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# TRASH

STY

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Editor Jim McLennan. He's the man who wanders around in his pyjamas with a packet of Romany Creams muttering "It's a tough life". Brian Bower, Jason Parker, Lino, Per and Steve contributed to the twelfth issue of this Quarterly zine, published but three times a year. This anomaly may possibly be connected to the following three facts: 1) We spend our time actually doing the things we write about, 2) Jim keeps wanting to rewrite the film reviews and 3) Have you ever tried to illustrate a piece on UFOs? In comparison to TC's conception, which is slow, noisy and leaves the Art Ed with sticky fingers for a week, it's birth in John London's hands at Copyprint is a miracle. Another miracle is the subscription price which remains at 75p/issue, \$2 Europe, \$3 Elsewhere, \$850 3WA headquarters (includes danger money). For the Gospel According to TC parts 9, 10 and 11 you'd better be quick, as we have less than a dozen of each. at £1/\$2/\$3. TC9 will soon be a T-shirt and the rest of us will probably have an identity crisis too before the next ish. All contributions to this creation, except those about the artistic merit of "Driller Killer", should be sent to the following address which will shortly be wrong:

7 Tummons Gardens, South Norwood Hill, LONDON SE25 6BD

## WELCOME TO THE VIDEODROME

TC11's editorial rant over Forbidden Planet's fiscal tardiness awoke the powers-that-be and rapidly provoked phone-calls, of varying politeness, from people at Titan Books and FP to explain what had happened. Someone (who's now left) had screwed up, lost my invoice and compounded things by trying to cover up their error. And lo, it took them a mere 30 days to pay for TC11. I was also firmly assured they are not going bust - such rumours do the rounds irregularly, according to FP manager Dick Jude.

TC11 was therefore again available from FP, as well as from Psychotronic Videos, Fantasy Inn (now recovering from a fire) and Top 10 Comics in London; the Sheffield Space Centre in, funnily enough, Sheffield; by mail order from Dark Carnival (SAE to 21 Avon Road, Scunthorpe, DN16 1EP), Trick or Treat (who may have copies of TC8 - SAE to 69 Pontamman Road, Ammanford, Dyfed SA18 2HX), Daystar Books (no money, no plug!) and Media Publications (who've moved recently, so their address is uncertain). Abroad, Videodrom in Berlin and Michael Dericks were carrying the flag.

Thanks to Stephen, Phil, Kanji, Johns Spencer and Overall, Peters J & R Evans, Rudy, George, Dave, Brian, Alun, Ewart, Paul, Rick, Stefan, Adam, Jeff, Claire, Oddone plus Pandora Powell (Partridge & Storey), Christopher Crouch (Yaffa) and Catherine Flynn (The Associates)

We may be too late for Film Extremes 2, but we should be out before Spencer Hickman's 'Nothing Shocking' filmfest in Northampton on June 6th. Though accommodation problems are likely to stop me going, the line-up, including 'Deadbeat at Dawn', sounds interesting - phone Spence on 021-360-5368 for details. And something else that missed 'Three-Pin Plugs': I remembered Tim Greaves' address, but forgot to mention his one-off glossy devoted to Yutte Stensgard, with lots of lustworthy pictures...

Ludicrous optimism award. Peter Maudsley, Liverpool Trading Standards Officer, after a six-month operation led to a trivial ten arrests and the seizure of such 'nasties' as 'Wild at Heart' and 'Assault on Precinct 13':

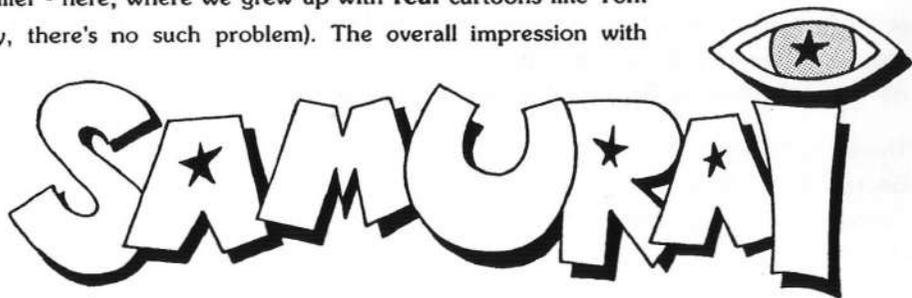
"We feel that we've all but put an end to underground horror videos"

Yeah, that's right - now go back to nicking landlords who pull short pints, will you?



Few things on Earth, short of a direct hit from a thermonuclear warhead, are capable of getting me out of bed at 9 a.m. on a Saturday morning. Yet despite this, I've recently been leaping downstairs (well, stumbling, anyway), with an enthusiasm not seen since the early days of 'Multi-Coloured Swap Shop', to watch a cartoon show.

'Samurai Pizza Cats' is a freeform translation of a Japanese animated series. 13 episodes have been shown in the UK, with another 13 to go, but there are at least fifty original programs. Being Japanese, it's had to undergo surgery before getting here. However, while most such programmes died on the operating table - see 'G-Force', aka 'Battle of the Planets', for perhaps the worst case of malpractice - SPC survived the treatment remarkably well, mostly because it was done with a sense of humour and the content was not toned down to anaemic levels (personally, I blame this for the rise of the American serial killer - here, where we grew up with real cartoons like Tom & Jerry, there's no such problem). The overall impression with



### Samurai Pizza Cats Opening Lyrics

Samurai Pizza Cats - who do you call when you want some pepperoni?  
Samurai Pizza Cats - they're fighting crime, and you know that ain't baloney!  
There's Speedy Cevichi, the leader of the bunch.  
A heck of a fighter, makes a heck of a lunch!  
And little Polly Ester, who's never afraid,  
Of going into battle when the bad guys invade.  
Plus Guido Anchovy, a wild romantic rover,  
This cat gets down, down with a love hangover...  
Here come the Pizza Cats - they're so bad <Ta-Raaa!>.  
They've got more fur than any turtle ever had!  
They're stronger than old cheese (stronger than old cheese!),  
They're stronger than dirt (stronger than dirt!).  
If you step on their tails (don't hurt me now!),  
Then you're gonna get hurt!  
Samurai Pizza Cats -

SPC is that a bunch of guys with a VCR got together on a wet weekend and made up their own story. At least, I assume that the characters in the original didn't discuss their lack of eyebrows with each other! I suspect the conversion may have been done in Canada, but this is based purely on the odd reference to Quebec, and the fact that no Americans seem to have heard of it!

It's about, you will not be surprised to hear, some restaurant running felines with sword skills. The hero is Speedy Cevichi, a distinctly un-neutered tom who regularly falls in lust with any female, of any species, who crosses his path, just as long as she possesses those 'anime eyes', the size of footballs (and in SPC, these are taken to ridiculous extremes). He possesses a wonderful Ginzu sword, capable of slicing in two almost anything (including a deep-pan pepperoni pizza) with a display of background pyrotechnics unrivalled since the last Jean-Michel Jarre concert. Together with his colleagues Polly Ester and Guido Anchovy, they strive to defend Little Tokyo, their home, from the machinations of the Big

# PIZZA CATS

Ha!  
A samurai always  
lands on his feet!



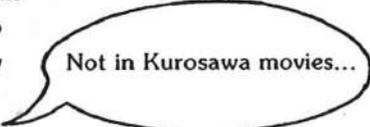
Cheese, an evil rat with a penchant for cross-dressing (more on this later), and a band of his own henchmen.

The plots have a comforting similarity, being variations on the theme of "Big Cheese plots to destroy Little Tokyo, but is foiled". However, that's like describing Tom & Jerry as "cat fails to catch mouse". The use of the same animation in different shows (the Pizza Cat launching sequence appears with a relentless regularity) becomes like the chorus to a song, and careful observation reveals the accompanying dialogue subtly varies.

Japanese kid's shows are known for including plot devices that'd make the BBC blanch. In the original version of the aforementioned G-Force, chief villain Zoltar was actually a hermaphrodite. Needless to say, there's no trace of this left in the "sanitised for our protection" version broadcast in Britain. One episode of SPC was similar: it revolved around the head villain being seen wearing women's clothes, and sending out his henchmen to kill the witness before she could reveal his secret. Instead of not bothering to translate that show, the explanation given was that he was rehearsing the role of Maria in 'The Sound of Music'. While not X-rated, perhaps, this is still several degrees more perverse than you'd find in 'The Real Ghostbusters'. The Big Cheese's crows are even referred to as "ninjas", ITV not sharing the BBC's mealy-mouthed approach ('Hero Turtles?') to such things.

The series is refreshingly free of the moralising that strait-jackets other shows, most notably the obscenely preachy 'Captain Planet': "Gee, if we're nice to each other then we can solve this Middle East crisis AND be kind to the environment as well". Don't you hate socially-conscious broadcasting? None of that in SPC: Little Tokyo gets trashed on a regular basis, junk food is promoted with the ultimate decadence of home delivery and moral concerns are simply not present. One story was about 'Princess Vi' and her attempts to go out on the town incognito. Anyone who remembers Princess Di's exploits with Pamela Stephenson will know where this episode is coming from, and it has to be said the portrait of royalty isn't a very flattering one. On reflection, this republican outlook might tie in with the Quebec references!

However, the main appeal of the show doesn't lie in it's origin or it's plots. On the surface, it might seem like a cheap ripoff of the Ninja Turtles (TM, C, all-rights-reserved). However, SPC harks back to the days when cartoons were entertainment rather than adverts for toys - it's only as a result of the series' success that the SPC toys will be arriving here (apparently, mainly due to pressure from the grandson of a senior executive at Bandai UK!). But above all, Samurai Pizza Cats possesses one major advantage: it's actually FUN to watch, and in the current era there aren't many television shows which you can say that about.



Not in Kurosawa movies...

ONE

FADE IN:

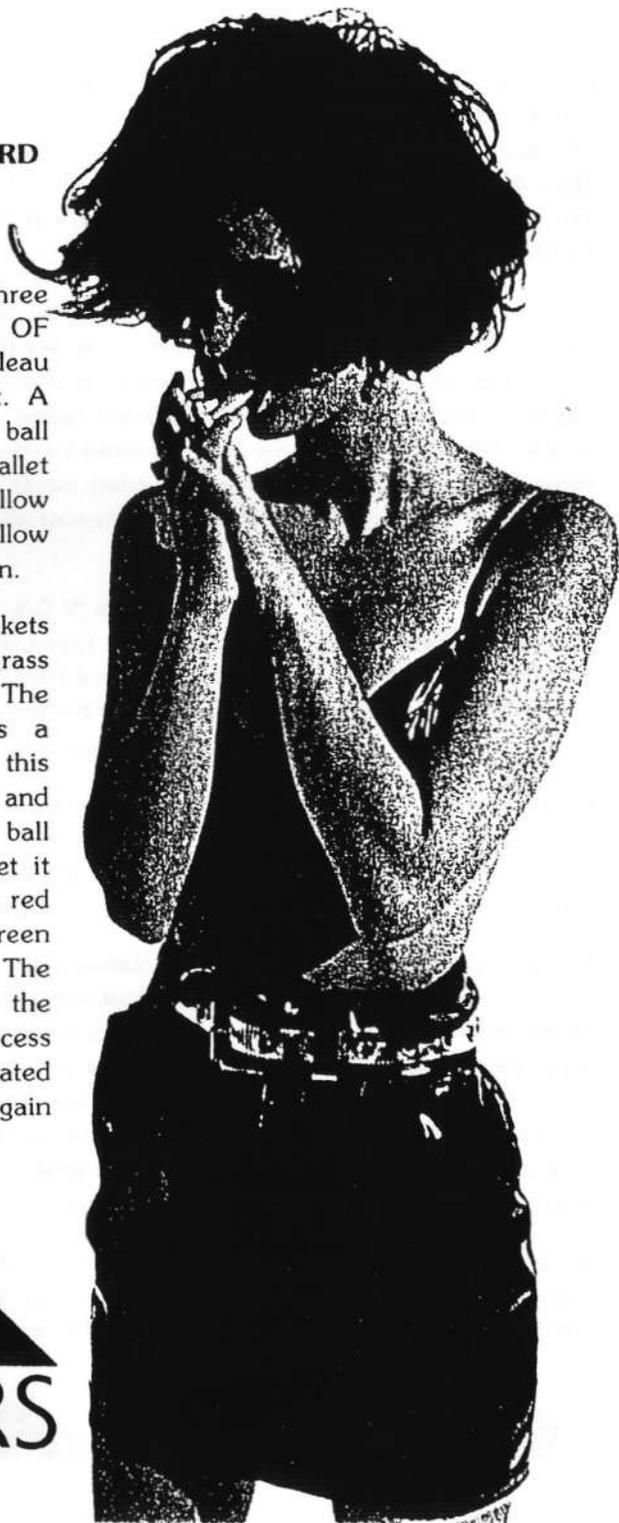
EXT. SAWYER'S BACKYARD  
DAWN.

Elegaic music murmurs as three female and barefoot PAIRS OF LEGS in skirts break from tableau to gently engage in croquet. A blue mallet hits a blue ball through a wicket, a green mallet knocks a green ball, and a yellow mallet pushes forward a yellow ball, all in enticing syncopation.

Suddenly a red ball rockets through the dew covered grass and hits the green ball. The LEGS all stop moving as a FOURTH PAIR OF LEGS, this one in stylish shoes and stockings, marches to the red ball and steps on it. A red mallet it brought down hard on the red ball causing the adjacent green ball to thunder out of view. The Pair of Legs manoeuvring the green ball departs. This process of elimination is grimly repeated with the yellow ball and yet again with the blue ball.



HEATHERS



However, when the **BLUE MALLETTED PLAYER** makes her sad exit, the viewer's viewpoint glides along with this particular **Pair of Legs**. A red ball whizzes by. The **Legs** stop. Another red ball malevolently sails past the legs. Then yet another red ball. A fourth red ball makes brutal contact with the **Legs** causing the **Player** to fall to her knees and into the frame. The player is **VERONICA SAWYER**.

As should be clear from the above paragraphs, the shooting script for 'Heathers' (dated January 26th, 1988) is a different animal from the finished film in many ways, ranging from the subtle to the obvious. The challenge is to play the detective and try to work out why the changes were made, piecing together evidence from the script, and other sources as well. For example, if you've seen the trailer for the film, it included the line "It's God versus my boyfriend, and God's losing", which never appeared in the finished film. The script reveals this was part of Veronica's voice-over after killing Kurt & Ram - the original speech was as follows:

**Veronica (V.O.):**

The most popular people in school are dead. Everybody's sad, but it's a good kind of sad. Suicide gave Heather depth, Kurt a soul, Ram a brain. I gave **J.D.** shit about the Ich Luge thing but what really frightens me is that I'm not frightened by what **J.D.**'ll do next. It's  
God versus my boyfriend, and God's losing.

Why this was axed, I can't say, and there are other, even smaller (but obviously deliberate) tweaks to the dialogue where no obvious explanation can be found. "You stupid cunt" becomes "You stupid fuck" (scarcely going to get the film a PG rating) and, even more bizarrely, "Love your blouse" was modified to "Love your cardigan". Odd.

Fortunately, some changes make more obvious sense. Product placement has become a thorn in moviegoers' sides recently, with seemingly gratuitous plugs for products littering certain movies. 'Heathers' bucks the trend, and a couple of brand names mentioned in the script never made it onto celluloid. The scene between Veronica and JD in the 'Snappy Snack Shack' originally took place in a 7-11, but presumably New World's lawyers nixed the idea, on the grounds that 7-11 would not want to be identified as the favourite convenience store of a teenage psychopath. Similarly, the "mineral" water planted near Kurt and Ram's bodies to prove their homosexuality was originally Perrier!

It's also interesting to note the way some of the characters changed, especially **J.D.** When preparing the "hangover cure" for Heather Chandler in the script, he doesn't notice that Veronica picks up the wrong cup. In the film he realises the error, but conceals it, which



clearly makes him more culpable, as does his suggestion that Veronica forges the suicide note in the earlier version, the idea comes from Veronica herself. On the other hand, the planned version of the final battle in the boiler-room has JD attempting to shoot Veronica in cold blood.

This heightened viciousness is apparent in other places. Though the script contains no trace of the widely-known "everyone gets blown up" ending, it's true to say that the entire movie was originally blacker in tone. No-one is innocent: Peter, organiser of Westerburg's Foodless Fund, is seen dipping into the kitty for a Big Mac and some fries: "Hey, even Bob Geldof's got to eat".

Speaking of things food-related brings me to the cheerful scene in the school toilets where Veronica is called into a cubicle to assist Heather Duke to vomit (a regular task - Lehmann carefully draws attention to Veronica's index finger, specifically that the nail is cut short). Presumably on grounds of taste, we lost the following little exchanges:

**Heather McNamara (O.S.):**

Did she have the pie or the ice cream for dessert?

(like a game-show host)

And the answer IS....

**Heather Duke** holds up her copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* and makes a bizarrely defiant smile.

**Heather Duke:**

Yeah, you know Holden Caulfield in the *Catcher in the Rye* wouldn't put up with their bogus nonsense.

**Veronica:**

Well, you better move Holden out of the way or he's going to get spewed.

**Heather Duke** puts down her book and opens her mouth. **Veronica** sticks her finger in...

Bleah. Interestingly, the book Heather Duke carries everywhere is "*The Catcher in the Rye*". Between the shooting script and the film, this became '*Moby Dick*' - '*Catcher*' may have been thought too cliched. Anyway, another tasteful passage happens when Veronica and JD are talking after their game of strip-croquet:



**J.D.:**

See the condoms in the grass over there. We killed tonight, Veronica, we murdered our baby.

**Veronica:**

Hey, it was good for me too, Sparky.

**J.D.:**

Just saying it's not hard to end a life.

**Veronica:**

There's a big difference between the most popular girl in the school and dead sperm.

And while we're on the topic of sex... David, Heather Chandler's boyfriend, was eventually only seen in the party at Remington University, getting a blow-job from his girl (in a room described as decorated with "a series of obnoxious Ferrari posters", though you couldn't tell in the movie!). As the following phone-conversation shows, the script has him reappearing later, as **Heather Duke's** boyfriend, after she moves up to replace Heather Chandler as queen bitch:

**Veronica:**

I'm delirious for the both of you. Can you put Heather on? David proudly looks down off-screen at his lap.

**David:**

She can't really talk right now...

A pity this scene was lost, as it reinforced the idea that nothing had changed, despite the multiple deaths. This would have fitted in with other excised sections emphasising how Heather Duke has become Heather Chandler II. The fact that it would have added another dimension to dubious fantasies about Shannon Doherty, is, of course, irrelevant...

And finally, you may remember TC9's shower scene extravaganza, which included the wonderful scene from 'Heathers' where Winona takes a shower with her clothes on. Well, there was more to it than that...

**Heather Chandler:**

Veronica needs something to write on. Heather, bend over.



Both Heather McNamara and Heather Duke bend over. Heather Chandler violently laughs:

**Heather Chandler:**

How nice. Two assholes; no waiting.

....

[In answer to the question, "What would you do with \$5 million, and two days to live.]

**Rodney:**

I'd change my life. New clothes. New haircut. New house. New home.

**Heather Chandler:**

How sad! Blowing all

two days of trying to be hip.

### MASSACRE AT CENTRAL HIGH

A loner arrives at a school, run through terror by a powerful clique of students. He falls in love with a girl on the fringe of the leaders, but falls foul of the clique itself. Then it's members start to die in suspicious ways... However, this doesn't solve the problem as other pupils move right up to continue the status quo. So the loner decides to solve the problem by blowing up the entire school, but the plot is discovered by the girl he loves, so he commits suicide by blowing himself up in front of the school.

Sound familiar? No, it's not 'Heathers', but 'Massacre at Central High', a film dating back to 1976. No-one paid much attention to it at the time - probably because it's not really all that good - but the similarities to the much later 'Heathers' are striking, even if the synopsis above is slightly selective rather than female, and they drop a car on the loner's legs, which understandably leaves him a bit upset). Watching it is a bit like seeing Bava's 'Bay of Blood' after 'Friday the 13th'; there's an eerie sense of déjà-vu, made surreal by the obviously dated fashions. And, hell, even the loner looks very much like Christian Slater...

Look at me. I look great. I'm fit  
the bikini on the horse holding  
by Billy Idol's guitarist's guitar  
a piece of

Sever  
When you make the jump

Listen up, dude. In

We've broken through

ularity?



NO EARTHLING HAS EVER BEFORE  
SEEN THE CRATERED, SCARRED  
SURFACE OF DISTANT PLANET ZOG!



The ultimate conspiracy theories take individual, seemingly disparate, topics and link them together to form a web of intrigue so dense that nothing can be considered as beyond its grasp. Step up, Milton William Cooper, a chief proponent of a line of thought that takes in individual plots as diverse as Kennedy's assassination, aliens from another world, the CIA's drug running and the fall of the Soviet Union, and combines them all into an interesting schema.

The following is a transcript of a talk given by Cooper in Los Angeles on November 17th 1989. I've edited it to achieve a more coherent form - partly because what works in speech doesn't always work on paper, partly because Cooper exhibits a tendency to deviate into other areas. Fascinating though his tales from Vietnam, descriptions of Hawaiian scenery and details of how the FBI award security classifications are, they don't bear much relevance to the matter in hand.

"As a child, I'd heard stories from my father (my father was a pilot) about Foo Fighters, UFO's, strange craft that were not made on this Earth. And as a kid, you hear that in passing, and it's neat, and you giggle about it, and you go out and play "Spaceman", and you forget it. When I was in the Air Force, I met men who had participated in alien recoveries. Now this intrigued me, it interested me, but it was usually after quite a few bottles of beer that these stories would come out, and sometimes the next morning I couldn't remember what the heck the guy said.

"When I left the Air Force, I went into the Navy...I was assigned to the Intelligence Briefing Team

## [Conspiracy corner] " the aliens

of the Commander in Chief of the United States Pacific Fleet, who had to know everything concerning his area of operations, which was one half of the Earth's surface - the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, and all the land masses in between.

"Eventually, I found myself...holding two documents; one called 'Project Grudge', another one called 'Operation Majority'. Project Grudge contained the history of alien involvement since around 1936, and it began [by] talking about Germany's involvement with a crashed disk that they had recovered in 1936 and were attempting to duplicate....If they had been successful, we would not have won the war, because you can not beat these weapons. You can not outfly these craft, you can't even think about it with conventional aircraft.

"They did make some headway. When we went into Peenemunde, we captured documents, we



got some scientists, we got some hardware. The Russians also got some documents, some scientists and some hardware. It wasn't until 1947 that we were able to capture a craft, a whole craft, not all together but it was everything. And that occurred near the city of Roswell, New Mexico. There were dead aliens recovered from the craft. In Project Grudge I saw photographs of these dead aliens, of the craft. I saw photographs of live aliens, I saw photographs of autopsies, internal organs, I saw photographs of the alien designated E.B.E. which was held in captivity from 1949 until June the 2nd, 1952 when he died. I saw the history of what they had been able, at that time, to put together, from incidents in the 1800's which involved aliens and their craft.

"I saw a project that was to fly recovered alien craft that had been recovered intact and undamaged...how that happened, I have no idea. It was called 'Project Red Light' and first was conducted from the Tonopah test range in the Nevada test site and then was moved to a specially built area, ordered built by President Eisenhower, called Area 51, code named 'Dreamland' in the Groom dry lake area...by secret executive order. It doesn't exist officially: if you ask anyone, or if you write letters to the government, they will tell you it doesn't exist.

"The project to...test fly these craft was ongoing until sometime in 1962, when a craft blew up not far from the test site, in the air, and the explosion was seen over a three state area, the pilots were killed. They had no idea what had happened or why the craft blew up, but they put Project Red

# supplied us with

Light on hold until a later date when the aliens supplied us with three craft and personnel to help us fly these craft. That project is ongoing and we now have not only alien craft that we are flying, we have craft that we have built using the captured technology, and some of the UFOs that people report seeing in the United States, and maybe even elsewhere, are flown by United States personnel.

"Professor [James] Oberth was probably one of the greatest rocket scientists...that ever lived. When he retired, the government gave him a special award, there was a press conference, all kinds of ceremony, and when he got up to speak he said...and I quote Professor Oberth, "Gentlemen, we cannot take credit for all the technological developments that we have had in the past decade. We have had help"...One of the reporters raised his hand and said "Professor

Oberth, can you tell us what other country helped us?". He said, "It was those little guys from out in space", and then he got down and would not comment any further.

"The first moon landing was May the 22nd, 1962 - oh, excuse me, that was the first landing on Mars...The first time we landed on the moon was sometime during the...middle 50's because at the time when President Kennedy stated that he wanted a man to set foot on the moon by the end of the decade, we already had a base there.

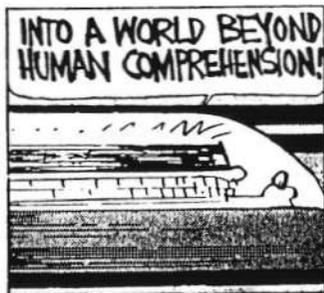
"I will tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that there are all kind of things going on all the time, we are making rapid progress in exposing this. Since I have begun talking, people have begun coming out of the woodwork at a rapid rate...and are helping us to put it together, because I don't have all

# three craft and

the answers. I saw an awful lot of material, I have remembered an awful lot of it., I have probably, in my remembering, made some mistakes, but I guarantee you they're minor ones, if I have.

"You know, there's really nothing wrong with what's been happening, except for three things . Number one, when they decided to keep it secret, they needed to finance it. They couldn't tell the public, so they couldn't tell Congress - they decided to finance it with the...importation and sale of drugs. Now, in the documents that I read, in Operation Majority, it specifically stated that when George Bush was the president and CEO of Zapata Oil, he, in conjunction with the CIA, organised the first large scale drug importation into this country from South and Central America by fishing boat, to the offshore oil platforms of Zapata Oil, and then from there onto the beach, thus bypassing all Customs inspection and law enforcement inspections of any kind. They are still bringing in drugs, to a limited extent, in this manner.

"Another manner is by CIA contract aircraft...one of their bases of landing is Homestead Air Force Base in Florida. We have affidavits from air controllers who have vectored the planes in, who have made sure they're not interfered with in any way. We have affidavits from personnel at Homestead Air Force Base who say the planes have been met by Zeb Bush, who is George Bush's son. We have affidavits from people who work in the Gulf of Mexico, in the offshore oil business, that yes, indeed, the drugs are coming in, at least some of them, from the offshore oil-platforms.



"The next thing that's wrong is, to keep the secret they killed a lot of people who tried to leak it out. And if I hadn't done it the way that I did it, you wouldn't be seeing me anywhere standing or walking on this Earth now. They killed President Kennedy...Between '70 and '73, in Operation Majority it stated verbatim that President Kennedy ordered MJ-12 to cease the importation and sale of drugs to the American people, that he ordered them to implement a plan to reveal the presence of aliens to the American people within the following year. His assassination was ordered by the policy committee of the Bilderbergers . MJ-12 implemented the plan and carried it out in Dallas, it involved agents of the CIA, Division 5 of the FBI, the Secret Service and the Office of Naval Intelligence.

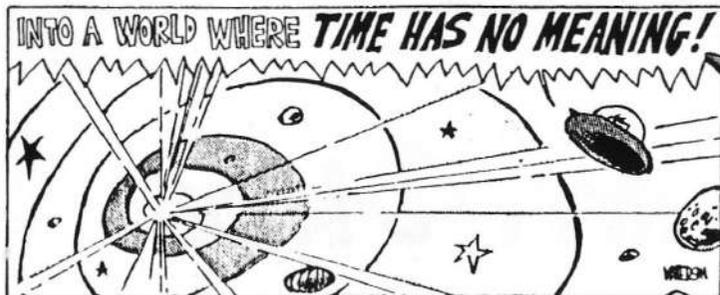
"President Kennedy was killed by the driver of his car, whose name was William Greer. He used a

# personnel..."

recoil-less, electrically operated, gas-powered assassination pistol specially built by the CIA to assassinate people at close range. It fired an explosive pellet that injected a large amount of shellfish poison into the brain and that is why in the documents it stated that President Kennedy's brain was removed ...The reason for that is so... they would not find the particles of the exploding pellet or the shellfish poison in his brain, which would have proved conclusively that Lee Harvey Oswald was NOT the assassin.

"The Soviet Union and the United States have been close allies since the end of World War II and have been closely participating in the secret space program all this time...What you see happening in the Soviet block right now is not the result of people standing up and saying, "We want to be free", it's the result of the international bankers saying, "You tear down these barriers and you meet the West half way, give your people some freedom, the West is gonna take some freedom away from their people so that we can put together a one-world economic system and have all the power. That's what's happening! If you don't believe it, sit around and watch it!"

These last sentences do ring some rather disquieting bells these days, judging by the presence of McDonald's in Red Square, for example. If even 10% of the above is true, it certainly puts a new, very sinister slant on Bush's much vaunted "new world order"...



**Black Cat** (Steven Shin) - Hollywood aren't the only one remaking 'Nikita', as this enjoyable but almost pointless Hong Kong film shows. It's pointless, because Besson's original was the nearest any Western director has come to reproducing the style and pace of the best Eastern action. Shin's version tweaks the story in several ways - the heroine is now an innocent waitress, sent down after shooting a man in self-defence (and, admittedly, blowing away a cop as a nervous after-reaction), and her final hit is on the man she loves, but these have little impact on the feel of the film. One interesting idea is using an implanted chip to control the heroine but, save for one beautiful scene on an aircraft, it's also sadly wasted. However, the set-pieces are easily up to the level of the original and had it not all been done already, it would have been heartily recommended. C+

**Body Parts** (Eric Red) - I'd have expected better from the writer of 'The Hitcher' and 'Near Dark' than a rehash of those old "psycho limb" movies, but in essence, that's what this film is. Jeff Fahey loses his arm in a road accident and gets the limb of an executed murderer. Fill in the blanks yourself for most of the next 70 minutes, as the film skirts the more interesting questions such as, "If he were to jerk off, would it feel like someone else was doing it?", in favour of predictable menacing-the-family sequences, as the people who got other bits from the criminal meet neo-grisly deaths. Only in the last quarter does the film show much imagination, a pity, as the ideas on view there aren't bad - if you can stay awake that long. D-

**Burden of Dreams** (Les Blank) - This documentary chronicles the making of Herzog's "Fitzcarraldo", and ends up being more fascinating than the movie it portrays, though with the same central theme: grand folly. Like a Shakespearean tragedy, heavenly ambition becomes hellish nightmare, as Herzog is forced from his first location at gunpoint by local Indians, lead actors Jason Robards and Mick Jagger drop out and the vital rainy season is missed. Then things really start to go wrong. See Klaus Kinski, smiling on arrival, metamorphose into a scowling wreck, muttering about the "fuckin' stinking jungle". See Herzog spend "four years" trying to make a film. See a bulldozer taken on the Amazonian jungle, and lose - the jungle didn't need spare parts flown in from Miami - all depicted with unflinching detail. A nightmare. B+

**Wilm** 

**Death Leaves No Footprints in the Snow & other films** (Justino Gaveleto) Amateur films are usually at their best when they attempt things no Hollywood director would, and this batch of shorts mostly appeal in direct relation to their incoherence. Wisely using film stock rather than video, Justino produces some striking, surreal, and weird images, especially when (as in 'Death...') he's unencumbered by plot. Then there's 'Gratuitous Violence & Garlic', which tries to tell a vampire story, but is let down by seriously bad acting, and actively annoying technical shoddiness. These represent the two extremes - most are in the middle, dumping raw imagination onto the screen without much intervention. While the ideas are definitely there, a willingness to edit out failures would be welcome. Justino would make a fine director of photography, but **definitely** needs to keep an eye on any storyline. I'll still be interested to see his next project - a 'heroic bloodshed' shoot-out. Contact Just, 77 Crystal Palace Park Road, London, SE26 6HT. B- to E-

**The Golden Years** (four directors!) - An American TV series repackaged here as one massive four-hour tape. Which is the main problem. It's unwatchable in one chunk, and barely palatable in a couple - I took three sessions over nine days. Based on a Stephen King story, it's about a janitor at a research establishment who gets blasted by radiation and starts to grow younger, provoking interest, unsurprisingly, from "agencies". He's forced to go on the run with his wife, helped by a renegade agent. The first two hours are nearly redundant (Steve missed them but still sussed the plot) and it could, and should, have been cut down to feature length. Apart from that, it actually has decent performances from Felicity Huffman, R.D.Call and Frances Sternhagen plus some humour, weirdness and things-mankind-was-not-meant-to-know, though the ending is bizarre C-

I DO ANYTHING FOR *money*  
BUT...

I DON'T KISS

*J'embrasse pas*<sup>18</sup>  
( I DON'T KISS )

*Kenneth Rive*  
presents  
a film by

André Téchiné

with

Philippe Noiret Emmanuelle Béart  
Manuel Blanc Héléne Vincent

Produced by Maurice Bernart,  
Jacques-Eric Strauss, Jean Labadie

A  FILM RELEASE



**J'Embrasse Pas** (André Téchiné) - Not many French actresses get **two** films to open in London in one week, but Emmanuelle Beart had "La Belle Noiseuse" (four hours long, bearable only to serious film theorists - or those who like Ms.Beart with her kit off) and this one which, like 'Noce **Blanche**', had a totally misleading advertising campaign. The title does **not** apply to her but the rent boy she befriends - in the first 80 minutes of the film, EB is on screen for about two of them. More truthfully, it's about a bloke who comes to the city; gets a job; sleeps with his landlady; loses both and is forced into prostitution to survive; then finds the life not that awful. His attempt at a relationship with EB doesn't go too well - her pimp beats him up and rapes him. There's a moral in there somewhere ("Emmanuelle really screws you up?"), but I'm not sure I like it. Not badly-made, and utterly cheerless, I'm docking it marks for being a con! D-

**The Last Boy Scout** (Tony Scott) - While 'Die Hard 2' plunged virtually straight into mayhem, this film starts off by trying to set up characters and a complicated scenario involving corruption, gambling and politics. The point of this is not clear. It's a Bruce Willis film f'heavens sake, we know precisely what's going to happen - Bruce will end up in his vest, bloody but unbowed, smiling his famous "shit-eating" grin. Nothing should get in the way - not family problems, or brushes with the law. Catch some z's, as until the Bad Guys (redneck boss, effeminate hitman) turn up this could **almost** be "Kramer vs. Kramer" (except that didn't have gratuitous exotic dancing). The sound of nose entering brain will alert you to phase B: which piles mayhem upon mayhem and wins the award for Best Offensive Use of a Stuffed Toy before fading to the obligatory moral, which seems to be "The family that slays together, stays together", judging from the chortles accompanying the final death. Probably reprehensible, but did you expect anything else? C+

**The People Under the Stairs** (Wes Craven) - In most Craven movies, the bad guys are more colourful than the good ones. Here, the hero is a kid burglar, who gets a lot more than he expected when he breaks into a house, best described as an unofficial orphanage, run by a man and woman who seem to be inspired equally by 'Parents' and the Brothers Grimm. Our hero, who only went into crime to stop his poor, sick mother from being evicted (ha! tell that to the people of LA...), has to rescue the poor, abused daughter. Ignore the clumsy social comment and it holds together, generating a fine head of steam despite the good-guys-by-numbers approach, though the titular creatures are frankly a disappointment. B.

**Showdown in Little Tokyo** (Mark Lester) - "The proportion of Americans who do not consider Japan a dependable partner rose to 42 pct over the past year, a survey commissioned by Japan's foreign ministry shows. Major reasons given were fierce economic competition, Japan's attack in 1941 on Pearl Harbour, and the selfishness of Japanese people". This news item goes some way to explaining why the villains in 'Showdown' are Japanese, but xenophobia aside, it's not a bad film, adding a few twists to the 'mismatched cop' cliché - Dolph Lundgren is the pure American hero, obsessed with Japanese culture; Brandon Lee is his half-Eastern partner who couldn't give a damn about it. They take on the "slopeheads", rescue a damsel in distress (mostly as an excuse for a very bad pun), learn to respect each other, and make comment's about Dolph's penis. At the risk of repeating myself, "Probably reprehensible, but did you expect anything else?" C+



### 3x3 Eyes OAV 1 & 2 - Only in Japan - for the moment...

Yuzo Takada's manga series, translated and released in English by Studio Proteus, has also made it to the video screen, with the production in Japan of a series of OAVs (Original Animation Videos). Pai, the last member of the Triclops, a race of immortals, has journeyed from Tibet to Tokyo to find Yakumo, whose father had promised he'd help her become human. Unfortunately, Yakumo is killed, only to be resurrected by Pai, who "inhales" his soul, turning him immortal, albeit with a mark on his forehead that spells "zombie". This links his fate to Pai's - she dies, he dies; she becomes human, so does he - and this vested interest provokes him into aiding her search for the Statue of Humanity, which will fulfill her wish.

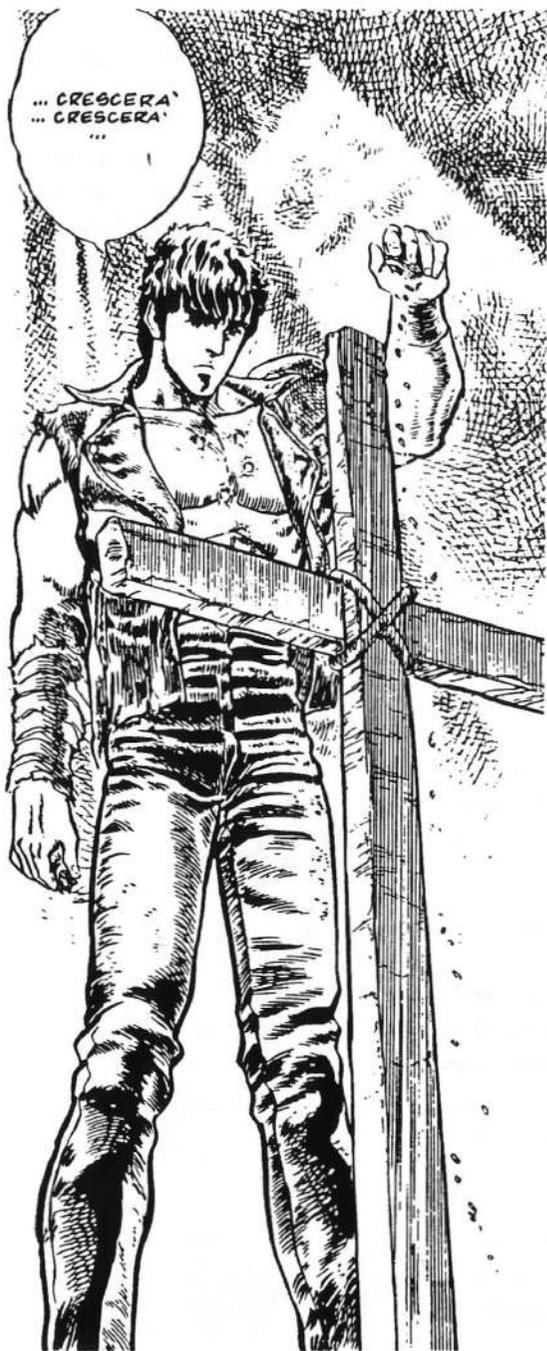
In the first OAV, they travel to Hong Kong and meet Ling Ling, a sceptical psychic investigator, who soon learns to be slightly less dogmatic! At 25 minutes long, it works well, putting the supernatural elements in an effective modern setting, which increases the plausibility, while the animation is very sharp. But I had to wonder whether the story held any long term interest, as it seemed easy to predict the plot for the rest of the series.

Fortunately, part 2 confounded the predictions, though it returns to a favourite anime cliché, the Demon High School - Japanese monsters must be the most learned in the world, judging by the time they spend plaguing educational establishments! So with a nod to 'Urutsoji Doji', and perhaps one to 'Mr Vampire' too, the OAV splatters it's way towards an impressive climax. There's now two more in the series, and hopefully the imagination shown in them will be on the same level. B-

### Fist of the North Star - Island World, 12.99.

Island World deserve credit for spotting anime's potential. Spurred on by the success of 'Akira', they're promoting the genre in a big way, and have planned a whole series of releases, of which 'Fist' is the first - unfortunately, it's not brilliant, with animation no better than competent Saturday morning TV, and a plot reminiscent of bad kung fu fodder. I can see why they chose it to follow up 'Akira': "Fist", with it's post-holocaust, urban decay setting and gleeful violence, might have sounded like Katsuhiro Otomo's masterwork. But anyone expecting 'Akira 2' will be disappointed





Ken, the hero, has his girlfriend kidnapped, and sets off to rescue her. Luckily, he's the Fist of the North Star - ten seconds or so after he hits someone, they explode - so before you can say "...and you must pay!", he's spraying around the internal fluids of anyone who gets in his way. Which is the major appeal; 'Fist' is undoubtedly the bloodiest animation ever to get a UK release, even with the (imposed?) digital blurring. If only they'd put more effort into the animation or story, and less into finding a striking range of ways to kill Ken's foes!

So I can't really recommend 'Fist'. It (just) succeeds on a one-off viewing but anyone interested in Japanese animation should hold fire, as there's better anime coming. AnimEigo are planning to release the excellent 'Bubblegum Crisis', and Island World have lined up 'Dominion' for July and 'Project A-ko' next, with '3x3 Eyes' and 'Legend of the Overfiend' (BBFC permitting!) planned for later in '92.

'Fist' seems to have sold quite well, but how much was follow through sales from 'Akira'? However, hopefully interest in anime has been established - either that, or it's back to scouring the children's section for mutilated anime, a frightening prospect for films like 'Nausicaa', which lost 26 minutes in becoming 'Warriors of the Wind'. That's more than the BBFC cut from 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2'... D-

## Project A-ko (US Manga Corp, \$39.95).

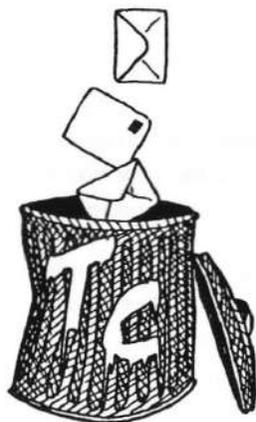
America, spurred on by a fandom numbering in the tens of thousands, is now a sufficiently large market to allow the release of a wide range of anime. And for sheer entertainment, 'Project A-ko' is among the best. The title is a homage to Jackie Chan, and they have a similar spirit humour, mayhem and sailor suits, though 'Project A-ko' has these on schoolgirls, rather than coastguards!

The story is centred around two girls, A-ko and B-ko. They were at kindergarten together, where B-ko challenged A-ko to a battle, but it never took place as A-ko had to move away. Now, the pair have met up at high school and are squaring off for the long-postponed duel, once again over the friendship of a third girl, C-ko. Now this may sound terribly twee, like a story in 'Bunty', but things aren't quite what they seem. C-ko's a princess, abandoned when she was a baby; her family is now on the way to reclaim her and they're more than willing to total Tokyo or anyone who interferes, including A-ko & B-ko. Fortunately A-ko & B-ko are no average citizens either - A-ko is capable of

leaping through tall buildings with a single bound (right at the end, we glimpse her parents, and heredity may be blamed!) while B-ko can design and build a robot from scratch in an evening, and wields an interesting range of weaponry. When these two clash, the results would keep several construction companies in work for months, so when they realise C-ko's family want to take her away, it's major urban renewal time!

The animation is smooth and fluid, the humour comes across well, it's got a neat soundtrack and the story develops beautifully from near-normality towards wild SF. The pace occasionally slackens too far in the first half and some scenes might provoke sniggers from a Western viewpoint, but leave your brain at the door, and you should have a thoroughly enjoyable 80 minutes. US Manga Corp have done an excellent job of presenting the tape. It's letterboxed, and subtitled, using the black space below the picture, which makes the text highly legible. \$40 may seem expensive (it should be less when Island World release it here in August, albeit dubbed), but as it's just about an all-round winner, it's hard to complain. A-





## HIGH WEIRDNESS BY MAIL

In place of the usual random ramblings (mine) and edited highlights (yours), here's something rather more coherent, referring back to the Mail Order Brides piece in TC10:

Dick Klemensen, Des Moines, USA - "I found it especially enlightening as I married an Asian lady over two years ago. I thought you might find my viewpoints interesting - you are welcome to publish them, or just read them as how one guy managed to luck out...

"If you've followed my rather personal editorials in 'Little Shoppe of Horrors', you will know I was married to a rather good-looking and well built redhead named Karla for some 15 years, when our marriage fell apart in 1987. I moved to a new town, and was living in a little apartment while I trying to sell my home in Waterloo, Iowa. This was one damned miserable period - one son trying to finish high school while living with his grandparents, the other getting over a divorce of his own (from a 3 month marriage). So it took some time before I got back into the dating area, and a damned strange feeling it was after 15 years to be going through the dating ritual shit again. But at 41, I found more available women than at any time in my life!! Maybe when women get older, they get different ideals of what they want in a man. But after joining a high class health club, I was going out 2-3 times a week (with different women) and was always totally broke. Dating is expensive. But I really wasn't finding anyone I could connect with. I was even finding myself doing something I would never have imagined - turning down sex to avoid getting caught up with women with REAL family entanglements (as opposed to my teen years when just the THOUGHT of sex would split my pants out...). I was ready to have a relationship - so why weren't the women I was seeing making me feel like I could settle down with them?

"I saw an ad in the back of Premiere, the movie magazine, for an oriental women dating service, or something like that. Well, I'd always found orientals unbelievably cute and sexy, and I sent away for the free packet. Some 16 pages of cute Filipinas and other Asian girls. Hmmm. But it would cost \$125 for even the smallest ads and a 3 issue subscription. I let it slide for two more months, and then sent off a check, more out of curiosity than anything else.

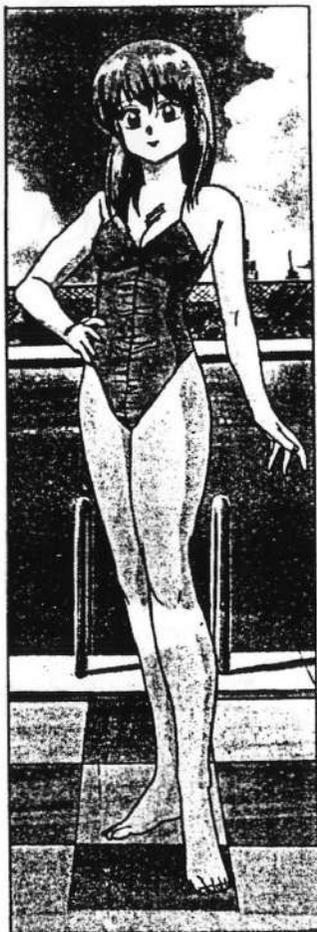
"To be honest, I was more than a bit shy about the whole thing. Aren't the only men who send away for these just too godawful ugly to get girls on their own? Well, I also found there was a second type - someone who had been burned so badly by a first marriage that they wanted someone to whom marriage really meant something.

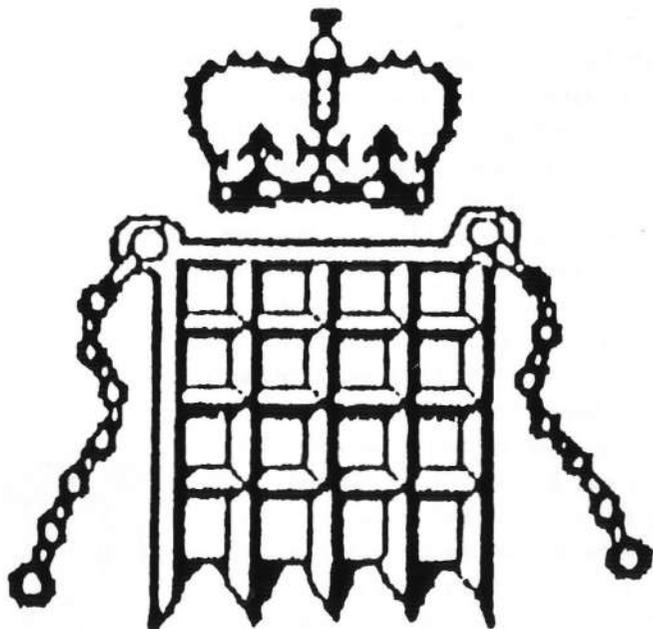
"I had more women than I could handle right here in the old U.S.A. (for the first time in my life. What an ego boost...), but I had a need for something concrete. And boy, did I get a response from the ads. Hundreds of letters, most of them from the Phillipines or from Filipinas working in Hong Kong. I knew what Mick Jagger must have felt like with the women falling all over him... Many of the letters so sweet, the girls even sweeter. An occasional porno shot. Even some young film actress looking for a way to get to Hollywood (she said she would make it "worth my while". Lucky I didn't have a heart attack right then and there). But the ones I found the most interesting were the educated ones. There is no way I could fall for someone unless I knew something about them, and many people in the Phillipines pride themselves on the fact that they get their children educated in Universities, even if it means being a contract labourer for several years in the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, or elsewhere. That described the life that Esperanza (Espie for short) had had.

"It was a real bitch narrowing down who I wanted to write to, but her letters stood out from the rest. She wrote sweetly but honestly: she had a little daughter, while she would like to have a relationship, if I wouldn't also accept her daughter, I could just "Kiss off". Well, I liked the honesty and openness.

"To make all this a bit shorter, we fell in love, wrote enough letters to publish as an encyclopedia, and married in Hong Kong in 1989. In May, she will have been in the USA for two years and becomes a U.S. citizen. Espie has a college degree in accounting, and is attending a University in the U.S. while working full time.

"Suzie Wong she ain't, but I didn't pay 1800 pounds for a stupid introduction! It worked for me, I can't say it would for everyone. To be honest, there are a lot more women at home and it would have been cheaper to marry any one of the other women I met. But who can say where one's heart will lead them. I'm pretty happy".





# CUSTOMARY PRACTICE

It may be 1992, but as yet there seems little sign that Customs and Excise have slackened in any way from their vital job of maintaining our high moral standards - obviously far more important than stopping the tons of drugs imported every year. If you are sent anything larger than a packet of cigarettes from abroad, there's a decent chance these brave guardians of our morality will have examined it.

Now, TC naturally does not condone anyone breaching the law, even accidentally, and we're sure you'd want to do everything in your power to help Customs and Excise. So here's some tips everyone should follow to reduce the risk of importing anything illegal.

1. Basically, if you're doubtful, do everything in your power to attract Customs' attention to your package so they, with their superior wisdom, can decide what to do. Be careful not to disguise the nature of the contents. Anyone looking for video tapes will be expecting packages of a certain size and density and if, like me, you're a terrible butterfingers, by the time you've securely packed a tape in newspaper and Sellotape, it's possible to end up with a package that looks nothing more like a squashed Toblerone than a video-cassette, and which might slip past Customs.

2. On the other hand, Customs officials are basically like you and I, so it's not unreasonable to assume some of them may well be interested in, say, comic art. Now, you don't want anyone who's been corrupted by filth like "Hellblazer" to examine a package of comics, as they may prove capable of putting them into their correct context and might not even consider them obscene. This would never do, so be sure not to label the contents of your packages in any way likely to attract the interest of a fellow-fan.

3. You can buy, on the semi-open market, aerosol cans of spray which make ordinary envelopes go transparent. Since Customs probably use these, be sure not to send goods in padded bags or wrapped inside other things, as this could make things more difficult for them.

4. When ordering items from abroad, remember to use your own name. If you have just moved house, there'll probably be lots of mail for the previous occupant lying around and their name can easily slip into your subconscious, only to emerge when you're filling in an order form. If this did happen, and the package was seized, when Customs turn up on your doorstep, you might, in all innocence, utterly deny all knowledge, and express shock and amazement at the old occupant being involved in whatever-it-is.

5. An even worse mistake would be to put in the wrong address, especially if you then accidentally went to the Post Office and filled in a request to have your mail forwarded from this wrong address. The potential problems here are too horrible to contemplate: should Customs alert the police, they'd go round to the wrong address! Imagine the embarrassment you'd feel when you see your neighbours getting raided...

6. It might be tempting to get things sent to your work address as this helps reduce the chance of some bastard nicking the goods in transit (few thieves will have much interest in "holiday brochures", "computer manuals" or "stationery catalogues"). However, printed matter from abroad arriving at the offices of a multi-national company is not likely to be noticed by Customs, so it's really much safer to only use your home address.

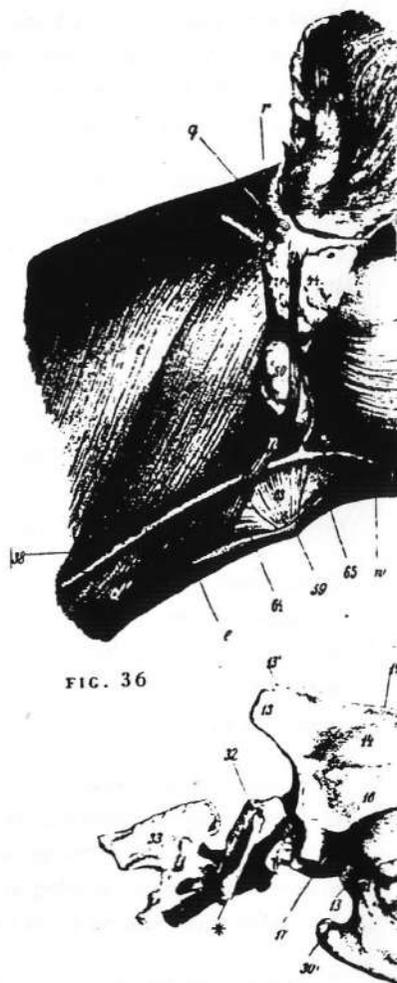
7. Ideally, you should very rarely receive packages from abroad. Customs officers are only human, and if friends and contacts overseas frequently send you packets of entirely legitimate material, the inspecting officers will eventually get bored with reading Swedish TV magazines, Dutch sportswear catalogues and Japanese video-recorder instruction manuals and pass your mail over with barely a glance, which might mean that some impoundable material (ordered in complete innocence, of course) would get through.

While these suggestions will unfortunately not make *certain* that Customs are able to preserve the sanctity of the British Isles, it should allow them to concentrate their energies on the crucial task of trying to keep Britain out of the 20th century, and the 20th century out of Britain...

Jim McLennan begged me for months to write something for TC, and being a kind-hearted soul, I finally agreed to help out by doing the fanzine reviews, thereby making him the object of hatred for every 'zine editor in the world. By the way, anyone interested in financing a film I have planned can get in touch with me via Jim at the editorial address. Basic plot involves lingerie models crashing in the jungle and being captured by lesbian Nazis...

Number four of *Fantasynopsis* sees an increase in size from \*\*\*Jim\*\*\* [er, um, more than it was last time - Ed] and now boasts full colour front and back covers. This issue sees an interview with Dario Argento (yawn!) but makes up for this with a great interview with David McGillviray (who wrote some of Pete Walker's best films), it's usual mix of reviews and a colour poster of the 'House of Whipcord' video sleeve. **Dark Star**, now in it's 5th year, caters for the SF fan - issue 8 covers the cult that's built up round the 'Princess Bride', the making of 'Hardware', and also includes a three page peek at what's coming soon in the world of fantasy films. With a glossy two-colour cover, editor Rob Dyer has produced a good read.

Andrew Featherstone, editor of **Blood and Black Lace**, has worried me ever since I saw him proudly tell the viewers of a C4 documentary that repeated viewing of Fulci's 'The New York Ripper', hadn't affected him at all. No surprise - you can kick a rock for ever and a day, but it won't bleed... The 'zine has had a facelift since No.1 and includes interviews with Dario Argento (Aaargh!) and Mariano 'Caruncula' Bianco, and reviews ranging from 'La Setta' to 'Spider Labyrinth'. Very nicely laid out, but for my money incredibly overpriced; word reaches me that Andrew now lives in America, so don't hold your breath for the next issue. A fanzine packed with short story fiction and nothing else isn't my cup of tea but **Dementia 13** never fails to impress. Now up to issue 7 [in the millenia between giving Lino the 'zines and getting this article, issue 8 appeared - Pam is broadening the



'zine to include some non-fiction pieces - Ed], every issue has at least one or two good stories. Read 'Rim', and you'll nail the toilet lid shut and start crapping into a bucket. It's thick to boot, so very good value for money.

The first issue of **Mentally Penetrated by an Acid Enema** claws it's way out of the mire, and while not up to the production standards of **Samhain** (so??), it's full on interesting 'bits', from the start of a regular blaxploitation review section and a real life murder page through to a review of 'Munster, Go Home'. Great fun, though they could lose the cartoon strips. Max Della Mora's excellent **Gorezilla** is always superb value for money with in-depth deatures and reviews. In past issues, Max has covered Italian horror comics, being a zabbadoing (I don't know!) and anime - oh, and the occasional Godzilla mention. If you can find the first issue, it had a great interview with Joe D'Amato (or failing that buy the next Cold Sweat, which has an even better interview) [Oil Any more of that and you're history!].

**Midnight in Hell** is mostly made up of short stories, with the occasional interview. No.7 talks with Robert Rankin and also has an article by one Jim McLennan on, surprise, surprise, anime! [Now, that's the sort of plug I can handle...] Overall, the stories are very entertaining, and I always enjoy seeing a fanzine with a cover that makes it embarrassing to read on the bus! Ah-so, **Orient Express** has some really nice articles but boasts some of the worst pictures ever drawn, I mean, have you seen the front cover? Pictures aside, issue two has articles on Jackie Chan, Godzilla and the Five Star Stories anime series, plus a letters page which contains a letter by one Jim McLennan [I think my shoes are quite clean enough now, Lino... - Ed]. **Strange Adventures 34** (that's 34!) really is a great read. Along with the usual reviews, it has a well-drawn comic strip (I hope the Orient Express crew are paying attention!) and a profile of Luc Besson. Tony Lee is to be commended for producing a great fanzine at a ridiculously cheap price. Buy one or else!



# THREE



# PIN

FIG. 38

# PLUGS



**Horrorshow** doesn't pretend it wants to be the next *Shock Express* (bozol), it's just a six-page photocopied work of love, with some great ad mats, a book review and a review of 'Confessions of a Pop Performer'. Nice and simple - just like me! I've only just discovered **Mkultra**, and I wish I'd caught up with it from issue one. Intelligently written, interesting, occasionally rambling in some of its articles, **Mkultra** has a very good future for itself. But don't listen to me, order one and find out for yourself. Volume two, issue one has a four-page pulling apart of Romero's "Dead" trilogy and an interview with Dario Argento (oh well, all for one...). **Killer Kung-Fu Enema Nurses on Crack** contains articles on the editor's hassles (to put it mildly) with New Zealand Customs, and also has features about censorship and the all-important **Killer Kung-Fu** guide. Frightening reading, I thought the Kiwis were pretty laid back, but the horrible truth is that censorship reaches even 'Bad Taste' land. What the bloody hell Jim gave me **Reefer Madness** for, I'll never know. 1,001 uses for a 'pipe', a double page spread consisting of badly drawn pictures of pipes, repros of comic strips to do with the evil weed, etc, etc - and they're now up to issue six!! The whole idea makes me shudder...

Now, I think (along with 9/10 of the British male population, including Jim McLennan) that **Traci Lords** is pretty damned attractive. Steve Rag, editor, creator and writer of **Nora K**, thinks about nothing else, or so you would imagine by reading his 'zine. Now up to his sixth issue, Steve takes us by the hand (not the sticky one)





and leads us through the streets of Traci... (blimey, that Ralph McTell is good, isn't he?) Everything you always wanted to know about Traci and more is explored in NK, including reviews of her films old and new. Even if you only buy it for the pictures, you have a bargain on your hands. However, I was very disappointed by the fact that it had no Dario Argento interview and, strangely, no letter from Jim McLennan [that's your last warning, mate! - Ed]

The last word in fanzines, definitely the best fanzine in the whole world **Creeping Unknown** goes from strength to strength. It's just received an Oscar for Best Fanzine and is being made into a mini-series by CBS in the States. The cherries on the top of the cake that is **Creeping Unknown** are the great, witty articles written by Lino - boy, can he write. I urge you all to steal money and buy a copy of **Creeping Unknown**...

...That's it, game over! I wouldn't have minded if there'd actually been an issue of CU to review!! Apologies to those Lino hasn't mentioned (maybe they should be grateful!): **Scareaphanalia Invasion of the Sad, Man-Eating Mushrooms**, and, especially, **Magazines of the Movies**, (a very impressive "Factsheet Five" type publication dealing with all manner of cinema-zines) are all worth getting. And there's just space (if there isn't, I'll hack some chunks from Lino's bit) to mention **Mike Landers**, who can get a whole lot of 'Akira' stuff, from T-shirts to cels, and the **Film Extremes Video Collection**, authorised dealers of some impressive Hong Kong films. SAE to both for details.

**Blood and Black Lace (£3)**

Box 1689, Bishop's Stortford, Herts,  
CM23 5BW.

**Dark Star (£1.50)**

64 Arthur Street, Gravesend, Kent,  
DA11 0PR.

**Dementia 13 (£1.75)**

Pam Creais, 17 Pinewood Ave, Sidcup,  
Kent, DA15 8BB.

**Fantasynopsis (£2.50)**

1 Bascraft Way, Godmanchester,  
Huntingdon, Cambs, PE18 8EG.

**Film Extremes**

Box 409, London SE18 3DW

**Gorezilla (\$5)**

Max Della Mora, Piazza Tripoli 7, 20146  
Milano, Italy.

**Invasion... (£1.25?)**

PO Box 7, Upminster, Essex, RM14 2RH.

**Horrorshow (SAE)**

Damage Control,  
163 Bromyard Rd, Sparkhill,  
Birmingham, B11 3AY.

**Killer Kung-Fu... (£1, + postage?)**

Peter Hassall, PO Box 27432,  
Upper Willis Street, Wellington,  
New Zealand

**Mike Landers**

6 White Colne, Grove, Lancashire,  
BB8 9SG.

**Magazines of the Movies (£3)**

Ray Stewart, 45 Killybawn Rd, Saintfield,  
Ballyhinch, Co. Down, B24 7JP.

**Mentally... (price unseen)**

4 James Street, Abertillery,  
Gwent, NP3 1AA.

**Midnight in Hell (£1.20)**

G. Houston, The Cottage, Smithy Brae,  
Kilmalcolm, PA13 4EN

**Mkultra (£1.50)**

Moved since last time, but I can't find  
the new address & the ed's phone is  
out of order...

**Nora K (£1)**

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

**Orient Express (£1.50)**

c/o Astounding Comics, 74 High St,  
Newport, Isle of Wight.

**Scareaphanalia (\$1)**

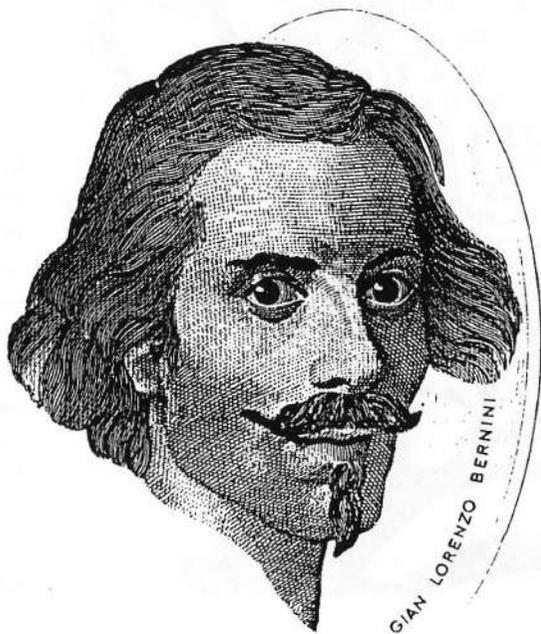
Michael Gingold, PO Box 489,  
Murray Hill Station, New York,  
NY 10156-0489, USA.

**Strange Adventures (£1.20)**

Tony Lee, 13 Hazely Close, Arreton,  
Isle of Wight, PO30 3AJ.

**Yutte Stensgaard (£2?)**

Tim Greaves, 118 High Street, Eastleigh,  
Hants, S05 5LR.



# fighting females



I've thought for a long time that "action" actresses in particular have had a very raw deal when it comes to recognition of their efforts. There are exceptions - Sigourney Weaver in 'Alien/s/3' - but the vast majority never get a mention. So, in answer to the millions of miles of paper used to repeat the same details over and over again about Segal, Van Damme, Schwarzenegger, etc, here is a modest tribute to the fighting fairer sex.

The most obvious, and best, source of films featuring lethal ladies is the Far East where stars such as Yukari Oshima, Michelle & Cynthia Khan, Moon Lee and Michiko Nishiwaki all

prove themselves capable of throwing a good punch. However, these are as much martial artists who can act as the other way round, so let's concentrate on their American counterparts, on actresses who've demonstrated varying levels of skill in combat...

Where else to start but with 'California Dolls'? This is full of first class female wrestling, as Vicki Frederick and Laurene Landon fight their way from the bottom of the bill to become champions, though to earn some desperately needed money they have to take part in a mud wrestling bout, which becomes a topless match. Considering that Frederick and Landon are first and foremost actresses, the action looks pretty authentic.

This may be the most obvious and best known example, but the genre is much older - it can be considered to have begun with Marlene Dietrich, and her classic brawl with Una Merkel in 'Destiny'. This is one of, if not the first, real female fight to appear in a major film, and is still thought to be one of the best.

One area that can virtually be relied upon to contain a good catfight is the women-in-prison film - 'Chained Heat', 'The Naked Cage', 'Delinquent College Girls', etc, etc. In 'Hellhole', for example, there's quite a brutal fight between the statuesque Edy Williams (recently seen brawling in 'Bad Girls From Mars') and Ann-Elizabeth Chatterton. Now, as it takes place in a room adjoining the showers, you won't be surprised to hear that Edy is topless, and Ann-Elizabeth starts in bra and pants, though the former goes about two seconds into the bout. Rather than a scratch-and-bite catfight, both actresses swing punches like men - one right cross from Williams sends Chatterton backwards over a table - and the pair briefly team up to deal with a hefty nurse who tries to stop the fight.

Almost as entertaining to watch, though for sheer awfulness, are the more badly staged fights, Take 'The Wrecking Crew', one of the Matt Helm spoof series, which had a fight between the late Sharon Tate and Nancy Kwan. It is very obvious that the kicks and punches miss by miles, as are the points where the stuntwoman took over for Tate (though Kwan does appear to do her own action). Just as bad/good for different reasons is the battle in the 'Men from UNCLE' film 'The Spy in the Green Hat', featuring the lovely Janet Leigh against Letitia Roman, and mostly taking place in a large office on top of a huge round glass table. It starts as a knife fight, though the knives are lost, without actually being used, in the first five seconds. After some rolling around the table top, we see the two girls going round on hands and knees, glaring at each other, while the camera alternately goes down Roman's (impressive) cleavage and lingers on Leigh's long legs (shown to full advantage by her hiked up skirt). They finally get to their feet and clasp hands in a show of strength before one breaks the hold and knocks the other out with a right uppercut.

I won't spoil the film by revealing who wins...

There are a couple of interesting gaps in the field. While Sybil Danning may be the Queen of Action Films, I can't remember having seen her in a cat-fight. And British films are conspicuous by their absence, though I understand that, a few years ago, there was a comedy, possibly featuring Mike & Bernie Winters (a "comedy" in it's loosest definition, obviously) - with a lovely leading lady of the time, Anne Aubrey. I'm told there was a "sensational" catfight in a laundry, with numerous other battles going on in the background. Everyone got soaked and a lot of clothing was shed, but can anyone come up with any details? Like the title?

Space is tight, and I haven't even covered the fighting females of TV, including Joan Collins, Heather Thomas, Heather Locklear and Emma Samms maybe next time! But here's ten more films you may care to keep a (black) eye open for:

**Deathstalker** - Introduces the new pub sport of Gratuitous Mud Wrestling. The same footage was reused, equally gratuitously, in Deathstalker 2 & 3.

**Django** - Two saloon girls fight in the 'street', but since this is no more than the muddy bit between two rows of buildings, it all gets VERY messy.

**Eye of the Cat** - An "oldie but goodie". Gayle Hunnicutt and Jennifer Leak. As this is the swinging sixties, it's mini-skirt time. Oh, and colour co-ordinated underwear was in vogue.

**Fresno** - This American series was a parody of 'Dallas'/'Dynasty' and so naturally had to include a parody of the Linda Evans/Joan Collins catfights. Teri Garr, Valerie Mahaffey and some platefuls of baked beans...

**The Man Behind the Gun** - not to be confused with 'The Man Behind the Sun', though that has a cat-fight too (in which the cat loses). This is a 1952 Western pitting Patrice Wymore (better known for musicals) against Lina Romay. Pan, chair and crockery-fu.

**Mugsy's Girls** - A mud wrestling contest provides the opportunity for a series of short fights. Worth noting, for the fact that one of the wrestlers is singer Laura Branigan.

**The Night They Took Miss Beautiful** - Victoria Principal versus Sheree North, on a beach. Lots of decent moves, and a surprising lack of standins given the actresses have a combined age of 76!

**Total Recall** - If nothing else, probably the biggest budget catfight ever, between Sharon Stone and Rachael Ticotin.

**The Under Achievers** - The fabulous Barbara Carrera tangles with Susan Tyrrell in one of the best (and longest) American cat-fights. The actresses play school officials and the battle goes through school corridors, classrooms, walls and windows, then carries on outside. Played for laughs, but still very rough.

Ten days in California had vaccinated me against most forms of weirdness but virtually the first person in San Francisco we spoke to reminded us just how different a place this was. Steve and I went up to the reception in a perfectly normal, recommended tourist hotel and I asked for a room. Only in San Francisco could the reply possibly be "Will that be a double bed or two singles?".

Having affirmed our heterosexuality, we discovered the hotel was down near the waterfront, possibly the most schlock-filled area of land I've ever seen, culminating in Pier 41, a bizarre mutant offspring of Covent Garden and Carnaby Street with all the fake neo-historical charm of a restaged medieval banquet. Still, they had an NFL shop, where I finally managed to get a Minnesota Vikings shirt - never seen over here because Vikings fans aren't exactly numerous (like I've never met another one!) - so I was happy. Once again, we bumped into that nightmarish creature, sales tax, by which a similarly arbitrary percentage is added to all prices after they've been totted up at the check-out. A bit like secret VAT, it provoked much embarrassing fumbling in pockets for additional dollars.

The evening was spent in another "English pub", though this was actually an Irish one, and was slightly better i.e. the Guinness was treated with the respect it deserves. One major difference between Britain and California drinking houses, that took a while to sink in, is that American bars don't have any one-armed bandits - gambling being more or less illegal. With no fruit machines or quiz games to distract with the lure of money, we ended up playing darts, while watching baseball on the TV, which was definitely surreal.

It's always comforting to realise that some things are the same across the world. the Blockbuster Video store is one of these; we popped into one on the way home and were comforted to discover the same, sanitised decor, the same inanely grinning staff, and the same 500-copies-of-Home-Along-and-nothing-much-else contents.

We only had one full day in San Francisco, and we started off by going to Alcatraz, the notorious "escape-proof" penal establishment. It was actually only a jail for about 30 years, from the mid 30's to the mid 60's, but it's still probably the most famous prison in the world. Some of the stories that have grown up round it are myths - the "Birdman of Alcatraz", Robert Stroud, never had any birds during his time in Alcatraz - but sometimes the truth is pretty weird. It was the only Federal jail where the inmates had compulsory hot showers. This was to prevent them from getting used to cold water - a necessary prerequisite of any attempt to swim to the mainland.

San Francisco is indeed notably cooler than other parts of California. When we left San Jose, most of our luggage stayed there as we'd be coming back for the flight to LA - having suffered four days of 90 degree heat, I left all my jerseys behind, only to find that

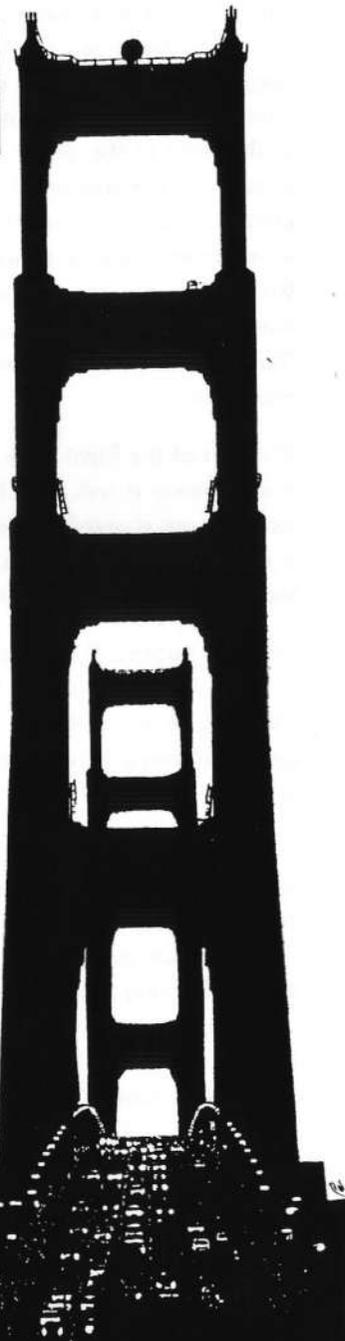


in the forty miles between San Jose and San Francisco the temperature drops about 30 degrees. As well as chilly, Frisco's also hilly, probably even more so than it looks on TV. If you get tired walking round it, you can always lean against it.

# AMERICAN EXCESS

We'd noticed in the paper that 'A Chinese Ghost Story III' was showing, so decided that might be worth a trip. However, on the way to the cinema, we passed another Chinese theatre - "Hang on", I said, "that looks like Chow Yun Fat". It was. Four films and eight hours later, having set a new personal best for amount of fu seen in a day, we staggered home, pausing only to leap in front of cars, fling each other out of windows and fly through the air in defiance of most of the laws of physics.

Despite clinging to every day with the enthusiasm of a drowning man to a liferaft, the final couple of days slid away like a handful of blancmange. We drifted back to Los Angeles and spent the final afternoon on the beach, which was almost deserted - so much for beach culture. Actually, I had been slightly disappointed with the cutie-pie quotient: while there were some stunners, I found teeth, tan & tits tended to tediousness after a while, though San Francisco's Chinatown had me in a state of almost permanent dribble. I suspect it didn't help that we managed to totally miss the weekends (two spent travelling, one at Animecon) - we did get to the beach, but it might have been the Gobi Desert for all the life on view, cute or otherwise



Our journey home didn't start well. We got to the airport in plenty of time and joined the queue to check in, only to find Ilsa, She-Wolf of the Departure Lounge there again, "organising" things. This meant the dumb jerks who turned up half an hour before their flight was due to leave, totally ignoring the two hours before flight check-in rule, got to go to the front of the queue. Now, a 16-hour flight would be sufficient to try the patience of a saint. The patience of a short-tempered, sarcasm-prone Scotsman was therefore no contest, especially after two weeks of nothing to whine about. I really hit my stride when we discovered our flight was cancelled. Even the "T.W.A. tea" jokes got the dust blown off them. However, they shifted us onto another flight to St. Louis (from where our plane was now starting) and even upgraded our seats from "Scummy, penny-pinching cheapo" to "flying on expenses, so who gives a damn" class. The major benefit of this was cuter hostesses.

The rest of the flight back wasn't bad despite the efforts of a mother and brats in the next row to make it hell. The kids were just about bearable, it was the mother's fondness for carrying out shouted conversations across the width of the plane that had me dreaming of a world where families on aircraft have a special place. Specifically, hanging just behind the engine, toasting gently like giant marsh-mallows.

Gatwick Airport, 8 am. Customs. My first trip through the red channel. You are permitted to take back a massive £32 of goods from America. I had somewhere over £500. Standing in the queue of people with something to declare, watching the person ahead getting thoroughly searched, I knew I was safe because I didn't have anything dodgy in my luggage. (Well, not *that* dodgy - sub-sub-ed)

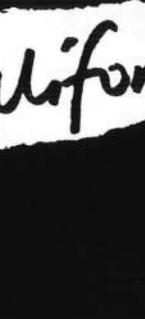
After getting through the red channel unscathed despite difficulty in signing the credit card slip because my hands were shaking, and a brief pause to sacrifice a couple of virgins to the Goddess-who-protects-from-Customs, it was back to Britain. There was nothing left of the holiday except a dose of jet-lag, which had me waking up at 3 am, and doing some ironing because I couldn't sleep. It had been exhausting. It had been terminally destructive to my credit card. It had been the least restful holiday I've ever had. Yet within days of returning to the UK, I was certain that summer 1992 would see me once again travelling to the place where "bad" means "good", and good is being about as weird as you can get!

**Post-script** - Six months on and life has almost returned to normal, save an inability to tolerate the concentrated muck that passes for orange juice here. But I get odd flashbacks, every now and again. Standing in Tower Records, holding a couple of American magazines, I suddenly found myself thinking "Damn! There'll be 7.5% California state sales tax on top!". While this may be true in their Los Angeles branch, it doesn't apply to the one at Piccadilly Circus. But I can only assume the salesgirl had been on holiday too, as she casually added up the American cover prices and said to me, "That'll be six dollars ninety please"...

# California über alles



If you were alive during the 1980's, you must have heard of them. They were the lone voice from the rear end of the stifled Punk era, both indomitable and incorruptible by the conspiratorial masses of conformist manipulators. He was their driving frontman, navigating their route, unafraid to yell. It's been quite a few years since the Dead Kennedys disbanded, but lead singer/lyricist/writer Jello Biafra is still the untamed wildman of the US alternative music scene.



The name Biafra first scalded the lips of his fellow San Franciscans back in 1977, when he ran for mayor of that city. The reason? A practical joke, of course - what **better** reason to run for office?! Among the many novel ideas that constituted his platform were intentions to: legalise squatting in buildings left vacant for tax write-off reasons; create a legal board of bribery; pass a regulation that all downtown business-men wear clown suits from 9 to 5; and insist that police officers run for election every four years, voted in by the people they patrol. All of which provide some early indicators as to his leanings.

And, as the SF mayoral campaign dictates, **all** candidates get equal air time on TV. So you can imagine how the audience got plenty of chuckles with Jello's constructive satire. Actually, he came in 4th place, out of ten, giving the supposedly 'serious' candidates a much need kick up the ass.

However, 1980 was the year that the Dead Kennedys gave America some vital victuals with their first album, "Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables". A classic of socio-political hardcore protein, served up in a suppository of thrash/punk attitude, creating the ideal vehicle for their intravenous venom. Titles like 'Kill the Poor', 'California Uber

Tina has never had a Tedo

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She went out to swap bottles for candy

ensorship campaign was. But, while proving their mettle, the damage had been done. They disbanded, after releasing a swan-song album in '85, "Bedtime for Democracy", though a compilation followed, proving that you can't keep good satire down.

But what was it that made them so effective? The strength lay in their Art (and make no mistake, that's what it was), commitment and ability. Biafra took phenomena offensive to human rights in general and manifests the cancer for all to see clearly, with his unique rhetoric and style. He 'assumes' the blatant face of the offending party, be they censors, corrupt politicians, cheesy musician hacks, religious nuts, dictators, or just callous money grubfucks. He then personifies and lampoons them, showing their true parasitical faces in the process, the antithesis of those who'd rather remain nameless for increased efficiency.

The Kennedy's may have disbanded, but Biafra's voice is still with us.

Recently, he appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show, in the defence of musical freedom, pitted against Mrs. Gore. Events spoke for themselves. He, smartly dressed in a suit, well-spoken and of obvious intelligence, maintained a rational air, as opposed to Tipper's ranting, maniacal zealot dictator attitude. He was a perfect ambassador, more than a match for her, especially when he revealed on live, prime-time TV that she had just categorically **lied** to the audience.

If you want more info, write to: Alternative Tentacles Records, 64 Mountgrove Road, London N5 2LT. Send an SAE. Can you afford not to hear his message, in this conspiratorial world? Guaranteed 100% better value than David Icke!



If you think Hollywood is into sequels, look at Hong Kong, where a successful movie will immediately, if not sooner, spawn a host of variations on the same theme. Jackie Chan's "Police Story" kicked off a tidal wave of cop thrillers, some better, some worse: perhaps the most consistently interesting series of clones is 'In the Line of Duty', produced by D&B Films, all the more remarkable as, to some extent, it isn't really a series at all...

It all began with the discovery of a girl called Yeung Chi King by the head of D&B, multi-millionaire Dickson Poon - though since she was Miss Malaysia, 'discovery' might be a bit strong! He decided she was going to be a star, despite her lack of martial arts and acting skills: some training and a few small parts later (she appears in 'Twinkle, Twinkle Lucky Stars', ending up under Samo Hung), she was ready for her first major role:

**In the Line of Duty 2 (Corey Yuen) - Yeung Chi King, Cynthia Rothrock, John Sham, Richard Ng.** [aka 'Yes, Madam ', UK title: 'Police Assassins 2']

Yeung Chi King is a cop awaiting the arrival of an English contact with evidence on one of Hong Kong's mob bosses. Before it's delivered, he is assassinated but the hitman is unable to find the evidence. The people who do find it are two burglars who soon find the mob and the police on their tail.

Behind perhaps the worst piece of cover art in existence, this is an odd, identikit sort of movie which in the UK version opens with a sequence taken from another movie, then meanders for 65 minutes before exploding into one of the best climaxes to any martial arts movie I've seen. Cynthia Rothrock, at that time a near-unknown, played a tough Scotland Yard officer, nicknamed 'Dirty Carrie', sent over to help, though the dubbing makes her sound like a Sloane Ranger. Yeung holds her own well, both in action and acting, and the movie is ok, despite a tendency to stage sequences in the dark. However, the final showdown between the pair, now ex-cops, and the mob is incredible, with much leaping about and demolition of bad guys (including one very painful stunt fall the poor man falls off one balcony 20 ft up, bounces off another and crashes to the un-matted floor): this alone is worth seeing and is followed by an ending best described as "nihilist vigilante". C+, most of which is gained in the last quarter of an hour.

For various reasons this film was put on the shelf but this didn't stop D&B from making a pseudo-sequel...

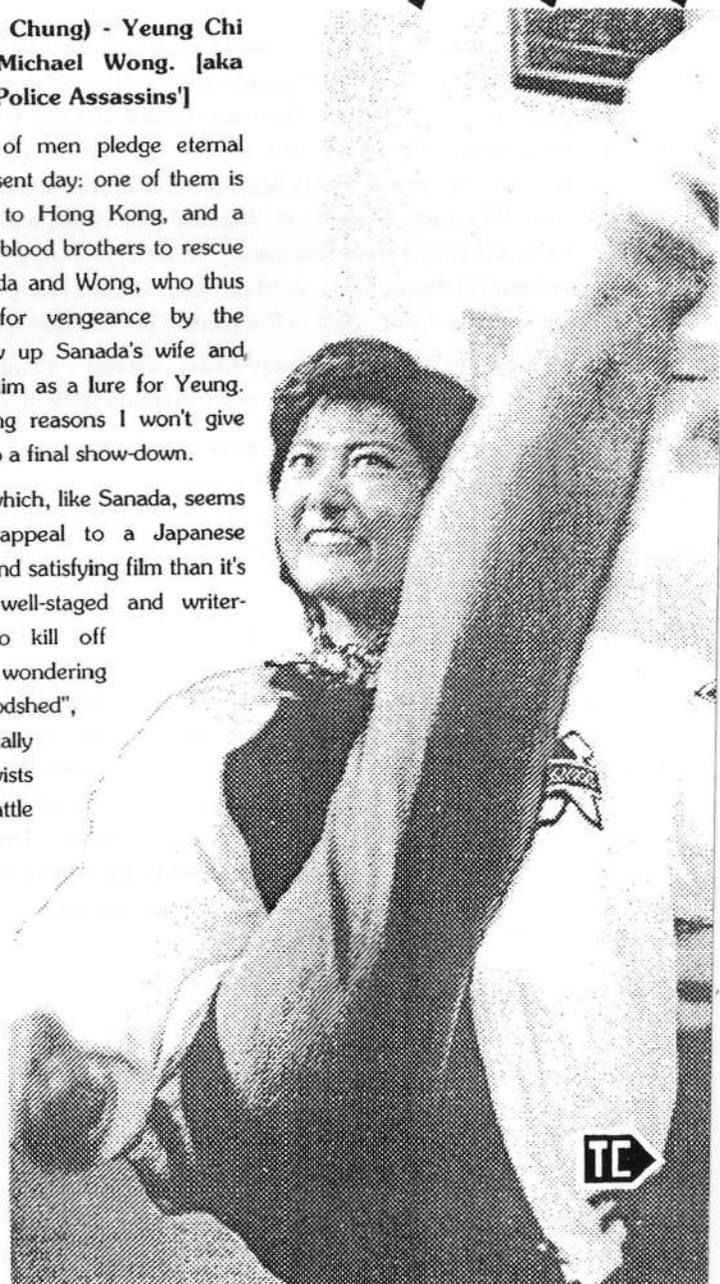
# IN THE LINE OF DUTY

**In the Line of Duty (David Chung) - Yeung Chi King, Hiroyuki Sanada, Michael Wong. [aka 'Royal Warriors', UK title: 'Police Assassins']**

The Vietnam war: A group of men pledge eternal loyalty to each other. The present day: one of them is being extradited from Tokyo to Hong Kong, and a hijack attempt, planned by his blood brothers to rescue him, is foiled by Yeung, Sanada and Wong, who thus find themselves the target for vengeance by the remaining fanatics. They blow up Sanada's wife and child, kidnap Wong and use him as a lure for Yeung. Though this fails for surprising reasons I won't give away, they eventually get her to a final show-down.

Despite an opening sequence which, like Sanada, seems to have been included to appeal to a Japanese audience, this is a more even and satisfying film than it's predecessor. The hijack is well-staged and writer-director Chung is willing to kill off characters, leaving the viewer wondering if this will be a "heroic bloodshed", everyone dies, film. Especially towards the end, the plot twists and turns, although the final battle

doesn't contain much in the way of martial arts, becoming almost an exercise in the imaginative use of pyrotechnics. This is something of a disappointment after the delights of 'Yes, Madam! Still, C+ again, though in a very different manner!



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This was released and did sufficiently well to prod D&B into taking 'Yes, Madam' off the shelf. Both were picked up for European distribution by Atlas, who suggested giving Yeung a more Western sounding name: 'Michelle Khan' was chosen and this is her billing on British releases. Another title change was required here because another film called 'Line of Duty' had recently been released, so they became 'Police Assassins' 1 & 2, Atlas managing to get them back to front! However, two films later, 'Magnificent Warriors' (see TC10) and 'Easy Money', Yeung married Dickson Poon and retired from film-making, though rumours of her divorce and return to the screen have been circulating. D&B would not let a trifle like losing their leading lady stop them, so they brought in a new starlet, Yang Li Ching (aka Cynthia Khan) and continued the series.

**In the Line of Duty 3 (Brandy Yuen/Arthur Wong) - Yang Li Ching, Hiroshi Fujioka, Michiko Nishiwaki. [No UK release, but the rights have been acquired by VPD]**

Two Japanese terrorists raid a jewellery show, to raise money for weapons, only to find that the gems are fake and they've been duped by the guy running it, as an insurance scam. To gain revenge, they travel to Hong Kong, followed by a rogue cop whose partner they gunned down. Poor Cynthia has to keep the peace while also handling her superior, who'd rather have her doing the typing.

Under the shallow sounding plot, this is actually subtle, with the characters given more motivation than normal. Even the 'villains' - I use quotes since neither terrorists nor rogue cops are cardboard cliches - provoke as much sympathy as dislike, particularly Fujioka. Although again there is as much gun-fu as kung-fu, the action mixes with the plot almost seamlessly and is hot stuff, especially when Cynthia takes on Michiko Nishiwaki, a former Japanese power-lifting champ but very cute none the less. The battles have a gritty realism about them, with people taking damage and looking more and more battered as things progress. There's a high mortality rate in interesting ways, most notably the death by industrial drill (even if it's no Abel Ferrara). Overall, it's an exception to the general rule that sequels are only good if you have the same people involved making them. B+.

**In the Line of Duty 4 (Yuen Wo Ping) - Cynthia Khan, Donnie Yen. [aka 'The Witness'. UK title: 'In the Line of Duty']**

A variation on the theme of 'Yes, Madam', that of evidence ending up in the hands of someone who doesn't know it's worth. It begins in America, where a policeman taking pictures of a CIA endorsed drug deal is gunned down. Before dying, he passes the film onto an immigrant worker,

# 4 A H H!!!!

who soon discovers a lot of people want it. After his brother is gunned down, he escapes to Hong Kong, pursued by Khan & Yen (a classic good-cop/bad-cop pairing), plus another policeman who is an undercover CIA agent.

This is a perfect example of the strengths and weaknesses of Hong Kong action films. In



the English version (I've not seen the Hong Kong print), the story looks like someone removed massive sections, as things suddenly happen without noticeable explanation. Fortunately, the action is incredible and virtually non-stop, so you don't notice the holes until about the third viewing. The highlights include Cynthia Khan demonstrating her prowess with nunchaku spanners (cut by the BBFC, naturally!), an ambulance battle where she out-Indianas Harrison Ford, and a final 10 minutes where everyone shows off their fighting skills, though these are only peaks in a distinctly high-altitude movie: given a better plot, this would have been the first kung-fu film to get A+, but A will have to do.

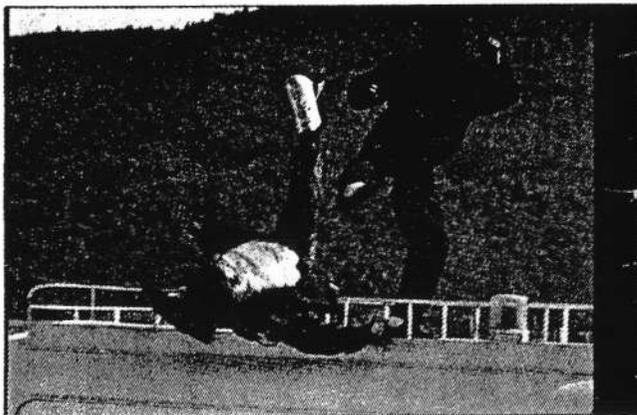
**In the Line of Duty 5 (Cha Chuen Yee) - Cynthia Khan, David Wu [aka 'The Middleman', No British release]**

Once again, the CIA are involved, together with a spy ring who have a nasty habit of terminating anyone who gets in their way. Unfortunately, this includes David, the cousin of Insp. Yang Lei Ching (Khan), who's been dropped in it by a CIA double agent, and is now on the run from the spy ring, the police and the CIA. He's not the only person to be dragged in - most of these fail to make it to the end of the movie.

The first shock is that there's no martial arts for about 30 minutes, by which point you're

# IN THE LINE OF DUTY

wondering whether this is an Oriental soap opera. Then, with the sort of *bang!* you only get when someone falls onto a car roof from a great height, someone falls onto a car roof etc, etc, and things warm up. They continue to improve in a sporadic fashion until the climax, the only bit where the fights rival IV in the series. It does have it's moments, but overall it fails to gel, though it improved on the second viewing it received for this article. I'd blame the faults on the script-writer, who would seem to have overdosed on John Le Carre, perhaps NOT the best preparation for a martial arts film. D-



One borderline case worth a mention is Queen's High, which has been touted as 'In the Line of Duty - The Beginning' ('In the Line of Duty 0?'). This is dubious, as Cynthia Khan's character is a gangster's daughter rather than a cop, whose wedding is rudely interrupted by the massacre of her family by another gang. Plot summary: revenge.

Such a story can be forgiven when it's delivered with such over-the-top panache. Cynthia Khan in full flow, wearing a virgin white wedding dress and spraying automatic gunfire everywhere, is nearly a religious experience. This is fortunate, because up until then, it's been slow to the point of tedium. One wonders why they carefully built up the other characters, only to casually blown away in a five-minute spell. The second half is markedly better, in a "you killed just about all my relations and you are certainly going to pay" fashion as Cynthia wears knee-length boots and wipes the floor with the opposition. For once, the music is not ripped off from anywhere else (Eastern films, Western films, Jean-Michael Jarre) and is very simple and effective. First half E, second half B+, wedding sequence A+, overall, oh, let's say B-.

D&B Films have shown, with this series and their other films, that they can compete with the big boys like Golden Harvest. Cynthia Khan is now probably their biggest star - she also has a small role in the recently released 'Tiger Cage', which as you might expect, was known in Hong Kong as 'Tiger Cage 2!' Despite the relative disappointment of part 5, further parts in the series are planned, and I'm certainly looking forward to them.

Comics, where shall I start this time ? Best news of the past couple of weeks (hmmm... TC "production delays" seem to have extended this to couple of months!) has been the final re-release of **The Crow**, meaning that you can get it reasonably cheaply, and that J. O'Barr gets to finish it off. The first two books reprinted the original four Caliber issues, and the third (a 64 page single issue entitled **Death**) will complete this tale of love stronger than death. If you haven't read it yet, now's your chance, if you have read it, then wait a few months and you'll finally get the conclusion.

Continuing on the conclusion front, **Hard Boiled** issue three has arrived and is a suitably down-beat ending to a marvellous series: the art's still stunning; the stories nicely dystopian; all in all it remains highly recommended. **The Griffin** has finished too, issue six tying up the loose ends in a pleasant easy style. Not all that much *new* about it I suppose, but it is very nicely done. And the final final issue here is issue 12 of **Metropol**, in which the good guys are finally gathered and an assortment of loose ends are left to pave the way for **Metropol AD**, coming in autumn... I guess you can also expect a collected **Metropol** around then.

Beyond this, all seems steady on the comics front... the most looked forward to titles for me at the moment are: **Hellblazer**; **Sandman**; **Akira**; **Dark Horse Presents** (particularly for Frank Miller's **Sin City**, Matt Wager's **The Aerialist**, and the Rick Veitch weirdness, but always enjoyable nonetheless); **Yummy Fur**; **Shade**; **Cry For Dawn**; and **Legends Of The Dark Knight**. Unfortunately, **LOTDK** is now reaching the "buy it if the particular story-line is up to it" stage, early on it managed to always be worth a look, but the **Destroyer** cross-over series killed that run off. All in all, it's oldies-but-goodies I guess. **Akira** has the lowest issue count of the above (if I use a spot of artistic licence and forget **Yummy Fur** which has never really a regular production), but with only about four or so of the 34 issues coming out last year, it's still the titles of three or four years ago that are listed. Sad, innit ?

That's pretty much it. It's sad but true, I'm finding it tough to find new comics I like. There's hope for **Hard Looks** (a new series of Andrew Vachss short stories that's due out from **Dark Horse** but not yet spotted, even after TC production delays...), but we'll have to wait and see. As things stand, this could be the last comics waffle for a while, either that or the old stuff gets dragged out for review yet again!

Lately I've topped up the back-catalogue with handy graphic-novel sized collections of titles such as **V for Vendetta** and **Elektra Assassin**.



They're much better for reading on buses/trains/tubes than handfuls of individual issues... plus, of course, it's damn good stuff anyway.

It's happened again... once I decide that nothing sooper is around, other bits start grabbing my attention. Recent manga sightings are **Sanctuary** and **Crying Freeman vol. 4** both of which: come appropriately recommended; deal with modern day organized crime in Japan and have art by Ryoichi Ikegami. There are also

graphic novel collections of Freeman volumes 1 & 2, which do a good job of setting the story and avoid those annoying month+ delays between issues. Another recent addition is **A1 book 6** (the final one, and probably the cheapest at £2.95) which ties things up in the style A1 readers will have become accustomed to... i.e by announcing a final-final issue, to be known as **A1-6B, The Zirk Low-Brow Woo-Woo Special**. This will feature (& I quote!) B.E.M.s, Babes, Boobs'n'Bombs, Bullets, Buttfucks'n'Bastards... need I say more!

Serious mood-swing alert...

Just when I thought that comics were entering a seriously *boring* phase, our friendly Customs & Excise come along and decide they're still too much for their half-assed definition of obscene. This is a 2.5 cans of Stella rant [later edited at 3.5 cans!], but is straight from a pissed off heart. A readers copies of **Sandman 33** and **Hellblazer 48** were seized by HM Customs as they contained (genuine quote!!) "...some scenes of violence and mutilation...". Unlike (available at a video shop near you!) *Silence Of The you-know-whats* [I'm afraid to mention the full name in case I get branded a subversive and strip-searched every time I go through Customs from now on].

In fact, those particular issues weren't even all that heavy really. Issue 48 of **Hellblazer** had some bastards getting their come-uppance for burning an old dear to death in 47, and



**Sandman 33** has (as it's "mutilation" scene...) a demonic chap opening himself up to let some crows out... so they're not very nice crows, but so what - that's part of why **Sandman** prefers **mature** readers. Guess I've been completely corrupted by them. Somehow the gothic horror of **Sandman** & **Hellblazer** don't seem any more horrific than the excesses of the press and all the other brown-tonguing lackeys. No wonder UK life seems such a pisser when you can't even read **mature** material.

Intriguingly, **I Want To Be Your Dog** was judged as being worthy of "...reservations about the content", but not obscene, and hence, theoretically, importable. This is not a mainstream title. This is a title from **Eros** comics, who had most of **Butterscotch** kept out of the country, and very few companies risking trying to bring anything else in. Maybe a further quote will help to show why the risks of importing "interesting " titles are so panic-inducing for the importers...

"The package also contained a further two comics which, although not considered to be of themselves obscene, are still liable to forfeiture under the provisions of Section 14(1)(b) of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, having been mixed, packed or found with goods liable to forfeiture."

So, basically, get one dodgy comic sent across with a couple of thousand X-Men issues, and risk losing the lot. Would you think it was worth the risk, or would you let yourself be suppressed ?

Okay, so the titles were allowed in eventually (apart from the obscene ones from DC, corrupt underground publishers that they are!) but still, the necessity of law suits to import comics that have been bought, *by myself*, from such establishment esteemed places as the Virgin megastore on Oxford Street [okay, so it's a *real* comic-shop with a franchise there, but it still looks & feels like you're shopping at Virgin] is genuinely ludicrous.

Please HMC & E, show some sense. Comics are **not** a medium for children. They are a medium, no better or worse than any other. Don't take episodes from the middle of story-lines (both the above were the second issues of their respective tales) and damn the carrier as obscene. Although I realise that this is a huge amount to ask, think of more than just a line that you see, try and find the context for any content. Even better, find a full life that makes you realize just how much good fiction there is that your narrow minds currently reject. Roll on 1993, and a Europe unified against petty bureaucracy... so we can hope.





# GRIEVOUS BODILY HARM



Satellite TV gave professional wrestling much new impetus: Hulk Hogan is a hero to a large proportion of eight-year olds, and video store shelves celebrate the thrill of carefully staged, theatrical violence. Below this popular culture of wrestling lies the grey sub-culture of fighting girls. Whilst in these morally conscious days this genre may not be socially acceptable, perhaps the only difference between Cynthia Rothrock and the Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling is that the latter are better at acting. So, after much careful research, TC can divide the field into two categories, depending on which animal instinct they appeal to.



## VIOLENCE & SEX - Unnecessary Roughness

These are found next to the WWF tapes and bear certain similarities: relentlessly larger-than-life characters; every feature exaggerated to and beyond pantomime level. "Bad" is "evil" and "good" is "good-until-pushed-too-far-by-the-bad-girls". Watching a decent bout is like seeing a Ken Russell script directed by Chuck Jones, with the female presence providing the final part of that famous Holy Trinity: sex, violence and humour.

**Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling** - My introduction to the genre and still the best. Little has changed - Amy the Farmer's Daughter may have gone but her "sisters" live on (characters in GLOW regenerate a la Doctor Who - new girl, same costume). Watch any section and within 15 seconds you'll be able to work out the plot. They're about the only wrestling tapes I'd actually watch for entertainment - the sheer tack (the jokes! The musical numbers!) overpowering any moral scruples about the concept. It's very obviously fake, and is thus entirely harmless. At it's best, like a truly bad film, it provokes a surreal disbelief and an inner warmth: there is still hope for the universe when things like GLOW exist. B.

# GRIEVOUS BODILY

**American Women's Wrestling Federation** - Anyone buying both volumes of this is in for a nasty shock - the first 20 minutes are exactly the same on each (introducing the members of the AWWF). This is an annoying rip-off. Most of the AWWF girls occupy an ambivalent middle ground between Good and Bad, even those who appear to be pure as snow are not averse to malicious wounding. The rivalries tend to be on a personal basis: The Littlest Angel, The Cajun Queen and Rock Candy are at each other's throats over the affections of a ringside valet, or past injustices. The lowlights of both tapes are the naff mock-interviews between Spice Williams, a former AWWF champion who also appeared in 'Star Trek 5', and the current contenders, asking such penetrating questions as "What do you like to do in your spare time?". If 'The Word' ever need a new presenter, Spice would be ideal. Overall, while the fighting is well-staged, that's the least part of it. What's important is the spectacle, and the AWWF seem to take themselves just too seriously. While GLOW may be compared to a Christmas pantomime, the AWWF, if not Shakespeare, is perhaps a play by Arthur Miller... C-



# HARM

**Cutey Suzuki's Ringside Angels** - Buy a Sega Megadrive and play at Japanese lady wrestlers! Over there, Cutey and her colleagues are as famous, if not more so, than their male rivals, with adverts, recording deals and films. The audience is mainly teenage girls, who admire the stars with the ardour a girl here might devote to Jason Donovan. Some enterprising video label should release a tape or two here, as Ms.Suzuki lives up to her name 100%.

## SEX AND VIOLENCE - Girls With Gunge

This group might also be called "substance abuse", as they often involve the use of Jello, mud, oil or anything with the right consistency and appearance. There's no male equivalent - you won't see Hulk Hogan taking on Ric Flair in a pool of

dessert - and the tendency to separate participants from clothes relegating most to the "Adult" section. Of course, this only increases the allure!

**Gellorama** - Virgin are selling this for 4.99, but I'd think twice before paying even that. For starters, there is only about ten minutes of actual gello-ing, the remaining fifty minutes being wimpy strip-teases. The inane, repetitive commentary by a Mae West clone continually mentions "loose puppies" (battlespeak for what happens when a bikini-top cracks under pressure) but the camera is always facing the wrong way. The most savage thing on view is the editing (for which I was actually grateful); you'd get more fun from an episode of 'Baywatch'. E+

**Battling Beauties** - Dating back to '83, this is a definite improvement. Some effort is made to give the girls personalities by having them arrive dressed in costume, though characterisation is abandoned when the bouts start (one girl looks much like another, when both are rolling around covered in oil from head to foot). The tape starts with three slippery-but-neat matches, accompanied by the appearance of a Burt Reynolds look-alike, for no apparent reason. Next, the low point of the tape: 'Foxy Boxing', which bears more resemblance to semi-professional pillow-fighting than boxing. Things recover in the final section - mud wrestling - which contains the most notable and gratuitous occurrence of loose puppies, accompanied (bizarrely but effectively) by the tune "Duelling Banjos". B-

**Co-Ed Oil Wrestling** - Another 4.99-from-Virgin tape, this one fails for similar reasons to 'Gellorama': it could be reduced to 15 minutes with no damage. The hook is that male members of the audience bid for the right to get covered in oil and wrestle the girls (personally, if I had \$700, I could find better things to buy than the chance to roll around in oil for three minutes, even with a couple of bikini-clad cuties), though they have to endure hours of dull strip-tease first. Save your 4.99, and put it towards your own oiled-bimbo-wrestling session. E+

**Foxy Boxing** - I wasn't looking forward to this after the dumb section in 'Battling Beauties', but it's better than feared. Commentator Garrett Atkins comes up with some coherent, amusing sentences, and while headguards and gloves are worn, they have a knack of coming off before very long has elapsed. The girls aren't that pretty - "tough" is the word that comes to mind - but there may be semi-genuine bitchiness involved - one fighter ('Konar the Barbarian') launches an assault on a girl holding the round cards. Said girl is a wasted-looking Traci Lords, who loses her top in the fracas. Further fun is provided by someone who looks a bit like Cynthia Rothrock. £4.99 in Virgin, of course, and just about worth that. C





**Out for Justice** - With a plot so simplistic Bruce Lee would have rejected it (you killed my best friend and you must be able to guess the rest), Stephen Seagal demonstrates a flair for languages, speaking in English, French & Italian but failing to ACT in any of them. To be fair, with dialogue like "chicken-shit fucking pussy asshole", he has his work cut out. Plenty of loose ends - the Mafia run 'around a lot without DOING anything - flail about like a pool ball in a handkerchief. And gosh, by coincidence, that's exactly what Seagal uses to dispatch the inhabitants of a bar in which he's "making enquiries", LAPD style. Such brutality is the film's only saving grace, odd flashes of wit being buried under dull melodrama. D-

**Paradise** - Obscure, early Phoebe Cates movie, which even I have to admit deserves to be forgotten about. A 'Blue Lagoon' rip-off set on land, as two kids have their families slaughtered by filthy Arabs (drag in those racial stereotypes) and manage to stumble across an oasis. However, they still have the twin problems of a) white slave traders who want to do unmentionable things to Phoebe and b) what to do with their genitals. Awful, a nice Basil Poledouris score and a lovely shower scene being the only redeeming merits, the BBFC having very unsubtly edited the solution to b) so that, whatever genitals are for, they're nothing to do with sex. E-. It makes you realise that 'The Blue Lagoon' could have been a whole lot worse. And speaking of which...

**Return to the Blue Lagoon** (William Graham) - Sellotape my hair to my nipples, if it's not a sequel to one of the most squirm-inducing movies of all time (ah, the things I watch in the name of TC). Actually, and I didn't expect to be saying this, it's not that bad. Ok, it's no classic, still being sanitized, schmaltzy and saccharine, but it's not THAT bad. The first section is salvaged by a surprisingly good performance from Lisa Pellikan as their mother, making the plot convolutions ALMOST plausible, and her death is not unmoving. Then, it's virtually a straight re-run, with Milla Jovovich an entirely acceptable replacement for Brooke Shields as Miss Jailbait and Brian Krause subbing for, um...anyone remember? Their idyllic life of sun, sea, sand and writhing on the beach is terminated by civilization arriving. Or at least a ship's captain, his daughter (who pounces on Krause like a hungry panther), and a crewman who demonstrates a startling lack of imagination by trying, of all things, to ROB Jovovich. Entirely predictable chewing-gum for the libido, I was pleasantly surprised - then again, I wasn't expecting very much to start with. C

**Ronin** (Kazuo Kuroki) - A samurai version of 'A Better Tomorrow 2', with three renegades (one of whom even owns a restaurant!) against vast numbers of villains. The cause of the swordplay is a band of psychotic samurai who are going round killing prostitutes, to cleanse the world. However, when they kidnap one beloved by our three heroes and tie her to two bulls going in different directions, they have quite definitely Gone Too Far and we get a 3 vs. 120 swordfight which, while not gory, has the most vicious SOUNDING swordplay I've seen - or rather, heard. A grubbily historical feel (a bit like 'Django') and cool characters make this one to watch. B

This page, a subscribers only freebie, was produced on a wet Tuesday morning at work, to use up a couple of reviews I didn't have room for in the full 'zine, but was loathe to dump, and to provide a taste of colour, something that might be used more fully next issue. The picture on the other side is an example of Japanese culture which, curiously, the recent festival managed to miss...

Thanks to Kanji Bates for "technical assistance"!