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MARCH #363

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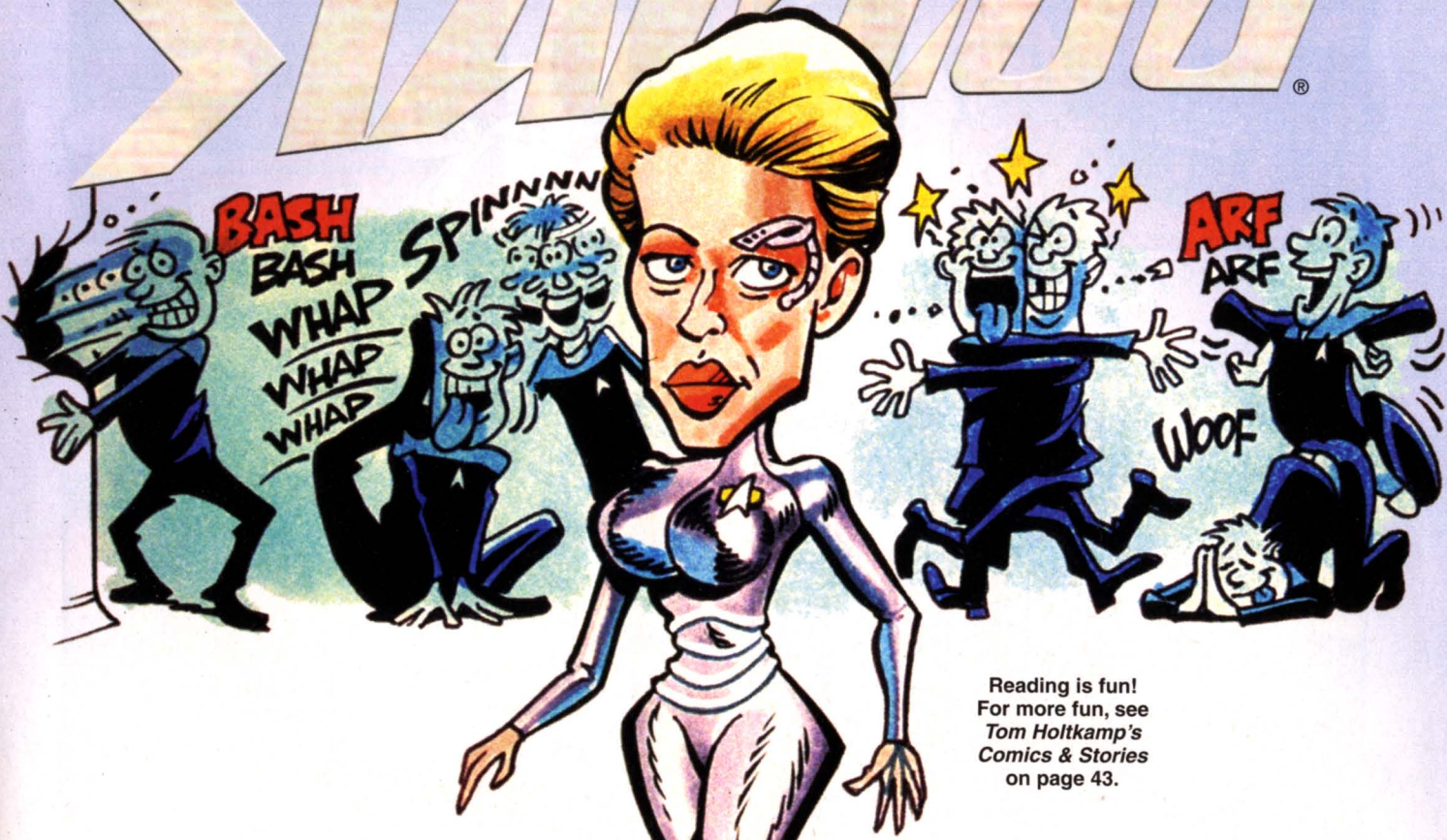
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Tom Holtkamp's
Comics & Stories
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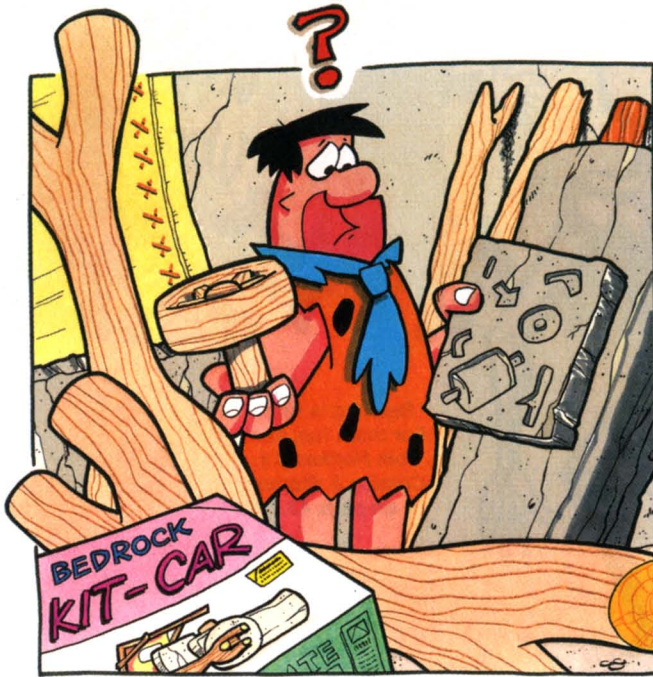


BOB TOONS

All Art: Bob Muleady



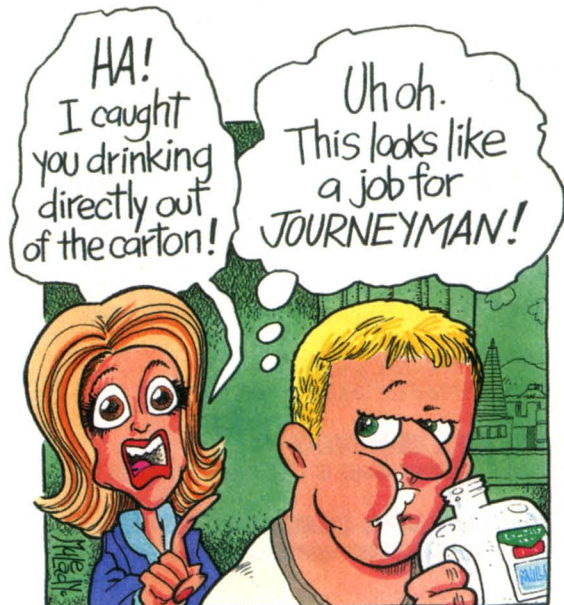
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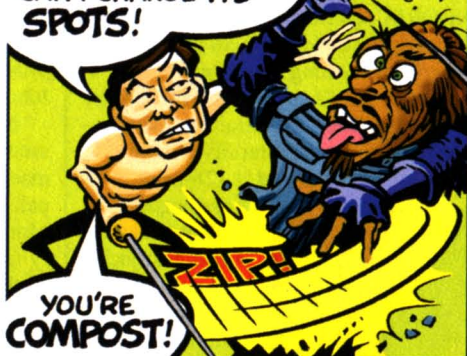
SIC 'EM GERTRUDE.



WAIT! I'LL TURN OVER A NEW LEAF...

FORGET IT! A TRILL CAN'T CHANGE ITS SPOTS!

OUR SAVIOUR! OHHH, CAN I JUST TOUCH YOUR SWORD? IT'S SO LONG AND...



HARD TIME GETTING UP, CAPTAIN? WE'RE APPROACHING ANOTHER GASEOUS ANOMALY.

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LOGLINES

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Why would we go out for pie, when you just brought us one?"

—Lily (Swoosie Kurtz), *Pushing Daisies*

STUPID DECISION OF THE MONTH

And the winner is...NBC! It seems kinda short-sighted of the network to more or less cancel *Heroes: Origins* before production could really begin on it.

FIVE OF OUR HEROES

They include Sir Arthur C. Clarke, the greatest living SF writer in this universe. And, we're proud to note, he's a STARLOG reader, too.

The late **Rod Serling**, your guide to *The Twilight Zone*.

Dick Smith, makeup master. Patron saint to generations of makeup folks.

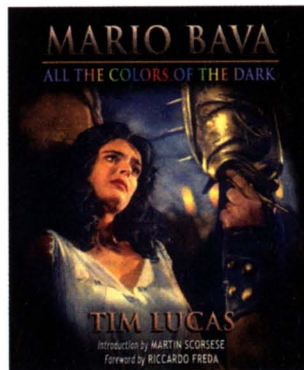
Frank Frazetta, the protean artist who gave life to countless heroic fantasies.

Kevin McCarthy, the man who fought the Pod People. Courageous in real life, too.

BY OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Call him Tome Lucas!: Congratulations to *Video Watchdog* publisher-editor (and FANGORIA contributor) Tim Lucas, whose magnum opus *Mario Bava: All the Colors of the Dark*, everything you ever needed to know about Italy's premier horror-fantasy film director (but were afraid to ask), has arrived with a crash (literally). Begun 32 years ago, it's a 12-pound, 1,128-page,

glossy-paper/hardcover/cloth-bound/dust-jacketed milestone in genre publishing, featuring quotes from more than 100 Bava colleagues, 1,000-plus illustrations (most in color) and a Martin Scorsese introduction. Check out www.bava.com for details and order



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ing info. Highly recommended. It's \$250, but actually worth it!

WHERE TO BE...

...January 13 (8 p.m.) & 14 (9 p.m.)??? In front of the TV for the two-part launch of *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles* on Fox. Watch it if you want to live.

THE LAST FAREWELLS

The science fiction universe sadly salutes these fantastic talents who died recently.

Bernard L. Kowalski (October) The TV director who helmed episodes of *The Wild Wild West*, *Knight Rider*, *Whiz Kids*, *Airwolf*, *Mission: Impossible*, *Columbo*, *Banacek*, *The Untouchables* and many others. His career began at the Roger Corman movie factory, directing (at age 28) *Night of the Blood Beast* and *Attack of the Giant Leeches*. Then there was SSSSSSS. (FANGORIA #41)

Ira Levin (November) The author of the bestselling novels *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Boys from Brazil* and *The Stepford Wives* and the hit play *Deathtrap*—all eventually (and successfully) filmed.

Reg Park (November) *Hercules in the Haunted World*.

Verity Lambert (November) The first producer of *Doctor Who*—and a pioneering British TV female producer (at the BBC in 1963!). After *Who*, she produced (for the BBC, London Weekend Television and her own Cinema Verity) such projects as *The Quatermass Conclusion*, *Rumpole of the Bailey*, *Reilly: Ace of Spies*, *The Naked Civil Servant* and *Jonathan Creek*. She also served as executive producer of the movies *Morons from Outer Space*, *A Cry in the Dark* and John Cleese's *Clockwise*. (STARLOG #319)

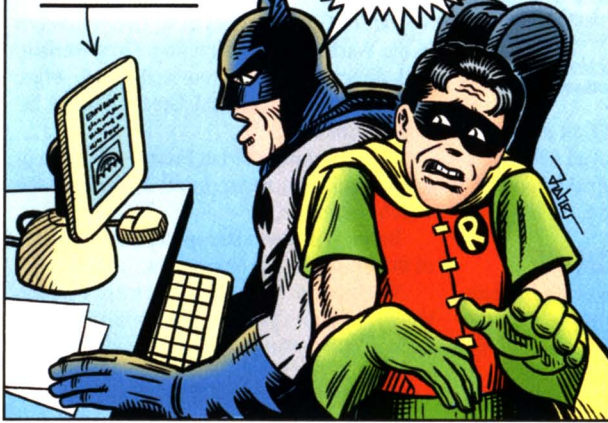
Monty Westmore (November) One member of Hollywood's fabled makeup maestro family dynasty—and brother to our pal, *Star Trek* makeup guru Michael. Monty's extensive credits over a half-century (as artist or supervisor) include *Jurassic Park*, *Hook*, *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*, *Strait-Jacket*, *Star Trek: First Contact*, *Star Trek: Insurrection*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze*, *Alien Nation* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. He was the first winner of the George Westmore Lifetime Achievement Award (a makeup honor named after his grandfather, the family patriarch).

Bruce Gordon (November) The Disney Imagineer, production designer and show producer who worked on numerous Disney park projects (including revitalizing Tomorrowland). He also wrote several books on

Bava Image: Courtesy Video Watchdog

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Disneyland's wonders. For STARLOG, he conceived and wrote the popular (and amazingly complex) *Back to the Future* "The Other Marty McFly" articles published in #108, #154 & #170. A nice guy.

BOOKS OF NOTE

Our old Marvel pal, Steve Saffel, has a great new (and heavy) coffee table book out—*Spider-Man: The Icon* (Titan, hc,

science advisor for SCI FI's *Battlestar Galactica* and *Eureka*. BenBella also has *The Psychology of Superheroes* (tpb, \$17.95, out March), edited by clinical psychologist Robin S. Rosenberg. It delves into various mind-boggling matters (like would Superman still be such a nice guy if raised, not in Kansas, but in New York—ouch!).

Speaking of the Big Boy Scout, Jake Rossen chronicles the Man of Steel's multi-

\$49.95). This art-intensive volume explores the life and times of the friendly neighborhood comics wall-crawler created by Stan Lee (who provides the introduction) and Steve Ditko. Saffel, by the way, began his career as Marvel's PR guy, then edited *Marvel Age* (recruiting Assistant Editor Lia Pelosi from STARLOG to help) and eventually became a book editor at Del Rey.

The Science of Dune (BenBella, tpb, \$17.95), out this month, dissects the various scientific aspects of the Frank Herbert SF saga. It's edited by Kevin R. Grazer, the

media flights in the provocative *Superman vs. Hollywood: How Fiendish Producers, Devious Directors & Warring Writers Grounded an American Icon* (Chicago Review Press, tpb, \$16.95, out next month). From radio shows and movies, cartoon shorts and serials to multiple TV shows, it's a wonder that Superman ever survived his encounters with some of the folks who made them. This volume includes new interviews. The foreword's by comics scribe Mark Millar.

FILM FANTASY CALENDAR

Release dates are extremely subject to change and may shift without notice.

January: *Cloverfield* (1/18), *Fanboys* (1/18).

February: *Jumper* (2/15), *The Spiderwick Chronicles* (2/15).

March: *10,000 B.C.* (3/7), *Horton Hears a Who* (3/14), *Wanted* (3/28).

May: *Iron Man* (5/2), *Speed Racer* (5/9), *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (5/16), *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (5/22), *Starship Dave* (5/30).

June: *Kung Fu Panda* (6/6), *The Happening* (6/13), *The Incredible Hulk* (6/13), *Wall*e* (6/27).

July: *Hancock* (7/2), *Journey 3-D* (7/11), *Hellboy 2* (7/11), *The Dark Knight* (7/18), *X-Files 2* (7/25).

August: *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* (8/1).

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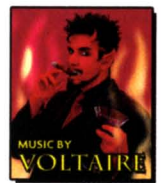
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SEQUELS/PREQUELS

At last! There's another *X-Files* movie! *Really!* Although some may feel that the wait has been so long that fans have ceased to care, production has begun on a second film (to be released July 25, 2008). The script's by creator Chris Carter and longtime *X*-hand Frank Spotnitz. David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson star in this *non*-mythology, stand-alone story.

Bruce (*Nowhere Man*) Greenwood will be Captain Christopher Pike in J.J. Abrams' *Star Trek*. The late Jeffrey Hunter played the character in *Classic Trek*'s original pilot ("The Cage") with Sean Kenney subbing for him as the severely wounded Pike in scenes for the reworked "The Menagerie" two-parter. Winona Ryder will play Amanda, Spock's Mom. Ben Cross is his father, the regal Sarek. *House*'s Jennifer Morrison is on board as young Carol Marcus. And Clifton Collins Jr. is Ayl, Nero's cohort.

In the *Underworld* Universe, it's also prequel time. Makeup FX master Patrick Tatopoulos will direct *Underworld 3: The Rise of the Lycans* from a script by fellow *Underworld* vet Danny McBride. Bill Nighy, Michael Sheen and Rhona Mitra star.

Rome's Ray Stevenson is the new anti-hero in *Punisher: War Zone* (now shooting, literally). Lexi Alexander is directing a cast that includes *The X-Files*' Doug Hutchinson, *Buffy*'s Julie Benz and Wayne (*Jurassic Park*) Knight.

Vivendi Games is creating what amounts to *Ghostbusters 3* as a video game (due out on its Sierra label this fall). The story's by Dan Aykroyd & Harold Ramis (the duo who created the concept and scripted both movies). And the featured voices (so far) include Bill Murray, Ernie Hudson, Annie Potts, William Atherton, Aykroyd and Ramis.

UPDATES

Gerard Butler has escaped from the *Escape from New York* remake. The filmmakers are now trying to apprehend a new Snake.

Justin Bruening (of the TV soap opera *All My Children*) has picked up the keys to the car. He's the new *Knight Rider*—and (in a tantalizing bit of continuity) the son of Michael Knight (the original show's David Hasselhoff) in this NBC TV movie/pilot. And yes, Hasselhoff may be in the cast, too. The female lead is Deanna (*The Young and the Restless*) Russo.

Even though Tim Burton didn't know his next project (on page 66 this issue), he has, at presstime, settled on his next *two* pictures. They'll both be 3-D films for Disney. Harking back to Disney's earliest shorts (the *Alice Comedies* of the 1920s), the first will be a live-action/animation combo version of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. The script's by Linda (Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*) Wolverson. Richard Zanuck, Joe Roth and Jennifer Todd are



producing. And the second? It's an expanded feature version of Burton's beloved 1984 short "Frankenweenie." And this *Frankenweenie* will be in stop-motion animation.

THE REMAKE GAME

Jennifer Connelly has nabbed the Patricia Neal role (Helen Benson) in the *Day the Earth Stood Still* remake. It started shooting last month in Vancouver.

Hellboy's Guillermo del Toro will write, direct and produce a movie version of the semi-obscure 1968-9 TV series *The Champions*. They were a trio of humans who gained mysterious powers and fought evil. United Artists will release it.

Alfred Molina and Hope Davis are starring in that reimagining of *The Lodger*.

Sir Anthony Hopkins will be father to *The Wolf Man* in the remake.

COMICS SCENE

That didn't last long. Shawn (*A Night at the Museum*) Levy is out as director of *The Flash*. Instead, David (*Fred Claus*) Dobkin

CODE NAME: CLOVERFIELD

Well, after months of also being known as "the untitled J.J. Abrams monster movie," *Cloverfield* apparently is its title after all. The top-secret project, produced by STARLOG reader Abrams, features creatures from the Tippett Studio and premieres January 18. If we told you any more about it, we'd have to kill you. Or let the really big tourists attacking NYC in this film do it for us.



will helm the project, as now scripted by Craig (*Dirty Sexy Money*) Wright. Sorry, Jay Garrick and Barry Allen (and you, too, Gordon), but this movie Flash looks to be Wally West.

Meanwhile, the film's ring now apparently goes to Hal Jordan (*not* Allan Scott, John Stewart or Guy Gardner) to be *Green Lantern* in the Warner Bros. adaptation. Greg Berlanti will direct as well as co-script with Marc Guggenheim and Michael Green. Donald De Line is producing.

Max Headroom's Matt Frewer plays down-on-his-luck evil mastermind Moloch in the *Watchmen* movie.

Bruce Willis will star in the movie version of the SF comic *The Surrogates*.

There are *no* deals for a director or cast yet, but writer James (*Zodiac*) Vanderbilt is signed to do a *Spider-Man 4* screenplay.

CHARACTER CASTINGS

The marvelous Jim Broadbent will play Potions Professor Horace Slughorn in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Also new to the cast is Helen (*The Queen*) McCrory as Narcissa Malfoy (mother to Draco and sister of Bellatrix Lestrange).

James Purefoy will be Solomon Kane in the long-brewing film version about Robert E. Howard's Puritan adventurer.

Sky Captain's Giovanni Ribisi will deal with CG effects again—as part of Jim Cameron's *Avatar*.

GENRE TV

Eliza Dushku is returning to SF TV—and she's bringing Joss Whedon with her. After the two met for what was only to be an advisory dinner, Whedon ended up creating a new series on the spot for his *Buffy* star: *Dollhouse*. And (without a pilot), the Fox network immediately ordered seven episodes, so Whedon and veteran collaborator Tim Minear are back in business with Fox (despite *Firefly*). The series seems to be a mix of *The Matrix*, *Alias*, *Mission: Impossible* and *Total Recall*. Dushku will play a "doll" named Echo, a superspy programmed with new personalities for different assignments. After every mission, Echo and her fellow dolls have their minds wiped, the better to begin anew next time.

FANTASY WORLDS

Peter Jackson and director Neill Blomkamp were going to team on the *Halo* movie adaptation, but that did not work out (due to studio budgetary concerns). Instead, they're doing an original SF movie, *District 9*. Jackson produces, Blomkamp directs. Weta will do the FX for this Sony release shooting in South Africa.

Terry Gilliam next directs *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*, a modern fantasy that seems a bit like *The Circus of Doctor Lao*. Gilliam and longtime collaborator Charles McKeown scripted. Christopher Plummer, Verne Troyer and Tom Waits star.

Sci-Fi TV

WRITERS' STRIKE

The Writers Guild of America strike—still ongoing at presstime—will impact almost all of these genre series. Some are going on early production hiatuses due to lack of complete scripts, thus seriously curtailing the number of new episodes. Expect more reruns.

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Renewed for a fourth (and final) 22-episode season by SCI FI. Scheduled to debut in April, but production is on hiatus now due to the writers' strike. Showrunner (and executive producer) Ronald D. Moore is making his directorial debut on an episode he scripted. Jennifer Halley reports on page 87.

BIONIC WOMAN

Airs Wednesdays on NBC. Ratings are declining. In danger of cancellation. At presstime, production is on hiatus due to the writers' strike.

CHUCK

Airs on NBC. Renewed for the rest of the season (nine more episodes). Yvonne Strahovski debriefs on page 18.

DESTINATION TRUTH

Investigative series renewed for a second, six-episode season by SCI FI.

EUREKA

Renewed by SCI FI for a third, 13-episode season, scheduled to bow this summer.

FLASH GORDON

Airs Fridays on SCI FI. At presstime, SCI FI hadn't yet announced its renewal.

GHOST HUNTERS

Renewed for another season on SCI FI. The network has also ordered a spin-off show, *Ghost Hunters International*, that will focus on a new investigative team's paranormal searches set in Europe. Scheduled to possibly premiere on SCI FI as early as this month.

HEROES

Airs Mondays on NBC. Ratings have been declining. *Heroes: Origins*, the planned spin-off series, has been axed before production actually began for various reasons (writers' strike, fading ratings for original show). It may be resurrected at another

time. Or not.

JERICO

Being resurrected by CBS as a mid-season replacement (seven episodes). May return as early as this month or February.

JOURNEYMAN

Airs Mondays on NBC. In danger of cancellation. Kevin McKidd considers his time-lost odyssey on page 26.

KYLE XY

Second half (10 episodes) of its second season premieres 1/14 on ABC Family Channel. Already renewed for a third season.

LOST

New season may debut in February on ABC. Only eight episodes have been produced thus far. Already renewed for two more seasons.

MEDIUM

Returns at mid-season on NBC. Nine episodes have been produced.

MOONLIGHT

Airs Fridays on CBS. Ratings are good. CBS ordered four more scripts. Alex O'Loughlin chats on page 14.

REAPER

Airs Tuesdays on the CW. Last new episode bows 1/8, but the CW promises the show will return later in the season. Rick Gonzalez stops by to talk on page 82.

THE SIMPSONS

Airs Sundays on Fox. It actually has plenty of new episodes in stock (about 10) to weather the strike delays.

SMALLVILLE

Airs Thursdays on the CW. 1/10: Alaina Huffman guests as Black Canary.

STARGATE ATLANTIS

Renewed for a fifth 20-episode season. Fourth season shows air Fridays on SCI FI.

TERMINATOR: THE SARAH CONNOR CHRONICLES

This spin-off series has been renamed, adding *Terminator* to its title. It premieres 1/13 (Sunday, 8 p.m.), then moves the next day to its regular time slot, airing Mondays, 9 p.m. on Fox. This issue, Lena Headey (the new Sarah Connor) and Summer Glau (the new Terminator named Cameron) talk—on page 34 and 38 respectively.

TORCHWOOD

The British series debuts on DVD this month.



Ghost Hunters Grant Wilson and Jason Hawes continue their haunted hunt on SCI FI. A new team takes on Europe.

NEW AMSTERDAM

New series about an immortal detective is scheduled to debut 2/22 on Fox, airing Fridays, 9 p.m. Fox cut the episode order from 13 shows to the seven already produced. STARLOG visits the set on page 22.

PUSHING DAISIES

Airs Wednesdays on ABC. Renewed for the rest of the season.

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TV ON DVD

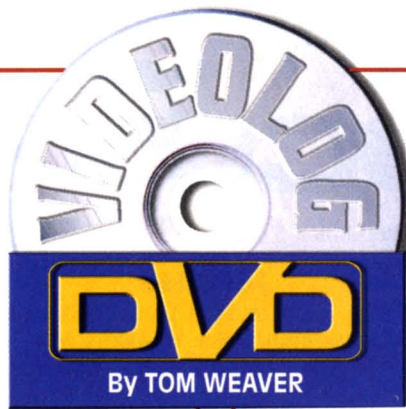
Here we have on the one hand NASA paying *Star Wars* the greatest honor: recently sending a lightsaber used in *Return of the Jedi* into space aboard the shuttle *Discovery*. Chewbacca and Jedi Knights gave it a send-off, and George Lucas attended the launch. The other hand... Well, that would be 20th Century Fox (distributor of the *Star Wars* films!) turning the space saga storyline over to the tender mercies of Seth MacFarlane and the *Family Guy* gang, who spoofed it in their hour-long sixth-season opener "Blue Harvest." (The episode title derives from the code name used when lensing *Return of the Jedi*, but you knew that.)

On January 15, "Blue Harvest" blasts off from Fox Home Entertainment (\$22.98) with Peter as Han Solo, Lois as Princess Leia, Chris as Luke Skywalker, Brian as Chewbacca, Quagmire as C-3PO, Cleveland as R2-D2 and Stewie finally embracing his dark side (and soiling his diapers) as Darth Vader. The DVD features four minutes of never-seen footage, an uncensored track, interviews with MacFarlane and Lucas and more. For the true diehards willing to drop \$34.99, there's also a Special Edition that includes collectible packaging, trading cards, a brochure, 3-D glasses and a T-shirt. Also featured (in both editions) will be an advance peek at the series' next *Star Wars* spoof, now tentatively titled "Something, Something, Something Dark Side." May the Farce be with you! (But you knew that!)

Galactica 1980 (Universal, \$29.98), the short-lived spin-off of the original *Battlestar Galactica* comes to DVD as a two-disc, 10-episode collection. The original crew finds our world and, with the Cylons closing in, helps Earth create the technology necessary for battle. From the newer incarnation comes *Battlestar Galactica: Razor*, the two-hour special just seen on SCI FI in November which takes place (of course) "on the eve of a devastating Cylon attack." Also in attack mode are Universal publicists, hawking this \$26.98 release as an "Unrated Extended Edition"(!) with "exclusive footage and more action!"

Did you leave space on your DVD shelf to the right of *SeaQuest DSV: Season One* when you bought it back in...ummm...2005? That's good, because coming in alongside the New Year is *Season Two* (Universal, \$59.98), more futuristic oceanic adventure with Roy Scheider and the rest of the glug-glug gang. Remember to leave room to the right of *that* for 2011, but maybe the next set will be here sooner than you think! For those who prefer less of a wait between their *Season One-Season Two* purchases, how's this: *Weird Science: The Complete Seasons One & Two*, an 88-episode set from A&E Video, all in one swell foop (\$44.95).

That trio of celestial saviors (Roma Downey, Della Reese, John Dye) dispatched from Heaven to inspire people facing crossroads in their lives are back in *Touched By an Angel: The Fourth Season: Volume Two* (Paramount, \$42.99). Also from Paramount comes the Melissa Joan Hart-starring *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch: The Third Season* (\$38.99) and *The Adventures of Young Indiana Jones: Volume Two* (\$117.99), the latter a nine-disc set of episodes from the action-adventure series following Indy's around-the-world exploits as a boy and young man, learning life lessons and encountering



various historical figures along the way. Bonus features this time include an interactive game and timeline, plus "Historical Lecture: War and Revolution." Sorry, the dog ate my homework (again).

For a bit of TV history, there's Image Entertainment's two-disc *Tales of Tomorrow: Collection Three* (\$24.99), 14 more "live" (give or take 50-something years) episodes of the SF anthology series from the medium's infancy. Guest stars include Bruce (King Kong) Cabot, Joanne Woodward, Rod Steiger, Burgess Meredith, Leslie Nielsen, James Dean and horror legend Boris Karloff. What, no Bela Lugosi? Nope, but don't sing the blues: He's well-represented in Infinity's *Suspense: The Lost Episodes: Collection Two*, more long-thought-lost segments of that pioneering series. This set includes Bela's 1949 "A Cask of Amontillado," the Edgar Allan Poe tale updated to WWII Italy and featuring Our Favorite Hungarian (as the fascist "General Fortunato") and, in a small supporting role, everybody's Favorite Martian, Ray Walston.

Our Favorite Humanoid Mass of Plant Life battles supernatural and evil threats in *Swamp Thing: Complete First Season* (Shout! Factory, \$39.99). The four-disc set includes 22 episodes, plus new interviews with STARLOG favorite Dick Durock (who played the comics hero) and *Swamp Thing* co-creator Len Wein.

For nostalgically-inclined cartoon fans, *The All-New Super Friends Hour: Season One: Volume One* (Warner Home Video, \$26.98) is a collection of superhero adventures featuring Wonder Woman, Superman, Aquaman, Batman & Robin and "guest shots" from Green Lantern, Hawkman & Hawkgirl, Flash and Atom—plus Black Vulcan and, of course, the legendary Apache Chief. Who???

Speaking of Who...or should that be Whom?...the Torchwood Three sets out to safeguard Great Britain from all things terrifying and extraterrestrial in the *Doctor Who* spin-off series *Torchwood*. The seven-disc *Complete First Season* comes into our homes courtesy of BBC Warner on January

22. Sooner if you have a Tardis. Later if you ain't got the \$79.98.

The lines between good and evil are blurred and loyalties are challenged when the survivors of the crash become tangled with the lives of Others in *Lost: The Complete Third Season* (Buena Vista Home Entertainment, \$59.99), seven discs and 23 more episodes, plus supplemental materials like secrets from the Others' world and (according to the press release) "unprecedented access to the *Lost* writers' room." If it's anything like the STARLOG writers' room, watch out for all the teetering stacks! But you knew that!



Yo, there shall come a reckoning! *Family Guy* takes on *Star Wars*!

WHEN ANIMALS ATTACK

Giant crocs wreak more havoc in *Lake Placid 2*, a semi-remake *G*of, calling itself a sequel *to*, the Betty White-starring 1999 original, with Cloris Leachman now appearing as her just-as-nuts sister, and unleashing *four* more 30-foot prehistoric beasts on unsuspecting lakefront visitors like John (*The Dukes of Hazzard*) Schneider—perhaps not the country's sharpest sheriff, since he says he considers the gory events of the original flick nothing more than unsubstantiated rumor! Fox Home Entertainment is calling this \$26.98 release a "Special Unrated 'Gnawed Up' Version," and amidst the added-value material are the featurettes "Sex, Guns and Croc-n-Roll" and "Surviving a Crocodile Attack." Did you (like Sheriff Schneider) miss the David E. Kelley-scripted original? Opt for the *Lake Placid Two-Pack* (\$32.98).

Snakes' alive! *Dragon Wars* is on DVD!

The SCI FI Channel strikes (out) again with *Mammoth* (Union Station/Starz, \$14.98), an intentionally ridiculous actioner in which a well-preserved Pliocene-era mammoth, kept in a block of ice in a natural history museum in (where else?) Louisiana, is freed when a plummeting UFO hits the building, and comes to life courtesy of the twin miracles of "possession" by the space visitor and low-level CGI. Vincent (*The Invisible Man*) Ventresca as the museum's nerdy curator is our hero, with Tom Skerritt as his UFO-logist dad seen in support.

What's older than prehistoric crocs and mammoths? Dragons, as described in age-old myths...as seen in ancient art and sculpture...as represented by six goofballs in one long costume every Chinese New Year...and most recently seen raising hell in LA in the South Korean-U.S. *Dragon Wars*, new on DVD (and Blu-ray Hi-Def and UMD) from Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (\$28.95). The featurettes "5,000 Years in the Making" and "Storyboard-to-Screen," a conceptual art gallery and collectible foil packaging (for those who collect foil) sweeten the deal.

Dragon, shmagon! Can your hearts stand a shocking seven-movie onslaught by the King of Monsters? If so, seek out Classic Media's box set *The Godzilla Collection*, with more than 20 hours



Underdog Ultimate Collection (\$27.95), which not only includes the exploits of the peerless pup with the gift for rhyme, but also the Go Go Gophers, Tennessee Tuxedo and others.

More cartoon animals make the home video scene in Warner Home Video's extras-laden *Looney Tunes Golden Collection: Volume Five*, available by itself (\$64.98) or as part of the \$324.98 *Looney Tunes Golden Collection: Volumes One-Five*. The 30-cartoon *Looney Tunes Spotlight Collection* is also up to Volume Five (Warner, \$26.98); Lionsgate is offering a *Chuck Jones Collection* (\$14.98); and the *Walt Disney Treasures* series resumes with *Disneyland: Secrets, Stories & Magic* (self-explanatory, \$32.99) and the same-priced *The Chronological Donald: Volume Three* (1947-1950)—which includes some cartoons in their original widescreen format—and, from the silent era, *The Adventures of Oswald the Lucky Rabbit*. Delving into archives not quite as dusty, Walt Disney Video's marvelous *Pixar Short Films Collection: Volume One* is \$29.99. It includes "Boundin," "Geri's Game," "Jack-Jack," "Luxo Jr." and others.

DVDS IN BRIEF

The Last Sentinel (Echo Bridge Home Entertainment, \$26.99): An "electronically enhanced" soldier (Don Wilson) and a rebel beauty (*Battlestar Galactica*'s Katee Sackhoff) take part in a resistance movement in a future where drone police have become civilization's oppressors. Includes a "Making of" and commentary.

Paprika (Sony, \$26.96 DVD; \$38.96 Blu-ray; PSP \$26.96): Japanese anime-hem! A machine which enables a person to enter another's dreams is stolen by a "dream terrorist." Can scientist Chiba (codename Paprika) retrieve the apparatus and save the world from madness? Includes four behind-the-scenes featurettes.

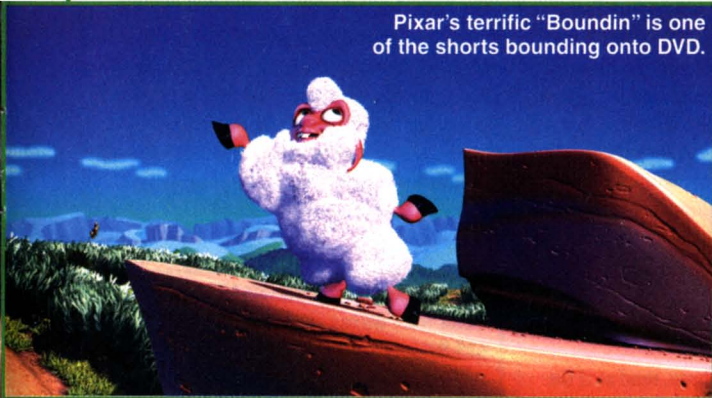
The Myth (Sony, \$24.96): Jackie Chan sets out to uncover a missing Chinese tomb and royal treasure, and en route is plagued by a series of bizarre dreams. Sony tacks on a few treasures of their own: a "Making of," deleted scenes, Chan's first-ever full-length commentary and two music videos.

Resident Evil: Extinction (Sony, \$28.95): The third installment of the video game-based series follows genetically enhanced warrior Milla Jovovich and her fellow survivors in new battles against flesh-eating zombies, killer crows *ad nauseam* as they attempt to save Earth from a fatal virus. Includes deleted scenes, commentary and "Making of" featurettes; also available on Blu-ray and UMD.

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End (Walt Disney Video, \$34.99): Has anyone heard of this movie? A two-disc Collector's Edition of the rollicking Johnny Depp-starrer. Bloopers, audio commentary, featurettes (and lots more) are amongst the swag on the DVD and also the same-priced Blu-ray.

Soylent Green (Warner): Out again! And Soylent Green...is *people!* There! We just saved you \$14.98! You're welcome.

Pixar's terrific "Boundin" is one of the shorts bounding onto DVD.



of content and bonus features starting with the original *Gojira*, plus the Americanized Raymond Burr-starring version, as well as *Godzilla Raids Again*, *Mothra vs. Godzilla*, *Ghidorah*, *the Three-Headed Monster*, *Terror of Mechagodzilla* and more (\$79.95).

Much smaller—but sometimes just as scary—cats have a background of macabre mythology, movie-wise most memorably in producer Val Lewton's 1942 classic *Cat People*. That fright flick, and nine other Lewtons, comprise the new edition of *The Val Lewton Horror Collection* (Warner, \$59.92), re-released because of the addition of the new Martin Scorsese-produced and -narrated documentary *Val Lewton: Man in the Shadows* to the boxed set. *Cat People* shares a disc with its follow-up *The Curse of the Cat People*, *I Walked With a Zombie* is paired with *The Body Snatcher*, *Isle of the Dead* with *Bedlam*, *The Ghost Ship* with *The Leopard Man* (another cat!) and *The Seventh Victim* with WHV's previously produced doc *Shadows in the Dark: The Val Lewton Legacy*. Fortunately for owners of the previous set, the Scorsese doc will also be available as a single disc for \$19.97.

Can anyone save us from this menacing menagerie? Therrrrr's no need to fear, *Underdog* is here from Walt Disney Video (\$29.99). A live-action adaptation of the '60s cartoon series, it features the classic characters Polly Purebread, Simon Barsinister, Riff Raff and, of course, Underdog himself, formerly a beagle named Shoeshine until a lab mishap gave him superpowers and the power of speech. No sale? Then stick with the old animated show, available most affordably if you get Classic Media's three-disc



Davy Jones has a new locker—just to store his DVDs. Stingrays and Blu-rays stored separately.

Art: Copyright 2007 Disney/Pixar. All Rights Reserved.

Wars Image: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

Pirates Image: Copyright 2007 Disney Enterprises, Inc. & Jerry Bruckheimer, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

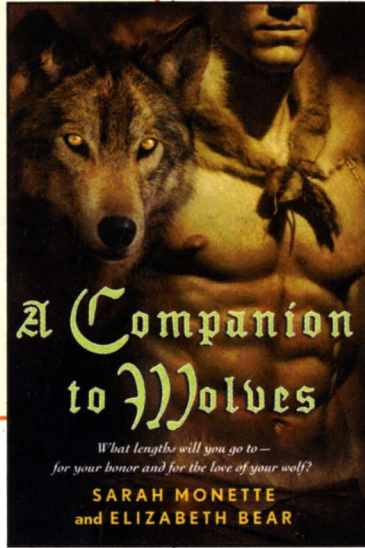
***A Companion to Wolves* by Sarah Monette & Elizabeth Bear (Tor, hc, 304 pp, \$24.95)**

Though the nominal plot of *A Companion to Wolves* concerns a war between trolls and humans, the true heart of the tale is the complex web of relationships that develops as hero Isolfr telepathically bonds with the wolf Viradechtis, becoming part of the all-male and -wolf society of the wolf hall—and alienating his father in the process.

Sex is an important part of this story—and it's sex between men—but it's neither voyeuristic nor filler. Flipping genteel fantasy conventions on their heads, the authors use the raw sex scenes—rather than those of combat—to illustrate Isolfr's stuttering growth into a leader.

A Companion to Wolves isn't a book for everyone, but it is compelling.

—Penny Kenny



***The Dragons of Babel* by Michael Swanwick (Tor, hc, 320 pp, \$25.95)**

The Dragons of Babel is a smart, stark steampunk fantasy. It's gritty and magical and, in sensibility, is similar to Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* and *MirrorMask*.

Its "hero" Will is forced to leave his Faerie village after serving as a reluctant lieutenant for a war-dragon. And while Will ultimately slays the dragon, he can never escape the taint it leaves in his mind. As his destiny leads him toward the cacophony that is the Tower of Babel, a colorful cast of characters that includes con artists and a high-born Elven Lady gives shape to his future. Original and dashing, *The Dragons of Babel* is a breath of fresh air through the fantasy section.

—Penny Kenny

***Hungry* by Alethea Eason (Eos, tpb, 208 pp, \$16.89)**

Eleven-year-old Deborah is good at math, music and sports, has a cute boy friend who celebrates 31 days of Halloween and is plagued by an annoying brace-faced rival. Normal, right? Except Deborah is also a cannibalistic alien and part of an Invasion Earth mission. But when her parents tell her she'll have to eat her best human friend, Deborah rebels.

In the girl-eat-girl world of tweens, *Hungry* is bound to strike a chord. Eason employs a light touch as she tackles issues of individuality, status and family relationships in a comic SF setting. Though the full poten-

tial of all its ideas isn't tapped, *Hungry* could very well become a tasty favorite of mother-daughter book clubs.

—Penny Kenny

***The Morcai Battalion* by Diana Palmer (Luna, hc, 320 pp, \$24.95)**

Humans and Centaurians must work together after the Rojok declare war on the galaxy. But a spy within their ranks and deep cultural differences might end their alliance before it has truly begun.

Who knew Romance's Grand Dame could do SF? Palmer's *The Morcai Battalion*—a "refreshing" of a book published in 1980 under her Susan Kyle pen name—offers space battles, clones, cat-like aliens, prison gulags, psychic abilities and the slightest hint of romance. The action is nonstop, the cultural background intriguing and the male characters fascinating. Unfortunately, main heroine Madeline has to be stupid for much of the plot to work. Overall,

however, *The Morcai Battalion* is an engaging opening volume for this trilogy.

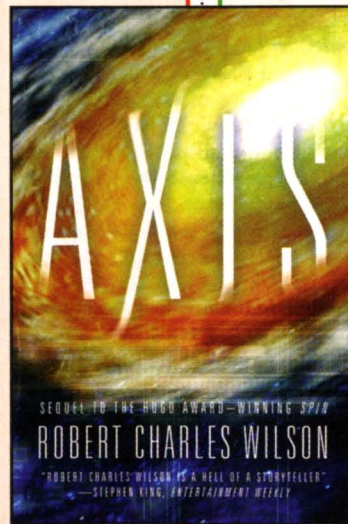
—Penny Kenny

***Axis* by Robert Charles Wilson (Tor, hc, 304 pp, \$25.95)**

Wilson's earlier novel, *Spin*, read as if the word "sequel" had specifically been invented for it, and here he picks up the promise.

Humans are colonizing the distant planet that was set up for them by the mysterious Hypotheticals and is connected via the enormous Arch. But smaller stories punctuate this larger one. Lisa Adams and Turk Findley are investigating the disappearance of Lisa's father on the new world. Their cooperation comes about as the planet is being bombarded by Hypothetical Nan machines. Soon, what was once a minor mystery blossoms into a planetary-sized one.

Wilson has a great talent for taking cosmic-level storylines and letting them unfold



through the auspices of minor incidents. He creates a small cast of characters who are capable of allowing large amounts of plot to flow through them. Reading this work is like watching a tsunami hit from the vantage point of a small office: intimacy dressed in cataclysm. Or perhaps it's the other way around.

—Michael Wolff

***Nova Swing* by M. John Harrison (Bantam, tpb, 272 pp, \$16)**

Somewhere, somehow, Dashiell Hammett had a head-on collision with the Strugatsky Brothers, and the result was this novel. Vic Serotonin is a burned-out citizen who lives in the city of Saudade. He offers his services as a guide to the Event Site: a place alien to human science and comprehension. A special police unit works to intercept traffic stumbling out of the Site, and they have their eye on Vic. But a mysterious woman appears wanting access and, as the genre usually goes, her influence oversteps that of the cops.

Harrison's prose is pure noir caught in the glare of a nuclear explosion. It's the sort of thing that others have tried before, but Harrison makes it work and bends it to his personal vision. All the familiar elements are here, and the reader can almost hear the whining saxophones as we follow Serotonin and the other characters through their paces. This is an entertaining first visit to an old school.

—Michael Wolff

***Dragon Harper* by Anne McCaffrey & Todd McCaffrey (Del Rey, hc, 320 pp, \$25.95)**

A mysterious plague is sweeping across Pern, decimating the Holds' young-adult population. Unless a cure is found, the Dragonriders will be next, leaving the planet vulnerable to the next Threadfall.

We've seen this all before. The plague plot is a follow-up/reworking of *Dragonsblood*, while the time travel and its paradoxes have become standard Pern accoutrements. But what keeps *Dragon Harper* from being simply a collection of Pern's greatest hits are the characters. The McCaffreys excel at creating ordinary heroes whom you can relate to and root for. While the people here lack the vivid personalities of the characters in earlier Pern novels, readers will still get caught up in their entertaining travails.

—Penny Kenny

This column showcases websites for SF, fantasy, comics & animation creators and their creations. Websites are listed for free *entirely* at STARLOG's discretion. Site operators may nominate their sites for inclusion by sending relevant info via e-mail only to allan.dart@starloggroup.com

TIM BURTON WEBSITE

After the one-two twisted punch of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Corpse Bride*, the unconventional Burton brings his maverick moviemaking to a new genre: the musical! The director teams up with Johnny Depp once again in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. Swing your razor high at www.timburtoncollective.com

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES BOOK SITE

Holly Black and Tony DiTerlizzi's beloved children's book series tells the story of three youngsters—Mallory, Jared & Simon Grace—who go in pursuit of Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guide, and encounter fairies, goblins and magical adventure along the way. www.spiderwick.com

KEVIN MCKIDD SITE

Fresh from the swirling (and incredibly bloody) politics of ancient *Rome*, the Australian actor has quantum-leaped to modern San Francisco. There, he keeps jumping around, in and about recent times as *Journeyman*. Learn of the man and his odysseys at www.kevinmckidonline.com



THE SILVER SERVER

STEPHEN SONDHEIM SITE

One of the greatest and best-known artists in American musical theater, Sondheim is the composer and/or lyricist of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *West Side Story*, *Gypsy*, *A Little Night Music* and *Follies*. Now, his *Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *Sweeney Todd*, is slashing his way onto the silver screen. www.sondheim.com

TERMINATOR: THE SARAH CONNOR CHRONICLES SITE

Sarah Connor (Lena Headey) and her savior son John (Thomas Dekker) try to take back the future in this new TV series set after the events of *T2*. Judgment Day is near at www.takebackthefuture.com

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES MOVIE SITE

Nick Nolte, Freddie Highmore, Sarah Bolger, David Strathairn, Mary-Louise Parker, Martin Short, Seth Rogen and Joan Plowright are just some of the actors bringing the *Spiderwick* characters to life on the big screen. Learn more about director Mark (*Mean Girls*) Waters' film at www.spiderwickchronicles.com

TOD SLAUGHTER SITE

The Titan of Terror. The Master of Melodrama. Slaughter was "the most lovable multi-murderer on the British stage," and star of such low-budget flicks as *Murder in the Old Red Barn*, *The Crimes of Stephen Hawke*, *The Face at the Window* and

Murder at Scotland Yard. But the late actor is best known for his early portrayal of that avenging coiffeur, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. todslaughter.125mb.com

ROBERT J. SAWYER PAGE

Sawyer is one of only seven writers in history to win all three of the world's top science fiction awards for best novel of the year: the Hugo, the Nebula and the John W. Campbell Memorial Award. If you want to know more about the SF scribe, *Flashforward* to www.sfwriter.com

THORNE SMITH WEBSITE

Smith's stories are full of wit, satire, whimsy and sexual innuendo, his most famous being *Topper* (made into a movie with Cary Grant and Constance Bennett) and "The Passionate Witch" (filmed as *I Married a Witch* with Fredric March and Veronica Lake). Discover more of his hidden treasures at members.tripod.com/~JCHOMA/THORNE.html

PETER DAVID WEB PAGE

This screenwriter-author enjoys *The Knight Life*, has penned multiple *Star Trek* and *Babylon 5* novels and contributed to the comic book universe. Next up is a novelization of the *Iron Man* movie. Find out what else he has in store at www.peterdavid.net

VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA SITE

Fans are ecstatic that they can finally *Sea* Irwin Allen's fantastic *Voyage* on DVD. Relive the adventures of the nuclear submarine, the *SSRN Seaview*, at this web page. You can get to the *Bottom* of things at www.iann.net/voyage

CONVENTIONS

Questions about cons? Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the con's address. Do NOT contact STARLOG. Note: Listed guests may *not* appear and cons may be cancelled without notice. Conventioneers: Send info (with phone number and e-mail address) no later than *three* months prior to the event to STARLOG Con Calendar, 1560 Broadway, 9th Flr, Suite 900, NY, NY 10036 or e-mail allan.dart@starloggroup.com This is a *free* service. STARLOG makes no guarantees, due to space limitations, that your con will be listed.

JANUARY FANGORIA'S WEEKEND OF HORRORS

January 18-20
Renaissance Austin Hotel
Austin, TX
Creation
1010 North Central, Suite 400
Glendale, CA 91202
(818) 409-0960
www.creationent.com

Guests: Robert Rodriguez, Jared Padalecki, Tom Savini, Donnie Dunnagan, Kane Hodder, Tony Timpono

OFFICIAL XENA CON

January 25-27
Burbank Airport Marriott
Burbank, CA
Creation
See earlier address
Guests: Lucy Lawless, Renee O'Connor, Ted Raimi, etc.

FEBRUARY FANGORIA'S WEEKEND OF HORRORS

February 22-24
Wyndham Chicago O'Hare
Rosemont, IL
Creation
See earlier address
Guests: Tom Savini, Adrienne Barbeau, Tony Timpono, etc.

MARCH MEGACON

March 7-9
Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, FL
MegaCon
P.O. Box 1097

Safety Harbor, FL 34695
www.megaconvention.com
Guests: Adrian Pasdar, Kristy Swanson, Peter Mayhew, June Lockhart, Robin Curtis, Noel Neill, Erin Gray, Gil Gerard, Michael Golden, etc.

VULKON March 14-16 Sheraton North Houston Houston, TX

Vulkon Entertainment
P.O. Box 551437
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33355-1437
www.vulkon.com
Guests: Avery Brooks, Anthony Montgomery

By BILL FLORENCE

THE INNER MONSTER

It's *Moonlight* time when Alex O'Loughlin patrols the shadows as LA's latest vampire detective.



Photo: Monty Brinton

Like many vampire sagas (books, movies, TV shows) before it, *Moonlight* features an immortal vampire (Alex O'Loughlin) in love with a mortal woman (Sophia Myles).

Alex O'Loughlin has been a fan of the vampire myths for as long as he can remember, which makes his role as bloodsucker private eye Mick St. John on the CBS series *Moonlight* a perfect fit.

"I've always loved the idea of vampires and immortality," the Australian O'Loughlin says during a rare break on set. "I love *The Lost Boys* and *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and the work of Anne Rice. I don't know if I would want to be immortal, but the thought of the infinite excites me. It also haunts me, in a way. My father, who teaches physics

and astronomy, has given me ideas about the expanse of the universe that have haunted me for years and made me get in touch with my own mortality."

In *Moonlight*, Mick relies on his special skills as a vampire to tackle crimes involving both the living and the undead. O'Loughlin, 32, was drawn to the series by not only its vampire motif, but also because of the strength of the show's pilot script, which the actor says was particularly well-developed.

"I read a bunch of pilots," he relates. "Good writing stands out easily from bad



Photo: Cliff Lipson



All Other Photos: Copyright 2007 CBS Broadcasting, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

writing every time. The more material you read, the more quickly good stuff jumps off the page at you. The *Moonlight* pilot had a great script that was well-constructed and balanced. The concept was really cool, and the characters were already fully developed. I understood Mick St. John, his motivations and where he comes from morally and spiritually. When you have an understanding of a character as quickly as I did, you know you can get down to the important work sooner rather than later."

The actor was gratified to find that subsequent episodes maintained the same integrity. "I feel the show is getting better and better," he declares. "The difficult thing about the pilot was establishing our mythology and our rules. There was a good deal of exposition for the audience to digest before we could move into the storyline. I think we did that pretty successfully in 44 minutes, but the nice thing about moving away from the pilot was that we could start to focus on specifics."

Night Patrols

O'Loughlin says he and his alter-ego share a common understanding of irony, which is "a big foothold for me into the character. Mick has a dark sense of humor, too, which I really like. But beyond that, he and I are quite different. Mick is tougher than I am, and probably a little smarter, too. I'm just a guy who's lucky enough to do what he enjoys for a living.

"I think I'm more gregarious than he is. Mick is much more alienated from the world than I am. I have lots of friends and loved ones that I spend time with. Even though he's a humanist, Mick doesn't necessarily like people. I know that sounds like a contradiction, but the fact is, Mick is a loner, and I, myself, am not." Chuckling, O'Loughlin adds, "It helps that I can go out much more in the daylight than he can. I can go to the beach—and it won't kill me!"

Imbuing characters with inner conflict is key to making them interesting, O'Loughlin maintains, and the outwardly cool, internally tortured Mick is a perfect example. "He's enormously conflicted. He's a monster who is terrified of the monster within himself," O'Loughlin reflects. "Mick is a relentless vampire who is, at the same time, a humanist. He hates what he is. Mick is in a perpetual state of highly controlled denial about his vampire nature. He became a private investigator to rid society of predators like himself. Mick feels that each predator he gets rid of gets him closer to his former humanity, but unfortunately, that's not necessarily the case. Even though he appears controlled and graceful most of the time, he's in utter turmoil."

A big part of the problem for Mick is that he's in love with a mortal woman, reporter Beth Turner (Sophia Myles)—a love that, while not unrequited, is fraught with complications. Mick has been watching over Beth ever since he saved her from a dire mishap when she was a little girl. Now,



Till Death Do Us Part. Coraline (Shannyn Sossamon) took her vows a little *too* literally, turning Mick into a bloodsucker on their wedding night.

she's an adult—and his peer—which changes the nature of his feelings for her. Unfortunately, the last woman Mick loved, Coraline (Shannyn Sossamon), turned him into a vampire on their wedding night. So Mick is a little leery of getting too close to Beth. He's afraid she'll get hurt—maybe even at his hands. And if he does manage to resist turning her into a vampire like himself, the passage of time will ultimately tear them apart. What's more, Beth already has a boy friend, Josh (Jordan Belfi).

Moonlight surprised many viewers, and O'Loughlin himself, by having Beth learn that Mick is a vampire in just the second episode, "Out of the Past." "That was a shock to me, initially," O'Loughlin admits. "No one told me that was coming. I read the script, and I was like, 'Wow, you guys have made some pretty big decisions in the writing department!' I would say that episode is probably my favorite to date, along with the fourth one, 'Fever.' The climax of 'Out of the Past,' where Beth learns Mick's secret, was enormous for me. It was really exciting how she finds him, and he has no choice but to show her what he really is.

"We're on episode nine right now, and I've realized that Mick's revelation in number two has shortened the process for us to get to important plot issues, which are coming your way soon. Beth's discovery of Mick's true nature also raises the stakes in a way. Yeah, the cat's out of the bag, but now there's new drama and new conflict for Mick. Beth knows this much; now, she wants to know *more*. Where does it stop?



Photo: Robert Voets

As O'Loughlin notes, Mick may seem in control, but the self-hating private investigator is in constant turmoil.

Soon, she'll want to participate in his adventures. The revelation definitely complicates things."

Night Shoots

Many feel that *Moonlight's* strength, at least in the early episodes, lies in the sizzling on-screen chemistry between Mick and Beth. O'Loughlin acknowledges the point, and says working with Myles is as effortless as it is enjoyable. "Sophia and I have a fan-

tastic chemistry on screen, and we're great friends outside of work, too," he proclaims. "She's amazingly talented, smart and, of course, beautiful. Sophia is an avid professional who brings so much to the character of Beth. It's truly a pleasure to work with her. She doesn't mess around. Sophia is *always* prepared.

"The chemistry between the two of us is an absolutely key element to the show's success. Sometimes you put two people on screen together, and there's nothing much going on. But sometimes people pair really well together, and I think that's the case with us. Again, it's complicated, because Mick has gone from a paternal role with Beth to a



Beth discovers Mick's true nature in just the second episode, "Out of the Past." Later, to save his unlife, she lets him feed on her.

sexual, romantic role. And there's another layer of conflict for him—and for Beth eventually—if she ever finds out the true nature of his presence in her life."

Interestingly, O'Loughlin says the vampire Josef (Jason Dohring) is "my favorite character on the show. I really enjoy Jason as an actor, and as a person, too. He brings to *Moonlight* a touch of comic relief and a different feel. There's a little shift of gears every time he's on that helps me push through from one episode to the next. I love how Josef is so unashamedly hedonistic. He has been around for so long and done so much. Josef has been to so many different countries, he has fed on countless people and slept with countless women, and he just doesn't have anything left to prove. I think he's hilarious.

"Josef has a strange set of morals—well, he doesn't really have *any* morals at all. Call it a strange set of beliefs for getting through life. And he's getting through life just fine. Even though he conflicts with Mick almost all the time, they're still best buddies. In fact, they're important allies for one another. Neither one could ever dream of not having the other in his life, because they're essentially each other's only true friend."

Despite the great time O'Loughlin is having making *Moonlight*, working as the lead in a TV series isn't without its hardships. Asked what has been especially challenging so far, he pauses a moment, and when the answer comes, it's hardly surpris-



Mick better be careful about exposing his chest so often. Someone just might stick a stake in him to see if he's done.

and all the rest of it, but the hours are pretty enormous. This past weekend, for example, I got home at about 8:45 a.m. on Saturday, then had to be back on the set at 5:45 a.m. Monday. I spent most of that free time catching up on sleep. It's crazy. I find myself sleeping in a corner of the studio from time to time, just to catch 20 minutes here and there."

By comparison, working with *Moonlight's* special FX is no big deal. "The vampire eyes are contact lenses, and the vampire teeth are molds made to impressions of my own mouth," O'Loughlin explains. "The teeth snap in and out pretty easily, and they're extremely realistic. I do go through them, though. Occasionally, I get pretty heavily into character, and I'll bite down on them, or I'll get punched in the mouth or fall on my face and break them.

"It takes me about an hour to get into full vamp mode," O'Loughlin continues. "When we do the morphing on-screen, that's a process which involves greenscreen and slates both with and without me, and I have to keep the same position. It's pretty standard procedure for the show to morph me from normal to vamp, but it's time-consuming. As the actor, I have to remain patient

and let everyone fuss about and do their job frantically around me, while I stay in character and in the moment. But I'll tell you, mate, once I put those teeth and eyes in, it's like I'm wearing a mask. It completely shifts me away from who I am. Mick St. John as a normal guy, before he vamps, is one character, but Mick St. John in full vamp is another beast altogether!"

Night Moves

O'Loughlin has only been acting in film and TV since 2004, but *Moonlight* isn't his first turn in a genre project. In 2005, he costarred in *Man-Thing*, a poorly received movie adaptation of the Marvel comic. "[Director] Brett Leonard is a friend of mine," O'Loughlin states. "He's a very passionate filmmaker who makes a certain kind of movie for a certain kind of audience. He takes a film that you really need x amount of money to make, and he makes it for half or a quarter of that.

"The bottom line is: There are certain things you need to have money for, like good music and good production values. *Man-Thing* was one of those films that needed to be bigger. It probably needed a [big-name] star as well. Having said that, we also didn't have the greatest script. It was about a swamp creature, and we didn't have enough money to do it right. But I don't worry about it. That was my first sort of 'big' feature."

That same year, O'Loughlin landed a

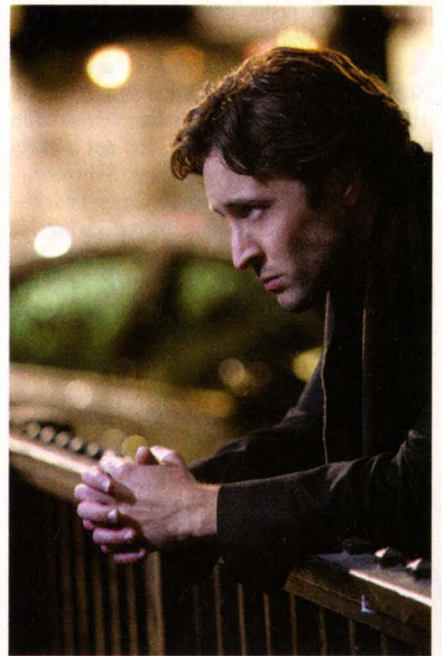


Photo: Robert Voets

Why does it seem like all vampires are brooders? Is it all that time on their hands? The melancholy Mick St. John is yet another case *against* eternal life.

role in the critically acclaimed Australian mini-series *The Incredible Journey of Mary Bryant*, a biopic about one of the first successful escapees from the Australian penal colony in the late 1700s. While not SF, the project—which also starred Romola Garai, Sam Neill and Jack Davenport—left an indelible mark on O'Loughlin, who earned a Best Lead Actor nomination from the Australian Film Institute.

"That was a wonderful learning experience," he remarks. "It was a tough shoot, mate: four months on the water, with children, in the Australian sun, in convict boats, and wearing convict clothes. We pulled out all the stops. It was wonderful being part of something that actually happened. I tried to do a huge amount of research on my character, Will Bryant, but I hardly got anywhere with it, because there's very little information about him out there. My main concern was that I was representing someone who was a real person, and I wanted to bring a voice and a heart and a brain to him. Not too many people in America have seen that show."

As O'Loughlin prepares to return to the *Moonlight* set, the subject of his flawless American accent on the show comes up. "I've always been fascinated with accents, ever since I was a kid," he attests. "I grew up with American television, and I've lived in LA for a number of years now, so it isn't that hard. But I constantly work on it."

So what's going to keep viewers tuning in to *Moonlight* each week? "The show has lots of integrity," Alex O'Loughlin sums up. "The approach we're taking is that it's a human show that just happens to be full of vampires. I care about these characters, and the more people tune in and stick around, the more they'll care, too." ★

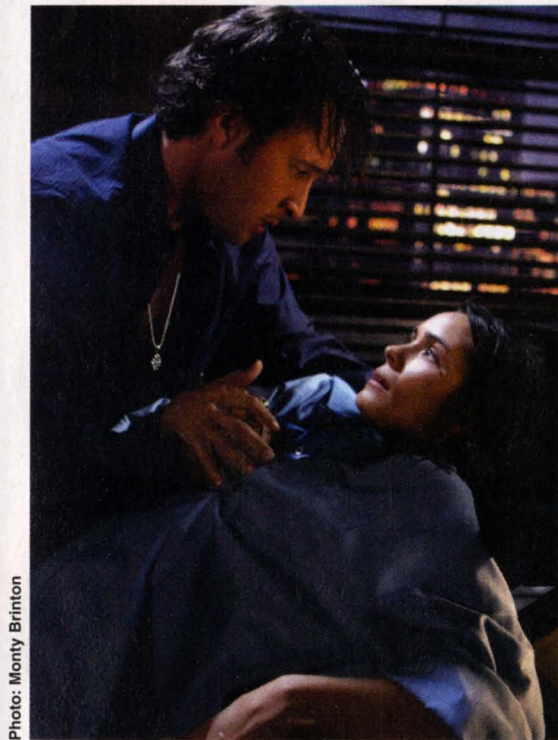


Photo: Monty Brinton

Coraline's betrayal is one reason why Mick has romance issues. Here's another: Some women look like Coraline to him.

ing. "The hours," he replies. "The workload and the pressure are *quite* challenging. I've come to the conclusion that I will never work harder than this as an actor—unless I'm doing a war film for Oliver Stone somewhere in the Vietnamese jungle, it's boot camp and he's making me sleep in the trees and not allowing me to eat at all.

"I think this is about as hard as it gets. You know, we do have trailers and great food

Soon after she was cast as CIA agent Sarah Walker on the NBC TV series *Chuck*, Yvonne Strahovski asked Josh Schwartz why he gave her the part. After all, she was an unknown Australian actress with no U.S. credits to her name, and not a likely candidate for a primetime show. Schwartz—who co-created *Chuck* with Chris Fedak—didn't have to think long before giving his answer.

"He said it was because I could be really sweet, and then switch into a lethal agent, which was necessary for the role," says Strahovski. "Also, being athletic and looking convincing holding a gun didn't hurt."

Indeed, the 25-year-old Sydney native—who recently opted for a more accessible, easily pronounceable surname than her original

When she's on the job, CIA Agent Sarah Walker (Yvonne Strahovski) dresses and plays the part with a no-nonsense, all-business attitude.

Photo: Chris Haston

Sweet & LETHAL

By DAN YAKIR

Watching over *Chuck* is a full-time job for Yvonne Strahovski.

Strzechowski—excels in fleshing out the duality of her role. And in so doing, she deserves credit for helping make *Chuck* the artistic and popular success that it is.

"Sarah is really good at what she does," explains Strahovski. "As a CIA agent whose role is to protect Chuck [Zachary Levi] and the government secrets he has in his head, she can deal with dangerous situations and handle them very well. And Sarah can certainly take care of herself. But it's an uphill struggle for her when it comes to normal daily situations, just being a normal human being. This is a different kind of assignment for her, because she must protect Chuck and pretend to be his girl friend in order to provide both of them a cover. At the same time, Sarah gets to see a part of Chuck's life that she doesn't have: his family and friends."

She meets his sister, Ellie (Sarah Lancaster), who cares about Chuck's job opportunities no less than his prospective love life; Ellie's amiable boy friend, Captain Awesome (Ryan McPartlin), whose extracurricular achievements match his ability to have a cozy home life; and Morgan (Josh Gomez), Chuck's loyal friend, whose heart is in the right place, even when his fanboy behavior is consistently immature.





Photo: Carin Baer

But sometimes her assignment of safeguarding Chuck (Zachary Levi) gives Sarah the chance to have some fun, like dressing up as Princess Leia for Halloween.

“Chuck’s family and friends show her that there are people who are compassionate and innocent,” explains Strahovski. “Most of the time, all she sees is the negative side of people.” That’s because Sarah is in a business rife with intrigue, back-stabbing and diabolical plots. “She sees Chuck’s innocence and vulnerability and is attracted to it, because she doesn’t have that in her own life.”

And yet her cover as a hot-dog maker—at a fast-food joint that requires her to wear a Swiss Maid uniform, complete with apron and pigtails—is oddly appropriate: Behind her hard-boiled exterior, Sarah has a vulnerable core that strives to be heard. But yearning for normalcy takes a backseat to a life of danger, duty and, yes, excitement.

“There’s a tragic element to Sarah, because she can’t have a normal life,” says

Getting “mean” with each other before the cameras roll helps both Strahovski and Chuck co-star Adam Baldwin (as Agent Casey) get into character.

Photo: Chris Haston



Working undercover means tolling at a fast-food joint—and wearing a Swiss Maid outfit and pigtails. Duty before dignity!



Photo: Michael Yarish

Strahovski. "She can't ever trust anyone completely, and that comes into play when she falls in love. Sarah might have to leave the country or simply disappear overnight. That's part of the dangerous life that she leads. And yet she's human and has a heart. Everyone needs to feel love and have family and friends, yet she's forbidden to do that.

"At the same time, she enjoys her job—even if she has to *learn* to enjoy some parts of it, such as having to teach Chuck the ropes. It isn't an easy task to instruct him about her world, because Chuck is so clumsy and innocent and doesn't know what to do much of the time. It's like constantly having a child around. But that's part of the fun as well."

That rapport helps Chuck to lose some of his awkwardness, just as it points out to Sarah why she should be more in touch with her humanity. "When you put two people like Chuck and Sarah together, they're going to rub off on each other," reasons Strahovski. "Chuck will pick up tricks that he never knew, and

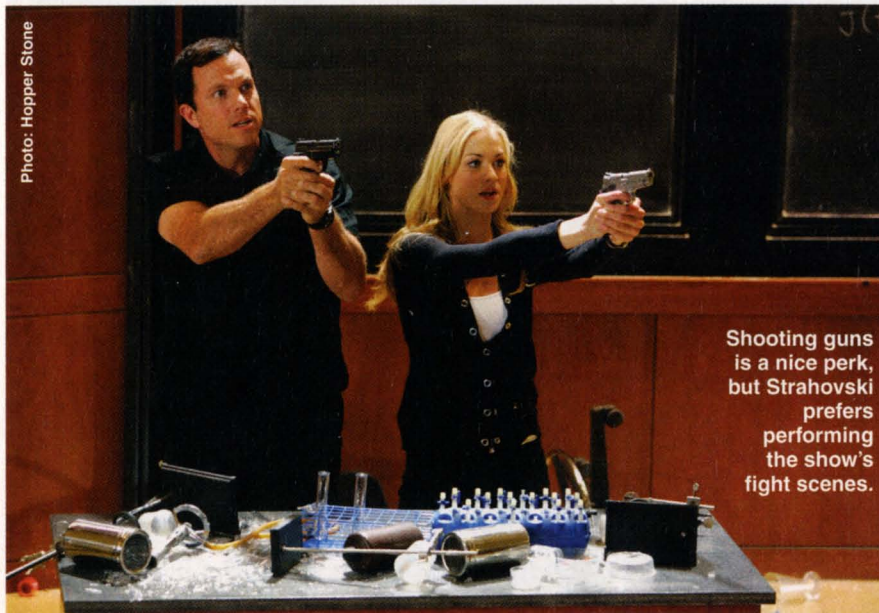


Photo: Hopper Stone

Shooting guns is a nice perk, but Strahovski prefers performing the show's fight scenes.



Photo: Paul Drinkwater

For kicks (and punches), Strahovski is taking kung-fu training. She especially likes the legwork, noting, "High kicks look good on camera."



Beauty and the geek. Some people don't see why Sarah would find Chuck attractive, but Strahovski understands the nerdy guy's appeal.

she'll have her eyes opened a bit more to a world that she craves, but which she can't have most of the time."

Getting Physical

Although the traditions of serial TV may require *Chuck's* protagonists to become romantically involved, the show's creators are taking their time before nurturing such seeds. "Sarah and Chuck are obviously attracted to each other from the start," offers Strahovski. "I don't know what's going to happen—whether they will get together—but it would make for an interesting dynamic if they became a *real* couple."

Photo: Carin Baer

What Chuck may see in Sarah goes without saying: a beautiful blonde who isn't bashful and has a bag of tricks up her sleeve. But it takes a greater leap of the imagination to explain what Sarah sees in Chuck. After all, she had a relationship with Chuck's ex-pal, the late, rogue CIA agent Bryce Larkin (Matthew Bomer), whose mastery of treachery matched his dashing good looks. If anything, you would speculate that Sarah would be more inclined to see romantic potential in the likes of the similarly dashing (though infinitely less conniving) Captain Awesome.

"Even though Sarah was in love with Bryce, it was hard for her to fully trust him, because he was in the same line of work," says Strahovski. "When you join the CIA, you sign your life over to the government—serving the country comes first. But also, some women like good-looking guys, and other girls fall for nerdy ones. It comes down to personal taste."

Personal taste factors into Strahovski's attraction to her role, which she approaches with the experience from her years of drama school *Down Under*. "I learned a whole bunch of things, and I've come up with my own way of reading the script and preparing the part," she explains. "And then there's the physical element that my role entails—the fight scenes, and the choreography that requires. I have a strong dance background. I danced from age five till 18, and that helps a lot. Doing a fight routine is like doing a dance routine."

"Also, I recently started kung-fu training to make it look even better!" she adds. "I just love the physical stuff, stunts and fight scenes. I was more of a tomboy growing up. I never liked makeup or painting my nails. I loved camping, hiking and rock climbing. So the physicality of this role is very attractive to me. I get to use all of the skills I acquired growing up."

"In the early episodes, I didn't contribute as much to the fight choreography. We have a stunt and fight coordinator who create the routines. But in an episode we shot recently, I requested certain things for the fight sequence. The more fights that I do, the more I realize what I *can* do, and what I'm good at. I like to do kicks, because I'm flexible, and high kicks look good on camera. I loved *Kill Bill*. I remember watching that and thinking how much fun it would be to perform those fight scenes. And now, I get to do it!"

Strahovski cites "Chuck vs. the Wookiee" as her favorite episode so far. In it, a rival agent named Carina (Mini Anden) requests Sarah and Casey's (Adam Baldwin) help in stealing a diamond from a vicious drug lord. However, the two are reluctant to help, because they've had negative experiences with Carina before. Once they agree—and with Chuck in tow—Carina proves yet again that trust is a luxury secret agents can ill afford. The episode includes a sizzling confrontation between the two women, both of whom display that they're as adept at kicking as they are at punching.

"It had lots of action and laughter in it, but also lots of heart," says Strahovski. "Those three elements are the key to our show's suc-

cess, and together they attract all kinds of people to watch it."

Chuck's appeal also has to do with the amiable mood and jovial spirit among the talent on the set, which seeps onto the small screen. "We have a really good relationship," remarks Strahovski. "We have loads of fun, and are always joking around and making fun of each other. With Adam, because we have a competitive on-screen relationship, we tend to play it up off-camera as well. Before a scene, we'll make fun of each other and tell each other to shut up. We do have conversations where we're nice—but we're also mean like we would be in front of the camera!"

"With Zach, it's pretty crazy, because *he's* pretty crazy on the set. I guess we all feed off of that. It's so much fun hanging out with the cast: We sing and dance, chase each other around and flirt. We're like children on the set, especially when we shoot past 1 a.m."

When the cameras are rolling, however, Strahovski doesn't face a similar comic challenge. "I have a serious role," she states. "The comedy comes from Chuck and the Nerd Herders, the Buy More characters and Chuck's family. My side of the deal is to bring in the show's more serious, action elements. But I did have a comic moment with one of the Nerd Herders, who tries to see if he has a chance with Sarah...and it doesn't go down very well."

Mental Training

It's only fitting that her major credit is a fantasy series, not only because the actress is an SF fan who likes "*ALIEN* movies and *Jurassic Park*," but also because it's part of her upbringing. "My parents both have scientific backgrounds," she notes. "My Mom is a lab technician, and my Dad is an electronic engi-



Chuck has been a pleasant surprise for NBC, and having a blonde and badass beauty like Sarah Walker has certainly kept viewers tuned in.

neer. I grew up around that, and I do enjoy SF movies and television. What appeals to me [about the genre] is that it's about exploring your imagination and how far you can go with things, imagining what life could be like if the world were different or circumstances changed or aliens came for a visit..."

Her other movie credits include a small part in *Gone, The Plex* ("an Australian romantic comedy I did last year, where I play one of the workers at a multiplex") and *The Canyon*. "I shot *The Canyon* right after the *Chuck* pilot," says Strahovski. "It's about young new-lweds who go to the Grand Canyon for their honeymoon with a guide, and end up getting lost. It's a dramatic thriller with tragic elements. We filmed at beautiful desert locations in Utah, Arizona and the Grand Canyon."

The pleasure Strahovski finds in her chosen métier harks back to her childhood, when fun and games helped pave the way to a full-fledged career. "When I was young, I was such a showoff," she remembers. "I used to make my best friend do home videos with me. We would set up the camera and shoot all kinds of things—mock commercials we had written, pretend shows, fake documentaries—and play all the different characters. We did crazy things, really funny stuff. My family and friends loved it when we showed them the final product."

Encouraged by their feedback, Strahovski took drama courses at school. "I also did it as an extracurricular activity with an ensemble," she says. "We performed musicals and other things, and right after high school, I got into drama school and then started working professionally in Australia for three years before I came here. This is my fourth year in the industry."

"In October 2006, I came here for a couple of weeks to get a manager, but then I had to go back home, where I was working on a series called *Sea Patrol*. My managers in the U.S. were submitting me for all these parts, and so I would go to a studio in Sydney, make audition tapes and send them as files over the Internet. Last February, I came back [to the States] for the pilot season, and a few days afterward, I got a phone call saying that they had watched the tape I made for *Chuck* and wanted me to come in. By the end of the week, I had the job. It was pretty crazy."

"I came [to the States] thinking I would stay for three months—I had a return ticket for that date—to get some experience and see how things were. I intended to come back a year later and maybe get lucky and land a job. But to have it all happen in a week was unbelievable. And now, nine months later, to have a lead role in a TV series, as well as a lead role in an American film under my belt, is just great."

Now a LA resident, Yvonne Strahovski feels that the industry has embraced her. "People here seem to like Australians. And essaying a badass CIA girl, I get to do things I could *never* imagine doing in my own life. Just to have the opportunity to play a whole bunch of different people in one lifetime... What an exciting life!"

It feels more like a scene from *The Birds* than anything else. The cast and crew of the freshman Fox series *New Amsterdam* are gathered at St. Mark's Church on 10th Street and Second Avenue in New York City. Series star Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, dozens of extras (many of them attired as homeless people) and 20-something grips, assistant directors and the like wait patiently for a camera turnaround to be completed so that the next shot can roll.

Several of them chat on their cell phones or poke at their PDAs or talk amongst themselves. Others grab a newspaper or a magazine and settle onto benches, the church steps or the ground. And a decent-size contingent slips into the "camera village"—an improvised and covered space with directors' chairs and monitors, where the director, script supervisor and director of photographer sit and eyeball the lighting, framing, etc.

Unfortunately, the camera village is positioned directly next to a tree filled with pigeons, easily 100 of them perched on every available branch. And when a real homeless woman nearby rattles a brown bag loaded with bread, the birds shriek with excitement and like a blur flock to the woman and the free meal. Back and forth they go, from the tree to the woman and back again, crapping mercilessly on everyone and everything below. Laughing and/or cursing, people disperse as the dive-bombing buggers unleash their fury. Yes, plenty of Alfred Hitchcock and *Birds* jokes follow. And Coster-Waldau, who has dodged beneath a lighting screen, joins in the amusement.

"That's just crazy," he says. An assistant director puts it differently: "That was ridiculous." One of the extras suffered a direct hit. "Only in New York," she mutters, as a production assistant helpfully wipes her off. Finally, after the birds flit away and calm descends on the set, another A.D. says, "Let's shoot a show."

That show, "Keep the Change," is *New Amsterdam's* fourth episode. Coster-Waldau

plays the lead, John Amsterdam, a man blessed and cursed with immortality 400-plus years ago after he saved the life of a Native American girl. These days, he's a cop, partnered with Eva Marquez (*The Lone Gunmen's* Zuleikha Robinson), and dealing with the realization that he may have finally met the woman—Dr. Sara Dillane (Alexie Gilmore)—whose love could render him mortal. That realization hits him hard, very hard: Amsterdam recently suffered what appeared to be a fatal heart attack, the signal that true love may indeed be blossoming.

"I would say that *New Amsterdam* is a romantic procedural," explains writer-executive producer-showrunner David Manson, whose previous credits include the TV series *Saved*, *Thief* and *John Doe*. "It's about a New York City homicide cop who is, in fact, immortal, and he'll stay immortal until he finds the *one* woman he is meant to be with. John Amsterdam is a man for whom the past is very present. He has lived 400 years in the New World, most of it in New York City, and he has an extraordinary amount of knowledge and experience that he brings to bear on the procedurals that he's involved with and the murder cases that he helps to solve.

"One of the things that makes this unique is that everywhere John looks in New York City, he's familiar not only with what's there right now, but what was there as many as 400 years ago. He's incredibly mindful of the city's archaeology, and he has memories and experiences that denote these different locations, characters and skill sets. We also go back to the past and see the many, many different lives that John has lived, and how they might impinge upon the present, either narratively or emotionally. Each week, a murder case is unlocked or partially unlocked by some experience that John had in the past, some skill that he might have picked up, some profession at which he worked.

"*New Amsterdam* isn't a fantasy show," Manson hastens to add. "I'm not really a fantasist. I don't think of myself in those terms. I'm not a fantasy aficionado. So, in an

odd way, we're approaching this as realistically as we can. Obviously, we're talking about a world that's imaginative, because this man is immortal, but we're trying to explore what it would *really* feel like to be 400 years old, and to carry the burden and the pleasures of knowing that you're immortal. So we're investigating that with as much depth as we can muster."

Life Experiences

Back on set, after shooting a scene in which Amsterdam and Marquez emerge from a car after pulling up to a homeless shelter, Coster-Waldau takes a few moments to talk. Manson's description of the actor as a combination of Denis Leary and Aaron Eckhart with a Danish accent is spot on, and Coster-Waldau—best known in the States for roles in *Firewall* and *Wimbledon*—seems to be enjoying himself in Manhattan, pigeons and all.

"I had been here once before, for four days, when I was 19," he reveals. "So this is a slight difference. New York City is fantastic. It's a character on the show. I love history and just being able to go into the history of New York City—it's overwhelming what has happened here in less than 400 years. In that time, it has become the financial capital of the world, and the cultural capital—of the Western world, anyway. It's simply mind-blowing. And did you know that in 1637, another Dane, Jonas Brung, arrived and settled north of Manhattan, in a place that was later known as the Bronx? I was so happy when I read that. I was like, 'Yes! There *is* a connection.'"

Much like his boss, Coster-Waldau does not necessarily consider *New Amsterdam* an SF series. On the other hand, the notion of immortality is alien to him. "In that way, to me, it is science fiction," he acknowledges. "I don't believe in immortality in any way, shape or form. I think John is a man. I worked with a director many years ago in the theater, and he said something that I'm going to quote. He told me, 'You may get more life experience, but you don't get any wiser on what it means to be a human being.'"

"If you fall in love, it happens, and you can't control it. You can't control your feelings. Your emotional life is still your emotional life, no matter how long you've been around. So, yes, John has lots of life experience, but I'm not sure he's that good at being with people and that whole social aspect.

By IAN SPELLING

ETERNAL AFFAIRS

The *New Amsterdam* cast & crew don't want TV immortality—they just want their show on the air.



John Amsterdam (Nicolaj Coster-Waldau) *knows* New York City. The immortal P.I. has spent most of his 400 years in the Big Apple. Now, this old soul has a new partner—Eva Marquez (Zuleikha Robinson).

All New Amsterdam Photos: Julie Dennis-Brothers/Copyright 2007 Fox Broadcasting Company

New Amsterdam showcases NYC's scenery—both above and below ground. The city itself is another character, impatiently awaiting the show's February 22 premiere.



Dr. Sara Dillane (Alexie Gilmore) may hold John's fate in her hands, because her love could actually make *Amsterdam* mortal.

John isn't well-trained in that, despite being alive for so long."

Robinson signed on for *New Amsterdam* after the demise of the acclaimed HBO series *Rome*, in which she played Gaia. To STARLOG readers, though, she's perhaps more familiar for her role as Yves Adele Harlow, friend to *The Lone Gunmen*.

"That was my first job, and very exciting for me," she says. "I lived in Vancouver, and I love that city so much. I was lucky, because the cast was fantastic, and [executive producers] Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz were wonderful to work with and very good to me. And I enjoyed my campy character. She was loads of fun to play. But some of the die-hard *X-Files* fans didn't take to her, and they were like, 'She's always screwing them up.' But it was a good experience."

As for *this* experience, "I was drawn to the romantic aspects of *New Amsterdam*, because I'm a sucker for anything like that," the actress says as she sits in her trailer during a lunch break. "And it was definitely dif-

ferent from some of the other pilots I had read. I didn't audition for too many. I decided I was going to be selective, and I simply fell in love with this one. I thought it was very interesting. Also, character-wise, I've always tended to act in period stuff, so it's pretty exciting to be playing someone very modern and current.

"I come into John's life as his new detective partner, and he's quite different from anyone I've ever known or met," Robinson adds. "It takes us a little while to get on the same page, and even when I think we're on the same page, we're actually not, because John is off in his own world and doing his own thing. I have to prove myself to him—that I'm a good detective, and that he can trust me. John has all these issues with relationships and life and death, because he has lost so many people—children, friends and lovers—along the way. He has outlived all of them.

"And now, he's having a hard time connecting because, after a certain point, it messes with John, in so many ways, to keep

on losing people. My character—and we discussed this going into the show—cares very passionately about people and things, but I also have incredible commitment issues. That's my problem. So I have similar issues, but in different ways. And we'll meet my family. They're all cops. I can't wait to see how they develop the dynamics of John and my family."

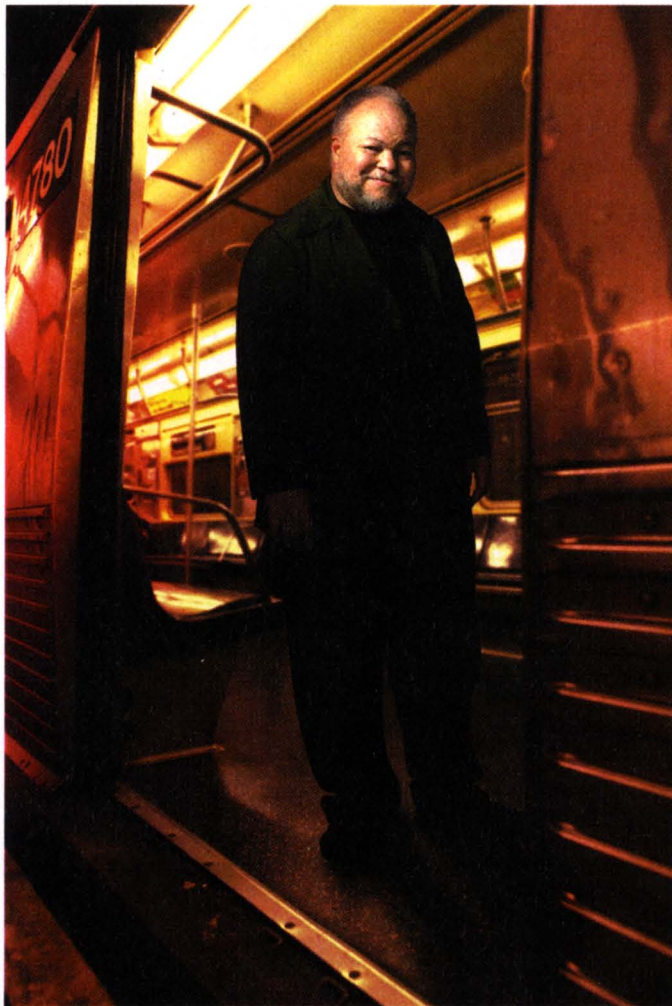
Immortal Memories

Back by the church, director Jim McKay confers with several members of the crew, then steps away to discuss the episode at hand. McKay has helmed such shows as *The Wire*, *Big Love* and the New York-based *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*. "The main theme of this episode is sobriety, and the confessional aspect of the process of becoming sober," he says. "In the pilot, we found out that John is sober, and there was even a shot of him at an AA meeting. This episode goes back to the 1960s, to a time when he fell off the wagon and entered the program.

"When I read the script, I thought it was really cool, because it had a specific theme to it. The story wasn't simply another crime plot, but it also smartly weaves in the crime, which deals with confession, drinking and falling off the wagon as well. So, by working

"He has lost so many people—children, friends and lovers—along the way. He has outlived all of them."

After enjoying her time as Yves Adele Harlow on *The Lone Gunmen*, Robinson was glad to join a genre series with more romantic elements.



Stephen Henderson plays Omar, a jazz club owner who is Amsterdam's best friend and knows his eternal secret.

off his experience in the program, John basically solves the case. It's a very well-written episode. The flashbacks are extremely interesting, and they give you some nice background about John."

Speaking of background, New York City is nearly as much of a character as Amsterdam. McKay points out that it was a "mandate" to use the Big Apple as much and as frequently as possible. And most of the interior shots are done at a studio a few miles away in Long Island City. "Within the limitations of time and space and permission, etc., we're trying to profile New York as a city," McKay explains. "And we're using it to mix in the idea of John's past and today's very real present within the architecture of what we're shooting.

"For instance, we're filming at St. Mark's Church, which is old and has a sense of history, but in the present, we're using it as a brand-new homeless shelter. It isn't trickery, but rather a way to play the past against the present, which is one of the show's themes. I love shooting here, but I have to say it's hard to find a spot where there *isn't* a Chase Manhattan bank, Dunkin' Donuts, Gap or an Old Navy somewhere within the visual landscape. So that has become part of the challenge. We need to look harder to find unique

locations, and we have to shoot a little differently, a little tighter maybe, but it makes what we film that much more unique."

Hopefully, what's being shot will be unique enough. *New Amsterdam*, for all its promise, seems a bit jinxed. Acclaimed filmmaker Lasse Hallström directed the pilot, but he left the project soon after, and much of the pilot was rewritten and then reshot. And after announcing that *New Amsterdam*

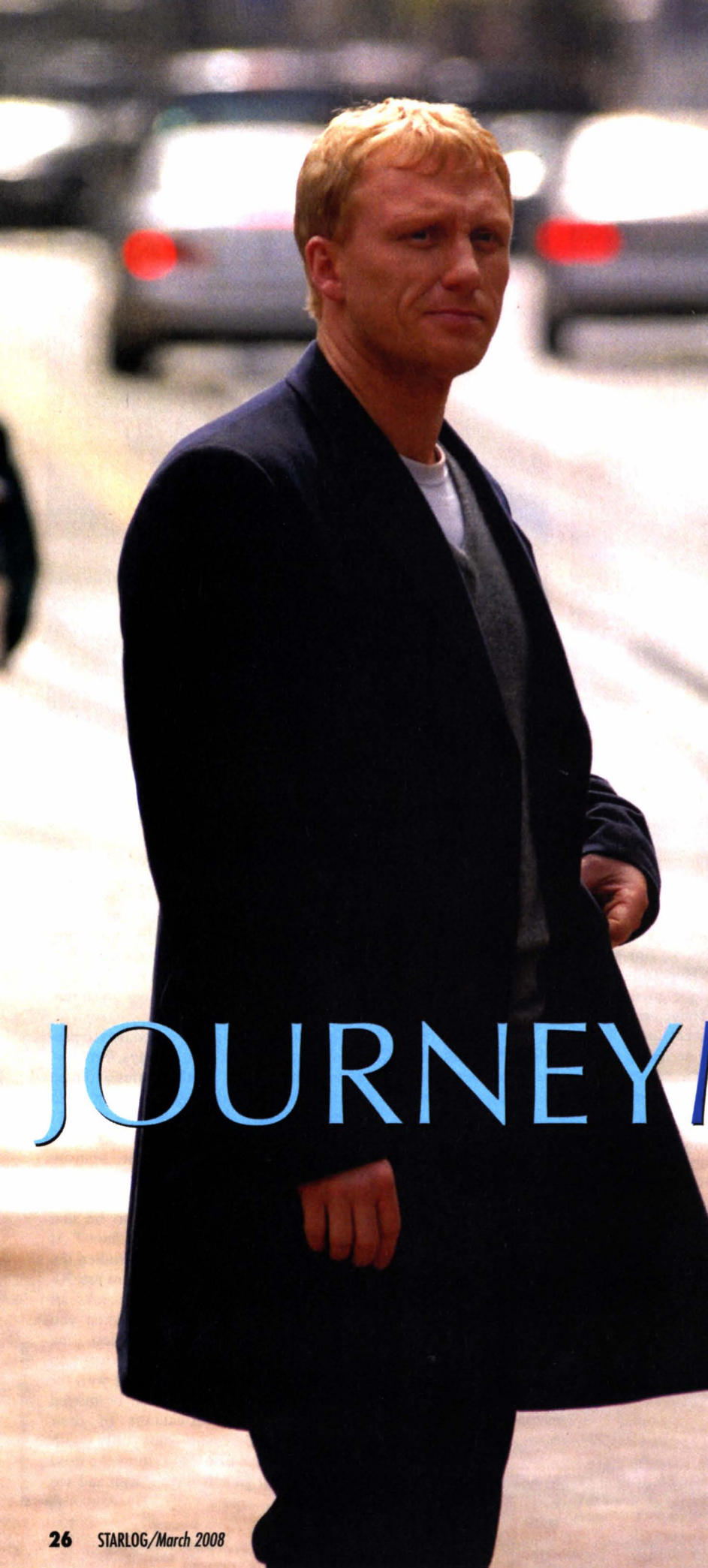
While most of the interiors are filmed in Long Island City, the *New Amsterdam* team tries to fit in as much NYC location shooting as possible.



would debut in fall 2007, Fox bumped it to mid-season. Then, after initially requesting 13 episodes (the pilot and 12 more), the network reduced the order to seven and put the show on hiatus, an unusual move given that it had yet to debut.

New Amsterdam is now scheduled to premiere February 22. It'll air Fridays, 9 p.m.—the same time slot as another series about an eternal detective romancing a human woman in a big city (CBS' *Moonlight*).

"This is one of those [glass] half-full, half-empty conversations," David Manson says. "Clearly, when it first happened, I thought to myself, 'They've lost confidence in us. Is the perception going to be that there's something wrong with the show?' At the end of the day, when you've studied the fall season, and you know that there are 30-plus shows premiering within two weeks, all competing for shelf space, and when you know that Fox hasn't had the easiest time launching shows in the fall, and when you know that the shows that have done well for them have either been launched or moved somewhere to take advantage of their strength at mid-season—not only with *American Idol*, but also *24*—I think we need to see it as a net gain. So, we'll wait and see what happens."



All Other Photos: David Moir

read a bunch of pilots this year," says Kevin McKidd, "and I was attracted to *Journeyman* because of the mixture of science fiction with the emotional, grown-up attitude of the show."

McKidd plays Dan Vasser, a San Francisco investigative journalist who unwillingly begins traveling in time within his own life-line, always returning to his own era. Dan soon learns that this time jaunting is for a reason—he must change something to alter the future, which is *his* present.

"Dan is an interesting character," the actor remarks. "He isn't a cartoon-like heroic figure. Dan is just a guy trying to get on with his life, and this extraordinary thing happens to him. He's trying to assimilate this 'affliction' into being married and being a father, trying to juggle these things and multi-task on an existential level.

"I thought that was an interesting idea for a science fiction show: to *not* have the whiz-bang focusing on the time machine. It focuses on someone who is trapped in an SF scenario, as it were, and attempting to keep a normal life while going through this. That's an interesting and fertile area for a science fiction series to explore. And, hopefully, people watching *Journeyman* get that it's an *adult* science fiction show."

Past Crusades

Although you can't tell it from either NBC's *Journeyman* or *Rome*—the lavish HBO series in which he played Roman citizen Lucius Vorenus—McKidd is Scottish. He was born in Elgin, Scotland in 1973, growing up

Kevin McKidd ponders the past, present & future of his televised time travels.

By BILL WARREN

JOURNEYMAN'S

with his plumber father and secretary mother. When his Dad took him to see *E.T.*, the die was cast. Back then, he wanted Steven Spielberg to drive up to his home and offer him the job of Elliott in a sequel, but more realistically, McKidd knew he wanted to be an actor—and he developed a life-long fondness for SF movies and television.

To time-travel through his own life is a journey all its own. McKidd joined the Moray Youth Theatre, and in college at Edinburgh, he first tried an engineering course, but soon moved on to Queen Margaret College to study acting. He was cast in his first professional role (the lead in the play *The Silver Darlings*) while still in university. His first movie was as the vicious thug Malky Johnson in *Small Faces* (1996), a

All Photos: Copyright 2007 NBC



Photo: Mitch Hasseth

Meet the Journeyman & women (l to r): Gretchen Egolf as Katie Vasser, Charles Henry Wyson as Zack Vasser, Kevin McKidd as Dan Vasser, Reed Diamond as Jack Vasser, Moon Bloodgood as Livia Beale and Brian Howe as Hugh Skillen.

title unfamiliar to most Americans. But his second film role was as the good-natured fitness buff Tommy in the smash hit *Train-spotting* (also 1996).

While that movie launched the careers of his co-stars Ewan McGregor and Robert Carlyle, it did little for McKidd. "That was a great movie, but I didn't work for 18 months

END

after that," he says. "I was working on a building site, shoveling rubble, wondering what happened. Then I got a gig, and the wheels started to move again. It's such a random business at times; you can't take *anything* for granted."

When the wheels moved, they moved McKidd a long distance, and he demonstrated his versatility at every stop along the way. He worked in Scottish movies, British films, television and on stage, in a wide variety of roles. He appeared in *Hideous Kinky*, *The Acid House*, played Count Vronsky in the 2000 BBC-TV production of *Anna Karenina*, worked with John Cusack (whom he greatly admires) in *Max* and co-starred in *16 Years of Alcohol*, *Gunpowder, Treason & Plot* and the TV production of *The Virgin Queen*.

He was also in the Cole Porter biopic *De-Lovely*, and had a good role as one of Gilbert & Sullivan's main singers in *Topsy-Turvy*. The latter was directed by Mike Leigh, who never uses a script, just an outline, with the actors improvising their parts. McKidd surprised Leigh by the depth of research he did for his role of Durward Lely. The actor visited Lely's home and, to his surprise, found an unpublished autobiography of the actor-singer who was the star (as Nanki-Poo) of that premier *Mikado* production which the film chronicled. Additionally, McKidd was used to singing—he has been in the rock band MEMIL on and off for years.

When he was on stage with Diana Rigg in the play *Britannicus*, he met a young woman—and within two weeks knew she would be his wife. When the play moved on to New York, McKidd and the young woman went along with it. He proposed to her in Manhattan, and now they have two children under 10, a boy and a girl. McKidd loves being a father, and soon after moving to LA, like any good Southern California Dad, he took his kids to Disneyland—in the rain.

McKidd has an American accent in *Journeyman*. He was required to speak with a British accent in *Rome*—even though he was essaying a Roman soldier—so he was pleased to return to his Scottish inflection for the upcoming *Made of Honor*. In that film, McKidd plays the wealthy owner of half the

whiskey distilleries in Scotland, alongside Michelle Monaghan and Patrick Dempsey.

Besides *Rome*, STARLOG readers probably know him best as the tough, no-nonsense leader of the *Dog Soldiers*, in which an army squad on maneuvers in the Scottish Highlands runs into a group of werewolves. The actor has high praise for *Dog Soldiers* director Neil Marshall. "He's a friend of mine," McKidd notes. "I saw Neil quite recently, and had dinner with him. He just finished his next movie [*Doomsday*], which he's testing out here [in California]. I think Neil will be Britain's Spielberg before long. He has an eye for popular cinema, and he's going to break out of the horror genre pretty soon—even though that's his first love. When Neil was at film school, all he wanted to make was horror movies, but Neil is inevitably going to break out of that. His spectrum will broaden. Neil is a lovely man, and I wish him all the luck."

Perhaps readers caught McKidd as the green-clad, ginger-whiskered leprechaun Jericho O'Grady in the telemovie *The Magical Legend of the Leprechauns*, which co-starred Colm Meaney and Whoopi Goldberg. On the big screen, McKidd's other notable projects include his turn as the vicious Kolnas in *Hannibal Rising*, and Ridley Scott's Crusades epic *Kingdom of Heaven*, in which he played an English sergeant.

"The role in *Kingdom of Heaven* was very small, but if Ridley Scott asks you to be in a

movie, you do it," McKidd explains. "I was truly honored to work with someone like Ridley, and I would love to work with him again. He's a real visionary, and you see that as soon as you're on the set, because Ridley is running around doing set dressing, has each shot in his head and is adjusting things like teapots on shelves. But Ridley doesn't suffer fools gladly, so you better show up on the day with all your shit together and deliver. If you do that, you're his best friend; if you don't, you're in trouble."

Present Journeys

Most audiences recognize McKidd from *Rome*, which ran for two years on HBO and is now available on DVD. The series focused on Lucius Vorenus (McKidd) and his tough, gladiator-to-be pal Titus Pullo (Ray Stevenson). *Rome* was well-received in the U.S., but was so expensive that the cable channel passed on a third season. However, it made McKidd a known quantity, and when the pilot season for the 2007-08 broadcast year kicked into gear, he was surprised to find producers actually fighting for his services.

"I didn't even know what pilot season was," McKidd admits. "I come from a tradition of European cinema and British television, which doesn't have pilot seasons as such. I never really came out here to work until this year. Suddenly, the phone was ringing off the hook, and agents were saying, 'People really want to meet you.'"

"*Rome* was fantastic, and such an amazing experience. I've been very lucky the last few years—I've worked on quality projects with great people. With *Journeyman*, I was told, '[Executive producers] Kevin Falls and Alex Graves want to meet with you.' We had coffee at the Chateau Marmont, and I loved their script. I read other scripts, but there was something about *Journeyman* that just [clicked with me]. And [the three of us] realized that we're like-minded people with similar sensibilities about the way a show should be run. Because when you're on a show, you would rather be with people you want to see and hang around with. We recognized that we could bear each

other's company for extended periods. Then, shortly after that, they offered *Journeyman* to me, and I accepted pretty quickly."

Journeyman is the sort of SF that McKidd particularly enjoys. In interviews, he has noted that he's drawn to character-intensive genre films like *Donnie Darko* and *Jacob's Ladder*. "Dan is a journalist, and he has that investigative, seat-of-the-pants training, and he uses those instincts rather well," says McKidd. "He arrives in different time periods and learns to quickly adapt, probably more quickly than a normal guy could. But Dan makes mistakes, and he screws up sometimes. He'll think he's on one mission, but actually fate—or whatever it is that's controlling this—has other ideas. So the mission turns out to be something different, and Dan finds this out as he learns, makes mistakes and realizes what he's meant to do.

"I like that. Most TV shows focus on the hero being almost omnipotent—of being able to see all and have all the answers. I appreciate that Dan isn't like that, but he strives to be. He's an emotional guy who is sensitive about

As if his life isn't complicated enough, Dan must deal with his brother Jack's past relationship with his wife Katie.

Coincidentally, "Game Three" was *Journeyman's* episode three. In that show, Dan travels back to 1989 when the San Francisco earthquake took place.

Photo: Mitch Hasseth



his wife's past relationship with his brother, which is complicated. And Dan retains feelings for Livia. She was his first love, really, and suddenly she's essentially back from the dead. Dan is trying to do the right thing by his family, but it's sometimes hard for him. Kevin has done a good job of creating a three-dimensional guy. Hopefully, audiences empathize with Dan. He has done wrongs in his past, but he's trying to do right now."

Dan is a recovering gambling addict, which pops up in episodes from time to time. "His past took a bad turn, and he hit rock bottom," McKidd elaborates. "Dan has bounced back from that, which is a universal feeling. *Journeyman* is about the chance meetings in this world that can throw your life into a spin. That's another thing I love about the show: It deals with the theme of the random nature of life, but how there's also some strange kind of pattern to it."

McKidd is also thankful that Dan's jour-



Although McKidd has appeared in British TV series and films, as well as starred in HBO's *Rome*, the actor had no clue what "pilot season" was in the U.S.

Livia is Dan's ex-fiancée. She was presumed dead after a plane crash, but Dan encounters her in the past, where she reveals that she travels through time, too.

continually crunching—Dan keeps going back to the same 10 minutes. So there's a great deal of imaginative play with the timeline."

Future Odysseys

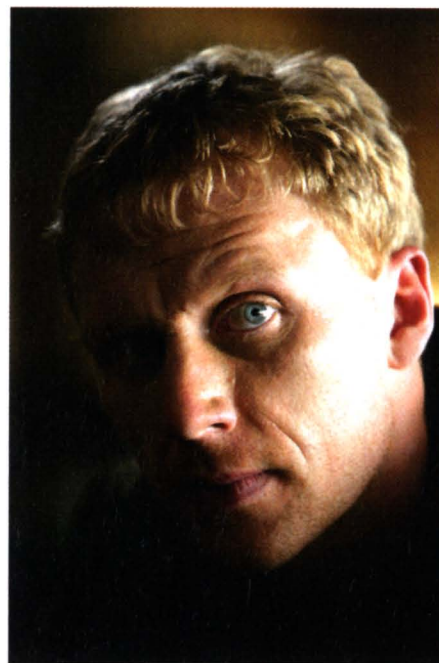
Viewers are only beginning to learn what is going on with Dan's former love Livia (Moon Bloodgood), whom he—and everyone else—thinks died in a plane crash. But when Dan skips back in time, he often encounters a very-much-alive Livia. "We find out that she's living somewhere," reveals McKidd. "In the same way that Dan lives in 2007, Livia has a timeline in a different decade. She has her own life and her own stuff going on, the usual commitments—not leaving the kettle on, or the cookies in the oven, that sort of thing."

As for the production side of the equation, McKidd extols, "The entire cast feels so lucky to be working with a team who are such gentlemen, very talented and have such a breadth of experience and knowledge. They have a true gift for drama, interesting drama, on a show that isn't cookie-cutter. We strive, every day, to *not* go down the obvious route. I'm honored to be working for these people."

McKidd is also happy to be working with Gretchen Egolf, who plays Dan's wife, Katie. "She's fantastic, and she brings amazing sensitivity to that role," he lauds. "It's tough to play a time traveler's wife, but Gretchen finds the fun, humanity and truthful emotional aspects in Katie. And Katie has become quite *sang froid* about [Dan's disappearances]. She realizes that there's nothing either of them can do about it. They're at the mercy of fate. What are they going to do: drive themselves crazy, or try to ride things out? Between the two of them, it becomes something almost akin to trench humor."

Of the shows aired so far, one of McKidd's favorites is episode nine, in which Dan goes back only a few years, but has to avoid encountering himself in the past—even though the person he has to help is *himself*. "That episode is fantastic, a bookend of a two-parter where a predator shoots Dan in the chest during the teaser. Dan travels to the past, injured and dying, while the predatory character keeps Katie hostage in the house. It's a really dark, interesting episode."

The Writers Guild of America strike had just begun as this interview took place—and the future of *Journeyman*, already rocked by fading ratings, seems a bit shaky. It's in real danger of cancellation at any time (perhaps even *before* this article sees print). "The writers' strike is tough, because nobody knows what the future holds for *anybody* right now," says McKidd. "But the network realizes that *Journeyman* is a quality and intelligent show. I haven't heard anything about [it being cancelled], but I hope it carries on. Sadly, I'm just



Kevin Falls doesn't think McKidd is just a *Journeyman* actor. The series co-creator is positive that McKidd is on his way to becoming a star.

an actor."

Succeed or fail, *Journeyman* has moved McKidd to a new position in his career. "I take what comes at face value. I focus on the moment—this is what I'm doing *now*," he comments. "I don't make choices with [stardom] in mind. More people will see me in the show, and hopefully that gets me more work. The tough thing about being an actor is that no matter how much experience you have and how many people have watched you, you still have to go into that room and audition and get the part. I don't think that ever changes—but I hope it gets better."

"Actors sometimes become too precious about the things we choose, and kind of stall our own careers, because we're thinking too much like a chess game, trying to work out 10 moves ahead. That's fair enough, but I like to get up each day and *act*. I enjoy being on a set, doing my job, learning and getting better. I love spending time in front of a camera and playing a character. That has always been my work ethic."

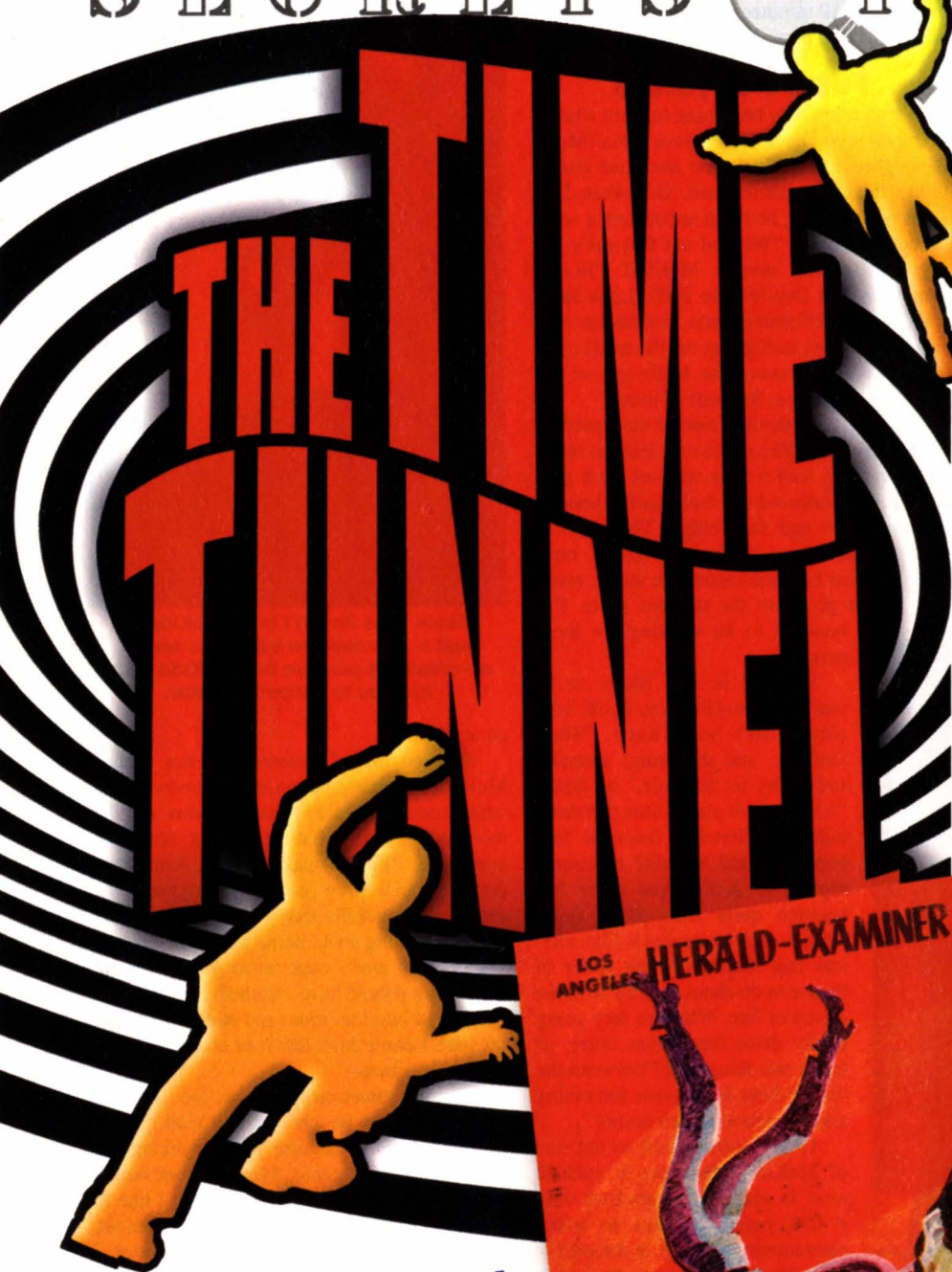
Beyond *Journeyman*, the Internet has been hammered with rumors about McKidd landing the lead in the upcoming *Thor* movie. "That's kind of on the boil," he admits. "They've now said that they want to go with someone *younger*. But I like the script, and I would be interested in doing it. I think there's another role they're considering me for, but that's definitely in the mix."

Unfortunately, McKidd has to rush back to the set—in fact, the cell phone he's talking on cuts off when he enters the soundstage. But the actor will be back. As Kevin Falls told STARLOG, whether *Journeyman* is a hit or not, Kevin McKidd is sure to become a star. And after a chat with the intelligent, thoughtful actor and watching him on the show, it's hard to disagree.



neys into the past don't always follow the same format: He isn't always out to prevent a death—accidental or otherwise. *Journeyman* is far from predictable. "There are times when Dan will go into the past for three hours, and then he comes back to the present and only 15 minutes have passed," says McKidd. "There's an elasticity to time that we play with on our show. The writers know what is controlling this thing, and Elliot Langley [a mysterious scientist] seems to know, but Dan certainly doesn't. But whatever it is, we play with time in a much more dynamic way than traditional theories. There's an episode where time is

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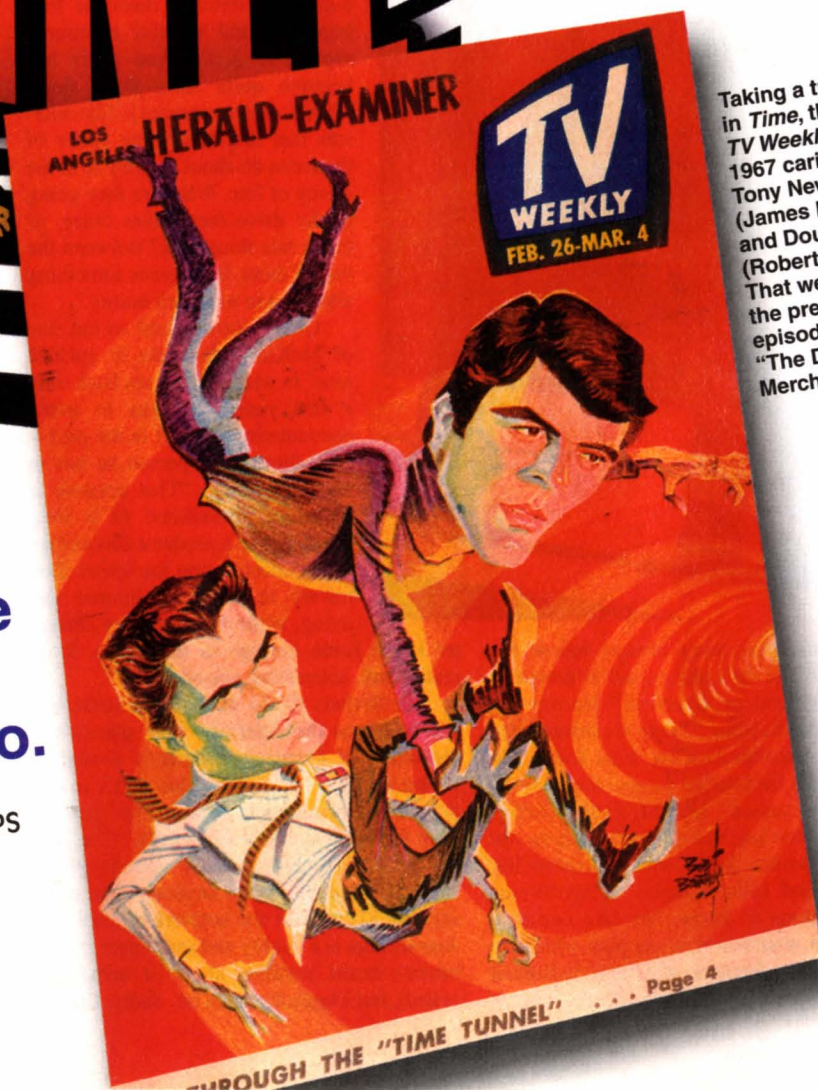


It was stunning—it played more like a feature film than a TV show,” recalls former ABC Network President Thomas Moore about Irwin Allen’s *Time Tunnel* pilot, in which two scientists (James Darren, Robert Colbert) use a time machine to plunge back to the *Titanic* in April 1912, hours before the ocean liner’s tragic sinking.

As TV’s most expensive pilot of 1966, much of the budget of “Rendezvous With Yesterday” went into creating the dazzling Time Tunnel complex, secretly housed under the Arizona desert. ABC’s President from 1963-68, Moore was a longtime SF fan. After screening the pilot with fellow executives, he recalls, “We had a great deal of excitement about putting the series on the schedule.”

At the time, ABC was a struggling, third-place network trying to compete by offering unique, innovative programming. “TV Westerns were dying, and SF was the perfect genre with which to attract viewers,” says Moore. “Irwin Allen was a brilliant, take-charge producer, and he hired the best people to work for him. He loved special effects, and those costs were *Time Tunnel*’s biggest detriment. It’s remarkable what he accomplished with limited technology and modest budgets.”

Tony Newman (Darren) and Doug Phillips (Colbert) tumbled into a new era every week, including 1519 Mexico, the French Revolution (1793) and WWI Italy (1915).



Taking a trip back in *Time*, this *TV Weekly* from 1967 caricatures Tony Newman (James Darren) and Doug Phillips (Robert Colbert). That week saw the premiere of episode #25, “The Death Merchant.”

Revealed at last!
Irwin Allen’s
SF classic made
history. And
rearranged it, too.

BY MARK PHILLIPS

Critics always harped that the pair ended up in historic time periods, but since the Tunnel's computer was directing the time travelers' journeys, it made sense that its research database was tapping into history's hot spots. Meanwhile, the Tunnel's lab team (Lee Meriwether, Whit Bissell and John Zaremba) aided the travelers with information while trying in vain to retrieve them.

Allen developed a reputation as a penny pincher, but Moore strongly refutes that characterization. "Irwin loved to spend money, and he would have spent *more* had Fox not complained to us about Irwin's poor management of budgets," he says. "The studio was afraid he was going to bankrupt them!"

As a result, Allen increasingly relied on money-saving techniques, such as using stock footage from films like *Destination Moon* and *Prince Valiant*. Even *Time Tunnel*'s cliffhanger endings were devised to cut costs, replayed as the next show's opening.

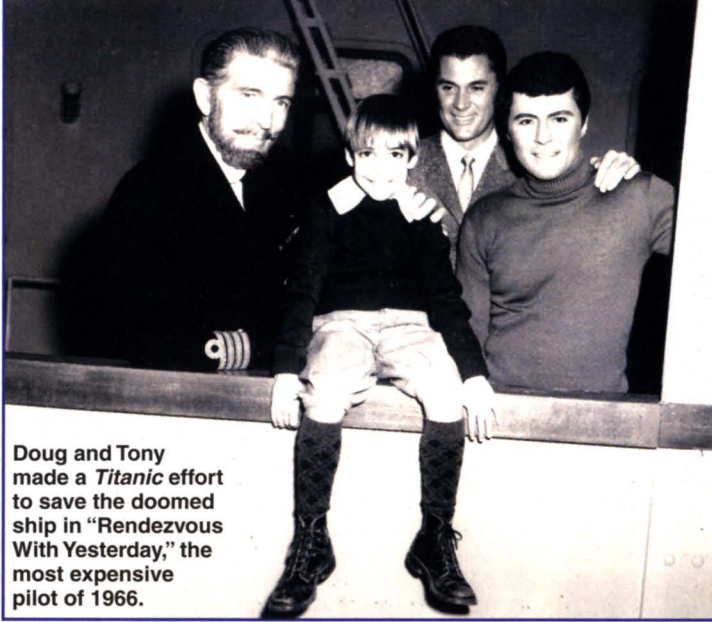
Moore felt the series had "an excellent opportunity" for success. Scheduled Fridays at 8 p.m., with *The Green Hornet* as its lead-in, the series' early ratings were encouraging. A nationwide poll of high school students ranked it as their third favorite new show, behind *Star Trek* and *That Girl*. But it never had the respect of literary SF fans.

When the pilot was screened at Tricon-World Con in Cleveland, Ohio, days before its network debut, the late SF novelist Jerry Sohl recalled that the reaction was mixed. "The fans had very high standards for televised science fiction," he said. "When they saw thousands of soldiers running up and down the Time Tunnel corridors with sirens blaring, the fans hooted and booed. Those scenes were over-the-top spectacle rather than SF."

Andrew I. Porter, the assistant editor of *Fantasy & Science Fiction* magazine (and later a Hugo winner for his semi-prozine *Algol* in 1974), was a 20-year-old Tricon attendee in 1966. "The one thing I remember from *Time Tunnel* was that hilarious bit when they're trying to convince the *Titanic* captain to turn around or slow down or something by holding up a copy of the newspaper that says, 'Titanic sinks.' Yeah, *that* oughta do it. *Star Trek* made a much bigger impression on fans than *Time Tunnel* did."

Revising History

Susan Hampshire was "thrilled to be a part of *Time Tunnel*." She played Althea Hall, the schoolteacher aboard the *Titanic*. The British actress still receives mail from fans about her



Doug and Tony made a *Titanic* effort to save the doomed ship in "Rendezvous With Yesterday," the most expensive pilot of 1966.

role. "It has definitely become a cult show."

Other notable guest stars included Tom Skerritt, John Saxon, Carroll O'Connor, Richard Jaeckel and Ellen Burstyn, who devoted a page of her autobiography to memories of the show. There were also appearances by veterans such as Michael Rennie, Victor Jory, Jim Davis and Gary Merrill.

Dennis Hopper had a prominent role in the pilot as the conniving *Titanic* passenger William Tabor, who tries to sneak aboard a lifeboat dressed as a woman. Doug rips off Tabor's shawl, exposing him.



So what did people see when they looked at these *Time Tunnel* View-Master reels? Stereoscopic images from the first episode.

Hopper's role was cut out due to running time issues, but his deleted scenes are included in the *Time Tunnel* DVD extras. And Dan O'Herlihy was originally cast as Merlin the Magician in a later episode, but quit two days into filming due to artistic differences. Christopher Cary replaced him.

The *Time Tunnel* casting fell primarily to Larry Stewart, who later directed episodes of *The Bionic Woman* and *Buck Rogers*. "Irwin loved big-name movie stars, and he wanted them on his TV shows," Stewart says. "I had to explain to him that feature film actors require feature film *salaries*. It was very frus-

trating when Irwin's friends like Red Buttons, Edward G. Robinson or Groucho Marx visited the set and were genuinely excited by what we were doing, but they wouldn't even consider doing guest appearances. I had a difficult time even getting journeyman actors to do shows.

"Fred Gwynne was very offended when we approached him to do *Lost in Space*. He took it as an insult. Many actors felt Irwin's shows—particularly *Lost in Space* and *Land of the Giants*—were beneath them and could hurt their careers. At Irwin's bequest, Richard Basehart did

a cameo on *Lost in Space* ["The Derelict"], but Basehart was adamant that nobody find out. We had Cyd Charisse signed up to do *Land of the Giants* ["Doomsday"], but at the last minute she got cold feet. Francine York replaced her."

Stewart had his own actor favorites. "Guys like John Crawford and Malachi Throne were terrific," he says. "They weren't household names, but they were wonderful actors. They brought a real energy to their performances. When we cast the Krakatoa episode, Irwin's first choice as the scientist was Walter Pidgeon. Walter was interested, but was way out of our price range. We also tried for Donald Pleasence and Edward Mulhare. We almost got Joseph Cotten, another of Irwin's friends. We ended up signing Torin Thatcher, someone we could afford, and he did a fine job. We had lots of wonderful actors on *Time Tunnel*, because they love to play people from history. The show wasn't always perceived as SF, and that



"Rendezvous With Yesterday" also got the coloring book treatment. Although it only aired for one season, the series lives on, preserved in a two-volume DVD set.

helped, because that genre suffered from a real stigma at the time. And unlike *Lost in Space* and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, we didn't have to convince them to act with monsters!"

Donald Harron—who appeared on shows such as *The Invaders* and *The Outer Limits*—starred as the titular hero in "The Revenge of Robin Hood." "It was refreshing to play a character who smiled," he says. "I had been cast in grim roles, because I have a naturally worried-looking face. But as Robin Hood, I didn't have to frown. My strongest memory was going to lunch on Sunset Boulevard and I had

this big, bloody gash on my forehead. It was fake, but it looked very realistic. People were pointing and staring at me. I was tutored in the swordfighting scenes by a man [Paul Stader] who had served as Errol Flynn's stand-in for all of those swashbuckling movies. James Darren was one of the wittiest people I've ever met. It's too bad he didn't get a chance to play more comedy."

In "The Alamo," Tony and Doug desperately try to convince Colonel William Travis (Rhodes Reason) to evacuate the wounded from the besieged Texas fortress in 1836 before 6,000 Mexican soldiers kill Travis and his 186 men. "My wife Jeri and I visited San Antonio last year, and seeing the real-life Alamo was quite an experience," says Reason. "I wanted to find the exact location where Colonel Travis had been killed in battle. I located it at the northeast corner, and said to my wife, in a rather loud voice, 'This is where I was killed.' That brought a few stares from people! Perhaps they thought I had gone around the bend."

Reason says *Time Tunnel* had several factors in its favor. "Going back in time and depicting historical events accurately was both educational and entertaining," he remarks. "That juxtaposition of history and how it might be changed by people from the future was interesting to watch. Colonel Travis being brought into the future and witnessing his own demise on the Tunnel's screen was such an occurrence."

Safety procedures ensured that Reason wasn't burned, blinded or deafened by the Tunnel's pyrotechnics. "Before the scene began, I had to stand in the Tunnel with my eyes closed and my hands covering my ears," he explains. "After the Tunnel's explosions went off behind me, with the giant arc lights flashing, I walked through the smoke, into the Tunnel's laboratory, where I expressed Travis' bewilderment of being in the future."

In addition to enjoying working with Darren and Colbert ("Robert and I were golfing buddies long before the series, and we still keep in touch"), he praises Allen. "Irwin was very hands-on during the whole series, and he

Some actors didn't want to guest on the show, but John Doucette (middle) had no problem playing Ulysses in the Siege of Troy-set "Revenge of the Gods."



Ellis St. Joseph penned two *Time Tunnels*. He's especially proud of "The Day the Sky Fell In," in which Tony confronts not only himself as a kid (Sheldon Golomb), but his Dad's 1941 death at Pearl Harbor.

personally selected his guest stars," Reason offers. "He was a gentleman, and he took great pride in the shows he produced."

Reason returned to play Joshua—the Israelite leader in 1200 B.C.—in writer Ellis St. Joseph's "Walls of Jericho." "Rhodes was magnificent in his all-too-brief scenes," St. Joseph lauded in 1995. "He gave a superb performance that helped the episode immeasurably."

Reason is gratified at the writer's praise. "I appreciate hearing that," he says. "It was daunting to play a Biblical character of such magnitude. I'm glad I was able to pull it off effectively. I've received many fan letters as a result of those two roles. *Time Tunnel* was a very popular series and great fun to do."

Recalling History

An early episode written by St. Joseph, "The Day the Sky Fell In," received the most acclaim. Tony and Doug materialize at Hawaii, 1941, a day before the devastating attack on the U.S. Navy by Japanese planes.

Tony's father was stationed at Pearl Harbor, and was reported missing after the attack.

"I stayed as close to recorded history as possible," says St. Joseph, who watched the episode again in 1995. "Seeing it years later, it was the perfect production. Like all of *Time Tunnel*'s episodes, it was beautifully produced and photographed. I'm very proud of it."

A production memo emphasized that Tony's father must have a "believable, ordinary quality." Gene Hackman was considered for the role, but when Linden Chiles was cast, he knew it was special. "I'm not a TV fan," he says. "I don't even own a TV set. But this was a fine script and an unusual story. James and I worked together to make the scenes where the son cradles his dying father as real as possible." Tony weeps over his mortally injured father, who now realizes that this is his son from the future. When director William Hale ran behind schedule, Allen took over. "Irwin wasn't a good director," says Chiles. "We were happy when Billy returned."

Memos on the first draft of the script

Creator Irwin Allen had a reputation as a penny pincher, but a tremendous amount of *Time* and money were spent building the Tunnel complex.



Jeez, Tony and Doug sure had a knack for showing up just in time for an important historical event. In "Massacre," the Project Tic-Toc duo find themselves in the Battle of the Little Bighorn.



reflect intense scrutiny by story editor Arthur Weiss. "There's a lack of excitement in this story," he observed. "The Time Tunnel scientists do nothing but react to stock footage of Japanese planes! And the Tunnel itself plays no important role in the story."

Weiss vetoed a fancifully ludicrous idea of having a Japanese Zero fly into the Tunnel and crash-land. Instead, Weiss noted to Allen, "Why not have the Tunnel send back photos of the impending attack to the Commander at Pearl Harbor? Or have the Tunnel bring back a top military leader from 1941 and prove to him that the Japanese will strike the islands?"

To enliven *Time Tunnel's* ratings midway through its run, production associate Hal Graham devised "The New Concept," a writers' guideline to create more alien and futuristic storylines. In "Chase Through Time," Robert Duvall plays a traitorous technician named Nimon, who kills a scientist (Hal Torey), plants a nuclear bomb in the Tunnel complex and then escapes to 1,000,000 A.D. Weiss liked Carey Wilber's script but was concerned by Graham's proposed changes. "This story is fine as it is," Weiss stated. "It's more 'far out' than any *Time Tunnel* ever written. It's futuristic, it has a heavy and ends in a prehistoric era with dinosaurs. It already conforms to our New Concept formula."

Weiss also objected to making Nimon a space invader. "Turning Nimon into an alien is a mistake. To do so will require major revisions to this character, and the resultant story changes will jeopardize preparations for filming. The secondary character of Vokar [Nimon's silver-skinned ally] is already the equivalent of an alien." Weiss won his argument, and "Chase Through Time" ends with the human Nimon meeting a horrific fate at the stingers of giant prehistoric bees.

Another alien adventure, "Town of Terror," had the time travelers join up with a courageous young woman (Heather Young) to battle blue-skinned invaders in New England, 1978. Originally, the script was set in 1986, and associate producer Jerry Briskin grimaced, "Where do I begin? There's a lack of characterization, many script holes, numerous story

inconsistencies and unbelievable situations. Since we're dealing with 1986, what will the policeman's futuristic car look like? Such a vehicle means a mockup that will require additional budget requirements."

Briskin suggested dropping an elaborate matte painting that would depict the aliens' vast control complex. "The dialogue also needs a complete going over, starting with page one," Briskin urged. "This corny, small-town dialogue will get us nothing but laughs." Changes were made, and "Town of Terror" was

Time Tunnel's last episode, airing in April 1967. The show was over.

Restoring History

The series' 30 episodes have played around the world for more than 40 years, but its premature cancellation was disappointing to fans. Although *Time Tunnel* was ABC's highest-rated show on Friday nights for that year (outranking *Green Hornet* and *12 O'Clock High*), its audience declined. Its seasonal average ended with a 15.0 rating, just shy of the 16.0 baseline then needed for renewal. Nevertheless, the network OKed a second year (1967-68) to play Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. That renewal was rescinded at the last minute in favor of a new series, *The Legend of Custer*.

"*Time Tunnel* was very successful in reaching the six- to 18-year-olds," notes Moore. "That audience was the most marketable



Tony and Doug were transported to the comics scene in this four-color Gold Key publication. Their exploits always delighted fans.

group in the advertising community at the time. The show's ratings began promisingly, and it was well-received critically. But it did not deliver the general, national audience numbers necessary for it to continue." A persistent myth is that Moore left ABC in 1967, and that resulted in *Time Tunnel's* cancellation. Moore denies this, and confirms he remained with the network until 1968.

In a roundtable discussion of SF TV with Rod Serling and Gene Roddenberry a year later, Allen blamed *Time Tunnel's* demise on "an unfortunate time slot." Allen had already commissioned his writers and artists to create 20 storylines and illustrations for Season Two. Some of these had already been rejected during the first year, such as Charles Bennett's "Murder-Go-Round." In that story, Tony and Doug join up with British Intelligence in WWII London to thwart terrorist bombings by the Nazis.

Also considered was Leonard Stadd's story of an overpopulated future, in which Tony and Doug find the old Time Tunnel housed in a subterranean museum. A memo from Weiss for another story, "Prehistoric Future," raved, "This could be one of our best shows ever!" Tony and Doug befriend a sensitive cave girl in a land of fierce tribal warriors and volcanoes. It ends with them finding (pre-*Planet of the Apes*) the apocalyptic ruins of New York City and realizing that this is the far-future. Allen's 1967-68 storylines also included visits with King Tut, Richard the Lionhearted, Attila the Hun, Christopher Columbus, a trip to Atlantis, a futuristic "Holocaust Under the Sea" and script titles such as "Battle of the Galaxies," "Missile from Centauri VI" and "Plunge to the End of Time."

For the rest of his life, Allen remained fascinated by time travel, and he produced the highly rated TV movie *Time Travelers* (1976), where Sam Groom and Tom Hallick played scientists who travel back to Chicago, 1871 to solve a medical mystery. Another Allen effort, *Time Project* (1982), could be considered "the godson of *Time Tunnel*." Lt. Col. Casey Redman and Dr. Lucas Royce use a time capsule called Kronos to travel one million years into the future to learn how humanity solved the energy crisis. They meet Omega, the master of the time stream. They also travel back to 1896, a trip that gives Redman the creeps. "We're walking into a world of ghosts!" he bristles.

A memo from Allen notes, "We want to evoke the spirit of *Time Tunnel*, yet must acknowledge the sophistication of today's audiences." This included something Tony and Doug never had—a time traveler Prime Directive: "Under no condition may you ever tamper with the past." *Time Project* ended on the storyboard stage after a similar show on NBC, *Voyagers!*, failed during the 1982-83 season.

In 1989, Allen (who died in 1991) admitted that *Time Tunnel* was his favorite series. Writer Ellis St. Joseph perhaps summed it up best when he said, "I will be forever grateful to Irwin for allowing me to write for such a wonderfully imaginative and unusual TV series."★



The show chronicles the exploits of (l to r) Cameron (Summer Glau), Sarah (Lena Headey), John Connor (Thomas Dekker) and James Ellison (Richard T. Jones).

The unknown future rolls toward us. I face it for the first time with a sense of hope, because if a machine, a Terminator, can learn the value of human life, maybe we can, too."

That narration by Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton)—set to an image of asphalt rolling by in a car's headlights—brought *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* to a close in 1991. Sarah had reason to think positively: The Terminator threat seemed to have been terminated once and for all. However, the future has turned out to be less hopeful than Sarah expected. Fox's new mid-season show *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*—which opens with a similar shot of striped pavement rolling by—picks up the story four years after the events of *T2*. The show premieres January 13 (Sunday, 8 p.m.) and then shifts to its regular time slot (Mondays, 9 p.m.) January 14.

The killing machines are back, so Sarah and her son, John, are constantly on the move, fearful of another attack. Sarah is consumed by the need to remain hyper-vigilant at all

times and protect her son from any danger. Robbed of a normal family existence, it's not surprising that mother and son find their relationship strained. What's more, Sarah must allow Cameron, a "good" Terminator, into their lives—the better to assure that John fulfills his destiny as leader of tomorrow's Resistance. Cameron sends all three of them forward in time to the year 2007, hoping to get the upper hand on Skynet.

That's a lot for anyone to endure, even the tough-as-nails Sarah Connor. "There's a surface to Sarah which sort of belies what is really going on beneath," offers *300*'s Lena Headey, who takes over the role in the TV show. "I think she could possibly go crazy. She's just barely hanging on to her sanity. Sarah is an ordinary woman in extraordinary circumstances, through which she develops into a very complex human being.

"Women are good at holding a thousand things together. They have a strength that goes deeper than most men. Women can deal on many, many levels. You know the saying,

"Behind every good man is a fantastic woman"—I believe there's truth in that. Sarah is just a great character. She's an interesting, layered, strong woman. And that's always appealing."

Mother of Tomorrow

The Sarah Connor Chronicles—which also stars Thomas (*Heroes*) Dekker as John Connor, Summer (*Firefly*) Glau as Cameron (see page 38) and Richard T. Jones as FBI agent James Ellison—takes all of its cues from the second film, while steering clear of any connection to *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (2003). After all, time is fluid in the *Terminator* Universe, and the events of *T3* seem to belong to an alternate (and thus ignorable) timeline.

Headey hasn't even seen the third film. In fact, she only saw *T2* "all the way through" after the series started lensing. "I watched it with Thomas about four weeks ago," she reports. "But I knew the *Terminator* premise [before that], and it's sort of current with

FF ARE YOU SARAH CONNOR?"

By BILL FLORENCE

where we are now as far as technological developments go. The notion of man vs. machine is quite relevant. I understand it on an emotional level. The second movie is the most informative one [for our series].”

She calls the trio of Sarah, John and Cameron a “dysfunctional family.” “Sarah loves her son above and beyond [the norm] for many different reasons,” Headey remarks. “John is the key to the survival of mankind, so there’s an added pressure. Meanwhile, Sarah is learning to trust Cameron, who is sort of her adopted daughter. Cameron has to be in the family, and although Sarah *isn’t* happy about that, they learn to live with each other.”

If *Terminator* fans are to embrace the new show, they will have to get over the recasting of Sarah and John. Headey says she is working hard to make the TV Sarah her own while not ignoring Hamilton’s performance. “There are some viewers who are never going to let me in as Sarah Connor, and I can’t do much to change that,” she reflects. “I’m still giving Sarah the strength that the original character had.

“Since we’re doing an hour every week, there are going to be developments and differences for her [compared to the movies’ Sarah]. People may say, ‘That’s not Sarah Connor!’ But that’s because I’m doing 22 hours of this, not just two. To hold the audience’s interest and develop the characters and make things interesting, Sarah must go places that the films never went. But Linda Hamilton’s portrayal—particularly in the second movie—*does* influence my take on the character. Sarah has been pushed to her limits as a female and as a human being.”

The complexity of the role, and the physicality of the show in general, were two elements that attracted Headey, 34, to *The Sarah Connor Chronicles*. “The pilot script [by Josh Friedman] was great, and we continue to get new scripts and ideas that are intriguing,” she declares. “I love all the physical stuff I get to do on this series. Plus, Sarah is pretty intense. If she were a real person, I would have to get her drunk or something to get her to lighten up. She has *a lot* on her plate.”

One of the challenges she faces in playing Sarah is to avoid being “too dramatic,” Headey says. “You know, screaming and crying and other emotional extremities are interesting, but for now, for this first season, I want to keep a lid on Sarah. I’m trying to let her be interesting in a subtle way. We’re just finding out where we [the charac-

Yes, she is Sarah Connor. Headey takes over Linda Hamilton’s role in the new Fox series *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*.

Pushed to the limits, Lena Headey faces a TV tomorrow filled with Terminators.





Photo: R. Foreman

"She's just barely holding onto her sanity" is how Headey describes Sarah. The brooding mother has the burden of what may come tomorrow resting on her shoulders.



Photo: Patrick Ecclestine

Her greatest responsibility is protecting her son John, the future leader of the Resistance—and eventual savior of mankind.

ters] all fit and who we are. We need to have somewhere to go with them, so we want to keep a few surprises in store."

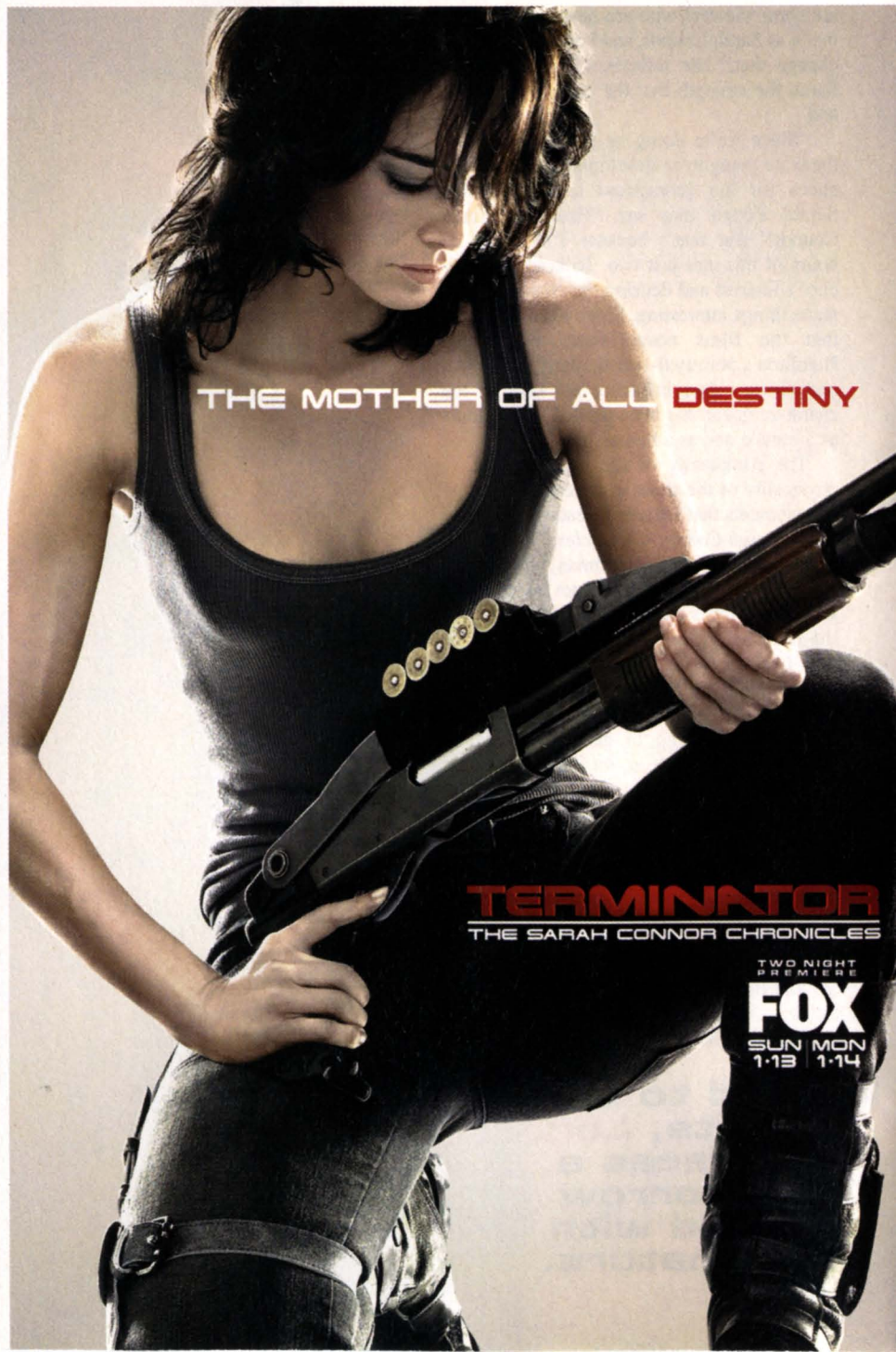
Headey pauses a moment, reflecting on the challenges in acting, and then ventures that she isn't quite comfortable with the notion that acting includes challenges. "It's a strange word, 'challenging,' because it's *not* challenging—it's a great job," she replies. "If there's anything challenging about it, it's focusing and concentrating when you're tired. I guess you could say that playing Sarah is challenging in a fabulous way, because I get to work out all these things—like how to make it brilliant, hopefully. I feel really blessed to have this job."

The series' early episodes are intensely

dire and grim, as any story about killer robots and the end of humanity is bound to be. There's nary a smile or joke in sight. However, Headey insists that lighter moments are coming. "Again, you need somewhere to go. There needs to be humor in this show, but we don't want to make it lighter right now," she muses. "Actually, there are humorous moments in the early episodes, but it depends on what you think is funny."

"On the set, when we're filming, we're like, 'This is really funny,' but perhaps the audience won't see it that way. For example, we throw Cameron through a window [in the second episode "Gnothi Seauton"]. There's a look between John and Sarah when they do it, and Sarah's like, 'Screw you and your friend.'

Headey based her character on the tough, intense and militant Sarah seen in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*.





While she didn't get to join the battle in *300*, Headey is making up for it with her very physical performance in this TV series.



Some of her genre experiences haven't been that great. However, Headey had an "awesome" time on Zack Snyder's *300*.

Those little moments may not be outright hilarious, but I don't believe we should be doing hilarious right now."

Woman of Yesterday

As grim as things are on screen, life on the *Sarah Connor Chronicles* set seems to be just the opposite. "The mood is very relaxed," Headey notes. "We all get on wonderfully. I love Thomas and Summer. Thomas is like someone I've known for my entire life, and possibly previous existences, too. We have a great bond, which just happened naturally. He's an amazing man, a ball of energy."

"And Summer is an extraordinary being. I've never met anyone like her. She has been given this role where she's playing a robot, and yet you fall in love with her. She's quite something, Miss Glau. I'm incredibly fond and protective of the two of them. The material is so serious, but we screw around [when the cameras aren't rolling]. We're all very silly and camp. We usually rehearse in a musical style, and then we bring it back down."

Considering her own part in the behind-the-scenes hijinks, Headey quips, "I'm hilariously funny. I don't think Sarah is particularly humorous, though. Her humor comes out by accident. If you ever asked her to stand up and make a joke, it would probably be awful. But I'm a comic genius."

Headey is reticent to discuss upcoming episodes except to say that, "There are lots of interesting guest stars, and some unexpected new and old appearances. And we have some amazing action," she attests. "Our action sequences are of feature-film quality, and that's exciting. It's like we're shooting a movie every eight days. Plus, I'm getting some great opportunities to develop Sarah. I love the episode we just shot, 'Heavy Metal.' It's so crazy! We did lots of location stuff for that one, and it's very action-packed."

Before *The Sarah Connor Chronicles*, Headey co-starred in the movie adaptation of *300*, the Frank Miller-Lynn Varley graphic novel. "That was awesome," she says of her time making the film. Headey was also in director Terry Gilliam's *The Brothers Grimm* (2005), but her remarks about that experience are altogether different. "It was *grim*," she says tersely. Any reason why? Headey's laconic reply: "Because Terry Gilliam is a shit!"

Another 2005 genre film that featured the actress was *The Cave*, about bloodthirsty creatures terrorizing divers in an underwater cave. "Thank God there wasn't a sequel," Headey mutters.

In 2008, movie audiences can see Headey in *The Broken*, writer-director Sean Ellis' psychological thriller about a woman who encounters herself on a busy London street.

"It's finished, and I'm about to go see it for the first time," Headey remarks. "*The Broken* was a tough shoot, but I'm hoping it will be something quite original."

Offering some final thoughts on why she expects *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles* to be a hit with viewers, Lena Headey observes, "We're bringing an action-suspense drama to TV that is unique and has an intriguing plot. The scripts are so exciting, and hopefully we'll transfer that excitement to the screen. The series has this huge sense of the unknown going on, which is pretty cool. Even if I had nothing to do with the show, I would watch it and probably get hooked!"

Design & Layout: Heiner Fell



Pull up a seat and see the *Chronicles* unfold. "Even if I had nothing to do with the show, I would watch it!" Headey says.

John Connor: "What model are you? Are you new? You seem...different."

Cameron: "I am."

The Terminator was once synonymous with the physical brawn and square-jawed visage of Arnold Schwarzenegger. Now, the latest model in Terminators can be seen in the new Fox series *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles* as played by Summer Glau, who couldn't be more different from the former bodybuilding champion. Pretty, petite and younger in appearance than her 26 years, Glau is an unusual choice to succeed Schwarzenegger as an unstoppable machine from the future whose only purpose is to protect John Connor (Thomas Dekker). Glau herself admits that, initially, she wasn't sure she was right for the part of the Terminator dubbed Cameron.



Sarah Connor (Lena Headey), John Connor (Thomas Dekker) and Cameron (Summer Glau) star in Fox's *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*.

Essaying a new kind of Terminator, **Summer Glau** adds heart & humanity to tomorrow's war.

“COME WITH ME IF YOU WANT TO LIVE”
BY BILL FLORENCE

"When I first got the sides to audition for the series, I was very reluctant," reveals Glau, who's enjoying a rare day off from the set. "I felt that I did not fit the profile of the kind of person I would choose for a girl Terminator—you know, sort of a 'Wonder Woman' type. I thought, 'I'm going to look silly, and they're going to laugh at me.' That was before I found out that Josh Friedman had written it.

"Once I got to the audition [and saw him there], I wished I had prepared something brilliant to show him, because I respect him so much. David Nutter, who directed our pilot and first episode, was there, too. After working with them and talking about what sort of a Terminator they wanted Cameron to be, I fell in love with the part. From that point on, I *really* wanted to do it."

With a sheepish laugh, Glau confesses that she hadn't actually seen any of the *Terminator* films when she was cast as Cameron. "None of them," she discloses. "My Dad said, 'I cannot believe my daughter hasn't seen the *Terminator* movies, and now she's playing a Terminator!' So he went out and got all three of them for me. I knew the basic story of the films, though. Everyone knows what a Terminator is, even if they haven't seen the movies.

"I had an idea of how Arnold Schwarzenegger played the role. I thought of this super-human man who is so imposing, bigger than life, strong and tough. But when I watched him in *Terminator 2*, I was amazed by how touching his performance was, and by how much I cared about his Terminator. When he sacrificed himself at the end, it broke my heart! That's what I thought was great about his performance, and that's what I want to try to do with mine. It's fun to do all the stunts, it's great to be tough and beat people up and use guns, but what I loved most about Arnold's performance were his moments with John. He was trying to relate to him. I found that compelling."

Machine Parts

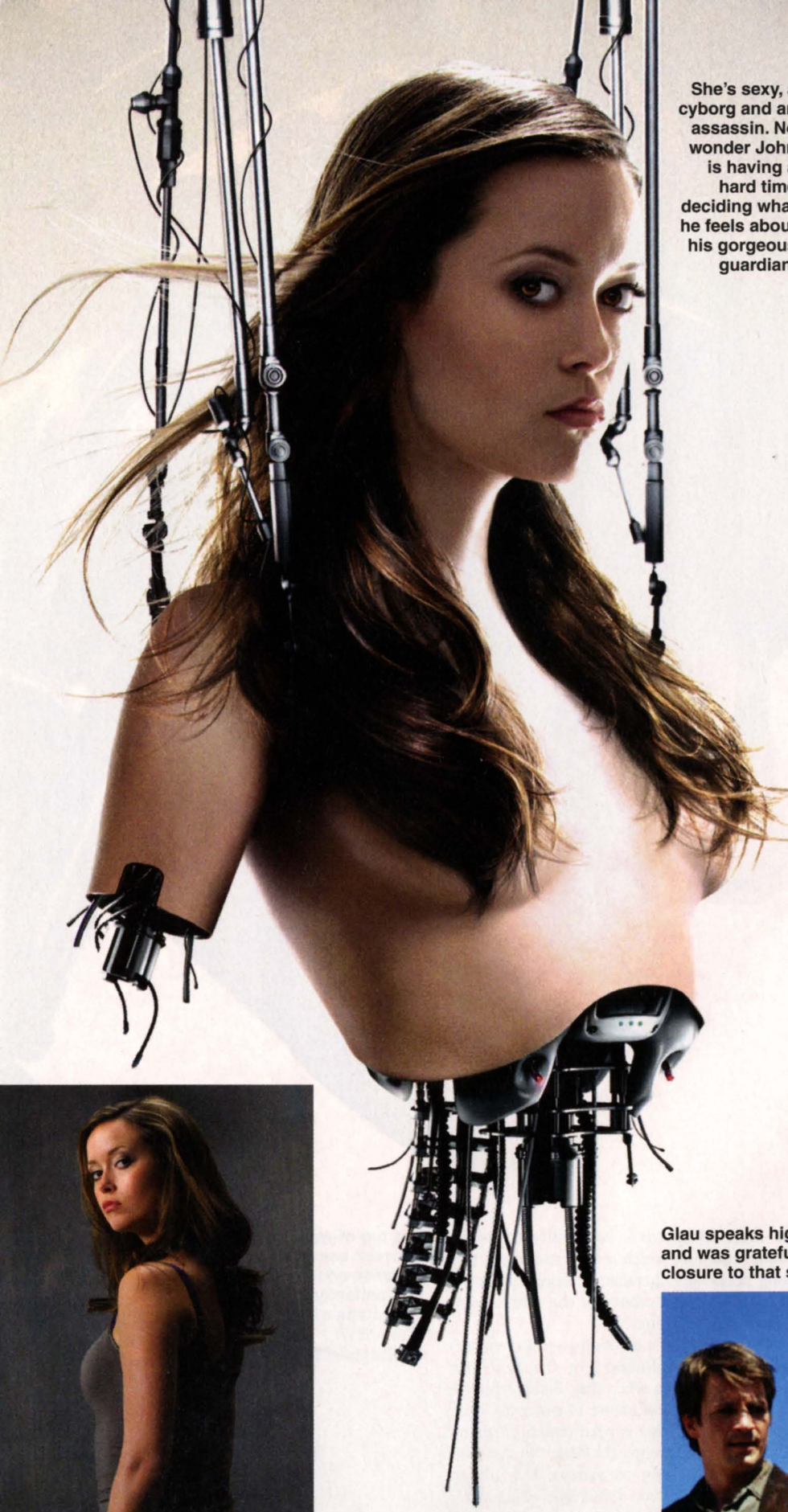
Glau's Terminator builds on the same premise, in that Cameron seems to have a nascent ability to empathize, particularly when interacting with John Connor and his mother, Sarah (Lena Headey, see page 34). "She's still a mystery to me right now," Glau reflects. "Cameron is a machine, but there's something about her, a vulnerability and an openness, that is close to being human. I wouldn't be surprised if, in the future, she became almost human, in a way. I'm delighted with the character's growth. When I met with Josh to discuss the role, he talked about how Cameron is the most advanced Terminator model so far. And what makes her

the most advanced is her ability to mimic human emotion, which is the most interesting thing about this character. Playing a robot is fun, but playing a robot that can mimic emotions is truly exciting."

Still, Cameron's emotions—real or imitated—are rarely glimpsed in the first few episodes, and even when they do emerge, the character's machine nature is never far from viewers' minds. That is what makes playing a Terminator challenging for Glau. "In the short time that I've been an actress, I've played emotional, wounded, vulnerable characters," she points out, referring especially to her work as the psychologically fractured River in Joss Whedon's SF-Western *Firefly* and the schizophrenic Tess in *The 4400*.

"So to play someone like Cameron is

The tug-of-war between being a machine and finding her humanity is the source of Cameron's endless struggle.



She's sexy, a cyborg and an assassin. No wonder John is having a hard time deciding what he feels about his gorgeous guardian.

daunting for me. I'm not used to it. I have to approach it differently. I want people to be able to relate to her and feel something for her, even though she can't feel anything herself. The writers do such a great job, and Josh is such a great leader and coach, that it's working well. I'm just doing my best to develop Cameron to her fullest. She's definitely absorbing [new experiences] every week, with every new script we get. Cameron is like a child learning at a rapid pace."

Cameron passes herself off as a high school classmate of John's in order to stick close by him and protect him from attacks by other Terminators. Acting the part of peers, John and Cameron enjoy a complicated relationship. "We all talk and laugh about whether they might develop feelings for each other," Glau relates. "I don't know if they will. It's up in the air right now. I *do* know that Cameron lives only to protect John, and even though she can't truly love him, the way she treats him and speaks to him is as close to love as a robot can get. I think that element of their relationship will continue to grow. I've been asked by fans, 'What is the *one* thing that you want Cameron to do?' My answer is, 'I want her to fall in love.' That would be the most challenging, exciting possibility to me.

"The relationships between all three characters—Sarah, John and Cameron—are strained at the moment," the actress adds. "They're feeling each other out, and trying to understand one another. Right now, they're like a dysfunctional family. But there's also a sense of belonging to each other, which I hope will continue to grow."

Most likely, the series will explore such relationship dynamics in greater depth as it moves away from the one-note, life-and-death situations of the first few installments. "The third episode is actually much lighter [than the first two]," Glau declares. "Obviously, we have an action-oriented story, so it's going to be dark and dire at times, but I've been amazed at how our writers have been able to balance the action with drama and humor.

"We keep the action going strong, but you'll be surprised by the humor. I know that as actors, when we're sitting on set reading the new scripts, those lighter moments are the ones we look for and talk about: 'Did you read



This new Terminator model looks like a model. Cameron is by far the most sophisticated killing machine to date.

Glau speaks highly of her *Firefly* experiences, and was grateful to provide some closure to that series with the feature film *Serenity*.



that hysterical moment that we get to do in Scene Six?' We're getting the chance to lighten things up."

Human Roles

Things are already light behind the scenes, according to all three cast members in separate interviews for STARLOG. "We're having so much fun!" Glau declares. "I've only had one other experience like this, where I've had so much fun with the people I work with. That was *Firefly*. And I've never been part of such a small cast before. There are really only four of us in the main cast [including Richard T. Jones as FBI agent James Ellison], so if we didn't get along, it would make the long working days even longer—excruciatingly long. Thomas, Lena and I constantly laugh. Those two are both really funny. I'm not very funny, but they are, and they make me laugh all day long. We're supportive of each other, too. It's a blessing to work with people I get along with and care about. We're together five days a week, and I actually dream about them on the weekends. I miss them when I'm not working. We're very bonded."

A ballet dancer in her youth, Glau particularly enjoys the many opportunities she's getting to demonstrate Cameron's physical strength and durability: from exchanging blows with other Terminators to getting thrown out of windows or through walls. She is quick to point out, however, that the physical demands of her current role are quite unlike those required of her in the 2005 *Firefly* big-screen adventure, *Serenity*, in which finely-tuned martial arts moves were the order of the day.

"My favorite thing about playing Cameron is all the action," she notes. "I love doing the

And a River runs through it. The mystery behind the Academy and the government's experiments on River were finally resolved in *Serenity*.



physical work. But Cameron's fighting style is completely different from River's [in *Serenity*]. I went from playing a girl who is human, small and helpless looking, to playing a girl who is stronger than any human. There are no martial arts for Cameron. She doesn't know finesse. Working with the stunt team is kind of the same, though. You have to know how to make the hits look real. In that respect, my past experiences have helped to a certain extent on *Sarah Connor Chronicles*. Mostly, I

rely on Joel [Kramer], our stunt coordinator, who also worked on *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. He's brilliant, and I love working with him as much as I can."

On the subject of *Serenity* (beloved by many STARLOG readers), Glau—who won a Saturn Award as Best Supporting Actress for her role and discussed the film in issue #340—asserts that it was successful despite its poor box office performance. "After *Firefly* was cancelled, all of us [in the cast and crew] were dying to have some kind of closure," she states. "*Serenity* provided that. I don't know if we have complete closure, though, because we were so in love with that story, each other and Joss. I don't think it's ever really a closed book. But it was important to everybody to close out *Firefly* in a way we were all comfortable with."

Later, Glau had "a great time" playing Tess Doerner in several episodes of *The 4400*. "I love that cast," she says. "They're fun, talented and down-to-earth. I enjoyed my character, too. I was happy with the way Tess progressed. As a guest star, it's nice when the writers take time to develop your character."

Now, though, she's solely focused on *The Sarah Connor Chronicles*. "We have all of the iconic elements that the *Terminator* films are known for: big action, a compelling story and an overall exciting ride," Summer Glau remarks. "The great thing about doing it as a TV series is that we have more time for quiet moments, funny moments and character development that you can't always do in a film. I think there's something for everyone to relate to. Viewers can live with these characters every week." ★

Design & Layout: Heiner Feil



After essaying wounded, vulnerable women like River, Glau embraced the opportunity to play a more assertive character.

In *The 4400*, Jordan Collier (Billy Campbell) seeks out Tess (Glau) and enlists her in his plan to steal some Promicin.



4400 Photo: Alan Zenuk/Copyright 2006 USA Network

All Serenity Photos: Copyright 2005 Universal Studios

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#10 Auberjonois. Posters: *U.S.S. Defiant*, Shimerman, Grodénchik, Rosalind Chao. \$7.

#11 Meet Morn. Creating graphics. Posters: Farrell, Visitor, Auberjonois, Meaney. \$7.

#12 Shimerman, Paul Dooley. Posters: Brooks, Lofton, Shimerman, Siddig. \$7.

#13 Dorn, Louise Fletcher. \$7.

#14 Farrell. Seven synopses. \$7.

#15 Siddig, Colicos, Kenneth Marshall, Writer Hans Beimler. Posters: Dorn, Farrell, Siddig, Auberjonois. \$15.

#16 Visitor, Robert O'Reilly. Posters: Barrett, Chase Masterson & Mark Allen Shepherd, Marshall, Shimerman. \$7.

#17 Brooks. Posters: Brooks, cast. \$7.

#18 Farrell. Posters: Dorn, Farrell, Shimerman, Auberjonois. \$7.

#19 Shimerman. Posters: Brooks, Visitor, Siddig, Meaney. \$7.

#20 Chao. Masterson, Felecia M. Bell. Posters: Farrell, Visitor, Chao, Masterson, Bell. Art of *DS9*. \$7.

#21 Jeffrey Combs, Shawn, J.G. Hertzler. Posters: Combs, Fletcher, Grodénchik, Shawn, Hertzler, Ferengi Rules of Acquisition wall poster. \$7.

#22 Dorn, Farrell, Shimerman, Bole. Posters: Dorn & Farrell (wedded & solo), Shimerman, Brooks, Siddig, Auberjonois, Meaney. \$7.

#23 All-synopsis issue. Posters: Alaimo, Lofton, Anglim, Visitor, Melanie Smith, Marc Worden. \$7.

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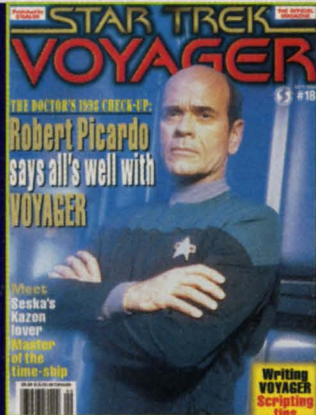
#10 Robert Picardo, Co-creator Taylor. \$7.

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TOM HOLT KAMP'S COMICS AND STORIES

HOLT KAMP MEETS THE MONSTROUS FICENT SEVEN



This *STARLOG* Signature Section, Tom Holtkamp's Comics & Stories, celebrates one of the magazine's cartoonists. Why? We were sifting through his accumulated contributions archived (since 1995) on photo CD and (then since 2000) as digital computer files when the idea came: Wouldn't it be neat to collect a sampling of Holtkamp's varied works all in one place? So, this is that place.

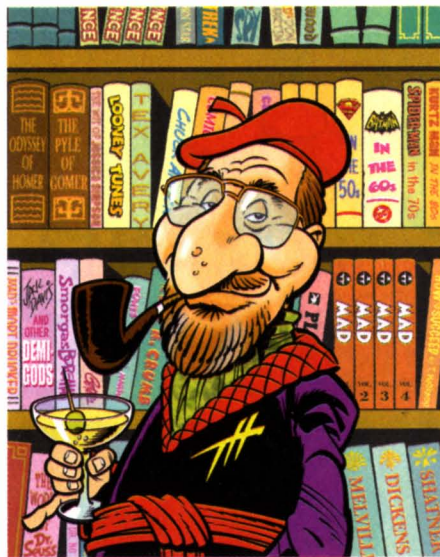
As a fan artist, he illustrated *STARLOG* contributor Jean Airey's legendary fanzine story, "The Doctor and the Enterprise" (which brought guess Who into first contact with Kirk, Spock and McCoy). Now, he's a professional commercial artist in Ohio.

By DAVID McDONNELL

KID HOLTkamp, OUTLAW ARTIST

Here are some quotes *STARLOG* readers have always wanted to see.

Will the *real*/Tom Holtkamp please put down that martini?



STARLOG: Judging from that self-portrait you sent us (above), I have one question: Who are you? And what have you done with the *real* Tom Holtkamp?

TOM HOLTkamp: Well, I admit it's not accurate. I always have a brandy before turning in, not a martini. I'm shopping around my new series *Toonboy After Dark* right now.

STARLOG: How did you begin?

HOLTkamp: I really wanted to be a TV anchorman, but didn't meet the minimum hair requirements. Fortunately, I had art to fall back on. After a year working at a small studio and another year creating artwork for plastic bags, I was ready to pull out the few hairs I had left—a 9-to-5 job didn't seem to be working out for me. Luckily, I met illustrator Jared Lee, who was very big in advertising and publishing. Looking at his studio, I realized what you could accomplish working freelance, so I started drawing greeting cards, magazine illustrations, *anything* I could find to keep me away from a real job.

STARLOG: Name the artists who have influenced you. In alphabetical order.

HOLTkamp: Neal Adams, whose style made characters like Batman and Green Arrow seem absolutely real. Tex Avery, the funny Walt Disney. His stuff was always memorable. Jim Borgman, Cincinnati's editorial cartoonist, and hands down the best in the country. I'll never forget working up the courage to go down and meet him back in art school. Not the unreachable demi-god atop a 10-foot desk that I expected, but a regular Joe, feet on desk, flipping through a pile of *Mad* magazines—my kind of guy! (I think he is unapproachable these days, after winning a Pul-

itzer.) Jack Davis, for my money, the best cartoonist in the world. *Mad*'s master of the brush, brilliant at both satire and advertising. I can't draw a doodle without seeing his influence in it somewhere. Mort Drucker, *Mad*'s best caricaturist. He has the ability to just draw a person doing nothing but standing there, and it makes you laugh. Chuck Jones, what cartoonist hasn't been influenced by the Warner Bros. classics? He managed to give those animated characters more personality than most human actors; he made them *real*. Alex Toth and Doug Wildey, what would comics and Saturday mornings in the 1960s have been without them? Toth's *Herculoids* and *Space Ghost* designs have great appeal to SF fans, and I'll never understand why *Scooby-Doo* is considered Hanna-Barbera's golden fire hydrant while you can't find Wildey's *Jonny Quest* with MapQuest nowadays. Wally Wood, another *Mad*, EC and Marvel comics great. Whether it was one of his hilarious *Mad* satires or an EC Ray Bradbury adaptation, you never forget Wood's unique style...and his women weren't too shabby either.

STARLOG: You've managed to carve out a career as a commercial artist and cartoonist even though you live in Ohio. How?



This 1999 look at *ALIEN* was a prototype for Scenes *STARLOG* Always Wanted to See (which began five years later).

HOLTkamp: Actually, you can work from any place now if you have a fax machine and are online. I've never met 90 percent of my clients face to face, which I'm sure pleases them no end, but I do miss the old days of lugging around a portfolio and shaking hands. Personal meetings help people remember you and your work. Plus, it's impossible to bribe an art director with donuts over the Internet.

STARLOG: You inked Mike Peters' *Mother Goose & Grimm* newspaper strip for several years. What was it like working for Mike?

HOLTkamp: It was a lot of fun. Mike is quite different from most cartoonists I've met because he's very extroverted, whereas most of us are happy to draw off in a nice quiet corner somewhere. His mother, Charlotte Peters, had a variety show in St. Louis for many years, and he spent his younger days around a showbiz atmosphere. That really shows in his per-



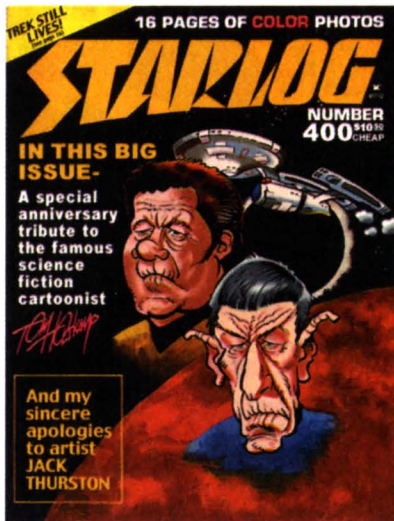
sonality—he has that larger-than-life quality about him, and boundless energy. When he's in a room, you definitely know it. I don't know if all strips reflect their creators, but Mike is very much like Grimmy the dog, its wild, smiling, tail-wagging star. I remember in the early 1990s working on the Saturday morning animated series based on the strip and pleading with Mike to voice Grimmy. He would have been perfect.

STARLOG: When did you begin contributing to STARLOG? And why?

HOLTkamp: I think the first thing I submitted to you was a gag cartoon spoofing what I considered *Star Trek: The Next Generation's* rather noticeable lack of action. It was a "Captain Picard Actionless Figure" complete with tea & crumpets [published in STARLOG #189, 1993]. You first gave me story illustrations to do for Lee Goldberg's *seaQuest* piece [#229], and away we went. My Mom, bless her heart, gave me my first STARLOG for Christmas back in 1976, issue #3, with that great cover of *Star Trek* caricatures drawn by *Mad's* Jack Rickard. A magazine featuring my favorite show of all time drawn by an artist who worked for my favorite magazine? Wow! It was love at first sight. STARLOG took its place of honor on my shelf right next to *Famous Monsters of Filmland* and my Robby the Robot model, so there was no way I wasn't going to submit something when I started freelancing.

STARLOG: Over the years, you've illustrated stories for us (like Walter Koenig's memoir in #233; John de Lancie's *Alien Voices* essay, #240), created SF dictionaries (Trekonyms, #260; Yodanymys, #274) and done gag cartoons.

In this Toon Jam offering, Holtkamp again savaged his fellow artists. And a great many of the rest of us, too.



Here's his homage to the STARLOG #1 cover as a possible issue #400 concept.

Illustrating SF titans Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, he produced this beige-shaded rough-colored differently in the final art.



Holtkamp imagined an *Alien Voices* audiobook taping with John de Lancie and Leonard (Captain Nemo) Nimoy some 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.

Which kind of artistic endeavor do you prefer?

HOLTkamp: That's a tough one because I've enjoyed them all. My favorite STARLOG piece would be the *X-Files* STARLOG YEARBOOK cover [left]. It's always a thrill walking through a store and seeing a cover you've done sitting there, and casually flipping through it while you accidentally bump the guy next to you and nonchalantly lean over and flash it in front of his face.

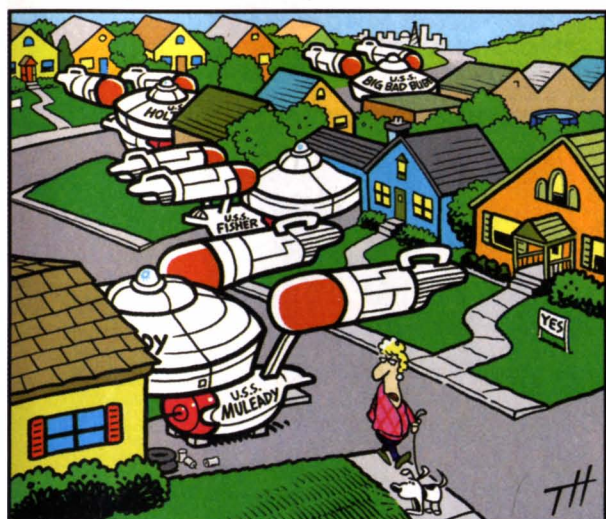
STARLOG: Describe your fellow STARLOG Cartoonists of the Apocalypse—Mike Fisher, Bob Muleady and Alain Chaperon (a.k.a. "Big Bad Bubba" & "bortQ.")—using only adjectives.

HOLTkamp: Mike: Tremendously technically talented...and tall. Bob: Friendly, fabulously funny...and filthy. Alain: Delightfully digitally dazzling... Dig? I haven't had contact with Mike, but Bob and I have been bowling for dollars late-

STARLOG: And finally...if you could be any kind of a tree, what kind of tree would you be, and what would be your dream project?

HOLTkamp: This sounds like a Barbara Walters question, except she would have said "twee." I think a bigleaf magnolia, because it beats the hell out of a shortleaf pine. My dream project is easy: I would like to direct a *Star Trek* movie that actually looks like the *Trek* I grew up with—where the foreheads were all smooth and the skirts were all mini—where everything had that "Brought to you in living color" look I've missed ever since *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* premiered. I know you'll say I'm not a director, but that never stopped William Shatner. I just wanna be J.J. Abrams!

An Index to the films lampooned in Tom Holtkamp's Scenes STARLOG Always Wanted to See feature. Note: Scenes does not appear in STARLOG #331 & #345. And the Best 12 Scenes (*asterisked) are republished this issue on pages 46-47. STARLOG #265 & #266: Three prototypes of the feature, all re: *ALIEN*. #328: The series begins with *THX-1138*. #329: *Spider-Man 2**. #330: *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925). #332: *Flash Gordon* (1980). #333: *The Illustrated Man**. #334: *House of Wax** (1953). #335: *Star Wars: Episode VI: Return of the Jedi*. #336: *Batman & Robin*. #337: *The War of the Worlds** (1953). #338: *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory**. #339: *Mysterious Island*. #340: *The Fog* (1980). #341: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets**. #342: *King Kong** (1933). #343: *King Kong* (1976). #344: *Colossus: The Forbin Project*. #346: *The Omen** (1976). #347: *Superman: The Movie* and *X-Men* (a full-page strip). #348: *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl*. #349: *Snakes on a Plane*. #350: *The Shadow**. #351: *Forbidden Planet**. #352: *Casino Royale** (1967). #353: *Battlefield Earth**. #354: *TRON*. #355: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II*. #356: *Star Wars: Episode IV: A New Hope*. #357: *Shrek*. #358: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956). #359: *Blade Runner*. #360: *The Abominable Dr. Phibes*. #361: *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*. #362: *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*.



LIKE THEIR NAMESAKES, THE STARSHIPS TURNED OUT TO BE ABJECT FAILURES AND ENDED UP DRY-DOCKED IN THEIR MOTHERS' GARAGES.

THE BEST IN SCENES

All Art: Tom Holtkamp/Previously Published in STARLOG (2004-7). See the Scenes List on Page 45

IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.
Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **FORBIDDEN PLANET**
LESLIE NIELSEN LETS HIS NATURAL COMEDIC SIDE SHOW THROUGH.



IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.
Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **The Illustrated Man**



CARTOONS BEFORE THE MAIN FEATURE.

IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.
Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **BATTLEFIELD EARTH**
THE FUN TAP-DANCING SEQUENCE!



IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.
Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **CASINO ROYALE**

THE (ACTUALLY) FUNNY ONES! THE ONES WHERE THE PLOT MAKES SENSE! THE ONES WITHOUT THE KITCHEN SINK!



IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.
Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets**

HARRY FINDS OUT HE'S RELATED TO SAMANTHA STEPHENS, WHICH WORKS OUT GREAT BECAUSE HE CAN NOW OPEN THE MOVIE WITH COOL RETRO CARTOON TITLES.



IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.
Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **WILLY WONKA & THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY**



FEMALE OOMPA-LOOMPAS!
 WITHOUT THEM, THE RACE WILL OOMPA OUT!

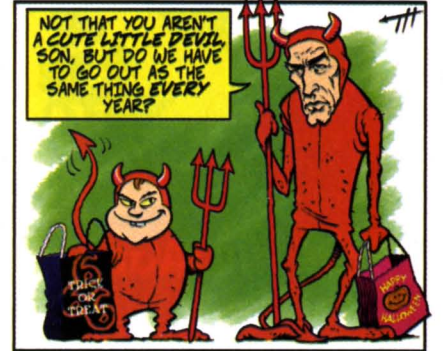
IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.
Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **HOUSE OF WAX**



FOR THE ULTIMATE IN 3-D CREEP-OUTS, WE SUGGEST A RANDOM TOSsing OUT OF CHARLES BRONSON'S WAX HEAD.

IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.
Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **OMEN**

MORE FAMILY TIME BETWEEN FATHER AND SON, THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE MALE BONDING.



IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.

Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **War of the Worlds**



THE FIRST MARTIAN CYLINDER LANDS BESIDE A TYPICAL AMERICAN GRADE SCHOOL AND THE MARTIANS IMMEDIATELY DIE OF MUMPS, CHICKEN POX, STREP THROAT, DERMATITIS, MEASLES, PINKEYE AND JOCK ITCH.

IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.
Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **The Shadow**

WHY MOVIE AUDIENCES DID NOT SEE HIM...
 BECAUSE I HAVE THE POWER TO CLOUD MEN'S MINDS! WOMEN'S MINDS! LITTLE CHILDREN! CATS! DOGS! GOLDFISH! PARAMECIUM...



IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.
Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **KING KONG**

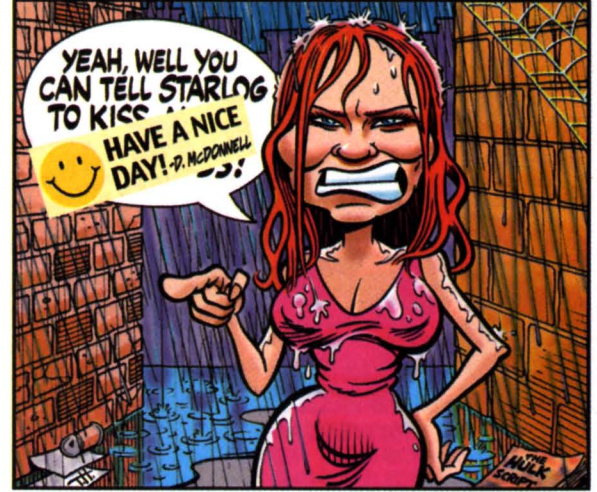
A HAPPY ENDING, WHERE KONG GETS THE GIRL.



IF WE ONLY MADE 'EM DEPT.

Scenes STARLOG always wanted to see from **SPIDER-MAN 2**

HEY, WE'RE PRETTY SATISFIED. BUT NOW THAT WE THINK ABOUT IT, THE MOVIE COULD HAVE USED FOUR OR FIVE OF THOSE RAIN-SOAKED **KIRSTEN DUNST** SCENES.



IN THEATERS
"SOONER OR LATER..."

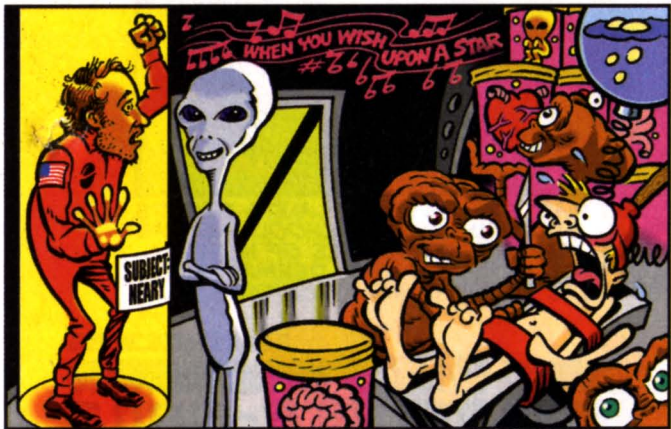


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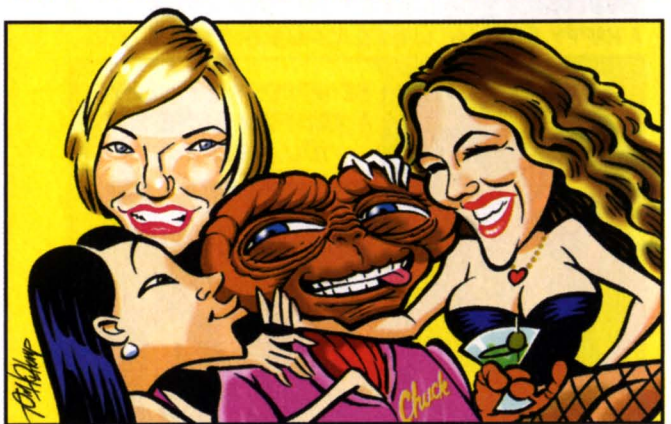
NOW WE'LL SEE THE INSIDE OF E.T.'S SPACE SHIP... JUST LIKE WE ALL RRREEEAALLLYYY WANTED!



SO TODAY'S YOUTH CAN EASILY RELATE TO HIM, E.T. WILL NOW "SPIDERWALK" AND BLEED ACID.

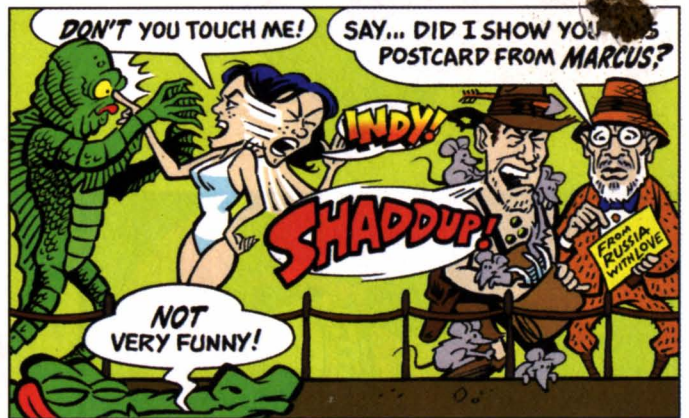
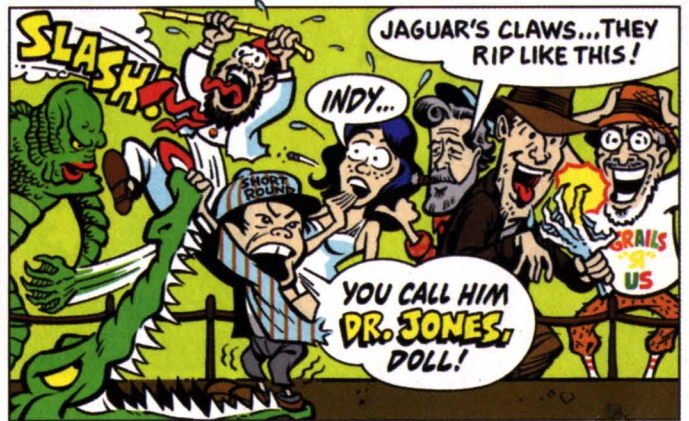
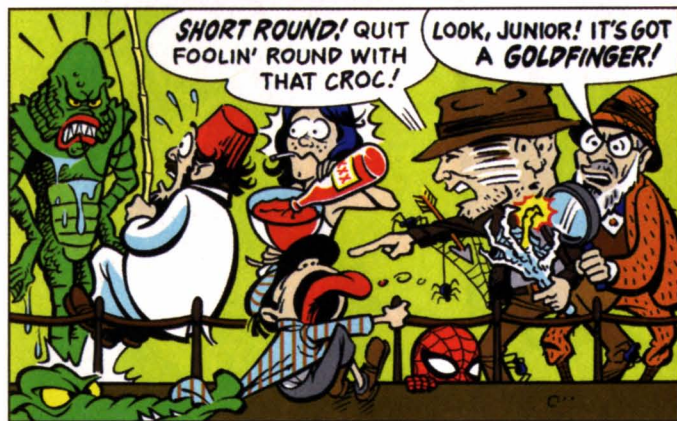
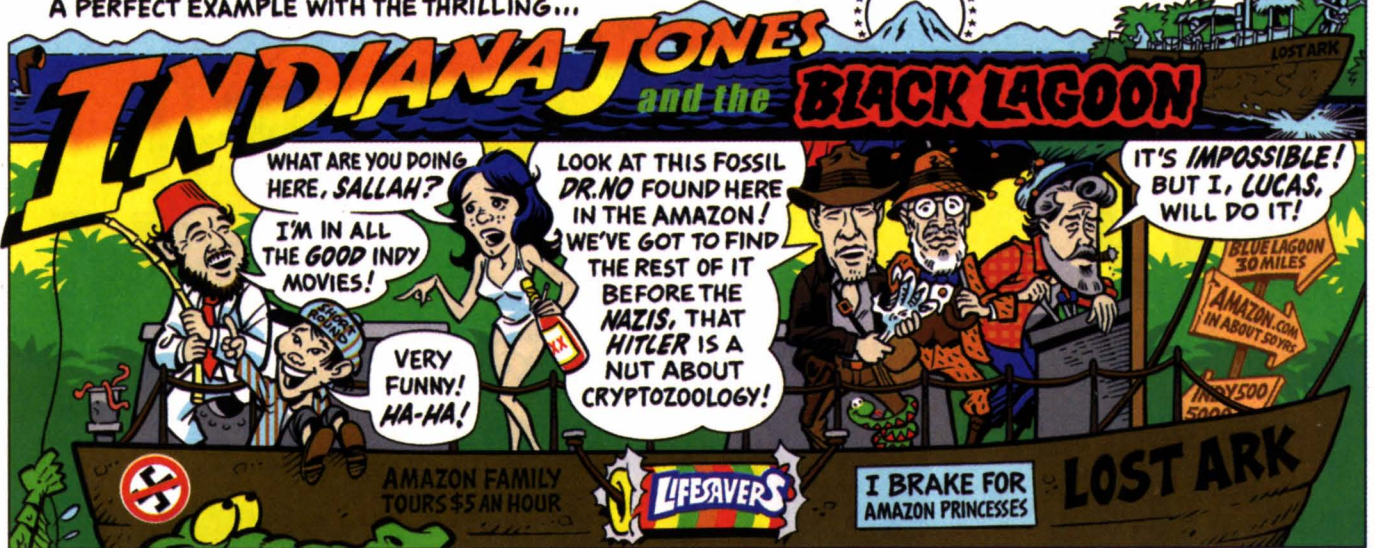


THIS TIME, E.T. CAN'T PHONE HOME BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN FROZEN INTO IMMOBILITY WONDERING WHICH LONG DISTANCE SERVICE WOULD SAVE HIM THE MOST MONEY.



IN FACT, E.T. DECIDES NOT TO GO BACK HOME AT ALL, HAVING BECOME REACQUAINTED ONCE AGAIN WITH LITTLE DREW AND HER CHARMING NEW FRIENDS!

GIVEN THE FACT THAT EVERYTHING TODAY IS A SEQUEL OR A REMAKE, WE HERE AT STARLOG WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THAT HOLLYWOOD FRESHEN THINGS UP BY COMBINING THE TWO TOGETHER. WE NOW PRESENT A PERFECT EXAMPLE WITH THE THRILLING...

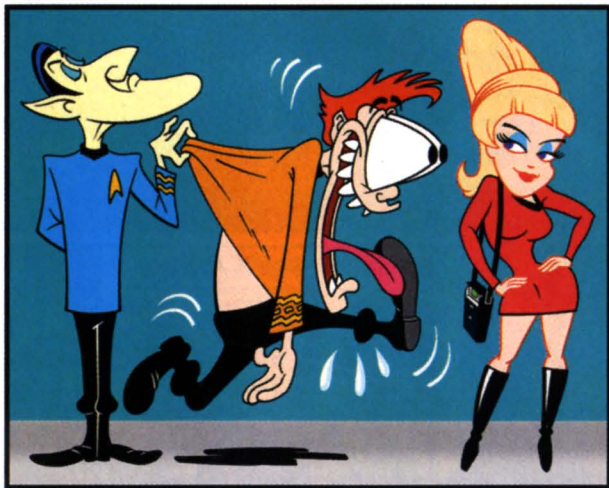


Parody Script & Art: Tom Holtkamp/Previously Published in STARLOG #300 (2002)

TOM HOKAMP'S COMICS AND STORIES



THE PHANTOM MENACE. REVEALED AT LAST!



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From out of the night, the Brothers Strause directed this battle royale between Predator & Aliens.

BROTHERS BLOOD

By WILL MURRAY

It's intensely dark and damp on the set of *ALIENS vs. Predator: Requiem*. A crane-mounted sprinkler stands poised to pour tank water down on the outdoor set—a hospital roof helipad built at ground level in the Green Timber Reforestation Centre near Surrey, British Columbia.


Directors Colin and Greg Strause are conferring on the scene about to be shot. It has already been a long night for the surviving cast, who are huddling in a soaked and shivering knot at the foot of a chainlink-fence-screened ramp. If they can reach that white medevac chopper, they live. If they don't, it's death and dismemberment by Alien.

They start up. Rain-slick black creatures begin popping out from the shadows. Someone yells, "Aliens!" Gunfire splits the night. One Alien, crawling up the ramp after them, takes the full brunt of bullets and goes tumbling tailbone over cranium backward. Another is trying to squeeze through a hole in

the fence. He goes down. Others emerge to take their place. No one is going to have it easy tonight.

"Basically, it starts as multiple stories," Greg explains during a break. "And as the movie progresses, the stories begin to overlap. It becomes about a team of survivors who have to choose how they get through this. There are three main characters: Dallas, Kelly and Sheriff Morales, played by Steve Pasquale, Reiko Aylesworth and John Ortiz. They're the heroes whom the story follows around. There's also Ariel Gade, who's Reiko's daughter, and Johnny Lewis, who plays Steve's younger brother. Then there are the other people who assemble. Whether they make it or not..."

Aylesworth is this installment's inevitable Ripley stand-in, Kelly O'Brien. "We call her the inverse Ripley," explains Colin. "Ripley is the mother who had to become the soldier. Kelly is almost the exact opposite. Her arc in the movie is the soldier who has to learn to become a mother. She starts kind of



Who will rain supreme in the battle between these voracious creatures? *Requiem* is the second matchup of *ALIENS* vs. *Predator*. This time, brothers Colin and Greg Strause are at the helm.

hard and distant from her family. When the shit hits the fan, Kelly's relationship with her daughter needs to strengthen. Otherwise, they aren't going to make it out."

To hear the Brothers tell it, the casting of Gade as 10-year-old Molly was inevitable. "Invasion was one of the reasons," says Greg. "And I saw her in *Dark Water*."

"It's funny," laughs Colin. "I hadn't seen *Dark Water*, but I said, 'God, we gotta get that girl from *Invasion*.' Because I loved that show. And Greg said, 'No, forget about that girl. We gotta get the girl from *Dark Water*.' It was the same person!"

"She's like a miniature adult," Greg praises. "Her depth and understanding of the scenes are quite surprising. Working with her, she's a little lady."

"There's also an innocence to her," adds Colin, "which makes it even scarier in a situation. She has an awesome scream, too. It will blow your eardrums out. She's a loaded weapon."

ELEGY FOR ALIENS

Requiem isn't the traditional last-human-standing death stalk. "It's a different thing," reveals Colin. "In the *ALIEN* movies, everyone got whittled but Ripley. But in this, there's more of a team. Who's going to make it? There isn't one person who's going to make it alone. So they must work together."

"There are twists," agrees Greg. "We've tried to make sure that you can't pick who will make it and who won't. Many people get taken out in this film."

"We're also trying to keep it realistic," continues Colin. "Sometimes doing the right thing gets people killed [in the movie]. We've tried to stay away from anything cheesy or cliché with the action. We don't have the one guy who gets up with the gun and singlehandedly kills 20 Aliens. Other than Kelly, who does have a military background, these are normal people. But she isn't Special Forces. She's a helicopter pilot who knows how to shoot a rifle. These are average people trying to play against nasty things."

Don't look for any personal significance in the Holland brothers, Dallas and Ricky. They aren't surrogates for the Brothers Strause.

"They were part of *AVP 2* before we were hired," Colin chuckles. "That was a coincidence. We haven't tried to draw any parallels between ourselves. The only thing is just knowing how we interact as brothers, we always make sure that the characters we're developing have very real and sensible personalities and actions."

"There are a couple of scenes in the sewer where some of the dialogue is very 'us'—how we talk to each other," Greg notes.

Although the Brothers Strause have long been involved in big-budget FX spectacles like *Terminator 3* and *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* through their visual FX company, Hy*drau*lx, this is their first major genre project as directors. They pitched for the first *AVP*, which ultimately went to Paul W.S. Anderson.

"There wasn't any script," Colin recalls. "We pitched a \$150 million idea based on the comics, which was too rich for what everybody was looking to do. Alien homeworld stuff. Forty minutes with no dialogue in English."

"I called it *Dances With Wolves in Outer Space*," laughs Greg. "I think we've matured as filmmakers since then."

Two-thirds of the way through production, *Requiem* is going well. "We're pretty thrilled with everything," Colin offers. "It's a huge undertaking. We're a modest-size feature film. This isn't anything close to the size of the behemoths we've worked on as visual effects artists. It's really astounding how much work goes into it."

"We had less than four months to prep," inserts Greg. "Some of the animatronics just showed up this week. That was the trickiest thing."



Look for changes in the opposing creatures. "Some people were afraid that we would simply rehash the same old creatures from the last movie," muses Greg. "In the end, that probably became the biggest line-item in the budget—redoing all of those things."

"There are advancements in the animatronics," Colin says. "We have controls over the lips and mouth that they've never had before."

That process started with the Predator. "He's a complete redesign, an all-new Predator," Colin offers. "But we went back heavily to the original Predator. He won't look anything like the ones in the last *AVP*. The Predator used to have teeth inside the mouth. We've gone in a completely new direction with all the bodywork. He isn't short and squat and covered in armor. He's light, lean and scarred-up."

"This guy has been fighting for probably a thousand years," Greg elaborates. "We went more tribal. He's covered in more trophies and bones, and all the tattooing on the body is very much like the original Predator."

And yet different, too.

"This is the first time we've seen a non-hunting Predator," Colin notes. "He isn't here to hunt—hunting for sport, we should say. That's why we call him the Wolf. He's like Harvey Keitel in *Pulp Fiction*. He has a different set of tools. This Predator isn't necessarily all about fighting fair. Because he isn't here for trophies. They've done that so many times with the Predators. It's nice seeing a Predator in a different, more dire situation, and how his mentality and tactics change."

PRAYER FOR A PREDATOR

The Aliens have been tweaked to evoke an earlier vision. "Our head design is a throwback to James Cameron," asserts Greg. "The new Alien head is based on the warrior design from *ALIENS*. But the detail level that they're now able to achieve is definitely a step up."

The Brothers Strause—who actually pitched for the first *AVP*—aren't making a PG-13 movie. They're bringing the series back to its "gritty horror film" roots.



Kelly O'Brien (Reiko Aylesworth) has her hands full in the small Colorado town as she fends off bloodthirsty Aliens and Wolf—*Requiem's* ruthless Predator.

"Part of the idea behind that," Colin continues, "is that the Aliens try to conceal themselves in the spaceship. Their long, smooth surfaces blend in, like in *ALIENS*. The rigid head helps them camouflage into their environment. These are warrior Aliens. They aren't drones. So they have a different mentality. They're on a different mission as well. We did the same thing with the Facehuggers. We changed the Facehuggers slightly, and made them more menacing and darker. The color palette for all the creatures is darker. Our Aliens are black and silver, whereas the others were a much brighter blue."

"People are going to be surprised at how different the Predator looks," Greg predicts. "Although we love the guys at ADI [Tom Woodruff and Alec Gillis], we had to gently suggest that we *weren't* fans of the Predators in the last movie—even though it was their work. We had to state our preferences for the new Alien head, too."

While the Brothers looked to *ALIENS* for design inspiration, don't expect to see the Alien Queen. "There is no Queen," Greg insists.

"We've seen enough of the Queen," says Colin. "Not to say there isn't a surrogate. But that's something we can't really go into."

Possibly, he's hinting about the Alien-Predator hybrid seen at the end of *AVP*. But, again, the Brothers won't go there. "Even in Ripley's films, a single warrior was turning people into eggs," Greg says. "So there's no one single way these things reproduce. They find *any* way to survive. And they don't need a Queen. *ALIEN* proved that. *ALIENS* showed what happens when they form a hive. Even *ALIEN: Resurrection* had a whole different way for the Queen to reproduce—giving birth instead of laying eggs. That is what's so amazing about them being Xenomorphs: They adapt according to the situation in order to guarantee the survival of the species."

"That's always the trick," explains Colin. "You want to honor the originals, but not simply reproduce them."

"Nothing [in our film] breaks any established rules or canon," Greg adds.

Requiem will probably be rated R. "What has been exciting for us is [bringing the series] back to a gritty horror film," notes Colin. "Over the last few movies—especially on the Alien side—it got away from those horror roots."

That meant going back to basics. "Not to mention some good old-fashioned debrainings and other interesting stuff!" Greg promises. "We should do a body count. I think we're going to best the original. There are 25 Aliens, and we ordered a few extra hundred gallons of blood."

"To me, this is a continuation of the *Predator* franchise," Colin opines. "Even though the last one was set on Earth, it could have been on some distant planet. Because, at the end of the day, what would have happened if they had gotten out of that temple? A couple of penguins get attacked? The stakes weren't that high. Whereas in this, because it

Based on the warrior design from James Cameron's film, these Aliens are back to being black and silver—and especially nasty.



is in America, the risk of planetary infestation is extraordinarily high.”

Obviously, the Aliens are the main threat in *Requiem*—and a huge audience attraction. “The Aliens are mysterious,” observes Greg. “They’ve done a good job of not explaining too much where the Aliens come from. That’s why, even 30 years later, they’re still effective movie monsters. If you show too much of the creatures—which has been a big rule of ours because of the last movie—you *demystify* them. They aren’t scary. The longer you see an Alien in frame—no matter how horrific, no matter what it’s doing—you become completely numb to it.

“We’ve been careful to pace the movie out. That’s why most of the film takes place at night; that’s why the lights are out; that’s why it’s raining; that’s why it’s indoors. There’s just a *ton* of atmosphere. We’re trying to hide these creatures and blend them into their environment, so that when they do reveal themselves, it’s truly horrific.”

REQUIEM FOR A DREAM

For these two brothers from Illinois, *Requiem* is a dream come true. Just don’t ask them to play favorites among monsters and movies. “I don’t really have one,” reflects Greg. “I wouldn’t want to say that one is cooler than the other. It’s funny. When Colin and I used to go into movie pitches, people would ask us what kind of films we liked. We would always answer that *Predator* is the best mission movie.”

“Then *ALIENS*,” says Colin.

“And *ALIENS* is the best action-horror film we’ve ever seen,” adds Greg.

“We’ve probably seen those movies 50 to 60 times,” Colin seconds. “Easy.”

“Yeah,” Greg continues. “I love them both. The tribal aspects of the *Predator* and its technology are awesome, and the sheer killing efficiency of the Alien is, in my mind, rivaled by few movie monsters.”

So, are the Brothers up for *AVP 3*? “We’re having lots of fun,” Greg notes, without really answering the question.

“Oh, yeah!” Colin exclaims. “I would *absolutely* do another one. In our minds, *AVP 3* would bridge this and the original *ALIEN*. There are some things that we’re doing for continuity—particularly at the movie’s end—that are pretty cool possibilities for the next one. We were joking that the crew shirts for this film should be a script page

that’s all blacked out. Literally, there are only *six* people in the entire world who have read the screenplay. We personally black out pages and pages to keep the cool things as secret as long as we possibly can.”

Beyond that, the Brothers Strause are as tight-lipped as a Facehugger. “We’ve put a great deal of thought into the movie’s continuity,” says Colin. “That sets the film up for sequels. We don’t answer all the continuity questions, but we fix some really big ones. And at the end, we’re set up to explain the gaps between this franchise and the others. It’s complicated, because the ending is kinda twisted. There’s definitely an aspect of heroism. But there’s also a viciousness. It’s depressing. It’s all over the place. It’s *not* a feel-good ending.”

“This is a fairly mean-spirited movie,” Greg says. “But there are things to root for and people to cheer for, which is what you need in a film.”

“Enough of the heroes survive that you won’t want to slit your wrists at the end,” Colin promises. ★



“All right, Mr. DeMille, I’m ready for my close-up.” Don’t expect many revealing shots in *Requiem*. The Strauses want to restore the Aliens’ mystery and menace by *not* showing too much of them.

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Screenwriter Robert Nelson Jacobs adds turbulent twists to *The Water Horse*.

THE *Loch Ness*

MAKEOVER

By KEITH OLEXA



Fans of Dick King-Smith's stories will gaze in wonderment when *The Water Horse* makes its big splash in theaters this Christmas, though they're also apt to wonder: Why all the changes between the book and film?

Screenwriter Robert Nelson Jacobs doesn't

wonder about that, of course. Nor should he. His work on such fantastical fare as Disney's *Dinosaur* and DreamWorks' *Flushed Away*—to say nothing of his Oscar-nominated script for *Chocolat*—proves he has what it takes to turn magical prose into cinematic imagery. When adapting *The Water Horse: Legend of*

the Deep, Jacobs realized he needed to swirl some dark and troubling waters into the sweet sea-serpent story.

"The book is lovely, but it's a small children's book," notes Jacobs of King-Smith's tale of a child who finds, then attempts to raise, a mythical Water Horse in early-20th-century Scotland. "There were many things about the book that charmed and intrigued me. I loved the setting and characters [King-Smith] created, but I realized that expansion was needed in order to open the story and make it into a feature film. So changes were made."

Magical Monsters

The most critical change involved *The Water Horse*'s protagonist: The book featured Kirstie, a little girl, while the film centers on Kirstie's brother, Angus. The necessity of that alteration became apparent to the screenwriter once Jacobs introduced his most relevant plot shift. "We changed the time from 1930 [to later]," he says. "It's now set during WWII, and is about a boy who loses his father in the war."

Since his father's farewell, the lonely,



The Egg and I. *The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep* begins when young Angus MacMorrow (Alex Etel) discovers this crustacean shell on the Scottish shore.

withdrawn Angus (Alex Etel) keeps to himself, counting the days until his dad's return. It seems that nothing can distract Angus from his melancholy, but then the boy makes a discovery on the shores of the not-yet-infamous Loch Ness lake. He unearths a large and unusual rock covered in shells, which he then hides in his father's workshop—away from the over-cautious eyes of his doting but dour mother, Anne (Emily Watson).

Later, Angus discovers the rock is actually a giant egg, and its contents are soon friskily scampering around the workshop. Befriending the strange Water Horse hatchling, Angus names it Crusoe (after Daniel Defoe's solitary shipwrecked soul), and promises to keep it safe. But Angus also has to keep Crusoe a secret, because if his mother—or worse, the recently installed Captain Hamilton (David Morrissey) and his men—were to find out, Angus and Crusoe would surely be separated.

If you haven't guessed it yet, Crusoe is going to make a splash one day as the Loch Ness Monster (there's even a brief scene of a man taking the famous picture), but at the start, the Water Horse is just a wee lake pony full of mischief, charm and magic. "The idea that those two were one and the same was great," Jacobs remarks. "I loved the notion of bringing these two legends together: the old myth of the Water Horse, and the more modern myth of the Loch Ness Monster."

It isn't novelty that unites Angus and Crusoe, though; the boy and the beast share an emotional bond, rooted in their mutual loneliness. This further showed Jacobs how ideal Angus was for the central character. "I made the children a little older," he explains, "and wrote the script as a rite-of-passage story about a boy whose father has gone missing in the war, a boy who's forlorn and alienated and needs a friend.

"Angus' state of mind is expressed through flashbacks with his father—in the workshop, in the tide pool. His Dad is going off to war, and he tells Angus, 'You're the man of the house now.' So this boy, who is alone and scared, forms a friendship with this creature that teaches him, in indirect ways, what he needs to know in order to move on. Crusoe teaches Angus lessons about friendship and letting go, as well as about reconnecting with and finding the joy in life."

If that occurs through exasperating escapades, then Crusoe teaches joy in spades! An irrepressible scamp of a creature, Crusoe gets himself into fixes that include repeatedly invading the main house, several near-escapes from the kitchen's curmudgeonly bulldog (aptly named Churchill) and the utter upturning, at one point, of a formal dinner. Angus enlists allies to help cover up for his messy Nessie: First, his sister, Kirstie (Priyanka Xi), then Lewis Mowbray (Ben Chaplin), a recently hired handyman of mysterious character,



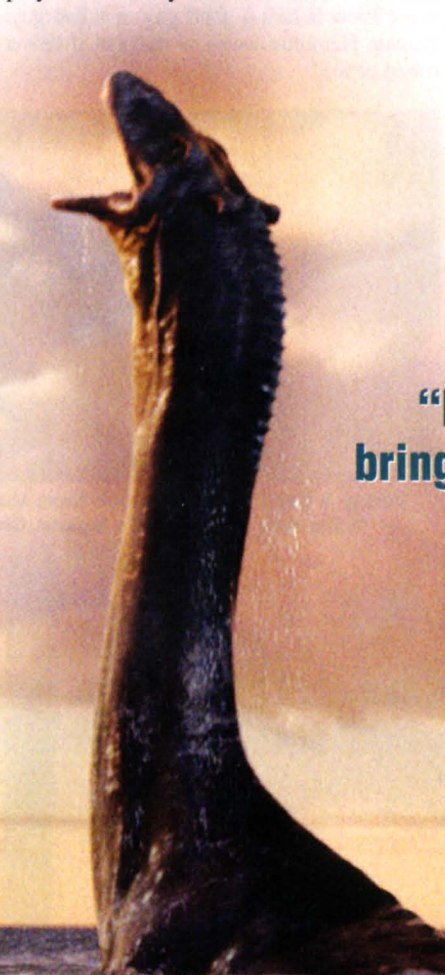
For the film, screenwriter Robert Nelson Jacobs shifted the focus of Dick King-Smith's story from Kirstie (Priyanka Xi in the movie) to her brother.

who is wrestling with his own demons.

Jacobs couldn't be happier with how his characters have been translated to the screen. He waxes particularly effusive over Etel. "Alex is just amazing," he lauds. "It isn't easy to get a great performance out of a child actor, but Alex did a wonderful job. And the movie is really on his shoulders. Alex has a nice, quiet, soulful manner about him. His eyes hold the camera, and those are the kind of things you pray for when you write a movie. That's

[director] Jay Russell's doing, too—he picked the right child for the part, and got a fantastic performance out of him. And landing Emily was great; she brings so much to it."

The *Miss Potter* actress essays Anne, a recently widowed housekeeper who finds herself caught between Mowbray and Captain Harrison's attentions. And with the war and her son's eccentricities plaguing her, it's no wonder the woman is solemn and always on the defensive. "There are many sources of opposition in the story," Jacobs says. "There are soldiers who are doing their job, unaware at first [that they're harming Crusoe], though eventually they do start pursuing the creature. Then there's the mother, Anne. She loves her son, cares about him and wants to protect him, but she's a force of opposition, although unwittingly. Anne doesn't know that her son has made friends with this wonderful creature. She's simply trying to keep her son out of trouble. Anne is an obstacle for her son, and only at the end does she realize the gift of the Water Horse. And it's a double gift. She not



"I loved the notion of bringing these two legends together."

Puff the Magic Dragon? Mixing the Water Horse mythos with the Loch Ness legend, Jacobs came up with his own take on Scottish sea serpent lore.



As a tiny critter, Crusoe is quite a handful for Angus to keep secret. But things really escalate as the Water Horse grows bigger.

only discovers that Crusoe is real, but she also understands what this creature has done for her son."

Fantasy has its healing qualities. "One of the conventions of this genre is that children see magic that adults don't," Jacobs attests. "The moment where Anne finally sees the creature is preceded by what is probably her darkest moment. The story is, after all, set during WWII, and this family has suffered a loss. In that dark moment, where Anne says that there is no magic in the world—that there's only war and guns and men going off to fight, never to return—we had to give the war its due. But we also wanted to convey that there's still magic, there's still redemption. We wanted to assert that there's a reason to go on living and look for new sources of joy. Obviously, it's a metaphor. You put those two moments together: the tirade—which Emily wonderfully acted—and then when she sees the Water Horse and her jaw drops. It's amazing."

Magical Mythos

Anne's outburst is certainly liable to strike a chord with mothers who see the film today. But *The Water Horse* wasn't written to be politically relevant. "I started working on this in 1999, and the world was different then," Jacobs says. "There's conflict in the world now, and war is much more on our minds, so I think parts of the film do have that resonance. Unfortunately, war stories are universal because wars happen all the time."

Jacobs certainly doesn't shirk from consid-

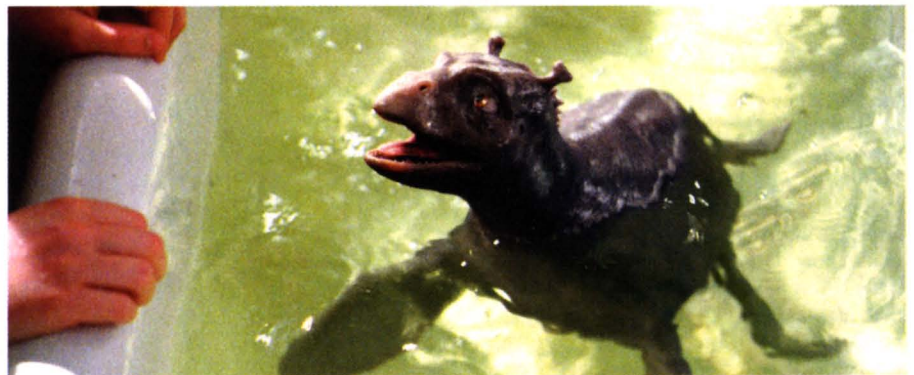
ering combat—or its horrors. "I wanted to use the war to create a specific emotional circumstance in order to establish an emotional resonance for Angus," he says. "There's this scene, a little moment, that I like, where Angus asks Lewis if he shot down the German plane [that injured him]. Lewis doesn't want to answer the question, and responds, 'If I did, I would not want to brag about it.' That remark gives Angus an adult perspective to war. That it isn't a game, and it isn't something to boast about."

Although he doesn't appear in the book, Mowbray is incredibly vital to the film. Beside being a wounded soldier, handyman and pacifist, "He's kind of an outsider," Jacobs relates. "In a way, he's like a figure from an American Western. Mowbray comes into town, and you don't know if he's a good guy or a bad guy. Captain Hamilton wants to find out if he's a friend or foe."

Part of Captain Hamilton's interest in Mowbray revolves, naturally, around Anne. "There's that implied subtextual love triangle between Mowbray, Hamilton and Anne," Jacobs says. "We don't play it too hard, because this is a family film, but you see that jealousy in Hamilton. Mowbray also becomes a friend and confidante to the children. He, Angus and Kirstie become this group, like they belong to a secret club. He's the only adult whom Angus can trust."

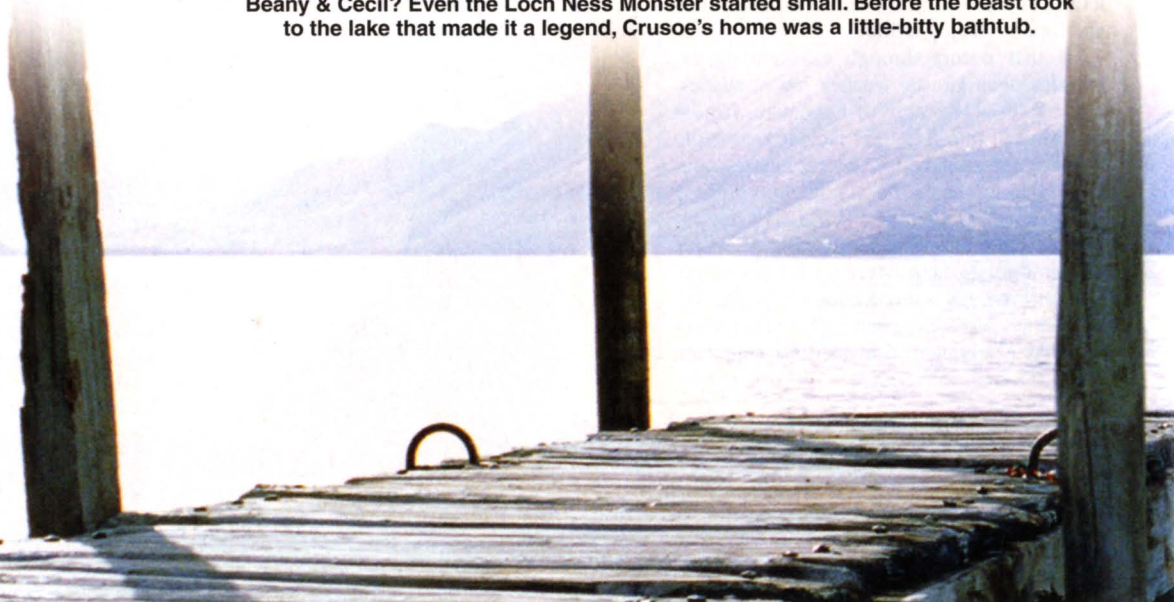
Mowbray is the one who relates the Water Horse myth to Angus. "Much of the mythology was invented," Jacobs admits. "I did some reading about the Water Horse, but many of the myths were invented for the movie. I wanted the spirit of the old legends, but we needed to make it more relevant. The idea that there's only one Water Horse in the world, for example, was ours. It's a sad notion, but it helps Angus—who misses his father—connect with Crusoe. In a way, he becomes a father to this creature. And the story of the Water Horse and the traveler isn't actually a myth, but there are certainly stories like it [notably one of a scorpion and a frog]."

The traveler story tells the tale of a Water Horse who agrees to take a weary traveler across a lake. However, the ending remains ambiguous. Either the Water Horse delivers its charge safely to the other bank, or it plunges down deep into the lake, drowning the hapless rider. Jacobs can't recall if it's one or the other—a fact that's cleverly mirrored in the script. "Mowbray tells the story to Angus, or most of it," he grins. "I thought it might be



Beany & Cecil? Even the Loch Ness Monster started small. Before the beast took to the lake that made it a legend, Crusoe's home was a little-bitty bathtub.

One of the rewards of making the movie today, notes Jacobs, is that the available digital technology could create a truly believable Water Horse.





Jacobs is delighted with Etel's performance, as well as the rest of the cast, which includes David Morrissey, Emily Watson and Ben Chaplin.

funny if Mowbray didn't remember the ending, so he can't say for sure what the Water Horse did to the traveler. So it's funny, but it also creates some tension when Angus chooses to ride Crusoe."

And ride him Angus does—not long after the last of Crusoe's stunning growth spurts. Throughout the first half of the film, Crusoe packs on some serious pounds. Before long, the only place the creature can swim in privacy and peace is in the Loch itself. Sending Crusoe to the Loch represents one of the times when Angus must come to terms with loss, saying farewell and the reality that Crusoe has become kind of scary.

"We wanted to explore that part of the idea, too," Jacobs says. "Crusoe is cute and lovely at first, but then it turns into this large creature. I thought there needed to be a moment where you weren't sure if it's a monster. That creates tension. Crusoe turns out to be nice, but there are still moments of wildness and uncertainty. Those scenes of Angus riding Crusoe's back, for example. They're signature moments in the movie, and kids will be exhilarated by them."

Magical Metaphors

Angus and Crusoe's antics wouldn't be half as interesting were it not for the folks at Weta. The studio that produced many things virtual for *The Lord of the Rings* and *The*

Chronicles of Narnia went to great lengths to breathe life into Crusoe. And they succeeded. From the Water Horse's nuanced expressions to its realistic water interactions, audiences might never guess that the Water Horse is less a creature of myth than one of computers.

"The visual effects guys in New Zealand did an amazing job of creating the sense that there's actually a creature on the screen," Jacobs says. "If the movie had been made when I first worked on the script, seven or eight years ago, the Water Horse wouldn't look as good as it does now. The technology has grown so fast. When I first saw a cut of the film, the thing that amazed me the most was how *real* Crusoe seemed. There's a performance—there's emotion in the eyes and recognizable behavior in the movements. And the moments in the bath, where Crusoe does flips in the water, are fabulous. I was pleased as a writer."

All the CGI in the world can't save a bad story, but Jacobs isn't concerned about that. Writing the script was a blast for him, but it wasn't all Water-Horsing around. "I knew that certain scenes were going to be fun—like the comic chases with Crusoe and the dog," he notes. "The harder scenes were the emotional ones—like the flashbacks with the Dad, or when Anne asks Lewis about his war experiences—because you want to make them real.

Take the moment when Angus gets angry at Lewis for releasing Crusoe into the Loch. The tone of that had to be just right; it had to be correctly modulated."

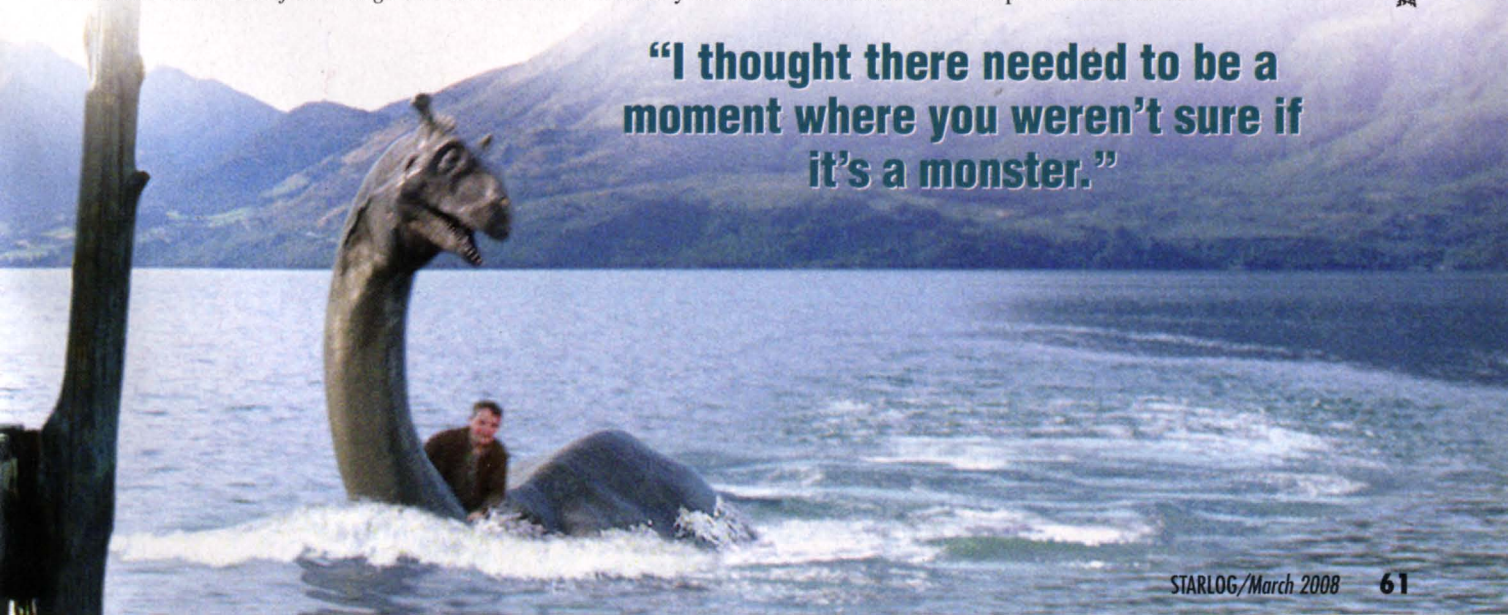
A crucial addition to the tale is Brian (X2) Cox as the older Angus. His role as the storyteller enhances the film's mythical nature, as well as adds a poignant footnote on Crusoe and the Water Horse legend. "Brian's character frames the story," Jacobs says. "He was added fairly late; even the idea of Angus narrating was added fairly late."

Jacobs grew up in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, and is a Yale graduate. His big break came in 1997 with the comedy *Out to Sea*. The writer then cut his teeth on the fantastical, helping pen Disney's saurian CGI spectacle *Dinosaur* (2000) and DreamWorks' *Flushed Away* (2006). "*Flushed Away* was lots of fun, but I wasn't as involved in that one," he says. "Animation is somewhat different than live-action films, in that the studios go through a number of writers. But I had a great time."

Between those two projects came Jacobs' sweetest success to date, *Chocolat* (2000). "I'm drawn to stories with some kind of magical element to them," he comments. "And within that magical context, I like the characters to behave as real and true and plausible as possible. All the rules of human behavior and understanding and growth still have to be in place. It can't be a world where anything can happen. *Chocolat* is about a town where people need to grow. They have to move past the things that are holding them down. In [*The Water Horse*], the magic is a metaphor for the ways in which we have to grow and embrace life. That's part of the metaphor in *Chocolat*, too. You don't have to feel so burdened by your traditions or the rules. You *can* cut lose sometimes.

"We all love stories about magic," Robert Nelson Jacobs concludes. "We *need* magic. And the key to writing a story about magic is to figure out the metaphor: How does this apply to our lives? What lessons do the characters learn? For Angus, it's about reconnecting with real life. The magic of the Water Horse is that it allows this boy to take the first step toward adulthood." ✨

"I thought there needed to be a moment where you weren't sure if it's a monster."





Edward Scissorhands'
Johnny Depp
switches from shears
to a sharp-edged
razor as *Sweeney Todd:*
The Demon Barber of
Fleet Street.

BLOODY BALLADS

By IAN SPELLING

Raising his razor high, Tim Burton takes a stab at a musical with *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*.

Director
Tim Burton called upon Depp, one of his favorite actors, to essay Sweeney Todd, one of his favorite characters.



Photo: Leah Gallo

Tim Burton was, is and forever will be a STARLOG favorite. Over the years, he has treated fans to films as diverse, daring and inventive as *Beetlejuice*, *Batman*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Ed Wood* and *Mars Attacks!*, as well as *Sleepy Hollow*, *Planet of the Apes*, *Big Fish*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Corpse Bride*.

His latest picture, a big-screen adaptation of the Broadway musical *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, doesn't exactly fit the STARLOG mold, but certainly many STARLOG readers will be among the first in line to check out how Burton has realized Stephen Sondheim's beloved yet blood-soaked classic.

And besides, with a cast of genre favorites—including Johnny Depp as the razor-wielding barber, Sweeney Todd, Helena Bonham Carter as his pie-making partner in crime, Mrs. Lovett, and Alan Rickman as the judge whose selfish actions stoke Todd's thirst for vengeance—how could we possibly ignore *Sweeney Todd*? So STARLOG catches up with Burton—at a Manhattan sound editing studio just two blocks from our offices, as he puts the final touches on his first all-out movie musical—for the following wide-ranging conversation.

STARLOG: What compelled you to “attend the tale of *Sweeney Todd*”?

TIM BURTON: I can't remember the year, but I think it was around 1979. I had never been to Europe, so I went to London. I wasn't really a theatergoer, but I had heard about *Sweeney Todd* and went to see it. And I just loved it. In fact, I think I went three nights in a row. I'm a huge

horror movie fan, and I liked the idea of the music and the horror and the melodrama all mixed together. It struck me as very strong.

STARLOG: And cinematic?

BURTON: It struck me as cinematic when I saw it on stage. And then it was interesting, because when I spoke to Stephen, he said that he had written it like a movie score, almost like an homage to Bernard Herrmann. It does come across that way. I was a student at the time. I wasn't yet a director in the cinema, per se. But it did strike me as very cinematic from the moment I saw it.

STARLOG: The show is pretty long, and the movie, for commercial purposes, had to be shorter. What was altered for time?

BURTON: The first script I read had more dialogue and less music, but the thing about the show that always stood out to me is, if you listen to the original soundtrack, you get the whole idea of the story without needing that much dialogue. So we tried to go back to that, where there's dialogue, but we treat it almost like a silent movie with music in it, where the music tells the story.

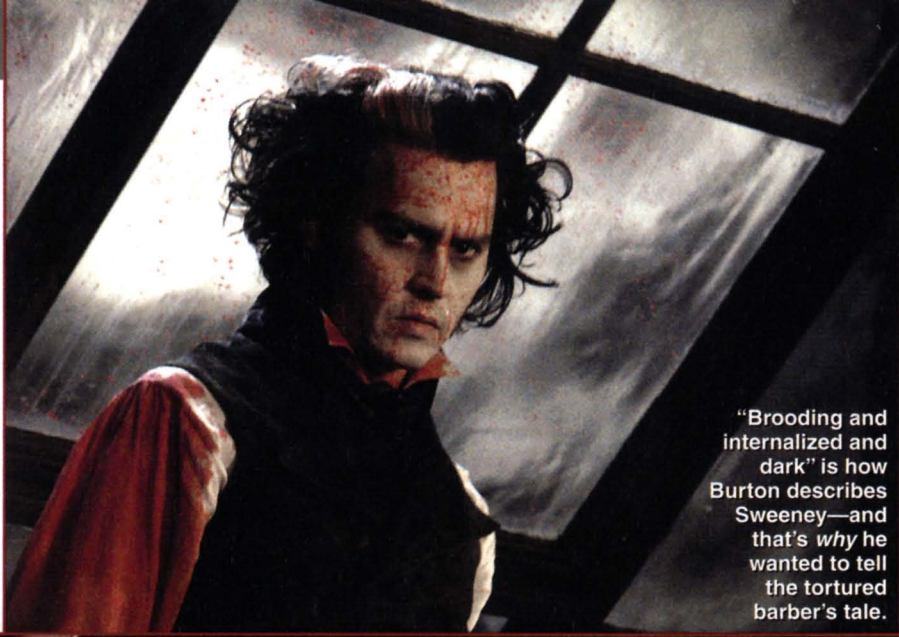
STARLOG: How involved was Sondheim in the changes?

BURTON: The script has gone through



There will be blood...and bodies. As Burton discerningly notes, how many directors get the chance to helm an R-rated movie musical?

All Other Sweeney Todd Photos: Peter Mountain



"Brooding and internalized and dark" is how Burton describes Sweeney—and that's why he wanted to tell the tortured barber's tale.

liked a character as much as Sweeney Todd. Can you elaborate on that?

BURTON: I've worked with Johnny many times, obviously, and I've enjoyed this one more than most. I don't know, maybe because he nails it in the sense that he does not say much; he does not do much. He just sits there and is brooding and internalized and dark. Unfortunately, I relate to that.

STARLOG: Depp was actually supposed to do a movie called *Shantaram*, but that got postponed. If he had made *Shantaram*, would you have waited for him so he could do *Sweeney Todd*, or would you have found another actor for the part?

BURTON: I think I would have waited for him, because doing it with Johnny was one of the reasons I wanted to make *Sweeney Todd*. I was actually involved with the project 10 years ago, and it never materialized. I believe that things happen for a reason. At that time, Johnny probably would have been too young for it, but now *Sweeney Todd* just



Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett's relationship is at the heart of this delicious story. Burton found Depp's perfect match in *Corpse Bride*'s Helena Bonham Carter.

Photo: Leah Gallo



This man knows how to make a point. Bent on revenge, Sweeney Todd not only sees red—he spills it! And then, thanks to Stephen Sondheim, he sings!

many incarnations. From what I gather from [screenwriter] John Logan, he had more music in, less music in, more dialogue in... They went through lots of changes. But Stephen was pretty open to it, because we ended up putting more music back into the script than when I originally read it. I had heard that Stephen signed off on that [first] script. My goal was to put more music back in. And I wanted to keep the film true to the spirit of Sondheim's show. That's why I made the movie. I didn't want to change a bunch of stuff. I wanted to do *Sweeney Todd* because I love the play. So even though things got taken out or moved around, I always felt confident, as best I could, that I had the spirit of the show in mind.

STARLOG: You've been quoted as saying that it has been a long time since you've



Instead of finding the particulars of making a musical confining, Burton and his actors actually felt set free by the songs and on-set music.

seemed right for everyone. It was a challenge for me, and I think it was a challenge for Johnny, too. It was new territory. And it just seemed right.

STARLOG: Judging from the footage we've seen, Depp appears to be channeling Peter Lorre in *Mad Love*, Humphrey Bogart in *The Return of Doctor X* and Christopher Lee in any number of Hammer films. Does that sound about right?

BURTON: Over the years, Johnny and I have talked about these kinds of actors and these kinds of characters, and it's a style of acting that you don't see often nowadays. Peter Lorre, Boris Karloff, Christopher Lee and Vincent Price could project something without saying anything. It's almost like silent-movie acting. That has always appealed to Johnny and me, and this character was perfect for that. With Sweeney and also Mrs. Lovett, I could imagine them in a wax museum. And that was my standard of visual representation for them. If I saw those two

weird is that before I knew either of them, I did a drawing of Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett, and right before casting I looked at it, and I went, "It's Johnny and Helena!" Really. So that was a fateful moment for me.

And then Alan is simply amazing. He's one of those actors where you go, "Oh, he's in *Die Hard* and he's in..." You forget all the movies he has been in because he's so great. That's the sign of a fantastic actor. They *become* these characters. And there's nobody better at playing twisted perversity. I've never said this to Alan, and he might take offense at it, but he has a certain Vincent Price quality. Especially in something like this, which is a melodrama. Alan is able to convey things without actually having to say or do



Depp and Burton had a hit with *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. For more Burton interviews, see past STARLOGs (#130, #145, #164, #180, #200, #234, #291, #320, #338) and FANGORIAS (#138, #188).

STARLOG: Except for maybe Sweeney's daughter Johanna and Anthony, everyone in the story is ultimately a nasty piece of work. How tricky was it to get around that in terms of giving the audience something, someone to care about?

BURTON: Yeah, but they *all* have their reasons, and that's what I love about them. There's a reason why Sweeney Todd is the way he is, and you get that. That's the thing that drew me to this project. Like I said, they're people I understand and like in a weird way. And that is what gives *Sweeney Todd* its drama, sadness, beauty and humor. It's a simple revenge melodrama, but there's a reason why everyone is the way they are.

STARLOG: Music has factored heavily in every one of your movies, but this is your first bona fide, straightforward musical. What were the inherent challenges in that—the lipsynching, the actors needing to sing as well as act, etc.?

BURTON: Well, it was an interesting experience. To be honest, I really enjoyed that part of it. In fact, I would probably consider playing music on the set even if it wasn't a musical, because it galvanizes everybody. It's like when people made silent movies and had piano players on the set. People just move differently [to music]. So what could have been a limiting experience turned out to be quite liberating. I talked with Johnny about this, and he agreed that instead of being confining, it was great. He moved in a way that he wouldn't have otherwise, and he did things that he wouldn't have done otherwise. So it was loads of fun.

STARLOG: Which song did you most enjoy shooting?

BURTON: I don't know. I appreciate all of them in their own way. I like where Sweeney goes nuts in "Epiphany," because that's the most cathartic [song for] me. But I enjoyed doing them all.

STARLOG: What happened with Christopher Lee's role? He was in the movie, and now he's not.

BURTON: That was extremely painful, because I love him, but there was this whole thing about having the ballad ["The Ballad of Sweeney Todd," which opens the stage show] and all the characters sing it. Chris did really great work in it, and there were a bunch of fabulous actors involved. But it



Photo: Leah Gallo

characters in a wax museum, I would say, "That is perfect."

STARLOG: What made Carter and Rickman right for their respective roles?

BURTON: Sweeney and Mrs. Lovett are a weird couple, and that's another thing I love about the story. They represent, to me, the perfect relationship. They're completely screwed up, completely nuts and they deserve to be with each other. And they needed to be the perfect double image. Johnny has that silent-movie quality I was talking about, and Helena has it, too. What is

them. And that is what this piece required.

STARLOG: Dante Ferretti was your production designer on *Sweeney*. How did you enjoy collaborating with him?

BURTON: Dante worked with Federico Fellini. He's a true artist. My background is in design, so I admire certain people. And he's one guy I admire. I would walk by his room, and he would be doing a big drawing of a set. That's like, "Yeah, it isn't a business. It's a movie. And there's art in movies." That's just pleasurable to be reminded of and to be around.

became apparent to me that the device of having people sing this ballad worked amazingly on stage, but it just *didn't* work in the movie. I wanted to see the story told for the first time and not be told what is going to happen. So that was quite painful, because Chris is an idol of mine. It was hard. But the bottom line is it had nothing to do with those people. I had never done a musical before, and there were things I didn't know until I started getting into it.

STARLOG: How actually is the film coming together?

BURTON: I feel great about it. I love it. I have no idea what anybody else is going to

Burning with rage, bloodily seeking vigilante justice, Sweeney Todd finds himself on the razor's edge of losing his mind—and his soul.



It took years for the Sondheim musical to get filmed. But Burton's second attempt actually came together quickly.

think of it, but for me, I had the opportunity to make an R-rated musical. And that does not happen every day. So I'm extremely excited.

STARLOG: *Sweeney Todd*, *Sleepy Hollow* and *Corpse Bride* add up to a Gothic horror trilogy of sorts. Have you done enough of that for now, or would you return to it again if the right project came along?

BURTON: I love it. It's all project to project, but I enjoyed *Sweeney Todd* more than I have lots of things lately. I had so much fun making this, and I feel good about it. So we'll see.

STARLOG: Let's talk about some other projects. What's the latest on *Ripley's Believe It or Not!*? Is that action film happening?

BURTON: I'm working on *Sweeney Todd*, and that's about it. This happened quick, I did it quick and it has been great. I'm not one who plans too far in advance, because I don't know how I'm going to feel in a week or a month or a year.

STARLOG: The writers' strike could be over by the time this article appears, or it may still be going on. If it's the latter, might you finally be able to get your forever-in-the-works Vincent Price documentary finished?

BURTON: What really pisses me off about

that—and what has held this up for many, many years—is that the cost of getting the clips to those Vincent Price movies is so astronomical, it's forcing the movie *not* to be made. I want to say to everybody, "This is a documentary. This isn't something to make lots of money. It's about a guy who gave the last moments of his life to talk to me, and he was this amazing person, and all I want to do



Teaming with Jim Lemley and Timur (Night Watch) Bekmambetov, Burton is producing *9*, an animated fantasy directed by Shane Acker.

is use clips of his movies to illustrate his work."

In fact, these people who have the rights to the movies, this would only benefit them. But we're in this era of, "Oh, you want that? Well, this clip is going to cost this amount, and that clip is going to cost that amount..." There's absolutely nobody who can afford the amount of money that would take. So it's unfortunate, and I wish those people would just realize, "I get this. If we have the rights to this film, it only benefits us. It's like free publicity." But so far, that hasn't happened.

STARLOG: You're listed as a producer on an animated-SF-fantasy-adventure film entitled *9*. What's the basic premise of that, and how involved are you with the project?

BURTON: I responded to this guy Shane Acker, who did a short all by himself that had an interesting vibe to it. It wasn't the usual talking animals or insects kind of thing. It felt different, and it's nice to see somebody trying something unusual in the animated vein. It's Shane's thing, and I think he has something going with it.

STARLOG: And our last question is: What's the one film that slipped under the radar? Which of your movies do you feel, for whatever reason, was overlooked?

BURTON: I've had movies that made lots of money that are deemed unsuccessful, but the opposite is true, too. *Ed Wood* is one of my favorites, and people come up to me and say that, too—and yet it was a complete disaster and bomb. It was like an Ed Wood movie, but really true. *Mars Attacks!* was a disaster here, but it was quite successful in Europe. But that just shows you that success and failure can be many different things. It's never black and white, and for me, that's probably very good! ☆

STARLOG



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IN SEARCH OF GOBLINS & FAIRIES

By PAT JANKIEWICZ



As illustrated by Tony DiTerlizzi, this frontispiece from *The Spiderwick Chronicles* is almost directly re-created as a shot in the film.

Tony DiTerlizzi & Holly Black offer up semi-grim fairy tales in *The Spiderwick Chronicles*.

With the enormous worldwide success of *Hobbits*, *Harry Potter* and *Aslan the Lion* in books, films and toys, the public has demonstrated a welcome new taste for smart fantasy. Now that these fantasy worlds are enjoying such a strong resurgence, Hollywood is hungry for intelligent genre material in hopes of filling their box office wardrobes. The latest is *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, its film adaptation due out February 15.

The series follows three siblings who move with their divorced, overwhelmed mother into the Spiderwick Estate in New England. Twin brothers Jared and Simon Grace and sister Mallory soon discover that the mansion and its surrounding lands are literally infested with fairies, dwarves, boggarts, trolls and other creatures. Illustrator Tony DiTerlizzi and author Holly Black couldn't be happier about their immensely popular *Spiderwick Chronicles* reaching the big screen.

"We saw a version of the movie yesterday, and it was just incredible," enthuses Black. "To see all the creatures come to life was amazing enough, but it was also fabulous to watch the characters move around and talk to each other. I really like it, especially seeing Jared [played by Freddie Highmore]. He's an angry kid... I'm not supposed to talk about any part, but there's a scene where he seems very... I don't know what I'm allowed to say. But that part really hit me in a [powerful] way.

"Jared is my favorite character, which may be why I was so excited to see him on screen. We did five books that tell the story of Simon, Jared and Mallory. Then there's *The Field Guide*, so you, too, can get into as much trouble as they do. The movie is a summary of all five books, but the books are very short. So, putting all five in one film



Spiderwick is the cause of the troubles. He recorded all sorts of fanciful creatures and their secrets in his *Field Guide*.

tions. "People ignored them, not because they were peaceful or good, but because they were afraid the fairies were going to snatch up their children and blight their crops. So with *Spiderwick*, I was really excited that kids would have that idea of fairies—especially when I think of boys who say, 'Oh, that isn't for me.' There's a great deal of fairy folklore that both boys and girls would enjoy."

"For me, visually, it was about keeping that true spirit of fairies and folklore alive," says DiTerlizzi. "De-sequining and de-sparkling it, making it a little grittier and going back to the things that I loved as a kid. I grew up reading Grimm's fairy tales. I loved *Dungeons & Dragons*, J.R.R. Tolkien, Arthur Rackham and Brian Froud. I think in children's books in particular, things are starting to get saccharinized. My big intention was, 'Let's show them what this stuff is really supposed to look

like.' I wanted to show what a goblin actually looks like!

"Fairy tales and folklore exist in all cultures," he continues. "They exist all over the world, and there's a long history of people interacting with fairies. The people who don't interact with them don't have special

When Jared Grace discovers Arthur Spiderwick's actual *Field Guide*, the story transforms from family drama into fantasy adventure.

wasn't as daunting as it sounds."

The five-volume series from Simon & Schuster includes *The Field Guide*, *The Seeing Stone*, *Lucinda's Secret*, *The Ironwood Tree* and *The Wrath of Mulgarath* (small hc, \$9.95 each). *Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guide to the Fantastical World Around You* (large hc, \$24) chronicles the supernatural creatures they meet (as well as some they don't). A second series, *Beyond The Spiderwick Chronicles*, began in the fall with *The Nixie's Song* (and focuses on another family).

"If you put all the [first series] books together, it's about 500 or 600 pages," DiTerlizzi points out. "The idea was, when we launched the books, that they were for younger readers. Clearly, series like *Lemony Snicket* and *Harry Potter* were doing really, really well at the time we began to work on *Spiderwick*. But we didn't want this to be for those kids. We actually wanted it to be for a younger audience, something a seven-, eight- or nine-year-old could read, but wasn't dumbed down or simplified. *The Spiderwick Chronicles* still has an edge, and the illustrations are reminiscent of real fairy tales. The movie looks good, and they've stayed true to the books' spirit, which was what I always told [director] Mark Waters he should do."

The Seeing Stone

Don't expect stereotypical Tinkerbell-type fairies on screen; these pixies are more complex than Peter Pan's sweet little sidekick. "The thing about the folklore regarding fairies is that they aren't just girls with wings—they're quite dangerous," Black cau-

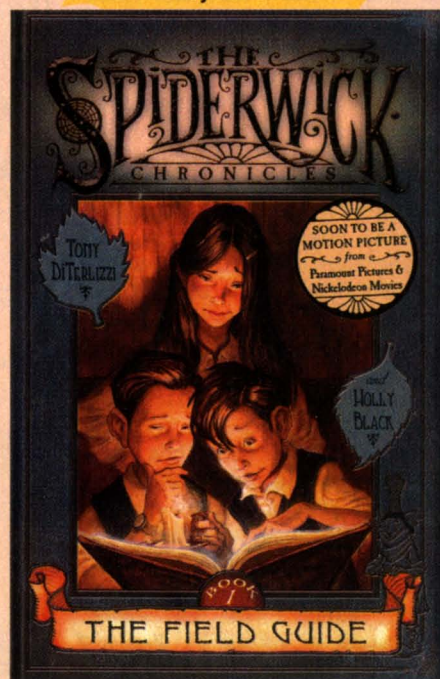


Photo: Pat Jankiewicz



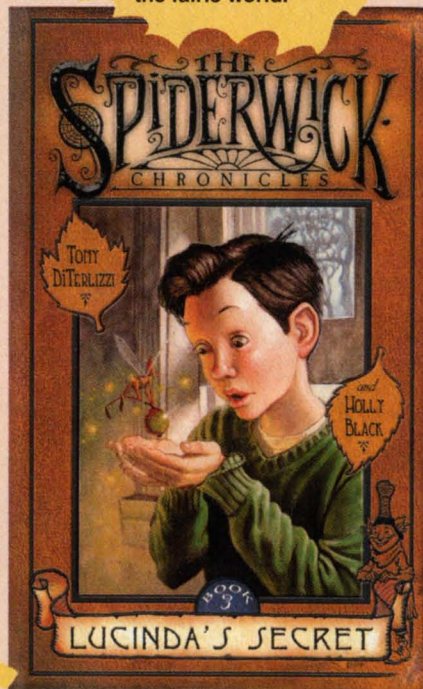
Artist DiTerlizzi & writer Holly Black conceived of the *Chronicles* as a fantasy series for an audience younger than *Harry Potter* readers.

All Spiderwick Art: Tony DiTerlizzi



The Seeing Stone is the second entry in the five-book series, which screenwriters Karey Kirkpatrick, David Berenbaum and John Sayles condensed into *one* movie.

In *Lucinda's Secret*, the Grace kids visit their Great-Aunt and learn more about Arthur Spiderwick and the fairie world.



When Mallory is kidnapped in *The Ironwood Tree*, Jared and Simon venture into the dwarven mines to rescue her. But this sequence *isn't* in the movie.

The Ironwood Tree

"I grew up in South Florida," DiTerlizzi notes. "Just a small house, a simple life, and then I moved to New York City with hopes and dreams to be an illustrator. I worked for years on *Dungeons & Dragons*. I like creating worlds for people. I also got to work on

the *Magic: The Gathering* trading card games. I was doing that during the period where fantasy worlds were big. But I felt like fairy tales were different, and I wondered how I could bring that to life. Fantasy has always been around; it just ebbs and flows.

powers or come from faraway lands—they're regular people. Our fairies *aren't* Tinkerbells. And there are also goblins and trolls and little sprites [in the film]. In the trailer, it isn't Tinkerbell chasing these kids; it's goblins and trolls!"

The thoughtful Black and witty DiTerlizzi have an easy banter, occasionally finishing each other's sentences. "We know each other extremely well," she comments. "For example, he mentions *Star Wars* all the time. When I send him manuscript pages, he immediately explains his criticisms in *Star Wars* terms!"

Nodding vigorously, DiTerlizzi agrees with a grin. "That's true, that's true. If I don't like something, I'll say, 'This is like the prequels!'"

DiTerlizzi's favorite *Spiderwick* character "will always be Hogsqueal. He's this precocious little hobgoblin who is really smarmy and funny, the Lando Calrissian who betrays them and turns out good at the end," he jokes.

"The funny thing that no one has really called us on is that Hogsqueal has this weird vernacular, where he calls the kids these funny little names that are actually antiquated curse words. Hogsqueal has been around a really, really long time, and so he uses funny words. The kids are like, 'Ha, ha, ha.' And we're like, 'Hmm, hmm, hmm.'" (In the movie, Hogsqueal is voiced by *Knocked Up's* Seth Rogen.)

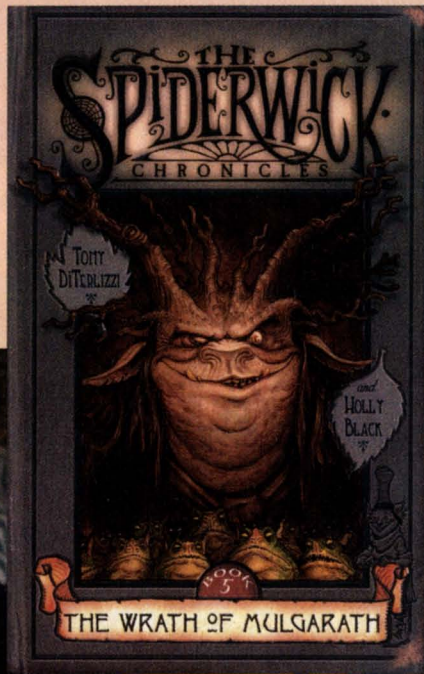


Thimbletack (voiced by Martin Short in the film) is only about the size of a pencil. But beware when this tiny brownie becomes a bitter boggart!

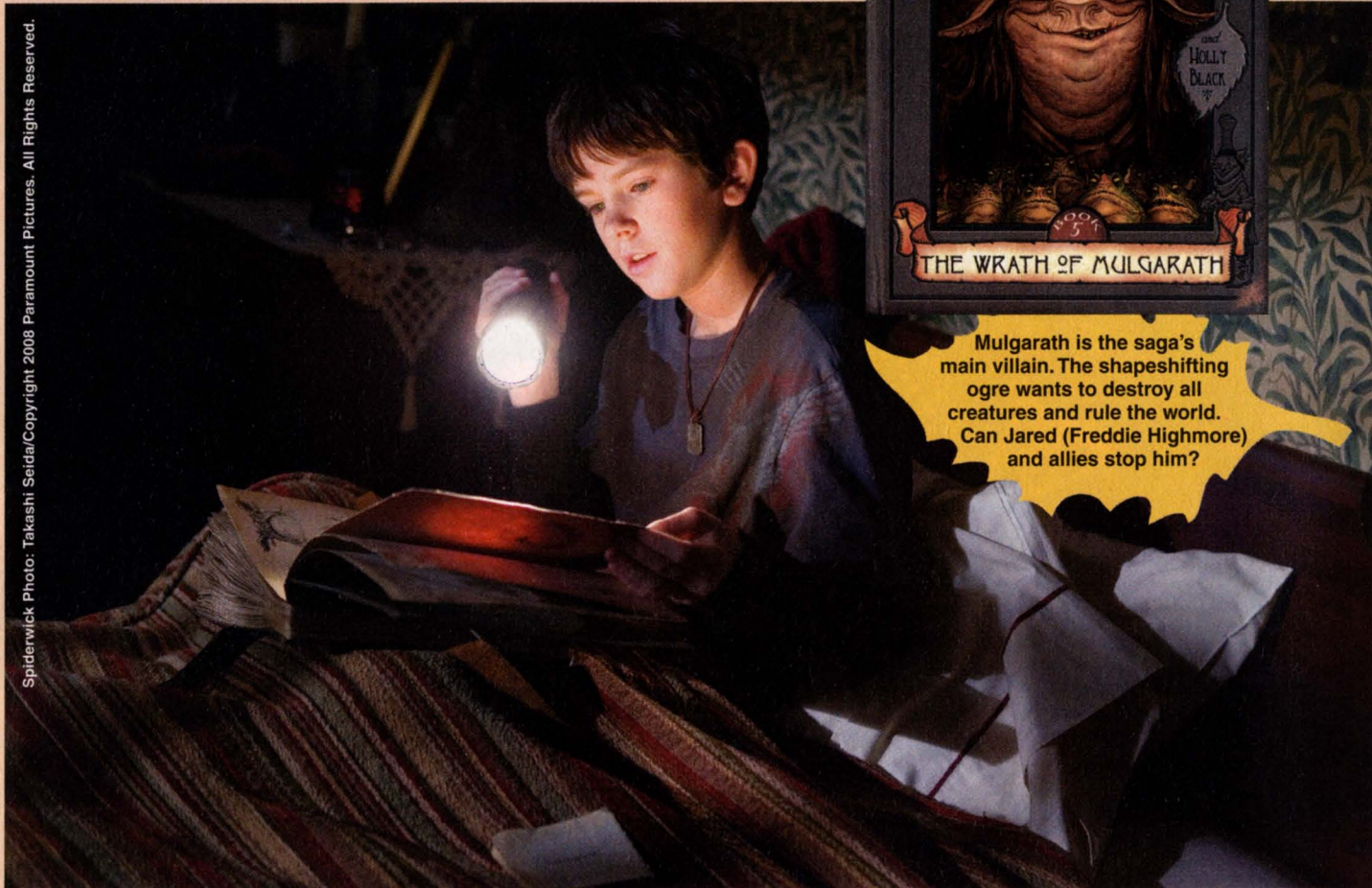
Black also cites Tolkien's influence, "But we're coming at it from such a different place. I remember reading Tolkien when I was in the eighth grade, so that's already in there. Everything that you create is in dialogue with everything else. It's always going to be, and it's just exciting. And there are lots of interesting new voices being added to it. Look at something like *Pan's Labyrinth*—the fact that a movie like that can now be made is so wonderful. And again, to see the dark side of fairies is thrilling.

run around after them. But still, at the core, there's this little boy dealing with the fact that his Dad has left and is *not* coming back."

And the pain of that divorce is felt through all five books. "People often think of fantasy as being escapist, but I believe that fantasy's great strength is that it can speak about things that are very real—and, in fact, often very painful—in different ways," Black offers. "By taking you outside the normal ways of talking about those



Mulgarath is the saga's main villain. The shapeshifting ogre wants to destroy all creatures and rule the world. Can Jared (Freddie Highmore) and allies stop him?



Spiderwick Photo: Takashi Seida/Copyright 2008 Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved.

"So much rich fantasy is coming out, and we're coming at it from such different places. What people love moves in cycles. Right now, fantasy is hot. It's something that they're really excited about and interested in. When we were kids, there was lots of fantasy. I wonder if, now that we're older and having children, we're getting the kinds of movies to watch with our kids that we had when we were kids, and that we miss?"

The *Spiderwick* movie also keeps the books' sad backstory. "What is great—and what we worked so hard to get into the stories—is that real human problems are going on, and they were able to capture that in the film," says DiTerlizzi. "You have this family that's going through a bitter divorce, and these kids are having problems with that. They don't have any other place to turn, so they move into this old house that's owned by the mother's side of the family. That's where they find the Field Guide. OK, then the fantasy starts, and the fairies and goblins

things, and being metaphorical—that's what the best fantasy *should* do."

How will they react when their characters are made into action figures? "Honestly, I have no idea," Black admits. However, DiTerlizzi takes a different stance. "Oh, it will be awesome! I hope kids love them, because I loved toys when I was a kid. To see the characters as action figures, and to be a part of that for our kids, will be great."

Black wants today's kids to experience fantasy the way she did as a child. "I remember going out into my backyard to look for fairies!" she declares. "When we started

doing *Spiderwick*, I told Tony, 'The beautiful thing is, I believe any kids reading this who go into their backyard to look for fairy evidence will find it, like I did!'"

She found clues that fairies had been in her yard? "Oh, yeah! Because there's always stuff that looks like evidence: squirrel nests that are built too well, knotholes in trees with little acorn cups that are carefully arranged..." Holly Black grins. "When you're looking for stuff, you'll find it. I grew up in the wilds of New Jersey, but I've never looked for the Jersey Devil. Just fairies! I've been out to the Pine Barrens a couple of times, and it was pretty scary. Although I didn't see the Jersey Devil, I was still a little scared!"



Hogsqueal proves unsurprisingly treacherous—and unexpectedly helpful—to Jared and his siblings.

Design & Layout: Heiner Fell



Do you still believe in magic?

Making
**MR. MAGORIUM'S
WONDER EMPORIUM**

By IAN SPELLING

Pretty much every movie Zach Helm loved growing up and every favorite toy he played with as a kid influenced *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium*, the big-screen children's fantasy he wrote and directed. The film, which stars Natalie Portman, Dustin Hoffman, Jason Bateman and Zach Mills, represents Helm's maiden voyage as a director after receiving kudos for his breakthrough script, *Stranger Than Fiction*.

Portman plays Molly Mahoney, the bright but tentative manager at Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium, the magical toy shop owned by the charm-

ing 243-year-old Mr. Magorium (Hoffman). After he announces that he's soon to die and is handing the store over to Molly, all the playthings in stock and the shop itself lose their luster, their light, their color—and they do so both literally and figuratively. Only by tapping the magic within can Molly, uptight new accountant Henry (Bateman) and Eric (Mills), the store's youngest employee, a sweet but friendless nine-year-old, revive this wonderful Wonder Emporium.

"Movies..." Helm says, rattling off influences. "*Mary Poppins*, which we obviously pay homage to, and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. I've probably seen *Duck Soup*, the Marx Brothers movie, more than any other film. There's a little bit of Groucho Marx going on with Dustin. The dinosaur scene with Henry is very similar to the Harpo-Groucho scene from that. As far as toys are concerned, my favorites are in the film. The Slinky was one of my favorite toys growing up. I lived in the attic, so there were stairs. That was rather useful. It sounds very Dickensian, doesn't it? So there's a big mix of stuff. When I watch the movie now, I see bits of *Harold and Maude*, which I loved when I was growing up. I see *The Little Prince*. I see *Curious George*. I see so much stuff in there, probably more than I could ever describe."

Helm received a gift of his own when making *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium*: its all-star cast, with Hoffman, Portman and Bateman complemented by the 11-year-old Mills. "I don't mean to brag, but it was relatively easy," Helm says of snagging his actors. "I got very lucky. Natalie came first. When Mandate Pictures asked me if I wanted to direct it, I said that I would, but I only wanted Natalie for that part. I knew Natalie a little bit socially, and I hold Natalie in very high regard as far as actors of my generation. So I said, 'It has to be Natalie,' and they had no problem with that."

"I approached Natalie boldly: I sent her the script, gift-wrapped it and I sent CDs, toys to bribe her and a letter [to Germany, where Portman was shooting *V for Vendetta*]. I realized that I had to stand out. When she said yes, I knew that we were in a good spot. And I knew Dustin from working

on *Stranger Than Fiction*. We had a rapport with one another. He was excited to work with Natalie, and I was able to sort of coax him into it."

"Jason and Zach came later," Helm adds. "We struggled to figure out who should play Henry, and exactly who could embody him. [Producer] Richard Gladstein actually suggested Jason when we were at dinner. I think we just repeated

the name 'Jason Bateman' for about two minutes, like, 'Jason Bateman! Jason Bateman!' So we asked Jason, and he said yes.

"And as for Zach...that was probably the most difficult. We looked at more than 1,000 kids. It's hard casting children for parts like this because you have kids who are too precocious or coy, and we knew that wouldn't

work, or there's a lack of emotional depth, and we knew that wouldn't work. Or the parents are crazy. You have to [cast the parents as much as the kid], because you're dealing with them, and you know that the child is indicative of their parents and, in some cases, that's how you communicate with the child. So we got really lucky with Zach. His parents are fantastic. Zach is a great kid. He's very much like that character, and as soon as he walked into the room, he had the part. But it was a process to find him."

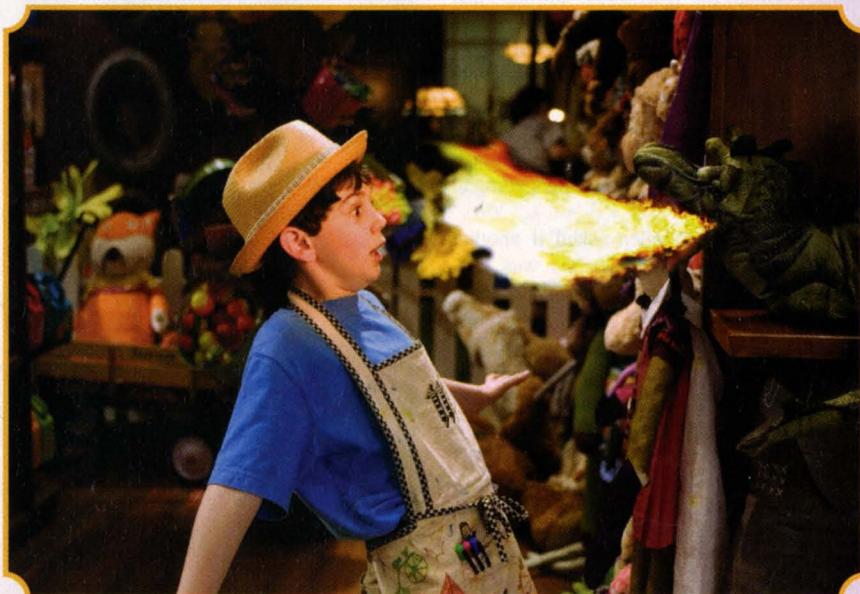
Young in Spirit

Portman, meanwhile, adored the *Magorium* script and her character, the self-doubting, one-time piano prodigy. That—coupled with the fact that she had met Helm socially before she met him professionally—prompted her to gamble on working with a first-timer.

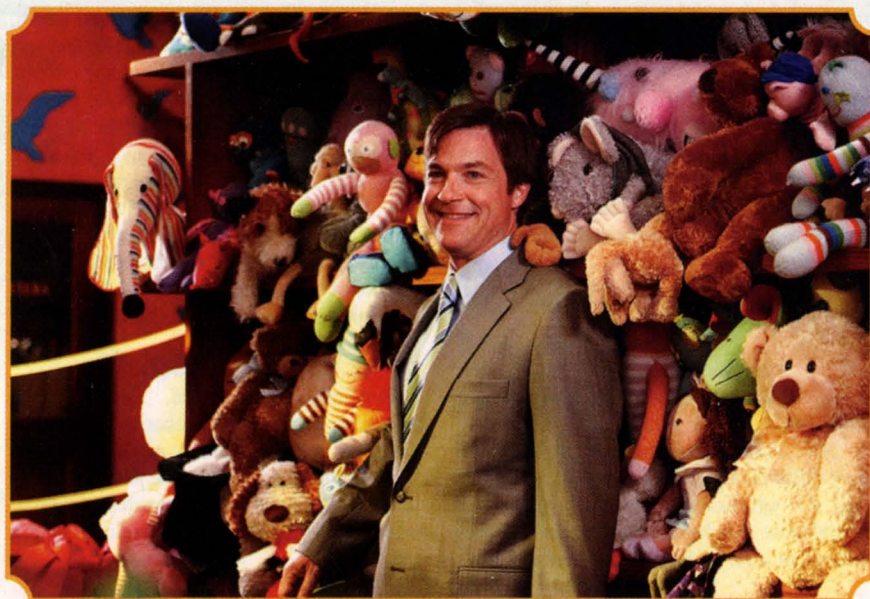
Then visit this cinematic shop of fantasies.★



Molly (Natalie Portman) discovers that there are many splendid and astonishing things to behold at Mr. Magorium's (Dustin Hoffman) Wonder Emporium.



Parents looking for the hot toy of the Christmas season should have checked out this fire-breathing stuffed animal. Eric (Zach Mills) seems impressed.



Stories about magic often have adult characters who simply refuse to believe. In this movie, Henry (Jason Bateman) has his eyes opened to the wonders of this special toystore.

"I knew he was someone who could communicate really well," the actress explains. "Zach is great to talk to and really, really smart. His script is incredible, and I was a huge fan of *Stranger Than Fiction*. Zach studied acting in college, so he actually has more training than I do. So in terms of giving acting advice, that was extremely helpful. He was great. Zach was really communicative, and he said some helpful things. His notes were always right on, and always interesting. Zach was completely open.

"It's hard for a writer to see anyone mess with their words, but if someone was like, 'You know, this doesn't feel quite right. Can I say this?', Zach would give us that freedom—although 99 percent of what's in the movie is written by him because he's a phenomenal writer. But he just had a great openness. And it's fun to go from working with Milos Forman, the Wachowski Brothers and Wes Anderson to Zach—to being with someone new for the first time. And directors don't really see how other directors work. That's something that is always interesting. They're each sort of self-invented, and when you see someone who is as inventive as Zach, you just know that he's going to be special."

Portman giggles when asked if another appealing element of *Magorium* was that, unlike in *V for Vendetta* and *Goya's Ghosts*, she wouldn't be tortured. "Interesting question," she smiles. "It really wasn't that. I'm just trying to do stuff that's different all the time. Yeah, I had the unfortunate position of having that in *Goya* and then in *V* as well, but I've also had a few... I guess I've only had [the short film] *Hotel Chevalier* since *Goya*. I just want to do stuff that's challenging in different ways, and this script was like a no-brainer when I read it. I was like, 'I have to do this.' I immediately called Zach and was like, 'I'm in. Whatever. You tell me when.'"

Bateman has been crazy-busy since the demise of his acclaimed series *Arrested Development*, but he welcomed the opportu-

nity to play the character who, as he puts it, "really kind of tethers this eccentric world to reality a bit." In that sense, Henry resembled his role as Michael Bluth on *Arrested Development*. "If you don't have someone who's sort of your eyes... I represent the audience coming into the toystore and saying, 'No, toystores aren't magical, and people don't live to be 250 years old.'

"I enjoyed watching this. And I enjoyed watching my character's progression, because it's the most relatable to me. And I just liked being a part of this nice message in the movie—this message of trying to keep yourself from getting a hard, crusty shell until as late as possible. I suppose people need to keep themselves open to things that might be a little less cut-and-dried. Zach could probably fill you in on other existential themes he has going through this that I didn't even notice, but there's plenty of brain candy in the movie for the highbrows."

Young at Heart

Hoffman, on the other hand, plays a role markedly different from anything he has ever done before. Magorium is as far as could be from Benjamin Braddock, Ratso Rizzo, Ted Kramer, Raymond Babbit and



even Mumbles and Captain Hook. "I've always felt that whether I like it or not I'm... What's the word?... I'm subjected to being a non-grown-up my whole life," the 70-year-old Oscar winner says. "I've never been able to grow up. I look forward to it at some point. This character is an adult, but he's not a grown-up. Grown-up kind of means you pretend. Grown-ups pretend to be other people, you know? He's what a kid is, I guess. Or that's the idea.

"A kid is there to believe. A kid believes as long as you let them believe, and once you start to kick that out of the kid, you kind of... I think a kid looks at an adult for hope, and if you don't give them hope, just in essence, then they feel hopeless around you. And that's what the movie is about. At least in my experience, kids make a decision about people very quickly when they meet them. Are you safe? Do they trust you? I've always been very close to kids. I yearn to find that more and more in my life."

These days, Hoffman also enjoys acting alongside the next generation of Hollywood stars. He shared the screen with Johnny Depp in *Finding Neverland*, Will Ferrell in *Stranger Than Fiction* and now he has done the same with Portman. Hoffman cracks up



Zach Helm(ed) his first film with *Mr. Magorium*. The newbie director was influenced by everything from *Mary Poppins* to *Duck Soup*.

when his young co-star is described as marriage-destroying material. "I met Natalie years ago," he begins, launching into a charmingly Hoffman-ian tale. "She's about 26, and I have a son who is 26. The first break I got in acting was in what we call class-Z summer stock, which meant there were no more than 100 seats. It was in Fishkill, New York. It was years and years ago, and it was the first time I got on stage. And I got to play Peter in *The Diary of Anne Frank*; he was Anne's boy friend.

"So when they did it on Broadway [a revival decades later, with Portman as Anne Frank], I wanted to see it. I took my wife, we saw Natalie in it and we went backstage and met her. It was kind of an image I won't forget, because there she was in her room with her mother, who was peeking out and deciding whether she even wanted to let my wife and I in, because she had Natalie sitting down. Natalie had just finished a performance, and she had her sitting down doing her high school finals. But she did let us in.

"But I did a very bad thing, which was I called up my son in LA, and I said, 'I got her.' He has hated me ever since, but I put him on the phone with Natalie," Hoffman adds. "He said, 'Dad, don't pimp for me anymore, please!' I

didn't heed the advice. It's one of my flaws. And they talked, and they met a few times. But that was the first time I met Natalie. I've seen her a few more times, but this is the first time I've worked with her.

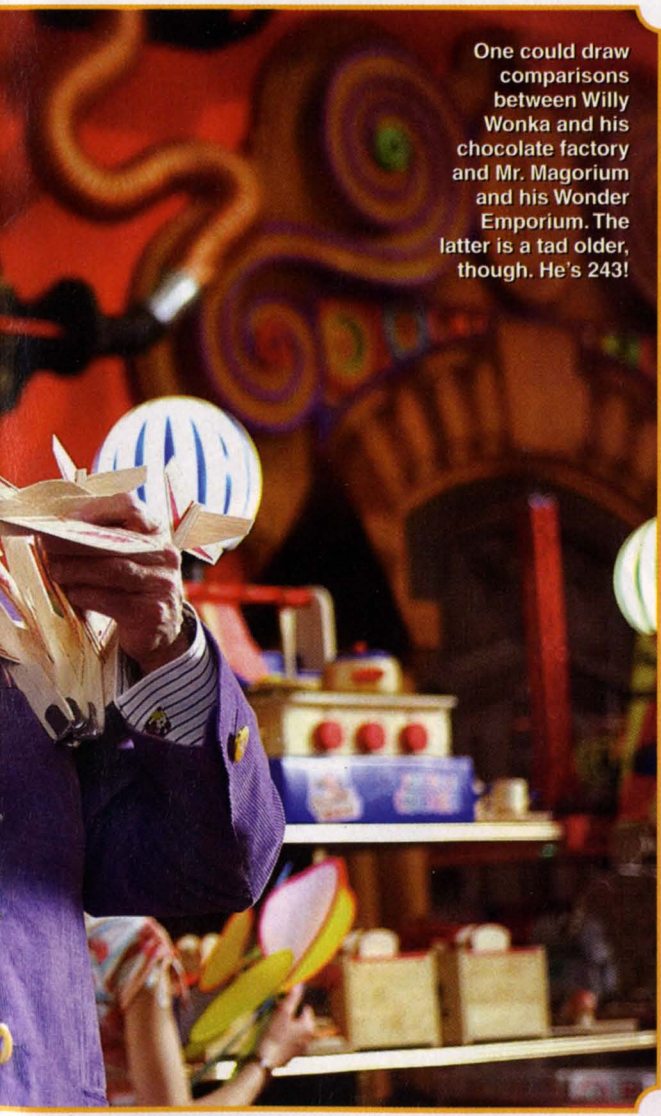
"Natalie is very, very bright. She would come in every morning to make-up, and she would be doing the *New York Times* crossword puzzle. Yes, she can do Monday and Tuesday rather rapidly, but when you see her doing Wednesday, Thursday and Friday...[the puzzles get more complicated by the weekday]. And that's what she does while she's getting her stuff on."

Hoffman believes that "Natalie belongs in that league, on that short list of actors who, in a way, try their best *not* to be seduced by stardom. I went to see *Goya's Ghosts*. It's a flawed film. I think everything is flawed. But there's stuff in there that's magnificent. It's visually wonderful. There are scenes with Javier Bardem, who is maybe the great actor of the moment, of our time. And in the scenes between him and Natalie, I saw her show a depth I hadn't seen in her work before. I called her up, and I said, 'Holy cow!'

"But it was kind of painful for her, because the film didn't really open or anything, and she had put in all that work. But she thanked me. And that was after we had worked together. Natalie runs away from it. I said, 'What are you going to do?' She said, 'I'm taking off for a year. I'm going to China. I'm going to do this. I want to go back to Israel.' She demands to have a life, I guess. She tries her best...

"So that's the first thing that comes to mind," Dustin Hoffman remarks. "I mean, she's a professional. She's fun to work with. She's lovely. I guess I'm so old I don't think of her as marriage-destroying. I go right for the voyeuristic aspect and say, 'Maybe she'll marry my son.' I can't be her boy friend or her lover. I'll be her father-in-law. It's a healthy transference!"

One could draw comparisons between Willy Wonka and his chocolate factory and Mr. Magorium and his Wonder Emporium. The latter is a tad older, though. He's 243!



Birthday Girl

By PAT JANKIEWICZ

With her high cheekbones, piercing blue eyes and commanding British accent, Samantha Eggar has a regal air to her. Born Victoria Louise Samantha Marie Elizabeth Therese Eggar, the 5-foot-5 dynamo has essayed many types: Queens, peasants, police, crooks, murderers, businesswomen, wives, daughters and Moms.

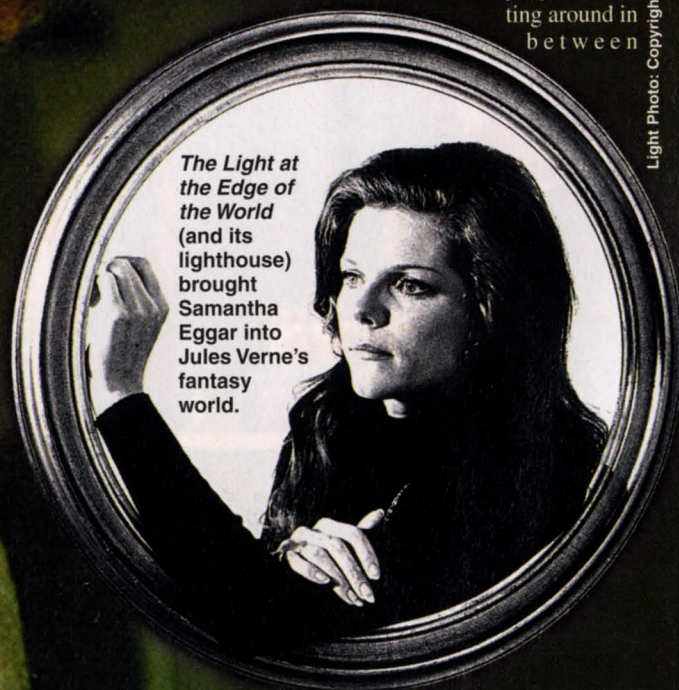
Her striking looks and acting style have lent themselves particularly well to the larger-than-life science fiction universe. "It isn't so much because of the appeal of fantasy films, I just look at the part," the actress shrugs. "If it sounds interesting or the director is good, I'm inclined to do it—especially if the writing is good. It's *always* the writing. So it just happens that many of the fantasy projects I've worked on were really well-written."

Eggar is in a great mood, as it's her birthday. "It seems appropriate to be talking about one's life and career on your birthday," she says. "I love being an actress. The British are almost embarrassed when you're an actor; it isn't a job they put on a high pedestal."

Family Chat

One of her most popular SF roles was Marie Picard on the "Family" episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. "Star Trek was fantastic!" Eggar exclaims. "I played Jean-Luc Picard's sister-in-law, Marie, who is married to his brother Robert [Jeremy Kemp]. I think Captain Picard only came to Earth twice on all of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and I was thrilled to be in one of those episodes. I adored Patrick Stewart. He had been in the Royal Shakespeare Company, so sitting around in between

Samantha Eggar celebrates with real presence & memories of adventures past.



The Light at the Edge of the World (and its lighthouse) brought Samantha Eggar into Jules Verne's fantasy world.

Smile, Samantha! And happy birthday! Today (as this interview occurs) is her turn for candles and cake.

takes, we would talk about London, theater and all the people we knew in common. It was a great experience working and hanging out with Patrick. In retrospect, I had no idea that the episode would stand out, because [after his nasty run-in with the Borg in "The Best of Both Worlds"] Jean-Luc was sent to Earth for some R&R.

"I really lucked out, because I didn't have to go through hours of alien makeup like everybody else on the show. I could be myself. I also didn't have to be on a spaceship set, because we spent the whole episode in a vineyard [on the Picard estate]. It was a wonderful experience, and I was especially thrilled to see how I looked in the episode: They made me up like Katharine Hepburn!

"Jeremy is nuts, absolutely nuts," she laughs. "Jeremy is your typical crazy English actor, but a total delight! He lives here [in California] now, and I've seen him since shooting our episode. Jeremy is adorable. I never worked with Patrick before or since, but I must say he was delightful, too. And I didn't even have to audition for the part."

Her favorite scene in the show "was when the Picard brothers start brawling! I watched them fighting in the mud. That was fun. It was these two older guys flailing, so neither one of them ever got a punch in, which was great—these two brothers settling all their old scores."

Marie Picard didn't really belong to the future, Eggar asserts. "There's a timelessness at his brother's vineyard, so I didn't see it as futuristic. I wasn't aware of how big a following *Star Trek* has, but I am now! How lucky was I, to be part of this enormous global experience and a member of the Captain's family? As his sister-in-law, I thought, 'This is cool. I'm not just some weird person visiting from another planet.' She was a weird person, but from *this* planet—and I liked being connected to the lead's immediate family.

"They even gave me a trading card, and to get that without being a baseball player is very flattering! They come in little envelopes for me to sign. But they're so small, and I have such a long name and big writing style, I worry about how I'll get my whole signature on there. Once, I was going to the theater in NY, and it was very late and I was in a big hurry, and there was a horde of people waiting for autographs. So because I was in a rush, I signed them 'Sam Eggar,' and they were furious with me and started tearing up the photos because they said it wasn't my name! I thought, 'You're lucky to get a signature.' But they wanted the whole long name."

Next Generation wasn't her only *Star Trek* connection. "I did a movie called *Round Numbers* with Kate Mulgrew from *Star Trek: Voyager*," Eggar says. "She became my best girl friend after we met on that. It was a great story, but it didn't turn out terribly well or hugely successful. Still, what's great about doing these projects are the deep and lasting relationships that you



She calls her *Star Trek: The Next Generation* husband Jeremy Kemp "your typical crazy English actor."



Making *Dolittle* took a year, so most of the aging monkeys and other critters had to be replaced. Polynesia the parrot stayed.



According to Eggar, *Doctor Dolittle* was ahead of its time. She loved singing and talking to the animals in the famous flop.

form. The woman who made *Round Numbers* mortgaged her house to do it.

"Kate and I were having lunch in Brentwood one day, and Kate had gone on an audition that she said was terrible, and her marriage at the time wasn't in great shape. She wasn't really happy. About a week later, Kate got the role as Captain Janeway and soared to stardom. It was so wonderful that someone who was emotionally downhill could turn it around and be given this extraordinary job. Kate is such a pro, and she nailed it. She is a dedicated, hard-working, serious, highly intelligent, amusing and flat-out brilliant friend."

She has no memory of TV guest stints on *Darkroom* and *Mann & Machine*, but *Fantasy Island* is another story. "That was fun, because I was Mr. Roarke's fantasy!" Eggar giggles. "We got married, and I had to have a brain tumor and die immediately. We shot those two-hour episodes in Hawaii, and it was so glamorous. Ricardo Montalban—you get someone from that era kissing you,

All Doctor Dolittle Photos: Copyright 1967 20th Century Fox

and you really know you've been kissed! 'Rrrrrriicarrdo, kiss me again, my darling!' Oh, he kissed me so hard, I felt it in my toes!"

Animal Talk

Acting came to her almost accidentally. "I was born in Hampstead, which is North of London, during the War," Eggar reveals. "I'm giving away my age, but I feel since today is my birthday, I can celebrate everything! Although I was born in that part of London, I felt I was a Chelsea girl who lived there. England was magical then. I would see the Beatles at the clubs all the time. I went to school south of London, at Surrey and in Kent. I actually never made a decision to become an actor; it was one of those serendipitous things where I was in art

a baby. Get on a plane and shoot this movie with Cary Grant!"

Doctor Dolittle, one of her biggest films, had her riding a giant pink snail and talking to the animals as Emma Fairfax, the cheerful assistant to the legendary veterinarian. "I can't rave enough about Tony Newley and Leslie Bricusse; their music was terrific," she grins. " 'If I Could Talk to the Animals' and those other great songs? How ahead of their time they were! I'm so in awe that Tony and Leslie wrote about animals and the environment in 1965, when nobody cared about anything like that. You listen to the songs now, and they're still wonderful.

"We filmed *Doctor Dolittle* for a whole year in England and St. Lucia; it was a long, long shoot. Rex Harrison [Doctor Dolittle] and I shared the same birthday! When I told

Voicing the goddess Hera, Eggar never knew her spouse Zeus was Rip Torn until she saw Disney's animated *Hercules*.



him it was my birthday, he said, 'No, it can't be, because it's *my* birthday!' I would always send him a card. Rex was a legend. I got to sing and dance, which I absolutely loved. It was a fantastic experience.

"The giant snail was great. It was huge, floated on the water and had an engine inside its shell. You could climb inside, and the entire cast fit on the snail. It looked like a giant Rose Bowl parade float. It was gorgeous. Ray Aghayan did all of the costumes. Of all the animals, I loved the Pushmi-Pullyu! He was a cute little thing and absolutely real. We worked with a real live animal called the Pushmi-Pullyu," she says with a wink.

Eggar found that the animals turned the set into a zoo. "The big anteater took us out one day!" she chuckles. "Through sheer power, the poor thing busted out of his cage and ran all over the studio! *Doctor Dolittle* took so long to shoot that they had to keep replacing the animals because they would

Molly Maguires Photo: Copyright 1969 Paramount Pictures Corp. & Tamm Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Among Eggar's major film credits are *The Collector*, *Walk, Don't Run* and *The Molly Maguires* (with Sean Connery, pictured).

school for two and a half years and somebody suggested I try drama school. I did, I liked it and here we are!"

In the 1960s, Eggar gained fame in such films as *The Collector*, *Doctor Dolittle* and *The Molly Maguires* (1970). She acted opposite stars like Terence Stamp, Sean Connery, John Hurt and Cary Grant (in the romantic comedy *Walk, Don't Run*). Was it every English girl's dream to work with Cary Grant? "All I can say is I was pretty lucky, wasn't I? That was his very last film. Cary was amazing. He had just married Dyan Cannon, and we shot most of that in Tokyo. The scene where I'm running down the street clutching my stomach was shot 20 days after I gave birth! The Japanese ladies bound my stomach with bandages. I felt like a slave on that. I didn't want to take my son, because he was so little. But I was under contract, and couldn't get out of it. The producer said, 'We don't care that you just had



"It was a wonderful experience," Eggar says of her *Trek*. And Patrick Stewart was "delightful."

All Next Generation Photos: Copyright 1990 Paramount Pictures TV



Hercules Art: Copyright 1997 The Walt Disney Company

and multiple locations. We went from one side of the world to the other.

"I loved singing and dancing, although Marni Nixon [who dubbed singing voices of actresses in such films as *West Side Story* and *My Fair Lady*] filled in. I did three choruses of my own singing—you can certainly tell the bits that aren't me, because they don't sound anything like me! She had this American accent, and I kept saying to her, 'Hello, I'm English—a little more Julie Andrews, Marni!'"

In 1977, she starred in *Welcome to Blood City*, a strange SF cult flick where people find themselves enslaved in a Wild West town where you can only change your status by killing others. "That was an interesting movie," Eggar opines. "I spent the whole film on a magnificent horse in this great cowboy gear. I just loved it. I wore a black, tight-fitting top with a big red cross, because that's how they killed people in those days—they would aim for the cross over your heart. Jack Palance was in it, too. Before he came on to the film, they told me, 'Don't you dare call him "Pal-lance"—it's "Pal-ance," and rhymes with balance! Say it 100 times, because he'll get angry if you pronounce it wrong.' Jack was a poet and a very interesting man. He did poetry *and* one-armed push-ups!"

Eggar worked with another famous movie cowboy, Yul Brynner, in 1971's *The Light at the Edge of the World*, an adaptation of a Jules Verne tale. "You don't have enough tape for me to talk about Yul Brynner," she laughs. "It's very fond, but goodbye to that subject!"

In 1979, Eggar played mother to *The Brood*, director David (Scanners) Cronenberg's excellent cult horror film. More recently, she was Kristy Swanson's mother in *The Phantom*. "Alan Ladd Jr., my producer from *The Walking Stick*, gave me that job. Short, sweet and nice. Not Alan, the movie," she deadpans.

As the voice of Hera, Mother of the Gods of Mount Olympus, she made a big impres-



STARLOG readers recall Eggar as Jean-Luc Picard's sister-in-law Marie in *Star Trek: The Next Generation's* "Family."

sion in Disney's animated *Hercules*. "I loved playing Hera. Who wouldn't want to be a goddess and the mother of Hercules? It was a wonderful experience. On those things, you never work with anyone else; you're all alone in the sound booth. Until I saw the film, I had no idea I was married to Rip Torn! I'm happy I did *Hercules*, because my grandchildren love it. It was fun doing the movie, and I enjoyed reprising Hera on the TV show."

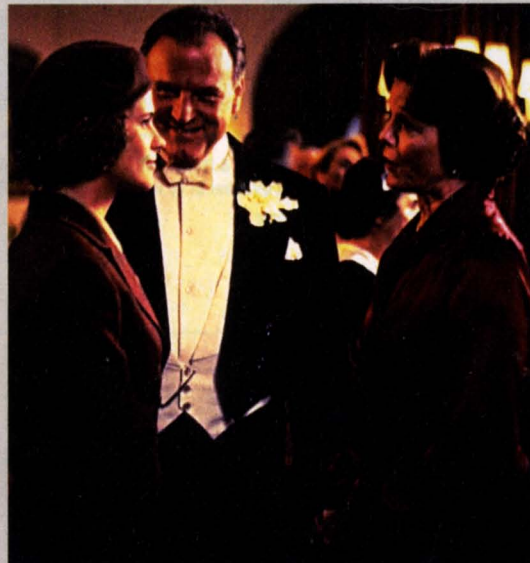
As for the future, "It's open," Samantha Eggar says happily. "I have no idea what's next!"

grow. Gub-gub the pig was replaced several times, as were most of the others. The only animal to make it all the way through was Chip the dog. He was a pound dog, so they couldn't replace him, and Polynesia the parrot stayed. All of the seals and chimps had to be replaced. It was also funny, because the animals would occasionally go to the bathroom during a scene."

Sadly, *Doctor Dolittle* was a giant bomb at the time of its release, helping bankrupt 20th Century Fox. "You're absolutely right," she declares. A string of films (including *Star!*, *Che!*, *Hello Dolly!* and *Doctor Dolittle*) didn't meet the studio's box-office expectations. "They all failed horribly, but every Easter, *Doctor Dolittle* plays on TV. Because of its environmental awareness and treatment of animals, *Doctor Dolittle* has come into its own and finally makes sense to everybody! Richard Fleischer directed it, and he was terrific. He had so much to cope with, working with all the animals, huge sets



Some filmgoers may know Eggar best from her voyage with *Doctor Dolittle* (Rex Harrison, who shared the same birthday).



As mother to feisty Diana Palmer (Kristy Swanson), Eggar is only briefly seen in *The Phantom*.

Phantom Photo: Andrew Cooper/Copyright 1996 Paramount Pictures

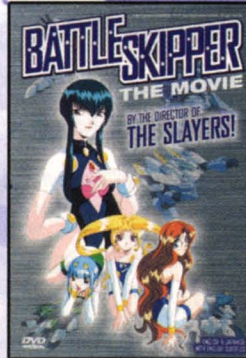
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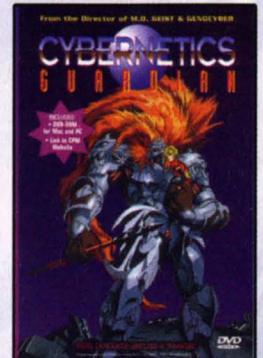
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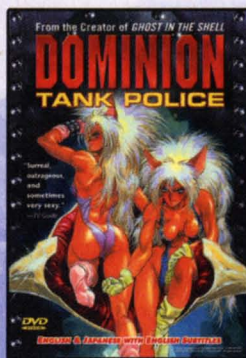
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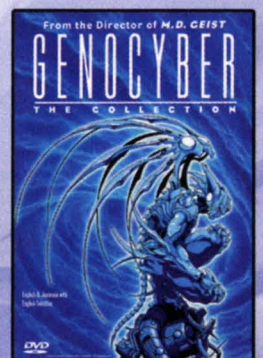
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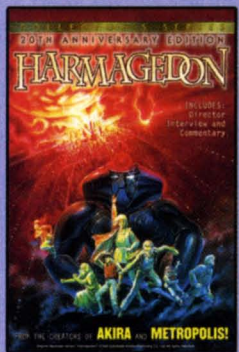
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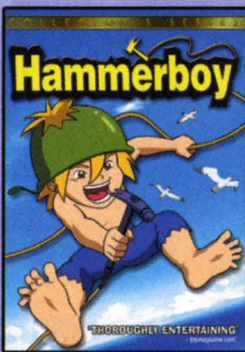
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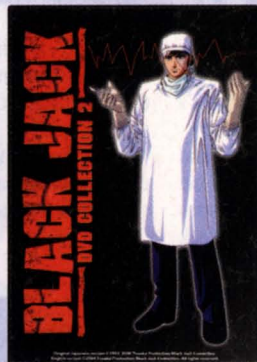
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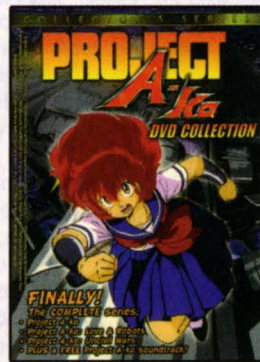
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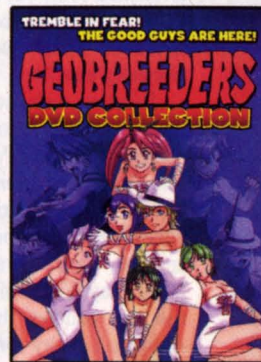
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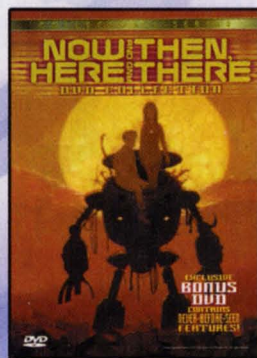
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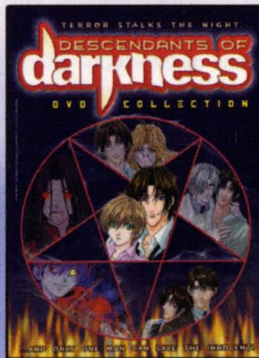
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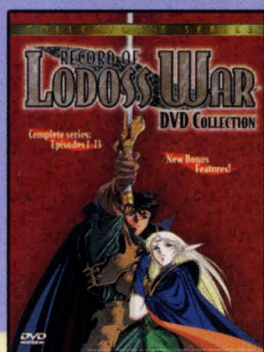
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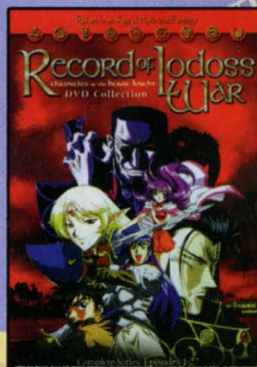
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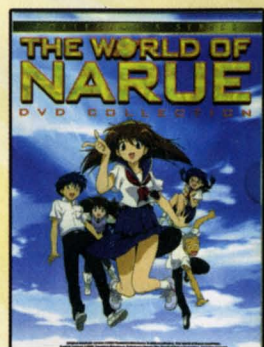
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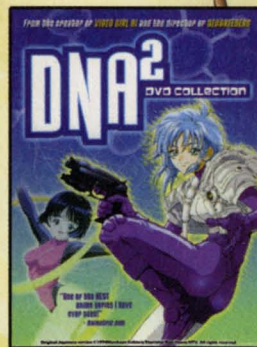
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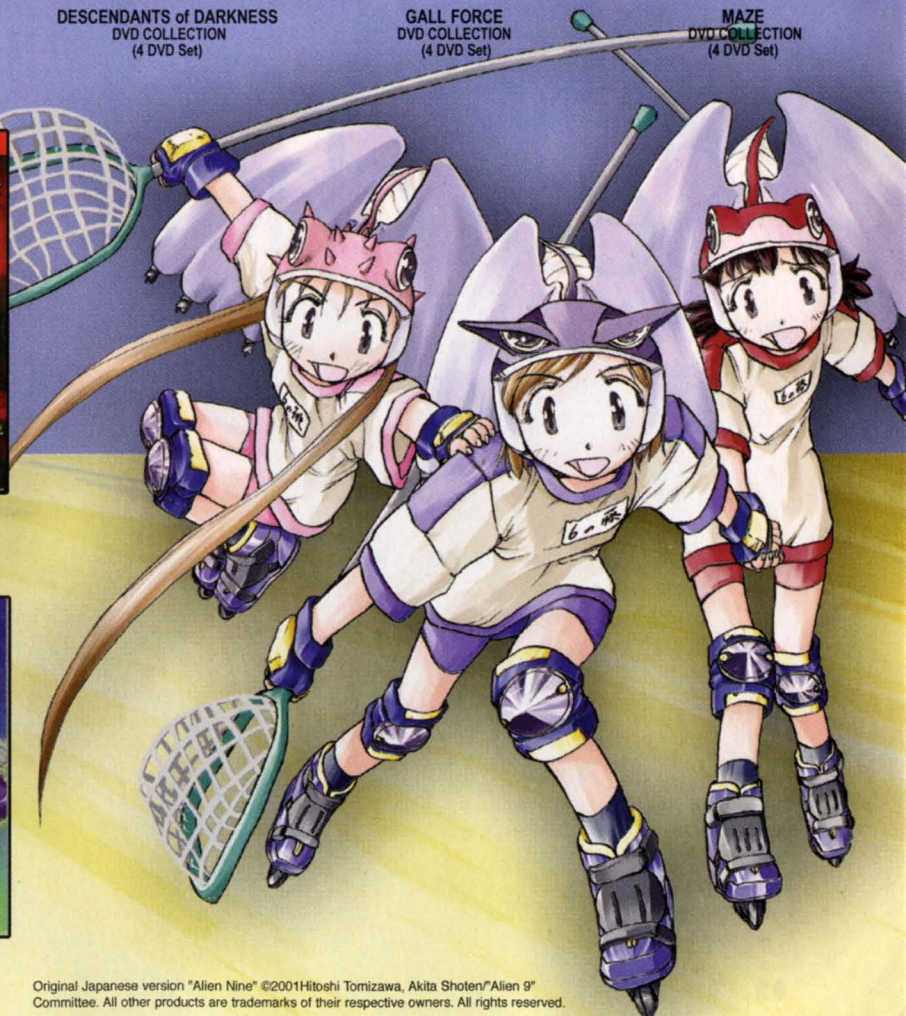
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Pity poor Rick Gonzalez. His *Reaper* character, Ben, simply cannot get through an episode of the Tuesday night CW series without being smacked, thrown, kicked or otherwise pummeled by assorted tormented souls out of the fiery pit of Hell. "I think it's because the writers have a horrible sense of humor when it comes to me," Gonzalez chuckles.

It comes with the territory. Ben has fallen in with sketchy companions. There's Bert "Sock" Wysocki (Tyler Labine), who makes John Belushi's *Animal House* character look like Princeton material. And then there's Sam Oliver (Bret Harrison), who's a bit of a slacker. Plus, Sam's parents sold his soul to the Devil (Ray Wise) before he was ever born. The trio are buddies, but this isn't the Three Amigos. Loyalty forces Ben to join Sam and Bert in *Ghostbusters*-style forays to recapture Hell's lost fugitives.

"I auditioned for it," Gonzalez says of his still-no-last-name role. "It was good, old-fashioned 'Get in there and win 'em over.' I really liked the role. I rarely get a chance to play

these kind of characters, so I jumped at the opportunity."

A veteran of feature films like *Biker Boyz* and *In the Valley of Elah*, the NY-born and Brooklyn-raised Gonzalez has been acting for a solid decade, having debuted in the 1998 TV movie *Thicker Than Blood*. A novice when it comes to genre productions, he did appear in one episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* ("Help") and had a brief turn as Tom Cruise's neighbor in *War of the Worlds*.

"I'm having a great time playing Ben, and I'm really happy something like this came along," he offers. "Every night *Reaper* comes on, I watch it. I get extremely anxious to check it out, simply because I want to see the end product. We work eight days on each episode, and I grow very excited to see what we've done. Especially with the special effects."

Although he's new to bluescreen work, Gonzalez doesn't find it especially challenging. "It's so smoothly created for us, it doesn't get in the way," he professes. "At least for me, it doesn't. And I'm almost always getting hurt during any of the special effects parts of the

show. But it's pretty cool. It's fun."

In fact, he has gotten so used to it, the CG demons he sees for the first time on TV don't amaze him any more. "The special effects guys are on-set on those days to shoot it, and they give us an idea of what we're supposed to be seeing and what it kinda looks like," Gonzalez explains. "So we have an image in our head of what's to be expected. When I see the final product, personally speaking, I'm not as surprised."

He has neither a favorite episode nor demonic antagonist. "Every week, they're getting better and better," Gonzalez asserts. "The

When *Reaper*'s Rick Gonzalez goes demon-hunting, somebody's gonna get hurt. Usually him.

Soul Searcher

By WILL MURRAY

Rick Gonzalez doesn't just act on *Reaper*; he watches it, too. "Every week, they're getting better and better," he says.

Photo: Eric Ogden

stories are now integrated better, and the characters are more developed. And you're starting to care more for each character. There's a better understanding of the show as we progress. It's becoming stronger and stronger.

"I kinda like it when women are the escaped souls," he does admit. "They do something *great* with the characters. I love their energy. We've had a couple of females who have done some great stuff with the souls. I like it when that happens."

In every episode, Sam and his soul-searching team are presented with a bizarre new vessel for recapturing that week's felonious fantasy fugitive. They've ranged from a Dirt Devil hand vacuum to a caged bird Ben in-jokingly names Winston.

Gonzalez's favorite? "Oh, man! The Christmas sweater. I thought that was pretty freaking silly. That was great. I *love* that kind of stuff."

Severe Bruises

The actor is on firmer ground talking about his character. Ben is someone he has

Photo: Jack Rowand



The Three Amigos. Ben (Gonzalez) and his buddies Sam (Bret Harrison) and Sock (Tyler Labine) find themselves in new trouble and hellish peril weekly.



Photo: Michael Courtney

So why *is* Ben helping out Sam? Well, Sam doesn't really have a choice about fighting demons. The Devil *literally* makes him do it.

been trying to capture since the well-received pilot. "I've been trying to find a thread in between Sam and Sock, who is so full of energy and strong," Gonzalez explains. "Sam is the straight man. So how does Ben fit in? How does their friendship evolve? And why do they care about each other so much?"

"Ben is the practical one of the group. Also, he carries the same shades of colors as they do. At times, Ben can be a little bit like Sock. But he can also be a little bit like Sam. At the same time, he's more calculated than the two of them. Ben is a little smarter than them, in terms of book smarts. When they're

that classic film. "Yeah, of course," Gonzalez acknowledges. "I think the more absurd things are, the better they feel. Sometimes they're very uncomfortable. But they get through it."

Does he see any comparisons between Ben and one of the original Ghostbusters? "Well, he might be Winston [Ernie Hudson]," Gonzalez chuckles. "He's the practical one of the group, which is why it's funny that Ben is the one always getting hurt. I think that's great. I love it."

Gonzalez naturally looks forward to more Ben-centric *Reaper* scripts to come, because he feels that there's more character to discov-

formidable Wise. "But I see him all the time on the set," he offers. "Ray is such a sweet and fantastic actor. I love what he does with the Devil. And I appreciate that they let him find his moments at the end of every episode, where he shows the Devil's human side. What a great guy! I would love for the writers to come up with a scene where the guys [Ben and Sock] finally meet up with the Devil. That would be interesting."

Right now, *Reaper's* future is completely up in the air. Ratings haven't been great, averaging below what *Veronica Mars* (the previous time-slot holder) scored last season. But reviews have been solid, and the show has buzz. The CW originally ordered 13 episodes, and (as of this interview) the production is working on Episode 11. Beyond that lies Limbo, thanks to the Hollywood writers' strike. "We're in the middle of the strike," Gonzalez ruminates. "The writers picked the perfect time—right in the middle of the season. Whereas in 1988, [the strike took place] at the season's end. I'm hoping that this is quickly resolved, because it's putting lots of people out of work. This is people's livelihood. Honestly, I have no idea, man. We're going to shoot 13, and then we're going on hiatus."

And beyond *Reaper*? "I don't know," muses the 28-year-old Hispanic American, who also dabbles in the rap music scene. "That's not for me to decide. I go with the flow. Whatever sparks my interest, I jump on it. I don't really have a preference. I always tell people I just want to stay employed. I would love to be working 20 years from now. I would love to produce and have more good scripts come my way so I could knock 'em out of the park. That's pretty much it. I'm a simple man."

However, if *Reaper* continues, Gonzalez believes, "There are so many places we can explore. Lots of people bring up *Buffy* and how one-dimensional it was in the beginning, but then the writing became so good because they were able to explore the ramifications of who Buffy was. And the good-vs.-evil idea. And the realism of it. At the same time, there's a dramatic aspect to *Reaper*. Sam has true feelings, and there are real repercussions. If we get the chance, we can examine that. There are so many questions and places to explore. And the show is in a *really* good place."

A good place about a very *bad* place, that is. Gonzalez credits two elements that have led to *Reaper* being so well-received by audiences and critics alike. "Ultimately, it's the writing and the on-set chemistry; we're connecting the dots there. That's why the media is enjoying the show. It's a smart and funny comedy. And we're having a good time doing it."

Rick Gonzalez hopes to be playing Ben far beyond that unlucky number 13. "We're on to something. *Reaper* is a cool show, and I hope people check it out. And it's only getting better. People should *definitely* stay tuned!" ★

"I'M PLAYING THE SCAREDY-CAT OF THE GROUP."



Photo: Jack Rowland

Stuck on 13 shows, *Reaper's* fate may depend on the writers' strike. As for Gonzalez, he's eager to return to work and discover new things about his character.

dealing with religion, he has lots of expertise in that. They look to Ben for answers and help in certain areas. "Ben, can you help us find this person online?" "Yes, of course." He's that kind of guy. So Ben is finding his niche."

One recent show focused on Ben, and filled in some of his backstory. "Episode Nine is pretty much *my* episode," Gonzalez says. "You get to see Ben's character a little more—who he is, and where he came from. Ben comes from a very religious family. He lives with his Mom and Dad, who is a pastor. Ben also has a weird relationship with his grandmother. He doesn't feel like he has her blessing. In that episode, you see how estranged they are. There's love there, obviously, between Ben and his grandmother, but you see her disappointment, and the friction between them. However, that leads to lots of comedy. Ultimately, she gets involved in helping us three and capturing the soul for that episode. It's hilarious."

Reaper, in its entirety, is pretty funny. And the show does evoke *Ghostbusters*—especially when the spirit-seeking trio climb into ridiculous castoff utilities clearly inspired by

er. "Many people have told me, 'I would love to see more of Ben. I want to get to know Ben better.' So I'm hoping for that," he comments. "I would like to see Ben take more control. What is great about [the part] is that I'm playing the scaredy-cat of the group. But I would love to see Ben evolve and develop some courage. I would like to know more of where Ben comes from, what he's about and the relationships he has with his friends."

Flesh Wounds

Speaking of friends, Gonzalez is enjoying playing opposite his fellow cast members, "Bret is awesome," he praises. "What I love about Bret is that he's thorough. He's very communicative with the writers. Bret really works hard in making sure that the script makes sense to him, and for his character. He truly wants to understand the ins and outs of the story; that way, it makes sense to the audience. Tyler is great, and he has amazing energy on the set. Everyone loves to be around him. He's so funny and refreshing. We all get along well."

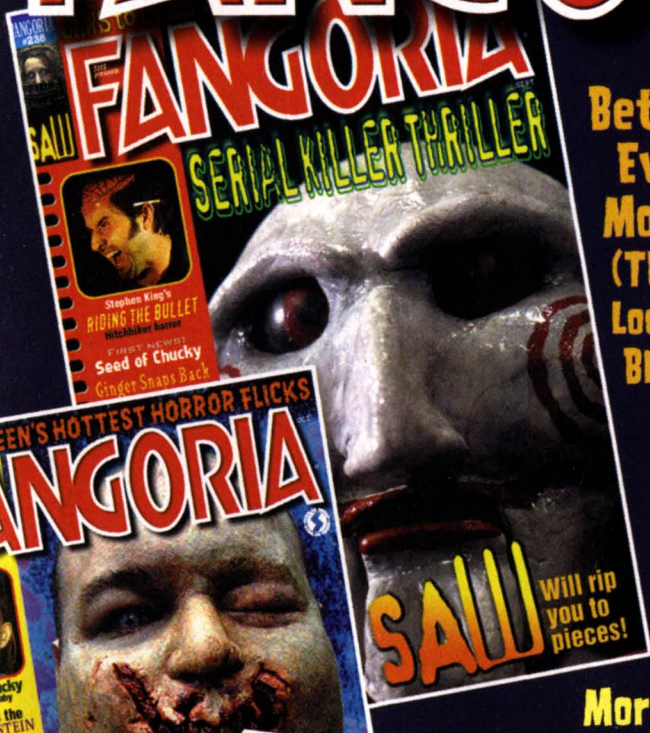
So far, Gonzalez has yet to work with the

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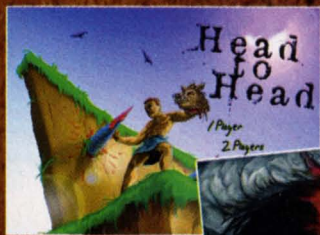
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She has gone from the frying pan into the fire, promoted from technician to Viper pilot. Now, with Cylons gunning for her, you have to ask: Is this any way to treat a lady?

"I said, 'Oh, no! Now it's going to be much easier to kill me,'" laughs Jennifer Halley, who plays the solemn Seelix on *Battlestar Galactica*. "Being a Viper pilot means you can die anytime."

But Halley is excited by her new flight status and is ready to kick Cylon butt when *Galactica* returns on SCI FI in April. Her character began as an unnamed ground crew person in the first season. "We were filming a scene on Kobol, where our Raptor had crash-landed, and I was tending to somebody's wounds," she recalls. "Director Michael Rymer came over and asked, 'What is your character's name?' I said, 'I don't have one.'

"Since neither I nor another technician had character names, Rymer yelled out randomly, 'Hey, what are the names of these guys?' Aaron Douglas [Chief Tyrol] yelled back, 'Tarn and Seelix.' So when we shot the scene, somebody called me Seelix, and I had my name." Not that Douglas' ad-lib of Seelix was her first choice. "I wanted to say, 'Wait a minute! I don't want Seelix. It sounds too much like Felix—no way!'" she chuckles.

During those early days, Seelix slogged

careful! Through her, I think I've become tougher. We share the same kind of loyalty, but unlike Seelix, I don't fly off the handle and attack people. I really like that about her, though—drop what you have in your hand and go grill somebody!"

Strapping In

The Vancouver-born actress began working as an international model as a teenager,

and has appeared on such series as *Stargate SG-1* ("The Tomb"), *Intelligence*, *The Chris Isaak Show* and *Tru Calling*. She's one of several Canadian performers on *Galactica* who began with a bit part and nurtured it into a strong, identifiable role. Now, as a Viper pilot, Seelix is unleashing her aggressions on those crafty metal monsters, the Cylons, as the fleet tries to find planet Earth.

"When Seelix was part of the ground

Jennifer Halley

checks her

flight status

for *Battlestar*

Galactica's

final missions.

BY MARK PHILLIPS

BATTLE READY

through the Cylon-infested forests of Kobol, was saved from gunfire by Cally (Nicki Clyne) and reluctantly used her medical training to euthanize a mortally wounded Socinus (Alonso Oyarzun). "I didn't even have a first name until Season Three," she says. "It's Diana. I looked up that name and discovered she's a Roman goddess of the Hunt. She's known for her prowess and athleticism. That helped me define who Seelix was."

At first glance, Diana Seelix seems drawn from disturbing, malevolent shadows. Her silent gaze and no-nonsense demeanor send people scrambling for cover. But wrapped inside that mysterious persona is a vulnerable, secretive soul. Asked if Seelix has beaten up anybody lately, the actress gives an all-knowing chuckle.

"She has given the gears to lots of people above her, that's for sure," Halley remarks. "Seelix is now much more vocal when she doesn't agree with the decisions being made. Sometimes even I'm like, 'Whoa, girl, be

Photo: Courtesy Jennifer Halley



Battlestar Galactica's Diana Seelix (Jennifer Halley) has climbed the ranks from ground crew technician to Viper pilot.

“Being a Viper pilot means you can die *anytime*.”

Photo: Carole Segal

crew,” Halley comments, “I would see actors doing second-unit Viper stuff, and I would say, ‘You’re a Viper pilot, that’s so cool.’ But the looks on their faces was more like, ‘Oh God!’ They would tell me, ‘No, don’t even wish to be doing this.’”

She soon found out why. “The first time I got into a Viper, I thought I was going to pass out,” Halley recalls. “You’re strapped into a very confined place, with a helmet on, and wearing a rubber suit that makes you sweat like crazy. When we finished my first scenes, I thought, ‘I really need to calm down here. This is clearly an irrational fear. Everybody goes through this. It isn’t like I’m going to die in here.’ I studied some relaxation techniques, and when I went back into the Viper this season, I employed those techniques and learned to enjoy and master those scenes.”

And when things get rough, Douglas lightens the mood. “Aaron is the absolute worst about trying to crack people up,” she says. “In between ‘Cut’ and ‘Action,’ the actors are trying to stay focused, but he knows I’m especially susceptible. For example, Aaron tries to get a song to play in my head. He’ll start singing it, over and over and over again, to the point that he has ruined a couple of great songs for me! Every time I hear one of those songs now, I’ll go, ‘Oh, that damned Douglas!’”

“Or I’ll be at a hockey game, and they’ll play what used to be one of my favorite songs, and I’ll just scream, ‘Argghhh!’ But Aaron is fun to work with, and he’s so talented. I miss working with the actors who play the ground crew, though. Things are now much more serious. Playing a Viper pilot, you never know whether your character is going to make it or not.”

It all comes down to survival, both on and off the screen. “Season Two picked up where Season One had left off, and we all looked through the scripts madly to see which of us lived,” Halley says. “When I saw

that Tarn [Warren Christie] died and I had been shot in the leg, I thought, ‘Man, that sucks! I know I’m going to die sooner or later.’ When I read that I lived, I was so excited. But it’s a constant fear: Will I survive?”

Seelix has also delivered her share of death. During Season Three, Seelix is revealed to be part of The Circle, a secret group that punishes humans who colluded with Cylons during life on New Caprica. “‘Collaborators’ was an important show for Seelix,” Halley observes. “We saw her loyalty to the *Galactica* crew and her strong sense of justice.”

That included pushing a screaming traitor out of an airlock and into space. “Seelix struggled with the ugly part of that kind of justice,” she says. “When we filmed those Kobol scenes early on, I had broken my leg months earlier, and I was still in pain, running through the mud and rain. I used those emotions to show Seelix’s struggle for survival. Her loyalty to her shipmates was strengthened by that terrible experience. So

to discover that some of her fellow humans had betrayed her race to the Cylons was really hurtful to her. That’s part of how she justified killing the traitors. These experiences have made Seelix tougher and more of a loner.”

Seelix is still evolving and pondering her bleak existence on the *Galactica*. “This season has gotten to the point where every attack plan seems crazy and against the odds,” Halley states. “Seelix is resisting the Commanders by speaking out, and her hope of ever finding a home is disappearing. Death for everyone is a very real possibility. For Seelix, that’s scary, unsettling and lonely. I wonder what that must do to her psyche, but she keeps on fighting.”

Watching Out

In the esteemed presence of Edward James Olmos (Adama) and Mary McDonnell (Roslin), Halley and the other *Galactica* actors are inspired to stay at the top of their game. “When we found out that Seelix was part of the resistance group in Season Three, it was a great opportunity to play some wonderful scenes,” Halley says. “But I didn’t want to screw things up. When you’re with such amazing actors, you want to be ready and not let anybody down. The cast is so talented, and the writers and directors are incredible. There are so many interesting and profound things this series is trying to explore. Just a few episodes ago, we were talking about racism with the writers. To have the chance to even talk about what racism really is, and then shoot a scene dealing with prejudice—that’s the kind of material you dream of as an actor.”

“If Eddie or Mary are working that day, I’ll come in early or stay late to watch them, and that’s an acting class right there,” she lauds. “They’re great. They’re also very nice and approachable. Mary has been acting for

Without question, Seelix is loyal to the *Galactica* crew, but the ardent and dutiful pilot can sometimes take her sense of justice too far.

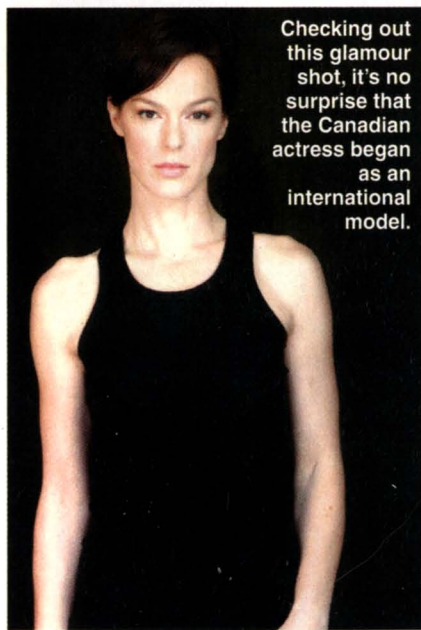


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She hasn't had a chance to really act with Edward James Olmos, but Halley did get her *Galactica* co-star to crack up on set.

“Death for everyone is a very real possibility.”



Checking out this glamour shot, it's no surprise that the Canadian actress began as an international model.

30 years, and yet she's still discovering things and is curious...it's beautiful. I would love to have a scene with her.”

And Halley has also made Olmos smile. “We did an episode last year where the Chief and Cally are trapped in an airlock [“A Day in the Life”], and they're running out of air,” Halley says. “I'm in a little control room, and Adama walks in. Eddie and I didn't get to exchange any dialogue, he just stood by me, and between takes I looked over at him

and said, ‘I just want you to know, I consider this a scene between us.’ And he laughed. That was the closest I've gotten to the upper echelons of *Galactica!*”

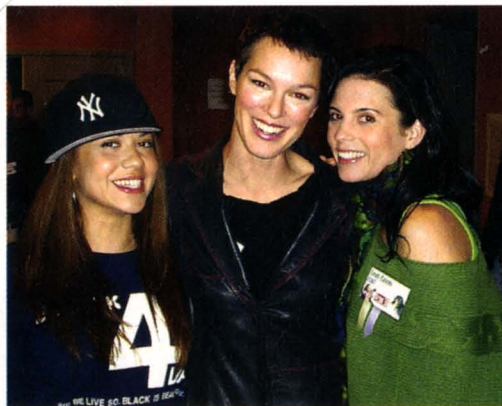
Halley has had a few memorable fan encounters. “At my gym, I was waiting at the front desk, and one of the trainers joked to someone in front of me, ‘Oh, frak off!’ He then looked over at me with a smile, like, ‘I know what you do.’ I don't tell people I'm on the show, so that was funny.”

The memory of another fan experience leaves Halley perplexed. “I was coming out of a store, and a woman said, ‘Hey, you work on *Battlestar Galactica!*’ ” Halley remembers. “I assumed she worked on the show

too, as a production or office person, so I walked over to her and said, ‘Yes, I do. Where do you work?’ Well, I must have scared the shit out of her. She backed off and said, ‘Oh, wow... I can't believe you're talking to me.’ She turned and ran off into an elevator and disappeared. I just stood there, like, ‘What just happened here?’ It was the strangest thing. Then it hit me—she was a fan. She had wanted to give me a compliment, which was so cool. But, gee, I'm really sorry I scared her!”

When Season Four ends, *Battlestar Galactica* will permanently close shop, and the actors will go their separate ways. What would Halley like to see happen with Seelix in the meantime? “She has been on that ship a long time, and she hasn't had any action,” Halley notes of Seelix's solitary lifestyle. “I don't mean that she should find a partner and settle down, because that does not often make for great television.

“But it would be nice if Seelix had a romantic distraction and explored her loneliness,” Jennifer Halley observes. “You never know what's going to happen to your character. I don't even think the writers know, which makes it unpredictable and exciting. Most importantly, I just want her to survive. But, hey, if Seelix has to die, then I hope it's an honorable death and she goes out with a real bang!”



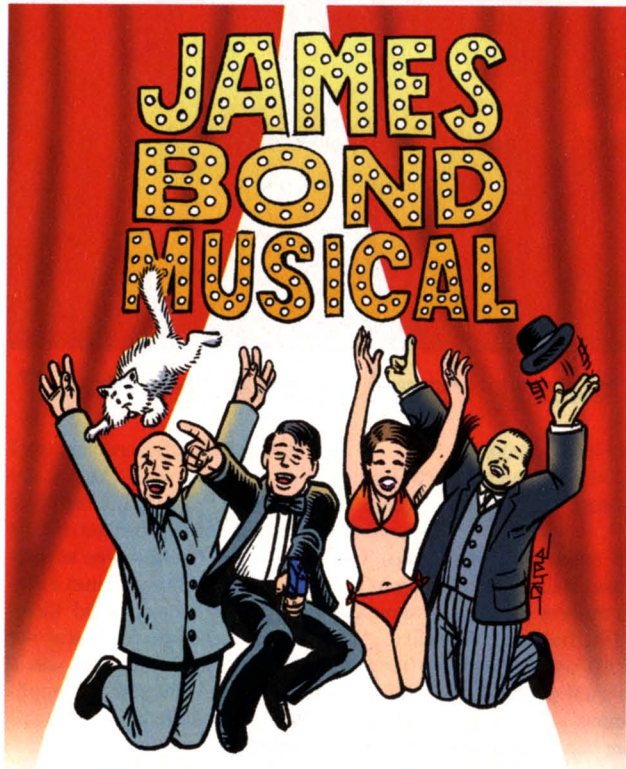
Halley hung out at V-Con, a Vancouver SF convention, with *Galactica* colleagues Luciana Carro (Kat) and Leah Cairns (Racetrack).



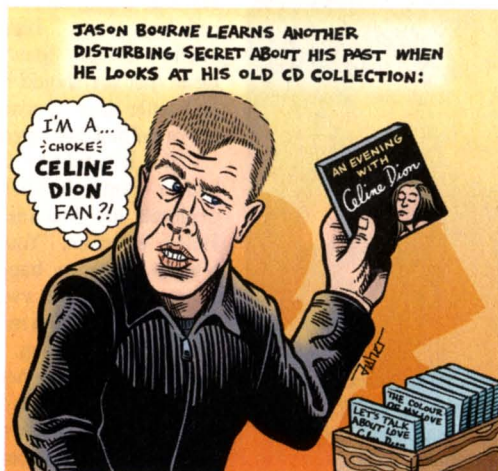
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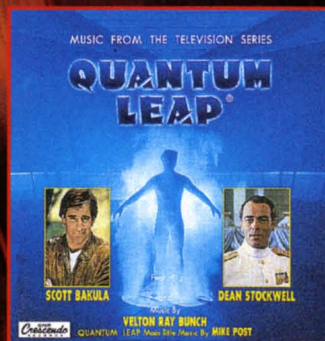
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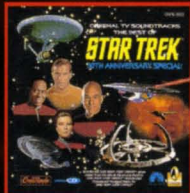
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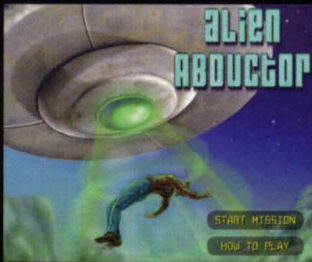
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