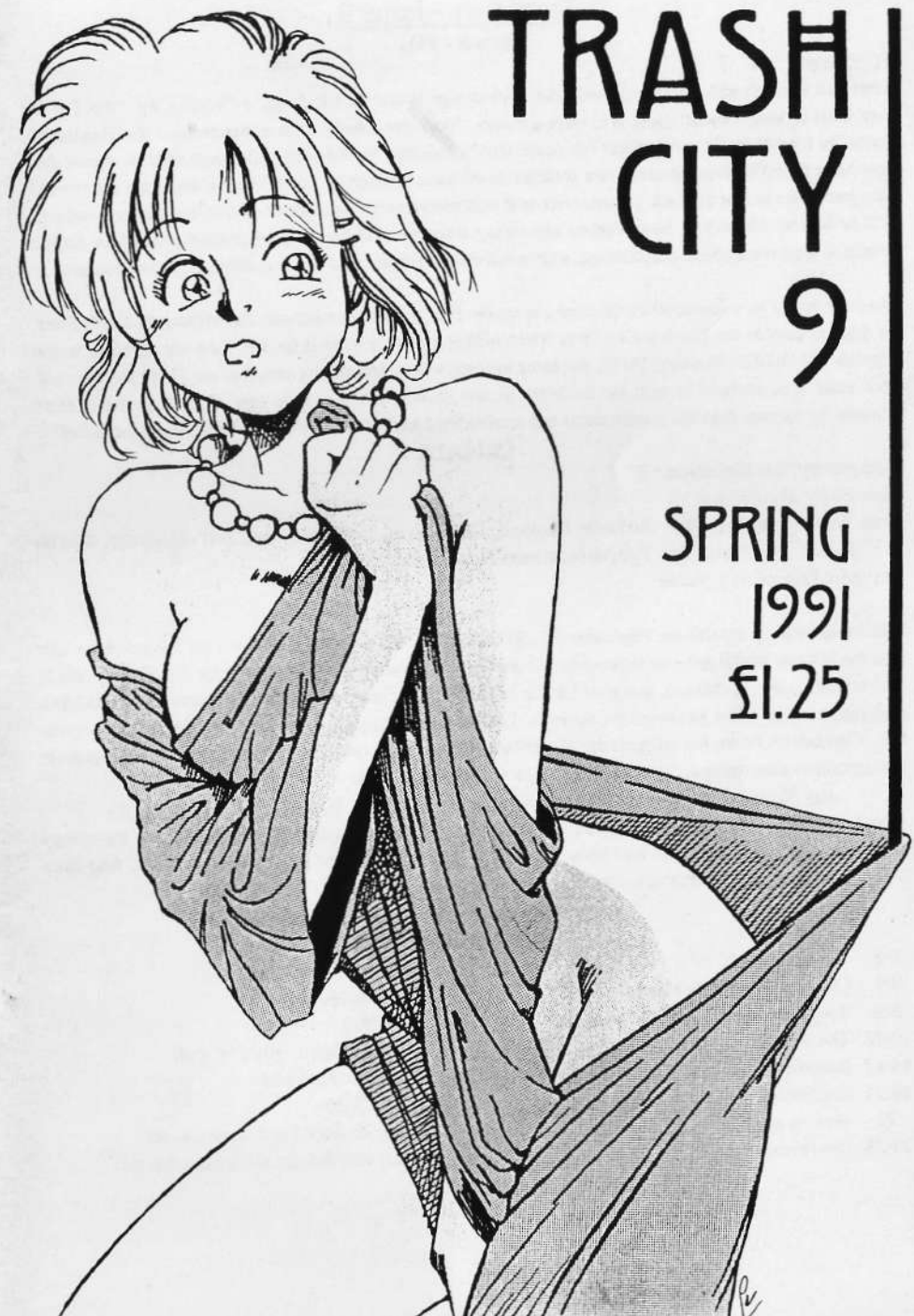


TRASH CITY 9

SPRING
1991
£1.25



Trash City - Issue 9 Spring 1991.

TC-shirts!

After consultation and market research, the final design is front: Kinski pic + "Trash City - the T-shirt they tried to ban!". back: most will have the text, "Fuck me gently with a chainsaw..." (a 'Heathers' quote, so it's not totally gratuitous) but some won't, and may be worn in polite company. A printer has now been found with sufficiently few scruples to do them (though he doesn't know about the quote yet!) - the bad news is that the back-printed ones will cost more - not sure of exact cost at the moment, but you will be told in due course. New readers wondering what we're discussing are invited to send for further details, if they are interested in clothing with a full-colour picture of a blood-spattered German actress...

Congrats to my two favoured ice-hockey teams, the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Minnesota North Stars, for both getting to the Stanley Cup final when neither has ever won it before. You are urged to watch Liquid TV (BBC2: Monday 1915), the most innovative and interesting program on TV at the moment. This issue was brought to you by the letter w, the number e3, 2 quarter tabs of beta-blockers, more Winona Ryder pics than the human mind can comprehend and a driving licence. Yep, passed this time!

CREDITS

Produced by: Jim McLennan.

Directed by: Per Porter.

From an original script by: Anthony Cawood, Des Lewis, Jim McLennan, Paul Mallinson, Martin Murray, Per Porter, Dan Pydynkowski and Steve Welburn.

Key grip: Copyprint, London

Sub. rates (min. 2 issues) are 75p/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. Note the price increase for UK issues - this is still brilliant value (I reckon), you pay for the 'zine, I pay for the postage. 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, 7 Tummons Gardens, S.Norwood Hill, LONDON, SE25 6BD

which has changed as well. Eagle-eyed readers may notice the post-code is not the same as on the change of address slips I sent out - that was wrong, the one above is official and Post Office approved. And since we'd no room on the cover, this is a more sensible than usual list of:

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Welcome to the Videodrome

Does Wendy James wear knickers or not? Those of you who saw BBC1's "Going Live!" on April 13th will have seen Bendy Wendy perform Transvision Vamp's latest single (since she's always careful not to exploit her body, I must have been hallucinating when I saw her clad in a skirt so short it barely covered her panties, grinding her crotch at the camera, stroking her inner thighs and squeezing her small-but-perfectly-formed breasts - ditto, the cover of The Face magazine, which had Wendy just-about wearing bits of a coat-hanger). There followed this interesting exchange with presenter Sarah Greene:

SG: Do all your costumes have knickers sewn into them?

WJ: No, I don't normally wear any.

SG: <Long pause> You're not worried about catching cold then?

In the investigative spirit for which TC is famed, I'll be going to see Transvision Vamp in concert before next issue and will be down at the front checking to see just how natural a blonde Wendy really is...

One final tweak to the top 10 films of 1990, following Xmas viewing. '**Meet the Feebles**' doesn't stand up to repeated viewing so is replaced by '**In the Line of Duty 4**', which gets better on reviewing. And a comic book to recommend: '**Squeak the Mouse**', Tom & Jerry crossed with every splatter movie you've seen. It was recommended to me some time ago by a reader (can't remember who!) but it's taken a while to get hold of a copy, since Customs seem to have been great fans of it... '**Meet the Applegates**' did indeed improve on a second viewing - while it's still no '**Heathers**', it's a neat little movie. I saw a trailer for Michael Lehmann's next film, '**Hudson Hawke**' recently: I'm not overly optimistic...

Next issue: I feel something Oriental creeping on. It'll have been four issues (= a year [near enough!]) since the last one, so it seems a good time to loose my predilection for lingerie-clad Japanese gothettes. Precisely what this means for TC remains to be seen. It'll probably involve a cold shower or two.

Thanks are due to Steve Rag, Dan Pydynkowski, Graf Hauser and Claire Blamey (all of whom have been feeding my NK obsession), Andy Waller, Paul Higson, Helen McCarthy, Stefan Kwiatkowski, Anthony Cawood, George Houston, John from Barlaston, Jay Felton, Tim Paxton, Damien Drake and Steve Moss. Congratulations to **Fantasy** and **Imaginator** for taking the top places in Samhain's 'zine poll - definitely worthy winners. TC8 was available from Forbidden Planet, Fantasy Inn and Psychotronic Videos, London, plus Videodrom, Berlin and Forbidden Planet, Cardiff - maybe the last named will get round to paying me for the issues I sent them at some point?

Film Blitz: Stop Press

Silence of the Lambs - Jonathan (**Married to the Mob**) Demme directs the adaptation of Thomas Harris' excellent novel of the same name. Anthony Hopkins and Jodie Foster star as psychopath and trainee FBI agent respectively. Sounds like a strange combination? Well, it works brilliantly: Hopkins will win next year's Best Actor and the film will be nominated for Best Film. The story concerns Hannibal Lecter (Hopkins), a psychiatrist turned psychopath incarcerated in a top security mental institution - Clarice Sterling (Foster) is used to try and gain Lester's help on the case of 'Buffalo Bill', a serial killer who skins his female victims. The most terrifying thing in the film (and the book) is the interplay between Sterling and Lecter - Hopkins is just totally charismatic as the too-intelligent-to-be-sane psychopath and plays Lecter to perfection. Honestly, the film haunts me even while I'm writing this...
10/10. (AC)

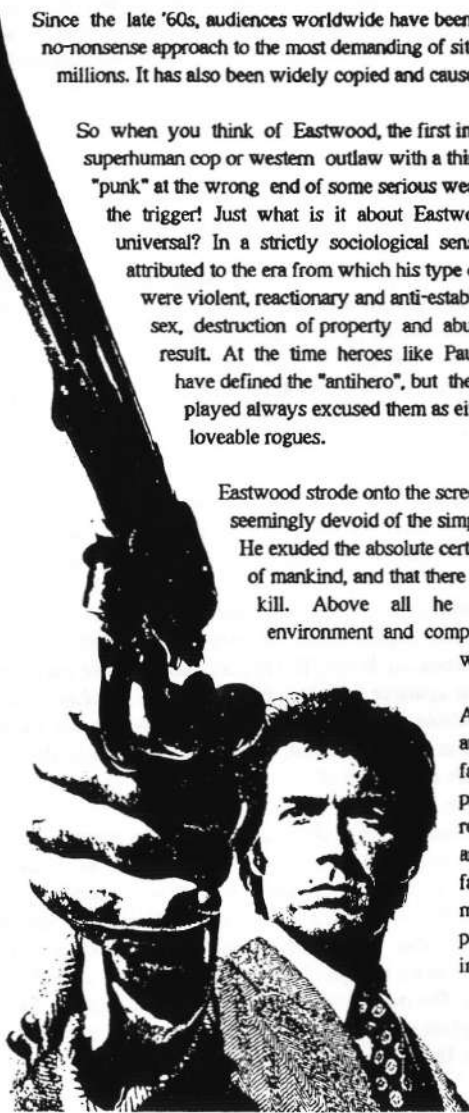
I know what you're thinking, punk. You're thinking, did he fire five shots or six? Well, to tell the truth, in all this confusion I forgot myself. But being as this is a .44 Magnum, and the most powerful handgun in the world - it can blow your head clean off - you've got to ask yourself one question: Do I feel lucky? Well, do you, punk?

Since the late '60s, audiences worldwide have been fascinated by Eastwood's style. His no-nonsense approach to the most demanding of situations has fired the imaginations of millions. It has also been widely copied and caused much controversy.

So when you think of Eastwood, the first image conjured up is probably that of a superhuman cop or western outlaw with a thin snarl on his lips, a squint and a poor "punk" at the wrong end of some serious weaponry. Oh, and you want him to pull the trigger! Just what is it about Eastwood that makes his popularity so universal? In a strictly sociological sense, much of his success can be attributed to the era from which his type of "hero" arose. Stateside, the sixties were violent, reactionary and anti-establishment. The classic film formula of sex, destruction of property and abuse of authority was the inevitable result. At the time heroes like Paul Newman and Marlon Brando may have defined the "antihero", but the backgrounds of the characters they played always excused them as either victims of their environments or loveable rogues.

Eastwood strode onto the screen in *A Fistful of Dollars* as a man seemingly devoid of the simplest emotions or sympathetic actions. He exuded the absolute certainty of one who stood above the rest of mankind, and that there was no-one he couldn't or wouldn't kill. Above all he was in complete control of his environment and completely certain of his actions. Here was a new kind of hero.

And therein lies his appeal to audiences. He was - and still is - the fantasy answer to our real life problems. People's desires are reflected in the heroes they choose, and who wouldn't want to possess the fast thinking and accurate decision making needed to take on the all pervasive society which renders us impotent. And to take it on and win!



DO YOU

Sergio Leone's remake of Akira Kurosawa's *Yojimbo*, made with a working title of *The Magnificent Stranger* and financed by a German-Italian-Spanish production company, ran into problems when both Henry Fonda and Lee Van Cleef rejected the part of "The man with no name". The story goes that when the production team met, the only suggestion raised was that they try out a tall soft-spoken American actor who had a supporting role in the long running black-and-white serial *Rawhide*. Eastwood, a relative unknown, saw it as a holiday for himself and his wife Maggie, a break from the serial, a fifteen thousand dollar fee and a chance to demonstrate his independence from CBS, who would neither release him from his contract or allow him to direct an episode. Most tellingly, he was confident that the film would never be shown in the US, and as the only one on the set of *The Magnificent Stranger* with any experience of the Western (and the only one who could speak English), he decided to take his character to the limit. Marlon Brando wouldn't even get out of bed for fifteen thousand dollars!

It was not until '67, after *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* had been completed, that *A Fistful of Dollars* was bought by U.A. and shown in the States to huge audiences and awful reviews:

A Fistful of Dollars

Mr. Eastwood shows a talent for squinting and mouthing a cigarillo.

Judith Crist, New York Tribune

For a Few Dollars More

A treat for necrophiliacs. The rest of us can get our kicks for free at the butcher store.

Judith Crist, NBC Today show

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

... must be the most expensive, pious, and repellent movie in the history of its peculiar genre.

Reanata Adler, New York Times

Eastwood's friendship with Don Seigel (who directed *Coogan's Bluff* and nominated Eastwood for membership of the Director's Guild so he could make *Play Misty For Me*) resulted in one of the most controversial films of his career to date, *Dirty Harry*. The film quickly became a cause celebre with the media who felt that the film condoned fascist police actions, and the police who saw it as a sympathetic treatment of an honest man's frustrations at police work. *Dirty Harry* is pretty representative of Eastwood's style, and the direction of his films subsequently. Filmed on location, on a low budget (well, low by Warner Bros. standards), under schedule and with Eastwood's famous insistence on doing his own stunts, most notably the leap from a tressle bridge onto a moving schoolbus. Its also a film in which the "hero" gets beaten physically. The first shootout (from which the above dialogue is taken) takes place outside the "Kwik Lunch" sandwich bar, which is next to a movie theatre. Have you noticed which film is playing? Incidentally, the poster copy for the film ran "You don't assign him to murder cases, you just turn him loose!"

Feel Lucky ?

The critics were a little less hostile to the Dirty Harry series:

Dirty Harry

A fast-paced detective story. Eastwood is excellent.
New York Daily News

Magnum Force

All that Eastwood can manage is a frown that suggests tension. The excitement is mainly in the camera work, which is stunning.
Nora Sayre, New York Times

The Enforcer

The Enforcer is the third or fourth Dirty Harry movie with Clint Eastwood blowing people's heads off and creating the kind of havoc Batman would find juvenile...It all went out of style years ago with Clint Eastwood's mumbling.
Rex Reed, New York Daily News

Sudden Impact

Sudden Impact has all the action anyone could want..This movie's a whirligig, an explosion, and absolutely senseless.
Archer Winsten, New York Post



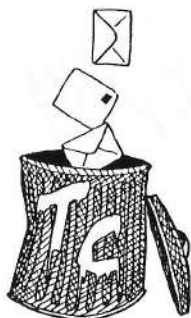
Eastwood's Malpaso (false step) production company was founded as a vehicle to make Eastwood's fast and cheap brand of escapism. In the mid seventies, among much talk of the death of the Western, Eastwood worked through **High Plains Drifter** and **The Outlaw Josey Wales**, films notable for their decidedly offbeat/supernatural character and the lack of a single likeable character! These are films where the quality of the direction stands out in generating atmosphere and terror in low key, disconcertingly normal situations.

Over the years, Eastwood has turned down starring roles in **Apocalypse Now** and **The Killing Fields**, preferring to experiment with scripts like **Tightrope** and **Bird**. He has been displaced at the box office by '80s heros (Murphy, Stallone, Cruise), but in the author's opinion he'd blow them away in a straight fight!

Filmography

- 1955 - Revenge of the Creature (b/w)
Francis in the Navy (b/w)
Lady Godiva (GB: Lady Godiva of Coventry)
Tarantula (b/w)
- 1956 - Away All Boats
Never Say Goodbye
The First Travelling Saleslady
Star in the Dark
- 1957 - Escapade in Japan
- 1958 - Lafayette Escadrille (GB: Hell Bent for Glory)
Ambush at Cimarron Pass
- 1964 - A Fistful of Dollars (orig: Per un Pugno di Dollari)
- 1965 - For a Few Dollars More (orig: Per qualche Dollaro in piu)
- 1966 - The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (orig: Il buono, Il brutto, Il cattivo)
- 1967 - The Witches
- 1968 - Hang 'Em High
Coogan's Bluff
- 1969 - Where Eagles Dare
Paint Your Wagon
- 1970 - Kelly's Heroes
Two Mules for Sister Sara
- 1971 - The Beguiled
Play Misty for Me (+ dir.)
Dirty Harry
- 1972 - Joe Kidd
- 1973 - High Plains Drifter (+ dir.)
Breezy (+ dir.)
Magnum Force
- 1974 - Thunderbolt and Lightfoot
- 1975 - The Eiger Sanction (+ dir.)
- 1976 - The Outlaw Josey Wales (+ dir.)
The Enforcer
- 1977 - The Gauntlet (+ dir.)
- 1978 - Every Which Way But Loose
- 1979 - Escape from Alcatraz
- 1980 - Bronco Billy
Any Which Way You Can
- 1982 - Firefox (+ prod/dir.)
Honky Tonk Man (+ prod/dir.)
- 1983 - Sudden Impact (+ prod/dir.)
- 1984 - Tightrope (+ co-prod.)
City Heat
- 1985 - Pale Rider (+ prod/dir.)
Vanessa in the Garden (TVM)
- 1986 - Heartbreak Ridge (+ prod/dir.)
- 1988 - The Dead Pool
Bird (prod/dir)
- 1990 - White Hunter, Black Heart (dir)
The Rookie





High Weirdness by Mail

It's 12:10 on Sunday, April 14th. Arsenal are 2-0 down after 10 minutes of the FA Cup Semi-Final against Terry Venables' bunch of bankrupts. I am not a happy man, which may be reflected in the tone of this column. Apologies if it sounds like Stefan Jaworzyn is editing this issue...

Mark Stevens, Rugby - "Blade Runner bit [TC8] ok if you're into that over-rated borefest. The article shows up what seems to me to be a TC fault - only trying to look for arty subtexts in a film if it's visually stunning and entertaining first off (and looks as if it's meant to be deep, a bad sign). Any Dario flick, or even Cannibal Ferox, is worthier than Blade Runner...Your Driller Killer review illustrates my Blade Runner gripe. I find it to be of high artistic content and many respected critics agree (not that I thought of it first!) and just because it isn't dazzling and doesn't have N.Kinski in it doesn't mean it's no good. There is actually a good reason for it's being shot in a dull tone (to reflect that way of live) and hence it's deliberateness makes it not dull, for me at least (could you understand that sentence? Because I'm having trouble on re-reading it)."

Nope, no problems with that one - it was the previous sentence, with the quadruple negatives, that got to me... I feel that deep down, most shallow exploitation films are exactly that - shallow exploitation. However, I may have missed the 'subtexts' inherent in the bit where the bloke gets his dick cut off, the artistic content of the animal torture and the whole point of movies that, no matter how well done they are, remain for me just a series of atrocities strung together for a cheap thrill. Anyone can make a sick puppy film, but it takes skill to hold an audience's attention by appealing to their brains rather than their psychoses - me, although I like both sorts, I never make the mistake of confusing them!

Tony Lee, Isle of Wight - "I can hardly believe you found Wings of Desire boring! Yes, a bit slow, but sometimes quite imaginative and easily the best thing Wenders has done! Transylvania 6-500 was at least mildly amusing, if not actually very funny. And as for saying Jeff Goldblum has "no talent for comedy at all" (!) have you never seen TV's Tenspeed and Brownshoe? - and what about Buckaroo Banzai? Earthgirls Are Easy, and the latent humour of Into the Night? Or for that matter, The Fly? Goldblum is a master of subtle character based comedy"

Yes, I was rolling in the aisles at The Fly, just like the rest of the audience. From what I can see, where Goldblum's films are funny, this tends to be despite, rather than because of him. Witness the recent series of adverts for Holsten Pils (there's a novel idea, advertise a beer by getting a tall foreign actor to be weird!) - I rest my case. And now for a couple of people who seem a little unhappy with the state of fandom, starting with the sort of unsubstantiated insinuations that letter columns were invented for:

William Kilfeather, California - "This is an open letter to all movie zines. Please see the attached review of Michael Flores's (It's Only A Movie). If more zines were brave enough to print a review like this, fewer of us would have been ripped off and in some cases for a lot of money."

The review mentioned is from an un-named publication and the bit highlighted reads as follows:

"We owe it to our readers who may wish to subscribe to It's Only a Movie to mention that Flores has a reputation for not fulfilling orders on subscriptions and videos. Use caution!"

Douglas Angel, Gt. Yarmouth - "Funny you should be criticising Samhain in your pages, I quite agree that it's going downhill, has been for a couple of years I'd say. I always laugh at their pretension of the horror zine scene being "healthy", a lot of them are utter ****! One I paid £1 for had about ten single-sided badly photocopied A4 pages with almost no text and some badly swiped photos, all of which have been seen in lots of publications over the years. Take away **** like that and the foreign zines that appear and you don't have that many left. I only feel that there are only a handful that are worth buying."

Now, here are two nuggets of trivia that might be very important (on the other hand, they might be totally irrelevant), some comments on financing T-shirts and an entirely unjustifiable speculation on the reasons behind my change of address:

Alun Fairburn, Ammanford - "Did you know that when Ripley activates the launch sequence in the escape shuttle towards the end of Alien, the message that appears on the monitor ('ENVIRON CTR PURGE 24556 DR 5') is the same message (and in the same colours) as a message that appears in the police car as Deckard and Edward James Olmos lift off near the beginning of Blade Runner?...Did I mention the Robocop 2 'joke'? In a scene in which Belinda Bauer/Dr.Faxx looks at the broken down Robocop & we get a view from his point of view, a load of rubbish scrolls up the screen, among it a line of hex which when translated says 'Peter Kuran is a great guy'. Kuran was one of the computer FX people. I must be bored or something."

Daniel Cox, Greenford - "I have already begun to raise the cost of the T-shirt in three desperate ways:

1) a swear box. With this I have already amassed 6p, which only goes to show what a vulgar person I can be under pressure.

2) sponsored suicide. With this I was able to raise over £12,000,000 but I chickened out and had to return the money.

3) by looking for money. A simple but ingenious idea. I have already found 42p simply by looking for it on the ground. What are the limits to this method I ask myself.

Anyway, to date I still only have 48p and some way to go for a TC t-shirt, and even though through self-awareness classes I have been able to reach a state of mind which allows me to view the piggy bank as being half full rather than half empty, financially that doesn't seem to make any bloody difference..."

Glyn Williams, Derby - "Is this constant changing of addresses entirely innocent? It's tempting to think that an incident involving a combination of your passion for French teenage girls and melted Belgian chocolate may have meant an enforced move."

I deny everything. We simply ran out of room in the old house - there's a limit to the number of chocolate-coated Euro-bimbettes one can keep in the fridge at the same time... Till TC10...

You may have noticed this issue of TC is late. The main reason behind this is that it's difficult to produce a 'zine when all your stuff is in a garage near Crystal Palace about three miles from where you yourself are. Yes, an impressive series of cock-ups meant that for about three weeks I was yet again, if not exactly homeless, sleeping on a couch and living out of carrier bags.

We'd been given notice to quit Underhill Road and had managed to find a new place (despite the tendency of agents to define a "luxury kitchen" as anything that hadn't actually been condemned by the local Environmental Health Officer - a lot of these places were immediately followed by a swift withdrawal into the nearest pub for a stiff drink). It hadn't really been that tough compared to last time, when there'd been a nasty three week gap when I was of no fixed abode while we waited for the references to go through. This time, it was going to be smooth.

We should have realised that the only reason the Fates were rolling out the red carpet, was in order to let them pull it out from under our feet.

Moving Day arrived. The omens weren't good. My employers have been shedding workers with deceptive ease, very slowly to avoid undue Press interest - every Friday, a few more people are called in to see Alison Fenn, the personnel department's hit-woman, and are never seen again. This Friday, it was our department's turn. At 5.25 pm, my phone rang.

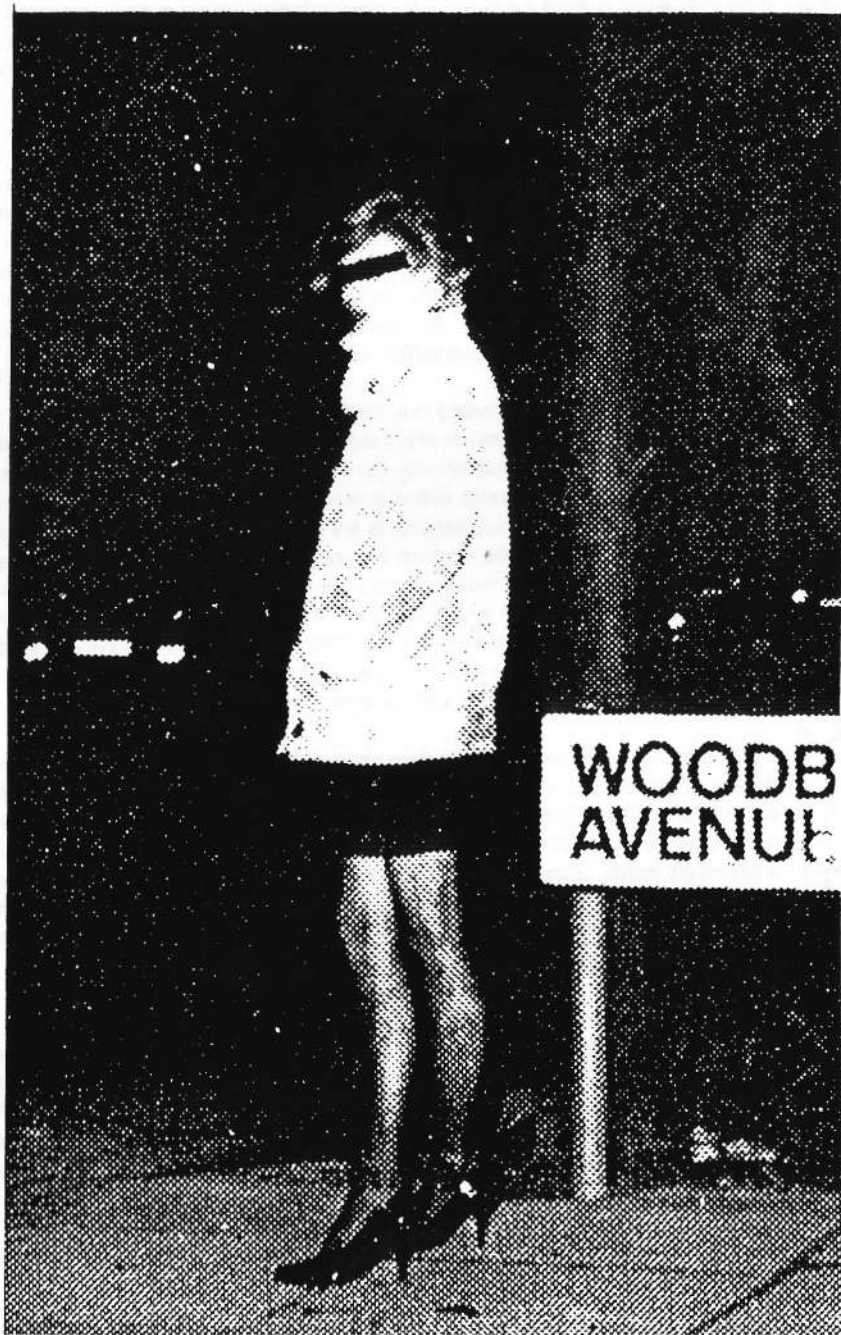
I came down off the ceiling and answered it. It was Vic, our new landlord with a slight problem - the old residents, from whom he was buying the property, had left without giving him the keys. He was trying to contact them. Ok, no hassle, I thought - the keys will turn up before long. I went home, ignoring the twitches from my intuition.

We'd arranged for a van, and a friend to drive it since none of us had car licences. At 7 pm Bill, the driver, phoned. He hadn't got the van, he'd been snared at work and was unable to reach the hire place before it shut. We began to frantically phone other companies, most of whom were shut, but finally found one willing to open their depot and rent us a van for a sum just this side of extortionate. While they were sorting things out, Bill phoned back - he'd got hold of a Renault 5, if we wanted to try moving our stuff in that. We looked at the enormous pile of cases, bags and boxes in the front room. We laughed hysterically. The van hire company phoned back to say they couldn't get the depot open. We decided to go with the Renault 5. My intuition was doing things to the hairs on my neck.

Waiting for Bill and Renault to arrive, we indulged in a little more packing. There were still bottles lying around with alcoholic liquid in them so we decided to reduce the load a bit by putting the contents into larger containers - to be specific, our stomachs. Gradually, things took on a pleasantly rose-tinted aspect. My intuition washed it's hands, went to bed and pulled the psychological blankets over it's head.

The car arrived, and we began shifting the goods. Still no sign of the keys at the other end so we stacked things in the landlord's garage instead - fortunately, he stayed next door to the place we were supposed to be moving into. Ten Renault runs and about four hours later, it was done, and 247 Underhill Road was totally empty of anything that might have connected it to us. This included bed-linen, so I spent an uncomfortable night sleeping on a bare mattress without any sheets.

A MOVING EXPERIENCE



A M O V I N G E X P E R I E N C E

It got even worse at about 2 a.m, when the peach schnapps and other drinks consumed earlier that evening, decided to make a return visit - they didn't taste nearly as nice on the way up as they did when they were going down. It's not pleasant to have your head stuck down the toilet while Reality taps you on the shoulder and says things like "Are you remembering you've got nowhere to sleep tonight?". In the distance I could hear my intuition laughing.

Saturday dawned (hideously) bright and (far too) early. I peeled my eyelids off the floor and got up, ready to face the dreaded Inventory Check. This, the bane of all tenants, involves someone comparing what is in the house now with what was in it when you moved in - any difference comes off your deposit. Done on a room-by-room basis, it's the residential equivalent of the three-shell game, as you try to shuffle furniture around at such a rate that it gives the impression of a full house. This doesn't always work, leading to anguished screams of "Turkish coffee-pot? What Turkish coffee-pot?"

We signed away our deposit, handed over the keys, left and hung around outside. I should mention that the house came complete with a cleaner, who came in on Mondays and Fridays to make sure the place was habitable (Sunday and Thursday evenings, we went round the house putting beer cans in bins, restoring videos to boxes and trying to make sure the place was semi-habitable). She'd been very helpful, so we swung into Plan A: "begging for mercy". "Please can we stay here for the weekend because we haven't got anywhere else to go and we'll be as good as gold and won't make a mess at all and we'll be out of the house on Monday morning and we'd be ever so grateful". In the face of such concentrated pleading, there was only one possible result and we gained two days respite. I switched to the couch in an attempt to have a mildly less uncomfortable weekend, not too successfully because all my clean socks and pants were sitting in a garage some five miles away.

On Monday, we found out why the old owners hadn't handed back the keys: they were still waiting to get the final installment of their money because of a cock-up between the two solicitors somewhere. In effect, Vic had rented us a place that he didn't actually own, which would have been bad enough even without the fact that one solicitor was now in the middle of a three-week holiday. However, all was not lost. Vic was suffering from serious pangs of guilt at being responsible for all this (feelings we tried to encourage by whistling 'Underneath the Arches' and repeatedly asking each other for spare change) and arranged for us to have the use of a friend's flat until things got straightened out.

The friend turned out to be Michael Thomas, a name that might be familiar to Arsenal fans - visions of tables piled high with South American nose candy, endless parties and appearances in court on drink-driving charges swam briefly before my eyes, until I was brought down to earth by the fact that Mr. Thomas didn't actually stay there any more. He had been renting the place out but it was now free. And 'free' is the word - not only was it costing us nothing, the rent for the remainder of March was waived by Vic, leaving us each about 200 quid better off.

Which is probably about fair compensation for two weeks in Streatham. Not exactly the centre of the universe, it's most renowned for having the biggest red-light district in South London. Could have fooled me - though not exactly short of underdressed bimbos, most of them

seemed to be aged about 12 and were at the ice-rink or the bowling alley. Whether this constitutes a red-light district depends, I suppose, on whether or not you like the taste of puppy fat between your teeth.

Add to this that we were living in a flat where the most interesting thing was a television set with no aerial, and you'll not be surprised to find we drank a lot of beer. The lack of plates too, meant a lot of junk food was consumed and overall it was a near thing whether we'd escape before cholesterol poisoning or cirrhosis of the liver took their toll.

Streatham on a Saturday night gives the impression of a place very much on the edge. Precisely what it's on the edge of, I'm not sure. Tooting, or Balham perhaps. There's a night-club called the Ritz, but despite this it seemed to be popular judging by the long queue of blow-dried secretaries, no doubt called Sharon and Tracy, and their boyfriends, named Stig and Urk if their foreheads were anything to go by. As for the doormen, the famous joke :

"Got any concealed weapons?"

"No."

"Want to buy some?"

takes on alarming plausibility in Streatham. I didn't venture in.

A week passed, and the solicitor came back off holiday. Then the problems really started. The final payment was made. The sellers wanted interest on it, for the three weeks they didn't have the money. They eventually got it. Then they waited for the cheque to clear. The result as far as we were concerned was that every day in the second week we packed, got ready to leave, and were told that it'd happen tomorrow instead. To quote J. Cleese in 'Clockwise', "I can stand the despair, it's the hope". And there was nothing we, or our landlord, could do but watch as the solicitors' wrangled and raked in the fees. I took to making up solicitor jokes:

Q. How many solicitors does it take to wall-paper a bedroom?

A. Two - if you slice them thinly enough.

Q. Why do solicitors only make love with their wives on top?

A. Because all they can do is fuck up.

My response to the news we had finally prised the keys out of the solicitor's grip and had a home to go to was unsurprisingly mute cynicism. I'd sunk into a numb single-mindedness, unable to think about anything else, yet going round in mental circles. "That's nice" was about as far as I could get.

Early Greek philosophers adopted a spartan lifestyle to concentrate their minds - for instance Diogenes lived in a barrel. Having spent 18 days with no possessions, wearing the same tie to work thirteen days on the trot and living out of plastic bags, I can thus disclose the great truth revealed to me in a vision: INXS and Transvision Vamp are actually the same band. No, really - apart from Wendy James, how many members of TV can most people name? And apart from Michael Hutchence, does anyone know who INXS are? I rest my case. But do they just swap singers, or is Wendy really Michael in drag? And where did Eighth Wonder/Patsy Kensit fit in? Or was this all a hallucination brought on by too much Kentucky Fried Chicken?

In any case, I've learned at least one thing. My parents have stayed in the same house ever since they got married, thirty years ago. I am now entirely convinced they've got the right idea.

Iron Angels (Teresa Woo) - Moon Lui, Elaine Lui, Hideki Saito.

If you're not concerned about Oscars, and are just after a damn good time, there is nothing as much fun as a good martial arts movie (to be honest, there is also nothing as tedious as a naff one, of which there are plenty. The fast forward button will be used heavily if you get interested in the genre!). They are virtually by definition 'bad' films, relying as they do on more or less completely gratuitous violence - the number that have achieved critical acclaim could be counted on the fingers of one hand without putting down your pint of Guinness.

However, who needs Meryl Streep when 'Iron Angels' delivers everything you could possibly want from a film: heady amounts of pretty Orientals kicking serious ass.



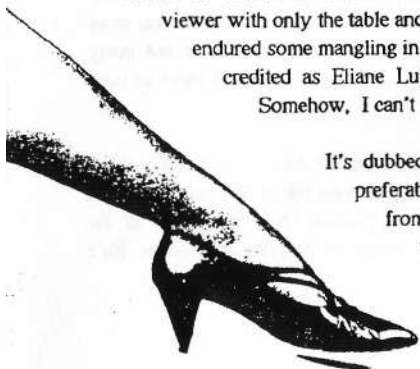
INCREDIBL

Don't know if director Teresa Woo is related to John Woo, who did "The Killer" - if not, they ought to be introduced since I'm sure they'd make a lovely couple. There are a lot of similarities in (high) style and (manic) approach: while 'The Killer' used more rounds of ammunition, 'Iron Angels' doesn't have quite as many sugary romantic interludes (boring!!!).

It's drug war time: the opening shots show the army teaching the locals to 'Just Say No' by shooting everything that moves, and blowing up everything that doesn't. This triumph is short-lived since it annoys the drug syndicates so much they bury their usual differences and start taking out the law enforcement agents responsible, as ordered by sadistic gang queen and martial arts mistress Madame Sue (Yukari Oshima, of whom more will be heard, mark my words!). One poor sod is neatly kebabbed by two motor cyclists, a sequence Ridley Scott would seem to have nicked for 'Black Rain', tho' since he's an "artist", his graphic-ish decapitation is a '15' certificate. 'Iron Angels', being mere exploitation, gets an '18' AND bits cut out. Someone should send Ms.Oshima round to the BBFC for a chat...

All this is too much for the cops. Fortunately, a visiting American drug agent, Bill Fong, offers to finance resistance: "Money is our speciality this year". In come the Iron Angels: Kenji, a Japanese martial arts teacher, Helen, part-time nightclub singer and Mona, currently filling in time between jobs as a secretary. She's clearly bored by her work, distributing post with a deadly eye around the office by hurling it shuriken-style without leaving her desk. This accuracy extends to other office supplies - Teresa Woo pulls off something of a first by having a camera accompany a Tippex bottle as it flies through the air.

The bane of all videos, the dreaded pan-and-scan, strikes 'Iron Angels' with some venom. No panning and very little scanning goes on leaving you with the middle 2/3 of the screen no matter what: one caption tells us we are at 'Kong International Air'. This reaches it's worst point during a scene in a bar: the characters conversing across a table are entirely missing, leaving the viewer with only the table and an empty chair as the discussion progresses. The stars' names endured some mangling in the credits as well: Moon Lui became Mona Lui, Elaine Lui is credited as Eliane Lui, and Yukari Oshima does a back flip to Oshima Yukari. Somehow, I can't see your average megastar happy to be billed as Streep Meryl.



It's dubbed, but this is no problem as it's well done and is infinitely preferable to subtitles. In Hong Kong films, these are usually written from an out of date dictionary and no real experience of English - "I will" always becomes "I'll", regardless of context - compared to C4's series of Chinese Ghost Stories which used liberal, rather than literal, translation: I can't believe 'Mr. Vampire' originally had the line "Don't let smoke get in your rice" (think about it!).

.Y BAD FIL

Back to the plot. Kenji cracks the case when he traps the insider who's giving information on the drug agents and applies to the traitor to get him to talk. I should point out the pressure is applied with a scrapyard car-crusher. Understandably, the victim gives way cracks splits talks. The Angels then break into Madame Su's office and photograph some papers in her safe, including an order for jewellery rabbits. When Madame Su finds out about this, she is slightly annoyed.

The next stage sees Kenji and Mona staking out a landing dock, where some "fish" are arriving. It should not be a surprise when I tell you these fish are white and powdery. Under the cover of a cunning diversion by Mona (namely, driving her car as fast as possible at anyone in the area), Kenji steals the drugs. Madame Su becomes mildly peeved.

Since she want her drugs back, a meet is arranged. The purpose of this escapes me, since she speaks to the Angels' director on a portable phone but it does allow a tracking device to be placed on her car, despite some nifty work with a tailor's dummy. Having found Madame Su's headquarters, Mona and Kenji go in under cover of another diversion, provided by Helen this time, driving up and acting the lost bimbo (the dubbing slips into Southern belle mode for this scene), with Bill Fong in her boot.

Up to this point, it's been pretty gentle stuff, nothing much more than an episode of "Charlie's Angels". Things explode into action when Bill and Helen get their asses kicked by Madame Su, while Kenji and Mona sweep through the house in search of the kidnapped drug agents. Oh, did I forget to mention them? Well, so did the film... However, since the hostages are killed by a misplaced burst of machine gun fire, it's not important. At the end of all this mayhem, everyone escapes except Bill, who is left to face Madame Su, now best described as "seriously miffed".

This turns out to be a clever ploy to keep an eye on Madame Su, since wherever Bill (and his tracking device) is, Madame Su will be. Sticking needles into him, to be specific. However, since he's financing the whole thing, they go in and rescue him, accompanied only by a helicopter, a death slide and more small arms than your average Central American banana republic would dream of. There are many explosions, a lot of broken glass and Bill gets rescued. The mental state of Madame Su, I leave to your imagination.

Since Madame Su's gang has been decimated, is this the end of the mission? No: to quote John King, "Money isn't the only thing - there's integrity". An odd phrase coming from the leader of a team who two minutes previously were happy to dampen the explosive effect of a grenade by dropping one of the opposition on it. And even odder, since the next thing they do is kidnap the daughter of Madame Su's lieutenant, in order to extract information from him.

LY BAD FILM

All he can say is that Madame Su is planning something big and that four numbers are the key. After Helen casts aspersions on his loyalty, Bill goes undercover looking for Madame Su, to find out what the numbers are. Since this consists of him walking down the street shouting "I'm looking for Madame Su", it rapidly has the desired effect and once again he's taken prisoner. Ah, but this time he's concealed a mini-pistol in his shoe. No luck. She distracts him with a flash of her chest (it's no surprise this is a success given the rarity of female flesh in the genre - it does look suspiciously like a stunt breast, however) and it's needle time once again. Madame Su makes the fatal mistake of telling him the numbers - 1, 9, 8 and 7 - and he communicates them to the rest of the team with a transmitter hidden in his other shoe.

But what does it mean? Kenji susses it, while sitting in a bunny bar: 1987 is the year of the rabbit so (an impressive leap of logic this) Madame Su is planning to rob a bullion van and export the gold disguised as little gilt bunnies (remember the invoice in paragraph 7?). And yep, this is exactly what happens, the van driver is in her pay and after the accompanying police have been disposed of i.e. blown up or shot, he drives the van to a building site. He'd clearly forgotten the old Chinese proverb "Never trust a woman whose chief entertainment is sticking needles into people", and so he, and the van, end up at the bottom of a large pile of concrete, which baffles the police somewhat.

Kanji, accompanied by the usual tracking device, was hiding in the back of the van and when the thieves arrive to pick up their loot they find it accompanied by a slightly out-of-breath Iron Angel. The reappearance of his tracking device alerts the police and, hey presto, one half of the gang is captured. Helen and Mona, meanwhile, have tracked Madame Wu to a gold smelter and I'm sure you can guess what happens next...

Mayhem. Exploding buttons. Acid-squirting belt buckles. Forklift-fu. Unnecessary use of metal poles. The effective termination of Madame Wu in a fairly spectacular manner. And that's about that, save the discovery that Bill Fong is still alive despite being turned into a human watering can.

This is really the third movie in a series, which is both a benefit and a handicap. On the plus side, scene-setting and character development are minimal, leaving more time for action. On the other hand some things, like the exploding buttons, are taken for granted, and the viewer is required to tolerate more plot inconsistencies than would be considered reasonable under normal circumstances. It's a bit like seeing "A Nightmare on Elm Street 5" without knowing anything about Freddy Krueger.

Those of you familiar with Japanese comics may know the Lovely Angels, aka the Dirty Pair, a duo of agents notorious for solving problems with the maximum impact possible. 'Iron Angels' resembles a live-action version of this: fast-moving, possessing no respect for property and a bizarre sense of style and fun. Idiotic, ridiculous and mindless? Probably. But who cares?

LM SHOW

[Conspiracy corner]



Ok, let's get one thing straight. Whatever the Gulf war was about, it hadn't got a great deal to do with protecting the integrity of a sovereign state. The Americans didn't give a damn when Afghanistan was invaded a decade or so ago. They don't give a damn about all the factions in Africa that attack each other with a depressing regularity. So why were they so fussed when one branch of the Salman Rushdie Depreciation Society tries to take over another? The theories mostly have to do with oil - the paranoid need not restrict himself to these and with a little imagination can come up with some interesting alternatives:

The American Government.

Most civilised nations find an outlet for national aggression in team games: the only thing that stops Scotland staging another rebellion is the opportunity to kick English ass at rugby once a year (whether we win or not!). As the American performance in the World Cup shows, they're generally no good at team sports, save those they invented themselves like American Football. War is the exception but while Hollywood has fostered the image of a team that never loses, last time out under Coach Bush they were reduced to sitting outside the Vatican embassy in Panama, playing loud rock music at a middle aged drug baron. This is not exactly a fearsome reputation for a nation's warriors to carry into battle.


The Defence Industry

If anyone really stood to benefit (the golden rule of conspiracism) from the war, it's arms manufacturers. Now that the "evil empire" is busy coping with problems like famine and civil war (all since they let Paul McCartney in, but that's another story), people were asking "Why do we need to spend \$295 billion dollars a year on weapons?", and weren't happy with vague answers about future threats. There's nothing like a war to boost business in everything from bombers to body-bags.

Nothing like a war to let you test things, either - before this year, the Patriot anti-missile system had been fired a mere thirteen times. Raytheon, the makers, must be rubbing their hands in glee at the prospect of the orders flooding in for their "battle-proven" weapon, while giving grateful thanks that the Iraqis never used more state-of-the-art missiles, against which the Patriot's efficiency is a lot more doubtful.

The British Government

Remember the Falklands? The Argentinian junta went to war to divert attention from economic problems at home and Thatcher gleefully grabbed the opportunity to recover from the worst mid-term opinion poll figures since Julius Caesar. This time, we had both reasons: people started to realise that



John Major wasn't all that different from Mrs. T and as for the economy, the worst unemployment figures in ten years received 30 seconds coverage, even on a hyper-extended 9 O'Clock News.

This theory doesn't take into account that Britain's influence in world affairs is limited to irrelevancies like decreeing the laws of cricket, or to odd bits of the Commonwealth where the inhabitants are waiting for a big white bird to bring Prince Philip. It is difficult to believe we could tell Iraq to invade Kuwait when we can't even get the French to accept our lamb without petrol-roasting it first.

B52 baby,

The Media

ITN spent the first two weeks broadcasting six hours of solid coverage every night even though there was, frankly, sod-all going on. Six hours, double time, seven days a week for those at home, not to mention the massive expenses for those lucky enough to be sent abroad. Were TV reporters responsible for starting and fanning the war, so they'd be the only people able to afford a gallon of petrol? "...and President Bush said Saddam Hussein was the son of a syphilitic camel, who enjoyed interfering with small boys. This is Kate Adie, urinating in a mosque, Mecca".

Things you could learn from the average news bulletin during the Gulf War

1. There's a war going on.
2. It's somewhere in the Middle East.
3. We're winning.
4. Definitely.
5. We've destroyed all the Scud launchers.
6. Apart from the ones that we haven't.
7. Did I mention that we're winning?

Lies, damn lies and things "compiled under reporting restrictions"

You may have noticed the whining and accusations of bias whenever TV showed coverage of bomb damage in Iraq. Conspiracy theory suggests you should worry more about what you aren't being told than what you are. It doesn't take much intelligence to work out that reporters on our side were just as liable to manipulation and censorship: our office has a newsfeed from Reuters and I've read hair-raising stories, not printed in the papers, about reporters with our troops getting arrested and/or beaten up. One curious side-effect of the censorship was that it makes the military look incompetent: the impression

throughout was that it wasn't the Iraqis that were killing our soldiers, it was accidents, and carelessness such as firing on them ourselves. Was this the same army supposedly capable of destroying over 3,000 Iraqi tanks without losing a single one of ours? It may be the first war where we've had reporters on both sides, but all this meant is that we got two sets of officially sanctioned propaganda and still hadn't the faintest idea what was really going on. You'd be better informed watching 'The Desert Song'.

The volume of news, however distorted, was admittedly impressive, for the first couple of days justifiably so: this was history in the making. However, despite them cramming 300 years of the best bits into nine months, History at school was dull and in real time it's even worse. To be fair, it was surreally entertaining watching a city get the shit bombed out of it, particularly when they put on the night sights and the whole thing resembled a video game. Then the Iraqis got wise, and realised that it wasn't clever having large numbers of journalists running round. Only allowing them to film undamaged parts of Baghdad didn't help: one "this military communications tower appears to be totally unharmed" report and said tower rapidly becomes a novelty rockery.

Otherwise, coverage was largely limited to shaky footage of Scud missiles not hitting Israel. With so much time to fill ITN got desperate and even had their anchorman reviewing the morning's papers. By

way up in the

Teach Yourself U.N-Speak: USA

1. "Cease-fire" (as in "immediate cease-fire")

Chance to get our breath back.

2. "This senseless fighting is hurting both of us"

We're losing.

3. "We have no reason to attack Kuwait"

What's the Arabic for "gullible"?

4. "God is with us"

Nobody else is.

5. "We call upon all Arabs to join us"

Help!

6. "We have it on reliable authority"

We made it up.

7. "The question of Palestinian sovereignty"

The last chance to save face.

8. "Prepare for the mother of all battles"

Sales of Nike running shoes have increased 500%.

9. "We will withdraw without conditions"

...apart from these ones.

10. "It was a civilian air-raid shelter"

A couple of civilians were passing at the time.



review, I mean "read out the tabloid headlines in a sarcastic tone of voice": a gratuitous picture of a female squaddie on the front page was warmly greeted with "nice to see sexist journalism is alive and well". Eventually ITN gave up, and left the blanket coverage to CNN and those lucky enough to have satellite TV. The American network has clearly been stockpiling pundits for some years and had enough to last a lengthy war.

Of course any programme that might conceivably cause offence were axed from the schedules. Monty Python, 'Allo, Allo and Carry On Up the Khyber all bit the dust and it's rumoured that the children's serial 'Five Children and It' vanished because it's story about a monster living in a sand-pit was considered derogatory to the Kuwaiti royal family.

To be perfectly honest, I'm glad it's over. While I sympathise with the civilians caught up in it, both Kuwaiti and Iraqi, it all felt like someone else's war - I never asked the Army to go in and fight. So it wasn't long before I became fed up with endless repetitions of censored news, sick of politicians pontificating at length about the crisis and bored to tears by hour long interviews with 'experts'. As far as I'm concerned we can now get back to more important things - now, where did I put that copy of 'Ilsa, Harem Keeper of the Oil Sheikhs'?

sky...



IRAQ

1. **"You have until January 15th to get out"**

We have until January 15th to get ready.

2. **"Join forces"** (as in "It is time for the countries of the world to join forces")

Do what we say.

3. **"Restoring the sovereign state of Kuwait"**

Kicking Iraqi butt.

4. **"Friendly fire"**

Sorry!

5. **"Flagrant breaches of international law..."**

We don't like it...

6. **"...abhorred by all nations"**

...and neither do our lap-dogs.

7. **"Multinational task force"**

Our army, plus anyone else who wants a finger in the pie.

8. **"War crimes"**

Killing Kuwaiti civilians.

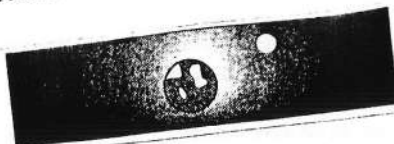
9. **"Collateral damage"**

Killing Iraqi civilians.

10. **"It was a legitimate military target"**

A couple of soldiers were passing at the time.

Golden Moon Film Co. Ltd. Hong Kong



Memorandum

From: J.Chan, Head Of Production

To: All Directors

It has come to my attention that attempts have been made to produce "artistic" martial-arts films. A long and proud tradition of films cut to ribbons by the BBFC is placed at risk by this thoughtless behaviour - the tendency of certain people to include "Camerawork" and "Conversation" rather than a good nunchaku sequence is to be deplored by all who care for our industry's future. In an attempt to stem this tide, all our movies must now adhere to the following rules:

1. Plate glass windows have one purpose - to be broken. Whether this is accomplished using animate or inanimate objects is left to your discretion.
2. There will be at least one scene in a restaurant, or similar setting, which provides tables to climb on, chairs to throw and plate glass windows (see 1).
3. Kicks and punches must be accompanied by the regulation sound (midway between a gunshot and an axe hitting an oak tree).
4. Falls onto hard surfaces may only be broken by more unpleasant surfaces (e.g. A twenty foot leap onto concrete may, at your discretion, become a twenty foot leap through a car windscreen). All falls must be panned to completion on aforementioned surface - the camera must not cut away at any stage during the fall.
5. Bear in mind the foreign video market. Much amusement can be given to viewers by making dialogue totally undubable. Alternatively, we have a large stock of humorous typos and mistranslations available for use in subtitled movies.
6. Historical scenes will be included wherever possible as this allows us to maintain our bulk discount at Tung's Silly Costume Emporium). If modern settings are used, characters may be supplied with fire-arms - these must, however, either jam, run out of ammunition or be kicked from the owner's hand within 15 (fifteen) seconds of being drawn.
7. Two types of female behaviour are permitted: "vicious, sadistic bitch" and "helpless, giggly kitten". The latter will always be cute, the former depending upon personal sexual proclivity and the availability of cute, vicious, sadistic bitches.
8. Two plots are permitted: you-killed-my-brother-and-you-must-pay and you-are-a-drug-dealer-who-has-framed-me-and-you-must-pay.
9. Being based in an area of the world with more centuries of civilization than most, even the most bizarre plot elements can rely on historical precedent. Do not worry about audience reaction, they will be too busy wincing at stunts (see 4) and deciphering the sub-titles (see 5) to notice the plot.
10. The credits will always thank a long list of companies who have nothing to do with the movie itself (e.g. the bottlers of Coca-Cola). The advertising revenue gained this way will be used to support future presentations.
11. Despite large numbers of beautiful, sexy, cute (see 7) women, sex will never happen, and nudity will not exist. (Note: this only applies to Hong Kong nationals, decadent foreign devils are exempt and may take their clothes off if necessary to the plot or your well-being)

Failure to adhere to these rules will result in the offending party/parties being surrendered as our representative in the exchange deal with Merchant-Ivory.

This will be your only warning.

Julie Chan

Given the short period of time most normal people spend in the shower, there have been a disproportionate number of Trash movies using it to make an impression. The list below is twenty of my favourite shower scenes, though I've widened the description slightly to include their close cousin the bath scene as well. All those listed have something to recommend them and are mostly more than gratuitous-wet-bimbos, even if the number of socially conscious shower scenes is still very small.

"Have sex and die". Not just a general term for the slasher genre, it's also a pretty good summary of what you can do in a shower, according to Hollywood. The list below falls into three types: nudity (the largest in number) and violence, both of which have distinct lines of descent, plus a few which don't really fit into either category, and may even be necessary to the plot!

The reason for the nudity is quite simple: it allows a lot of naked flesh without total gratuitousness: most people do take their clothes off when they take a shower, although I suspect women don't really spend quite as much time soaping their breasts as is shown in films. Violence in the bathroom can be traced directly to '**Psycho**', since when almost every lunatic-on-the-loose film worth it's salt (and a good few others) has had at least one pseudo-artistic sequence of blood spiralling down a plughole.

There are also movie that **should** have had shower scenes, like '**Videodrome**' (Debbie Harry's was edited out, to David Croneberg's eternal shame), and those that **ought** to have had shower scenes - you feel sure there was one in there somewhere but it's just your imagination playing tricks: '**Fast Times at Ridgemont High**' and '**Lust For a Vampire**', which had swimming scenes (a possible future article) or '**Edge of Sanity**', which had virtually everything else.



EDGE OF SANITARY

An American Werewolf in London

This film is enough to make anyone wonder about John Landis. He takes Jenny Agutter, an actress best known for her performance as a young teenage girl, dresses her up in a nurse's uniform and then throws her into the shower with David Naughton. It seems this movie had a profound effect on Sam Raimi, as I suspect it was no coincidence Jenny played a nurse in 'Darkman'. The experience would also seem to have been rather stimulating for David, judging from his brain-dead performances since then.

Carrie

Brian de Palma's adaption starts with a schoolgirl shower scene. Any hopes of some pleasing titillation vanish when the blood starts dripping, as the heroine has her first period. Her classmates are naturally helpful and sympathetic - they throw sanitary towels at her. One assumes this is supposed to say something. What exactly, I'm not sure but it is quite an impressive way to start a movie.

Countess Dracula

This one qualifies both under sex and violence. No-one could deny Ingrid Pitt provides the former, except she doesn't take baths in water or sissy stuff like asses milk: she prefers the blood of virgins as a moisturiser to anything Oil of Ulay produce (dread to think what her cleaning bill for towels must be like). While it works, and she does snare herself a husband, as with all addictive substances she has to keep upping the dose or her youthful qualities evaporate, leaving her looking as you might expect someone to look who has just spent several weeks in the bath: very wrinkled.

Creepozoids

Gratuitous-wet-bimbo par excellence, with Linnea Quigley scoring highly in all three categories as the ultimate non-actress gets extremely moist in a shower scene with no relevance to the plot. It says a great deal about the movie that this is the best bit but then LQ has a lot of shower experience, most recently in her Horror Workout, where she changed the usual order of things, having the shower before the exercise.

Flesh & Blood

Although it takes place in a bath, it almost counts as a shower scene given the enormous quantity of spray flying. Jennifer Jason Leigh is Rutger Hauer's bath toy as they do their bit for





water conservation, though the amount that slops over the side makes it an easy winner of the Soggy Bath-Mat award.

Heathers

Unique among those here in that showerer Winona Ryder, being a 'serious actress', demurely keeps her clothes on although they get nice and clingy. The purpose of the self-inflicted cold shower is to try and bring herself back to a reality where she has murdered her best friend/worst enemy. I might add it wasn't Winona's first aquatic appearance, since her earlier 'Square Dance' had a fairly long scene with her in the bath. However, as she was supposed to be a 13-year old, it's of limited interest to the average fan.

House on the Edge of the Park

David Hess walks into the bathroom only to find a beautiful, short-haired lady having a shower. She invites him to join her - this he does (after much drooling) and finds his back on the receiving end of a sponge. Just as we think we're in for a treat, she leaves poor old David covered in soap, and none too pleased. Film analysts may conclude that it is this that causes David to kill, maim and torture most of the other characters in the film.

I Spit on Your Grave

Idiotic behaviour is the mainstay of the horror-movie: without people merrily wandering into the woods /basement /house when a retarded slug would have had second thoughts, the genre would be much poorer. It allows us to say the idiots deserve what happens to them. If, say, a man helps gang-rape a woman, and is then stupid enough to accept her invitation to a bit of fun in the bath, we should not be surprised when he gets his genitals cut off with a large carving knife.

Reform School Girls

Advertised with the line "Young girls and their struggle for decency, respect and a warm place to take a shower", it's the quantity that counts here: of the 89:47 minute running time, 8:04 minutes or 9% of the movie are spent in the shower, washroom or other personal hygiene area, and that excludes the "fire-hose" sequence. To match this figure, you'd have to spend about 130 minutes/day cleaning yourself - while it'd mean Tube travel was more pleasant what'd it do to the morning bathroom queue?

Terror Eyes

Rachel Ward raises a few (wait for it!) smiles as she slowly undresses, leaving her clothes scattered around the flat, then takes a shower. As she caresses her body with the soap (as you do), an unknown figure stalks towards her. She notices a shape through the frosted glass, pulls the door open and lo and behold... (anyone who's failed to see what's coming, go and reread the Horror Cliches piece in TC) ...it's her boyfriend. So much for suspense, eh?

This could easily have been a top 30 - here's some more:

Arachnophobia: Sex-mad spiders crawl along shower-rails to peek at a cute teenager. c.f. 'Squirm'

Blood of Doctor Jekyll: bath time for Dr Jekyll leaves him a new man: Mr.Hyde to be specific

Cat People: Kinski's natural, outdoor shower scene.

Chained Heat: Sybil Danning and Linda Blair in the same shower.

Date With An Angel: Emmanuelle Beart, complete with large fluffy wings.

Emily: Koo Stark, would be a royal princess if things had worked differently. Also the only shower scene I've even seen on the Nine O'Clock News

Hardware: Dylan McDermott demonstrates glove love to Stacey Travis.

Immoral Tales: Countess Erszbet Bathory watches her imminent victims cleaning themselves before holding Mass and slaughtering them all.

Isa, She-Wolf of the SS: Dyanne Thorne in all her glory, bathing her boobs.

Isa, Harem-Keeper of the Oil Sheiks: Dyanne Thorne in all her glory, bathing her boobs.

Isa, Tigress of Siberia: Dyanne Thorne etc, etc but this time in the presence of five ogling men (or six, including me!). Nothing like variety, is there?

Lair of the White Worm: Amanda Donohue, playing a member of the gentry and part-time snakewoman, in thigh-length leather boots I might add) tends to a bath full of Boy Scout.

Mausoleum: Bobbie Breese, pity about the overabundance of bubbles.

Nekromantik: Some people have a rubber duck. Some have submarines. Some even have Jennifer Jason Leigh. Daktari Lorenz has a very dead cat.

A Nightmare on Elm Street: The perils of falling asleep in the bath.

Nuns on the Run: Eric Idle and Robbie Coltrane aren't actually in the showers so (mercifully!) they can keep their clothes on and leave the nudity to the female students.

Psycho: Say no more.

Psychos In Love: a parody of the 'Psycho' shower scene taken to the extreme. Not much flesh on view, but funny as hell.

Society: Billy spots his 'sister' doing the twist in the shower. Another step to madness for him.

Squirm: Sex-mad worms crawl up showers, and squeeze out of nozzles to peek at a cute teenager.

SS Experiment Camp: A Nazi experiment involving a couple making love in a 60-gallon vat of water could be construed as a bath scene...

Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down - In which a bath toy (a clockwork frog) turns into a sex-aid. Kim Basinger will shortly reprise this scene in the Hollywood remake.

Toolbox Murders: Ex-porn star Kelly Nicholls bathes away her aches and pains with her fingers! What accompanied by an absolutely, horribly unsuitable sound track.

OF SANITARY



aul Evans isn't a name familiar to most people. He had two hits. The first one, recently massacred by Bombalurina, was "Seven Little Girls...". There followed a seventeen-year gap. Then came perhaps his magnum opus "Hello, This is Joannie", about a bloke who has an argument with his girlfriend. She is then killed in a car-crash and he phones her apartment to hear her voice on the answering machine (making it a sort of 0898 number for necrophiles). This second hit spawned an LP, full of atrocious songs: this one is probably the worst, and may well have the most sickly lyrics ever committed to vinyl.

I'm Giving Up My Baby

She walked into the hospital, when the baby was almost due.
They asked her name and she replied, "I'll leave that up to you".
My lover called me "Darling", but he didn't call me "Bride"
And I'll never be called "Mama", by the little one inside,

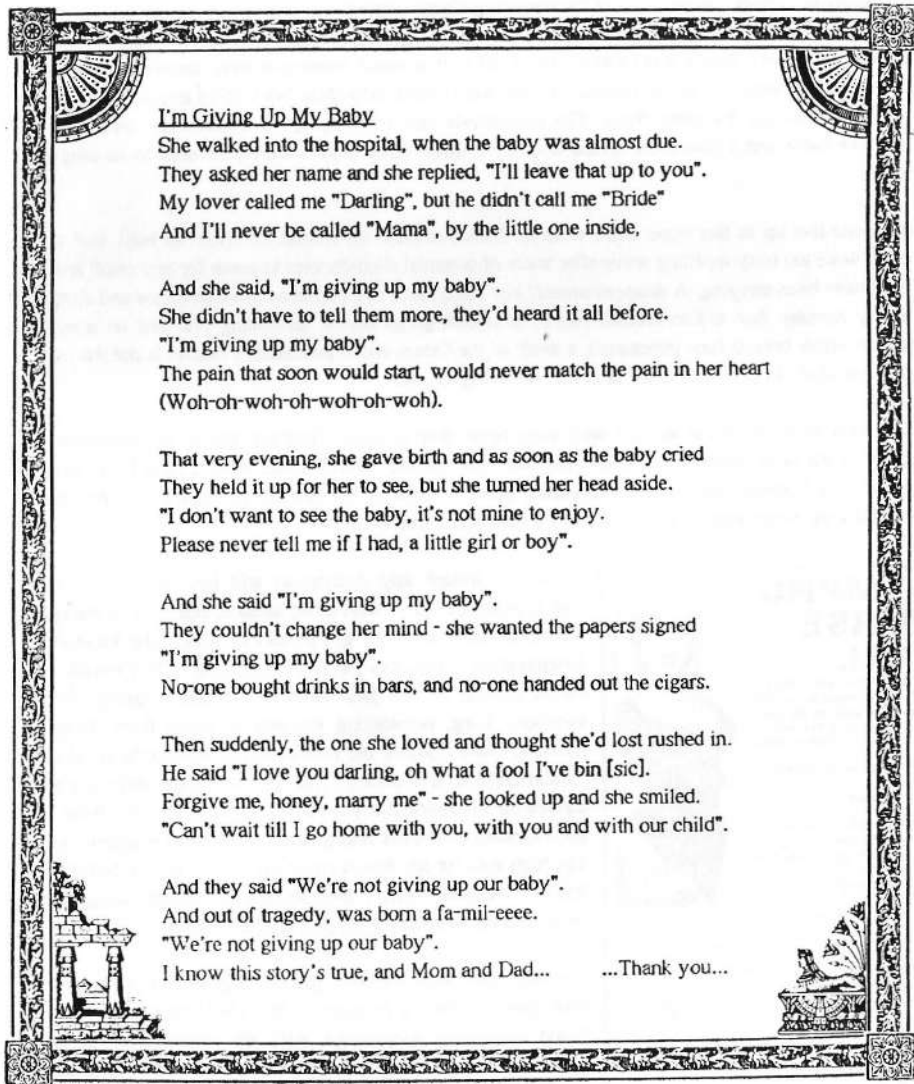
And she said, "I'm giving up my baby".
She didn't have to tell them more, they'd heard it all before.
"I'm giving up my baby".
The pain that soon would start, would never match the pain in her heart
(Woh-oh-woh-oh-woh-oh-woh).

That very evening, she gave birth and as soon as the baby cried
They held it up for her to see, but she turned her head aside.
"I don't want to see the baby, it's not mine to enjoy.
Please never tell me if I had, a little girl or boy".

And she said "I'm giving up my baby".
They couldn't change her mind - she wanted the papers signed
"I'm giving up my baby".
No-one bought drinks in bars, and no-one handed out the cigars.

Then suddenly, the one she loved and thought she'd lost rushed in.
He said "I love you darling, oh what a fool I've bin [sic].
Forgive me, honey, marry me" - she looked up and she smiled.
"Can't wait till I go home with you, with you and with our child".

And they said "We're not giving up our baby".
And out of tragedy, was born a fa-mil-eeee.
"We're not giving up our baby".
I know this story's true, and Mom and Dad... ...Thank you...



R E V O L T I O N

Reporters are used to facing danger: Sandy Gall in Afghanistan, John Pilger in Cambodia, Kate Adie in...just about anywhere there's trouble. Though even she might have thought twice about braving the Astoria theatre in London, on the night of the Revolting Cocks concert.

The current LP, 'Beers, Steers and Queers', starts off with a taped phone-call from someone operating under the misapprehension that the Revolting Cocks were a male strip show but I doubt anyone turned up at the Astoria thinking the same thing. The propaganda had been flying: flamethrowers, mechanical broncos, live cattle and a road crew armed with urine-filled water pistols were rumoured to be ranged against us.

It didn't quite live up to this hype: there were no flamethrowers, no animals (artificial or real), and the road crew were too busy repelling wave after wave of potential slam-dancers to reach for any small arms they may have been carrying. A disappointment? Not really, as it still crammed more deviance and sleaze into ninety minutes than a Ken Russell movie: a topless go-go dancer simulating oral sex on a man wearing inflatable breasts (one punctured), a mask of the Queen and a policeman's helmet is not the sort of behaviour likely to get them on the next Royal Variety Show.

Mention must be made of the support who were better than average: Godflesh started by apologising profusely for the poor sound before delivering some gut-knotting power noise, while Bomb Everything were solid thrash metal and showed remarkable good humour in the face of the enemy: "if you see anyone chucking a can, smash his face in and I'll give you a free T-shirt".

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To Revco, though any description will be inadequate. This was apocalypse music with a bad attitude, noise for a corrupt generation, the soundtrack to a remake of 'Caligula' set in the seventh level of hell. Even at the sort of volume that would be illegal coming from a jack-hammer, the sound quality was excellent. Long, unrelenting versions of songs from 'Beers, Steers & Queers' joined old favourites like the utterly tasteless 'Union Carbide' and 'Attack Ships on Fire' (bonus point if you can tell me the movie that line comes from!) to give the brain a good kicking until your reality was squeezed to a singularity. The high spot for me was a cover version of Olivia Newton-John's "Physical" which took an already dodgy song and mutated it into something verging on the perverse.

Visually, there was probably too much going on: with three lead singers working in rotation, the idle hands were often found occupying themselves with the charmingly named Revolting Pussies, two 'dancers' whose simulated affections were also lavished on each other, the audience and road crew

with wild abandon. All of which was terribly distracting, as said dancers kept sinking to the floor of the stage, just out of my line of sight - next time, I'll head upstairs! Other props included a blood-stained blow-up doll, a fluorescent ski-mask and large numbers of beer bottles used (at about groin level) to spray froth over the go-go dancers. Like I said, any description is inadequate.

If you can imagine being inside a lift as it plummets to the ground, you might get a flavour of the atmosphere that was generated. Your parents wouldn't like them, Teddy Taylor M.P. doesn't like them and they'll never be on the British Rock and Pop Awards - who can argue that when music is safe, ozone-friendly and socially conscious Revco are indeed, in their own words, "making the world a better place for you and your hog-bitch girlfriend".

Flameon : "You're absoluteley"

Five things to know about this band and their cassette:

1. They're not from Manchester.
2. They don't think this is 1967.
3. The guitarist thinks he's with the Buzzcocks.
4. No-one in the band is wearing a flowery shirt in the cover picture.
5. The lyrics do not give the impression the author was totally stoned when he wrote them.

I don't have a high opinion of the indie music scene at the moment. Most bands seem to be vanishing up their own backsides in a drug-crazed frenzy of retro-delia, so the appearance of an almost totally unsolicited tape in the post was greeted with the sort of enthusiasm usually reserved for bank statements. A four-piece band, from Stoke as far as I can tell. "Single and LP out on Release Emotions Records sometime this year". Hell, I'd better listen to it at least once...

Hang on, this isn't bad. Eight tracks, most of which leave you wishing they'd go on a bit longer, three songs I definitely liked a lot ("Words can't say", "I.p.h." and "3rd world dream") and twenty seconds of guitar at the start of "What you said" that involuntarily made me stop what I was doing and grab for the cassette box. The overall sound reminds me of the Buzzcocks, though the vocals bear no resemblance at all - ok, this means it is backward-looking, perhaps, but at least it's to an era I can remember without having to undergo hypnotic regression!

The tape may sound slightly rough & ready. 'White Lady' did seem to be jangling on the drugs references a bit and while all the songs have a similar style, I liked it so I'm not complaining. Heavens, I'll probably end up buying the LP - unless (hint, hint) I get another unsolicited package...

[No idea where you can get the tape! For further information, contact: Flameon, The Willows, Vicarage Lane, Barlaston, Stoke on Trent, ST12 9AG]



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Film Blitz

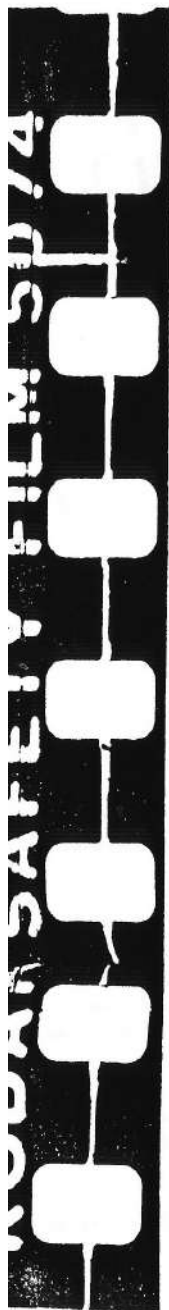
Arachnophobia (Frank Marshall) - Odd that those most likely to find this scary will be the least likely to go and see it. I'm no arachnophobe (wasps are my pet hate) so the film began at a disadvantage with me and I found myself cheering on the beasties - any hero who is a wine connoisseur loses my sympathy straight away. Most of the other characters are just as obnoxious: Julian Sands as the mandatory scientist and John Goodman as a bug-killer are the best of the (human) cast. After an hour of warming-up, it does provide some nice thrills to justify its existence and I suspect how much you enjoy the movie depends a lot on your feelings about spiders. Just spare a moment's silence for the ones that died in production and those mercilessly crushed by jumpy citizens who've seen the movie... 6/10.

Buried Alive (Gerard Kikoine) - Cliche ridden Edgar Allen Poe adaption - you can tell because there's a black cat in every other frame - seems like a cross between 'Suspiria' (lots of insects and a girls' school) and 'Reform School Girls' (they're naughty bimbos). Someone is doing nasty things to the inhabitants and Donald Pleasence wanders round saying things like "Yvonne sees reality as a warped rejection of her own super-ego" and "Who's to say they are dead? There are many different levels of existence". A film with all the problems of Argento movies and none of the benefits, this is a distinct disappointment from the director of 'Edge of Sanity' despite the first ever food-mixer scalping. 2/10.

Cafe Flesh (Rinse Dream) - "This is not a porn movie" says the Scala Cinema's programme in block capitals and a tone of certainty. Oh, yes it is! Despite a surreal post-apocalyptic culture setting, where only 1% of the population are able to have sex (watched by the other 99%) and better characters and dialogue than might be expected, without the hard-core it'd bear a strong resemblance to 'The Comic'. However, the decidedly cute presence of a pre-'Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers' Michelle Bauer (under the name of Pia Snow) is adequate compensation. 6/10.

Dead Calm (Philip Noyce) - Effective, if often predictable thriller has a husband and wife on a sailing cruise, up against a psycho who maroons the husband on the gradually sinking ship belonging to his last victims, and begins to close in on the wife. The setting is nicely claustrophobic and the set pieces work well but some sections require too much credulity. Does succeed in adding a new dimension to the phrase "dumb bitch deserves to die", however! 7/10.

Deathstalker III (Alfonso Corona) - A third director and a third lead actor remove all traces of continuity (apart from the customary rip-off footage from the previous adventures) leaving little more than a very tired idea and not enough sex or violence to justify it. What's the point of a sword and sorcery movie without nudity or blood? It certainly isn't the acting or the plot, neither of which stand up to scrutiny even at 3am in the morning after several beers and a lot of sandwiches. 3/10.



Desperate Hours (Michael Cimino) - Neither Cimino nor star Mickey Rourke are exactly flavour of the month with the critics so this one has been drowned in a sea of vitriol. A pity, because it's a very slick, taut and plausible (at least as these things go) thriller. Rourke plays a psycho, sprung from jail by his girlfriend, who takes over the house of a lawyer (Anthony Hopkins) as somewhere to lie low. The police net closes inexorably towards them and the stresses start to show. It may be formula stuff, but it's beautifully shot (perhaps too much so, it occasionally looks like a Utah Tourist Board promo film), relentlessly cool, Hopkins is as good as ever and Rourke shows that when he isn't trying to play the sexual animal, he can act - more of this might help his career, though I know at least one female reader who'd disagree!). 8/10.

Fantasia (Walt Disney) - 50 years old, and wearing well, despite, or maybe because of astonishing naivety: it takes a while to work out why the male centaurs look odd, then you realise they've no nipples or belly-buttons, leaving their bodies totally blank! At least the females have breasts, albeit nippleless ones. And while the animation is less detailed than in later pictures it's still easily as good as anything produced these days. The sequences either tell a story ('The Sorcerer's Apprentice' is the best known) or are more or less abstract sequences of pretty pictures, such as for Bach's Toccata - restful to the point of soporific, so it's a good job there aren't many of them. Advertised as "the ultimate trip", there wasn't a kid in sight when I saw it and if it won't replace LSD, it's more mind-expanding than 'My Little Pony'. 3-8/10, mostly towards the upper end.

Flesh Gordon 2 (Howard Ziehm) - Subtitled 'Flesh Gordon Meets The Cosmic Cheerleaders', this delayed sequel starts off being self-consciously stupid, then hammers the viewer with an endless succession of juvenile tit-and-fart jokes until...hell, you've got to laugh at the awfulness of it all. Good thing too, because the actual jokes aren't all that funny. Unlike the first, it's aimed at the 'R' market so there's a lack of blatantly removed hardcore which helps and the performances are at the right level of naffness. Racist, sexist and homophobic to the point where even I began to wince, leave all liberal sensibilities at the door. 6/10.

Goregasm (Hugh Gallagher) - After a man is found murdered and the entire police force is too busy to investigate, the case is assigned to desk detective Chase (Rick Billock). Soon he's delving into the world of porn videos after discovering an ad for 'Goregasm' in the dead man's house. The murderer turns out to be Tara (Gabriela), the wacked-out bitch in the Goregasm ad and soon Chase is trying to find her while she goes about, killing men, in various states of undress. The film (actually it's shot on video) isn't quite



exciting as the synopsis sounds. It is a fun "bad" film loaded with cheesy gore, the topless Gabriela and some bad acting - as a "real" film, this one has some good ideas, just doesn't execute them well. But taken on the level that Hugh Gallagher (publisher of the 'zine 'Draculina') had the guts to make a film despite having no money or stars, I'd say he did quite well: it's a big improvement over his first venture into film-making with the dull 'Dead Silence'. (DP)

Grim Prairie Tales (Wayne Coe) - The problem with anthology movies is that they tend to mediocrity: I've yet to see one with four really good stories and 'Grim' certainly doesn't qualify. The linking sections are better than the tales themselves, Brad Dourif and James Earl Jones providing an otherwise too often lacking frisson. For the record, No.1 has an Indian burial ground being disturbed - I fell asleep during it, so missed the end and the start of No.2, though I did get to see its spectacular climax (and 'climax' is the word). I was kept awake for No.3 by the guy in the next seat writhing every time the 14-year old daughter appeared (Hi, Jason, isn't libel fun?); it was otherwise pointless, and No.4, about a gunfighter scared of blood, wasn't much better. 4/10.

Heavy Petting (Obie Benz) - A group of celebrities, from William Burroughs to Zoe Tamerlis (now with red hair and calling herself Zoe Tamerlaine, still looking wonderful) via David Byrne talk straight to camera about their early sexual experiences with varying degrees of coherency and frankness. While these often strike a chord, the confessions never give more than a glimpse of the personalities behind them, and I enjoyed the interspersed clips from 50's and 60's sex-education films more - these varied from the ridiculous to the very ridiculous. 7/10.

Leningrad Cowboys Go America (Aki Kaurismaki) - If David Lynch had directed 'The Blues Brothers' while having one of his notorious sugar rushes, this might have been the result. A group of Finnish, vaguely Pogue-like musicians possessing incredible quiffs and minimal talent head for the States on the very reasonable grounds that "they'll swallow any shit there". Most of the movie centres round their journey to Mexico to play at a wedding, via encounters with Jim Jarmuseh, Nicky Tesco, bikers and police - it's all highly weird and if the far-too-numerous musical interludes do little except prove that the Leningrad Cowboys are indeed completely untainted by commercial potential, it's still likeably unique. 6/10.

The Little Mermaid (John Musker/Ron Clements) - There used to be rumours that Walt Disney had made pornographic cartoons, which were locked away deep in the vaults of Disneyworld. While T.L.M. is no X-rated movie, it's story resembles 'The Trials of Traci' (mermaid goes onto land seeking mate) and the heroine looks less like Snow White, and more like Cherry Poptart, star of a comic book high on H.M. Customs' hit-list. Very suspicious. And then there's all these hidden messages - beautiful people are good, ugly ones are bad - designed to influence our children. It's a plot, I tell ya! Paranoia aside, this is good stuff, almost classic Disney and easily better than any of the American competition. While the animation may be simplified to reduce effort, it's rarely noticeable - people lack teeth, that's all. Nice songs, an evil villainess and an entirely predictable story: exactly what one expects from Disney. 8/10.

The Match Factory Girl (Aki Kaurismaki) - Probably the most depressing film I've seen in ages: a woman has a dull job, a joyless homelife and spends her evenings being gloomy. The first 20 minutes has three words of spoken dialogue: "Half of beer". The comic highlight is someone getting poisoned.

And it's in Finnish. Yet despite being the visual equivalent of a Joy Division double LP, it's more engrossing than it sounds (though I can't for the life of me work out why) - only confirmed depressives will actually enjoy it and the rest of us should be sure to put away any sharp objects before viewing. 6/10.

Meet the Applegates (Michael Lehmann). The director of 'Heathers' has certainly come up with one of the more original films of the year so far: giant insects move to Median, Ohio from the Amazon so they can sabotage the local nuclear plant and save the rain forests. Their instruction manual to "being American" is a Dick and Jane reading book - reality is somewhat different, the husband has an affair with a secretary, his wife discovers the joy of credit cards, their son is hooked on dope and the daughter gets pregnant. This very thin veneer of normality reaches monomolecular levels as people who discover the truth end up cocooned in the cellar. The

problem is that, like 'Twin Peaks', there's nothing behind the weirdness: while the scenes of the family adjusting to American life are fun, it can't support an entire movie and the interval between inventive scenes gets steadily longer. However, bear in mind it took several viewings for 'Heathers' to take root... 6/10.

Mortal Passions (Andrew Lane) - This fails totally as serious drama, yet provides ninety minutes of tacky entertainment and a couple of the cutest actresses to appear on our screens this year. Zach Galligan plays a suicidal house-painter whose wife (Krista Erickson), the sort of girl who apologises by taking her clothes off, is having it away with a customer at the cocktail bar where she works, and is planning to kill her spouse for his money. But his brother finds out, kills the cuckold and takes over screwing the wife. Then the murdered man's girlfriend appears. Oh, and both husband and wife are getting therapy from a psychologist played by David Warner. No good comes of all this, you will not be surprised to hear. Victorian melodrama, 1991-style, that gets steadily more ridiculous and sleazy by turns. I liked it. 7/10.

Nuns on the Run (Jonathan Lynn) - TC's continuing quest to bring you the full range of nun-pics brings you a one joke movie (two criminals hide out in a convent) which by some sleight of hand still manages to be an enjoyable piece of mindless entertainment. This is mainly thanks to Robbie Coltrane (was he a nun in a previous life?) doing miracles with a script that is rarely less than obvious and never subtle. Eric Idle marks time in comparison, being frequently diverted by a love interest, presumably to reassure the audience that he and Coltrane are 'normal' and don't get any pleasure out of cross-dressing. 6/10.



Polyester (John Waters) - Could be considered inspiration for 'Meet the Applegates' as Divine and family are so bizarre they might well be from Amazonia. Originally released with scratch and sniff cards to enhance the ambience (I've got an unused one - any offers?), even without them it remains trash in a compressed, concentrated form and a monument to tack. While it lacks the deliberate offensiveness of 'Pink Flamingos', this is no bad thing, as it's replaced by vicious parody of American lifestyles, clothes, habits and everything from shopping to Alcoholics Anonymous. Despite a tendency to go on ramming the point home beyond what's necessary, this is perhaps Divine's finest moment. The plot? You wouldn't believe me if I told you... 7/10.

Predator 2 (Steven Hopkins) - Blam! Boom! Bang! Arnie may be missing, but the bad guy is back, or at least one like it. This Predator is even better equipped to kick human ass having all sorts of nifty optional extras: ultra-violet sight as well as infra-red, killer frisbees and lots of freaky weapons, as opposed to the original Predator's minimalist style (it went for the locking wheel nuts and a stereo radio instead). Virtually an expanded remake, set in the urban jungle of L.A, I don't think this will disappoint - it's intelligently exploitative, Danny Glover bringing more to his character than Schwarzenegger did, while the action sequences easily make up for some slack moments early on. The last ten minutes, as our hero finds the alien spaceship, made me sit back and go "Whoa!". An early contender for Pyrotechnic Overkill Movie of 1991. 8/10.

The Presidio (Peter Hyams) - Shaun Connery is a policeman on a military base who has to contend with murders, a renegade ex-soldier turned cop and a fairly un-necessary romantic subplot involving said cop and Sean's daughter. Needless to say, he ignores them all and proves again that while he may play a limited range of characters (this time, it's roughly 50/50 'Name of the Rose' and 'Hunt for Red October'), he's pretty good at them. 7/10.

Sex Madness (???) - From the same people that brought you 'Reefer Madness', a solemn tale of what happens to those who dare to have sex outside the sanctity of marriage. They get syphilis, pass it onto their husbands and children, are forced to the edge of suicide and lose any acting ability they may have possessed. Or maybe it just seems that way, as whoever the director is, he was clearly a one-take man: a half-open window slams shut, making the actress talking at the time visibly jump and the camera keeps right on rolling. These little technical quibbles aside, this is medical melodrama pushed to the limits - do I mark it as such or do I write it off for the dated exploitation it is? Both, and neither. 5/10.

Sugar Hill (Paul Maslansky) - You can tell you're in trouble from the song on the opening credits of this stinker: a groovy number called 'Supernatural Voodoo' (available on Motown records, we're told). Made during the blaxploitation period, the 'plot' concerns Sugar (Maki Bey), the death of her boyfriend and her subsequent revenge. It turns out Robert Quarry wants to get his greedy hands on the bar owned by the boyfriend - first they try buying him out but he refuses. Several minutes later they appear outside and in a totally hilarious fight scene, kill him - don't ask why they're wearing ladies stockings on their heads or appear to be dancing on the victim. Sugar Hill pops down to the local swamp and calls on Baron Zombie, a dude who thinks evil is breaking out into a nasty laugh every couple of minutes. He raises his zombie friends, who turn out to be a couple of black actors with silvery eyes, covered in cobwebs, and together with Sugar, they set about knocking off the dudes that killed her boyfriend. The movie is laced with well thought-out dialogue: "Honky, you killed my man - now you're going to die, sucker" and

Quarry's insistence on calling Sugar a "black bitch". This one has to be seen to be believed. 3 (but for a good laugh 6)/10. (MM)

The Vanishing (George Sluizer) - Dutch film that got a minimal release at cinemas to critical acclaim and is now out on video as a result. It's unusual story has a man obsessed by the disappearance of his girl-friend, who vanished three years ago at a service station, and trying to find out what happened to her. He eventually finds the man responsible - to say any more would be unfair. A psychological thriller (roughly translated: "not action-packed"), it concentrates on the characters involved - as a drama, it's fine (Bernard-Pierre Donnadiou as the kidnapper deserves especial mention) - as a horror movie, it lacks punch and I didn't feel it's ending lived up to the hype. Mind you, I'm not claustrophobic... 6/10.

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15



14A



Help! I'm trapped in a snow-bound suburb of London, with a rapidly diminishing supply of Guinness and no crisps at all. Which is why I've lashed myself to the typewriter, in readiness to review this quarter's pile of 'zines, before using them to build a warming bonfire... Well, this was true when I started writing the piece, it's not quite accurate any longer: April 7th! This long time gap means a lot to get through, as a good number of 'zines have put out two issues - where this is true, there's a slash between the numbers.

From a long time back we have **Anti Clock Wise 9** (12 A4, 40p), probably the first politizine to be mentioned here. Flag-burning in the States, anti-Fascist action, football hooliganism: a pretty mixed bag as you can tell, generally anarchic in tone. Needless to say, I disagreed with a lot of it! **Subterrene 3/4/5** (26,30,30 A4, 50p) is one of the most frequent 'zines I get; given this, the rough-hewn feel is to be expected, and in fact nicely fits most of the films reviewed - no **'Bambi'** pieces here! No doubting Anthony's commitment to the genre, who else but a fan would list, and time, the differences between the 126- and 140-minute versions of **'Dawn of the Dead'**? **Dementia 13 No. 5/6** (52 A4 for 1.75 - lots of calorific value there!) is a fiction 'zine; I don't read much genre stuff, but most of this was interesting and challenging - perhaps a little too difficult occasionally, though I'm not really qualified to tell since the last book I bought was **'The Railway Children'** (I'm not kidding!).



THREE PIN PLUGS

Even thicker is **Factsheet Five 40/41** (136/104 A4ish, \$7 inc p&p), and the price reflects this and postage costs - if you're in no hurry you can get a surface mail version for \$4. Alternatively, get in touch with me, as Tower Records here in London stock it and I'll happily buy copies for you if I can; it'll be about £2 or so. Anyway, it's a monumental listing of every 'zine, comic and tape the editor gets sent (and that's a lot - 1000+ I'd guess), from porno comics to earnest, political theory magazines all with capsule reviews. An awesome amount of work goes into this, and it shows. The same is true of **Little Shop of Horrors 10/11** (double issue, 172 A4, £6.95) - with my usual chauvinism, I think most 'zines I trade with are getting the better side of the deal, but this is quite the opposite and at the moment I feel very guilty about trading for it. It's not a 'zine about Hammer, it's a book with more information about the company than anything else I've ever read. Fortunately (for my guilt complex) it's irregularly published (No.9 appeared in 1986), but it'll take me about five more years to read it all!

Slipping out into left field, away from the horror scene, we find **Mektek 4** (60 A5, 1.50), a glossy little number, mainly about Battle Suit Warfare (seems to be part wargame, part role-playing). I found those bits incomprehensible (but intriguing), and took refuge in the other sections: manga and anime reviews and a handy review of the Panasonic NVL 28B, a video capable of playing unconverted NTSC format videos. Also in the same area (at least, in the box marked "Miscellaneous") is **Green Goblin 15** (48 A5 including the subzine, 50p). Mostly SF-ish though like TC, the editor is willing to write about what he damn well pleases - everything from music to books to computers - which makes for a pleasant ambience since the areas of interest are similar to mine, even if the specifics aren't. **Arglebargle 23** (36 A5, 70p) is in the same vein, though with slightly less chat and more postal games instead: I was impressed with the rules for one called 'International Terrorism', which I'll probably try to take part in. I'll let you know how I get on! Sliding gently back towards the horror genre, on the way we see **Rattler's Tale 10/11** (40 A5, 1.00?), a green horror 'zine? Odd combination, you might think - it's a mix of ecology, the paranormal and short horror/mystery fiction, favouring bite-size chunks rather than hefty articles. Again, while I might disagree with much of it, I still find it interesting stuff.

Most essential US 'zine comes from Tim Paxton, who has produced that rare beast, a 'zine likely to be of lasting use. **Naked!Screaming!Terror! 4/5** (double issue, 48 A5, \$4 + p&p) contains reviews and ratings of about 150 Oriental horror/action movies, from 'A Better Tomorrow' to 'Zu Warriors' plus some truly bizarre stuff in between. A definite must-have for anyone interested in the genre. He also publishes **Monster 45-49** (variable, normally 8 A5, \$1?) which reviews only monster movies, though his definition is wide enough to take in more than Godzilla and Frankenstein. **Scareaphanalia 96-99** (8 A5,\$1) heads smoothly on towards it's century with more literate, intelligent reviews of films that won't arrive here for ages yet (though oddly 'Warlock' is only just out in the States - the death of New World Pictures strikes again!). The new Stephen King adaption, 'Misery', gets the front cover this time.

ETC Vol.2 No.1 (I think: the inside says "welcome to the first issue" so you pays your \$3 [+ p&p] and takes your 32 A5 pages) is devoted to European Trash Cinema: Fulci, d'Amato, Almodovar, etc. And while I might quibble about the subject matter (though I admire the effort in a Joe d'Amato filmography, the point eludes me!), the writing is lucid, there's a good range of contributors and it's very professionally done. **Gore Gazette 103** (9 A4, \$2) celebrates ten years in business by devoting room to the delightful tale of how the Rev.Rick Sullivan got to meet Pres.George Bush, which just about nails the claims-to-fame game played in the letter column here on occasion. Oh, and some film reviews too, naturally. To finish off the foreign 'zines section, we have **Black 5** (according to the cover it's #7, in any case, it's 20 A4, \$6/four issues). Mikael reckons I'm "possessed by" Nastassja Kinski: does he mean "obsessed by", or does he know something...? Lots of reviews, music, comics and an interesting bit about a trip to Denmark, all written in English, or a close relation thereof!

Strange Adventures 23-27 (20-24 A4, 90p-£1) continues to publish issues at a rapid rate. Guess there's nothing else to do on the Isle of Wight! If it happens in the fantasy genre, there's a good chance it'll be reviewed in this 'zine, which retains it's friendly atmosphere. **From Beyond 2** (28 A4, 50p) is a new one on me, with a striking cover of Leatherface. An all review 'zine, be interesting to see whether it'll find a niche to live in and what personality it'll develop: such things take time. Personality is something **Headcheese and Chainsaws 6** (20 A5, 70p+SAE) certainly possesses in abundance. Also, a Peter Atkins interview, an article on telling the difference between original tapes and copies, reviews of films, book, comics and a bizarre Christmassy comic strip. "Bah, humbug" seems to be the message.

Creeping Unknown 16 (36 A5, 95p) virtually avoids mentioning the subject of Xmas altogether preferring, understandably, to concentrate on film & festival reviews, a major (and informative) piece on 'Revenge of Billy the Kid' and four pages of weirdness from Lino, who seems to be under the impression that I have a thing about 'Gwendoline'. Well, only when it's Winona Ryder's night off... 17 is also out, but has yet to be unpacked so I can't give details, but it was certainly as good as ever.

TC9's most essential UK zine is **Anime UK 3/4** (24 A4, £6/6 issues, no samples): at last someone is providing news, reviews and information for us fans of Japanese animation, and is doing a good job of it too. It looks pretty good, too, especially #4. Own-up time: the **Midnight in Hell** reviewed in TC8 was issue 4, not 5. This was brought home by the real arrival of issue 5 (20 A4, £1), including an interview with Nick Park - with neat timing, it arrived in my hands the day Mr.Park was awarded his Oscar for best animation! **Nora K 3** (44 A5, £1.50) has arrived; that's no misprint as the title's changed from Norma K. The subject matter is the same: Traci Lords, both her recent mainstream pictures and the other ones, which of course I know nothing about - Steve makes even them sound interesting. A labour of lust?

And finally, **Samhain**. Last time out, I slagged them off something rotten so a sense of fairness forces me to admit that their latest issues are an awful lot better (for some strange reason, I wasn't sent a freebie copy as normal!) . Rather than writing about films that have been done to death in the mainstream press (like 'Flatliners'), this issue concentrates on movies that you won't read much about in **Q/Empire/Sky**. The result is much more interesting, and it does suggest that the preceding issue was an aberration (I stand by my review - it didn't get any better on rereading) rather than a change in direction.

Anime UK - Helen McCarthy, 147 Francis Road, Leyton, London E10 6NT.

Anti Clock Wise - PO Box 175, Liverpool, L69 8DX.

Black - Mikael Bomark, Asp.v.28, 14141 Huddinge, Sweden.

Creeping Unknown - Nick Cairns, 33 Maltby Road, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 3BN.

Dementia 13 - Pam Creais, 17 Pinewood Avenue, Sidcup, Kent, DA15 8BB.

Factsheet Five - Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave, Rensselaer, NY 12144-4502, USA.

From Beyond - G.W.Sherratt, 'Brimstree', 1 Greenway, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 1EF.

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

Green Goblin - John Breakwell, 170 Caversham Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8AZ.

Headcheese & Chainsaws - Rob Bewick, 33 Ernwill Ave, Castletown, Sunderland, SR5 3EB.

Little Shop of Horrors - Dick Klemensen, PO Box 3107, Des Moines, Iowa 50316, USA.

Mektek - Ashley Watkins, 62 May Rd, Brighton, E.Sussex, BN2 3EB.

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

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

Nora K - Steve Rag, 118 High Street, Eastleigh, Hants, S05 5LR.

Rattler's Tale - Anthony North Enterprises, BCM Keyhole, London, WC1N 3XX.

Samhain - John Gullidge, 19 Elm Grove Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon, EX3 0EQ.

Scareaphanalia - Michael Gingold, 55 Nordica Drive, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520, USA.

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

Subterrene - Anthony Cawood, 6 Daleside Avenue, Pudsey, Leeds, LS28 8HD.

THREE PIN PLUGS

The Incredibly Bad Music Show

or "Life's a bitch, and so's Michaela Strachan".

Next year is 1992, when Britain, despite Mrs.T's best efforts, will become more closely linked to the rest of the European community. Trade barriers will be lowered, frontier restrictions will be eased and we can will hopefully see more cross-cultural pollination, ideally in the form of large packs of French schoolgirls roaming the streets.

But there's a down side to pay: it's not all sexy game shows and a glimpse of the cost was provided by the 5th annual Diamond Awards, broadcast in the early hours of Sunday, February 17th on ITV. This four-hour spectacular, recorded in Antwerp in front of an audience of 18,000 hysterical Belgians, celebrates the genre of Europop by giving awards to the artists whose records sold the most the previous year and giving the artists a free plug. In theory, it sounds ok; after all a lot of my favourite acts are from the continent - Front 242, Claudia Brucken, Laibach, Yello - so it looked promising.

I missed the first few minutes: I'd got bored about 30 seconds into the edition of 'After Dark' I was watching, as is normal (only they could take a topic like 'Addicted to Sex?' and make it duller than ditch-water) and went to brush my teeth. Coming out of the bathroom, I heard the strains of "I Think We're Alone Now" coming from downstairs so returned to the living room to see one moderately ugly female miming badly to the song. Now, to one who remembers Tiffany as a kinda cute teenager, unspoiled by success and who even had the guts to sing live on 'Top of the Pops', this was a shock. Dyed hair, and it looked as if her plastic surgeon had bought a job-lot of all the bits Cher's got rid of over the past ten years.

The format of the show became clear: the act sang their 'greatest hit', got their award and then sang their current single. There were a few exceptions to this rule: Kylie Minogue got to do three songs, as did a group I've never heard of called London Beat. On the other hand, Timmy Mallett (the presenter of the show raved about "his talent, his humour, his creativity" - surely some mistake here?) was restricted to one song: whether this was on the grounds of taste or because at the time this show was recorded Bombalurina had only recorded one is not known.

Perhaps surprisingly, this was actually something of a pity. Whatever one can say about the music, he was accompanied by two of the prettier backing singers that appeared in the course of the programme, which ensured that the entire song was viewed with deep interest, rather than being fast forwarded as soon as it was clear a) the music was crap and b) there were no cutey-pies to be seen. This happened to a majority of the acts: Kylie lasted about half a minute, though this at least 29.5 seconds of this was due to



the black PVC dress she was wearing. Jason Donovan was remote-controlled out before he could even appear on the stage and Jimmy Sommerville lasted about as long, though some sick puppy at ITV chose the advert break which immediately followed Jimmy to insert the only National Aids Helpline public information films of the night...

There was definitely something of an air of history about the proceedings, with a large number of the acts "has-beens" as far as this country is concerned: apart from Tiffany, Duran Duran fall into this category, as does Holly Johnson but most spectacular of the wrinklies was Helen Schapiro: "Walking Back to Happiness" was apparently a big hit in Europe in 1990, a mere -- years after it hit the British charts. Even the new acts didn't seem to have very much originality, with Irish band Something Else sounding more like Supertramp without the squeaky vocals.

Trust The Human League to come up with something bizarre. Bonus points go to both their bimbos, Suzanne Sulley for looking highly droolworthy + stealing Kylie Minogue's thunder by wearing PVC a good two hours before the girl from Oz, and Joanne Catherall for bravely performing despite a broken arm, subtly concealed inside a silver lamé sling which was easily mistakeable for a particular flashy shirt-collar. Other highlights, though for non-musical reasons, included Technotronic, who at least attempted to sing rather than mime (at least I hope so because if their records sound as bad, we're in worse trouble than I thought) and Roch Voisine, a Canadian who managed to get the crowd waving from side to side holding lighters in the air: despite this, the Incinerated Belgian Quotient remained low.

Over the entire four hours of it, there were **three** new acts I might like to see more of: Twenty 4 Seven (harmless, catchy Eurodisco), Beverley Craven (a cross between Kate Bush and Judie Tzuke) and Joelle Ursull - she was France's entry in last year's Eurovision Song Contest and came second, but her songs had an infectious, carnival rhythm to them. Of course, being a former Miss Guadeloupe is of no relevance at all. At the other end, Totto Cotugno, the 1990 winner was also there with "Insieme 1992" - as you may remember, the contest this year was dominated by lots of songs about the unification of Europe with "Nineteen ninety, Europe unite-ee" lyrics. And in the "whatever-happened-to" section, there was David Hasselhoff. Yes, that one - David "Knight Rider" Hasselhoff, whose single "Crazy for You" sold three million copies in Germany. He sings every bit as good as he acted...

All of this, coupled with presenter Desiree Nosbusch's tendency to speak a language that was like English, except with no sense of idiom, meant that by the end of the four hours I was ready to bomb the Channel Tunnel and stage a military coup to pull us out of Europe and prevent Britain's musical identity from being submerged beneath a tidal wave of Europap. Then I saw 'The Hitman and Her', and now, as far as I'm concerned, the sooner we unite the better.



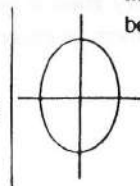
A brief precis of the idea behind this programme might be useful, for those people who have better things to do at 04:10 on a Sunday morning. Take a nightclub, any nightclub - Mr.Smith's in Warrington will do. Fill it with people by the simple method of sending out free tickets to anyone you can think of (even I was sent ten once - I did like the idea of going along to sabotage the event, but unfortunately it was in Brechin [on the coast between Dundee and Aberdeen, in case you were wondering] and I was in London). Now, when you have somewhere like that full of the sort of Darrens and Sharons who frequent such places, the sensible thing to do would be to lock all the doors and pop a couple of incendiaries through the window. Not ITV. They play records and make an hour-long programme consisting of shots of people dancing - it's like Top of the Pops with the groups removed. There's also a section where they haul people out of the audience and ask them where they bought their clothes.

It's all so **happy** and **cheerful** and everyone's **enjoying** themselves, although the combined IQ of those present is probably exceeded by your average digital watch. But even if you're not worried about the exploitation of the educationally subnormal, Michaela Strachan and Pete Waterman who present it (respectively, her and the Hitman) will succeed in sending the most extrovert optimist out for a sick-bag. While I'm quite prepared to admit that Ms.Strachan is cute and Mr.Waterman knows something about record production, I'm at a bit of a loss to see why this should *per se* make them any good as commentators at a cattle-market. It's probably part of the trend towards making presenters so inept that even the most tedious guest appears a master of wit and charm next to them. This reached it's ultimate extreme in 'The Word', fronted by Amammary de Cadanet (though I can't comment on her abilities since I've been unable to concentrate on what she says for more than five seconds without being distracted by a cleavage in which you could conceal several battalions of the Republican Guard) and Terry Christian, who has been described as "the unthinking woman's crumpet" on the reasonable grounds that he is about as coherent as most things you find in a baker's window and could thus be replaced by a chocolate éclair with no detrimental effect on the program.

After about 50 minutes or so of forced jollity relieved only by certain cameramen tending to zoom down blouses or up skirts in a manner reminiscent of a Russ Meyer movie, I gave up. On the balance of that evening's viewing, although there are certain continental commodities I am not looking forward to receiving, I still reckon European union is a good thing. But can we please send Timmy Mallett on a very long, extremely slow European tour, and swap Michaela Strachan for Desiree Nosbusch first?



CROP UP TO REGISTER MARKS



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The mask was identical to the face Martin wore beneath.

"They're meant to be uglier than your own mug, Martin. No point otherwise - especially at a Hallowe'en party." I said this with a tongue in my cheek, as he knew I knew his face was nothing to write home about. And it would probably scare strangers shitless, particularly those of the gatecrasher variety...

"OK, OK, joke's over. You'll be laughing the other side of you face before the evening's over."

If I didn't know Martin better, I would have suspected something sinister in that loosely veiled threat. I could even have believed he wasn't joking.

We were not exactly gatecrashers ourselves, but it was a bit like a friend of a friend of a friend thrice removed who was holding the party in King's Langley, if you know what I mean. We'd heard at least the rumour that all and sundry were invited. So, here we were, climbing off the M25 in Martin's 2CV. Neither of us had been North of Watford before and we were eager to discover whether there was life up there...as the saying goes. We knew there would be, but that didn't stop us chortling on the joke as the rubber band inside Martin's jalopy finally unwound, bringing us to a halt in the car park of the Rose and Crown, where many of the guests would be tanking up in readiness for the long night ahead.

I turned to Martin and kidded him about all the badges he was wearing on his Albanian Flapjacket. I think he must have belonged to every club and society going including both the Foxhunters and the Anti-Blood Sports Associations. Whether it was just another of his silly jokes or he genuinely didn't know his own mind, even now, after all the events have finally finished unfolding, I remain unsure.

It's the story of my life, I know, but to cut a long story short, we'll go straight to the party which turned out to be a pretty drab affair. Even the strobe lighting in the room dedicated to disco dancing was about as limp wristed as my next door neighbour's dead mother. Martin and I carried out a few desultory jigs together, but the hotel foyer muzak was not exactly conducive to a real shake-out. On top of this, there were next to no birds. Even Alfred Hitchcock's film had Tippi Hedren going for it. Unless there was a room upstairs where they had all congregated packed like kids in a Sardines game to escape Martin's ugly mask, every guest at that shindig wore trousers and hugely dated floral ties. Not one badge between them, to gauge the fellow feeling, if any. Furthermore, not even obne backslapping

howdyado from a hale and hearty host, eager to make his guests feel at home. But thinking about it, I could have felt at home anywhere, given an amorous nature.

Eventually, Martin gave me the nod. Back down the M25, to see if we could catch up on a bit of real nightlife in more familiar territory. We felt like fish out of water, or at least I did. Martin, well, he was just Martin, as inscrutable as ever. We walked off the dance floor and thus out of the limelight of the torch that the DJ was flashing upon us from his plinth.

Suddenly we were accosted by a bright young spark who called himself Aretha Franklin.

"That's a funny name for someone who looks as if he's just walked out of one of Hitler's gas chambers."

"Hark who's talking. With a face like that..." - Aretha pointed at Martin's mask - "I bet your face wouldn't win a beauty competition against my bum."

I look quizzically at Aretha's backside, but could find no clue as to why he had made such an outrageous statement.

Martin evidently decided this was it. He was standing no nonsense from the likes of this Northern upstart and he immediately made a hefty kick at Aretha's backside.

"That'll change the odds somewhat - I hear judges don't like bruises on the merchandise."

Or that's what Martin'd probably have said, given half the chance. For, in the event, his leg was left stuck up at right angles, the foot sunk to it's ankle in Aretha's buttocks. The trouser seat had disappeared with the merest ripping noise, leaving the weltering cheeks literally to munch up Martin's calf. I tried to steady my friend, as he hopped precariously on his free leg.

As the others watched this amazing fandango in which the three of us were participating, I noticed the arrival of the Bad Crowd. Every shindig's got them, even down South. But this lot were the worst I'd ever seen. Plug Ugliers to the bone. Undergrunts to the letter. Martin's mush was not even in the same league. The fact that made them seem particularly horrendous was the female gender they wielded. Fresh from girl talk, no doubt, in that Ladies Room I'd imagined earlier, they were waving red-stained panties as if this were some preliminary to a mating dance. If I'd ever fancied a bird, now was the time to stamp homosexual authority on my proclivities...

To come clean, it was a good job that Martin's really only my alter ego and his leg, if I can put it this way, my metaphor for manly pride. Aretha (whose real name turned out to be Digory Smalls) wasn't all that bad looking, despite my earlier misgivings...and the Bad Crows eventually skulked off churlishly, presumably crestfallen, hopefully back to the Ladies Room where they belonged together.

San Futuro Chronicles – Sex & Comics

Initial Waffle

Beyond the realms of superheroes and supervillains, comics contain many interesting corners. Providing more adult entertainment, sex often plays a role (although, it must be admitted, it also plays a role in some of the less mature "for mature readers" titles)... and a very pleasant one at that. Personally, I find two things can make sex in comics particularly interesting to me: the art and the characters involved.

Art-wise, the (Continental) Europeans seem to win hands down – the British & the Americans are seemingly too set in the D.C./Marvel/D.C. Thompson school(s) of comic-art to allow truly beautiful pen & ink work (like that of Milo Manara or Guido Crepax) into their titles, then again, maybe it's the content that we & the Americans find difficult to cope with... look in any comic shop (or even any newsagent) and you'll find plenty of violent/funny comic titles there, but the nearest you'll find to sex & comics is the odd strip in a top-shelf mag.

In fact, in general the chance of the British readers out there finding many of the titles reviewed below (even in specialist comic shops) are minimal.



The Invisible Man Gets Happy (Butterscotch - Milo Manara)

Yes... last year wasn't just a year for clampdowns on videos, the comics shops got hit too. Comics were seized in police raids on places like Nostalgia & Comics in Birmingham & Fantasy Inn in London – and this was on top of shipments of comics being seized by H.M. Customs. Unfortunately, seizure by H.M.C. & E. has a nasty side-effect – if one "obscene" comic is spotted in a shipment, the whole shipment gets seized and no retailer wants to end up lumbered with 200 copies of last month's "X-Men" six-months++ down the line when they finally release them back to the importers... hence the importers got scared and all the extremely-pleasant-but-vaguely-dodgy titles disappeared from the shelves. Another worrying fact is that Customs seem to catch the "liberal" titles but allow bigoted crap out freely. How come comics in sealed bags on the top-shelf in a shop are judged as being "freely available to minors" – it's embarrassing enough reaching for the top-shelf at 24, never mind the added problem of "What-if-they-don't-believe-I'm-old-enough-to-buy-it". Anyway, enough idle waffle on the desperate



And the 'Eyes' have it... (Emanuelle - Guido Crepax)

state of our "liberal", "democratic" country and back to the idle waffle on Sex & Comics...

Character-wise, I probably find Anglo-American comics better - whether this has to do with cultural background I dunno. Best of the lot for characters are Love & Rockets (where sex features regularly, but is definitely not the staple content) and Omaha the Cat Dancer (where sex occurs every half dozen pages or so, and the characters are all cute animals with reasonably human bodies).

The Vaguely Informative Stuff

Eleuteri Serpieri

As far as I've seen, the main Serpieri stuff about is Morbus Gravis - a fun tale set in your average post-holocaust world with a plague turning folks into mutants. As a sucker for "the world's going down the drain & look where it might end" plots, that's great by me, but the main attraction of this particular tale is it's star - Druuna. Druuna is beautiful continental (i.e. French/Spanish style European) nymphette in an ugly run-down world. I like Morbus Gravis a lot, but wish that the remaining parts of Druuna's tale would appear over here in an understandable form. Morbus Gravis I is out as a Catalan Communications paperback; book two is available as a French hardback book or in the Spring 1988 issue of Heavy Metal; book three is meant to be out on the continent, but no sign yet in the UK. However, a French hardback Serpieri sketchbook entitled OBSESSION -



Druuna - So Sweet I Could Bat Her Brains Like Jam
(Morbus Gravis - Serpieri)

A la recherche de Druuna was published last November and was in Forbidden Planet (London) for 4.95. It's full of gorgeous (if a mite sexist) pictures of Druuna and this is currently making the wait for book III bearable. The only other Serpieri I've seen was in the Summer 1988 Heavy Metal: a pen & ink tale of weirdness in the Wild West; another Druuna tale also featured in that issue, by Sicomoro it shows what happened to Druuna after Morbus Gravis... no sex in either of those bits though.

Guido Crepax

As far as I've seen, Crepax's speciality is pen & ink work which is incredibly detailed (taken to the individual pubic hair level!!). His women are very much the "Vogue model" type (tall, thin, not overly well endowed up-top), and are most definitely sexually liberated... In 1965 in the Italian comic "Linus", Crepax started one of the first erotic series in comics - Valentina. Unfortunately, there isn't much sign at all of this work being available in this country beyond the Fall 1988 issue of Heavy Metal (which features a Valentina Rediscovered tale giving us Valentina 23 years on). Similarly, the Crepax adaptations of erotic literature (such as tales by De Sade & "The Story Of O") seem to be basically unavailable to the British reader. In fact, all that I've seen around is Emmanuelle 1 (published in New York on the Eurotica imprint, after being turned down by some 30 other US printers!!) which gives us an adaptation of the original Emmanuelle book (or at least the first part of it). In here, we have sex on planes, shower scenes, female masturbation, assorted sexual positions, tennis matches followed by sweaty lesbian lust, weirdly symbolic pictures of Emmanuelle entwined with snakes & other wildlife and assorted piccies of Concorde looking particularly thrusting.

Milo Manara

As I mentioned above, Manara's art is beautiful. His stories are generally fairly laid back affairs, bits of action to keep the scene changing, but the main purpose of the tale is purely to tie in the artwork. Most of the available stuff is in Catalan paperbacks (about - each) - but here & there, copies of Butterscotch in "proper" comic format have been spotted (published by Eros comics).

The "available" Manara that I've spotted is:

Butterscotch

This is most definitely a sex comic. A scientist invents a cream that allows him to become invisible... unfortunately it leaves a tell-tale smell of butterscotch in the air. Our heroine, "Honey", finds him in the room of Beatrice D'Altavilla, a prima ballerina and a complete bitch. Not being able to have his clothes invisible, "Butterscotch" is nude & Honey soon gets him "sitting up & barking" (accidentally of course). Scenes follow of Honey trying to convince Bea of Butterscotch's existence... culminating in the marvellous sight of the invisible man getting a blow-job. And there ends the first of the comic-books.



Butterscotch

The Adventures of Guiseppe Bergman

(Dies Irae, Great Adventure, Perchance to Dream)

Three books based around "Guiseppe Bergman", and his employment by H.P. (supposedly inspired by Hugo Pratt) as a "hero". G.B. then gets to spend the three books wandering around doing his damndest to be a hero and ending up in (very) unlikely situations. Not too much sex in here, but very nice when present.

Trip to Tulum

Based on a film idea by Federico Fellini, and therefore pretty weird. Trip is being serialised in the back of the Butterscotch comics, but is also available in a separate Catalan paperback and an Italian hardback - the paperback version includes an assortment of waffle by F.F., plus some other strips & piccies by M.M. Weird people, nude swimming & battling witches. It's odd. Enjoyable. But Odd.

Hidden Camera

Honey (the heroine of Butterscotch) is working with a camera-crew on a voyeuristic version of Candid Camera (which was actually the original Italian title for this book)... So, in here we have: backstage at a beauty contest; sadomasochism in the suburbs; public reaction to green three-breasted alien women; and a wacko priest attempting to exorcise a "witch"... somehow nudity creeps into all this lot and Manara's art is every bit as marvellous as ever. Sex-wise, I guess only the S&M sequence counts, but so what.

There are three other books of Manara's work that I've seen out (Shorts, Click!, and The Ape) but unfortunately I've yet to get them... Of the three I believe Shorts & Click! contain a plentiful supply of nudity, and regular doses of sex, and I think The Ape is basically sex free... mebbe I'll get to read them before next time, and I'll let you know then.

Reed Waller & Kate Worley

Omaha The Cat Dancer

Here we have the cute-animal sex. What can be said... it's an everyday tale of humans with animal-heads'n'tails. Omaha, the heroine, is an "exotic dancer" (i.e. stripper) and Chuck is the nearest thing we have to a hero. He's heir to a fortune, and falls for Omaha. Cue mayhem as the system tries to ruin their romance. It's a fairly "open" relationship... threesomes etc. are fairly natural is this (if cute-animal sex can ever be "natural").. then there're Omaha's friends & their relationships. Yeah, a loada screwing but I still find the characters (& the story) interesting too. Sex-wise there's probably something for everyone: straight male/female cute-animal sex; male/male homosexual cute-animal sex... etc. There are three collections of Omaha out, plus the actual comic books. This is definitely one of the more generally available items (give or take the issues that Customs got their grubby paws on).

Heavy Metal

I'll mention this on it's own, as it has featured a fair amount of work by the folks mentioned above. It's included... Druuna (Serpieri), Valentina (Crepax), stories by Manara, and plenty of other fantasy tales (in the best possible meaning of fantasy). Heavy Metal began life as the American counterpart to the French Metal Hurlant - a showcase comic for European strips. These days Metal Hurlant has passed on, but Heavy Metal survives. The covers are always stunning (postcards of some of the Olivia covers are available) and the majority of the content is usually worth a read (some of the content is certainly not my cup of tea, but there's usually sufficient content to make it worth a couple of quid). General format these days appears to be one large strip (about 40 pages or so) plus an assortment of smaller ones. (As examples of the longer strips, consider Serpieri's *Morbis Gravis II* & Mills & Bisley's *Slaine & The Horned God I*. Like I said... usually worth a look. P.S. It's bimonthly!!

Hmmm... bad news here. It's the old ten lines to the end of page 4 problem. Time for a very quick list or two here then...

Other good sex comics: Little Ego (Giardino); The Survivor (Gillon); Liaisons Delicieuses (Forg); Precious Metal (Arts Industria).

Current Comics Scene: Toxic; Starsstruck - The Expanding Universe; Dark Horse - Fifth Anniversary Special; Airwaves; Nature Of The Beast.

Back Issue Frenzy: Grendel; God's Hammer; Rust

