**Nazi War Atrocities**'. It simply depicted the conditions in, and inhabitants of, one of the concentration camps. Very Mondo stuff, not least because of the tacky video cover (the company releasing it rejoiced in the name of 'Waldheim Productions'!) but it had a purpose, to let the rest of the world know what had been going on in Germany. This purpose remains unaltered even now - it certainly brought home to me the reality of what had gone on in Belsen & Auschwitz.

ies part 2



Some people argue that an interest in death is natural, and this is true - you only have to watch people slowing down as they go past a car-crash to see ghoulish tendencies in action. However, mankind has lots of tendencies that we shouldn't be proud of and mondo movies are the modern equivalent of the Roman circus, throwing Christians to the lions. It's guilty of encouraging us to believe violent death is normal and it's this desensitization which is the most worrying thing, and for me the biggest argument for banning Mondos.

It happens in fictional movies as well - listen to the perpetual cries of 'Bigger! Bigger!' from Hollywood, or watch effects that seemed incredible at the time elicit stifled yawns when repeated in other movies. However, it poses no moral problems and is a good stimulus to film-makers who must constantly exercise their imaginations seeking new ideas for the FX team to simulate with latex and food colouring. But with Mondo movies, the directors have to sneak ever closer to the boundary, which no documentary should cross, between recording events and arranging them. There's plenty of evidence certain Mondos contain deliberately set up footage and even if the result isn't included in the final movie, how would it feel to know that someone was deliberately killed for your viewing pleasure? And what, in the final outcome, is the difference between that and the ultimate Mondo, a snuff movie?

(Jim McLennan)

But on the other hand...

When I told Jim I'd like to write something on mondo movies for TC, he wrote "Mondo movies have no appeal for me whatsoever. I don't believe them to be entertaining or informative and it takes no artistic skill to generate disgust by pointing the camera at firing squads". I disagree, I find mondo movies often entertaining, occasionally informative and generally well-directed. To deal with each point individually;

a) **Entertainment** I do not enjoy watching people suffer. I do not condone animal slaughter in the name of entertainment. I'm rather disturbed that it is in the sphere of human nature to want to watch people dying. But I like mondo films. I don't really see this as an anomaly - all you d'Amato and Deodato fans watch the same stuff (what makes 'Buried Alive' famous - it's autopsy scenes. And, 'Cannibal Holocaust' fans, here's one mondo fan who thinks you're a *lot* sicker than me). The simple fact is that either through morbid curiosity or a desire for bizarre entertainment, most mondo films are fascinating. I'm able to watch 'Faces of Death' again long after I've given up on even trying to watch a Freddy film, and I'll certainly not forget it in a hurry. Mondo films are the ultimate in horrific entertainment. Moreover, if you don't watch mondo films then you're missing out on some of the funniest scenes ever committed to celluloid. No, I'm not going into an aren't-road-accidents-amusing routine; there genuinely is humour in these films. 'Fear' takes us into the magical world of the placenta-eater, as grainy footage of a birth cuts to a man holding a frying-pan. "We're vegetarians, but this is OK because it's so natural". Apparently you have to take off all your clothes to fully appreciate the placenta; an interview with the dining party afterwards reveals that the meal ended in an orgy. "Vive la placenta" says his good lady wife.



'Let me Die a Woman' features Dr Leo Wolfman, a trainee Francis Gross, who introduces grainy black-and-white stock footage from old porno movies. Several (genuine) transsexuals attend Dr Wolfman's group therapy classes as he sits in front of an ever-expanding array of certificates. We're given dramatic reconstructions of men performing their own sex-change operations and diagrams showing the difference between men and women.

I could go on (the ever-so-convincing seance in **'Faces of Death'** that involves a superimposed blue ring, an echo chamber and much lip quivering springs to mind), but the point is made. When they're not being stupid, however, mondo movies are being shocking, and that, when there is so much safe and reassuring rubbish being peddled as entertainment about, can only be a good thing.

b) **Informative** Well, we all know (or can guess) what a dead turtle looks like, and I'll be the first to admit that the mondo movie uses the shield of "information" as an excuse to show shocking material, but these films are often genuinely informative. **'The Killing of America'** gives us a potted history of American assassins, with facts and figures that I've checked out and are accurate. **'Mondo Magic'** has incredible scenes of psychic surgery, something I'd read about and had previously assumed was some kind of hoax. Even the ridiculous **'Fear'** takes a look at people's hangups that is an eye-opener.

c) **Artistic Skill** Now, we're not talking about artistic *merit* here - even most mainstream horror films fall down there - but surely artistic *skill* is the ability to deliver what is promised by the type of film that is being made: **'Texas Chainsaw Massacre'** is grainy, roughly made and all-too-obviously budget-less, but it succeeds in it's intention, which is scaring you stupid. Mondo movies have a higher hit-rate than conventional horror films - they almost always succeed in their intention of grossing out the viewer. Therefore the maker's skill is evident. It is indeed easier to get a "cheap" shock by filming a firing-squad than by faking something up, but that is the point of the genre - the viewer knows (or is supposed to believe) that it is real.

My own objection to mondo movies is not concerned with their quality, but their presence. I don't think they are intrinsically harmful, but I do think that it's a shame that they need to exist. I enjoy them, and don't mind defending them, but I think I'd be happier if everything had stopped with, or preferably before, **Mondo Cane**. I've seen a man reduced to tears watching **Mondo Magic** and a woman vomiting watching **'Faces of Death'** and I think that is too far to go in the name of entertainment. If censorship is necessary then mondo films are (were) the first to go. You may not have the option of watching **'Mondo Magic'**, but at least this time you're missing something you really shouldn't need to see.

(David Thomson)

The inspiration for this article came half-way through a film called '**Mankillers**', after I suddenly realised it was such a good movie I'd spent the past ten minutes tossing a coin (for the record, 49 heads, 42 tails). In Trash cinema, boring does not mean the same thing as bad. Ed Wood Jr. may have made some monumentally awful movies ('**Plan 9 From Outer Space**' has become a classic) but they were boring. Being dull is the worst crime in the book: I'd rather watch a film that annoys the hell out of me for whatever reason ('**The Accused**' and most of Linnea Quigley's movies, albeit for slightly different reasons) than one which sends me to sleep. So here, more as a warning than anything else, is a list of ten films each of which is the cinematic equivalent of a handful of barbiturates.

Video Valium

1. **Ilsa, the Wicked Warden.**

All time king of the B-movie (where B stands for 'boring') has got to be Jess Franco. Though occasionally capable of turning out a classy shocker, as he did with '**Faceless**', this can be regarded as a fluke: given the man's huge output, sooner or later he would make a good movie entirely by chance. This is just a sample, many other movies of his could have been chosen - it's nothing but a succession of totally uninteresting atrocities (half of which are inflicted on the director's wife, f'heaven's sake!), and even Dyanne Thorne can do nothing to enliven it.

2. **Wings of Desire.**

Wim Wenders' movies are never very exciting at the best of times - '**Paris, Texas**' takes two hours to build to the highpoint of Nastassja not taking her clothes off - but this one takes the biscuit in the Art-House category because a lot of invisible dead people walking around Berlin just isn't in the slightest bit interesting. It's shot in B&W too, for that extra added dimension.

3. **Driller Killer.**

A sample 'video nasty' - most of the ones on the list are bad, at least in the artistic sense, but this is one we ought to be grateful to the police for suppressing. Watching someone slowly go insane accompanied by a gratingly dull sub-punk soundtrack isn't my idea of fun, nor is watching down and outs getting cheap special effects inflicted on them.

4. **Transylvania 6-5000.**

Most horror comedies sacrifice the horror element and play everything for laughs. 'Transylvania 6-5000' adopts the unique approach of not having any humour in it either. Jeff Goldblum has no talent for comedy at all (cf '**The Tall Guy**' for proof) and once you strip away the sheer ludicrousness of the plot (leaving it ludicrousnessless?), what have you got? Geena Davis in gratuitous lingerie. This is not quite enough to sustain interest for 90 minutes.

5. **The Streetwalker.**

Walerian Borowczyk is another director who didn't make it onto the short list for '**Robocop 2**'. Plot is usually sacrificed on the high altar of sex, nowhere more so than in this movie, but whaddya looking for

from a film starring Sylvia Kristel and Joe d'Allesandro? Hell, it's even normal sex which is not what we've come to expect from Borowczyk - where're the nuns?

6. The Comic.

Mention this film to anyone who was at the Splatterfest in January 1990 and watch them blanch. Never before has a film had a leading man so devoid of charisma, talent or wit. This is the only film in the list that I've seen twice, purely because I couldn't believe it was that dull. It was solely due to this lead performance. When I was in primary school, we used to put on plays that were acted with more venom.

7. The Trip.

Like wow, man! A really beautiful experience, you dig? Is it hell! Perhaps I approached this film with a bad attitude i.e. without a kilo of Columbian talcum-powder up each nostril. Far more effective than 'Just Say No', try to imagine a bad acid house promo video played very slowly and you'll begin to appreciate what Roger Corman's psychedelic cash-in has to offer.

8. Assault of the Killer Bimbos.

The ultimate case of a movie failing to live up to the title. Two vacuous, talentless go-go dancers (art imitating life here?) go on the run, pick up a vacuous, talentless waitress and meet three vacuous, talentless surfer dudes. One of the bimbos looks slightly (but not enough) like Wendy James. A vacuous, talentless ripoff of Russ Meyer's 'Faster Pussycat, Kill! Kill!'.

9. Mondo Topless

Speaking of Russ, he's made some duff stuff in his time, beside diamonds like 'Faster' and 'Supervixens'. This dud is a 'documentary' with some not especially pretty go-go dancers strutting their stuff and discussing their work. Those that know Meyer won't need telling the girls are top-heavy babes but if that's not your scene, forget this bit of social realism.

10. 555

One of the problems with the easy availability of video-tech is that any jerk can now go out and make a movie, without having to demonstrate any competence whatsoever. Hence the appearance on the scene of a lot of shot-on-video turkeys - again, this is just a sample, it could just as well have been 'Redneck Zombies'. Never mind gun control, we demand licences for video cameras!

Video Valium



It Must Be True: Criminal Negligence

1. Improbable Excuses and Self-Incrimination

* A man suspected of holding up a jewelry store in Liege, Belgium told police he couldn't have done it because at the time of the robbery he was busy breaking into a school...

* Gregory Rosa of Rhode Island was charged with a series of vending machine robberies after trying to run away from police who saw him acting suspiciously near a machine. He tried to post his \$400 bail in nickels and dimes...

* Michael Leonard Jackson escaped from the courthouse while the jury were deliberating their verdict on charges of burglary and theft. Five minutes after he'd gone, the jury came back and found him Not Guilty, as well as Not Present...

* Christopher Plovic, on trial for possessing drugs, claimed to have been searched without a warrant but the police claimed reasonable grounds for suspicion, namely a bulge in his jacket. By chance, Plovic was wearing it that day and handed it to the judge for examination. He saw no bulges, but did find a bag of cocaine in one of the pockets...

* Herbert Freels was found guilty of rape despite producing a note from the victim saying "I was not raped. I did it under my own free will". Freels claimed he always got his sexual partners to write such notes...

* Kevin L.Jones was arrested in a Richmond, Virginia police station after going to post bail for a friend and staring just a little TOO long at the wanted poster of Kevin L.Jones...

* "Well, officer, the money was in this bag marked SWAG". Anthony Colella of Brooklyn made a clean getaway after robbing a New York bank of \$1,300. Unfortunately, a passer-by stopped him and mugged him of the cash so what did Colella do? Go straight to the nearest police station to report the mugging...

* Another bungling bank robber was Elwood Nolden of Pittsburgh. Again, the robbery went smoothly but he left behind the note demanding the money, which he'd written on the back of a sub-poena addressed to him, ordering him to appear in court on another charge...

* According to the Weekly World News, an un-named suspect in an identification parade was caught after he blew his cover. The candidates were asked to say "Gave me all your money - and I need some change in quarters and dimes", a phrase used in the crime. The first two said it ok, but the third blurted out, "That isn't what I said!"...

2. Sheer Stupidity!

* Police called to a Boston suburb found Winston Treadway writhing in agony down an alley after a shoplifting attempt went wrong. The live lobsters he'd stuffed into his trouser pockets got a little nervous. A pair of pliers removed the crustaceans, surgeons spent three hours limiting the damage and charges were not pressed - "the poor guy's had enough trouble for one day" said the store owner...

Damned thing chased me 60 feet!

RUNAWAY CHAINSAW



TRIED TO KILL ME!



DEADLY chainsaw ripped through Waller's shoe as he tried to escape.



RE-ENACTMENT shows position of raging saw seconds before Waller scaled a wall.

BELOW: Circled area shows point of impact where killer chainsaw hit wall, gouging out a big chunk of concrete.



By TIM GLEASON
Special correspondent

Greg Waller ran like the dickens and barely escaped with his life when the slashing blades of the chainsaw he dropped grabbed the dirt — and took off after him like a shot!

At one point the saw actually nipped his right heel and opened a cut in his ankle that required 19 stitches to close.

"My boss told me not to disconnect the automatic kill

Deadly machine ripped through his heel!

That saw could have cut me in two, if it had caught me!"

The mind-numbing drama began when Waller accidentally dropped his saw after felling a tree at a job site in Columbia, S.C.

The saw's automatic kill provision should have stopped the engine dead but since Waller had disconnected it, the blades kept spinning and slashed his heel. "I didn't

know I was cut but I knew enough to start running," said Waller.

"I looked back a couple of times and the chainsaw was no more than a foot or two off my heels.

"It was the damndest thing. It was like it had a mind of its own."

The saw stalled when it rammmed the wall that Waller jumped, enabling him to get back to his truck and drive

himself to the hospital for treatment.

The very next day he was back on the job with the same saw.

But this time, he had the kill switch connected.

"When you let up on the throttle, it cuts off but I don't mind pulling the rope to start it again," he said.

"This way if I drop it, the saw will stay put.

"I don't want that thing coming after me again."

IT MUST BE TRUE!

* In Mexico City, Luis Medina was arrested carrying a stolen TV down a street in the middle of the night. When he returned with the officers to the place from which he'd taken it, they discovered Medina had burgled his own house. He had planned to rob his next door neighbour but got confused because "it was a moonless night and very, very dark...My flashlight batteries went dead". Obviously, no burglary charge was possible but he was hit with "going equipped to commit a felony" instead...

* Two 15-year old boys from Kansas City were charged with stealing cars after stopping off to make a phone call at a police station, which they'd mistaken for a convenience store. Due to the icy conditions, the boys' attempted getaway was at the sedate pace of 10 mph.

* Donald Thomas faces up to 20 years in prison after escaping from a Rhode Island jail on day 89 of a 90 day sentence for disorderly conduct...

* Police charged Kenneth Lang with the robbery of a 7-11 store in Maine earlier this year. Lang initially entered the store in a stocking mask but took it off when he found he couldn't see. He then forced the shop assistant to put money into a paper bag, but the bottom dropped out of the bag. Lang ordered the assistant to pick up all the coins. They then argued about whether the store safe could be opened. While this was going on, Lang also told the till attendant to serve the queue of customers carrying purchases which had built up. When told he had all the store's change, Lang gave several customers the right money from his bag. On leaving the store, he took a wrong turning and eventually ended up back in front of it, where he was arrested...

* Earl Latham escaped from prison in Maryland, and went straight to his mother's house. This was the first place the police looked. Earl answered the door and when told he was busted, replied "You've got the wrong guy, I'm not Earl Latham, I'm Earl...Smith". Police arrested him anyway after he was unable to spell 'Smith'...

3. Our (Un)lucky Day...

* Stephen Baker of Vancouver, Washington was hospitalised with a gun-shot wound in January this year - eye-witnesses said Baker had hit a man's car with a snowball from a bridge. The man got out of his car, fired one shot at Baker from a rifle, got back into his car and drove off...

* Minnesotan police officer Angus Perkins arrested a 23-year old woman in a bar after she tried to pass stolen cheques belonging to her "boyfriend", one Angus Perkins...

* A similar story is that of Raymond Snyder, who stole a blank payroll cheque and selected the name 'Miles F.Huml' from the local telephone directory to fill the space. Unfortunately, the clerk in the bank where he went to cash it was MRS Miles F.Huml...

* Leslie Steven Slovak was sentenced to a year in jail for aiding a felony despite having given police a perfect description of the man who held up the bank where Slovak was standing in line. He just forgot to mention that (purely by chance, I should add) it happened to be his brother...

Thrash City

The Gospel According to the Men in Jumpsuits

"...And the acolytes of the great Gods, NME and Melody Maker did heap scorn upon the men of Devo and did say unto their followers : Look at these blasphemers, in their yellow jumpsuits and their flowerpot hats and laugh at their banal lyrics for they are Not To Be Taken Seriously."

"...And the men of Devo were wroth and did retire to their homeland across the water and plotted the downfall of the Conspiracy and produced some very good LP's, soundtracks for some not very good films and did write the music for the PeeWee Herman show."

"...And there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth among their followers, and the doubters among them did throw away their plastic and became Spud Boys & Girls, or joined the Conspiracy, but those of true faith remembered the words of The Great Mothersbaugh when he said 'Are We Not Men?' and they kept the spirit alive."

"...And many years passed, and the Beast with the three heads called Stock, Aiken and Waterman did bring fear and terror to all on the music scene and the people prayed for a saviour to deliver them from the Anti-Christ who was named Kylie."

"...And The Great Mothersbaugh had not forgotten us and he said 'Lo, let us tour Britain again' and the other priests of Devo did verily say 'Yeah'. So they played two nights at the Town & Country Club and one night in Manchester, which might not seem much of a tour but is better than nothing."

"...And the Devo-tees did rejoice and brushed the dust off their unfashionable streetwear and did gather together. But they were nonplussed for the men of Devo were not on stage, there was a film show instead and the Elder Ones shook their heads and did remember Kraftwerk in 1981 when the band used plastic dummies as stand-ins ."

"...And then it became All Right when Markie (as The Great Mothersbaugh likes his followers to call him), Bob I & II, Gerry the Casale and the new drummer whose name we dare not speak (but I can remember it, honest) did come on stage and wax lyrical."

"...And they did play "Whip It", and they did play "Satisfaction" and they did play "Smart Patrol" and they did play "Shout" and they did play a lot of music from their new album which had been out in this country for about, oooh, five days so no-one knew the songs but all agreed they were damn good ones nevertheless."

"...And at the end, The Great Mothersbaugh did pull handfuls of spring onions from his underpants and did throw them into the throng of his followers, who did cheer mightily. But the biggest cheer of the evening was when the Men of Devo did put on their flowerpot hats which are a sign of their favour with the Gods, if perhaps not the record-buying public."

"...And everyone did say "That was a worthy concert", except for the critics who wrote literary essays that failed to say anything of interest at all. But frankly, who gives a damn?"

Lung! - "Having Fun in an Iron Lung"

There are certain occasions in my life, some pleasant and others I'd rather forget, that have taken on a sort of ill-defined, dreamlike quality, where reality gets distorted and it becomes impossible to distinguish what really happened from the products of my deranged imagination. This tape is the aural equivalent of one of those events: even after several listenings, switching off the cassette is like waking up from a nightmare.

Fortunately, I quite like this aural nightmare. How else could you describe a track like 'Holiday Camp/Torture Chamber', which starts off as a sound picture of Butlin's before, yep, you guessed it, slipping sideways into the soundtrack to 'Ilsa, She-Wolf of the S.S.'. Other titles include 'The Day My Brother Choked on a Hot Dog', 'We're So Crap' and 'The Reason I'm in a Wheelchair is Because I've Got No Legs'. The last is probably the best track on the album. It features a paraplegic being run over by a train.

This dates back to 1985, when Lung! had some brief moments of infamy. It was recorded in the school toilets and features a large number of things being broken - windows, chairs, urinals an electric fire and lots of plates although precisely what the plates were doing in the toilets escapes me. Despite efforts to ban them, they managed to play live in front of the school (the notes are unclear whether this means the location of the concert, or the audience for it!) and upset a lady by hitting her on the head with a cardboard box. By accident.

We're talking very basic sound here - few live tapes include the sound of one of the band members pausing for a pee, but given it's location, what do you expect? Post World War III, when the new cavemen are making music round their camp-fires by the glow of radioactive Basingstoke, this is what it'll probably be like. It doesn't all work - there's an element of sub-juvenile humour which does grate annoyingly but even when this isn't avoided, the tracks are so (mercifully?) short that you won't have long to wait until it's all over. The general result is a refreshing dose of anti-music, as in a quite unique version of 'Rock Around the Clock', capable of raising Bill Haley from the dead, or at least making him turn in his grave.

It's all completely unlike anything I've ever heard before. Whether it's something I ever want to hear much more of is a different matter! There was apparently a follow-up recorded, which was snatched in mid-air by a crow (don't ask me, this is only what I was told!) and the recording of the follow-up to the follow-up is a little problematic as "one member is either in jail or dead". It is unlikely to be an attempt to cash in on the current dance craze. Still, any group that can give a message to their fans of "You've wasted our time, I hope we've wasted your time and I hope you all die" has clearly got the right attitude to make it big in the megabucks world that is 90's pop music.

["Having Fun in an Iron Lung" is available for a blank tape and an SAE from Simon Wood, Fieldside House, London Road, Blewbury, Oxon, OX11 9NY. Ask for a few Lung! stickers while you're at it.]

LUNG!

LEGEND PG

A · R I D L E Y · S C O T T · F I L M

Ridley Scott's most misunderstood film flopped miserably at the box-office after audiences used to his hard-edged technoromps were faced with the sight of Tom Cruise playing an elf. They were understandably slightly nonplussed. Yet there is much to admire and enjoy in this film, even beyond the highly pleasing charms of Mia Sara in black lipstick.

A simple tale of light triumphing over dark, this is also a film in which lighting triumphs over plot, effects and acting (despite Rob Bottin and Tim Curry's valiant efforts in the last two categories). Everything is eventually submerged beneath a tide of shimmer, glimmer and glow not to mention the flower petals, myriad miscellaneous motes or even soap bubbles which litter each frame, most notably in the opening sequences which look like a remake of 'Scott of the Antarctic'. Visually, it is absolutely stunning stuff and is the prettiest film I've ever seen - each scene is arranged with such care and attention to detail you begin to think each of the previously mentioned petals was choreographed individually.

The problem is, it's unsure of it's audience - presumably a children's movie (as the advertising material shown here makes clear), the cutesy-pie visuals and 'soppy stuff' between Jack and Lili which suggest the 'My Little Pony' group are sharply at odds with some grim(m) references to cannibalism, as when one of the goblins says of the heroine, "**She was so sweet, I could eat her brains like jam**". The long build-up to the action would bore to tears most small boys not yet able to appreciate things like dazzling cinematography (or indeed, Mia Sara in black lipstick - why is innocence always cuter when it's dressed to kill?). So the movie gently falls between two stools and fails to appeal to anyone that it's supposed to.

This may explain the drastic celluloid surgery it suffered - the 'special version' shown on TV at Christmas was different from the video, although the extent of the alterations isn't apparent until you compare them scene by scene. How much was at the request, or with the approval, of Ridley Scott is uncertain - some may be for technical reasons as the special version seems brighter, Tim Curry's voice is deeper and in several shots the pan & scanning is different, giving the illusion of a new camera angle.

A · R I D L E Y · S C O T T · F I L M

LEGEND PG

MAZE COMPETITION

Can you help Jack and Gump find Princess Lili and the Unicorn, who have been captured by the evil Darkness. Using a pen, try to plot the route Jack and Gump must take to reach Princess Lili and the Unicorn, avoiding at all costs, Meg Mucklebones, Blix and Pox, and, of course, Darkness himself.

Name

Address

.....

© Artwork 1985 Twentieth Century Fox

The most obvious change is that the video version (VV) has an orchestral score, replacing the Tangerine Dream electronically based soundtrack on the special version (SV). Apart from the obvious differences, this totally alters the mood of some scenes, which the composers have chosen to interpret in varying ways. The scene where Lili enters the house in the woods for the first time is a salutary example of how music is capable of altering the tone of a scene. Dialogue is also altered in many areas, moved from scene to scene and removed or added. This can make a lot of difference: In the SV, Lili says to Jack, "**Tell me your future**", to which he replies, "**not today**", because they're going to see the unicorns. In the VV, Lili instead says, "**Teach me rabbit**", a rather less ominous phrase! Similarly, tho' this may have been excised on the grounds of taste, one of the goblins says in the VV "**Baby! How I love milk-fed meat!**", but by the time it reached TV, it had become "**Plenty hospitality here!**"

There is a love scene, albeit a chaste one, between Lili and Jack in the SV that is totally missing on video - the first kiss in the VV is not until right at the end after darkness has been defeated. Similarly, you don't see Tim Curry until nearly an hour into the video, despite hearing his voice. In the SV, he appears, complete with fluorescent eyes, almost straight after the opening caption introducing you to the characters, which is also missing from the VV. In the SV, you see the unicorn's horn being severed as Jack breaks through the ice that is covering the pool, while on video there's only Jack. This matches up with a scene at the end where the SV has Jack waking Lili at the same time as the unicorn's horn is replaced, and the VV only has the waking.

Conversely, at two points on video, Lili sings - once to charm the unicorn and, shortly afterwards, to calm Jack's anger. Neither are included in the SV and the lyricist credit, which opens the VV titles, is also dropped. When Jack meets the Glump, in the VV he is forgiven his 'crime' of showing Lili the unicorn after answering a riddle. There is no riddle in the SV - he merely says he did it for love. Another bit removed in the same way is when Jack faces Meg Knucklebones, the swamp witch - the VV has him using flattery to distract her, while in the SV it's virtually straight out with the sword and <Schnick>!

Most of the later sections are relatively untouched - a sequence where Lili dances with a masked figure is noticeably longer in the VV, but compared to the first half there aren't many changes. However, Lili's (faked) conversion to the powers of darkness takes place over a longer period in the SV, and is thus more convincing. The two endings do differ significantly - before Jack finally defeats Darkness, the SV gives Tim Curry a speech in which he says "**We are brothers eternal**" before being sucked into a void. No final speech on the video, and only a couple of after-shots of the void! The final shot of the VV is Lili and Jack walking off into the sunrise/set. The SV gives a rather different impression, closing with a superimposed shot of Darkness laughing...

Personally, I think both versions have their strong points - some of the changes make sense, while others do weaken the film. Overall, however, I'd give the nod to the special version. Yet despite all this mutilation and alteration, what comes through is an adult (in the best sense) fairy tale, delightfully dark and wonderfully moody. And any time you feel Tom "I'm a serious actor" Cruise is getting a bit too pretentious, watch '**Legend**' and you'll never take the cute, pointy-eared pixie seriously again!



Nightmares 8: Pearls

The gale licked at my turn-ups.

My toes curled involuntarily inside their Cartier corsets in a futile attempt to grip the shiny steel surface of the girder rather better than hardly at all. My stomach lurched and swayed rebelliously, in stark counterpoint to the solidarity displayed by the rest of my anatomy, standing rigidly pressed against the upright at my back. I still held the upper hand in my sado-masochistic tango with gravity, but the battle for my mind was in retreat.

I wanted to learn the accordion, fly a microlight and drive Italian cars at breakneck speeds through sleepy villages. But I wanted down from here more. I could still hear her laugh, a bass clarinet in an operetta by Carl Orf, emanating from a silken throat framed in a rather excessive collection of molars. That, I realised, was my downfall. No-one had twisted my arm or greased my palm. I wasn't tired of living or, like a moth with sunglasses, tired of flying round the lightbulb. But listen to Clifton Chenier or Joe El Sonnier frisking the mother of pearl on a cajun anthem, pull up to 7000ft cloud base like Zeus on Pegasus, or power through a moonlit landscape in a three litre Alfa Romeo with a laughing, pony-tailed redhead fondling your thigh and you may just realise that there's more to life than picking up peanuts for picking up someone else's dirty laundry.

Most people loose the lifelong battle with gravity to the tune of six feet plus the height of the bed, but the stakes were higher in this game. About sixteen stories higher. My inner ear was telling stories too, the lights of the city swam, spun and flashed and all the alarms in my head sounded. It was like being on the bridge of the Starship Enterprise during a Klingon attack, only worse.

It looked like I could trust my balance like you could trust Insurance Companies to give accurate valuations, London Underground Nestles dispensers to pay up in chocolate or that slice of toast you just dropped to hit the sheepskin rug marmite side up. With the marmite on the toast, not on the sheepskin that is. The wind redoubled it's efforts to make my trenchcoat flap like a Nomad's awning in a sandstorm. It looked like things couldn't get much worse unless Cronenberg had just bought the movie rights. My nose started to run.

My undoing was worn straight from the cleaners, and she knew it. She was my Nemesis, my Lament Configuration, my strange attractor. I had explained to her that I'd lost interest in busting my arse for salted seed kernels and achieving nothing but indifference, apathy and an addiction to polo mints. That there was no longer a place for free spirits or Private Eyes was a conclusion she'd read as "wimp city" before she shut down the play. Why? I wanted her because I couldn't have her. Everything else in life was everyday, corrupt or on page 149 of the Argos catalogue. Idealism isn't entirely unattractive, least not when it's dressed up fancy and taught to dance to 808 State.

"I was once told something about you by a man in a 3 piece suit with a gold AmEx card" she had said in a complimentary tone.



"That man was an imposter" I replied, knowing full well who she referred to and remembering the trouble he got me into when he drove into the side of the Norwegian ambassador's Volvo while I was blind drunk in the passenger seat. He handed me the keys and legged it.

"Something about heights". She smiled again, her breath rising like steam in the drizzle, and turned quickly so as to display the long pearl necklaces she wore to good effect. She exhibited the kind of neck-snapping beauty that makes the wearing of baggy trousers essential.

Time was running out. Shock was creeping in around the edges of my consciousness like ice on a Polar explorer's goggles. My pulse was weaker than MaxPax coffee and the blood was pooling in my swelling feet like a thermometer on a cold morning. One step street pizza.

No. I couldn't give her the satisfaction. And besides, I wanted to have another look at her before a casket obscured the view. If I couldn't get out of this, I needed someone who could. Rutger Hauer would drop his head, smile a little under heavy eyebrows and rush across the girder in a stoop, shoulders curved and palms spread forwards like a juggler. When I made the door, I heard him elucidate patiently, as if to a slow learning child, "Now, perhaps that's not so hard after all". Guess he could be right at that.

She was waiting for me, of course, in her car, a pretty dark blue Alfa, one of the last Bertone two-litre GTV coupes. Through the closing door I noticed a beautiful old Sila accordian on the rear seat, and as she crashed the syncro on first and made her gravel spun exit, a sticker in the rear window said "Microlight pilots do it with 2-strokes".

If there is a God up there, then he's a sick bastard.

It was enough to make a lesser man weep. Me, I started on a fresh tube of Polos.

(with apologies to Mark Williams)



Conspiracy Corner 3: Afr-AIDS.

"As shocking as it sounds, I believe the Soviets have already launched WW III, to the hilt. And it's not at all the kind of war we've been expecting...The great Soviet first strike has been delivered with surreptitious biological warfare, not with nuclear weapons or ground forces".

--- Lt.Col.Thomas E.Bearden in 'Aids - Biological Warfare'.

"Dares to present real facts, placing the blame of this disease precisely where it falls, on the shoulders of wilfully promiscuous homosexuals and our timid government! Exposes the homosexual community's sinister success in controlling government health officials and how the 'gay' community is succeeding in its evil agenda of legitimizing perversion in the eyes of youngsters"

--- Blurb on 'Exposing the AIDS scandal' by Dr. Paul Cameron

"I told you I was sick"

--- Inscription on hypochondriac's gravestone.

Hypochondria is a wonderful thing. There is a whole universe of wonderful diseases, illnesses and sundry ailments out there waiting for you to discover. Does anything compare with the delights of diabetes, the pleasures of pneumonia or the sheer, unadulterated joy of coming down with a disease whose symptoms you can find **no mention whatsoever of** in your copy of 'The Family Doctor'? The realisation that Death is lurking round every corner, waiting to mug you with his scythe certainly helps you appreciate life a whole lot more.

If there's one disease that's been a godsend to the pseudo-sick, and that has driven thousands of more people into our ranks, it's AIDS. Even the government seems keen to drum home the message with commercials of icebergs crashing into tombstones (or was it tombstones crashing into icebergs?), quietly forgetting that you've currently got a greater chance of dying on the roads.

My personal paranoia produced one of the worst moments in my life: coming back to my desk the day after a visit to give blood (handily incorporating an AIDS test), I found a note asking me to phone the Blood Transfusion Service. Fortunately they were just checking my address - I'd moved since my last pint - but it took a long time for my heart-rate to return to normal. Not bad going, since I'm not the slightest homosexual, am totally unacquainted with the sharp end of heroin-filled syringes and can't honestly claim to sleep with as many loose women as I'd like. So why do I occasionally find myself lying in bed, absent-mindedly checking my armpits for swollen lymph nodes?

Media hype is, unsurprisingly, largely responsible but it helps that most of the symptoms of AIDS are so nebulous as to be virtually meaningless. Tiredness, loss of appetite and sweating are three main ones, but there's scarcely a disease worthy of the name that won't leave you feeling tired, and if the imminent



prospect of a terminal disease doesn't stop you feeling hungry and make you break out into a cold sweat instead, you're a cooler dude than I am. Also, AIDS does more than kill you, being the only disease that'll terminate your family home too. No life insurance or mortgage company will pay out if you catch AIDS, whether you were healthy to start with or not, and some look askew at you if you admit to having had an AIDS test (which strikes me as hideously irresponsible).

This may be why AIDS puts the fear of God into people, or it might be the implication that they've been up to naughty tricks. Perhaps it's the you-can't-tell-by-looking aspect - it certainly doesn't seem sporting, or English, that all you can do is spin the chamber of the carnal revolver, slap the barrel against your groin and **pull!** Or maybe it's the sexual aspect generally, the idea that the most popular indoor sport of them all can seriously damage your health. Anyone remember herpes? Wasn't that supposed to be the great disease of the decade? Turned out to be the sexually-transmitted equivalent of Sigue Sigue Sputnik, really. Yes, the sixties had hippy free love, the seventies had punk free love, the eighties had... Kylie Minogue and AIDS. Ever feel you were born in the wrong era?

But where do the conspiracies come in? Firstly, there's the theory that AIDS sudden appearance is because it was a germ warfare weapon which was accidentally (or deliberately) released. Related to this is the Wrath Of God theory, very popular with people like James 'Cesspool' Anderton). The problem with both these is that lesbians very rarely get AIDS and while one may plausibly consider the US government, or God, devious enough to construct a virus capable of wiping out all those pinko fags and Haitians, who'd want a world inhabited solely by women in dungarees and silly hair-cuts?

Meanwhile, certain sections of the gay community take it into the area of sexual politics, AIDS being nothing more than a heaven-sent excuse for the nasty Conservatives to repress someone else. They may be right (tho' I suspect the number of gay Conservative MP's is more than they'd like i.e. greater than none) but while I sympathise, I shrug my shoulders and feel such are the penalties of life in a democracy - most minority groups, from horror fans to SDP voters, reckon they're repressed by someone or other. This is perfectly normal, well adjusted paranoia.

However, if you're conspiracy hunting, it's always worth looking to see who's making the money and this time, pharmaceutical companies are the winners - shareholders in whichever company eventually finds a vaccine get cocktails in Rio. Yes, there's no conspiracy theory like an economic one (preferably involving multinational companies), so my guess is that AIDS is the product of some highly illegal genetic engineering experiments in a Swiss laboratory, released on an unsuspecting world. The drugs cartels are just pretending to do vast amounts of research on it, saving enormous amounts of tax, and when they do release the vaccine (already discovered, but being kept secret), it's more profit thanks to the paranoia they've induced in us, and they also get hailed as saviours of mankind.

Some of you may scoff, but you'll know I'm speaking the truth when I'm found dangling off a bridge in Bristol with my trousers down and needle marks in my bum. Oh, sorry - wrong conspiracy. That's only for those who work for Marconi, isn't it? More on that one next time...



SAN FUTURO CHRONICLE 2

3 1/2

Well, here we are again, & I don't know if this is San Futuro Volume three or four, as Jim won't let on if the TC6 **Manga** piece was really a volume of SFC or not... For this venture into the world of comics, the Ed (capital "E" insisted upon !!) desires a theme. Apart from the obvious reply of "well, don't comics count as a theme" the most obvious options were... Sex; Horror, Kinski and Films.

Sex comics aren't really a great forte of mine - the nearest I get are **Faust** (Sex'n'Violence), **Heavy Metal** (Arty European Sex); and **Omaha The Cat Dancer** (Cute animal sex - Jim won't let me write about it as he considers it a slur on Bambi's good name).

Well, if not sex, waddabout horror ??? It's close to all the team's hearts (not as close as sex, but still pretty close!!), we've got a good few examples of various types... the gory ones such as **Faust**, **Blade**, **Chaingang** etc; the psychological ones - **Hellblazer**, **Sandman**, **Cry For Dawn** (okay, so that one also has a load of gore - so what ??); and various others - **Vampire Lestat** is obvious horror, but are things like **Give Me Liberty** horror ?? I reckon so, meaning that I either look at all the things I consider horror or wimp out & only do the blatantly genre comics. This entails a decision, and, as it's now one week to deadline, I guess I don't really have time to figure out what to do for the horror article (mebbe it'll still appear in the future at some stage!)



Next up, **Kinski**. The perfect topic for a TC article. She who embodies 90% of emotions generated by a certain TC editor (the other 10% being based around the phrase "Waddaya mean the comics article/layout [Delete as appropriate] isn't ready yet ?????"). She who has yet to be celebrated (as far as I know) in any sort of comic at all. Sorry Jim, looks like a Kinski-comics article is no go, for the mo'.

That only seems to leave us with film tie-ins. So, the theme is set, the bottle of tequila awaits, and it's time to start on some filmy-comicy sort of waffle...

Filmwise, there've been a load of tie-ins (both to & from films/comics). Firstly, there's film to comics... this has given us: **Terminator**; **Predator**; **Alien(s)**; **Hellraiser**; **Darkman**; and loadsa **manga** (the Japanese stuff from TC6). Then there's comics to film... no shortage here eitherwith: **Batman**; **Superman**; **Dick Tracy**; **Predator** (again); loadsa manga (again); **T**n*ge M*1*nt N*nja T*rds** etc.. etc.. Like I said there've been plenty of tie-ins, the Tequila is now gone, the editor is panting for an article, so on with the reviews...

Aliens

There have been three volumes of **Aliens** produced by Dark Horse. The first volume featured some stunning black & white artwork; the second had stunning **painted** artwork; and the third had fairly standard colour art. The three volumes follow on from the end of the film (*Aliens* that is, rather than *Alien*) and feature Newt, Ripley, Hicks and a selection of minor characters. The first volume has been reprinted in a single paperback, and I suspect that the subsequent series will follow hot on it's heels. Anyway, here come some plot details, so skip them if you think it'll spoil it for you.

Volume 1: Newt has been dreaming about the aliens and is talking it through with her psychiatrist... Cut to Hicks, Hicks is dreaming about the mission to Acheron, the aliens and the rescue of Newt. Cut to space, Coast Guards are blasting a derelict ship out of orbit. Problems. Meet the aliens. Cut to office, voice-over tells us how TV has evolved... see video being recorded. Subject matter? Religious. Denomination? The Church of the Immaculate Incubation. Content of video? The True Messiah. Identity of Messiah? Yup, it's an alien.

So it begins - Hicks, Newt and the aliens are together again. By the end of issue one, we've found out what's going on... the U.S. government have spotted the alien homeworld and would like a few specimens to train as the ultimate weapon (train *aliens* - would you like to try). Well, there're six parts to this and it was so good that the costs have gone through the roof - get the trade paperback if you can. As a hint, by the end of the sixth issue, we've met up with the *other* type of alien (you know, like the dead one in the mystery ship in the movie), aliens are on Earth, and lots of marines have been killed!!

Volume 2: Newt & Hicks are back in space... eventually they reach an outer colony. One problem here - the military are running the place and still want to try & train aliens (some people never learn). The major difference is that these aliens are to be trained to kill their own kind. Cue crackpot colonel, lots of confusion, near death-by-aliens for our heroes and yet more massacred marines. Eventually (i.e. in issue four - of four!!) Hicks & Newt are safely back on Gateway station (where *Aliens* the movie began) and our old pal Ripley comes out of the woodwork ready to kick alien ass.

Volume 3: This volume has a sub-title... **Earth War**. In this volume we find out the truth about the aliens, the *other* alien, what happened to Ripley between the film & her reappearance in Volume Two, what happened between Ripley and the *other* in the movie... etc. etc. Ripley's plan is the same one she had all along - get the aliens in one place & nuke them. How she intends to do this ??? I'll leave it for you to find out, but I promise you this - there's plenty of action.



Aliens Vs Predator

Aliens vs Predator

Clash of the titans ??? Well maybe, but the title skips one vital fact - there're still puny ol' humans involved as well. A four issue limited series, it's now on issue three. We have... Predators & Aliens fighting... Humans caught in the middle... Cute art... Okay story-line... Plenty of action... Nice covers as well!!

Terminator

Whoops... The one that got away. Yes, there are plenty of Terminator comics out there. Yes, they should have been reviewed. No there isn't room here for a full review (personally I prefer *Aliens*!!). The first Terminator volume wasn't appealing to me, those since have been mini-series and I've gone out, bought them and enjoyed them. The latest series is from Dark Horse, the previous ones were from Now Comics (Who also did *Rust* (Buy! Buy!!)).



Nightbreed

More violent fun!!! The first four issues comprise a "mini-series" adaptation of the movie... and then things start to twist. The movie adaptations good (similar standard to the film I suppose), and the series is sort of like just keeping the film going. It follows Boone (Cabal if you prefer) and the Nightbreed as they try to find a new homeland/sanctuary. Some of the Nightbreed forget the ways of Midian and return to eating human flesh, and Boone has the doubts due of all reluctant heroes. Basically: if you liked the film (even just as entertainment) you'll like the comic; if you didn't like the film, but liked the book... give the comic a try - you may be pleasantly surprised; if you liked neither, don't bother unless you hope you were wrong with the movie & the book.

Robocop

Well, both movies have been adapted to comic-book form, but Robocop also has his own series these days. Outside of the content of the films, but with OCP up to there old tricks. Sort of fun, but nowhere near as dark as the original movie...

Predator

The film that spawned a comic that spawned a film... Yup, **Predator 2** (the movie) is supposed to be the film of the comic-book sequel to **Predator** (the movie). It's set after Predator (not surprisingly), and features Schaefer (Dutch's big brother (Arnie was "Dutch" in case you've forgotten)), a New York cop with a less than delicate (and less than orthodox) manner when dealing with the bad guys. Anyway, it's heatwave time in New York, and the city's going crazy. Enter a Predator. Havoc hits NYC. So, Schaefer vs the predators... Schaefer finding out what happened to Dutch... The army getting involved... Loads of predators in NYC (bit like Xmas shopping on Oxford St. (Yeuch)). It looks like this should be one helluva movie if it lives up to the comic... then again, it could turn out to be another Batman!

Hellraiser

The Hellraiser comics are not adaptations of the films. They are something much better. Set in the same mythos (for want of a better word) as the films, they tell of Lament configurations, LeMarchand (who invented the Lament configuration(s)), other ways to call the Cenobites, the creation of Cenobites and a whole host of other goodies that will appeal to horror fans, comics fans, and anyone else out there with a taste for the macabre. Each issue features five tales using different authors and artists, a few of the tales use the same characters, but the majority are unique creations not to be found anywhere in the films. A mixed bag in general, but even so, generally a good mix.

Darkman

I know this is going to appear unfair... I haven't read the comic adaptation of the film, but I'm going to say that the only reason I haven't is that the movie was great, but the comic looks like a heap of shit. As such, I didn't buy it on principle. Other people who did mistakenly buy it hoping for something as good as the film agree. Waste your money if you like.

The Winding Up Part

Well, that's it on the review front. Yes, there's a lot of ground I haven't covered, but it is possible to have too much of a good thing (give or take the odd immoral exception!!). Brief mentions here of two comics related items:

Comics Scene - a bi-monthly American magazine. It is a sister-magazine to Starlog, and devotes itself to comics & films. The films involved are either comics-based or animation, and it includes listings of all comics for which film rights are known to have been purchased, along with the current state of such projects. Often an interesting read, with plenty of inside info type interviews & reviews. Available from comic shops etc. etc.

Comics the Ninth Art - a Spanish TV series all about the history of comics. It's been showing late Sunday evening (earliest showing 23:30, latest 00:10) on London Weekend Television for the past three months, but whether other ITV regions have had it, I don't know. It's given a good history of comics with nicely "animated" sections from some of the classics (including **Watchmen**, **Dark Knight**, **Incal**, **Area 88** & various manga). Episode one was basically a summary of what the series contains; two to eleven covered a Western history of comics (European & American); twelve was manga; and thirteen covered the future (showing snippets from various "up & coming" artists). The series has just finished, but if you get a chance to see it, it's definitely worth a look.

A few lists here... Firstly, of films that are (apparently) in the process of being made; secondly of comics for which film rights are out there and are still supposed to be produced some day; and finally a list I snuck in that contains a few title's I'd like you to peek at that I had no better excuse available for...

Coming Soon... The Airtight Garage - animated movie based around Moebius's tales; Captain America - very soon, like it's made; Judge Dredd - script by Howard Chaykin (by the latest rumour I spotted); Sgt. Rock - Bruce Willis... John McTiernan... Joel Silver (Sounds more like Die Hard III).

Maybe Some Day... American Flag; Blackhawk; Deathlok; Dr. Strange; Evangeline; The Far Side (!!); Green Hornet; Green Lantern; Grimjack; Iron Man; Lone Wolf & Cub; Mai The Psychic Girl; Mandrake; Mr. X; Nick Fury, Agent Of SHIELD; Phantom; Prowler; Reid Fleming; Rocketeer (Disney!); Shadow; Spiderman; Tom & Jerry (Film now on hold...); Vampirella; V For Vendetta; Watchmen (Sam Hamm... Joel Silver... Terry Gilliam... needs a studio); Wolverine.

No Excuse... Give Me Liberty; The Nazz Chronicles; Hard Boiled; Shade - The Changing Man; The Last American; Marshall Law - Kingdom Of The Blind; Sandman (okay, so it's not new, but I don't think I've said "Buy It" yet, and I should have!!)

That's all for now - 'til next time... Happy reading.

