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Sporting that stylish
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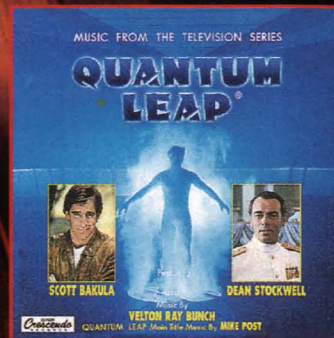
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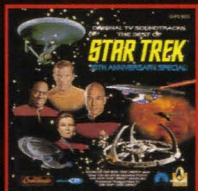
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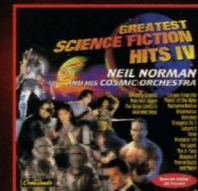
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LOGLINES

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Someone has to get us out of here, and I don't see it being the writer."

—Dustfinger (Paul Bettany), *Inkheart*

STUPID DECISION OF THE MONTH

Well, we can't really blame ABC, thanks to the show's declining ratings, for opting *not* to order more episodes of *Pushing Daisies*. But you know what?

We will anyhow! It's *still* a stupid decision. This means there's practically *nothing* worth watching on ABC (OK, *Lost*)—especially for a genre fan.

ARE YOU LISTENING?

There are a number of intriguing audio books out from Macmillan; here are just a few: *The Path of Daggers* (\$69.95) by Robert Jordan, read by Michael Kramer and Kate Reading, the eighth volume in the late author's *Wheel of Time* saga. *Ender in Exile* (\$49.95) by Orson Scott Card, read by David Birney, Cassandra Campbell, Emily Janice Card, Orson Scott Card, Gabrielle de Cuir, Kirby Heyborne, Don Leslie, Stefan Rudnicki & Mirron Willis. Want to know what happened during the years between *Ender's Game* and *Speaker for the Dead*? Well, the story of Ender's missing years is told here. *Anthem* (\$69.95) by Neal Stephenson, read by William Dufres, Oliver Wyman, Tavia Gilbert and Stephenson, is the latest release from the writer of *Cryptonomicon* and *The Baroque Cycle*. And, finally, there's the fifth book in Frank Herbert's desert planet saga, *Heretics of Dune* (\$59.95), read by Simon Vance, Scott Brick and Katherine Kellgren.

WHERE TO FIND...

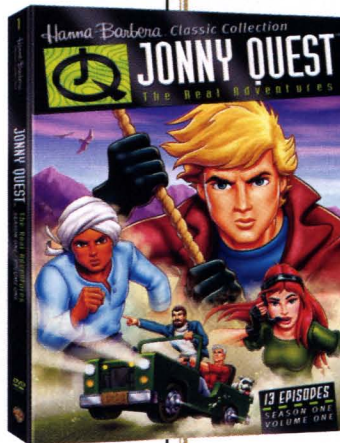
...FANGORIA RADIO? Check out Sirius XM Satellite Radio (Channel 102 on Sirius; 155 on

WIN THE QUEST!

The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest: Season One: Volume One comes to DVD February 17 from Warner Home Video (\$26.99). It includes 13 exciting episodes of the 1990s toon that revived Hanna-Barbera's quintessential animated action hero. Can't wait to see it? Fortunately, we're giving away five DVD copies now! Want to win one? Here's how to enter: Print your name and address on a postcard *legibly*. Postcards only, please. *One* entry per household. Multiple entries will be disqualified. Mail to STARLOG, Quest Contest, 250 W. 49th Street, Suite 304, 3rd Floor, NY, NY 10019. All entries

must be received in our offices by February 3, 2009. A random drawing will be held and DVD prizes sent out. Employees (and their family members) of STARLOG, the Brooklyn Company and Time-Warner are ineligible. Void where prohibited by law. Decisions of the judges are final. Good luck!

Join the Quest! The excitement of *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest* is now on DVD!



XM) Friday nights, 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. (an encore of the live show immediately follows). See the website for subscription info (sirius.com/fangoria).

WHERE TO BE...

...February 13, 9 p.m. In front of a TV set to support Joss Whedon's latest SF series, *Dollhouse* (which premieres on Fox that night).

BY OUR CONTRIBUTORS

The folks behind those great reissues of *Doc Savage* and *The Shadow*, series editor Anthony Tollin and STARLOG's Will Murray, are brewing up more double reprint volumes which will revive other Street & Smith pulp heroes. First up is *The Avenger* by "Kenneth Robeson" (bylined with the *Savage* pseudonym, actually written by Paul Ernst), being reprinted in chronological order by Sanctum Books (tpb, \$12.95, with essays and articles by Tollin and Murray). *Avenger* #1: *Justice, Inc.* & *The Yellow Horde*. #2: *The Sky Walker* & *The Devil's Horde*. #3: *The Frosted Death* & *The Glass Mountain*. The best way to get this new reprint series is by subscription (price TBA at presstime) from Tollin, P.O. Box 761474, San Antonio, TX 78245-1474. E-mail address: sanctumotr@earthlink.net. For info (and those sub price details), see the website (www.shadowsanctum.com).

Murray provides the intro to the second volume of *The Gangland Sagas of Big Nose Serrano* by Anatole Feldman (Off-Trail Publications, tpb, \$20). This collects four more of

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the poetry-spouting, Chicago gangster hero's exploits from 1931-32: *Horses, Hoboes and Heroes*, *Hell-Bent for Election*, *The Crime Crusade* and *Hangman's Holiday* (in which he fights a Spider-like antagonist). For more info, e-mail offtrail@redshift.com.

Lee Goldberg has another original *Monk* novel out—*Mr. Monk is Miserable* (NAL, hc, \$21.95). In this one, Monk and friends take a trip to France (the home country of Goldberg's wife Valerie: the duo were introduced by his STARLOG colleagues Randy & Jean-Marc Lofficier when she was visiting LA). Just imagine! Monk in the sewers of Paris! "The hotel, the restaurants and just about every other setting in the book actually exists," Goldberg says. "I also named many of the characters after my French family and friends." He has already finished the series' next volume (*Mr. Monk and the Dirty Cop*, due out in July) and is at work on another (*Mr. Monk in Trouble*, December).

Our old pals Terry J. Erdmann & Paula M. Block have another wonderful reference book, *Star Trek 101: A Practical Guide to Who, What, Where & Why* (Pocket, tpb, \$16). A nifty gift for friends and family who don't know from Tribbles, phasers and Ferengi, this volume simply explains almost everything Trekkian. It's a handy basic guide (as well as a great refresher course for those of us who have forgotten a few Federation facts), just essential—and highly recommended by STARLOG.

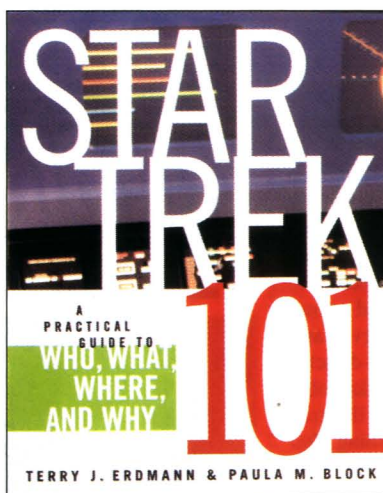
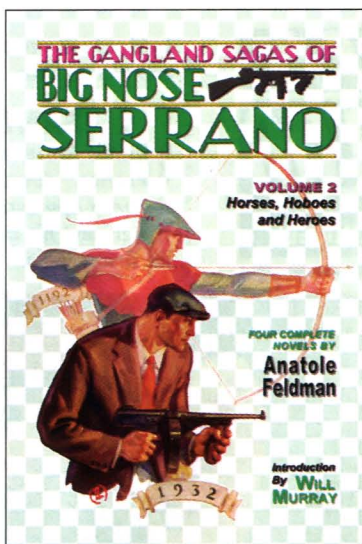
THE PERFECT GIFTS

Why not give subscriptions to FANGORIA and STARLOG to friends and family? We may be a tad prejudiced, but it seems to us that they're really the *perfect* gifts. For ordering info, see the sub ads this issue on page 13 and 69.

RECOMMENDED READING

Just in time for the movie (page 74), Quirk Books has a fine graphic-novel version of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (hc, \$15.95). It's adapted by Nunzio DeFilippis & Christina Weir, illustrated by Kevin Cornell. Read it while you're aging backward.

Del Rey issued the second volume of Michael Moorcock's *Chronicles of the Last Emperor of Melniboné*, *Elric: To Rescue Tanelorn* (tpb, \$15.95), in late summer. It's graced with fabulous illustrations by master artist Michael Wm. Kaluta. But the treat here is Moorcock's Elric stories in proper order, with cuts restored and the author's preferred, definitive texts (plus lotsa introductory and explanatory material). Good job, Del Rey, on these new Moorcock editions (as well as the



Here are three new volumes for your STARLOG Contributors Library, Bookcase Two.



Robert E. Howard collections).

Meanwhile, sister imprint Ballantine is keeping the horrors of H.P. Lovecraft in print. The latest reissued volume is *The Watchers Out of Time* by HPL and August Derleth (tpb, \$14). This one is mostly Lovecraft fragments transformed into unsettling, posthumous collaborations by Derleth. One of them, "The Shattered Room," even got filmed (see *Videolog*, page 11).

Papercutz is reissuing *Classics Illustrated* graphic novels (from the second series, the one undertaken by First Comics in the '80s), including *The Invisible Man* by H.G. Wells (as rendered visible by Rick Geary), Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (also by Geary), *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll (adapted by Kyle Baker) and, best of all, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven and Other Poems* (as illustrated by the always-brilliant Gahan Wilson, out in April). These are all hc editions, \$9.95 each. Papercutz also has longer *Classics Illustrated Deluxe* editions (\$13.95 tpb, \$17.95 hc) of *Tales from the Brothers Grimm*, *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame (adapted by Michel Plessix) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (adapted by

Marion Mousse, out this month). More volumes are, (super)naturally, in the works.

And finally, our friends at Titan Books have just published *The Cream of Tank Girl* by Alan Martin & Jamie Hewlett (hc, \$29.95), a terrific salute to the great British SF comics heroine (best known Stateside for the not-so-great movie version). This is a fantastic coffee table book, brimming with Hewlett art (including all his *Tank Girl* comic covers as well as unpublished items). It's the tankiest!

FILM FANTASY CALENDAR

Release dates are extremely subject to change and may

shift without notice.

January 2009: *Inkheart* (1/23), *Underworld: Rise of the Lycans* (1/23).

February: *Fanboys* (2/6), *Coraline* (2/6), *Push* (2/6), *Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun Li* (2/27).

March: *Watchmen* (3/5), *Race to Witch Mountain* (3/13), *Knowing* (3/20), *Monsters vs. Aliens* (3/27).

April: *The Wolfman* (4/3), *Dragonball Z* (4/8).

May: *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* (5/1), *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past* (5/1), *Star Trek* (5/8), *Terminator Salvation* (5/22), *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian* (5/22), *Up* (5/29), *Drag Me to Hell* (5/29).

June: *Land of the Lost* (6/5), *Nowhereland* (6/12), *Transformers 2: Revenge of the Fallen* (6/26).

July: *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs* (7/1), *2012* (7/10), *They Came from Upstairs* (7/10), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (7/17), *Piranha 3D* (7/24), *G-Force* (7/24).

August: *G.I. Joe* (8/7), *District 9* (8/14).

September: *Whiteout* (9/11), *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* (9/18), *The Surrogates* (9/25).

October: *Toy Story* (in 3-D, 10/2), *Where the Wild Things Are* (10/16), *Astro Boy* (10/23).

November: *The Fantastic Mr. Fox* (11/6), *The Tooth Fairy* (11/13), *A Christmas Carol* (11/16), *Planet 51* (11/20), *Sherlock Holmes* (11/20).

December: *Avatar* (12/18), *The Princess and the Frog* (12/25), *Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakel* (12/25).

2010: *Alice in Wonderland* (2/5), *Toy Story 2* (in 3-D, 2/12), *How to Train Your Dragon* (2/26), *Iron Man 2* (5/7), *The Chronicles of Narnia: Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (5/7), *Shrek Goes Fourth* (5/21), *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (5/28), *Pandamonium* (6/3), *Toy Story 3* (6/18), *The Green Hornet* (6/25), *Thor* (7/16), *Guardians of Ga'Hoole 3-D* (7/30), *Rapunzel*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows I* (11/19), *Smurfs* (12/17).

2011: *The First Avenger: Captain America* (5/6), *The Avengers* (7/15), *Newt*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows II*, *Cars 2*, *Hotel Transylvania* (9/30).

UPDATES

Disney's *Beauty & the Beast* is getting a Disney Digital 3-D make-over. It'll be re-released in that format in 2010.

Fringe's Roberto Orci & Alex Kurtzman are the new writers at work on the *Cowboys & Aliens* project. Likewise, *Smallville*'s Alfred Gough & Miles Millar are now scripting *Robotech* (previous draft by Larry Kasdan).

Orci & Kurtzman have also plotted a four-issue comic book mini-series that serves as a prequel to *Star Trek* (the J.J. Abrams-directed film they wrote, due out in May). Mike Johnson & Tim Jones scripted the comic, illustrated by David Messina for IDW Publishing. *Star Trek: Countdown* begins this month.

Faced with the end of *Battlestar Galactica*, SCI FI has at last ordered the *Galactica* prequel *Caprica* to series. Eric Stoltz, Esai Morales, Polly Walker and Paula Malcolmon star. The executive producers are Ronald D. Moore, David Eick and Remi Aubuchon (who co-scripted the pilot with Moore). The 20-episode first season begins shooting this summer for a 2010 premiere.

HBO has finally ordered a pilot of George R.R. Martin's *A Game of Thrones*. It's the first volume of a fantasy saga that HBO has long contemplated adapting as a TV series.

COMICS SCENE

Joe (*The Rocketeer*) Johnston will direct *First Avenger: Captain America*. Johnston will next be represented in theaters by the *Wolfman* remake. *Prince Caspian* co-writers Christopher Markus & Stephen McFeely are scripting *Captain America*.

Josh Schwartz (co-creator of *Chuck & Gossip Girl*) will script 20th Century Fox's attempt to continue the X-Men with younger (and much cheaper) mutants: *X-Men: First Class*.

David Lindsay-Abaire, the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright who adapted *Inkheart* (page 64), is writing *Spider-Man 4*.

Marvel is mounting a 26-episode half-hour animated *Thor* series. It'll debut on an under-terminated outlet in fall 2010, months after the *Thor* film's release.

Djimon (*Constantine*) Hounsou will be the voice of T'Challa in Marvel's animated *Black Panther* (to air on BET).



MOUSE COURAGE

Kate DiCamillo's award-winning children's book *The Tale of Despereaux* has come to life in an enchanting CG-animated adaptation directed by Sam Fell and Robert Stevenhagen. It's touching hearts—and unveiling heroic mice—in theaters now.

THE REMAKE GAME

It wouldn't be a Medialog without a mention of Guillermo del Toro. Now, he's on board to produce (with the Jim Henson Co.) yet another version of Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*. However, this one will be stop-motion animated and scripted by Gris Grimly (adapting his own 2002 graphic novel). And meanwhile, del Toro is still producing *Champions* (which he was perhaps going to direct at one time) for United Artists. Christopher (*The Usual Suspects*) McQuarrie will write and produce this film mounting of the 1960s TV series.

J. Michael Straczynski is scripting the *For-*

THAT'S THE SPIRIT!?

And so it is—as writer-director Frank Miller unleashes his *Sin City*-styled rendition of comics legend Will Eisner's classic crimefighter in a bijou near you. Gabriel (TV's *The Others*) Macht stars as detective Denny Colt, long thought dead but resurrected as the Spirit, all the better to fight the Octopus (Samuel L. Jackson) and the forces of evil that menace us all.

bidden Planet remake for producer Joel Silver and Warner Bros.

FANTASY FILMS

United Artists is planning a possible movie series devoted to John Flanagan's *Ranger's Apprentice* books. Screenwriter Paul Haggis and his daughter Alissa are adapting the first volume.

New Regency has acquired film rights to Isaac Asimov's *The End of Eternity*.

PREQUELS/SEQUELS

Director Peter Segal will encore at the helm of a *Get Smart* sequel (to film when schedules allow). After that, it looks like he may finally get to do his *Captain Marvel* movie. That project, still scripted by John August, has moved from New Line Cinema to Warner Bros. So *Shazam!* It's still alive!

Yes, Virginia, there will be a sequel to *Twilight*, but you knew that. Of course, it'll be an adaptation of Stephenie Meyer's *New Moon* (the saga's second volume).

20th Century Fox is in development with a new *Planet of the Apes* sequel. This one would chronicle how the Monkey Planet got that way (in other words, sort of remaking *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes*).

CHARACTER CASTINGS

After his brush with villainy as *The Dark Knight*'s D.A. (and Two-Face), Aaron Eckhart goes heroic in Columbia's *Battle: Los Angeles*. Jonathan Liebesman will direct the film firefight pitting human Marines against alien invaders in the City of Angels.

X-Files veteran Frank Spotnitz is developing a NBC police procedural with his *Night Stalker* star Gabrielle Union to topline.

That *Boldly Going Nowhere* sitcom pilot (re: life on a starship) features Ben Koldyke as Captain and two *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* veterans: David Hornsby and Artemis Pebdani (who'll play the alien Startemis).

Jennifer Connelly cameos in *Inkheart*. She plays Dustfinger's wife. And Dustfinger is, of course, portrayed by her real-life husband Paul Bettany.

Sci-Fi TV

AMERICAN DAD

Airs Sundays on Fox. The network has renewed it for a fifth season (to debut this fall).

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

New episodes of its fourth (and final) 22-episode season resume airing on SCI FI 1/16 through 3/20. A two-hour standalone prequel TV movie *The Plan* will follow the series' end. Jamie Bamber speaks on page 18.

CHUCK

Airs Mondays on NBC. Ratings are disappointing. *Not* airing during January. Returns 2/2 with the 3-D episode. *Galactica's* Tricia Helfer will guest on another entry.

THE CLEVELAND SHOW

New animated series, a *Family Guy* spin-off, has been delayed to premiere this fall (instead of mid-season). Fox has also ordered nine more episodes.

DOLLHOUSE

Fox has ordered seven episodes of the Joss Whedon-created show starring Eliza Dushku. Premieres 2/13, airing Fridays, 9 p.m.

ELEVENTH HOUR

Airs Thursdays on CBS. Renewed. Five more episodes ordered. Airing through 4/2.

FRINGE

Airs Tuesdays on Fox. It's a hit. Renewed for the rest of the season.

GHOST WHISPERER

Airs Fridays on CBS. Ratings are great, but fan response to David Conrad's death (and his new status) has been decidedly mixed.

HEROES

Airs Mondays on NBC. Ratings continue to decline. *Not* airing during January. Resumes in February.

KING OF THE HILL

Airs Sundays on Fox. The network has decided not to renew it after the current 13-episode season. ABC may pick up the show. No decision yet.

KNIGHT RIDER

New series revival airs Wednesdays on NBC. The program's being retooled. Ratings are disappointing, but the network nonetheless renewed the show for the rest of the season. In danger of cancellation.

KYLE XY

Third season premieres 1/12, airing Mondays, 9 p.m. on ABC Family.

LEGEND OF THE SEEKER

The syndicated series, formerly known as *Wizard's First Rule*, is based on Terry Goodkind's *Sword of Truth* novels. Episodes are available as of the Mondays after their initial broadcast at the iTunes store (www.iTunes.com) for purchase and download.

LIFE ON MARS

Airs Wednesdays, 10 p.m. (new time slot as of 1/28) on ABC. Ratings are declining.

LOST

The series will return to ABC with new episodes 1/21 (with a two-hour show). It'll regularly air Wednesdays, 9 p.m.

MEDIUM

Returns to NBC at mid-season, time slot to be announced shortly. The network has ordered six more episodes (meaning 19 overall now).

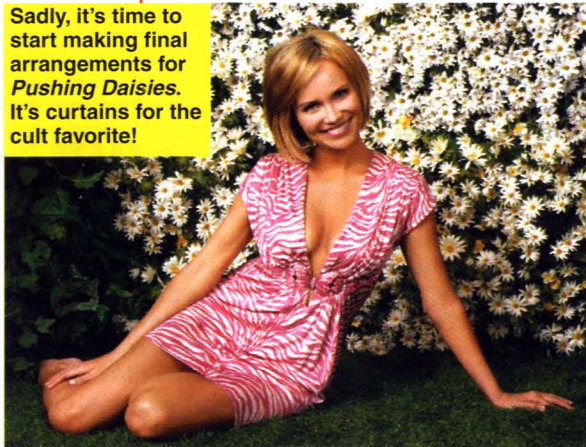
PRIMEVAL

Airs on BBC America. Coming soon in Titan Books' original novel series are *Extinction Event* by comics scribe Dan Abnett and *Fire and Water* by Simon Guerrier (both hc, \$11.95).

PUSHING DAISIES

ABC has chosen not to renew the series after its initial 13-episode second season

Sadly, it's time to start making final arrangements for *Pushing Daisies*. It's curtains for the cult favorite!



order. It's effectively (though *not* officially) cancelled. It's over. Nothing to see here. Move along.

REAPER

Renewed for a second 13-episode season by the CW, to debut 3/17, airing in its old time slot, Tuesdays, 9 p.m.

SANCTUARY

Airs Fridays, 10 p.m. on SCI FI. Renewed for a 13-episode second season.

SCARE TACTICS

Renewed by SCI FI for nine more episodes.

SMALLVILLE

Airs Thursdays on the CW. In reruns. New episodes resume 1/15 with "Legion," written by comics vet Geoff Johns. It guest stars the Legion of Superheroes' Lightning Lad (Calum Worthy), Saturn Girl (Alexz Johnson) and Cosmic Boy (Ryan Kennedy). Titan's *Smallville: The Official Companion Season Seven* was written by Craig Byrne (*not* Brye, as we misspelled in #370, due to wrong info supplied us.)

SUPERNATURAL

Airs Thursdays on the CW. Ratings are good. Jared Padalecki chats about the new *Friday the 13th* movie in FANGORIA #280 (on sale 1/20).

SURVIVORS

Airing on BBC One in the UK November 23-December 28. No exact premiere date for the U.S. yet. Series steward Adrian Hodges previews the show for American readers on page 56.

TERMINATOR: THE SARAH CONNOR CHRONICLES

Airs Mondays now on Fox. As of 2/13, it moves to Fridays, 8 p.m. Despite disappointing ratings, it has been renewed for the rest of the season. In danger of cancellation.

TRUE BLOOD

New HBO show based on Charlaine Harris' book series airs Sundays. Already renewed for a second, 12-episode season that begins shooting this month for summer 2009 airing.

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Note: Airdates shift without notice. Airtimes are EST. Series are only listed for which STARLOG has new info.

TV ON DVD

An English teenager recently paid a \$16 fee to legally change his name from George Garret to Captain Fantastic Faster Than Superman Spider-Man Batman Wolverine Hulk And The Flash Combined. You can enjoy many of those same superheroes, and *not* have to squeeze that crazy name onto all future checks, by picking up Turner Home Entertainment's two-disc *The All New Super Friends Hour: Season One: Volume Two* (\$26.98). For more animated superhero exploits, there are *Aqua Teen Hunger Force: Volume Six*, also a two-disc from Warner Home Video (\$29.98), and Paramount's seven-disc *Transformers Energon: The Ultimate Collection* (\$61.99). Writer's cramp not included.

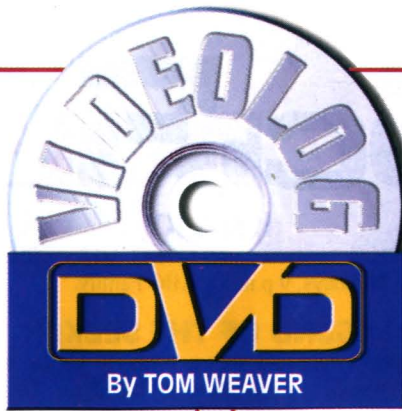
The mysterious hero with seemingly superhuman powers, Kyle (Matt Dallas) continues to lead a double life: one as your average teen savant, and another as an extraordinary individual trying to understand his purpose in *Kyle XY: The Complete Second Season: Revelations* (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, \$39.99). David Vincent (Roy Thinnes) perseveres in trying to prove that aliens walk among us—and finally starts making some progress—in *The Invaders: The Second Season* (Paramount, \$36.98, see page 51). The guest star lineup in this second and unfortunately final year includes Kevin McCarthy, Richard Anderson, Dana Wynter and new series regular Kent Smith, STARLOG favorites all! Back in Cartoon Land, there are more adventures in space in *Ben 10 Alien Force: Season One: Volume Two* (Warner, \$14.98) and under the sea in *SpongeBob SquarePants: Spongicus* (Nickelodeon, \$16.99).

From Warner comes the four-disc collector's set *Moonlight: The Complete Series* (\$39.98), with Alex O'Loughlin as an LA private eye who's also a vampire—and whose life is filled with 16 episodes' worth of further complications, like memories of the ex-wife who turned him into a vampire and an eternally dangerous relationship with a human (Sophia Myles).

Battlestar Galactica: Season 4.0 (Universal, \$49.98) is a four-disc set incorporating the 10 episodes from the first half of the final season. The feature-length "Razor" is also included in two incarnations: the original 88-minute broadcast version and a 13-minutes-longer Unrated Extended Version. The bonus content includes deleted scenes plus commentaries on the Unrated Extended "Razor" and the episodes "Faith," "Guess What's Coming to Dinner" and "Sine Qua Non." In other news from the cult series front, the William Hartnell-starring golden oldie *Doctor Who: War Machines* is now available from BBC Warner (\$24.98). You can also get *lust* in space in the animated *TripTic the Rift: The Complete Third Season* (Starz/Anchor Bay, \$29.97), 13 high-definition episodes of that SCI FI Channel cartoon.

In 22 episodes of *PSI Factor: Chronicles of the Paranormal: Season Three* (Echo Bridge Home Entertainment, \$29.99), we get prowling poltergeists, dreadful disappearances, preternatural possessions, swarms of snakes and other alliterative unpleasantness as the covert Office of Scientific Investigation and Research investigates top-secret cases inspired by documented events.

And now for something completely inexcusable: Videolog neglected to mention in a timely manner A&E Home Video's recent release of *The Complete Monty Python's Flying Circus Collector's Edition* (\$159.95), a limited-edition DVD set featuring "ultra-collectible" packaging (!) and 21 discs filled with every madcap moment from the program's four-year run, plus the *Personal Best* DVDs featuring the Pythons' favorite sketch picks, two new documentaries ("Before the Flying Circus" and "Monty Python Conquers



America") and more.

For fans of the original *Jonny Quest* (1964-65), the revival series' title *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest* has an off-putting connotation, but hats off to any teenager willing to tackle the paranormal, SF misfits and other assorted Hanna-Barbarians. His loongtime companion, the Indian boy Hadji, and a new character, Race Bannon's daughter Jessie, join Jonny in Warner's 23-episode *Season One: Volume One* (\$26.99).

And while on the subject of off-putting, now that you've bought Paramount's four *Wild Wild West* collections, don't you think you should also

have the made-for-TV follow-up features *The Wild Wild West Revisited* (1979) and *More Wild Wild West* (1980)? Well, guess what, sucker: The only way to get 'em is to spend \$129.98 rebuying all 104 WWW episodes in Paramount's *The Wild Wild West: The Complete Series*, which has the two post-series features tacked on as value-added material! Truth be told, revisiting these two flicks in our minds via 30-year-old but still dire memories, and perusing the cast lists (Shields & Yarnell as bionic characters, Dr. Joyce Brothers, Avery Schreiber, Jack LaLanne, Paul Williams, etc.), we find it a little tough to get worked up over this value-added injustice. As our Great Aunt Maude used to say, "Who needs 'em?!"

FANTASY VIEWS

Bertram (Ricky Gervais), a man with "people skills" issues, dies but miraculously revives after seven minutes, waking up to discover that he now has the ability to see ghosts—and they all want something from him! That's the premise of the fantasy comedy *Ghost Town* (DreamWorks, \$19.99), co-starring Greg Kinnear and Téa Leoni. The supplemental features include commentary by Gervais and writer-director David Koepp, a "Making of," gag reel, etc.

Based on the bestselling novel, the family-friendly *City of Ember* is set in an underground metropolis whose residents have flourished for centuries—until now, as the city's power generator begins to fail and the street lamps start to fade. Can two courageous teens find a way out before it's permanently plunged into darkness? Co-produced by Tom Hanks and starring Tim Robbins and Bill Murray (but not as the teens), it's coming on DVD from Fox Home Entertainment (\$29.98).

Like grandfather, like grandson: The descendant of the original Nutty Professor gets hold of the secret formula for Gramps' elixir and becomes more confident—but also destructive and obnoxious. (What's wrong with obnoxious?) This new *Nutty Professor*, co-produced by the original's Jerry Lewis (who also provides a voice), is all-CG and all yours from the Weinstein Company for \$19.98.

A TASTE OF VAMPIRE

Very much influenced by shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Bloodwars* (MTI Home Video, \$24.95) stars Tony Todd as a minor-league vampire king (he and his followers stand around a dark, unfurnished house looking at each other) and A.J. Draven, Allison Lange, etc. as a Scooby Gang-like group of friends with whom they come in contact and conflict. Everything that's good about *Bloodwars* isn't original, and everything original about it isn't good, so stick with more reliable brands like the *Underworld* franchise, because its two titles to date are getting a DVD twin-pack re-release (Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, \$19.94) to tie in with this month's *Underworld: Rise of the Lycans*. The two-disc set includes *Underworld Unrated Extended Edition* and *Underworld: Evolution Special Edition*, both starring Kate Beckinsale and Scott Speedman, and throws in a sneak peek at *Rise of the Lycans* as well as e-Movie Cash for that film's theatrical release.

Interested in the genuine article? *Vampyres* is a documentary in which a journalist begins by investigating a rumor about vampires in New York City and winds up discovering that "15,000 real vampires" now *reside* (we can't say "live"!) in the U.S. of A. Presumably, these "true-life" night creatures are a bit different from the ones who turn into bats and crumble into dust—maybe that's why they're vampires



Look for even more mysteries about *Kyle XY* on DVD.

with a Y. Y not find out for yourself (Redemption Films, \$19.95)?

For more traditionally trashy entertainment, the 1969 *Blood of Dracula's Castle* stars Alex D'Arcy and Paula Raymond as a very Gomez and Morticia Addams-like pair of night prowlers, holed up in a seaside castle with a homicidal houseguest (Robert Dix), creepy butler (John Carradine) and lots of chained-up gals in the basement. This schlocky Al Adamson production is half of a \$12.98 Deimos/BCI Eclipse *Exploitation Cinema Double Feature* with the same-year madman-in-a-wax-museum chiller *Nightmare in Wax* with Cameron Mitchell and Scott Brady, made by some of the same folks—like producer Rex Carlton, who in real life borrowed money from the Mob to make these flicks, couldn't pay it back and killed himself rather than be killed! We don't think anyone died bringing us the movies in Deimos' other two-fer: the Jekyll-and-Hyde variation *Horror High* (1974) and the demonic *Lurkers* (1988), which is also \$12.98.

Formerly Best Buy exclusives, four vintage Warner Bros. chillers are (as of December 9) now widely available: *Chamber of Horrors*—another wax museum melodrama, this one with Patrick O'Neal as a hook-handed heavy—is paired with the Christopher Lee-starring *The Brides of Fu Manchu* in one \$19.98 double-header, while Roddy McDowall's *It!* and the H.P. Lovecraft & August Derleth-derived *The Shattered Room* with Gig Young, Carol Lynley, Oliver Reed and Flora Robson comprise the other.

For an assortment of creeps and ghouls, plus Moe, Larry and Curly, Sony has unleashed *The Three Stooges Collection: Volume Four: 1943-1945* (\$24.96), many of the shorts WWII-themed and others skeery: *Spook Louder* (a phantom pie-thrower), *Idle Roomers* (a werewolf loose in a hotel), *Three Pests in a Mess* (spookiness in a pet cemetery), *If a Body Meets a Body* (a skull with wings) and, maybe the weirdest of the lot, *Dizzy Detectives* with an ape committing a series of robberies—and after it swallows nitro and explodes, Curly happily holds up its blown-off head! Now, *that's* entertainment!

HISTORY LESSONS

You're never too old to learn: Did you know that in the final days of WWII, before the Allies could drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, they first had to get it past the Japanese fleet and its island of giant pterodactyls? You say to yourself, "If that had really happened, we would have learned about it in school!" But, hey, here it is documented on film in the SCI FI Channel's *Warbirds*, flapping its way to us from *Lightning/Anchor Bay* (\$19.97). It *must* be true!

We also learned as kids that, as giant jet-propelled fire-breathing space turtles go, *Gamera* was mostly a bad egg. But now in *Gamera the Brave* (Tokyo Shock, \$19.99), it's a friend to children and battles a man-eating dinosaur. Drivers ed teachers insist that pedestrians always have the right of way, but how can that be when in *Death Race*, reality TV bloodlust has produced an "extreme sports event" show in

which the contestants are hardened convicts in tricked-out cars. Win five events and you're set free, but lose and you're roadkill. The \$29.98 Universal DVD comes with the theatrical and unrated versions, a "Making of," "Dissecting the Stunts" and a commentary with the director and producer. Don't forget to use your blinkers!

There's more action to be found in Sony's \$27.96 *Resident Evil: Degeneration* (zombie attacks create airport delays) and Fox's *Babylon A.D.*, a futuristic tale in which veteran-turned-mercenary Vin Diesel



Animated zombies attack! Planes delayed! In-flight snacks axed! Talk about your *Resident Evil: Degeneration*.

and his "brave group of heroes" (as opposed to all those groups of cowardly heroes we see walkin' around) embark on a journey that, naturally, "may determine the fate of humanity." It's available in a single-disc DVD (\$29.98) and a two-disc *Special Edition* (\$34.98) that includes five featurettes as well as a graphic novel prequel.

In other graphic novel news, Frank Miller's *300*, already a two-disc *Special Edition* (summer 2007), stormed back onto DVD, this time as a *three-disc Limited Collector's Edition* (\$49.98) with a new documentary about the *300* legend, a 52-page hardcover art book with a "Personal Message" from director Zack (*Watchmen*) Snyder ("We can't go on like this...?"), collectible photo cards, plus all contents from the two-disc, now *not-so-special* 2007 edition. Warner flacks, in a subtle attempt at psychological pressure, warn that this new version will be available "while supplies last." Yeah, *that'll* work.

Evil is cold-blooded in Genius Products' *Yeti* (\$14.95), in which a plane crashes in uncharted Himalayan mountains territory and a college football team fights to survive the harsh conditions and the hungry beast that stalks them. The "All-Star Cast" (press release) includes Carly Pope, *SeaQuest's* Peter DeLuise, Crystal Lowe and Ed Marinaro.

DVDS IN BRIEF

The Persuaders!: Three Film Collection (Lionsgate, \$19.98): Roger Moore and Tony Curtis are "The Persuaders"—globetrotting, sophisticated playboys solving crimes of passion and espionage—in "features" created by re-editing episodes from their 1971-72 TV series.

You're a Good Sport, Charlie Brown (Warner, \$19.98): Motorbiker Charlie Brown, wearing a pumpkin as a helmet, is in the running in the big motocross event. His main competition is rival racer the Masked Marvel, who is actually Charlie's own dog Snoopy. Based on the secret testimony of the miserable souls who survived this terrifying ordeal—and an Outstanding Children's Special Emmy winner in 1976.

The Films of Michael Powell (Sony, \$24.96): Two classics from the renowned British director are on DVD for the first time: 1969's *Age of Consent*, a drama about an aging artist (James Mason), and, more pertinently here, 1946's *A Matter of Life and Death* (a.k.a. *Stairway to Heaven*), a fantasy in which WWII pilot David Niven tells a heavenly court that he was accidentally chosen to die and pleads for his life. Martin Scorsese intros both movies, and film historian Kent Jones provides a *Life and Death* commentary.

Ghost Writer (Genius, \$19.95): A struggling writer (*Angel's* David Boreanaz) trying to work off his rent debt accidentally dies in the process. His landlord (Alan Cumming) gets Boreanaz's book published and receives the credit—and Boreanaz comes back to haunt him. Carrie Fisher, Henry Thomas and Karen Black co-star in this dark-comic yarn directed by Cumming.

Open Season 2 (Sony, \$28.95): The *Open Season* critters are back, and some of them are head over hooves in love in this follow-up CG-animated feature. The bonus material includes deleted scenes, a tutorial on how to draw some of the characters and the "Wacky Weenie Arcade" (we don't wanna know!).

One Touch of Venus (Republic Pictures, \$14.98): The statue of Venus, bought by a department store owner and put on display in a window, comes to life (as Ava Gardner) and makes amorous advances toward the store's window trimmer (Robert Walker). The Broadway hit comes to the screen as a 1948 box office dud, enlivened only by the sharp tongue of supporting player Eve Arden as a worldly-wise secretary. Look, Ma, no arms!

NEW IN BLU-RAY

This issue's new Blu-ray releases include Weinstein Company's *Death Proof* (\$29.95) and *Planet Terror* (\$34.95); Universal's *Serenity* (\$29.98) and *Death Race* (\$39.98); Paramount's *Event Horizon*, *Ghost* and *The Truman Show* (all \$29.99); Fox's *Babylon A.D.* (\$39.98); Sony's *13 Going on 30* (\$28.95), *Resident Evil: Degeneration* and *Open Season 2* (both \$39.95); and Walt Disney's *Space Buddies* (\$34.99).

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

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL REMAKE SITE

Good Gort! They've *really* done a remake of Robert Wise's SF film starring Michael Rennie and Patricia Neal? Scott Derrickson takes over the reins for this redux with Keanu Reeves and Jennifer Connelly. If you *Still* can't believe they're reimagining this classic, go to

www.dtessmovie.com

THE INVADERS WEBSITE

The Invaders: alien beings from a dying planet. Their destination: the Earth. Their purpose: to make it *their* world. David Vincent has seen them. For him, it began one lost night on a lonely country road, looking for a shortcut that he never found... Revisit the classic '60s series at

www.theinvaders.co.uk

THE SPIRIT FILM PAGE

Frank Miller adapts Will Eisner's seminal comic in this story about a rookie cop returned from the dead as the Spirit (Gabriel Macht) to fight crime—and arch-enemy the Octopus (Samuel L. Jackson)—in Central City. Scarlett Johansson, Eva Mendes and Jaime King co-star. If you're in *The Spirit* for *Sin City*-style comic book cinema, go to

www.mycityscreeams.com



SAURON'S DEFENSE

THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX PAGE

Kate DiCamillo's Newbery-award-winning children's book is now a feature film with Matthew Broderick, Emma Watson, Tracey Ullman, Dustin Hoffman, Sigourney Weaver, William H. Macy and Kevin Kline lending their voices to this tale of three unlikely heroes: a misfit mouse, unhappy rat and servant girl with cauliflower ears. Small heroes have big hearts at

www.thetaleofdesperauxmovie.com/splash

JOHN NEWTON WEBSITE

The former Superboy is all grown up. Since then, he has appeared in the TV series *The Untouchables*, *Models Inc.* and *Melrose Place* and various telemovies and films. You can call *Desperate Housewives*' cable guy at

profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=297305577

HELEN SLATER WEBSITE

Now that we've covered Superboy, it's only fair that we talk about Supergirl. Slater made her feature film debut as Lara, the Girl of Steel, in 1984. *The Legend of Billie Jean*, *Ruthless People*, *The Secret of My Success* and *City Slickers* followed. And the actress recently returned to the DC Universe as Lara-El in two *Smallville* episodes. Learn more about her movies, TV work and music at

www.helenslater.com

INKHEART MOVIE WEB PAGE

Reading is fundamental—especially in this fantasy film in which Brendan Fraser has the special ability to bring characters out of books. Iain (*K-PAX*) Softley helms this adaptation of Cornelia Funke's novel.

www.inkheartmovie.com

EILEEN DIETZ WEB PAGE

She was in *Helter Skelter*, *Ge-*

neral Hospital and the Tony-winning play *Steambath*. But, of course, to genre enthusiasts, it's her *Exorcist* roles as the Demon (better known as the Face of Death) and the possessed Regan that stand out. The power of Christ compels you to visit

www.eileendietz.com

THE REAL BRENT SPINER SITE

This *Star Trek* star can sing, too! Spiner teamed up with cabaret sensation Maude Maggart to record *Dreamland*, a new CD that uses sound FX, characters and song to tell a story that is part musical, part film noir and a throwback to radio's golden era. To hear some clips—and purchase the CD—go to this official web page:

www.therealbrentspiner.com

THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON SITE

"I was born under unusual circumstances." And so begins *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, David (Zodiac) Fincher's fantasy film based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story. Brad Pitt plays Benjamin (a man born in his 80s who ages backwards) and Cate Blanchett essays Daisy, the love of his life.

www.benjaminbutton.com

DEBBIE ROCHON WEBSITE

All you have to do is check out IMDb to see the number of credits that Rochon has racked up over the years. A scream queen and a genre fixture, the *American Nightmare* and *Nowhere Man* actress will soon be seen in *Colour from the Dark*. And, of course, she's our pal, co-host of FANGORIA Radio.

www.debbierochon.com

CONVENTIONS

Questions about cons? Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the con's address or visit their website. Do NOT contact STARLOG. Note: Listed guests may *not* appear and cons may be cancelled without any notice. Conventioneers: Send info (with phone number and e-mail address) no later than *three* months prior to the event to STARLOG Con Calendar, 250 West 49th Street, Suite 304, 3rd Flr, NY, NY 10019 or e-mail allan.dart@starloggroup.com This is a free service. STARLOG makes absolutely no guarantees, due to space limitations, that your con will be listed.

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January 30-February 1
LA Marriott at LAX
Los Angeles, CA
Creation Entertainment
1010 North Central, Suite 400
Glendale, CA 91202
(818) 409-0960
www.creationent.com

Guests: Robert Trebor, Jennifer Sky Band (Friday); Michael Hurst, Hudson Leick (Saturday); Lucy Lawless, Renee O'Connor, Victoria Pratt (Sunday)

FEBRUARY NY COMIC CON

February 6-8
Javits Center
NY, NY

www.nycomiccon.com

Guests: Joe Sinnott, Herb Trimpe, Bob Layton, J. Michael Straczynski, George Pérez, Michael Golden, Michael Uslan, etc.

TWILIGHT SALUTE

February 20-22
Westin San Francisco Market Street
San Francisco, CA
Creation Entertainment
See earlier address

MARCH FANGORIA'S WEEKEND OF HORRORS

March 6-8

Wyndham Chicago O'Hare Chicago, IL

Creation Entertainment
See earlier address
Guests: George Romero, Doug Bradley, H.G. Lewis, Tobe Hooper, Tony Timpone, etc.

SUPERNATURAL CON

March 6-8
Crowne Plaza Cherry Hill
Cherry Hill, NJ
Creation Entertainment
See earlier address
Guest: Jared Padalecki

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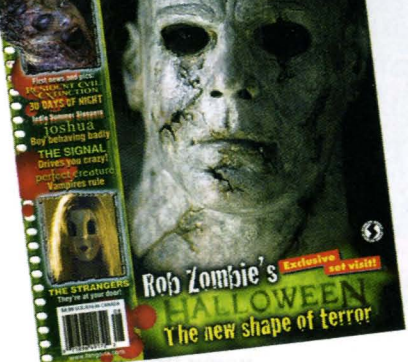
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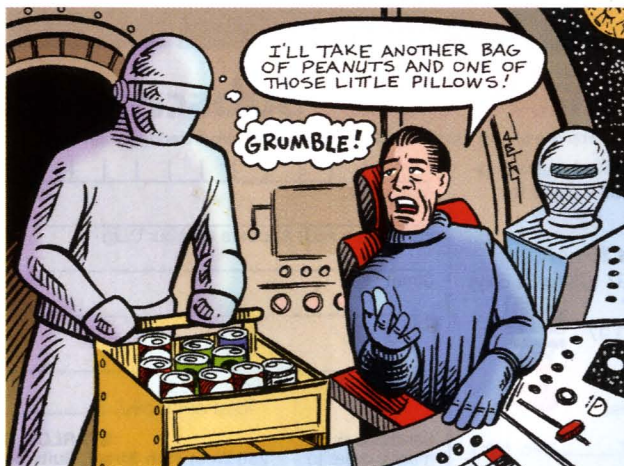
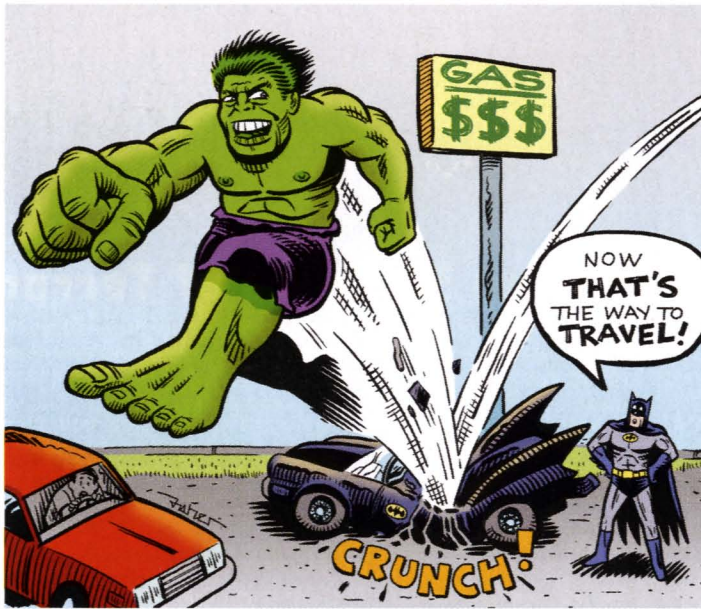
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LOG TOONS

Art: Mike Fisher



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EXCERPT FROM A
RECENT INTERVIEW
WITH THOMAS JANE
PROMOTING
THE MIST

DEE SNIDER: WELCOME TO THE SHOW THOMAS JANE!

THOMAS JANE: WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT FROM ME NOW?

DEE: AT FIRST I THOUGHT I WAS TALKING TO CLIVE BARKER FOR A MINUTE THERE.

THOMAS: I HAVE NEVER DONE ANYTHING LIKE THAT IN MY LIFE...

DEE: WHERE ARE YOU?

THOMAS: I AM IN THE MIDDLE OF A SEAFOOD DINNER WITH A BUNCH OF DWARFS.

TONY TIMPONE: IS IT HAPPY HOUR?

DEBBIE ROCHON: YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'RE VERY HAPPY!

THOMAS: I SOUND LIKE I'M VERY HAPPY? I AM BUT I HAVE TO SPEAK TO YOU TOMORROW ... I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A SEAFOOD DINNER... WHERE'S MY PILLOW?

DEBBIE: WHERE'S MY PILLOW?!

DEE: ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE ABLE TO STAY ON THE SHOW?

THOMAS: DON'T TALK TO ME UNTIL I'VE SPOKEN!

DEE: BUT, THOMAS, I WANT TO KISS YOUR ASS!

THOMAS: OK, DON'T KICK MY ASS.

DEE: I SAID KISS, NOT KICK!

THOMAS: I'M JUST A NORMAL GUY. I'M JUST A REGULAR GUY OUT FOR A GOOD DINNER AND A GOOD TIME WITH MY WIFE. WHAT ELSE CAN I TELL YOU?

DEBBIE: THAT'S ALL ANYONE CAN HOPE FOR, THOMAS.

TONY: AND HE'S GOT SOME WIFE!

DEBBIE: JUST WANNA SAY HOW INCREDIBLE YOU WERE IN THE MIST!

THOMAS: IF YOU DON'T DO ANYTHING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, PLEASE GO SEE THE MIST. YOU'RE RIGHT, IT'S A SPECIAL PERFORMANCE. NOT ONLY BY ME BUT EVERYBODY ELSE TOO. I'M NOW MAKING DARK COUNTRY AND WE'RE SHOOTING IN 3D. IT'S A SLOWER PROCESS FOR GOD'S SAKE. DON'T TELL THEM I SAID THAT. BUT THE PRODUCT ITSELF IS PHENOMENAL!

DEE: IS THIS YOUR DIRECTORIAL DEBUT?

THOMAS: YES, IT'S MY DIRECTORIAL DEBUT. BUT I REALLY LOOK FORWARD TO TALKING TO YOU GUYS ABOUT THIS IN THE FUTURE. WHEN WE HAVE SOME PICTURES TO SHOW YOU. RIGHT NOW I'M JUST BLOWING SMOKE UP YOUR BUTT.

DEE: SAME THING WE'RE DOING WITH YOU, DUDE.

THOMAS: YOU'LL BE VERY EXCITED TO SEE WHAT WE HAVE TO DELIVER. WE'VE GOT RON PERLMAN, WE'VE GOT ME, WE'VE GOT LAUREN GERMAN, IT'S REALLY FUN.

TONY: TELL US ABOUT THE PLOT OF THE MOVIE, I HEAR YOU'RE A BAD GUY IN THIS MOVIE.

THOMAS: NO, NO! THAT'S NOT TRUE! COME ON! IT'S A FILM NOIR IN THE TRUEST SENSE WHERE THE PROTAGONIST IS CAUGHT UP IN THE SPIDER WEB OF EVENTS THAT LEAD TO HIS ULTIMATE DEMISE. THAT'S THE FUN OF FILM NOIR, WHERE YOU TAKE A NORMAL GUY AND YOU SEE HIM GET CAUGHT UP IN ALL THIS STUFF AND YOU CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THEN YOU TAKE A GORGEOUS GIRL LIKE LAUREN GERMAN AND YOU THINK TO YOURSELF, 'YEAH, I'D GO AFTER THAT', AND YOU GET CAUGHT UP IN THE MORAL CONFLICT. THAT'S WHAT'S EXCITING ABOUT FILM NOIR AND I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING MORE TO SAY ABOUT IT THAN THAT. TALK ABOUT EXCITING... WE ARE ON THE CUTTING BLEEDING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY. WE ARE ON THE BLEEDING EDGE OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE TO DO IN FILM TODAY IN 3D! SO WE'RE SHOOTING 3D, WE'RE SHOOTING DIGITAL AND WE'RE ON THE BLEEDING EDGE OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE FOR US TO ACCOMPLISH IN FILM TODAY.

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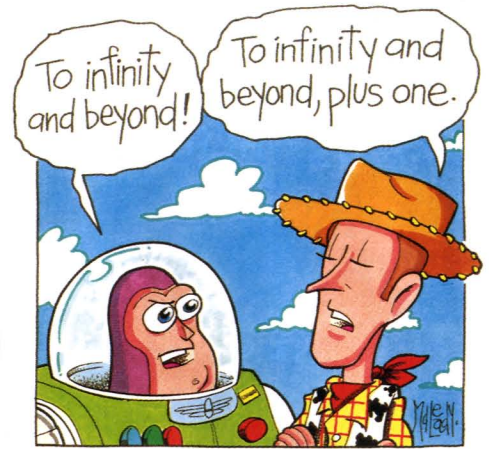
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LISTEN IN YOUR HOME... LISTEN IN YOUR CAR... LISTEN ON YOUR COMPUTER

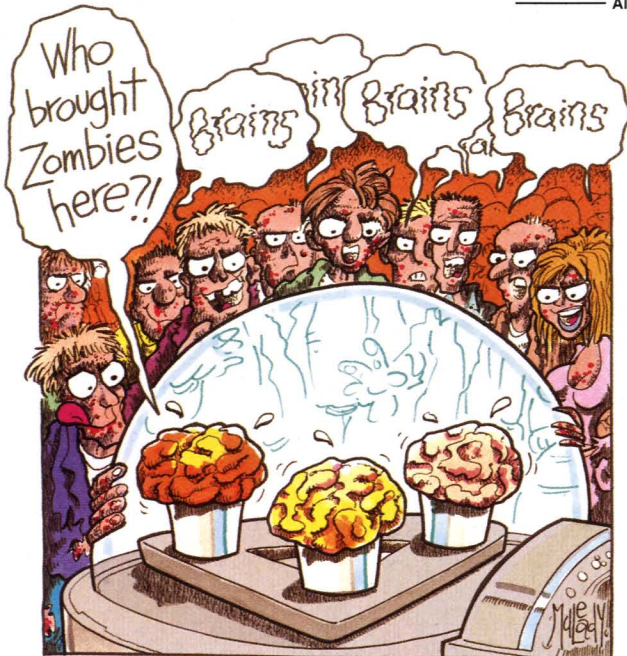


BOB TOONS

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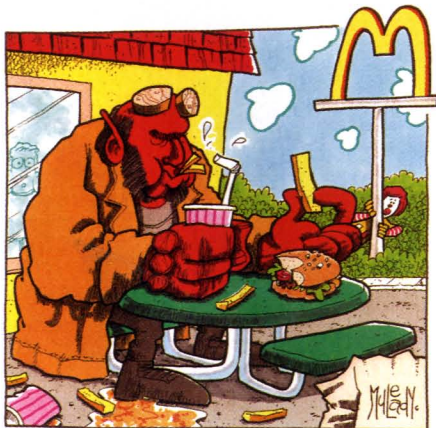
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HELLBOY II—
THE GOLDEN ARCHES

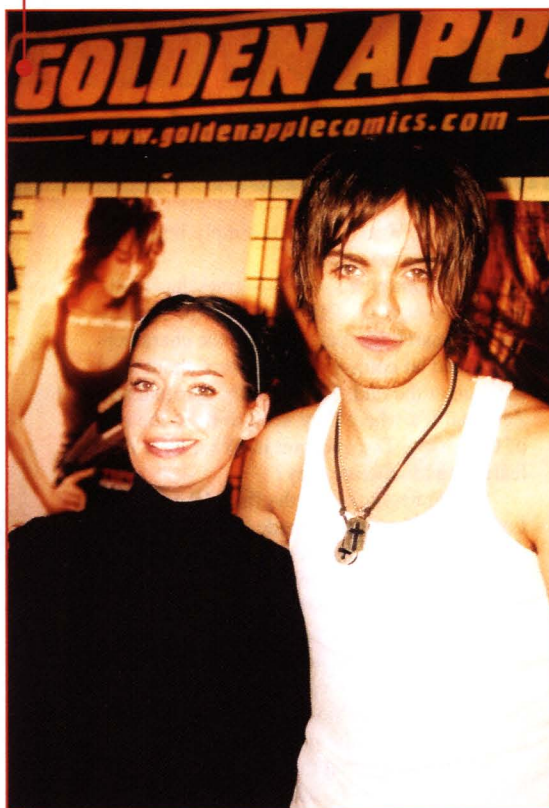


INVISIBLE GIRL CHECKS THE TIRES ON WONDER WOMAN'S INVISIBLE PLANE.

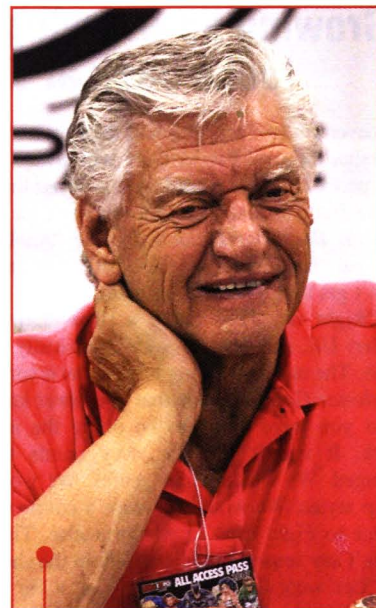
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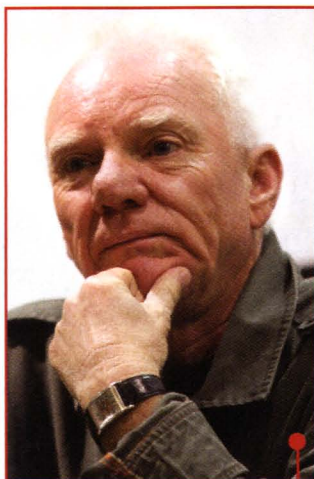
Mini-Me. Major star. **Verne Troyer** reunited with Mike Myers in *The Love Guru* last year. He'll soon be seen in Terry Gilliam's *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*.



Lena Headey and **Thomas Dekker**, playing mother and son, hope fans will watch *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles* when it shifts to its new Friday night time slot on Fox next month.



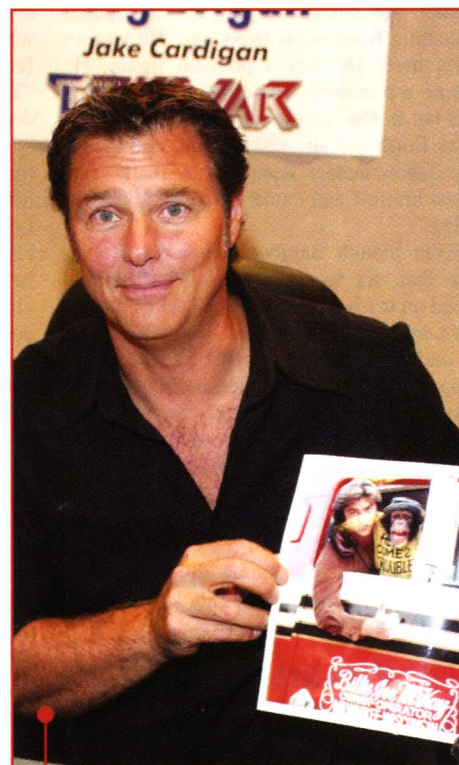
It's our favorite Darth Vader! The Force remains strong in **David Prowse**, a STARLOG pal for more than 30 years.



Does he look like the Green-Eyed Man? Decades after *A Clockwork Orange*, **Malcolm McDowell** continues adding stylish evil to such projects as *Bolt* (the villain's voice) and *Heroes* (Linderman).



Grace Park is preparing for life after *Battlestar Galactica*. And here she is at an SF convention—just as lovely in real life as she is on screen.



Genre fans may recall his *TekWar* role as Jake Cardigan, but **Greg Evigan** realizes that most folks still know him best for (yes) *B.J. and the Bear*.

FINAL BATTLES

Growing up & saying goodbye, Jamie Bamber looks back at *Battlestar Galactica*.

I never got to sleep with half the Cylons that Baltar did, and I think there will always be a part of me that would have *enjoyed* that," Jamie Bamber jokes as he looks back on his days as *Battlestar Galactica*'s Lee "Apollo" Adama. "But, no, really, there isn't anything I didn't get to do. I can't complain.

"Right now, I'm doing a show, *Law & Order: UK*, and every episode is basically the same. The one astounding thing as an actor on *Battlestar Galactica* was that you never knew what you were going to be doing the next week. It wasn't just the story points that changed. We would jump genres. We would jump styles. We would go from a courtroom drama to *Fight Club* to whatever else. There wasn't any sense or predictability to the show.

"Lee went through huge changes. He put on 30 pounds at one stage because he got married, happy and listless. He was suicidal at one point and tried to do away with himself because it all seemed too bleak, and because humans couldn't even get along with other humans. He became a lawyer and started advocating from the witness box. He was an action hero. He was a political figure. He became a president. There was so much that went on. It was almost *too much*. I was looking to finish [off the series] well, and thankfully [showrunner] Ron Moore really surpassed himself and came up with the perfect ending."

Even though Bamber completed filming more than six months ago and has already moved on to his next gig, *Battlestar Galactica* won't wrap up its acclaimed, groundbreaking run until this spring. The SCI FI Channel is airing the second half of Season Four, which picks up on January 16 with "Sometimes a Great Notion." That hour follows the events of the mid-season finale, "Revelations," in which the *Galactica* and her crew—including Lee, Commander Adama (Edward James Olmos), President Laura Roslin (Mary McDonnell), Kara "Starbuck" Thrace (Katee Sackhoff), etc.—finally reached Earth, only to discover a decimated planet.

Exit Interview

Discussing *Battlestar Galactica*'s final 10 episodes, Bamber explains that viewers will get to see "everything. You will see the aftermath of Earth's discovery that was only hinted at at the end of the first block of episodes—and the immediate aftermath of that is *huge*. You will also see the death of many characters and a huge tumult within the fleet. And, most importantly, you will be privy to a truly sub-

lime ending. Ron's finale is simply beautiful, and it ends appropriately.

"The *Galactica*'s whole journey has really been a voyage of self-discovery, an identity crisis, a search for meaning, and the characters are forced to come to conclusions about who they are at the end. So it's pretty spiritual and Zen, and it's where they need to be at the end of this chaos. The question is: What have they learned, and who are they?"

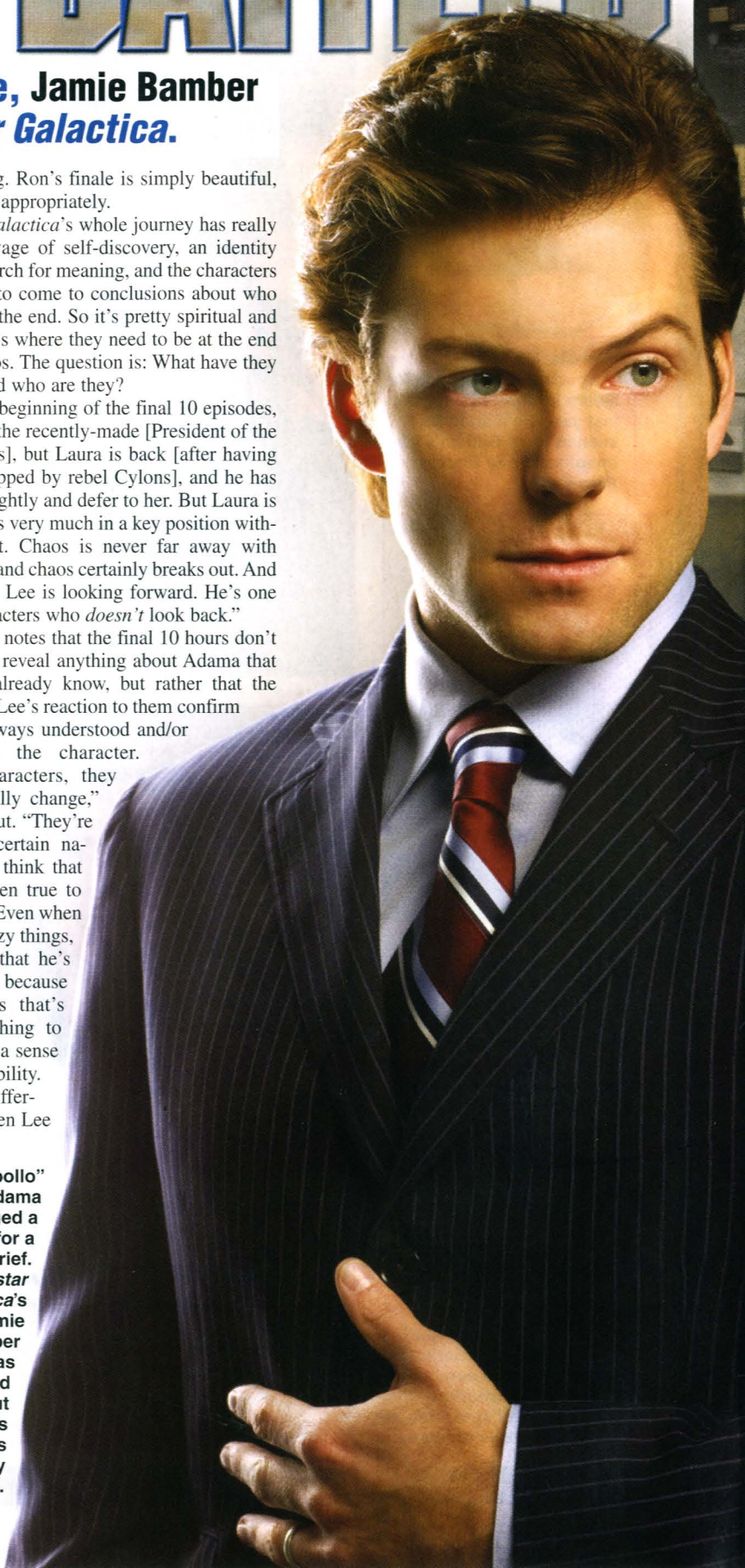
"At the beginning of the final 10 episodes, Lee is still the recently-made [President of the 12 Colonies], but Laura is back [after having been kidnapped by rebel Cylons], and he has to revert slightly and defer to her. But Laura is ill, so Lee is very much in a key position within the fleet. Chaos is never far away with *Galactica*, and chaos certainly breaks out. And by the end, Lee is looking forward. He's one of the characters who *doesn't* look back."

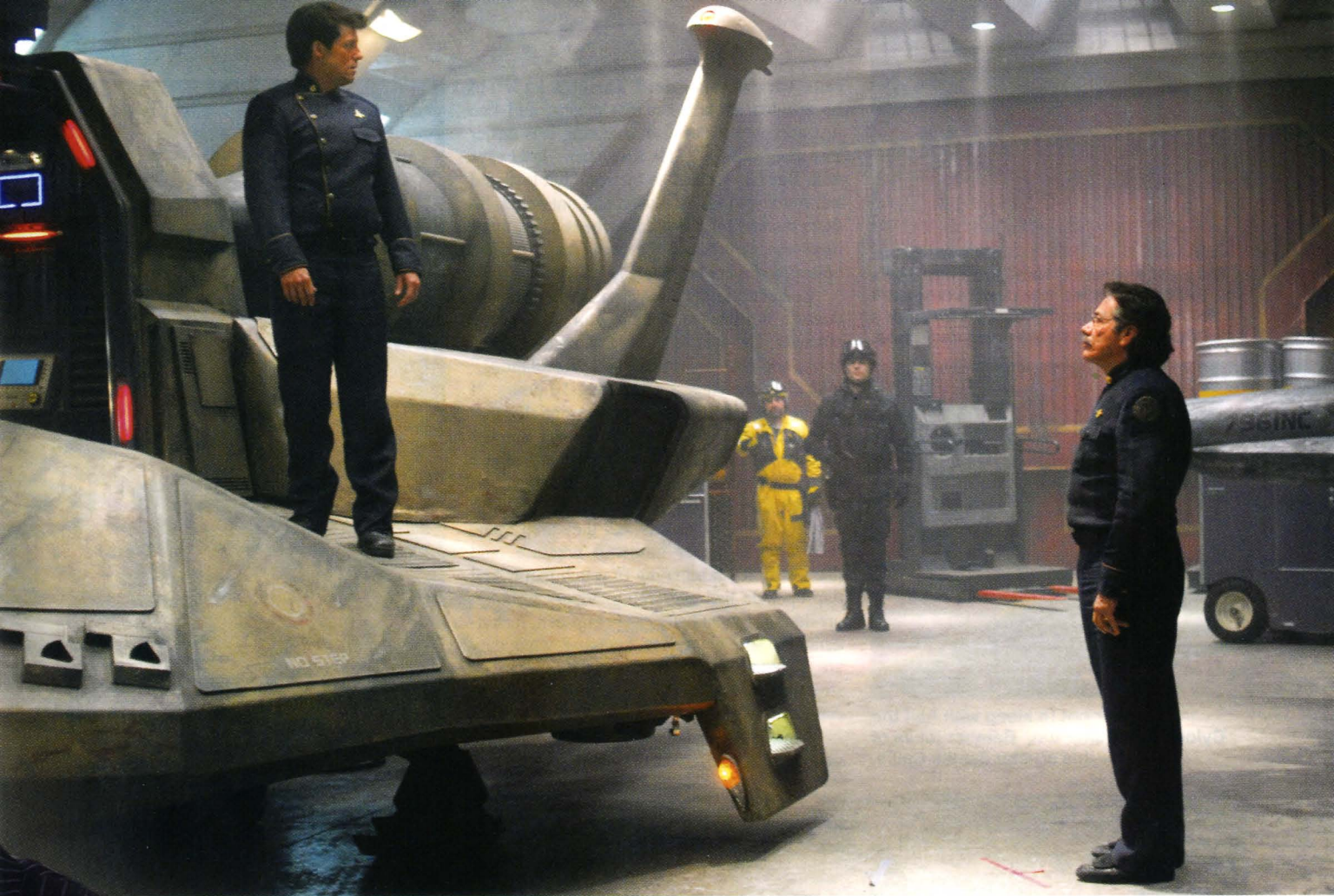
Bamber notes that the final 10 hours don't necessarily reveal anything about Adama that he didn't already know, but rather that the events and Lee's reaction to them confirm what he always understood and/or felt about the character.

"These characters, they don't actually change," he points out. "They're true to a certain nature, and I think that Lee has been true to his nature. Even when he does crazy things, you know that he's doing them because he believes that's the *right* thing to do. He has a sense of responsibility.

"The difference between Lee

Lee "Apollo" Adama exchanged a flight suit for a lawyer's brief. *Battlestar Galactica*'s Jamie Bamber says he has enjoyed acting out his character's many changes.





It isn't easy being the son of the *Galactica* commander, but Lee's relationship with his Dad (Edward James Olmos) eventually evolved into a mutual respect.

and Starbuck is that she doesn't feel any responsibility to anyone but herself. There's an egotism to what she does, which is very attractive, but nevertheless she has the strength of mind. In a way, she's a stronger person, because she doesn't care what people think about her. Lee does care, and he makes difficult decisions and does some crazy stuff, but it's always because he thinks that it represents his duty. And that *doesn't* change right through to the end.

"There are revelations, sure," Bamber continues. "In Season Three—or was it Season Four?—you find out that Lee's mother was abusive and that his father wasn't the malevolent force in the family. His Dad was just absent. Things like that are revelations to me as well as the audience. The sign of a successful character is the surprising things that can happen to them, and how they can behave in surprising ways. But, fundamentally, they are who they are. Our childhoods form who we are. At the beginning of the mini-series, Lee is a fully-formed piece of work, and he will change and understand himself better as he grows older. That's what the journey is about. There isn't any incoherence in Lee's behavior, really, when you look at it."

Journey's End

In the final installments, Moore will no doubt address Lee's convoluted relationships. When asked the hypothetical question, "If

Moore had told him, 'Jamie, we don't have enough time. We can focus on either the Lee-Kara relationship or the Lee-Adama relationship. Pick one,' " which option would have Bamber chosen? "Of course, Ron does both. He's clever," Bamber replies. "But I would probably say the Kara relationship, because I feel that the father-son element was the 'A story' for most of the journey.

"The father [Commander Adama] isn't just a character—he's an emblem of Lee's problem, which is a problem that many of us have, and that's striving to become something in your own right and grow out of not only your father's shadow, but an entire generation, society and a whole way of doing things, and to make a difference in the world and be the cornerstone of your own existence. That has been Lee's journey, and in several episodes along the way, he has little pieces of that revelation: when he becomes a commander; when he commands a Battlestar for the first time; when he steps out of the uniform; when he becomes a president... And by the end, Lee understands that it isn't about any particular role, but rather about accepting and being comfortable in your own skin.

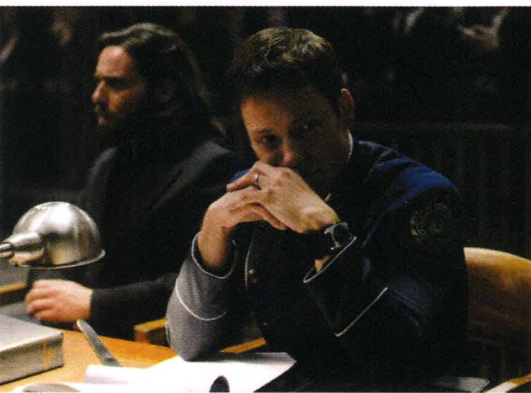
"As for Kara, the achievement there, if you like, is that Lee ignores it in the fourth season," Bamber adds. "Kara is a strange entity. Lee doesn't know what she is, so he doesn't have much to do with her. I think that relationship needed more work, because Kara

Selected Photos: Carole Segal

All Galactica Photos: Copyright 2006, 2007, 2008 SCI FI Channel



The Lost Weekend? Nah! Although Lee's frustrations have led him down some dark roads, his resiliency saw him through a multitude of tough times—and decisions.



"I never got to sleep with half the Cylons that Baltar did," Bamber jokes of his co-star James Callis.



He has also had a sometimes contentious relationship with President Roslin (Mary McDonnell), but gains her respect due to his handling of a hostage situation.

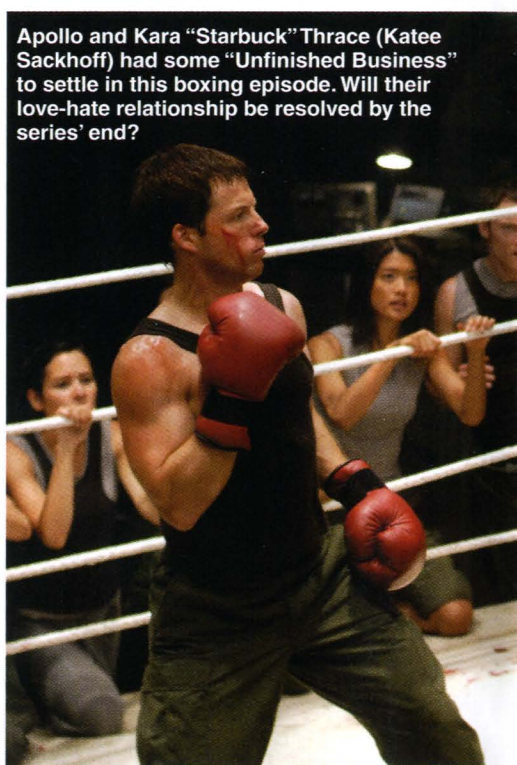


After the Cylons' attack on the 12 Colonies, Lee was promoted from Captain of the Colonial Fleet Reserve to the *Battlestar Galactica's* CAG (Commander of the Air Group).

came back from the dead. There's a lot left to be decided about what that means, and Lee just accepted it because accepting it is easier than confronting it. He loves her. He always will. But Lee walked away from that love and left it unexplored, in a way, and untainted. So there's something there that begs a bit more involvement between the two; [they need] to understand what has actually happened."

Considering the show as a whole, Bamber doesn't hesitate to pick a pair of favorite episodes. He cites "33," the first regular-series entry, and the aforementioned "Revelations," which set the stage for the final 10 hours. "I would say '33' because quintessentially that was the brand, that was the show," Bamber explains. "There's that desperate nightmare chase in which Lee is pushed to the edge, and they all fray, but they hold tight. You [fall in love with] the characters, but they aren't perfect. They're under immense pressure, and that's why it's fascinating to watch them. And that episode had everything: Vipers fighting, presidents, the bad guys as yet unseen, misunderstood and not really knowing what they are. That's where the show was on its strongest footing as an entertainment phenomenon."

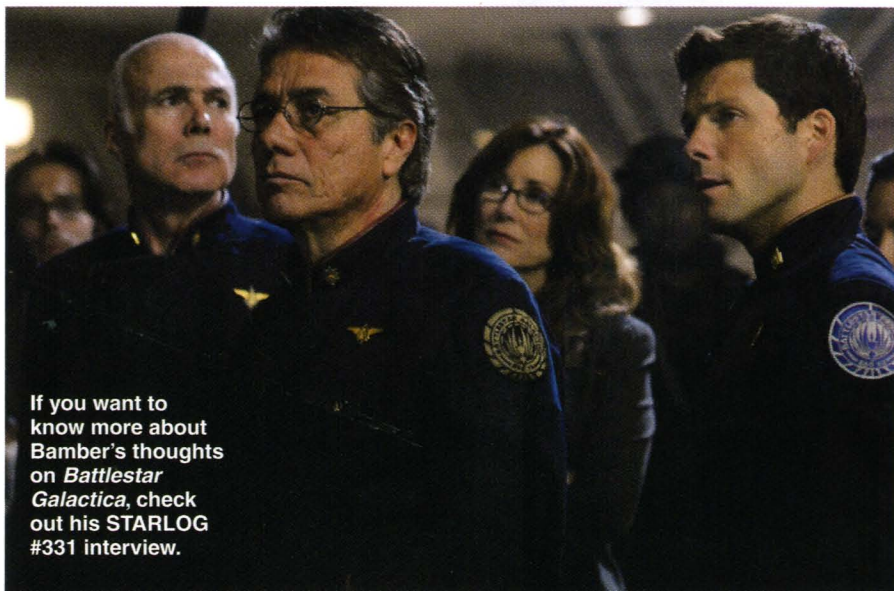
"And for me, personally, I would pick 'Revelations,' where Lee is President at the begin-



ning, and then they find this Earth, and they find the President, the actual President Roslin. They think this planet is Earth, and the whole *Galactica* crew goes crazy. Lee does a Tom Cruise and jumps around on a table, everyone is crying and shouting for joy and there's that release of tension that was pent up for almost 70 episodes—or whatever it was up to that point. They've been yearning for this mythical place, and they finally find it. The hope is realized and then dashed, and that's quintessential *Battlestar* as well. When things are at their very best, they're not far away from turning sour, and that's the emotional rollercoaster of the show, those two episodes, for me."

New Beginning

Back when *Battlestar Galactica* launched, Bamber was a young British actor best known for his performances as the doomed British Royal Navy Lieutenant Archie Kennedy in the *Horatio Hornblower* TV movies and his



If you want to know more about Bamber's thoughts on *Battlestar Galactica*, check out his STARLOG #331 interview.



Who) Agyeman, Harriet Walter and Bradley (The Sarah Jane Adventures) Walsh. The show is based on American producer Dick Wolf's long-running *Law & Order* franchise, which follows cops as they crack cases and the prosecutors who handle those cases in court. However, this series spin-off adds a British twist to the American shows: The police officers fight crime without guns, and the lawyers wear wigs. So far, 13 episodes are scheduled to air in England, and they will likely surface in the U.S. in the near future.

"It's chalk and cheese from *Battlestar*," Bamber relates. "It's great to come home with my American experience under my belt and bring an American show to the British screen, which has never been done before. That's very exciting, as is having a leading role on British TV and having the British public be more aware of who I am. And maybe it will lead to other work over here. That's important to me. I have to say that [initially] there was a culture shock working on an English show. It's so much smaller and the budgets are much tighter. And then you have to add to that making a drama that is grounded,

that is based in the real procedural world, that is of a very specific métier and that [focuses on] these detectives investigating criminals every week.

"There are many adjustments in an actor's life," Bamber adds. "I basically know what every *Law & Order* episode is going to be. I know the form, and *Law & Order* is sort of a repetitive thing as an actor, so I miss *Battlestar*'s variety and the emotional challenges of every episode. *Law & Order* isn't like that. It's a vehicle for the guest stars; the detectives are really the narrators. But that brings its own subtle tests—trying to portray a good cop whose [personal] life isn't seen on screen. You see him at work, and that's it. So that's a fascinating challenge. And it's nice to be home with my family, old friends and old haunts, and to introduce my kids to London life and go to the theater. But I do hope to find my way back to California when [*Law & Order: UK*] is done, and to base myself in the States."

For the record, Bamber won't be in the upcoming Olmos-directed *Battlestar Galactica* telemovie prequel. In fact, Jamie Bamber believes that after the *Battlestar Galactica* series finale, he'll have left Lee Adama behind forever. "I think I've played the character for the last time, although nothing is certain in this industry. Someone at NBC Universal informed me the other day that all of the sets have been digitized, and they wouldn't have done that if they didn't believe that there's at least a chance of revisiting *Battlestar* at some point. But that's a decision for people with much more responsibility than me. In my head, I've definitely put *Battlestar Galactica* to bed." ✨

With only 10 episodes left before *Battlestar* wraps, Bamber would like for Lee to explore the love he still feels for Kara.

Design & Layout: Heiner Feil

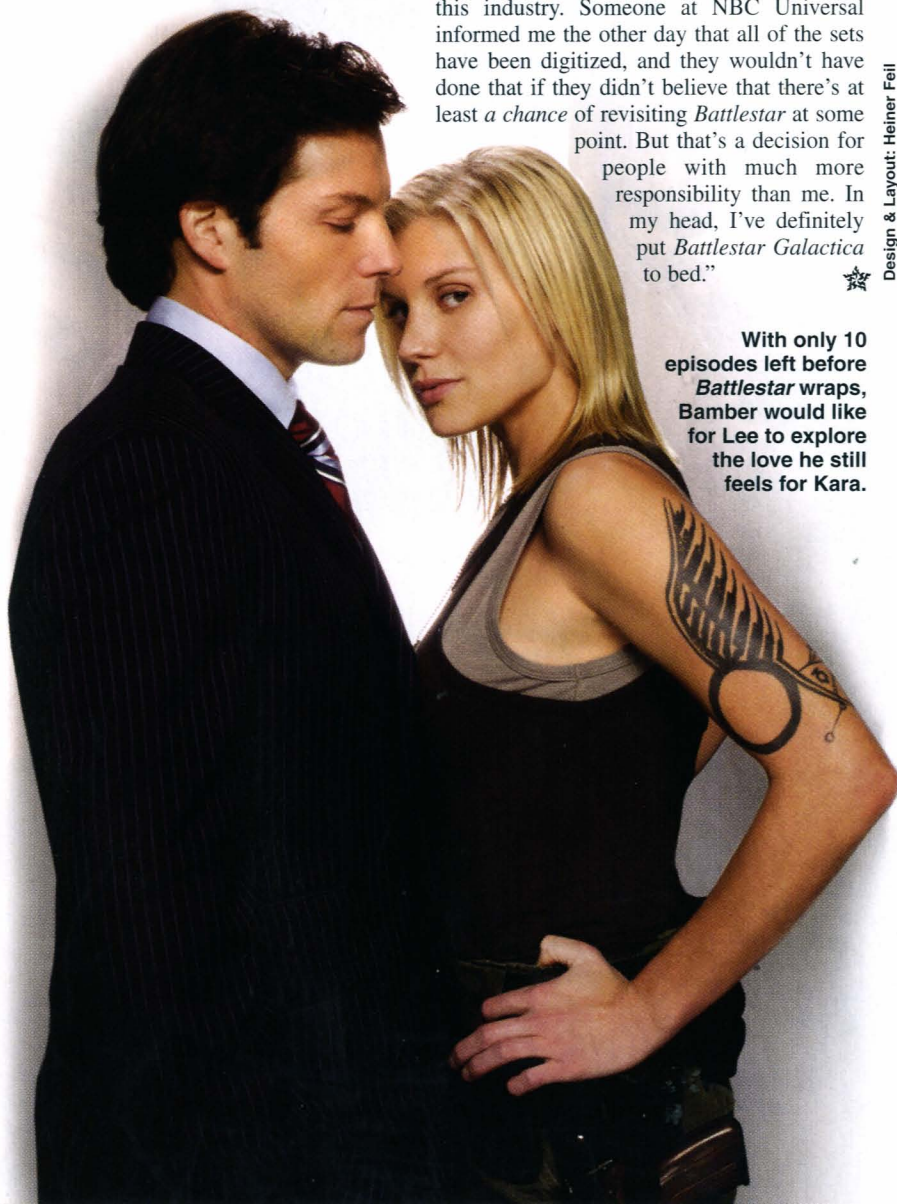
appearances in such programs as *Band of Brothers*, *Peak Practice* and *Ultimate Force*. Then *Battlestar Galactica* arrived on the scene and suddenly Bamber found himself far more famous than before—as evidenced by the numerous magazine covers he has graced—and in greater demand as an actor on both sides of the pond, as his work in *Ghost Whisperer*, *Cold Case*, *Pulse 2: Afterlife* and *Law & Order: UK* will attest.

"It has changed everything on every level," Bamber says. "It has changed me. I have become truly American as a result. I've always been an American citizen. My Dad is American, but I was born in London, and I had never lived in the States. The one thing I didn't have growing up was the States' popular culture. I was very sporting, and I got all the sporting stuff, and so it was a real privilege to have this chance to jump into American television on a show that became embraced by the American public, and particularly by the American critics and press. I found myself at the heart of this amazing, creative body of people. And to work with people like Ron, David Eick, Michael Rymer, Edward and Mary—it changed me creatively, entirely, and gave me more confidence than I ever had before.

"I've grown, just as Lee has grown on the show. I've tread a similar path. I went from a single guy to a married father of three. So my life has changed in every way, personally and professionally. And in terms of my identity, I sit here in London right now and find myself watching Jon Stewart, having missed Thanksgiving and the election and my new home in California. So, in every regard, I feel changed and very privileged to have been on this journey with *Battlestar Galactica*'s cast and crew. I already miss it very much."

Law & Order: UK features Bamber as DS Matt Devlin, and co-stars Freema (Doctor

Photo: Justin Stephens



KING OF DREAMS

By JOE NAZZARO

Neil Gaiman entertains kids & frightens adults with his dark fantasy fiction.

The late Robert Bloch famously remarked, "I have the heart of a small child—I keep it in a jar in the bottom drawer of my desk." That sentiment, whether he would care to admit it or not, also fits Neil Gaiman just as well as any of the countless black T-shirts that fill the award-winning fantasist's *Addams Family*-like Minnesota home. Whether it's *Coraline*—his 2002 children's novella about a girl who confronts an unsettling pair of parental doppelgängers—or *The Graveyard Book*—his current bestseller that follows the adventures of a boy raised by the inhabitants of a centuries-old cemetery—Gaiman knows how to successfully enchant children while scaring the crap out of older readers.

That bizarre dichotomy can be summed up by a strange encounter that the writer had with a Scandinavian journalist a few years ago while on a European promotional tour for *Coraline*. "I was in Denmark," he recalls, "when a journalist in his late 40s or early 50s said very seriously, 'How can you justify allowing children near this book? I finished it at three in the morning and walked around my house turning on all of the lights. It's the most terrifying book that I've ever read.'"

"I said, 'Well, children read the book as an adventure; it's adults who see it as terrifying. Adults are reading about a child in danger, but children are reading about somebody like themselves up against something nasty, but they have no doubt that the child is going to win.' I've never had a journalist stare at me like that. I could see the guy trying to repress and squash down the urge to respond, 'You're a liar!' to me, but he didn't say it."

Bedtime Stories

While that reaction may be somewhat irrational, there's definitely something about *Coraline* that unsettles adults in a way that Gaiman never anticipated. Terry Pratchett (who co-wrote *Good Omens* with him) warned that the book will "send a shiver down your spine, out through your shoes and into a taxi to the airport," while Lemony Snicket (Daniel Handler), no slouch at upsetting readers himself, called it "a fascinating and disturbing story that frightened me nearly to death."

Even with several years of hindsight, Gaiman is still at a loss to explain why this particular story manages to strike such an emotional chord. "I certainly didn't know that was going to happen when I wrote it," he

Where does Neil Gaiman, the author of *The Graveyard Book*, like to hang out? Why, the cemetery, of course!



Coraline is the latest Gaiman novel to become a film. Henry (*The Nightmare Before Christmas*) Selick directed the 3-D stop-motion movie (bowing February 6).



Stardust sank at the box office, but fantasy fans appreciated Gaiman's whimsical tale of a young man's journey to capture a fallen star.



Dave McKean took the helm for *MirrorMask*, another Gaiman fantasy tale featuring a young female protagonist, doppelgangers and an alternate world.



Director Robert Zemeckis returned to motion-capture animation with *Beowulf*, which Gaiman co-scripted with Roger Avary.

MirrorMask Image: Trademark & Copyright 2005 The Jim Henson Company. All Rights Reserved.

admits. "The first moment that I realized what was going on was after I had finished *Coraline* and read it to my daughter Maddy, who loved it. She was my guinea pig. If she hadn't liked it, I probably would have put the book in a box, and it would have gone into the attic with the things that don't go out into the public.

"But my daughter loved it, and she was almost seven, so I sent it to my agent, who

phoned me back and said, 'You can't seriously be saying this is a children's book!' I said, 'Well, of course I can.' And she said, 'But the book scared me!' I replied, 'Yes, it's a children's book, and it won't scare kids.' She asked me how I could say that, and I told her, 'I read it to Maddy, and she loved it. She was not scared. You have two daughters, age six and eight; read it to them.'

"She reluctantly agreed, and phoned me up at the end of the week to say, 'They love it, and I'm sending it over to Harper Children!' So it's something that we figured out afterward—that adults and children are reading a different story. With *The Graveyard Book*, it was only when I handed it in to my publisher in the UK that they said, 'We're going to publish this as an adult *and* a children's book, because it's

All Coraline Images: Copyright 2008 Focus Features LLC. All Rights Reserved.

All Beowulf Images: Copyright 2007 Paramount Pictures & Shangri-La Entertainment LLC. All Rights Reserved.

both.' So that's how Bloomsbury did it.

"And *The Graveyard Book* is two different books. If you're a kid, you read *The Graveyard Book* and you want to be like Bod, live in the graveyard, have magic powers, fade from sight, do all that cool stuff and have Silas for a friend. If you're an adult, you tend to read it as a story about growing up, family and the nature of family. But kids don't get to the book's end and blink away tears; the *adults* do. And, again, it wasn't intentional. That's just how it seems to have worked out."

As if the original story wasn't unsettling enough, on February 6 moviegoers will be able to experience *Coraline* as a 3-D stop-motion film written and directed by Henry (James and the Giant Peach) Selick. Dakota Fanning provides the voice of Coraline, who moves into an old house with her well-meaning but distracted parents (Teri Hatcher, John Hodgman). Their fellow tenants include ex-vaudevillians Miss Spink and Miss Forcible (Dawn French, Jennifer Saunders) and the eccentric Russian Mr. Bobinski (Ian McShane), who's training an unseen circus of mouse performers.

When Coraline walks through a secret door, she discovers alternate versions of her family and friends who appear to be more delightful than the real things—except for the fact that they have big black buttons where their eyes should be. As this world proves too good to be true and her "Other Mother" quite dangerous, Coraline must use all of her resourcefulness and determination to return home and save her real family.

Coraline's genesis as a feature film began shortly after Gaiman finished writing the book and asked his agent at CAA to send advance copies to Selick and Tim Burton, who had pre-



His agent initially didn't think *Coraline* was appropriate for children. However, she changed her mind after her daughters loved the book.

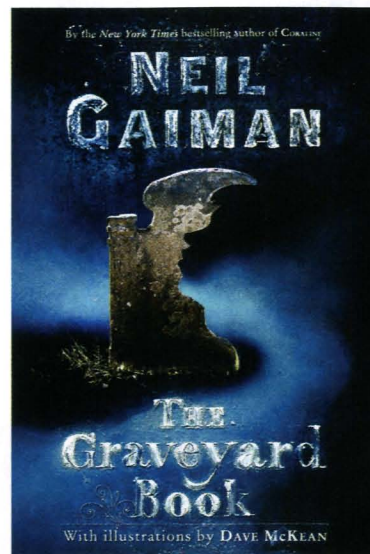
viously collaborated on *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Although Burton didn't respond, Selick got in touch within 24 hours of receiving the book and said that he wanted to adapt it as a movie.

"Henry wrote the script as a live-action film; he wasn't thinking stop-motion," Gaiman reveals. "He was just thinking 'movie,' and he originally planned to put it together with Michelle Pfeiffer, but then 9/11 happened and the bottom fell out of various markets. Bill Mechanic was going to produce *Coraline* and do it more or less at his own studio, but he lost his sources of funding. Eventually, it wound up at Laika [with Mechanic still on board], with Henry doing it as the single most ambitious stop-motion film anybody has ever made. I love that and think it's amazing."

With Selick writing the screenplay as well as directing, a number of changes have been

made to Gaiman's original story: from tiny additions such as Miss Spink and Miss Forcible stuffing and preserving their dead Scotty dogs as furry angels to the inclusion of an annoying neighbor boy and his silent alternate-world counterpart.

Although Gaiman is delighted with most of the alterations, he isn't entirely sure that all film adaptations are suited for that sort of flexibility. "If anybody is going to do a *Sandman* movie, I don't necessarily want it to be *Watchmen*-close—where you can see somebody more or less tracing the panels—but I would



Watching his young son riding a tricycle in a churchyard inspired Gaiman to write the *Jungle Book*-like story *The Graveyard Book*.

very much like it to be as faithful as possible, because that's what people going to the movie would want to see.

"If you're going to a *Sandman* film, you don't want them to cast Miley Cyrus as Morpheus. You want to watch something that is as close to [the source material] as possible. That's true up to a point, but there are certain things where you want to let people go off and do what they do. You have to allow people to



Graveyard Book Art: By & Copyright 2008 Dave McKean

create, and so much of the joy of [having a book turned into a film] is letting people create and play with it.

"I don't think you could actually make a perfectly faithful *Coraline* movie. Well, you could, but it would feel like *The Innocents* or something like that. It would be a black-and-white expressionist horror movie for kids, which I don't think anybody in the world would want to see. It isn't even a marketing decision. It might be a good film, but it would definitely be a very *strange* one!"

Graveyard Fables

If *Coraline* is Gaiman's twisted version of *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Graveyard Book* could be considered his *Jungle Book*. When Nobody "Bod" Owens' parents are slain by an assassin known only as "the man Jack," the infant survivor wanders into a graveyard, where he falls under the protection of its ghostly residents as well as the mysterious Silas, who is neither living nor dead. As Bod

Now that films have been made of *Stardust* (pictured) and *Coraline*, how about *Death: The High Cost of Living*? Gaiman says that project is dead—for now.



grows up, he is raised and educated by the specters, who also pass on to him some of their unique abilities. However, if the inquisitive boy leaves the graveyard, he takes the chance of being discovered by Jack, who has been tracking his prey for years...

While it could be argued that *The Grave-*

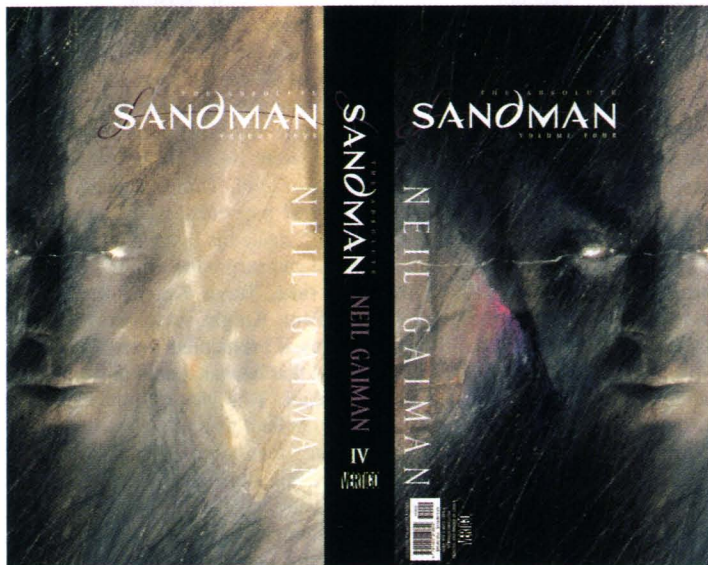
yard Book is a spiritual cousin to *Coraline*, Gaiman insists that the two couldn't be more different. "They're both written by the same person using the things that I feel and believe about childhood, and from what I remember [of it]: 'This is what I like and don't like, and this is what I want in there.' But Bod and Coraline are incredibly different," Gaiman argues.

"What was most interesting about Bod to me was getting to draw the arc of somebody from the age of 18 months to 15 going on 16, trying to change him with each chapter and then saying, 'OK, he has to be a bit precocious, because most of the people he's talking to are adults, so his vocabulary is going to be slightly off. I was happiest with chapter six, where Bod goes to school and is out in the real world. He's trying to talk like the other kids, but it's always a bit off, because he's still figuring out how to do that. So are [the two books] spiritually similar? I hope so. Is the Other Mother worse in some ways than the man Jack? Yeah, I guess so. She's a Lovecraftian, deep, dangerous cosmic beastie who steals souls, and the man Jack is somebody who kills people."

The idea for *The Graveyard Book* began percolating when Gaiman was in his mid-20s. The writer's 18-month-old son was riding his tricycle in a churchyard near their home, which sparked in Gaiman's head a *Jungle Book*-like story, but set in a graveyard and with ghosts taking the place of animals. Over the years, Gaiman worked on the project a number of times, writing a page or two here and there before abandoning the story.

It wasn't until he wrote Chapter Four, "The Witch's Headstone" (which became a short story of its own), that Gaiman finally understood what his story was about. But even then, the process wasn't easy. At one point, readers of Gaiman's blog will recall, the writer talked about how he ran into a major structural problem that necessitated a trip back to square one.

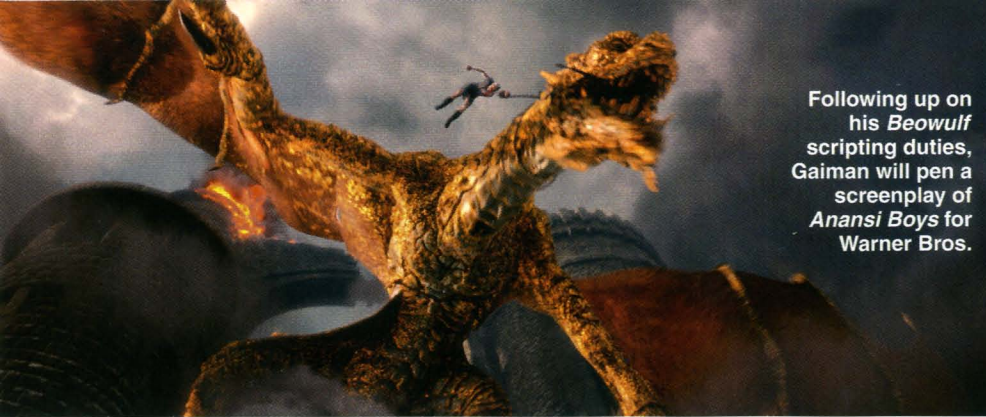
"The book's theory and structure broke on me, so I had to figure out what to do," he explains. "I had this brilliant—or so I thought—idea in which I was going to do a series of short stories, with each story set two years apart. And I had the climax planned, this whole cool ending in Chapter Six where Bod would go up against Jack, fight him, win and then discover that there's a *whole order* of these people.



The fourth and final *Absolute Sandman* is now out. The impressive slipcased volumes collect all of the groundbreaking comics with completely new coloring and bonus materials.



Selick originally conceived of *Coraline* as live-action, but various factors prompted him to shoot it as a stop-motion film. (Pictured here are maquettes of the characters.)



Following up on his *Beowulf* scripting duties, Gaiman will pen a screenplay for *Anansi Boys* for Warner Bros.

"That was my plan, and I was incredibly proud of it, but there was a point where I realized that it simply *didn't* work dramatically. I said to myself, 'You can't stop in the middle of exciting action, when you're [reaching the] climax and everybody is running around, and then say, "And two years later..."' That would have destroyed every dramatic element that I had been striving for. Suddenly, I had a book three-quarters written, but it had a structure and plan that didn't work. At that point, I had to completely rethink what I was doing, what it meant and how to fix it. Eventually, I wound up throwing out large chunks of the plot and creating an entirely new one."

Strange Tales

Now that *The Graveyard Book* is finished, Gaiman (as generally seems to be the case) has more than enough work to keep a dozen writers busy. On the book front, he has just signed a deal with Morrow to write three nonfiction books, starting with *Monkey and Me: China and the Journey to the West*, which will be Gaiman's first nonfiction effort since his companion to *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was released two decades ago.

There are plenty of film and TV projects on the horizon as well, although that list no longer includes an adaptation of Marvel's *Doctor Strange* or *Black Hole*, the latter being a Gaiman-Roger Avary version of the Charles Burns graphic novel that was put aside when new director David Fincher came aboard. Then there's the long-rumored *Doctor Who* episode that Gaiman refuses to confirm, other

than agreeing it would indeed be nice to do. And with actor David Tennant leaving the series later this year, one of the current front-runners is reportedly Paterson Joseph, who starred in the short-lived TV version of Gaiman's *Neverwhere*. "If Paterson ends up doing it—which is something I've wanted since 1996—that would be beyond cool!" Gaiman enthuses.

Despite an impressive list of high-profile media projects, Gaiman hasn't abandoned comics. He's just wrapping up his *Batman* graphic novel with artist Andy Kubert, *Whatever Happened to the Caped Crusader?* And Vertigo/DC Comics is celebrating *Sandman's* 20th anniversary with a plethora of Morpheus-related items, including the fourth and final volume of *Absolute Sandman*, a *Sandman* Tarot deck by cover artist Dave McKean, a promotional poster drawn by several *Sandman* artists and *The Sandman: The Dream Hunters*, a four-issue mini-series illustrated by P. Craig Russell that reinterprets the 2000 graphic novel by Gaiman and Yoshitaka Amano.

Unfortunately, one *Sandman*-inspired venture that might not see the light of day is a film version of *Death: The High Cost of Living*. Originally developed at New Line Cinema, with Gaiman set to write and direct and Guillermo del Toro as producer, the project was thrown into limbo by the studio's recent collapse.

"I don't know what's going to happen," Gaiman says. "I remember in 1996, Harvey Weinstein said, 'I want to do *Death*. Is there

any way to get it over to Miramax?' I even went and talked to the people at Warners, and I was told, 'No, there isn't!' The problem is that *Sandman* is at Warners. *Sandman* is never going walkies, and because *Death* is a *Sandman*-related project, it ain't going anywhere else.

"These things stop being about aesthetics and start being about rights. The projects that tend to get made are the ones where I control the rights, and I don't control any of the rights to *Death*. I wish I did. So I sometimes wind up bobbing along in the background. I can make phone calls and I can ask, but *Death* has to happen at a Warner Bros.-related company, and that will never change. New Line, which was developing it for years, was a very good fit for *Death*."

If there's one lesson that Gaiman has learned about Hollywood over the years, it's that nothing ever works out the way you expect. "That's as true with *Coraline* as it is with anything else," he reflects. "The fact is that we got to the best possible place by a magnificent series of accidents, and if anybody wants to tell me there aren't any coincidences...well, of course there are. We all wanted *Coraline* to happen, and none of us gave up.

"Henry wrote the first draft in 2000 or 2001 before I went back and wrote an extra chapter [to *Coraline*]. This was years in the making, but 9/11 happened, which meant that Henry couldn't make his live-action movie. A variety of odd and surprising things took place at the same time. Travis Knight, the son of [producer] Paul Knight, was working for Vinton Studios, if I remember correctly, where he discovered that he was a natural-born stop-motion animator. This was all unplanned, as was the fact that Paul wound up buying Vinton Studios. Henry then went there and said, 'I want to do *Coraline*.' And Paul said, 'OK, I'll put up the money.'

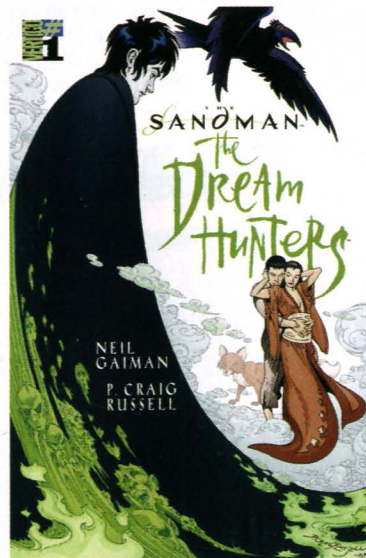
"At that moment, the idea of a stop-motion horror movie for kids, having been an impossible pipe dream, suddenly turned into the most obvious thing in the world. And all of that, at the end of the day, was accidental," Gaiman offers. "Accidental is the wrong word—it's unpredictable. You can predict many things, but you couldn't have predicted that. I'm sure that *Death* will end up getting made, and I'm sure that it will end up getting made at the best possible place for it."

With such a bewildering selection of projects at his disposal, there's no danger of Gaiman slowing down any time soon. In fact, the only question seems to be which one he'll tackle next. "I'm going to write a script for the *Anansi Boys* movie for Warners, and then I'll be doing my nonfiction book about China and myths and magic, which is going to take up a big chunk of my time over the next couple of years.

"There are also lots of short stories that I owe people and that I'm behind on," Neil Gaiman remarks, "so it isn't like I'm looking at anything right now and saying, 'Oh yes, I get to sit on a beach for a while.' There isn't any room at any point in any of my plans for beach-sitting!"

Dream Hunters Art: P. Craig Russell

A four-issue mini-series illustrated by P. Craig Russell, *The Dream Hunters* is a reinterpretation of Gaiman and Yoshitaka Amano's graphic novel.



TOM HOLT KAMP'S COMICS AND STORIES



Inside
Tom
Holtkamp's
brain!



A
STARLOG
SIGNATURE
SECTION

IT IS THE SEASON FOR CLASSIC MONSTERS TO HOWL AND PROWL, AND SINCE WE LIVE IN MODERN TIMES, IT'S TIME FOR A MODERN LOOK AT THEM. SO SHIVER NOW AS...

FRANKENSTEIN MEETS LYCANTHROPY PERSON'S SUPPORT GROUP

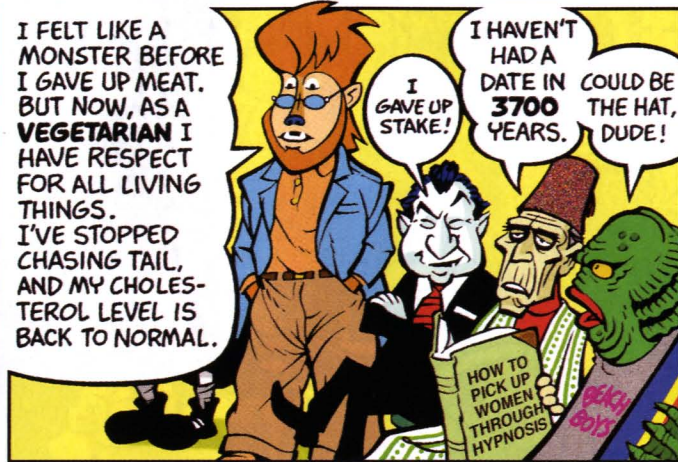


I'D LIKE YOU ALL TO WELCOME A NEW FACE TO GROUP.

I'M FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER!

HI MONSTER!

DUDE!



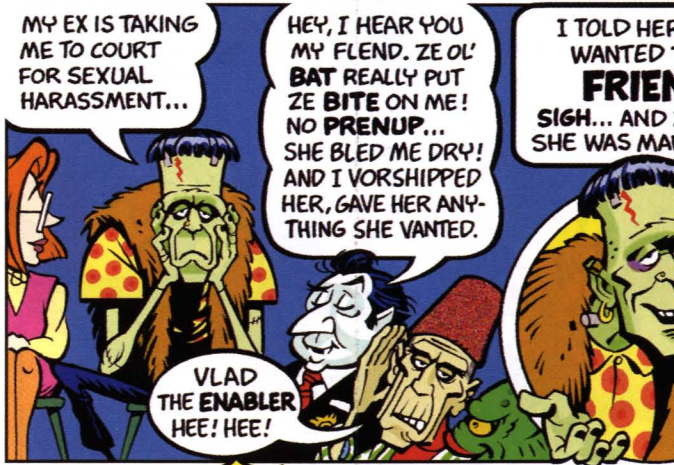
I FELT LIKE A MONSTER BEFORE I GAVE UP MEAT. BUT NOW, AS A VEGETARIAN I HAVE RESPECT FOR ALL LIVING THINGS. I'VE STOPPED CHASING TAIL, AND MY CHOLESTEROL LEVEL IS BACK TO NORMAL.

I HAVEN'T HAD A DATE IN 3700 YEARS.

I GAVE UP STAKE!

COULD BE THE HAT, DUDE!

HOW TO PICK UP WOMEN THROUGH HYPNOSIS

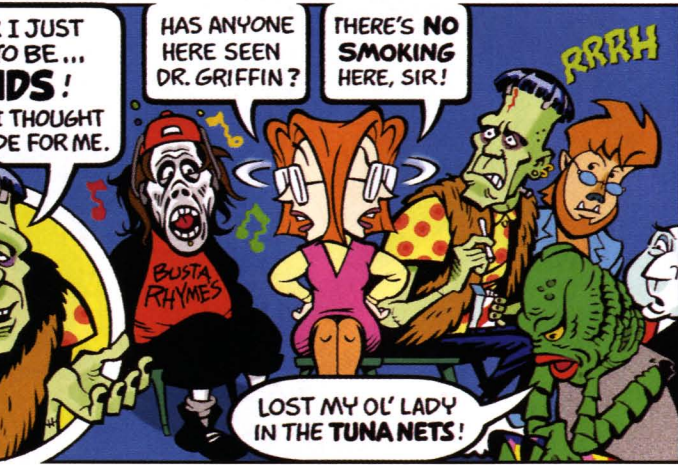


MY EX IS TAKING ME TO COURT FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT...

HEY, I HEAR YOU MY FLEND. ZE OL' BAT REALLY PUT ZE BITE ON ME! NO PRENUP... SHE BLED ME DRY! AND I VORSHIPPED HER, GAVE HER ANYTHING SHE VANTED.

I TOLD HER I JUST WANTED TO BE ... FRIENDS! SIGH... AND I THOUGHT SHE WAS MADE FOR ME.

VLAD THE ENABLER HEE! HEE!



HAS ANYONE HERE SEEN DR. GRIFFIN?

THERE'S NO SMOKING HERE, SIR!

RRRH

LOST MY OL' LADY IN THE TUNA NETS!



BUT...SMOKE GOOD!

NO, SMOKE BAD!

I'LL NEVER SPAWN AGAIN!



SOMETIMES I MISS THE OLD DAY'S BACK WHEN THINGS SEEMED SO BLACK & WHITE. PLAYING WITH THE KIDS AT THE LAKE... STROLLS IN THE GRAVEYARD... CAN'T DO THAT ANYMORE, THEY'VE GONE AND BUILT CONDOS THERE NOW.



PLAYING WITH KIDS... AT YOUR AGE? YOU MONSTER!

RRRH

POOF

WANT SOME WEED, MAN?



HIT ME AND WE'RE TALKIN' LAWSUIT, PAL!

SLAP SLAP

YGOR, GET THE PROZAC!

THIS IS SEAWEED!

NEXT TIME: THE LAWYER OF FRANKENSTEIN MEETS LYCANTHROPY PERSON'S DREAM TEAM!

Parody Script & Art: Tom Holtkamp/Previously Published in STARLOG #280 (2000)

This STARLOG Signature Section, Tom Holtkamp's Comics & Stories, again celebrates one of the magazine's ace cartoonists (contributing since 1993). It allows us to collect a second sampling of his varied works all here in one place.



Cartoonist Tom Holtkamp. Has pencil, will illustrate. Hey, MAD! Hire this guy!!

KID HOLTkamp RIDES AGAIN!

Once more, it's toon time! By DAVID McDONNELL

STARLOG: How has your life changed since THC&S #1 appeared in issue #363 a year ago?
TOM HOLTkamp: Well, I wish I could say I was richer with thousands of adoring fans, but unfortunately I'm feeling the effects of the economy like everyone else. It's just not a good time to be an artist right now; it's not a good time to be *anything* right now, and people are hurting all over, as we all well know. Many say Barack Obama will heal our ailing economy, but he'll have to be a miracle worker as President. I hate to say it, but I think I may have to actually go out and [shudder] get a real job.

STARLOG: One reason we're doing this again is that I accidentally (my bad) published the wrong *X-Files* illustration as your "favorite" last time. I had forgotten you did *two* big *X-Files* pieces. I'm old.
HOLTkamp: So that explains why you keep forgetting to have me draw another cover for you. Do more crossword puzzles, that's supposed to help.

I'm my own worst critic, but I was always happy with how this one [right] turned out, particularly Gillian Anderson. Women are usually harder to draw because you can't use as many lines for facial expression or they'll come out looking older than they actually are, something I can definitely say you want to *avoid*, especially when drawing caricatures in public. Years ago, I was actually physically attacked by a very attractive woman while drawing caricatures at a convention. Found out she thought her nose was too big, and this woman was stunningly beautiful, the *last* person you would ever think would be worried about her looks. I would also have men who were dead ringers for Goofy sit down for a drawing, and these would always be the guys who would end up loving it. So I learned a little bit about vanity back in those days—as well as self-defense.

This is really Holtkamp's favorite STARLOG piece—his STARLOG YEARBOOK X-Files cover.



STARLOG: We've introduced the If Only I Was... strip where you "quantum leap" into TV characters (seen in #364, #365 & #369).

HOLTkamp: That's certainly a lot of fun to work on. I wish I could take credit for it, but that was actually your idea. It's like Halloween never ends, because every so often I get to dress up like my favorite hero or villain on paper. What troubles me is the growing number of times you've suggested ideas that put me in drag, so I'm wearing a dress of some kind as Xena or Miss Piggy. I can't blame you because my legs *are* my best feature, they really are outstanding. It just creeps me out a little, that's all I'm saying.

STARLOG: Nonsense! Bearded guys in drag are *always* funny. But we don't have much space left, so say something witty and get back to the drawing table.

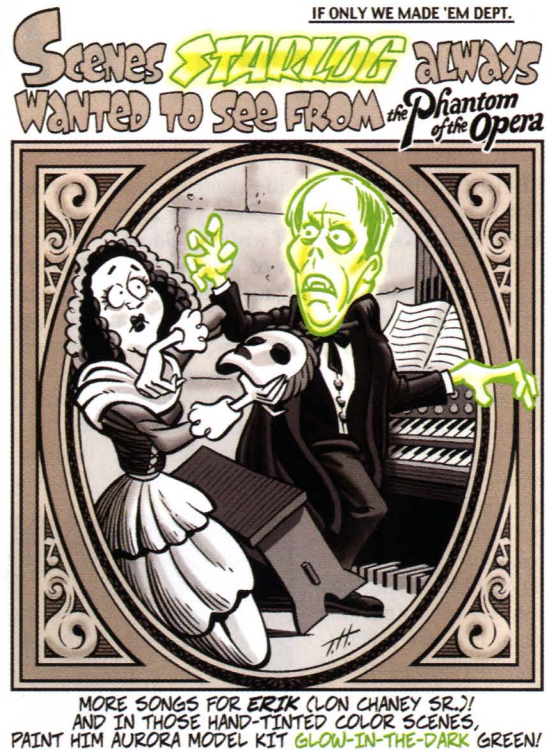
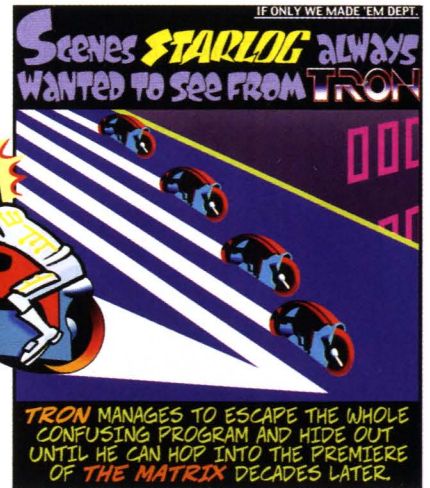
HOLTkamp: Put me on the spot, why don't you? OK, let me just say how beautiful I think the new STARLOG logo is, it's right up there with George Clooney in a batsuit...it's every bit the equal of the special effects in *Star Trek V*...it's certainly on par with me wearing a dress...are we running out of space yet?

An Index to the films lampooned in Tom Holtkamp's Scenes STARLOG Always Wanted to See.

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: *War of the Worlds** (1953). #338: *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory**. #339: *Mysterious Island* (1961). #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 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*. #364: *Terminator***. #365: *RoboCop*. #366: *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. #368: *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1959). #369: *The Fly*** (1958). #370: *The Curse of Frankenstein*. #371: *Planet of the Apes* (1968). #372: *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951). Note: Scenes does not appear in #331, #345 & #367. The Best 12 Scenes (*asterisked) were republished in #363. An additional 11 Scenes (**asterisked) are showcased this issue on pages 30-31.

THE SECOND BEST IN Scenes

All Art: Tom Holtkamp/Previously Published in STARLOG (2004-8). See the Scenes List on Page 29.



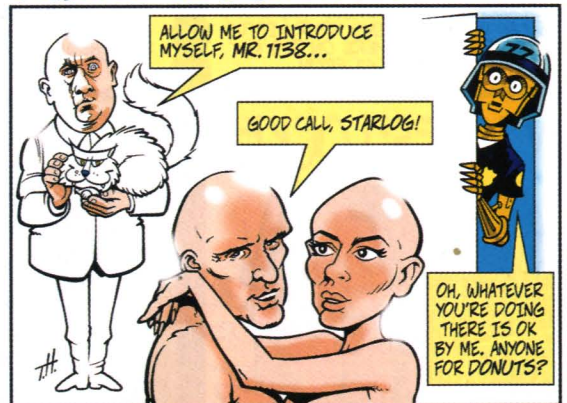
IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.

Scenes **STARLOG** always wanted to see FROM the abominable dr. Phibes THE PLAGUE OF BOILS / KILLER BEES FIRST MURDER.



IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.

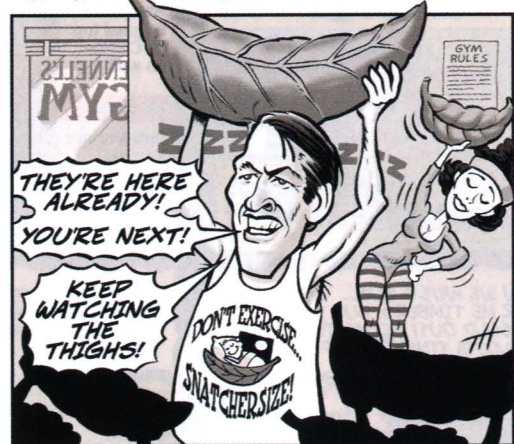
Scenes **STARLOG** always wanted to see FROM **THX 1138**



DONALD PLEASANCE WOULD WEAR HIS OLD SCAR. PERSIS KHAMBATTA PLAYS LUH 3417. AND ALL THE SECURITY ROBOTS WOULD NOW BE PLAYED BY COWARDLY GOLD DROIDS. NOW TELL US THAT'S NOT BIG BOX OFFICE!!!

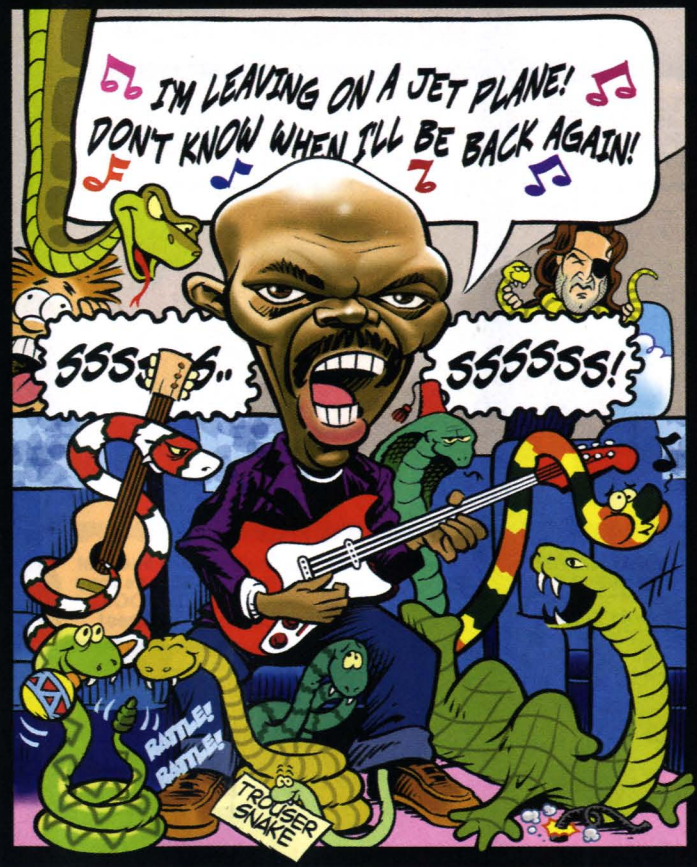
IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.

Scenes **STARLOG** always wanted to see FROM **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS '56** THE COOL SNATCHERSIZE EXERCISE VIDEO!



IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.

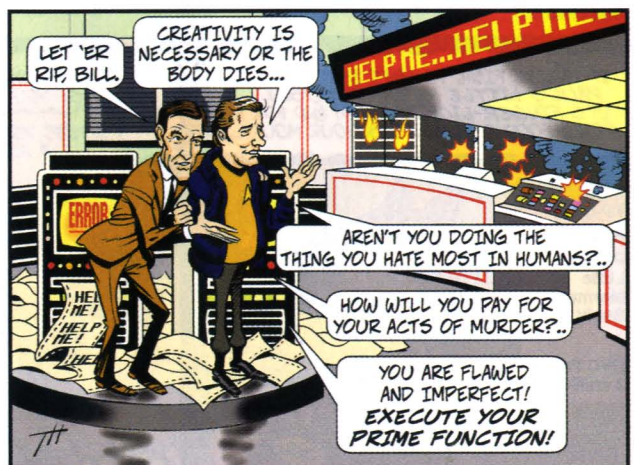
Scenes **STARLOG** always wanted to see FROM **SNAKES ON A PLANE** THE CAST & CREW SING-A-LONG END CREDITS!



IF ONLY WE MADE 'EM DEPT.

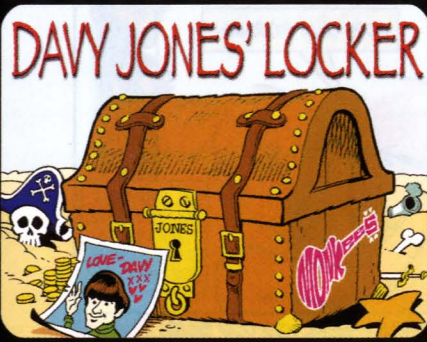
Scenes **STARLOG** always wanted to see FROM **COLOSSUS: THE FORBIN PROJECT**

HAVING FAILED AT EVERY ATTEMPT TO SHUT DOWN THE SUPER-COMPUTER **COLOSSUS**, DR. FORBIN PLAYS DIRTY AND PERSONALLY FLIES IN **WILLIAM SHATNER**.



Ahoy! What be the best way for a modern pirate to increase his bounty? Well, any landlubber could tell ya that ye need to go digital, matey. With that in mind, welcome to **DVC**, THE DISNEY VALUE CHANNEL-

WHY GO SEARCHING FOR BURIED TREASURE WHEN YE CAN FIND ANYTHING YOUR LITTLE HEART DESIRES RIGHT HERE ON **DVC**! WE'VE GOT IT DIRECT FROM...



FIRST UP BE THE **NAUTILUS**, A FEW DENTS, BUT ONLY HAS 20,000 LEAGUES ON HER! FER THE SAME PRICE GET THE **SEAVIEW**, THE PERFECT TOY FOR ANY LEVIATHAN!

N-20000	Nautilus
Nautilus DVC price 350 gold bars	
S-1999	SEAVIEW
Seaview DVC price 350 gold bars	
SeaQuest FREE with any order	TOTALLY FREE!

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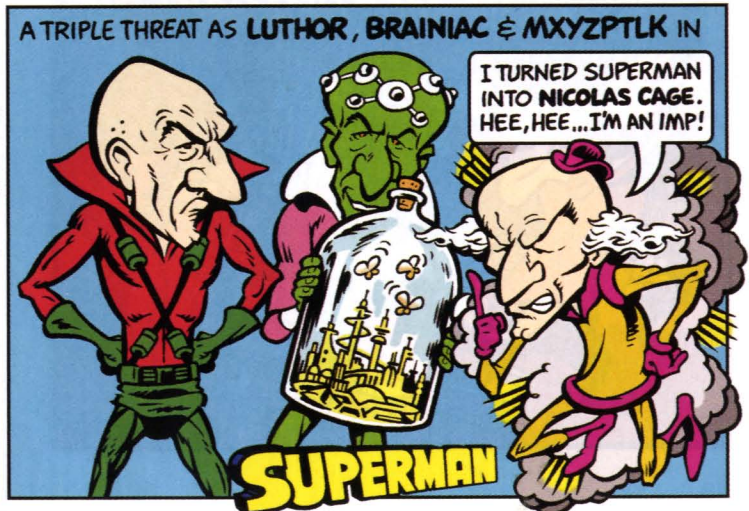
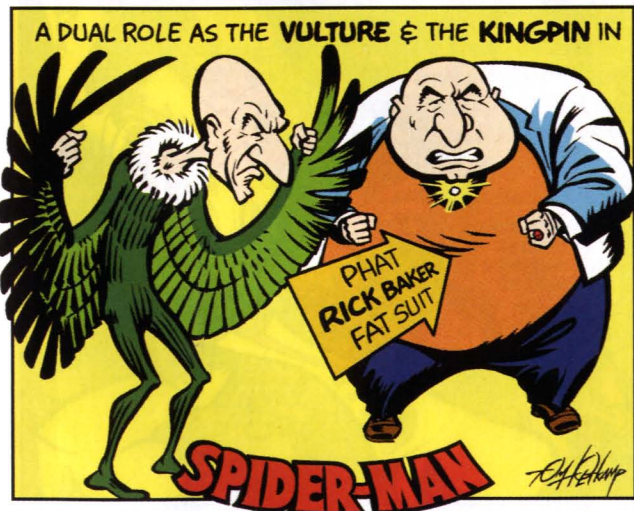
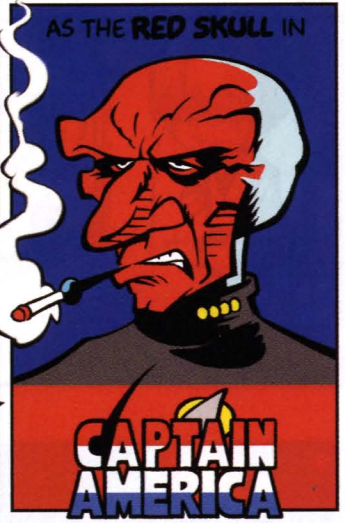
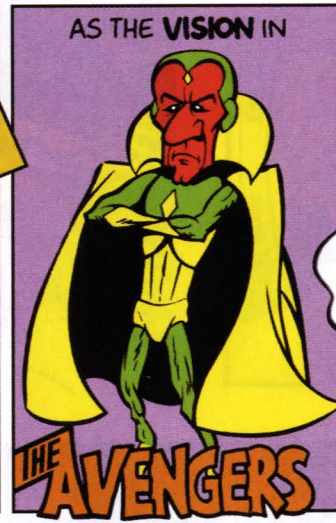
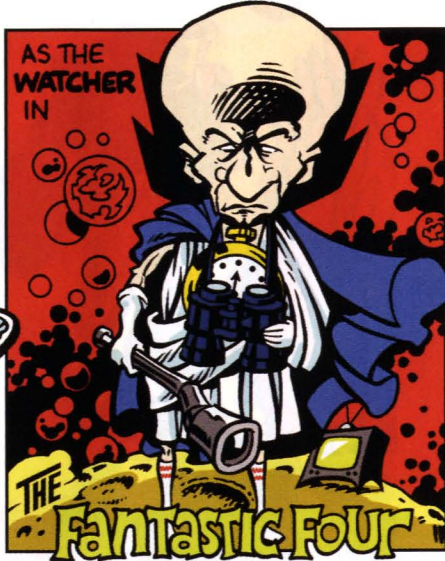
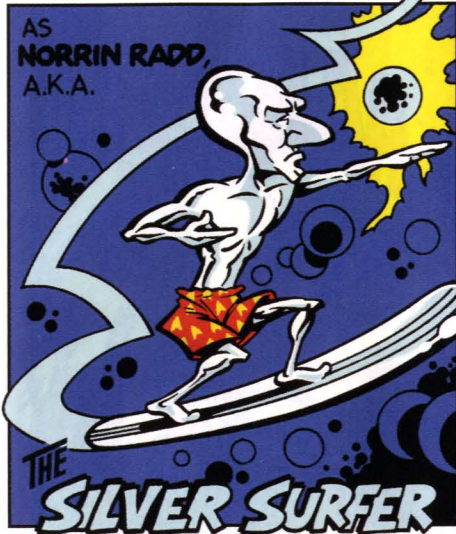
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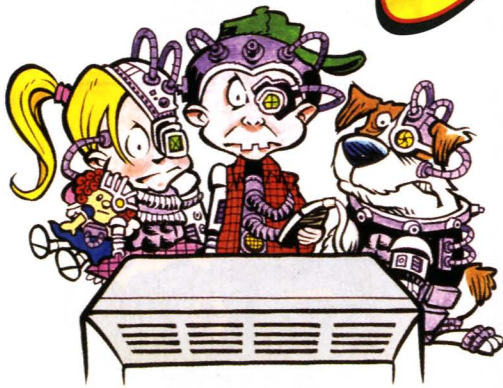
THANKS TO HIS **UNCANNY X-MEN** PERFORMANCE, WE CAN SOON LOOK FORWARD TO MORE OF...

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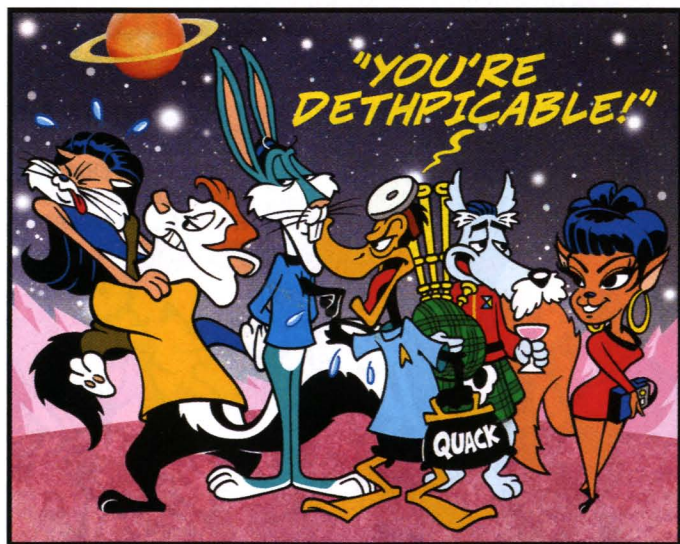
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TOM HANKAMP'S COMICS AND STORIES



BORBED

REVEALED... WHAT STARTED LITTLE ANAKIN ON HIS JOURNEY DOWN THE DARK PATH.





THIS CITY
IS AFRAID OF ME.
I'VE SEEN
ITS TRUE FACE.

STARLOG
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Fables #1

A STARLOG SIGNATURE SECTION



WATCH



"Now is the perfect time for the movie," Dave Gibbons says. "It's *Watchmen* time."

MOORE + GIBBONS



"I've always loved comics. And the fact *Watchmen* has brought people into comics is one of the things I'm most excited about," Gibbons notes alongside a fan disguised as Rorschach.

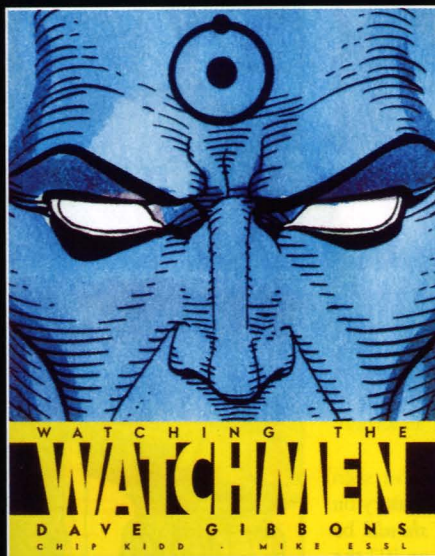
You know what? It's funny... Looking at *Watchmen*, the movie, I'm so happy," says Dave Gibbons, the artist/co-creator of the most acclaimed graphic novel of all time.

"So many scenes in the film look exactly like the panels I drew. There's Doctor Manhattan, the Comedian in Vietnam, the smiley face button, Nite Owl, the Owlship rising from the river, Rorschach... I'm so pleased. They look just like the actual panels."

The easygoing British illustrator had already drawn the likes of Judge Dredd and Green Lantern, but Gibbons made his mark with *Watchmen*, his 1985-87 collaboration with Alan Moore, the Thomas Pynchon of comics. *Watchmen*'s story is set in an alternate-universe 1985, where superheroes are real, but instead of alleviating the world's ills, their presence inflames Cold War tensions and pushes the Doomsday Clock ever closer to midnight.

Considered unfilmable by most, *Watchmen* went through several screenwriters and directors before Zack (300) Snyder took the helm of David Hayter & Alex Tse's script. In addition to finally seeing the graphic novel reach the screen, Gibbons also recently authored (along with Chip Kidd and Mike Essl) *Watching the Watchmen* (Titan, hc, \$39.95), which revisits the origins, design concepts and artwork of the landmark 12-issue comics series.

"The movie trailer is absolutely incredible," Gibbons enthuses.



Watching the Watchmen (Titan, hc, \$39.95) chronicles "how we created the comic." Now on sale, it's highly recommended by STARLOG.

"It's like the moving pictures I saw in my head when I was drawing *Watchmen*, before I boiled them down to static images. Zack has lifted them off the page and breathed life into them. I'm really excited about the film, and I think that people's reception of [the trailer] has been good.

"I never imagined that it would be done so well, but I've also never been like, 'Oh my God, I wish they would just make a *Watchmen* movie so that my life would be complete.' It's like having a ticket in a lottery that could come up—you might win a fantastic prize, a very small one or a booby prize!"

Colors of the Night

Moore—who has been burned by Hollywood before—wants nothing to do with this film (or any other), and even signed away his royalty checks. "I feel bad about that," Gibbons laments. "I wish that Alan could feel the same excitement that I'm feeling. I wish he hadn't had such bad experiences in the past, because I'm certainly having a *really good* experience.

"As always with everything involving *Watchmen*, there are elements of serendipity, coincidence and timing. This seems like a good time for a *Watchmen* movie to happen, and Zack is the right man who found himself in the right place to do it properly. When I see something like *The Dark Knight*, which, to me, is very much in the spirit of *Watchmen*, where you come away thinking of what you've just seen...

"Visiting the set was a fabulous experience; it was a lumberyard that had been transformed into Manhattan. And to smell the Comedian's cigar and have the Comedian [Jeffrey Dean Morgan] slap me on the back and proudly show me one of his guns... Simply amazing. I was completely thrilled. It all went by too quickly. I was like a kid at Christmas. And seeing the Owlship was astonishing! At any moment, I expected I was going to be pinched and wake up. It's a dream. To have something step out of my head and become real is incredible. What really did it for me, though, was stepping inside the Owlship. It first existed as a pencil scribble. And because I'm Dave Gibbons, they let my wife and I go inside it!

"To see what was in my head taken off the page and now be *inside* of it... That was such a strange, surreal moment. I was flattered that not only have they kept the set-pieces from my artwork, but whole scenes are just as I composed them. When the Owlship comes out of the water and the buoy in the harbor is rocking about, that was exactly how I saw it in my head all those years ago. It's like that static image has been given life.

"I love the film's look because they've kept [*Watchmen* colorist] John Higgins' secondary orange, purple and green color palette. Somebody asked me, 'Were you involved in the movie's design?' I replied, 'Yeah, but I did my bit 20 years ago.' That's what it feels like."

Some of the heroes' costumes have been altered for the film.

Co-creator Dave Gibbons is excited to see what unfolds on the silver screen.

By PAT JANKIEWICZ

WATCHING HIS WATCHMEN

Look to Gibbons' new book for early design concepts (like this Comedian gig), thumbnail layouts, character studies, color guides, advertising art and more.



"With *Watchmen*, we were deconstructing comics, so all of the costumes in the book are classic comic book/superhero staples. The movie, in essence, is deconstructing superhero movies," Gibbons declares.

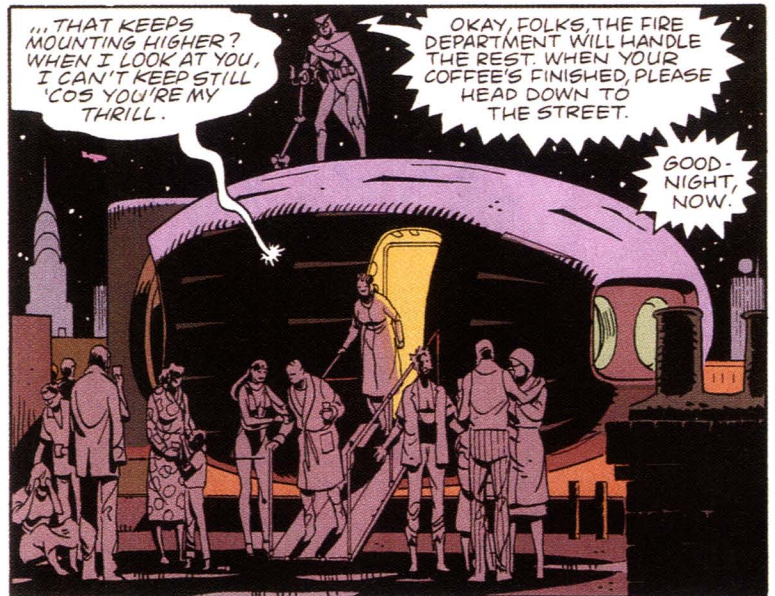
"The people who are going to see *Watchmen* have seen superhero films before, and so when there's a huge outcry on the Internet, that's an important subject. So it *should* be addressed that Ozymandias' costume had nipples on it!" the artist laughs. "That was intentional, because [they were] saying, 'Wasn't that a silly look in that *Batman & Robin* movie?' The costumes needed to be redesigned, and they've been redesigned very sympathetically. I'm very happy with them."

Faces of the Watch

Remarking on the cast bringing the *Watchmen* to live-action life on screen, Gibbons says, "I particularly love the Comedian and Rorschach [Jackie Earle Haley], because they're just as I saw them in my head. All of the actors are so close in their portrayals to what I imagined. John also has absolutely no problem with the artistic decisions that they've made. I'm proud to say that Zack and his crew are committed to doing this properly."

If the movie is a hit, how would Gibbons react to a *Watchmen 2*? "*Watchmen* is a finite story, and it was *only* ever conceived as that," he points out. "There were some suggestions, about 20 years ago, that maybe there could be things like *Rorschach's Journal* or *The Comedian's Vietnam War Diary*, which I think almost as soon as they were suggested, people realized that it probably *wasn't* a good idea.

"It's to DC's credit that they've kept *Watchmen* off-limits. Alan and I did once talk about doing the Minutemen, the Golden Age precursors to the *Watchmen*. The interesting thing there would have been that readers would know how things ended up, but I think that's extremely unlikely now. Alan and I have no plans to do anything further with



"A good movie is not a *literal* translation of every panel," Gibbons says. However, he's dazzled by the fidelity of film image to his comic art.



"They've kept [*Watchmen* colorist] John Higgins' secondary orange, purple and green color palette," Gibbons reports.

Watchmen. Whether Warner Bros. would consider the need for a sequel to the movie, I don't know, but I could only comment on that as I see fit at the time."

In the comic, Ozymandias makes millions of action figures of himself and his fellow superheroes. Now, there really are *Watchmen* action figures (being released this month). "I know, I know!" Gibbons marvels. "It's so strange to have these figures out there for real, just like in the book. I was hoping that they would make an Owlship toy chest, so that all of the other toys could be stored inside it!"

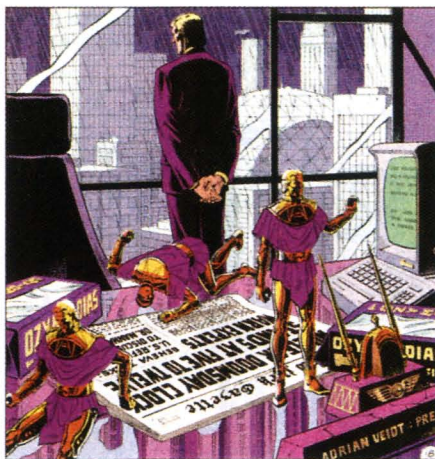
Surprisingly, the dense, ingenious *Watchmen* started from a simple premise. "Alan had the idea that if superheroes actually existed, the world wouldn't be the same," Gibbons recalls. "If Clark Kent/Superman really existed, the world would be a vastly different place. That had never been addressed before, and so that became the central focus.

"That also gave us the chance to think about the characters and the [changes in the world], like electric cars, fast food outlets, fashions, stuff like that. And that completely changed our approach to it, and led us to viewing *Watchmen* not as a superhero comic book, but rather an alternate world/science fiction story.

"*Watchmen* was a massive undertaking: 350-something pages of artwork, the deadlines... I found myself in the middle of it wondering, 'Am I ever going to get this done?!?' The terrifying thing about *Watchmen* was that it wasn't like an ongoing run on a comic, so unless Alan wrote it, I drew it and John colored it, we didn't have anything until we finished it!"

The most iconic *Watchmen* image is the smiley face button marked with a splotch of blood. "That came about when I designed the Comedian." Gibbons explains. "I put him all in black with guns and a mask, and then I realized that there wasn't anything funny about him. I added the smiley face button so that you would know that he's the Comedian. When I showed it to Alan, he said, 'That's great, and when the Comedian is murdered, we can have the button with blood on it in an alley.'"

"With *Watchmen*, we were reflecting the times. In the 1980s, there was this common paranoia about the Cold War: Was it going to escalate? What would happen if it did? [People were concerned about] how fragile our society was, and how very little had to be done to completely wipe away



"With *Watchmen*, there was a sense of achievement in finally getting it done," Gibbons admits. "And there's the thrill of continually seeing it still in print."

everything—either via mass destruction or a terrorist attack. Paranoia is what it's all about: 'Who watches the Watchmen?' [That's why it's nice] that they've kept the movie set in the '80s—it takes place *exactly* during the time we made it."

Comics of the Past

Watchmen is Gibbons and Moore's tribute to American comics. "The thing about America [to British people who read American comics] is that it has always been this fabulous far-off country like Byzantium or Cathay," Gibbons observes. "You take something like a fireplug or those water towers on New York roofs that Steve Ditko used to draw [notably in early *Spider-Man* stories]—we marvel at those things. Alan and I grew up reading American comic books, so it's a shared culture."

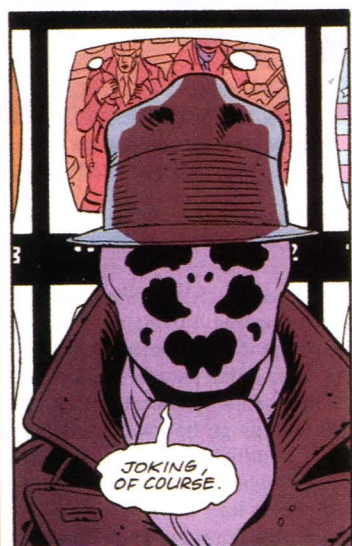
"Alan and I had known each other for five or six years when we did *Watchmen*. We had worked on stuff together for English comics as well as a few things for American comics. We liked working together—Alan played to my strengths, and I could draw things in a way that was comfortable with what Alan wanted to do."

"We had many conversations about what *Watchmen*'s aesthetics and tone should be," Gibbons continues. "Both Alan and I loved—and still love—American comics. Although *Watchmen* is considered grim, gritty and destructive, it's actually an act of love. We looked at these cherished comics and studied and connected with their strengths. I remember when I saw [artist Wally Wood's classic] 'Superduper Man' in *MAD*. I thought it was the best Superman story I had ever read. Wood delivered me into the character with a real humanity. Aside from the way it was drawn, there was Harvey Kurtzman's storytelling—the whole thing was an act of deconstruction."

"I suggested the nine-panel grid for *Watchmen*. Ditko was one of *Watchmen*'s godfathers, and he often used that nine-panel grid. It has a hypnotic quality, because you really focus on the pictures' content, and I pointed that out to Alan. He thought that that was a great idea which would give him tremendous control of the story's pacing. It let Alan know how each page was going to be composed, where the focus was going to be and how he should arrange the checkerboards and cut between scenes."

Gibbons first met Moore "when I was signing at a London convention. A writer named Steve Moore approached me [standing next to] this tall, gangly, bearded guy with very long hair, a dark suit that was

Early on, Moore and Gibbons began to view "*Watchmen* not as a superhero comic, but rather an alternate world/SF story."

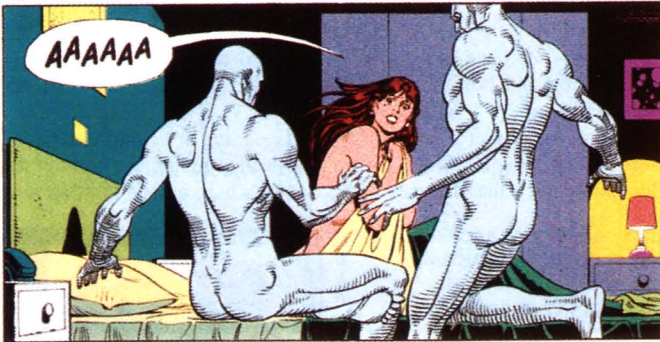


"Paranoia is what it's all about: 'Who watches the Watchmen?' " he observes.



The nine-panel grid format, a Gibbons suggestion, gave Moore "tremendous control of the story's pacing."

Gibbons never dreamed of *Watchmen's* legacy. "We were just happy to get it out as a comic book, tell the story we wanted to tell and have people read it," he explains.



"Whole scenes are just as I composed them," Gibbons muses. "It's like that static image has been given life."

about a size too small and who was carrying a bag full of comics. Steve said, 'Dave, I want you to meet a friend of mine, Alan Moore. No relation.'

"After that, Alan cropped up writing short stories for *2000 AD*, and I was sent one. I thought, 'Wow, this is good. It's a simple three-page story, but it's so efficiently written and the language is great!' I asked for more of his [stories to illustrate], and I did a half-dozen, including 'Chrono-cops,' an insane story based on the old *Dragnet* TV show. These cops go backward and forward through time, and meet each other at different points. It was an incredible story, but I had to keep track of where everybody was, which was the same thing we had to do later on in *Watchmen*.

"I was drawing *Green Lantern* [at the time], and although it was quite well-written by Len Wein, it wasn't the sort of story I enjoyed," Gibbons says. "Alan and I kept trying to get something going, and Alan wrote a wonderful treatment for *Challengers of the Unknown*, but they

had already promised *Challengers* to someone else. We came up with a treatment for J'onn J'onzz, the Martian Manhunter. It was a 1950s' paranoia thing, but J'onn J'onzz, too, was promised to someone else.

"Then one night I got a call from Len: 'Do you know a British writer named Alan Moore? We're interested in getting him to write *Swamp Thing*.' So I gave Len his number. Later on, when I wanted to get off *Green Lantern*, I heard that Alan was working on a treatment for the Charlton characters, and we went from there!"

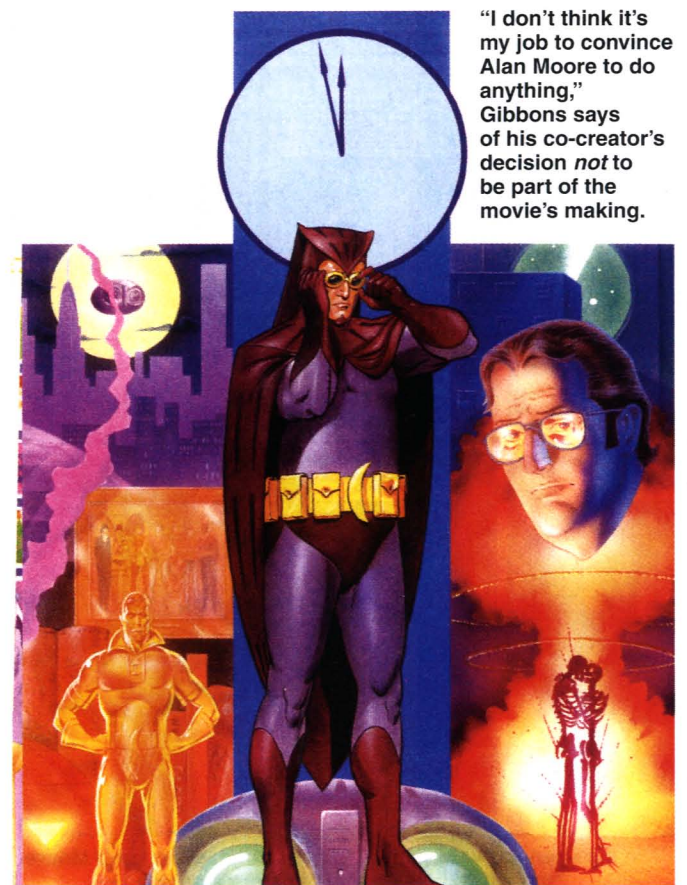
Heroes of the World

Watchmen initially stemmed from Gibbons and Moore's interest in doing a book about the Charlton Comics characters (Captain Atom, Blue Beetle, the Question, Sarge Steel & others), which DC had acquired after Charlton ended its comics line. "When I first saw the [*Watchmen* storyline], it was Charlton characters," Gibbons relates. "But because we were going to kill and mutilate a good number of them, and show these superheroes to be deeply flawed, DC suggested that we come up with

some different characters. That was wonderful, because it liberated us—the Charlton heroes were second-string knockoffs.

"The heroic archetypes [in *Watchmen*] are all of the varieties that you find in American comic books: the super-powered, godlike Superman figure (Doctor Manhattan), the Batman clone (Nite Owl), the psychopathic vigilante like the Question and Mr. A. (Rorschach), the feisty heroine (Silk Spectre), the smartest man in the world (Ozymandias) and so on. The secret was that we could tailor the archetypes to the story. It seems so obvious now.

"They let us do exactly what we wanted," Gibbons notes. "It's all DC's fault, because they weren't ballsy enough to let us kill off a few



"I don't think it's my job to convince Alan Moore to do anything," Gibbons says of his co-creator's decision *not* to be part of the movie's making.

GIFTS OF THE STORY

Fven though *Superman* inspired Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' *Watchmen*, neither one had much of a track record with the Man of Steel. However, Moore did write the touching finale to *Superman's* Silver Age Curt Swan era, and one of the few times that Gibbons drew the Metropolis Marvel, it was for *Superman Annual* #11. "For the Man Who Has Everything" was an immediate hit, and was later included in *The Greatest Superman Stories Ever Told*.

When Batman, Robin and Wonder Woman travel to the Fortress of Solitude to surprise Superman for his birthday, they find the Man of Steel in a catatonic state with an alien plant growing out of his chest. This plant, the "Black Mercy," was sent by Mongul, and renders its victims vegetables while their brains experience their fondest desires.

"It was fun to do Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman in the same story," Gibbons grins. "Every now and then it's fun to play with the company toys—and the iconography, like the Fortress of Solitude—in a clever story."

"Growing up, my favorite American comics were those edited by Julius Schwartz: *Green Lantern*, *The Flash*, *Justice League*. I went to a comics convention in Chicago, and Julie walked up to me out of the blue and said, 'So Dave, when are you going to draw me some *Superman*?' And I said, 'I would like to, but who's going to be writing it?' Julie replied, 'Who do you want to write it?' I said, 'Um...Alan Moore?'"

"Julie said, 'Yeah, fine, set it up.' That was amazing, and what came out of that was 'For the Man Who Has Everything.' That's one of my favorite things that I've ever worked on. Julie was the editor and Alan was the writer. It doesn't get much better than that."

"For the Man Who Has Everything" proved so popular that it was adapted for the animated *Justice League*, with *The Dark Knight's* Eric Roberts voicing Mongul. "I was pleased that they were faithful to the story, and that they used the actual dialogue and designs," Dave Gibbons says. "I was impressed that they wanted to do it [in the first place], and then they did such a great job with it."



Moore and Gibbons told one of the greatest Superman stories of all time with "For the Man Who Has Everything."

—Pat Jankiewicz

Superman, Batman, Robin & Wonder Woman Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1985, 2008 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved.

Colors: Tom Ziuko

Charlton characters. We were given *carte blanche*, more or less. Alan wrote it, sent me the scripts, I drew it and my friend John Higgins colored it. *Watchmen* wouldn't have been as good of a book if we had used the Charlton characters, because we would have been tied to their continuity. Instead, we got to do our archetypal Superman and Batman characters."

So, does Gibbons have a favorite *Watchmen*? "The only character Alan couldn't come up with a name for was Nite Owl, who I made up [as Night Owl] when I was 14!" he smiles. "The costume that the Golden Age Nite Owl wears is the same one I drew for my Night Owl. So because of that, he's my favorite. It makes me all warm and fuzzy!"

Gibbons is excited about *Watching the Watchmen*. "It has everything from doing the book," he reveals. "I'm a hoarder, and I kept every piece of art and paper related to *Watchmen*. Alan and I drew ideas on my couch, and I have Alan's *Watchmen* script that he bashed out on his old typewriter; it has cigarette burns and coffee stains. I even kept the envelopes that the scripts came in!"

"Basically, it's a book about how Alan and I created *Watchmen*. It has Alan's scripts and proposals, as well as my notes, sketches and thumbnail drawings. And there's a really good section by John, who was closely involved during the production. I found it fascinating to see his take on making *Watchmen*—from his involvement in the creative process to his view of what Alan and I were doing. There are roughs of all the covers, as well as unpublished artwork where I started a page and then came up with a better idea. I had all of this stuff in my drawers, and I thought it would



Challenged by a thrown perfume bottle, Gibbons "had it rotating at a set rate against a field of stars. And in the book, you can see how I mapped that out!"

make a great book to do with [acclaimed graphic designer] Chip Kidd."

In the book, Gibbons talks about *Watchmen's* most challenging issues, including #5, "Fearful Symmetry." "Alan told me that it was about Rorschach," Gibbons recalls. "Rorschach has this inkblot mask, which is kind of symmetrical, so I wanted to reference William Blake's poem 'The Tiger.' His face is like a tiger's, and I thought we could make the whole issue symmetrical, where all of the pages would have the same mirrored panel layouts. I figured that we would be able to plan out the entire issue, but because of pressing deadlines, Alan had only written the first third of the book, and the rest of it came to me one or two pages at a time! So as I was drawing, say, page four, I didn't know what was going to be on page 24."

"Another challenge was when Laurie throws a perfume bottle," Gibbons remarks. "I had to draw this bottle hurtling through the air, and I wanted to do it right, so I had it rotating at a set rate against a field of stars. And in the book, you can see the design of how I mapped that out!"

One potential side effect of the film "is that it will get people to read the comic. Hopefully, if they read *Watchmen*, then they'll read other comics and appreciate the range of material

available in the medium.

"I wish the movie well," Dave Gibbons says. "Even the trailers could make hundreds of thousands of people who've never read a comic book before actually read *Watchmen*. And that really pleases me greatly."

Design & Layout: Heiner Feil

**JUSTICE IS COMING
TO ALL OF US.
NO MATTER WHAT WE DO.**



AND NOW...WE WATCH

WATCH

They said it would never be filmed. But fans demanded it. They said it was too large, too long, too complex and too expensive for the silver screen. But fans never gave up hope. And now, it has arrived.

Watchmen—that most eagerly awaited of comic book movies—has been in the works so long that it dates back to the early days of the Tim Burton *Batman* film cycle. Based on the acclaimed 1987 Alan Moore-Dave Gibbons graphic novel, *Watchmen* has been in Development Hell since 1989.

Fresh from his success on *Batman*, Sam Hamm penned a script for 20th Century Fox with Terry (12 *Monkeys*) Gilliam attached as director. Then, two years later, David (X-Men) Hayter took a shot at writing it for Universal. Directors Darren (The Fountain) Aronofsky and Paul (The Bourne Ultimatum) Greengrass were also involved at various times. After Paramount let its option lapse in 2005, Alex Tse (working from Hayter's script) tackled the screenplay for Warner Bros. And then the project was finally greenlit. Enter Zack (300) Snyder, who convinced the studio that the answer was to go back to the basics.

So much time has passed since Hamm took that first crack at the script that what was initially conceived of as a contemporary alternate-universe story has now become a parallel-world period piece. Twenty years after it was originally optioned, *Watchmen* hits theaters March 6. The cast includes Billy Crudup as Doctor Manhattan, Patrick Wilson as Nite Owl II, Jackie Earle Haley as Rorschach, Matthew Goode as Ozymandias, Jeffrey Dean Morgan as the Comedian, Malin Akerman as Silk Spectre II, Carla Gugino as Sally Jupiter and Matt Frewer as Moloch the Mystic.

Alternate Realities

Watchmen depicts a dystopian world where outlawed superheroes are being systematically assassinated. As the killings mount, the survivors—largely middle-aged or retired—start to fight back. The movie has the distinction of being the first feature lensed at the new Canada Motion Picture Park in Burnaby, British Columbia. Pink arrows reading VEI (Veidt Enterprises Inc.) point the way to the imposing soundstage complex. Producer Deborah Snyder (Zack's wife) takes STARLOG on a quick tour of the production facilities. First up: A vast boardroom plastered with wall art and table models. Images from the graphic novel cover a massive amount of wall space. They call this the War Room.

Indicating the kaleidoscopic images adorning one section, Snyder says, "Zack designed this elaborate title sequence that sets up that we're in 1985, but it's an alternate-reality '85 where the *Watchmen* exist. We've tried to incorporate real-life icons and situations whenever possible. For example, we re-create the JFK assassination—except it's the Comedian who assassinates JFK. And Richard Nixon is still the President."

Co-producer Wesley Coller adds, "When you read *Watchmen* for the first time, you get that 'big picture' story. And then the

next time you read it, you start seeing all of the layering that Dave drew in there—and all of the references. Each time you read it, you get something else out of it. And I feel like Zack is creating a cinematic experience that's very similar to that. The first time, you go as a viewer, and you have that big movie experience. Then, when you watch it again, you'll start realizing all of the things that we've layered [into the film]."

"The graphic novel is just so rich," Snyder says, "and we've really tried to incorporate all these little Easter eggs in every department: It's a visual effects show, it's a production design show, it's a hair-and-makeup show... There's something for everyone to sink their teeth into."

Everything seems to be here: Doctor Manhattan on Mars. Ozymandias in his opulent office. Karnak in Antarctica. The Golden Age superheroes known as the Minutemen. Re-created vintage newspaper headlines like MYSTERIOUS MASKED MAN CLEANS UP WHARF and COMEDIAN TO MOLOCH: DROP DEAD. It's overwhelming. Prior productions collapsed under the sheer neutron-star gravity of *Watchmen*'s core story. Many people believed that the graphic novel was unfilmable. But it looks like it's all here. Amazingly.

The army of characters is bewildering. "Here are some of the early villains," Snyder says, indicating a rogues' galley of concept designs, including one that looks like a zoot-suited Joker, and a swastika-outfitted foe. "I like that they're just Villain #3 and Villain #4. And then we have Silhouette, Mothman and Dollar Bill."

Snyder takes STARLOG to the nearby backlot, where the familiar streets drawn by Gibbons have been brought to life. "This used to be a lumberyard," she explains. "We repaved it and put in this road, the sidewalk and manholes [that vent] steam. There's a whole other building where we fabricated most of our sets. We've accentuated some of the colors so they relate to the graphic novel. You'll see that there's lots of purple, just as in the novel."

A maze of Manhattan-style blocks is dotted with signature *Watchmen* elements: An authentic-looking Gunga Diner. A seedy Treasure Island comic shop. In a nod to the old Charlton action

heroes who inspired *Watchmen*, there's a Judomaster Martial Arts Studio above a Chinese restaurant. A sign announces: "USA Welcomes Vietnam as our 51st State." The Double P emblem of the old Popular Publications pulp house decorates a storefront. The Utopia Theater marquee reads: *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. And, of course, there's the signature graffiti: "Who watches the Watchmen?"

Next, it's over to "Porno Street," where Coller picks up the running commentary. "This is where the apartment of Edward Blake [a.k.a. the Comedian] is located," he says. "It's a little more upscale, Rorschach's world being Porno Street here. And then as we turn the corner, we get to the brownstone street and Dan [Nite Owl] Dreiberg's apartment." The graphic novel's dismal secondary colors dominate everything. You half expect Rorschach's inkblot face to peer out of an upper window.

"This is pretty awesome," Snyder says, indicating a graffiti-covered brick alley whose far end is a dingy, Day-Glo yellow, purple and orange. "This is the alley where Dan and Laurie [Silk Spectre] fight the Top-knots."

One is left to wonder: What, if anything, did they leave out?

Back at the soundstage complex, Snyder offers a peek at Doctor Man-



These are the Watchmen: Ozymandias, Rorschach, Nite Owl, the Comedian, Silk Spectre, Doctor Manhattan. They're dark superheroes created by Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons in 1985, now brought to the silver screen by director Zack Snyder and writers David Hayter & Alex Tse.

hattan's lab, which is being dismantled by grips. It's the largest non-CG element in the entire film—although a gigantic CG Manhattan will be inserted in post-production. A gargantuan, several-stories-tall nuclear reactor dominates the vast, high-ceilinged chamber.

"This is where Doctor Manhattan is 100 feet tall and shrinks back down [to human size]," she explains. "There's much more to the set, but piece by piece, it's going away. We were lucky to find a space with a ceiling of this height. Our light source was actually 100 feet tall, and it worked out pretty well."

Halloween Tricks

Today, they're filming Chapter VIII of the graphic novel: the Halloween prison break sequence where Nite Owl and Silk Spectre attempt to rescue the vigilante Rorschach from Sing Sing before he's slaughtered by the diminutive Big Figure (*Special Unit 2* scene-stealer Danny Woodburn) and his cons. Or is it the other way around?

As the cameras roll on the soundstage cellblock, a hulking, bald convict, arms stuck in a cell door, is having one of his extremities removed via chainsaw, courtesy of Rorschach. Screams resound. Blood splatters the pale yellow prison bars and purple floor. Appropriately, this sequence is being filmed on Halloween 2007.

During the splatterfest, Big Figure, looking terrified, hastily exits the scene. No doubt he knows that he's next. Zack Snyder calls, "Cut!" and shifts to a new angle as one of the crew brushes down Nite Owl's elaborate brown costume. Wilson dons the owlish goggles again and moves into position in the prison corridor.

"Ready, guys," Zack Snyder announces. "And settle. Action!"

Nite Owl and Silk Spectre enter the scene.

"How do we know he's alive?" she asks.

Surveying the crimson carnage, Nite Owl deadpans, "He's alive."

They exit the frame.

Zack Snyder calls, "Cut! Very good, guys. Very good. This scene is done."

The director takes a moment to talk about helming this epic deconstruction of the superhero mythos. "The interesting thing is that there's a clear tone to the graphic novel, but it's funny, now that I'm actually filming it, how surreal the movie is. When you read the graphic novel, it doesn't feel that surreal. But when you're actually visualizing a bunch of Doctor Manhattans. And the love scene. And you have Big Figure running away. And Rorschach... You realize how different from reality it truly is."

It's impossible not to notice that Wilson, as the cowled and cloaked crimefighter Nite Owl, bears an unshakable resemblance to Batman. But is that good for the film? "It's unavoidable," Zack Snyder responds, "and it's fantastically awesome. Between the time *Watchmen* was written and now, Batman has become a pop culture icon in a way that no one could have imagined. This is *pre-Tim Burton*. And from then until now, Batman has gone off the charts, and we're benefitting from the

accessibility that Batman creates for our story. I mean that in a visual way. It's a gift we get to embrace. Nite Owl has a cave. He flies about in a great machine. He has a cowl, a cape and a utility belt. But Nite Owl also has his own identity."

With two generations of superheroes and supervillains in the film, there isn't enough time for the director to talk about everyone in his sprawling cast. He does, however, comment on the choice of Goode as Adrian Veidt/Ozymandias, the adventurer-turned-corporate tycoon. "We tried to make him look slightly older. He plays in his late 30s, the same age as Patrick. I've always felt that Adrian would look younger than a normal man because he's a vegetarian. Matthew has been doing a good job."

Pressed to single out a favorite Watchman, Zack Snyder throws up his hands. "You know what? They all have their own feel to me. Certainly, Rorschach is special. I love Manhattan. I love Nite Owl. Laurie is awesome, as is the Comedian. They're all particular. It's hard, because they're all interesting. And each one of them has their place in the iconography. They each address a different type of the cinematic superhero manifestation. I always say, 'My Superman doesn't care about humanity. My Batman has self-confidence issues. My bad guy wants world peace!'"

Watchmen is a psycho-political Cold War superhero suspense satire. It's also viciously violent and unsettling. A graphic scene wherein a superheroine is raped adds to the brutality. *Watchmen* isn't your typical PG-13 comic book movie, and Zack Snyder had to fight for those scenes and an R rating. "Oh yes," he readily admits. "Who wants an R-rated superhero movie? Who's going to go see it? Nobody. But thanks, in some ways, to *300*, [we got the R]. It was hard. It made our budget smaller. They can't justify making a \$200 million R-rated film. It's impossible. But I don't feel like we've lost anything. Everyone just has to work extra hard. And everybody understands the commitment to that kind of decision, and they've shouldered it pretty awesomely."

Rorschach (Jackie Earle Haley) is undoubtedly the most enigmatic of these mystery men. In the film, his mask is an ever-moving inkblot (where what you see may tell you something about yourself). And he's just as handy improvising his way out of a hot spot.



Watchmen Comics Art: Dave Gibbons/Colors: John Higgins



As STARLOG visits the Vancouver set, Nite Owl (Patrick Wilson) and Silk Spectre (Malin Akerman) are kicking butt and taking names. It's all part of their Owlship rescue mission during a prison riot—as originally envisioned by comics artist Gibbons 20 years ago.

Big Figures

As Zack Snyder returns to work, Woodburn sits down to chat about Big Figure. “He’s like a Mafioso underworld boss, but to the nth degree,” offers Woodburn (previously interviewed in STARLOG #295). “The history I’ve given him is that besides being a very, very bad man, he’s casual about life and death. The reason they put him in prison is because he kidnapped every child of every U.N. delegate in the world. That’s some ransom to hold for the whole planet, and that’s why he’s here.”

The diminutive Woodburn is wearing prison grey and suspenders. “I’m the only inmate who gets to accessorize. It’s my trademark,” he beams. “I’ve done a week’s worth of work so far. I have a few scenes, and then I die rather quickly. And I started it, so what are you going to do? I’m a bad man!”

And (SPOILER ALERT!) just to show how bad he truly is, Woodburn gives away a plot point—although to be fair, it won’t surprise anyone who has read *Watchmen*. “It’s a mystery,” he teases, when asked about his character’s fate. “All right, I go into a toilet and I don’t come out. That’s basically what happens. The only part of me that comes out is a huge pool of blood. You fill in the blanks. I don’t know what happens in there. I don’t want to know. They can’t even show it in an R-rated movie. But I think to maintain character for me, Zack has decided to do something to me in the other room—he just won’t film it. I’m kind of worried about that!”

Woodburn was familiar with *Watchmen* before being cast, and notes that he was a comic book collector as a kid. “But a few years ago, I called home and said, ‘Mom, you know that big box that I had, with all the individually wrapped comic books? Do you know where that is?’ ‘Honey, I think I sold it at a garage sale.’ So the lesson learned is that the day you move out, take everything with you. That was a sad day for me. I had every *Alpha Flight* from #2 on. I had all the *New Mutants*, *Spider-Man* and *Wolverine*. I can’t even think about it!”

Working with Snyder is a happier story. “He’s great!” Woodburn extols. “Zack is so energized. I asked him how it is that he doesn’t get sick! And Zack has the loudest voice. He can be heard all the way across this vast former drywall company. Zack’s thing is when everything is set up, he goes, ‘FILM IT!’ as loud as possible. I’m having a blast. I really am. And I’m digging all of the stuff that Zack is doing with the framing of the shots. I always try to sit close to the director, because it’s a learning experience every time I’m on a set.”

Elsewhere on the soundstage, Haley agrees. “Watching this movie being filmed from every angle,” he marvels, “I can hardly wait for them to cut it together so I can see what it looks like.”

To which Akerman adds: “Zack is amazing. He’s such a big fan of *Watchmen*, and he’s excited all the time. His energy is abundant; it never, ever ends. I don’t know where he gets it from—whether it’s coffee or simply natural. But it gets you going as well. And Zack is never in a bad mood—knock on wood.”

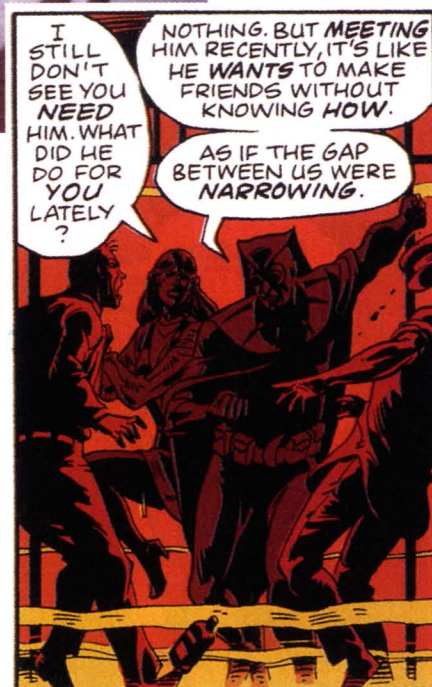
Akerman is enjoying essaying Laurie Juspezyk a.k.a. Silk Spectre, daughter of the first Silk Spectre (Gugino). In her yellow-and-black outfit, Akerman looks very much like a superheroine out of the Silver Age of Comics. “It’s latex,” she remarks. “And it’s like wearing a condom over my body! It isn’t very comfortable, but it looks good on camera. When I read the script, I had no idea that I was going to be wearing latex, but I knew that I was going to be kicking butt. So I was excited about that. I’ve done some fight training and gotten into shape. I can now walk up a flight of stairs without huffing and puffing. Plus, I got to pistol-whip someone today!”

Haley doesn’t have to wear a tight body suit, but he does have to spend most of the film emoting behind Rorschach’s ever-shifting inkblot mask. “It’s tough,” he admits. “I’m acting with a sock over my head. It was daunting for a while, where I was thinking, ‘How is this coming through?’ I had to start pushing that away and let it go. I’ll clown around here and there, but it’s still Rorschach’s face. And there’s a freedom to that. He gets to be who he truly is.”

At over 400 pages, the graphic novel is a multi-faceted monster with many plots, subplots and cross-pollinations. And Zack Snyder is realistic about keeping his movie within the audience’s ability to track and absorb the story’s overwhelming scope and complexity, which could only be faithfully re-created as a TV mini-series.

“I don’t know if the money would have been there for that approach,” he notes. “Certainly, a [mini-series] version is a possibility, but in my mind, that’s an attempt to not replace, but duplicate, the graphic novel, which isn’t the experience I want. I don’t know if that could ever work. *Watchmen* is so literary. For me, the visualization of it isn’t the same. It’s about trying to take the best bits [from the book] and leave the five-hour experience to the graphic novel.”

Asked to assess this very ambitious but risky project, Zack Snyder concludes, “I have no idea what the world will think. It’s a weird movie. *Watchmen* isn’t a superhero film. I mean, it is, but it’s unlike any superhero movie you’ve ever seen.”



I STILL DON'T SEE YOU NEED HIM. WHAT DID HE DO FOR YOU LATELY?

NOTHING. BUT MEETING HIM RECENTLY, IT'S LIKE HE WANTS TO MAKE FRIENDS WITHOUT KNOWING HOW.

AS IF THE GAP BETWEEN US WERE NARROWING.

In the Vancouver set of *Watchmen*, Jackie Earle Haley is busy doing a piece of emergency prison surgery. It's obvious from the open cell doors and profusion of paper litter that the inmates have taken over the asylum. Bee smoke chokes the cellblock corridors, and during the ferocious free-for-all, some prisoners are bent on vengeance. Fortunately—or unfortunately—revenge is a double-edged blade that cuts both ways.

A huge thug has stuck his arms into Haley's character's cell. Bad move. Dressed in prison grey, Haley is industriously removing them with a chainsaw. After the traumatic amputation, the dead-sounding voice of the disgraced former vigilante known as Rorschach pronounces sentence. "Hurrm. Never disposed of sewage with a toilet before. Obvious, really. Two-nothing. Your move."

Director Zack Snyder and his crew crack up at the lines torn out verbatim from the 1986 DC Comics graphic novel. "Oh, that is so awesome," laughs Malin Akerman, who plays the superheroine Silk Spectre.

Abruptly, Haley vanishes from the set, as elusive as the character he portrays. No doubt he needs to wash up. A good deal of corn syrup-based stage blood has been spilled this day. When STARLOG catches up with him later, Haley is relaxing in his trailer, hav-

ing changed out of his prison garb. In a deceptively calm and thoughtful voice, Haley discusses playing Walter Kovacs, the emotionally damaged avenging angel also known as Rorschach.

Rogue Crimefighter

In the *Watchmen* world, Rorschach is the ultimate outlaw. When all other superheroes quietly retired after passage of the Keene Act—which made it illegal to operate as a masked or costumed crimebuster—Rorschach stubbornly continued to fight on as a lone mystery man. Pitiless, unswerving, moving through the worst parts of the metropolis in a topcoat and fedora, Rorschach dispenses rough justice behind a white mask whose ever-changing inkblot decorations reflect his inner turmoil.

"He's definitely a trippy character," Haley observes. "Gosh, it's kinda weird to even look at him from the third person. From the outside looking at him. Because when you're in the middle of it, the guy kind of makes sense—he has a self-righteous logic. But when you step out and look at him—no."

Asked what turned the son of a prostitute into an urban avenger without mercy, Haley answers with the smooth assurance of someone who has answered this question a dozen times before. "His Mom," he says. "Yeah. Rorschach had an incredibly dysfunctional life growing up as a child. People respond to that differently in soci-



The most mysterious of mystery men, Rorschach is a riddle inside an enigma shrouded in the unknown. In the upcoming *Watchmen* movie, he's played by veteran actor Jackie Earle Haley.

It's Rorschach's initial investigation into the death of a fellow Watchman, the Comedian, that begins the classic graphic novel by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons.

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RORSCHACH TEST

Seeing things in black & white, Jackie Earle Haley essays *Watchmen's* frightening vigilante.

By WILL MURRAY



Bad News Bears Photo: Copyright 1977 Paramount Pictures Corp. All Rights Reserved.

ety. Some of us are able to grow up in a situation like that, and somehow manage to pull it together—to go through life with your emotional scars, yet somehow hold it together. But it tweaked him. He was forced to find a place where he could survive, where it all made sense to him. Rorschach is that place. Everything that he does, every person whom he punishes for some wrong, I think he's still protecting that little kid. He's lashing out at his Mom."

In Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' acclaimed graphic novel, Kovacs is first inspired to become the feared and disturbed Rorschach after he confronts a child murderer. The movie retains that brutal backstory. "Somewhere along the line, young Walter [began to] see these grey areas," Haley relates. "I would imagine if his Mom was asked, 'Why did you behave the way you did?' her answer would be, 'Life is difficult. I had to provide for me and my son. I had to do these things.' Walter was victimized by that greyness, and so the only thing that made sense to him was to *truly* make things black and white. There's no justification for wrongdoing. There's no justification for victimization. It's simply that clear to him.

"As Walter grew up, these issues were constantly coursing through him as he was finding himself. Then, at a certain point, with the child killer, it was just the last straw—I mean, it was the ultimate victimization. He couldn't take it any more. It became absolutely clear to him that this world is screwed up in complexity and grey, and he doesn't want to have anything to do with it. And with every punch and knife thrust, he's stabbing out at his Mom and the people who victimized him."

Night Watchman

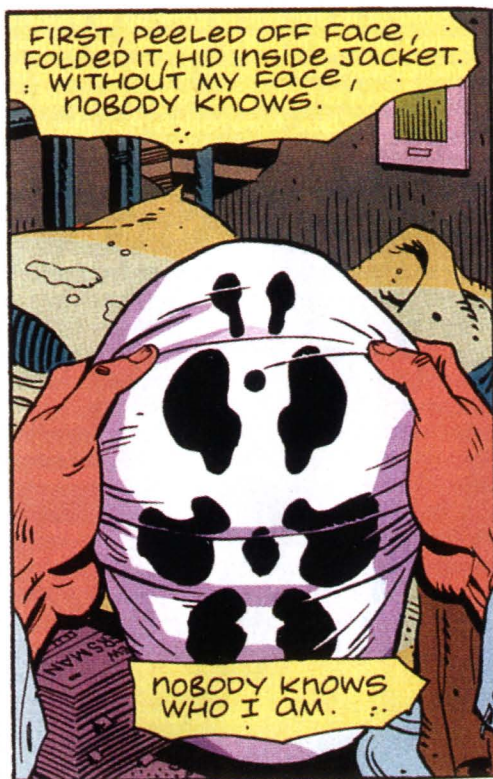
A former child actor and veteran of TV and films ranging from *The Bad News Bears* to *Little Children* (for which he received an Academy Award nomination), Haley came to *Watchmen* pretty much oblivious to the source material until he auditioned for the part. "I was slightly aware of it. I recognized some of the images, and I had seen the characters and stuff," he notes. "About four years ago, I noticed on the Net that somebody was suggesting me for [the part of Rorschach]. I didn't know what *Watchmen* was, so I looked it up. 'Oh, yeah. That.' Then I started to look into *Watchmen* a little bit more, and, obviously, much more when I heard about the film. 'Wow, they're finally doing it.'"

Once Haley got the *Watchmen* bug, he was hooked. "I read it and re-read it and was absolutely amazed," he says. "As a kid, I wasn't a real reader. All my friends were into comic books, but I was one of those kids who went, 'The pictures are good, but there are too many words.' By the time I started to accept words, I was



Unmasked, Haley is best known as a child actor (far right), stealing home (as well as most of the movie) in the *Bad News Bears* flicks. As an adult, he was Oscar-nominated for his role in *Little Children*.

There's a fearful symmetry to Rorschach's inkblot identity, both sides mirroring each other. In the film, thanks to CGI, the blots will endlessly move about his mask.



All Watchmen Comics Art: Dave Gibbons/ Colors: John Higgins

getting into novels. The first thing I read was *The Mote in God's Eye* [an SF novel by Larry Niven]. I was 12 or 13. It was a ridiculous book for that age. But it got me going.

"On my first pass at *Watchmen*, I thought it was amazing," Haley continues. "I said to myself, 'Wow! This is good stuff!' And then it was doubly so on the second pass. Maybe I have a slow curve—I'm sure I could have appreciated *Watchmen* sooner—but now, at this age, I find it incredible. I want to check out [more Alan Moore graphic novels]

because the combination of the creative, the symbolism and the art is really different. I bought *V for Vendetta*, but I haven't read it yet."

Rorschach is a pivotal character in the complicated web of *Watchmen's* alternate reality. Aside from supplying a narrative voice-over through his sometimes demented-sounding journals, Rorschach is the mainspring around which much of the action is tightly wound. When a serial superhero-killer snuffs out Rorschach's retired partners in crusading, Rorschach is the only one still at large and willing to investigate. His approach is so violent and single-minded as to make the Punisher seem well-balanced.

As Haley can attest, essaying an unhinged hero isn't a simple process. "I don't have one specific thing that I'm trying to do," he explains. "One thing that I'm really trying to do in a weird kind of way is find this guy's humanity. Rorschach is an odd character in a parallel universe. So it's a little different—not to mention acting with a sock on my head for 90 percent of the movie!"

Having a personal copy of *Watchmen* is essential. "The main thing I'm trying to do is balance bringing him alive, but yet still looking at the panels before every scene to see if there are things I can glean from Gibbons' work—as well as, of course, Moore's," Haley explains. "Visually, I'm trying to dig into all of the clues and make sure I'm bringing Rorschach to life—and being as true to the book—as much as possible. It's a challenge. Every panel in the book is a still image. Sometimes there are great clues. And sometimes there aren't."

Masked Avenger

Like many cinema superheroes before him, Haley discovered that masks are more cool than practical. The old Hollywood admonition about not bumping into the furniture must have been started by an actor forced to wear one. Originally, the masked Haley could barely see, but "temporary" eyeholes have been cut out for critical scenes involving certain types of action. They're "temporary" because, in post-production, CGI will be used to fill in the shifting and altering Rorschach test patterns on the vigilante's black-and-white mask.

"It frees me up to where I can see sometimes," Haley remarks. "There are tracking dots on the mask, but they aren't going to try to match the moving Rorschach blots with the eyes. Maybe a little here and there. It's more like they want to get a sense of the emotion *behind*



Psychopath or saint? Rorschach is implacable, ruthless, relentless. He sees the world as fundamentally evil—and his own strict "heroic" code must be followed.



Here's Gibbons' early costume concept of a more superhero-like Rorschach, literally flashing his full-body inkblot suit. This test uniform (and the individual logo below it) ended up unused.

[the mask] through the eyes. However, that [could occasionally] affect the emotional content of how Rorschach's mask blots up."

How much and how often the signature blots will be animated is something the filmmakers have yet to work out. Haley isn't concerned. "It's not like I'm trying to act through the mask," he offers. "At first, I thought I would have to [raises voice] 'accentuate bigger.' But no. I let the mask do what it does. So I'm just going for it as though I weren't even wearing the mask. What I'm trying to do is embrace the mask. It's my face. It's Rorschach's face."

Costume designer Michael Wilkinson is the man responsible for re-creating the bizarre visage in three dimensions. According to Haley, it was an adventure in trial and error. "They kept tweaking it," he recalls. "It was a whole process of getting it dialed in. It wasn't, 'All right, let's fit your head on.' Boom! 'There it is. Great!' It was, 'Let's try this. OK, now let's try this. And let's try this...'" Michael did an amazing job."

Haley is impressed by all of the Watchmen's regalia. "The other day, they were shooting a bunch of stills," he says. "The Minutemen and all this stuff. Man, the wardrobe, the costumes, the lineage! I could see the evolution, especially with the old Nite Owl. I was like, 'Wow! I get it!' It was an inspiring day. This world—and these characters—are really coming around. It's a trip. Once they started to dial in all of these things, I found it truly empowering."

Also empowering has been the training it has taken to transform the

actor into possibly the toughest tiger in this superhero jungle. "I've been working out, lifting weights and training the whole time, just trying to figure out how to fuel it," Haley says. "But it has been lots of fun. I'm getting into pretty good shape. Before I got here, I was doing isolated stuff in the gym, trying to make [certain muscles] bigger. But when I arrived [on the set], the guys weren't worried about that. They were concerned with core strength, and knew that the other stuff would take care of itself."

Most actors who take on such physical roles also diet to lose those extra pounds. Not Haley. "I'm actually gaining weight," he remarks. "In our workouts, we'll jam for 30 minutes—and it's a haul-ass workout, so I'm getting my cardio at the same time. But it's great! I'm hitting all these areas where I'm building up, and yet the core and everything is great. On the weekends, I go hiking and biking. I feel like I have more strength. It's nice. I'm 47, and I feel 10 years younger."

Returning to the enigma that is Rorschach, Haley comments, "We live in a society where there are many complexities. And these complexities often justify our behavior. Usually, it's the people who are in the middle of it who can't see. A good example would be an abused wife. It's easy for someone to say, 'It's a no-brainer, girl. Get the hell out of there.'"

"But life is complicated," Jackie Earle Haley says. "Sometimes it isn't that simple. It's difficult for somebody in that situation to see the black and white of it, because there are all those security and esteem issues. So Rorschach is out there protecting his inner child, you know what I mean?"



Design & Layout: Heiner Feil

For the French edition of *Watchmen*, Gibbons created this cover, which portrays Walter Kovacs, the man behind Rorschach's mask, behind bars.



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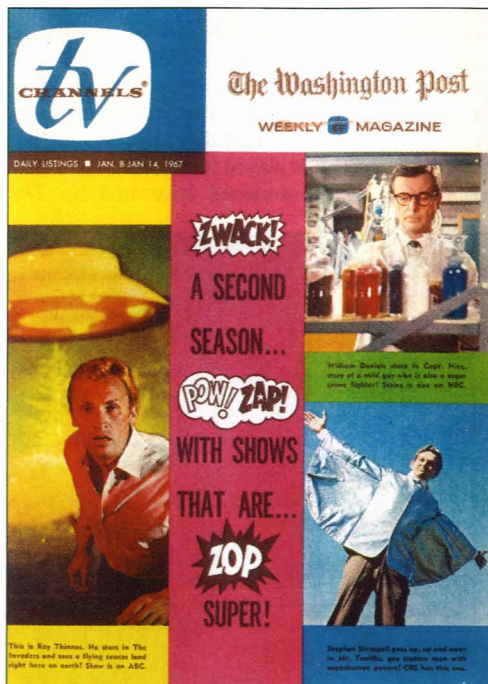
KEEP WATCHING FOR MORE NEXT ISSUE

SECRET S F

Revealed at last! They tried to make Earth their world, but those efforts ended far too soon.

By MARK PHILLIPS

THE INVADERS



Former ABC Network President Thomas Moore declares that *The Invaders* "was science fiction for adults."

Let 'er rip!" William Woodson is ready to listen to his frightening *Invaders* narration for the first time in more than 35 years, played for him long distance over the telephone.

The drenched-in-dread, coldly menacing voice begins: "...alien beings from a dying planet. Their destination: the Earth. Their purpose: to make it *their* world."

"My word!" exclaims Woodson when it concludes. "I had no idea it went on for so long. But it's a good, solid piece of work. I'm happy to hear it again."

Associate producer Anthony Spinner penned that iconic narration at the last minute, reminding viewers how aliens in human form were going to take over our planet. Only one man, architect David Vincent (Roy Thinnes), stood in their way. Woodson also narrated each episode, explaining Vincent's desperate efforts to "convince a disbelieving world" that the Invaders are here.

While essaying the *Boy Detective* on radio at age 16, Woodson realized voice work was his calling. His deep, authoritative voice was heard on ABC Radio's *This is Your FBI* (1945-53), and he appeared as a newsman in *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953). Woodson



Architect David Vincent (Roy Thinnes) initially faced *The Invaders* in 1967. The show's first year is already on DVD with the second (and final) season out this month from Paramount Home Entertainment.



William Woodson provided the series' evocative opening narration. Here he is July 16, 2008 in a photo snapped on his 91st birthday.

also provided the "bombastic" title narration for *The Odd Couple* series (1970-75). But it wasn't until he narrated the 1980s mini-series *Winds of War* and *War and Remembrance* that fans connected him to *The Invaders*.

"My agent submitted me for *The Invaders* in 1966," the former child actor recalls. "It was a wonderful experience, and I found the series fascinating; I watched it all the time. It had suspenseful, well-written stories. Roy was a nice, easygoing guy, and a very good actor. I liked him a great deal."

Woodson's youngest son Raymond was also a fan. "He walked around the house with a crooked finger, pretending to be an alien. My oldest son, Bill Jr., introduced me to the fabulous websites that celebrate *The Invaders*. That so many people still enjoy the show is remarkable!" Woodson continues to do voice work today.

Fingering Aliens

The Invaders was created by Larry (It's Alive) Cohen. Anthony Wilson, *Lost in Space* story editor, wrote the pilot, "Beachhead," which debuted January 10, 1967.

"Quinn Martin had produced two big hits for ABC, *The Fugitive* and *The FBI*, so we had high hopes for *The Invaders*' success," says Thomas Moore, former network president. "It was science fiction for adults. The pilot was excellent, and it tested extremely well with preview audiences."

The New York Times proclaimed *The Invaders* as one of the season's few big successes—"a show which threatens to overthrow the *Batman* craze."

Its creative challenges were daunting for art directors George Chan and James Vance. "*The Invaders* wasn't one of my favorite shows," says Chan. "I had worked for Quinn on *12 O'Clock High*. That was a normal series. Its stories made sense, and I could relate to it. When that was cancelled, I was looking forward to working on *The Fugitive*, another good show. But they were having budget problems on *Invaders*, and Jim Vance was over-

whelmed by the workload. When Quinn assigned me to the show, I was bitterly disappointed."

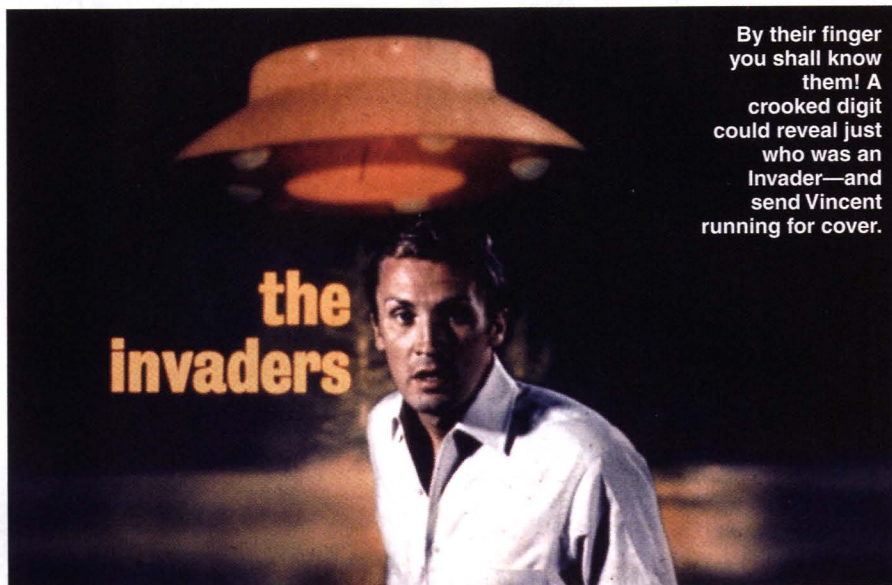
The aliens were everywhere: posing as night club strippers, cops, newspaper boys, salesmen, politicians, army officers, old ladies, astronauts, reporters, nuns, scientists, preachers, teachers, hitch-hikers, lawyers, housekeepers, psychiatrists and Mafia hit men. And it was up to Chan to try to make sense of it all.

"They told us they were going to do a story about killer butterflies," he exclaims. "Killer butterflies! I was amazed that audiences would accept such bullshit! I didn't appreciate a series where the leading man ran around the country chasing flying saucers. We had to create an alien raygun with a unique shape, so we finally came up with an interesting design. Next day, a production guy walked in, sheepishly holding a squirt gun that he found in a

toy store. It resembled our design, so back to the drawing board! Quinn wanted the raygun to be a color that no human eyes had ever seen before. That, of course, was impossible. We did our best, and Quinn accepted it." Other creative choices were less inspiring: The blue overalls worn by the aliens were actually race car uniforms.

Sometimes Chan was pleased with the work. "For 'Moonshot,' I re-created NASA's Mission Control. It was a challenge, but the results were very credible. In 'Condition: Red,' I designed the interior of NORAD [the North American Aerospace Defense Command in Colorado] with very little research, and it turned out great. For 'The Spores,' with Gene Hackman, we had to evolve living alien spores to grown aliens. That worked out nicely." The eerie sounds of dying spores were the cries of seagulls played backward.

Yet Chan remained frustrated by *The*



By their finger you shall know them! A crooked digit could reveal just who was an Invader—and send Vincent running for cover.



Who will believe Vincent's tales of otherworldly invasion? *Forbidden Planet* vet Anne Francis maybe? Most believers lived—or perhaps didn't live—to regret it.

Invaders. “Frankly, the show just annoyed the hell out of me,” he confesses. “Why couldn’t these powerful Invaders kill Vincent? Didn’t this man have *any* family or friends? Where did he get the money to buy such fine clothes and travel everywhere? The character had no sense of fiscal responsibility, and it drove me crazy! I told Quinn it was ridiculous. They finally wrote a scene [in “The Captive”] that showed Vincent working on an architectural project to finance his crusade.”

Lack of research time was Chan’s biggest problem. “I was very relieved when *The Invaders* was cancelled,” he admits. “I wouldn’t have stayed for a third season.”

However, Chan—who started as an art director for 20th Century Fox in 1945—stresses, “We had a wonderful production crew on *The Invaders*, some of the greatest talents in Hollywood, including our construction foreman, Harold Nyby. He was the older brother of director Christian [The Thing] Nyby.”

The flying saucer was intended to only appear in the pilot. “Quinn didn’t want to see

the saucer again,” says writer John W. Bloch. “He wanted a dramatic show with few special effects. But many of the writers loved the saucer, and so it ended up in every other episode.” Bloch recalls one unfiled story treatment called “The Search,” where Vincent joins a mountain climbing expedition to find the remnants of a decades-old saucer crash.

There was also the crooked finger, a gimmick that several of the writers hated. “That was to let Vincent know who was an Invader,” notes Bloch. “We had to give him an edge against them, or else he wouldn’t have lasted long.”

Killing Aliens

During the show’s 43 episodes, aliens were shot, impaled, choked, bitten by dogs, drowned, struck by cars, eaten by insects, electrocuted, burned, vaporized by laser beams, killed in saucer crashes, swatted over the head with pipes, felled by chicken pox and thrown from cliffs, balconies and helicopters.

“One alien was bitten by a rattlesnake and died,” recalls extra and Thinnes stand-in Randy Crawford. “We stopped filming to question how an alien, who had no blood, could have snake venom travel through his body. There were many discussions like this. We cared about the series and took it very seriously.”

“The original idea was to have the aliens die in a big puff of smoke, an effect created by igniting gunpowder,” continues Crawford. “That looked pretty, so we went with the red

glow and disintegration effect. It looked great! The writers and producers worked hard to establish what the aliens could and couldn’t do. Some directors didn’t want to adhere to those rules, and that really hurt the show. It made the aliens appear inconsistent.”

Hank Simms, who played a reporter in “Summit Meeting,” was the distinctive-sounding announcer for most of Martin’s shows (including *The Streets of San Francisco* and *Barnaby Jones*). He has been incorrectly credited for announcing *The Invaders* (naming the guest stars after Woodson’s narration).

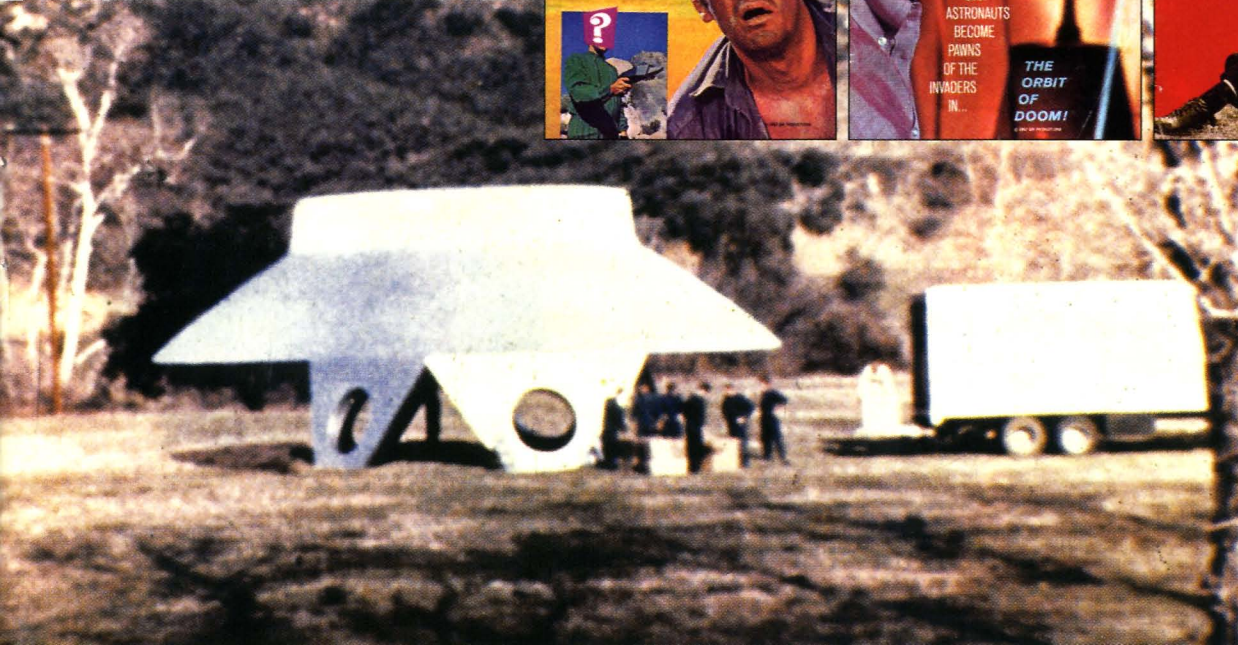
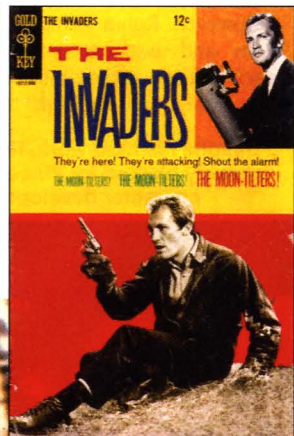
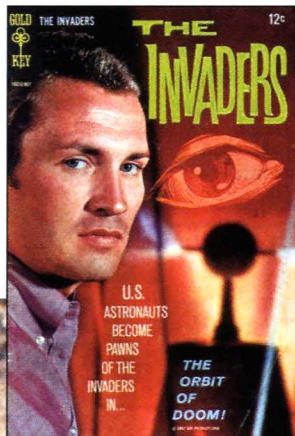
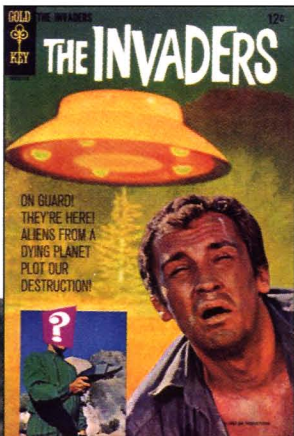
“*The Invaders*’ announcer was Dick Wesson,” clarifies Simms, who had a high regard for Martin. “Quinn was a consummate perfectionist in everything he did. He surrounded himself with good people and made decisions based on the amalgamation of that input. He was always thinking of new ideas for shows and had a great eye for spotting talent in people.”

“Quinn, with all his talent and success, only accepted input from a very select group he had hired,” counters Bob Rubin, who was an assistant director on *The Fugitive* and served as an AD on *The Invaders*’ second season. “He then went on to do whatever he wanted anyway. Quinn cost himself some valuable perspective by only surfacing on the set once a year, at the annual Christmas party. He derived the flavor of the script, the budget, a bit of pre-production, the dailies and then the finished product. He was a friendly, gracious, highly talented guy. He just *never* came on the set,

As series art director George Chan (and many viewers and comics fans) asked, “Why couldn’t these powerful Invaders kill Vincent?” Because, of course, then the show would have been over.



Thinnes “lived the part of David Vincent 24 hours a day,” says *Invaders* AD Bob Rubin. “He worked his ass off to make the series work.”



Intended only for use in the pilot, the flying saucer kept returning for further appearances since the writers loved its visual appeal.

Selected Photos: ABC

which limited his perspective greatly.”

The Invaders finished at a respectable 39th out of 100 shows for its 1966-67 season. That placed it ahead of *Lost in Space* (44th), *Star Trek* (52nd) and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (62nd). Even Martin's *The Fugitive* (50th) trailed in the ratings sweepstakes. But when *The Invaders* struggled in the ratings during its second year, “Things turned into a nerve-racking mess,” claims Bloch, as everyone scrambled to save the sinking show.

Rubin feels two ABC executives, Adrian Samish and Arthur Fellows, didn't help the situation. “Quinn entrusted Samish and Fellows to serve as his intermediaries. They were obviously ‘on’ when they were in Quinn's presence, but on their rare set visits, neither could muster a smile for any of the crew—not even for Roy—let alone a hello. They were downers. They would look right through you. Yet they were the ones constantly *whining* behind the scenes over why Roy, or, really, the character of David Vincent, didn't project more magnetism. All this while they governed, self-impressed, projecting fear and repelling every person on the set with their arrogance. I used to yell an ‘All clear!’ to everyone when either of them had left the soundstage.”

He praises Thinnas as a “very talented and hard-working actor [who didn't get the credit due him]. Roy was blamed by everyone, from day one, for not properly developing the character. It would have been different if he had phoned-in the part, but rather, he arrived early and left late. He lived the part of David Vincent 24 hours a day. The bottom line is, he worked his ass off to make the series work, but several people chose to throw him under the proverbial bus.”

However, Rubin admired producer Alan Armer and associate producer David W. Rintels. “They couldn't have been warmer, more caring or dedicated,” he says. “They

Despite his hard work, Thinnas was unfairly blamed for Vincent's lack of character development.

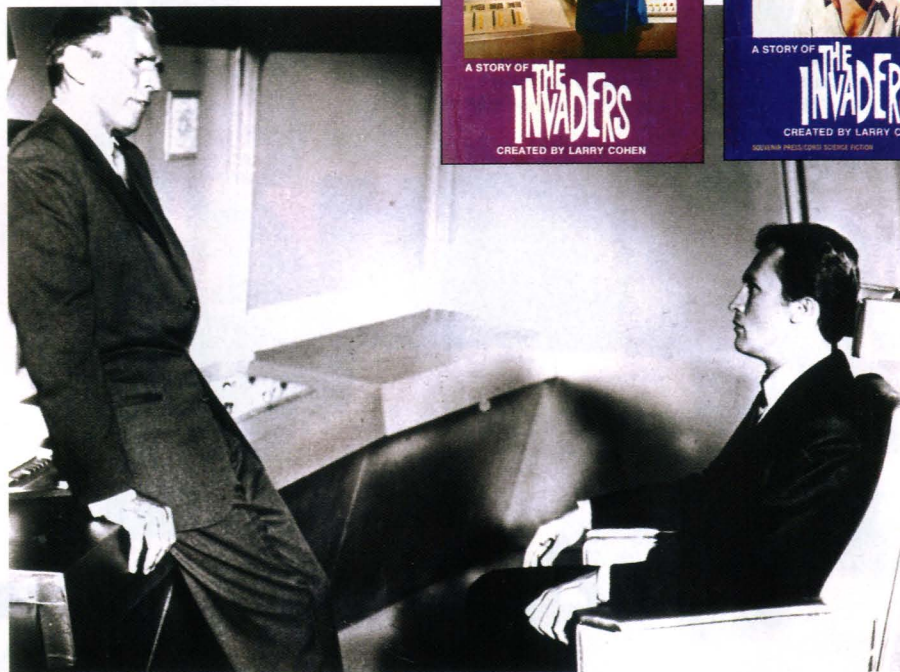


In the second season, Kent Smith joined the war as a businessman who truly believes Vincent and finances his desperate efforts.

were as talented writers-producers as one could ask for. Larry was in that league as well.”

Armer cast Kent Smith as businessman Edgar Scoville, who financed Vincent's war during Year Two. Smith (star of 1942's *Cat People*) was intended to attract an older audience. Research indicated the series “died” with viewers over age 50 because, as Spinner says, “The show scared the hell out of them.”

“It was a treat to work with a classy guy like Kent,” says Rubin. “We cast Kent's charming wife, Edith Atwater, for a part in the Michelangelo Antonioni film *Zabriskie Point*, on which I was an AD. Edith related to me that Kent never felt he was part of *The Invaders*, and that he believed he could have helped the program succeed, if given the opportunity. He never was.”



Michael Rennie (*The Day the Earth Stood Still*'s alien Klaatu) led a parade of nifty *Invaders* guest stars (Roddy McDowall, William Windom, Pat Hingle, etc.).

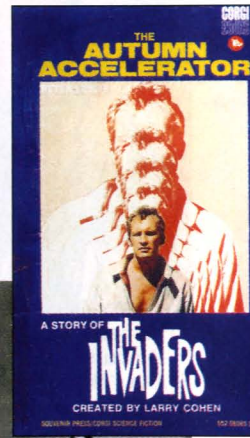
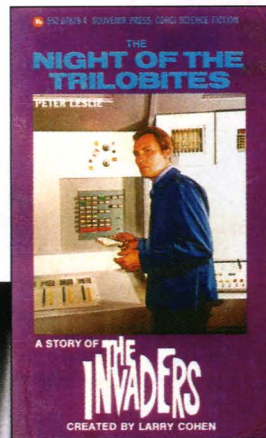
Erasing Aliens

Lowell Thomas (billed then as Tom Lowell) to differentiate him from the noted journalist) guest-starred in “Dark Outpost” as Steve, one of five college students held captive with Vincent in a military base by the aliens. “I was thrilled to be cast, because I was a big *Invaders* fan,” he says. “It was a well-written and well-acted show. I had worked with Roy before in my first professional job, a play called *The Balcony*. He was a very dedicated actor who was committed to making the series succeed. I enjoyed working with him again.”

The students (including Dawn Wells, Andrew Prine and the late Tim McIntire) are subjected to brainwashing techniques. One illusion shows Steve being subjected to a variety of gruesome deaths. “My wife and friends thought I had done well, but my mother called and she was very upset that I had been ‘killed off’ in such brutal ways!” Thomas laughs.

Wells recalled that her sneakers literally melted in the Mojave Desert sand. “Dawn was right—it was hot as blazes!” acknowledges Thomas. “And on the bus trip to the location, Andrew and Tim were hysterical. I never laughed so hard in my life! The old Army base we used was falling apart—the doors were off

Über-producer Quinn Martin visited the *Invaders* set just once a year—for the Christmas party. Rubin suggests booking more frequent trips might have raised the crew's morale.



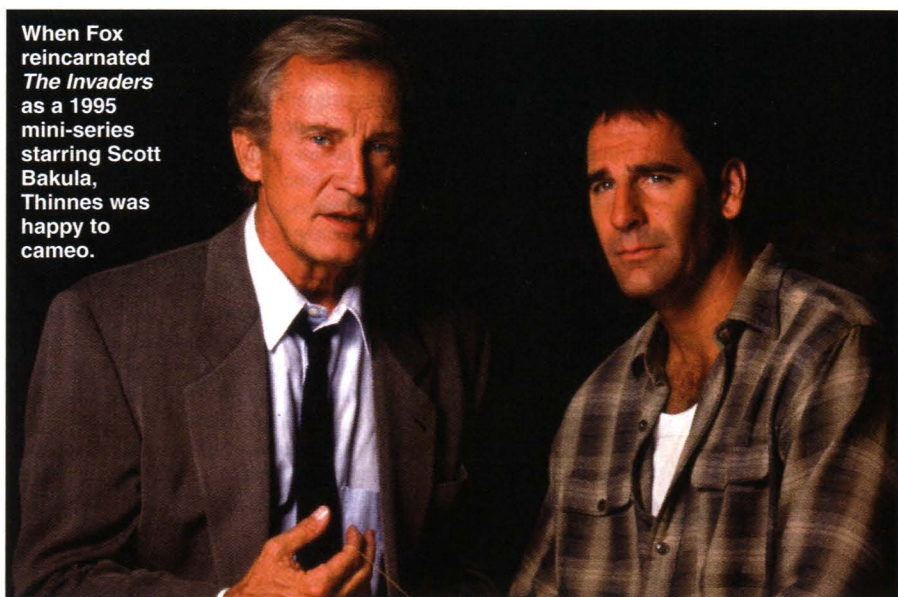
their hinges, everything was dusty and red ants were over-running the place. But the set decorators and prop people got it into shape superbly. I liked how the episode turned out. I thought *The Invaders* would run for years, like *The Fugitive*. It's really too bad that it didn't continue."

In William Blinn's "The Vise" (Robert Sabaroff shares story credit), Vincent tries to stop a black politician (Roscoe Lee Browne) from being appointed to a crucial position in the space program. His actions are misconstrued as racism. A black investigator (Raymond St. Jacques) faces strong criticism when he supports Vincent. Blinn's unusual teleplay makes reference to the Vietnam War, the 1967 Detroit riots and NFL quarterback Johnny Unitas.

Blinn, later the creator of TV's *Starsky and Hutch*, and a multiple Emmy-award winner for *Brian's Song* and *Roots*, was hired by Rintels, a socially aware story editor who wanted *The Invaders* to tackle contemporary themes. "I have much respect and admiration for David, a talented man with a caring manner," says Blinn. "All of our creative and storytelling meetings were beneficial and collaborative. I liked what I had seen of *The Invaders*. It had a good premise, and I've enjoyed SF whenever it's in that mystery style. But when it comes to space adventure shows such as *Star Trek*, that just doesn't resonate for me."

St. Jacques' character is a family man determined to see his young son grow up in a world where people aren't judged by their color. But he soon understands that the aliens are trying to ignite racial fury. "I've always felt that [racism] is an issue we need to acknowledge and address," Blinn remarks. "If it was possible to get a white audience to feel or emphasize with a black character and not deal with a message *per se*, then perhaps a door had been opened. Viewers don't want sermons; they want stories that involve them. I saw the

Invaders fan Lowell Thomas (then Tom Lowell) "was thrilled to be cast" and work again with stage colleague Thinnies.



Hawaii Five-O's Jack Lord (left) really enjoyed his Invaders guest stint as a war hero in "Vikor." He's with Alfred Ryder.



episode when it was first aired, and I generally liked it."

Blinn felt Thinnies was well-cast. "I've always been a Roy Thinnies fan. He's a good actor. *The Invaders* was limited in a sense, but challenging as well. There was a sameness to all of Quinn's shows, so it was hard to establish any creative signature. I knew many directors who disliked working for the QM factory for that very reason."

MAD magazine did a spoof on *The Invaders*, which ends with President Lyndon Johnson booting a jabbering Vincent out of the White House. The series was cancelled in 1968. "*The Invaders* began very promisingly in the ratings, but ultimately it didn't deliver," notes Moore.

Constant pre-emptions and a move to Tuesdays at 10 p.m. proved detrimental. Critics could be harsh as well: "This has to be one of the most depressing shows that's ever been on TV," declared *The Miami Herald*.


"ABC probably spent a lot to promote *The Invaders* initially, but they didn't know how to

market the program," Rubin points out. "Today, the show would have been strategically marketed on college campuses, something not even on the radar back then. Frankly, I think that Quinn was never a believer in the program and gave up on it much too early. If he and ABC had been committed to making the show work, *The Invaders* might well have become a world-class hit, bigger than QM's *The Fugitive*, *Cannon* and *The FBI* all combined together."

Fans of *The Invaders* include Sean Penn, Greg Evigan, Steven Spielberg and Chris Carter. "When I was first AD on *Dirty Harry*, I had several conversations with our director, Don Siegel, about *The Invaders*, which he loved," reveals Rubin. "Siegel directed the famous *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* [1956], and he couldn't believe that *The Invaders* was taken off the air, rather than being kept alive to find its audience, which he believed was out there.

"I was also the AD on *Hawaii Five-O*, and Jack Lord confided that he really enjoyed his guest-starring role in *The Invaders* [as Viktor, the anguished war hero]. He told me that he was shocked when the show was cancelled because of ratings problems. Roy never achieved the TV stardom that Lord earned via *Hawaii Five-O*. Steve McGarrett was all business, and it worked for 270 episodes. David Vincent was also all business. But *The Invaders* only worked for 43 shows. Go figure."

Nevertheless, Thinnies went on to a solid career and cameoed as David Vincent in Fox's poorly received 1995 *Invaders* mini-series. The recent *Invaders: The First Season* DVD includes an interview with Thinnies, episode commentary by Cohen and a rare, 60-minute unaired version of "Beachhead" (the 66-minute version apparently no longer exists). *Invaders: The Second Season* debuts on DVD this month.

"*The Invaders* was a marvelous, unique series," concludes John W. Bloch. "It was one of the few shows I wrote for that continues to have an after-life." 

In the early 1970s, British TV writer Terry Nation pitched his BBC bosses the idea for a new series in which most of Earth's population is wiped out by a deadly virus. It left a tiny handful of survivors struggling to exist in an aftermath where basic comforts such as electricity and running water had all but disappeared. Nation's aptly-named *Survivors* debuted in April 1975, ultimately running for three seasons and 38 episodes, and pre-dating such other post-apocalyptic fare as *The Stand*, *Jeremiah* and, more recently, *28 Days Later*.

Three decades after the original series' short but memorable run, writer-producer

Adrian (*Primeval*) Hodges has revived *Survivors*, which began airing on BBC One in the UK in late November. Loosely based on Nation's original premise and characters, the new show features a more serialized storyline, as well as an overall mythology that will unfold over time.

For Hodges, a huge fan of the original series, the prospect of creating a *Survivors* for a contemporary TV audience was simply too good to pass up. "I had been looking around for a genre idea that would work," he recalls. "I've been working on *Primeval*, and I'm still happy doing it, but that show plays in what we call a 'family slot' in the UK. I've always tried to make *Primeval* something that would appeal to both adults and younger audiences. But I wanted the challenge of doing something in the fantasy genre that had a much tougher

feeling and was definitely for adults.

"I was talking over ideas with the BBC, and they said, 'We've just secured the rights to remake *Survivors*,' which is a show I remembered extremely well from when it first aired. I said, 'If you let anybody else do it, I'll kill you!' It just seemed like an idea that had as much, if not more, relevance now as it did then. Also, as much as I admired the original, I did not feel it was so untouchable that you could not do anything to it. There was plenty of scope for re-imagining the stories and characters, and for taking what I hope was the best and what was wonderful from Terry's stuff and adding a little bit of my own [contributions] as well."

Survival Skills

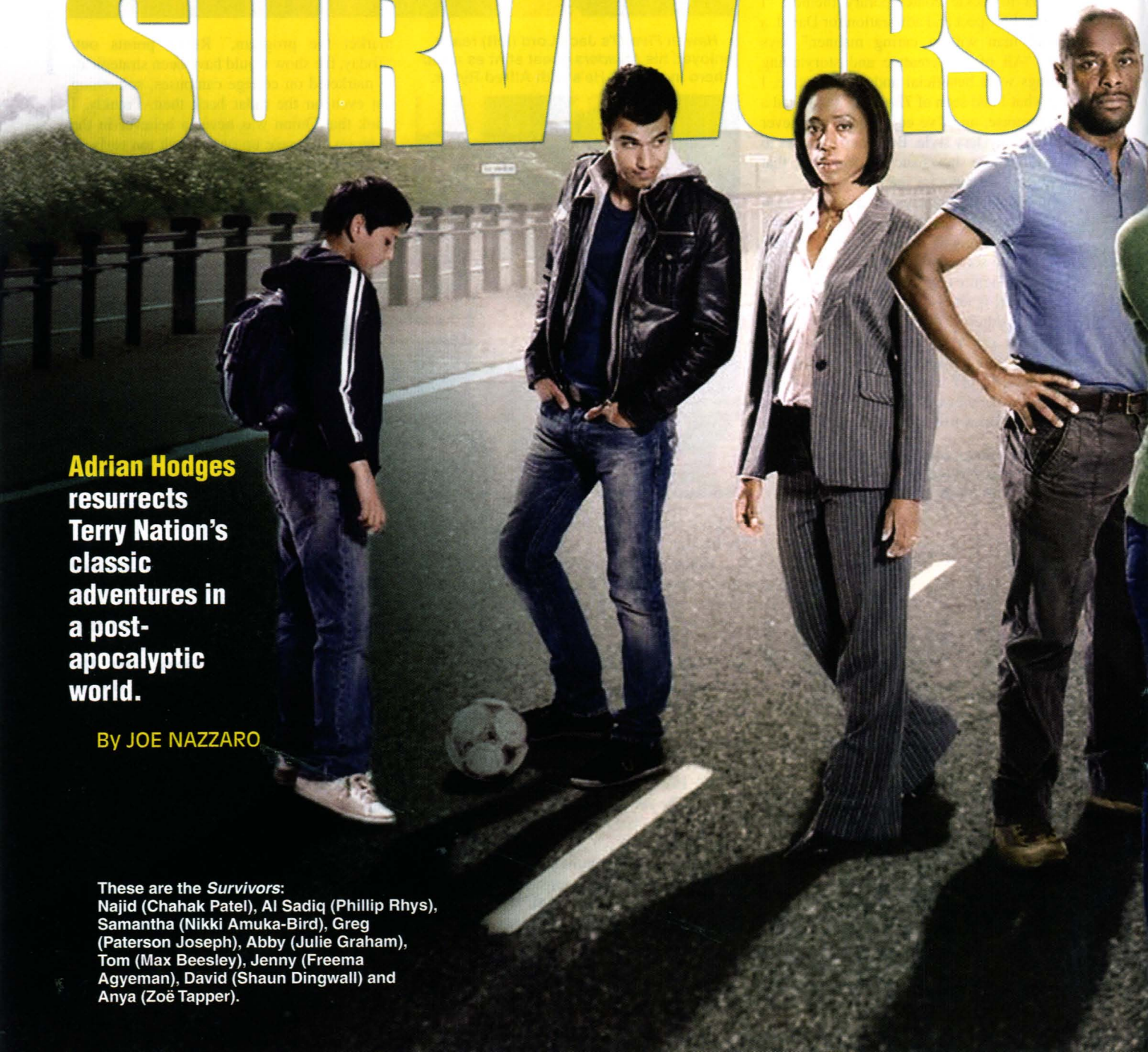
Hodges actually used Nation's 1976 first season novelization as source material. "The

SOLE SURVIVORS

Adrian Hodges resurrects Terry Nation's classic adventures in a post-apocalyptic world.

By JOE NAZZARO

These are the *Survivors*: Najid (Chahak Patel), Al Sadiq (Phillip Rhys), Samantha (Nikki Amuka-Bird), Greg (Paterson Joseph), Abby (Julie Graham), Tom (Max Beesley), Jenny (Freema Agyeman), David (Shaun Dingwall) and Anya (Zoë Tapper).



original series' rights' complication is so complex that the BBC opted to *only* secure the material that was written by Terry, all of which is in his novel, which he wrote after the first series had aired," Hodges explains. "The book is basically the material that's in the first five episodes. The rest of the novel is Terry's speculation about how he might have written the series had he stayed on it, because he fell out with the producer and left the program after the first series.

"The only difference between Terry's vision and mine is that I'm a little more optimistic about the human spirit. We're trying to stay very faithful to his concept, and there's a great deal—even in the first six episodes—about the implications of society's breakdown. Everything is now a battleground: supermarkets, remaining foodstuffs that haven't rotted...things like that become enormous issues. How human behavior would play itself out is

something that greatly preoccupies me. Would we become like *Lord of the Flies*? Would we turn on each other? Would we become warring tribes? Or would we do better than that? Would we stick together and see the better side of human nature?"

"What I've also done—and I think that this is really a measure of the times—is established a stronger serial element in this version. There are more ongoing 'mysteries.' I'm not saying it's *Lost* or as 'out there' as that, but I'm very mindful of the narrative hooks that will keep the audience coming back every week. The danger with a subject like this is that it could become very bleak, so I want the audience to feel involved and excited by the dilemmas, not horrified by them."

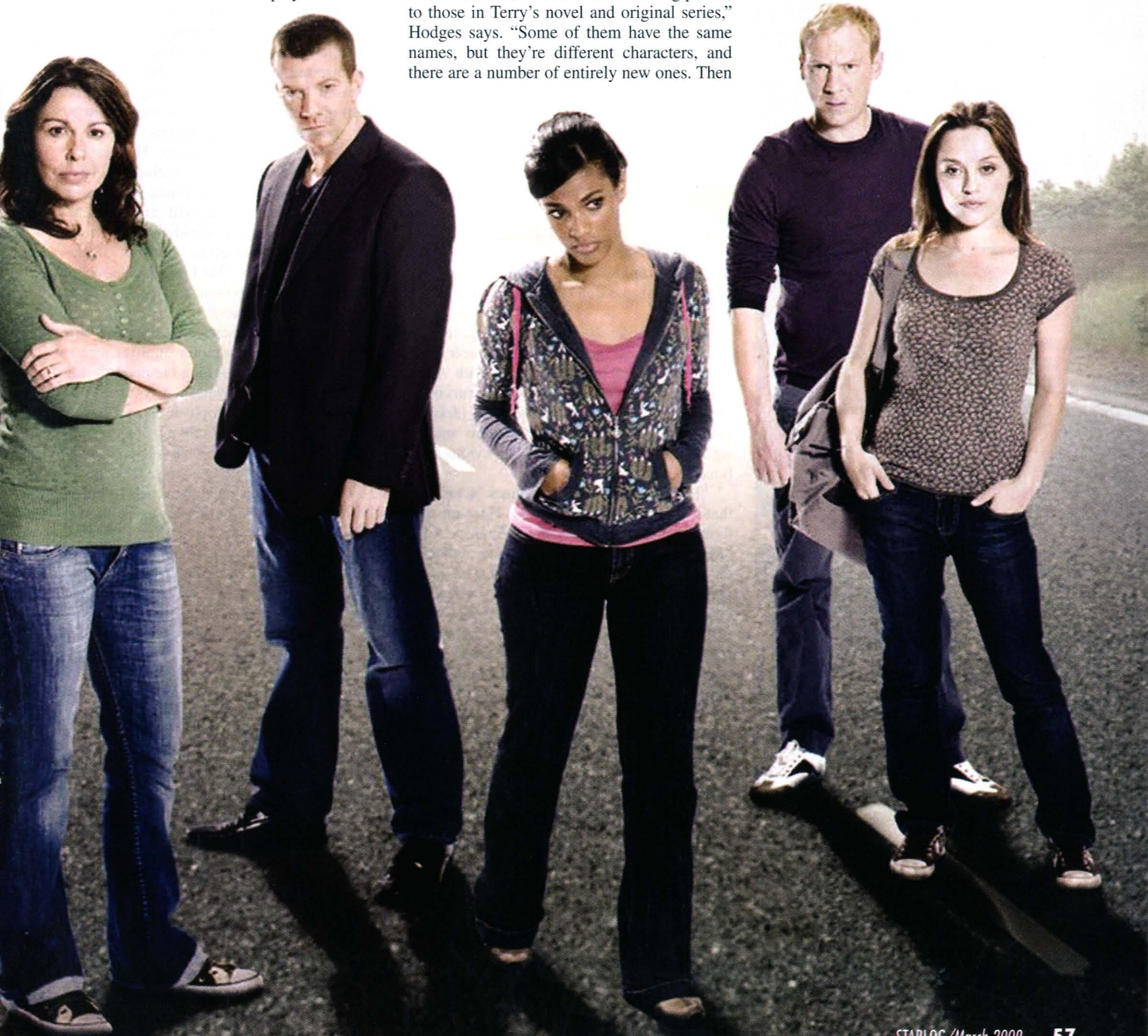
Although *Survivors* fans may recognize some of the names in this incarnation, there are a number of differences. "Several characters are similar, at least in their starting points, to those in Terry's novel and original series," Hodges says. "Some of them have the same names, but they're different characters, and there are a number of entirely new ones. Then

there are new people who mirror those from the original series, but I've given them different names for various reasons.

"For example, I won't tell you which one—you'll spot it quickly enough—but one of the characters has changed gender. Although the name and sex aren't the same, the character fulfills a function that's similar to the person in Terry's book. It's a question of making things new for myself."

Survivor Stories

Hodges provides a rundown for those unfamiliar with the series' cast of characters, starting with Abby Grant (Julie Graham), a wife and homemaker trying to repair her failing marriage who is separated from her son Peter when the virus strikes. "Abby is undoubtedly the moral center of the original show, but my Abby is very different [from Nation's],"



Selected Photos: Matt Squires

Abby is a wife and homemaker who is the spine of these *Survivors*.



David is Abby's husband. His storyline is similar to that of the 1970s show.



Greg has changed quite a bit from the original incarnation.



Doctor Who's Freema Agyeman plays a primary school teacher who survives the virus.

Hodges notes. "She isn't as middle-class as Carolyn Seymour's character, but their similarities are still greater than their differences. Abby is absolutely the spine, if you like, that everything else gathers around, and any show, even one with an ensemble cast like this, needs that. You need to have someone who you follow into the story. That isn't to say that Abby is the only strong character, or that she'll have the dominant role all the time, but Terry created a terrific character, and I couldn't see any reason to change that."

Shaun Dingwall plays Abby's husband, David Grant, but Hodges is reluctant to discuss the character in too much detail. "If you know the original," he hints, "the way in which that scenario plays itself out won't be entirely surprising. If you don't [know the original], I hope it is!"

One character who has changed quite a bit from his original incarnation is engineer Greg Preston, who often butted heads with Abby over the direction the group of survivors should take. In the new series, Greg (*Jekyll's* Paterson Joseph) is a former systems analyst who is emotionally scarred by a previous relationship.

"He's now played by a black actor, but that's purely because we love Paterson and thought it was great casting," Hodges says. "My only reservation about Greg as a character was that, at times, his role wasn't completely filled out in the original. I felt that I needed to know more about him. In fairness to that character, I know that Greg carried on through the original's last two series, but I haven't seen those episodes in recent years, and we aren't following the same path."

"Greg has an important role to play, and I don't think I'm giving anything away by saying that, very much like Abby, Greg is a moral person. He's at the story's moral center, but I wanted to make him more complex than the original Greg and give him a little more back-

The character who has undergone the most alterations is the dangerous Tom.



story. There's stuff in his past that might impact him. Basically, I tried to give all of the characters a story from their past that they carry with them into the present. I think that adds more of a mystery to them."

That includes Jenny Collins (*Doctor Who*'s Freema Agyeman), a primary school teacher who is introduced to the story when she tries to save her flatmate's life by getting her to a hospital. "I don't want to say too much about Jenny's journey," Hodges allows, "but what I can say is that although it starts in a similar way to the original, it *doesn't* follow through in that manner. Jenny has a very different journey."

The character who has arguably gone through the biggest changes from the first *Survivors* is Tom Price (Max Beesley), a charming but dangerous young man who is locked in a cell while everyone around him is dying. "I'll be honest, I *didn't* like the original character," Hodges admits. "He was riddled with clichés, and I didn't really care for him. So I've taken the name, and while our character is inspired by the original Tom Price, he's expressed in a very different way. I wanted him to play more of an integral role, and to be much more hidden and dangerous."

Besides Nation's characters, Hodges has added several new faces, including Anya Raczynski (Zoë Tapper), a young doctor who discovers that her medical skills are ineffectual when faced with a worldwide epidemic. "You'll see what I'm up to with that character," Hodges remarks, "but I felt that her being a doctor was an important part of the storytelling in our first series."

Another new character is Samantha Willis (Nikki Amuka-Bird), a junior minister who is initially tasked with handling the press during the crisis, but soon becomes the government's last contact with the people it can no longer protect. "Samantha is entirely my creation, but as I alluded to earlier, she's based on a character in Terry's book," Hodges says. "I've updated the role. In the original, there was someone who used to be a union leader, and although the way it plays out is rather different, Samantha was inspired by that character. I've spaced out how the virus develops a little bit more than in the first series. We meet Samantha at the height of the crisis, and while she certainly has a role to play on the show, I'll leave it to you to find out whether the government is involved in the virus or not."

Rounding out the cast are good-looking playboy Al Sadiq (Phillip Rhys) and 11-year-old Najid (Chahak Patel), to whom Al becomes a reluctant father figure. "I have immense sympathy with Al, because he's a bewildered, privileged playboy who survives through no effort of his own, but just by sheer dumb luck in the genetic lottery," Hodges points out. "He has to grow up and learn to take responsibility in a way that he never would have had to in the world as it was going along before. And then he's saddled with this kid, and part of the joke is that they're both Muslims, but boy, are they *different* kinds of Muslims!"

"Everyone assumes that Al is going to look

Several new characters have been added, like the young Dr. Anya Raczyński.



Samantha serves as the government's contact with the band of Survivors.

Charlton Heston. I'm a great admirer of *The Stand*, and if you look very closely early on in our first episode, there's a brief and playful allusion to Stephen King. Although, sadly, it isn't the right book—but never mind, the intention is there.

"Truthfully, this series is all about the characters and exploring this subject as realistically as we can. We take certain liberties, like the virus probably acts a good deal faster than it could in real life, but I'm exploring ways of explaining that. There are really good films, TV shows and books [about apocalypses]—*28 Days Later* is a recent movie—and if one day *Survivors* is mentioned in the same company, that's the best I can do."

Survivors' first series runs six episodes, including an extended pilot, and Hodges is hopeful that the BBC

busy at the moment. In addition to *Survivors*, he's still acting as showrunner on *Primeval*, the SF action-adventure series he co-created for British television (and which Hodges discussed in STARLOG #369).

"We're finishing up *Primeval's* Series Three, which is in post-production," he says. "We finished shooting the tenth episode two weeks ago, and I'm just starting to sit down with [co-creator] Tim Haines to talk about storylines and treatments for another season if we're recommissioned. With *Survivors*, as I said, we're in development on Series Two, although I should stress that neither a new *Survivors* or *Primeval* series has yet to be commissioned. But we still have to start planning for them. So yes, I'm very busy, but I feel privileged to be in that position."

Taking one final moment to talk about *Survivors*, Adrian Hodges hopes that genre fans enjoy his re-imagining of the classic series. "It's an action-adventure drama that is going to make them think. The show has deep moral issues and a situation that is plausible and credible. I hope that people find it gripping and exciting. *Survivors* is a drama, not a documentary. And if we can catch some of Terry's tremendous moral air of inquiry, I'll feel very blessed indeed!"

Design & Layout: Heiner Feil



after Naj because they're Muslims, and he's saying, 'Hang on, you're all Christians, and you aren't looking after each other. Why do I have to look after the kid?' It's funny. The inspiration for how these two develop together was *Paper Moon* with Ryan and Tatum O'Neal. I'm not saying that they con their way around; it's that notion of a reluctant couple who learn to care for each other. That's very appealing drama, and that's the journey that Al is on. He's an ordinary guy who happens to be very wealthy, and he was having a lovely time before the virus. I want people to identify with this man who had everything and now he has nothing and is really unhappy about it."

Surviving Seasons

While retooling *Survivors*, Hodges was aware of other well-known post-apocalyptic stories, with Stephen King's *The Stand* being the most prominent. He hopes that viewers will judge this series on its own merits. "I don't know if the original was entirely groundbreaking, but it was certainly very shocking and new," he says. "As far as I can remember, the only similar thing I had seen was *The Omega Man*, the version of *I Am Legend* with

will greenlight a follow-up season sooner rather than later. "I hope it will ultimately be a 13-episode series for American audiences," he says. "We're already in development on Series Two, which is basically the second half of the first series as American viewers will possibly see it. So I hope we'll be shooting again early in 2009."

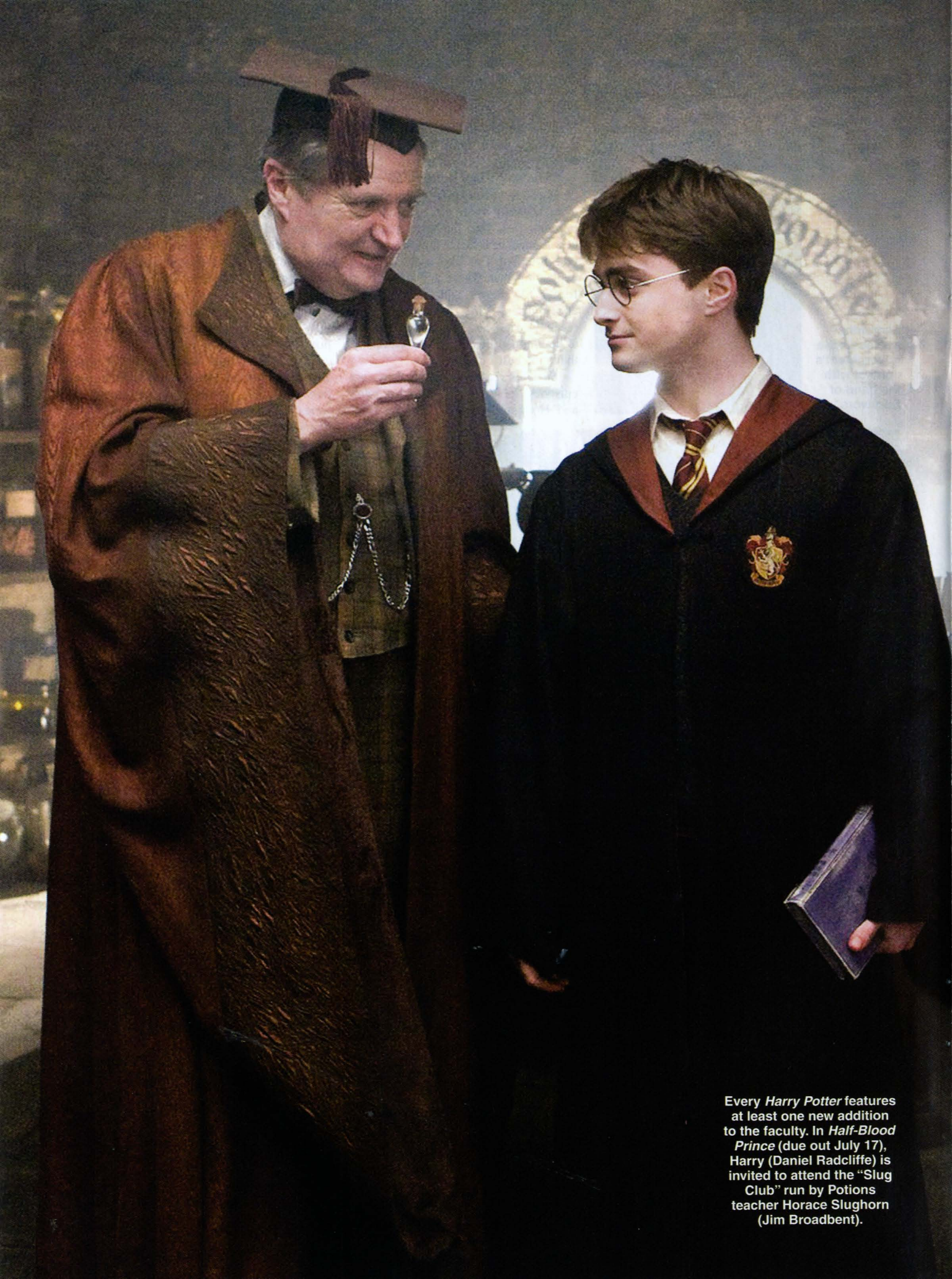
Looking ahead to the post-apocalyptic future, Hodges has long-term plans for *Survivors* should it continue. Nation's novel takes place over a period of five years, but right now, Hodges is simply taking one season at a time. "At the very least—and I say this with all humility—three years would be great," he offers. "If we go longer than that, I have storylines that I believe will get us through the second series in Britain, and certainly into a third. I have destinations for these characters that can go at least three seasons, but this stuff is in the lap of the gods—and the audience. I hope that we can get as far as the original show. In a perfect world, if we went four or five years, I'm sure there are enough stories to tell."

It isn't as though the prolific writer-producer doesn't have enough work to keep him



This playboy had everything until the virus took it all away.

Al becomes a reluctant father figure to 11-year-old fellow Muslim Najid.



Every *Harry Potter* features at least one new addition to the faculty. In *Half-Blood Prince* (due out July 17), Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) is invited to attend the "Slug Club" run by Potions teacher Horace Slughorn (Jim Broadbent).

WIZARD TALK

PRODUCERS DAVID HEYMAN & DAVID BARRON PONDER
THE CINEMAGIC OF THEIR *HARRY POTTER* SAGA.

For producers David Heyman and David Barron, overseeing the top-grossing Harry Potter film series isn't just a job; it's also a labor of love. That sentiment quickly becomes apparent when they begin talking about their cast and crew members more as an extended family than co-workers. Still, that isn't too surprising, when one considers that Heyman has literally been involved with the franchise since day one: His production company bought the film rights to Harry Potter just after the first novel was published in the UK. And Barron came aboard with the second film, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.

STARLOG: What has it been like watching these young actors grow up?

DAVID BARRON: It's the most expensive home movie of all time!

DAVID HEYMAN: What has been great, to put it simply, is that they're getting better. When [director] Chris Columbus began this process in 2000, they had minimal experience. Dan Radcliffe had been in *David Copperfield*, but Rupert Grint and Emma Watson hadn't done anything, and Chris would literally have to say, "Chin up, Dan! Rupert, stop smiling! Emma, focus!" And if you notice, the takes are quite short [in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*].

BARRON: Chris would talk through the actual take, because that was the only way to give them instruction.

HEYMAN: They got better from the first to the second, and then [*Prisoner of Azkaban* director] Alfonso Cuarón benefitted from them being a little older and having had more experience, particularly Emma. Alfonso tried to make it more naturalistic, and that was a slight shift for them. [*Goblet of Fire* director] Mike Newell is very much an actor's director, and between that, you had Rupert going off and doing films like *Driving Lessons* and Dan doing films and theater. Each time they go away, they learn from the other experiences and they bring what they learned back.

BARRON: They've become more mature as people and as actors, and it all comes into play each time they return.

HEYMAN: David Yates has engaged them more than any of the previous directors, partly because of where they are themselves as young adults, and partly where they are as actors. He [treats] them as collaborators; they are very much a part of creating this. Each film is about a different year, and so they're drawing upon their own experiences. And they'll

even say, "This doesn't feel quite right." David is keen to have them draw upon their own experiences and impressions, and I think that they've really developed. They've become more individualistic. When I met Dan, he was interested in professional wrestling, but now he's interested in, in no particular order, literature, history, women, music...

BARRON: It's a big spectrum to encompass!

HEYMAN: Emma is studying for her A

Many of the same people have been working on the films, so if anybody was to get a little uppity, I think—

BARRON: It's an ego-free environment, as much as any environment can be. It's very unusual.

HEYMAN: You couldn't get away with it here.

STARLOG: The tone of the last film, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, was often



American audiences may be unfamiliar with David Yates (left), but the talented director of *Order of the Phoenix* and *Half-Blood Prince* will also lens the last two entries in the *Harry Potter* saga.

Levels and has done so well in her exams. And Rupert is probably the most eccentric of the bunch now, whether it's the didgeridoo or his ice cream van.

BARRON: They're really bright and interesting people, and very inquisitive and fun to be with.

HEYMAN: Also, going back to them as actors, on this film they've got Jim Broadbent, Imelda Staunton, Maggie Smith, Michael Gambon, Alan Rickman and Gary Oldman. That's an incredible group of actors, all of whom have egos, because that's what any actor has to a point, but at the same time, there isn't any arrogance. There's humility and generosity, and I think as actors they see that. You don't really get any attitude from Dan, Rupert, Emma or any of the kids. You don't get it from any of the adults either, partly because they're around young kids. It's like a family here.

downbeat. This one is a good deal lighter, isn't it?

BARRON: That's true, in part. Harry has to follow Dumbledore's lead and try to discover, first of all, the truth about the Horcruxes and then their whereabouts. There's also the central adolescent romance that we touched on very briefly in *Goblet of Fire* with the Yule Ball; we slightly expand the repertory [in this movie].

HEYMAN: There's also the sense that danger lies within Hogwarts, and Voldemort is causing chaos in the outside world. So that casts a shadow over everything. I think there's a warm glow that permeates a good portion of the film because of the romance and friendships. A real tenderness exists between Harry, Ron and Hermione. They're very supportive of one another. I also think it's the funniest of the films. There's a real warmth in spite of—or

running alongside of—things. This movie doesn't deal as much with inner turmoil. The last film was very much about Harry struggling with his demons and also with Voldemort and the connection between them. But that's less of an issue [in *Half-Blood Prince*].

BARRON: There's also a slight feeling of WWII romances, where everything is heightened because [the characters] know how long they have, and everybody—even the children at Hogwarts—are very aware that Voldemort is out there. He's back, he's assembling an army and terrible things are happening in the outside world, but they're counterpointed by this wonderful warmth and teenage romance, which is reminiscent of the Second World War situation.

STARLOG: Could you talk about some of the chapter's new characters?

BARRON: There's Lavender. Jessie Cave is a real find. We went through a long casting process. As we've learned from the past, we can't ever trust to leaving the last stone unturned, because that's how we found Evanna [Lynch, who plays Luna] and Katie Leung [Cho Chang]—through open casting calls. But we found Jessie *before* we had the open call, and she's sensational. She's an absolute genius in this part.

HEYMAN: Yeah, she's wonderful. And seeing Bonnie Wright—who plays Ginny Weasley—blossom is lovely, and to see the burgeoning romance with Harry. And, of course, we have Jim Broadbent as Horace

First appearing in *Order of the Phoenix*, Luna Lovegood (Evanna Lynch) remains a quirky individual, but one who is also extremely honest and perceptive.



in a physical or practical sense, so our characters aren't touched by it that much.

BARRON: It's also easier in a line or two to present a feeling that an awful lot is happening outside without spending half an hour of the film trying to *show* something. It's actually quite difficult to present a sentiment on film in the same shorthand way you can in a book.

HEYMAN: We wanted to place Harry and Ginny in the center of something dangerous in order to keep that sense of what's going on beyond Hogwarts. We talked about it with Jo [Potter creator J.K. Rowling] and showed her what we were thinking, and she was really supportive. Believe it or not, we're somewhat [unaffected by external] pressures. If we paid attention to them, we could not move. We wouldn't be able to do *anything* if we listened to all of the issues and concerns. But we are fans, and as fans, we want to do right.

BARRON: Also, we've been blessed with screenwriters like Steve Kloves. He has written every film bar number five, and Steve has such a strong sense of this world and these characters. Steve is pretty much inside Jo's head as anybody can be, and he's very good at making choices

that encapsulate ideas and themes in the book which are spread over many pages and distilling them down to a single event or sequence.

HEYMAN: The other great benefit we have is Jo, who is protective but not precious and understands that a film is an adaptation of a book and *not* the book itself. It's a different form that requires certain things that she can't do in a novel. Jo has been wholly supportive of



The diabolical Draco Malfoy (Tom Fenton) is more dangerous than ever—and now he's working for Voldemort.

Slughorn, who's a bit of a dandy. Those are some of the exciting new characters. We also have Cormac McLaggen [Freddie Stroma], who is Ron's rival for Hermione and for the Quidditch position. He's an arrogant bastard who's very intimidating, but he's also a source of humor.

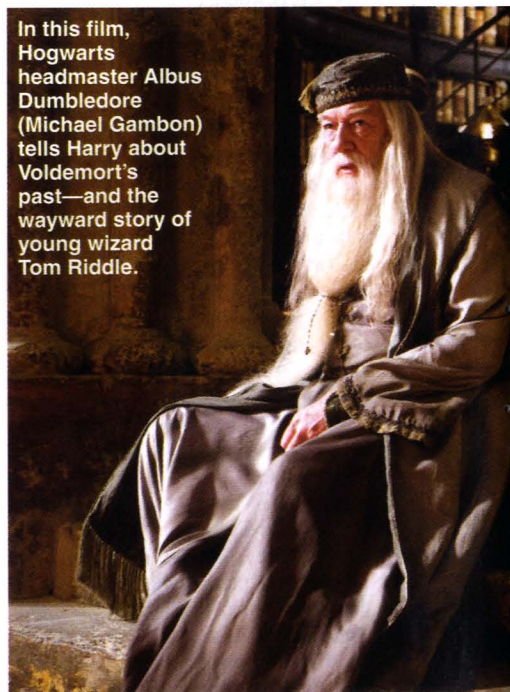
BARRON: There's also the young Tom Riddle. There are many new cast members, and they're all very strong.

HEYMAN: The youngest Voldemort, the Vol-

demort in the orphanage, is played by Hero Fiennes. He's Ralph's nephew, and he's amazing.

STARLOG: When you add a scene like the Weasleys' Christmas to the film, is there any reluctance because you're going "off-book" in a sense?

HEYMAN: I think it's very organic. That scene came about because it's important to keep the threat going. In the book, the outside world doesn't really touch Hogwarts as much,



In this film, Hogwarts headmaster Albus Dumbledore (Michael Gambon) tells Harry about Voldemort's past—and the wayward story of young wizard Tom Riddle.

Ron (Rupert Grint) is now the Keeper for the Gryffindor Quidditch team. And, of course, his unresolved romantic tension with Hermione (Emma Watson) continues.



us, and she's always there when we need her.

BARRON: Jo has been known to say, "I wish I thought of that!"

HEYMAN: Jo came to the read-through, and she has been down a number of times since then for a visit. When she showed up for the auction of her handwritten books, she brought them by here. She was around even more during the fifth film, because we needed the Black family tree, and she was able to supply us with that. Whenever we've needed something, Jo has been very quick to provide it.

STARLOG: The Quidditch matches have been reduced or removed from the last few films. What made you bring them back for *Half-Blood Prince*?

HEYMAN: Our approach to each movie is that we're telling a story, and we had Quidditch in the third film as well, with the



Unlike his predecessor Professor Snape, Slughorn isn't as self-serving and a stickler for the rules as most of his Slytherin brethren.

Dementors attacking Harry. We may not have shown all of the tournament matches [from the books], but frankly, there's only so much Quidditch that you can watch. I'm not sure whether even Jo understands the Quidditch rules, but I can assure you that they're challenging to say the least. The first two films were slightly more objective—they were the books translated into movies—but with *Azkaaban*, Alfonso, and subsequently Mike and David with [*Potter* screenwriters] Steve and Mike [Goldenberg], decided to tell the story from Harry's point-of-view. It still captures the spirit of the book, but we have to find logical ways of defining what we should keep in and what we should keep out. So the Quidditch matches aren't really relevant.

BARRON: Ron's Quidditch match is lovely color for the character. However, that scene was rather hard to include and do it justice without adding another 20 or 30 minutes to the

movie. But in this one, [the match is] essential to the plot, because it's Quidditch that drives Ron into Lavender's arms. It would have been difficult [to come up with something] for Ron to do that would have been equally as heroic.

HEYMAN: And, in a way, this is a different sort of Quidditch match than we've had or could ever do before. We call it "comedy Quidditch."

STARLOG: You're adapting the seventh book as two separate films, to be released in 2010 and 2011.

HEYMAN: *Deathly Hallows* is fantastic. I've read it a couple of times, and I'm reading it again now because the first time, I read it quickly because I was like everybody else [who wanted to find out how the series ended]. It was a Friday night—

BARRON: And he didn't come to work on Monday morning!

HEYMAN: It is such a ride, and then I was sitting there thinking, "Oh my goodness, this is a big film! How are we going to do this?" I believe we will do the book justice, and the movies are going to be fantastic.

STARLOG: How do you think you'll feel when all of this is over?

HEYMAN: It will be a combination of relief and grief. There will be that sense of "We've done it!" and it will be very satisfying and I'll be very proud to look back at this body of work. At the same time, we've built up a family here. I see David every day.

BARRON: It's rare to spend so much time on something and still enjoy coming to work every day. It's a blessing.

HEYMAN: These are really bright people who are the best at what they do, and who are ambitious to make films as good as they can be and work on material that encourages them. It's a great environment to be in. I will never be involved with anything like *Harry Potter* again, and it's amazing to be a part of this zeitgeist that people are so ravenous for and anticipate. This is something special to be appreciate *while* we're still making them.

World of Words

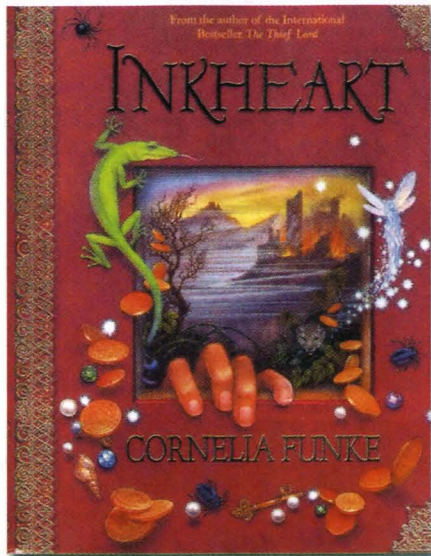
By JOE NAZZARO

The bestselling fantasy book *Inkheart* literally comes to life.

It's a cold January day at Shepperton Studios, just outside London, and director Iain Softley and an A-list group of actors are well into production on New Line Cinema's big-screen adaptation of Cornelia Funke's bestselling 2003 fantasy novel *Inkheart*. Temporarily sidelined by New Line's downsizing in mid-2008, the film has been picked up by the studio's parent company, Warner Bros., and is scheduled for a January 23 release.

On this particular morning, STARLOG will be watching one of the sequences being shot today, as well as sitting down with members of the cast and crew. For those unfamiliar with *Inkheart*'s premise, producer Diana Pokorny offers a condensed version of the story. "Brendan Fraser plays Mo Folchart. He has a great love for books, and he's a book-binder," she explains. "Mo reads to his three-year-old daughter Meggie [Isabella Clark] and wife Resa [Sienna Guillory] from a novel called *Inkheart*, which is a fantastic, magical story set during medieval times.

"But Mo reads it so beautifully that sometimes things inadvertently *come out of* the book. Mo considers this a curse, because he doesn't have control over this ability. When Mo reads aloud to his daughter, several char-



Based on Cornelia Funke's fantasy bestseller, *Inkheart* premieres January 23. *Inkspell* and *Inkdeath* complete the author's novel trilogy.

acters suddenly appear, including Capricorn [Andy Serkis], who is evil, and Dustfinger [Paul Bettany], who you aren't sure if he's good or bad. Also, sometimes people or things go *into* the book—like Mo's beloved wife."

The story picks up a decade later. "Unbeknownst to Meggie [now played by Eliza Hope Bennett]—who doesn't understand what's going on—Mo is searching for another *Inkheart* copy, hoping that somehow, by reading the book again, he can bring Resa back," Pokorny says. "Meanwhile, Capricorn has dis-



covered that he actually likes this world better, because there are all sorts of exciting things like guns and duct tape. So he's cornered in a little part of Italy, where he has things read out



"Silvertongue" (Fraser) is pursued by Dustfinger (Paul Bettany), an *Inkheart* character Mo read out of the book and into reality.



Mo's supernatural ability imperils both Aunt Elinor (Helen Mirren) and his daughter Meggie (Eliza Hope Bennett).



Literature in action! Mortimer Folchart (Brendan Fraser) demonstrates the power of reading—calling forth the tornado from *The Wizard of Oz*.

of other books for his own, evil use. However, Dustfinger *doesn't* like living in this world. He wants to return home, and he's hoping that Mo will be able to read him back into the book. So

the story sets off from there, as everyone comes back together, each with their own agenda.

"Along the way, Mo & co. pick up his Aunt Elinor [Helen Mirren], who also helps them. Jim Broadbent plays Fenoglio, *Inkheart's* original writer. Mo tries to find him, hoping that Fenoglio has a copy of *Inkheart* and can help him track down his family. Inadvertently, Mo reads a character out of *Arabian Nights* [Farid, played by Rafi Gavron], who also joins them on their adventures."

Inking the Deal

The process of bringing Funke's beloved novel to the screen began when executive producer Ileen Maisel was given an early copy of the finished manuscript. She flew to Hamburg with her partner Mark Ordesky to see the author, and ultimately secured the rights over David (*Harry Potter*) Heyman. As Maisel recalls, "One of the things that we did before we got a writer on board was spend lots of time in Hamburg with Cornelia, literally going through her book page by page. *Inkheart* is fantastic, but for example, Resa is almost a nonexistent character. What was her relation-

ship with Dustfinger? How do you define that? Did they have an affair or didn't they? We needed to clarify all of those things.

"People have certain expectations for the movie, but Iain and his team have taken it in a direction that nobody could have imagined; the writing on the faces, the Black Jackets' cool look and Helen's interpretation of her character, which isn't exactly how Elinor is in the book, but Cornelia loved it. When Cornelia is writing a novel, she's God in her world, but with the film, she was happy to share some of the responsibility."

Assembling a top-notch cast proved rather easy. Funke had written the first *Inkheart* with Fraser in mind as Mo, and Softley's wish list included Mirren, Broadbent and Bettany, all of whom enthusiastically responded to David Lindsay-Abaire's script. Even the search for Meggie was relatively straightforward. Although the producers saw a large number of young actresses, they ultimately cast Bennett, who had auditioned early on in the process.

The *Inkheart* character who arguably changed the most from book to movie is the villainous Capricorn. "Andy wanted to play that part," Maisel says. "Mark and he were



All Inkheart Photos: Murray Close/Copyright 2007 New Line Cinema

having dinner together, and Andy said, 'What about me for Capricorn?'"

"He also nailed the audition," Ordesky adds. "Andy was up against some other people, but he was great, while they were only fairly good. This is a fabulous opportunity for Andy, because he's a terrific actor, and he's very funny and scary in the movie."

Back in the studio, while Softley rehearses his cast through a scene that takes place in Capricorn's headquarters, some of the film's department heads offer a look at their respective contributions. Costume designer Verity Hawkes has set up several illustrated boards that show off the reference materials and fabric swatches for the major characters, as well as some of their actual wardrobes.

For the Black Jackets, Capricorn's henchmen, black lines mark their faces and clothing to indicate their origin. As Hawkes explains, "Capricorn finds someone with the ability to read people out of books, but he doesn't do it very well, so everybody comes out with writing on them. I wanted the Black Jackets to look cobbled together, with an army feel about them, but neither modern nor period; they're a collection of things that are threatening together. And when Capricorn originally gets read out of *Inkheart*, he's wearing a medieval costume.

"Then there's Mortola [Lesley Sharp]—who we later find out is Capricorn's mother—and the Inkheart maids, including



Every book must have a writer—and in this story, *Inkheart* was authored years ago by Fenoglio (Jim Broadbent).

Resa and some of the other girls he has read out from different books. For the villagers, we've referenced Eastern European refugees, and Capricorn terrorizes these villages. There's a scene in *The Arabian Nights* where a character's surrounded by the 40 Thieves, and we go from the Black Jacket world into the colorful world of the Arabian Nights."

Hawkes dressed Mo and Meggie in contemporary clothes, but put them together in such a way that they couldn't be dated. "Dustfinger looks like a traveler, so he's layered—he doesn't have a particular costume change," she adds. "He has one other jumper, and he keeps everything in his bag. Dustfinger's [outfits are] modern and practical, but still have a medieval sensibility. With Elinor, Helen came up with the great idea that she should look like [British poet and critic] Edith Sitwell, so I

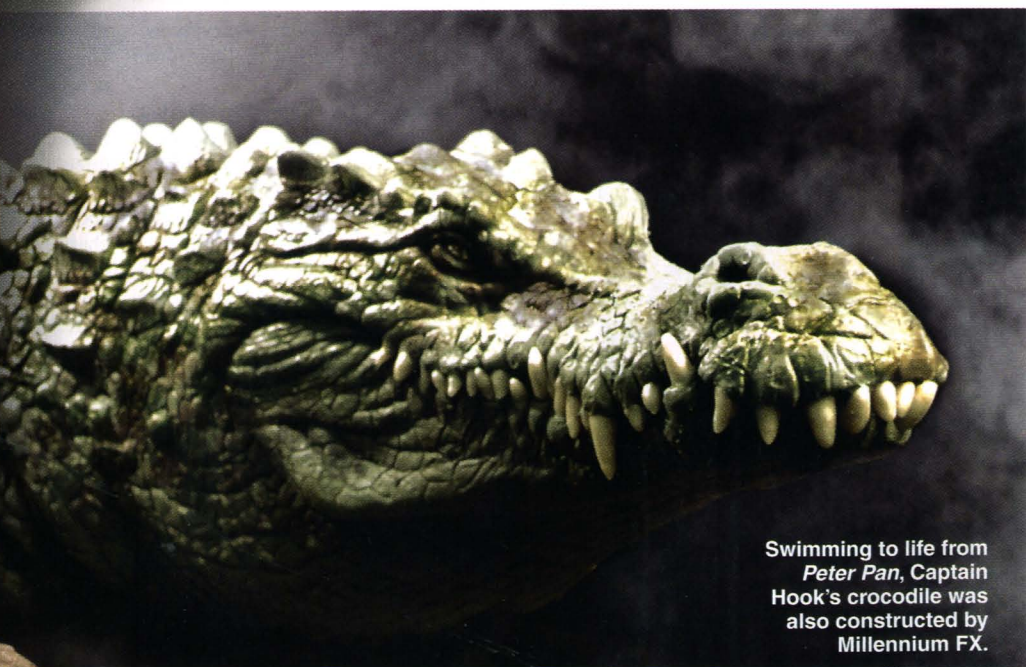
went out and collected [the appropriate apparel] to fit in with that brief."

The notion of using printed lines on various *Inkheart* characters was also employed by makeup designer Jenny Shircore. "I think the initial idea came from Iain," recalls Shircore, who won an Oscar for *Elizabeth*. "He was talking about Sienna's character, who is captured and taken into *Inkheart*. Iain said, 'She should have writing all over her,' and it progressed from there. We discussed how these people should look, because they're from the pages of a book written today about a period 500 years ago.

"I used several methods for the crowds, all of the people from *Inkheart*. There's Roman lettering on the men and slightly prettier, softer-colored medieval lettering on the women's faces. We took bits from the novel as well. I had the lettering made up three different ways:



Neill Gorton's Millennium FX created the movie's Minotaur and puppet doubles (for Toto and the ferret Gwin).



Swimming to life from *Peter Pan*, Captain Hook's crocodile was also constructed by Millennium FX.

stencils, tattoos and pen. That helped with the speed. Since it's print, we couldn't do it free-hand, because it's supposed to be from a book."

One of the major changes between the source book and Lindsay-Abaire's screenplay is the introduction of several characters from the *Inkheart* trilogy, including Toto and the winged monkeys from *The Wizard of Oz*, the crocodile from *Peter Pan* and a Minotaur taken from a book on Greek mythology. For the latter two creatures, visual FX supervisor Angus Bickerton recommended longtime collaborator Neill Gorton and his Millennium FX company.

"They were going CGI with the winged monkeys," Gorton says, "but they wanted some physical characters, primarily the Minotaur—a suit with an animatronic head—and giant crocodile. We also made stunt double puppets for the ferret and Toto, because when you're working with animals, you need backups.

"We spent lots of time trying to find the right 'levels' for the fantasy creatures. If you look at the flying monkeys, they're like chimpanzees with these big, beautiful wings. So design-wise, it was a case of picking the proper elements. It's the same thing with the crocodile—there's a lovely feel to it. Fantasy became reality without it being too much of a Disney caricature. I would go on the set and the crocodile looked real; it didn't look made up."

As Black As Ink

In order to create a film that straddled modern-day Europe and *Inkheart's* medieval fantasy realm, Softley enlisted production designer John Beard, whom he had worked with before on such films as *K-PAX* and *The Skeleton Key*. After settling on a number of shooting locations in Liguria, Italy, Beard's job was to re-create some of those buildings in the studio; he even brought in a truckload of stone from the area.

"The reason we went to Italy is because we found this fantastic village called Balestrino, which was completely abandoned apart from the people who lived at the top," Beard offers. "I always imagined that I would have to build ruins in the streets to make it look like an uninhabited village, but it was the other way around—we had to spend time and money making it safe to work there. We filmed three major scenes in Liguria: the book fair, Capricorn's village and the seaside town."

Beard has worked with directors ranging from Terry Gilliam to Martin Scorsese, and he enjoys having the freedom to interpret the reality that he's helping to create. "I used to prefer the things I did during the '80s, like *Brazil*, *The Last Temptation of Christ* and *Absolute Beginners*," he admits. "I avoided period films because they usually need to be a perfect re-creation of things that were carefully documented. Iain was set to direct *The Wings of the Dove* after *Hackers* and *Backbeat*, and he told me, 'Come on, let's have a go at this!' Somehow we managed to bring a contemporary look to *Wings of the Dove* even

though it's a period piece. After that, all I got offered for a long while were period films, but I always tried to give them a little bit of the unexpected."

Meanwhile, in Capricorn's castle, Softley is ready to shoot Scene #73, which involves virtually all of the main cast members as well as several Black Jacket extras, including a disfigured giant aptly named "Flatnose." In this scene, Capricorn's henchmen have captured Mo, Meggie and Elinor, thanks to information from Dustfinger, who is hoping that Mo can be compelled to read him back into the last remaining *Inkheart* copy. But to Dustfinger's chagrin, Capricorn has no intention of keeping his bargain and throws the book in the fireplace.

The sequence is a *tour de force* for Serkis, who extols the virtues of modern-day society—including, for some strange reason, duct tape. With so many actors involved, the scene has to be shot over and over from different angles, which means endless takes—especially when the tiniest error can ruin a perfect shot. At one point between takes, Flatnose leans over to Bennett and tells her a joke. The two then link arms and sing, "We're off to see the wizard!" as they exit the set amidst gales

of laughter. Perhaps you had to be there.

During a break in filming, the actors get a moment or two for a quick chat, beginning with Bennett, who talks about *Inkheart's* lengthy auditioning process. "Casting children is really different from casting adults," she points out. "My first audition was in April [2006], which is when I met Iain. But they changed the casting agents and then had open auditions, so I thought that I didn't get the part. Four months later, though, I got another call, and I met with Hubbards Casting and then met Iain again over lunch. We talked about the film, and I was offered the part the following week. So it was a long process, but this was something that I wanted to do from when I first read the book. Usually, I don't get my hopes up, but I did on this one, so it was a relief when Iain called."

For Serkis, the subject of *Inkheart* first came up during that aforementioned dinner with Ordesky, with whom he had worked on *The Lord of the Rings*. "It's so rare that you read a script that's rooted in reality but can be translated into a fantasy world," Serkis says. "That's what appealed to me."

Capricorn is more of a conventional villain in the book ("A heart as black as ink," Serkis



STARLOG's on set for this sequence as Capricorn (Andy Serkis, seated left) demands Mo read of the 40 Thieves' treasure—and bring out the gold.



Medieval street performer Dustfinger has his own unique skills. He's a firethrower.



Iain (K-PAX) Softley directed *Inkheart* from a screenplay by David Lindsay-Abaire.

quotes), but his film incarnation is more tongue-in-cheek. “Capricorn is very droll and dry,” Serkis remarks. “He likes the finer things, and I suppose that what he’s about—and the reason why he’s in this world—is that Pandora’s Box has been opened, and this guy has come into this parallel universe, and he [falls in love with] these material things. Capricorn loves fine suits and wines, and he’s very happy about living in a castle. He loves the smells and sights and sounds; that’s what really does it for him.”

Out of the Inkwell

Serkis isn’t the only actor with strong ideas about how to play his character. During the first day of rehearsals, Mirren reportedly showed up with a large shopping bag of “research” for Elinor. “What is on the page is wonderful,” she explains, “but I couldn’t see my way around acting the way Elinor is in the book. She’s very strong and interesting, so I wasn’t saying, ‘Oh, that’s boring. I want to do something else!’ But I didn’t feel that I could perform [the character as she is in the novel]. Another actress would have been better in that role, so my suggestion was, ‘If you want me, can I bring what I think I can give to it?’”

“I’ve based my [perception] of the character on Edith Sitwell, the English poet who completely lived in the imaginative world of books, literature and poetry as opposed to the real world. Elinor’s story is about learning to live in the real world, albeit the fantasy world of our wonderful film. That’s my thinking behind the character, so thus the costume and the turbans, which are absolutely based on Edith Sitwell. Elinor is an exotic and bohemian woman who lives in the world of literature, so that was my way into it.”

Fraser has tried to structure his performance as Mortimer “Silvertongue” Folchart as though he’s in a three-act play. “In the beginning, Mo is absolutely lost, because he has spent the last 12 years looking for Resa,” Fraser comments. “But he hasn’t come clean

with his daughter about the reason why her Mom is missing, so there are some fairly dark themes to play here.

“Mo doesn’t necessarily want this ‘Silvertongue’ ability, and then to learn that his daughter also has this power makes it even worse for him. He’s gripped with fear, and you really only see him emerge, step up and get a backbone at the end, when what he loves most is threatened, and that’s his family.”

If Funke had Fraser in mind for Mo, Bettany jokes that he didn’t have the same short-cut in landing the Dustfinger role. “I think she had Jude Law in mind,” he deadpans. “I was reading the book with my nine-year-old when the script turned up. I usually find fantasy quite difficult, but I didn’t while reading *Inkheart*. I think that’s because the book is so firmly set in this world, which is really helpful for me and people who aren’t so *au fait* with that type of story.

“What I love about Dustfinger and the

other characters is that they aren’t entirely bad or good. He’s an opportunist who wants to go home, and Dustfinger and Mo will do each other over to get what they want. Mo wants his wife back, and Dustfinger wants to return to his wife and children, but unfortunately their objectives clash. That’s fun to play.”

And what about that old admonition about working with children and animals—is that fun, too? “We have great kids and animals,” Bettany declares. “Eliza is incredibly articulate, smart and works so hard. She works a day like we have to, and then she has to go to school as well. Gwin the ferret also goes to school. We have like 20 ferrets, and each one does different things. One of them is really stupid and dull and just sits on my shoulder, and one is an attack ferret who runs up my shoulder and tries to get my ear. At the last minute, we’ll swap the attack ferret for the dull one. We have so many ferrets and, of course, Toto the dog is here, too.”

Softley has been associated with *Inkheart* longer than just about anybody involved with the film. “It’s incredibly fulfilling working on a project like this, where we’re essentially creating our own world,” he observes. “You’ve seen the sets—that’s what distinguishes my job from working in another medium, such as the theater. I have the opportunity to create these magical worlds as well as to go to real places, and [my job is to] find that link between realism and fantasy. I knew that *Inkheart* was going to be rich, and in terms of its scope, this film has been very enjoyable.”

The *Inkheart* book series is a bestselling trilogy, so the subject of possible sequels rears its head. The principal cast is signed on for *Inkspell* and *Inkdeath*, the second and third installments, but it remains to be seen if this group will reunite for another adventure. “I love this project,” Diana Pokorny enthuses. “I love the book, the material, the characters and everything *Inkheart* is about. We have a great cast and got Iain to direct it [because of the books]. It all ultimately stems from a fantastic source!”



Design & Layout: Heiner Feil



Farid (Rafi Gavron) joins Meggie and fellow heroes when he emerges from the fabled *Arabian Nights*.

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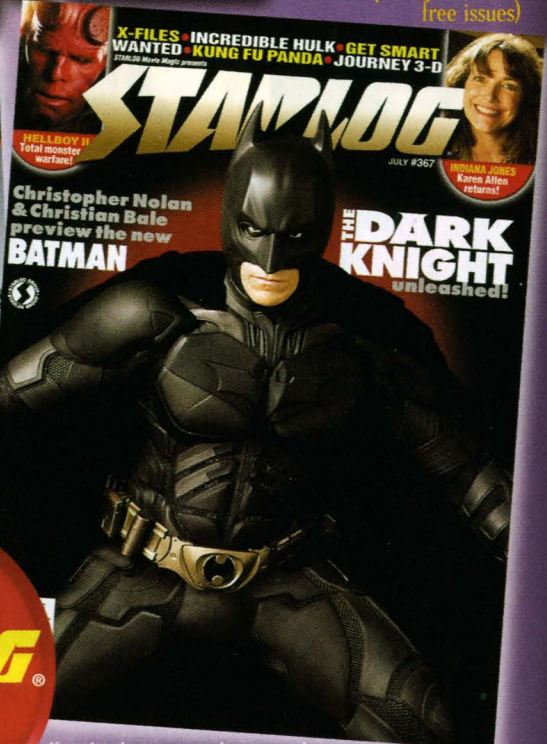
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HAVING A

STORY ARTIST & ULTIMATE FANBOY MARK WALTON SPEAKS UP ABOUT *BOLT*'S BIGGEST FAN EVER, RHINO.



WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE MARK WALTON! The Disney story artist is carving out a second mini-career as a voiceover guy.



What's a superhero without a sidekick?

Batman has Robin. The Green Hornet has Kato. Mr. Incredible has Frozone. Qui-Gon Jinn has Obi-Wan Kenobi and...Jar Jar Binks. (OK, forget that last one.)

Disney's latest superhero, the wonderdog Bolt, has a sidekick named Rhino. He's a hamster, except he's far, far more than simply a sidekick. He's Bolt's biggest fan. Ever.

Mark Walton, who voices the chubby furball, is just as enthusiastic as his character when describing him. "Rhino is basically the ultimate fanboy," he begins. "Anybody who has gone to a comic book or science fiction convention, or who has friends who are into *Star Trek*, *MacGyver* or *Star Wars*, [has seen these people who] dedicate their lives to being the *biggest* fan of what- or whomever. In this case, Rhino watches lots of television in his little Habitrail, and his favorite TV show is *Bolt*. He idolizes Bolt. Rhino would love to be Bolt if he could. And when the opportunity comes where he actually meets the show's

star, the real-life Bolt, Rhino jumps at the chance to participate in a Bolt adventure across the U.S."

Rhino comes equipped with his own help-the-hero action accessory: his exercise ball. "Many pet hamsters do get stuck in those balls," Walton explains. "This is what Rhino knows. But he *can* get out of the ball when he needs to leave it for special moments of super-spy action. Rhino ends up using the ball as his chariot; it's his special vehicle. It can float on water, bounce around, get into hard-to-reach spaces and move objects. Rhino isn't handicapped; he's a *handi-capable* hamster who uses the ball to his advantage."

Scratch Tracks

There comes a point in the story where our hero, Bolt, needs a little encouragement. He's facing the fact that he doesn't actually possess super-powers, and that his so-called special abilities were, indeed, effects created for his TV show. Luckily for Bolt, his biggest booster is around to give him the proper motivation.

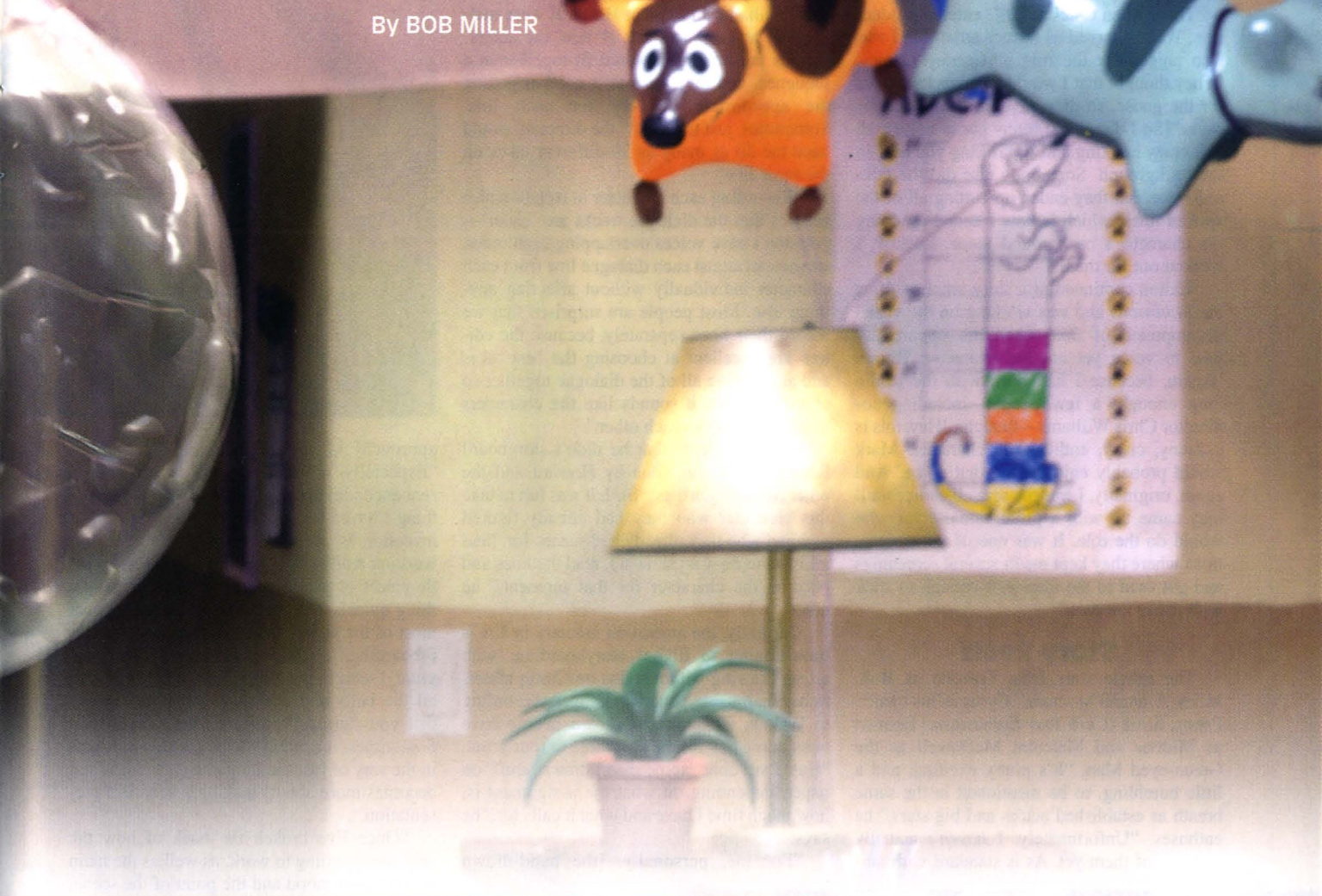
"That's funny, because that scene was written later in the process," Walton remarks. "I think people enjoy Rhino so much that they wanted to see a little more of him. The directors came up with the idea of having Rhino encourage and inspire Bolt, rather than the other way around. It's a fun moment—to have a rousing *Braveheart* speech, only it's between a hamster and a dog instead of a rebel and 1,000 angry Scots. And Rhino does the same thing for the cat, Mittens, later on as well."

It turns out that Walton is more than just an actor. His regular job is that of a Disney story artist, and he has worked for the company for the past 13 years. "I was an illustration major at Utah State University in Logan, Utah," he recalls. "It's an agricultural college, primarily, but they happened to have a really great illustration program at the time, headed by Glenn Edwards. I had always wanted to do something with art, but I wasn't quite sure what—whether it be as a comic strip artist or a children's storybook illustrator.

"Then a childhood friend found out on the Internet about Disney's internship program in

BALL

By BOB MILLER



"Many pet hamsters do get stuck in those balls," says Walton of his animated alter-ego Rhino. "But he *can* get out of the ball when he needs to leave it for superspy action."

Florida. I didn't have a computer of my own, but he thought that I could submit to it, and I said, 'Yeah, send my stuff in.' Amazingly, I got in, and I learned about storyboarding on the fly during that program. They had a studio then right there in Disney World. We worked in this big, open room with glass as one of the walls. Tourists would come in from the park and watch us working. It was a little disconcerting, but I got used to it after a couple of months.

"I ended up taking six months to tour around the country in one of those traveling mall shows for the company. We were promoting *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, which was being produced at the time. I talked about the storyboard art and animation to people and kids at malls. In the process, I met Kevin Harkey, and he took me on as his assistant in California the following year, in 1997. So I ended up working on *Tarzan*, and then I did some stuff on *The Emperor's New Groove*, *Home on the Range* and *Chicken Little* and I worked on *Rapunzel* for a while."

During *Home on the Range*, Walton voiced

a couple of bulls on the scratch track, and his rendition ended up in the movie. “They liked the way that I pitched the voices, and my take on their personalities,” Walton modestly says. “Originally, they were going to cast an actor, but they liked what I was doing well enough to keep me.”

Then, when *Chicken Little* entered production, Walton served as a story artist—and was also tagged for the role of Goosey Loosey. “They thought that I would be a wacky choice for the goose, so they gave me a chance,” he says. “[So I did some] funny goose noises: all that crazy honking and squawking you hear in the background. Somebody else did the talking voice, but they ended up cutting all of the spoken lines, which is how I ended up doing the character’s background voice. Luckily, I worked out for them.”

Walton continued as a story artist on *Meet the Robinsons* and was working on the visual development of *Bolt* when the opportunity rose to voice yet another character: Rhino. “Again, because I had been with the studio long enough, a few people—including co-director Chris Williams—thought, ‘Hey, this is a funny, crazy, enthusiastic character. Mark would probably enjoy doing that voice.’ And again, originally, I was the scratch choice until they came up with a professional actor who would do the role. It was one of those situations where they kept me in several screenings and got used to the idea well enough to stick with me in the part.”

Story Reels

The movie stars John Travolta as Bolt, Miley “Hannah Montana” Cyrus as his owner, Penny, Susie (*Curb Your Enthusiasm*) Essman as Mittens and Malcolm McDowell as the Green-eyed Man. “It’s pretty exciting, and a little humbling, to be mentioned in the same breath as established actors and big stars,” he enthuses. “Unfortunately, I *haven’t* actually met any of them yet. As is standard with ani-

mated features, we recorded our lines by ourselves, at different times, and sometimes in recording studios on opposite coasts.

“Typically, I would read each line at least three different ways—soft, loud, fast, slow, passionate, low-key, etc.—to give the directors and editors some creative choices. The directors [Williams and Byron Howard] were really good at keeping track of how the actors’ various performances would fit together in a sequence, and they were also good at getting the appropriate delivery for each line. Sometimes, just to be safe, the directors would have me do as many as 30 different takes on the same line!”

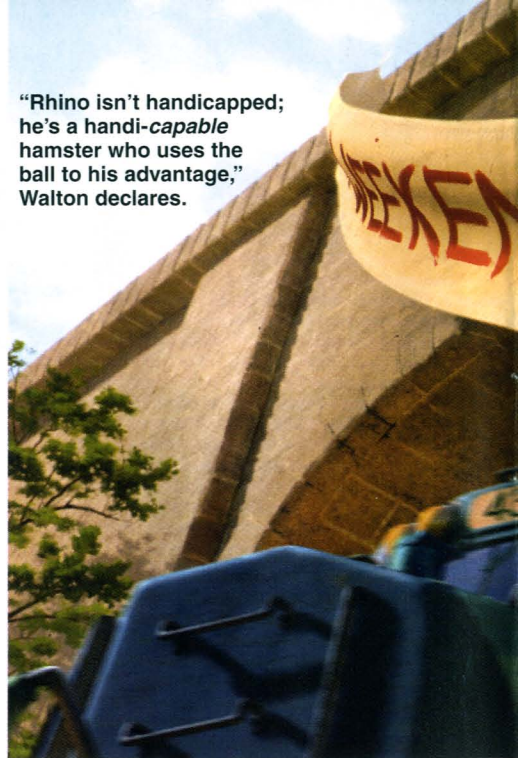
“Recording each character in isolation also ensures that the dialogue tracks are ‘clean’—you don’t have voices overlapping each other, so you can adjust each dialogue line from each character individually without affecting anything else. Most people are surprised that we record their lines separately, because the editors are excellent at choosing the best takes and assembling all of the dialogue together so seamlessly that it sounds like the characters must be talking to each other.”

Walton laments that he didn’t storyboard Rhino, which was done by Howard and the other *Bolt* story artists. “Still, it was fun to take this character who they had already figured out, and who they already had scenes for, [and all I had to do was] show up, read the lines and become the character for that moment,” he notes.

Currently, the animation industry in LA is transitioning to digital storyboarding, with artists drawing with a stylus on Cintiq tablets rather than using pencil and paper. According to Walton, Disney’s storyboard people have been doing this for the past three to four years. “But I’ve done some hand-drawn stuff on paper, depending on what the assignment is, how much time I have and what it calls for,” he says.

“For me, personally, [the hand-drawn

“Rhino isn’t handicapped; he’s a handi-capable hamster who uses the ball to his advantage,” Walton declares.



approach] is faster,” he candidly replies. “Especially when I’m working through a sequence idea for the first time, and it’s something I haven’t done before, or a good deal of invention is required. I find that it’s easier working really small and rough and fast on little pieces of paper where I can see the whole thing quickly put together. Photoshop is what most of the people here use when they’re storyboarding. It’s an extremely powerful program. I tend to get a little lost sometimes with all the bells and whistles—all those options that you can use to juice up the storyboards. Sometimes, it actually slows me down. It gets in the way of just thinking about the idea [and becomes more about] making a beautiful presentation.

“Once I’ve broken the back of how the sequence is going to work, as well as the main action, main mood and the point of the scene, then sometimes it *is* easier to go back and add a little color, or a bit of animation, or split the levels and make a nicer backdrop for the action. Some people work really fast on the computer. They’ve done everything that they were trying to do with pencil and paper, and it’s easier for them to move on to the computer. I like to work as simply as possible whenever I can.”

AfterEffects

In order to enhance the story reel presentation, Adobe AfterEffects software is used to apply pans and limited animation to the storyboards. It’s a technique that was pioneered by Brad Bird on *The Iron Giant*. “I’ve done some stuff where they’ve actually had somebody go back, pull apart what I did and *add* AfterEffects to it,” Walton remarks. “They have a guy here who adds animation, effects and 3-D elements to storyboards. That’s his specialty. I was supposed to create a video game chase where you’re being pursued down a hallway by these monsters, so I created a puppet with separate pieces—the head, neck,



“He idolizes Bolt,” notes Walton. “Rhino would love to *be* Bolt if he could.”



Incredibles Image: Copyright 2004 Disney Enterprises Inc./Pixar Animation Studios. All Rights Reserved.

arms and legs—where you could go back and manipulate the animation in the sequence based on the drawings that I had done.

“Normally, I don’t get nearly that involved. My stuff tends to be pretty simple and rough, and it isn’t always completely ‘on model.’ I’m more focused on the scene’s emotions and content. Brad is amazing. He has great people who combine the storyboarding with the workbook stage. They’re not only figuring out the content and acting, but they’re thinking about the camera angles, what the effects are going to be and [deciding on] the timing and dialogue. I haven’t gotten that deep into the boarding process. Perhaps someday I will. Right now, I’m happy with focusing on the mood, emotions, characters and acting rather than the technical side.”

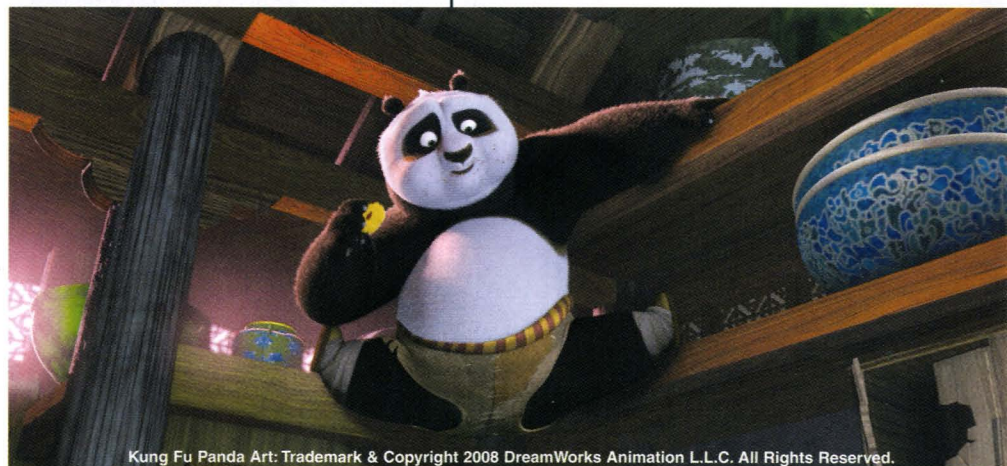
Currently, Walton is boarding the visual development of *King of the Elves*, the animated fantasy adventure due to hit theaters in about four years. Otherwise, he says, “Here and there, I continue to do some pickup lines for Rhino, and whatever kind of press, like this. I haven’t quit my day job quite yet!” he laughs. “We’ll see what happens. I hope to have the opportunity to do more voicework, but I don’t want to count my chickens before they hatch.”

Earlier, Walton spoke of Rhino as the ultimate fanboy. Is Rhino a bigger fanboy than Syndrome from *The Incredibles*, Comic Book Guy from *The Simpsons* or Po from *Kung Fu Panda*? “That’s hard to say. Rhino is a *different* kind of fanboy,” Walton muses. “Those are all great characters. But unlike Syndrome, Rhino doesn’t turn to evil; it never becomes a *Fatal Attraction* thing. And contrary to *Kung Fu Panda*, [Rhino’s situation] is more of a fantasy that never becomes completely real in the real world. But that doesn’t stop Rhino from trying—or from *imagining* that he’s a superhero, or that he’s helping a superhero.

“Rhino is less sardonic and embittered than Comic Book Guy,” he continues, “be-

cause Rhino is total, nonstop, round-the-clock enthusiasm and hopefulness. And unlike Comic Book Guy, he tries to participate in the adventure himself, rather than reading or talking about it.”

Williams and Howard have favorably compared Walton to the enthusiastic hamster—and pointed out that Walton’s workstation, and his home, are full of fan memorabilia. “It’s true,” Walton admits. “I don’t know how many won-



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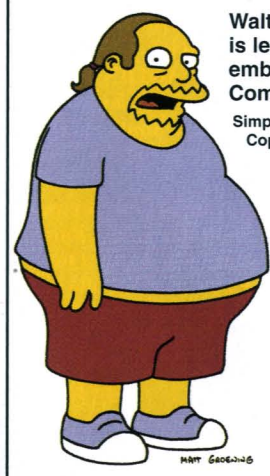
derful adventures I’ve had in real life, but I can identify with Rhino’s love of the art form. I love movies. I love animation. I love art and comic books, and I can get very *passionate* in my discussions about the things I feel strongly about, or that I wish would be better. It probably scares some people off. They’ll go, ‘Aw, come on. It’s just a movie.’ However, to me, it’s more than that. Although Rhino takes it a few steps further. But, to a *small* degree, we do have that in common.”

Mark Walton’s final words prove that he is, indeed, a true fan. “It’s going to be really exciting to see an interview with me in print. Especially in STARLOG magazine. That is going to be *awesome!*”

Who is the Ultimate in Animated Fanboys? You be the judge.

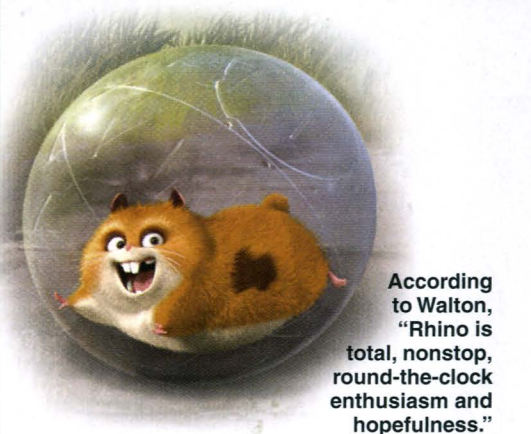
Walton reports, “Rhino is less sardonic and embittered than Comic Book Guy.”

Simpsons Image: Trademark & Copyright 2008 20th Century Fox Film Corp. All Rights Reserved.



“Unlike Syndrome, Rhino doesn’t turn to evil,” Walton observes. That’s a *good* thing.

Contrary to Po, Rhino’s situation “is more of a fantasy that never becomes completely real in the real world.”



According to Walton, “Rhino is total, nonstop, round-the-clock enthusiasm and hopefulness.”

Design & Layout: Heiner Fell

The *Curious Case of Benjamin Button* doesn't fit the typical Hollywood mold. F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story about a man who lives his life backward is now a big-budget motion picture with a star-studded cast, rife with special FX. It's a romance. It's a war movie. And it's a fantasy that brings to mind *Forrest Gump*, another epic fable about a folksy Southern man who finds himself in the center of numerous historical events.

The *Forrest Gump* comparisons are perhaps inevitable, as both *Benjamin Button* and *Forrest Gump* were penned by Oscar-winning screenwriter Eric Roth. While people looking for connections will find some, Roth believes that *Benjamin Button* is very much its own movie. "There are some similarities," he says. "They're both fables. They both concern the life of a man going against certain obstacles. But that may be as far as it goes. I think you'll find that most of the reviews will say that it's very different from *Forrest Gump*. That film was of its place and time, and was about this strange human being thrust into all sorts of ridiculous situations and confronting history. *Benjamin Button* is much more believable. It's more grounded in a way, and also deals with bigger subject matters like the textures of life and passing of time. Even though I



Benjamin Button is about many things, including romance. Benjamin first meets Daisy (Cate Blanchett) as a child, and their paths cross several times during their lives.

love *Forrest Gump* with all of my heart, *Benjamin Button* is a more mature piece."

Despite those similarities and differences, Roth probably wouldn't have done *Benjamin Button* if he hadn't written *Forrest Gump*. "I think *Forrest Gump* gave me the courage to do *Benjamin Button*, because I realized that one of the things about *Forrest Gump*—and maybe it's true of my writing altogether—is that you have to be willing to fail, so that you can try all sorts of things," Roth observes. "With *Forrest Gump*, I realized that I had succeeded, so I felt—not that I could do it again—but I had this confidence that I could write things that might be out of the box, but they would hopefully work. In this case, they worked for [director] David Fincher and the Powers That Be, because *Benjamin Button* is an unusual movie. It isn't your standard fare."

Selected Photos: Merrick Morton

The Curious Case of Writing Benjamin Button

Scripting under unusual circumstances, Eric Roth tells a fable for the ages.

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON

Living Backward

Benjamin Button had been in development at Paramount Pictures for many years. Roth first became involved in 2002. "Sherry Lansing, who was head of Paramount at the time, and Kathleen Kennedy, one of the producers, asked me if I would think about writing a version of it," he recalls. "They had a number of drafts that, for whatever reasons, weren't quite filling the bill. So they asked me if I would look at the story and see if I could come up with some ideas about how I *might* do it. And from there, I jumped right in!"

Fitzgerald's 1922 short story is a rather straightforward narrative and bare-bones account of Benjamin's life, so one of Roth's tasks was to flesh that out. "I didn't want to do anything disrespectful to Fitzgerald, because he's 20 times the writer I'll ever



Born old and aging backward, Benjamin leads a unique life, but one which Roth believes *all* people can relate to in some manner.

be," Roth humbly acknowledges. "I did research as to what, why and where he wrote the story, and as best as I could tell, he had written it as a whimsy. It was a fantasy to him. The main kernel of it to Fitzgerald was this idea of a guy who ages backward and how that would affect his life. So I felt a slight permission to update it, as well as take a tack that was different

Oscar-winning *Forrest Gump* scribe Eric Roth wrote the screenplay, with screen story by Roth and Robin Swicord from F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button." Brad Pitt stars.

from the original story. I figured that this was an opportunity to make my own attempt at it."

The film defies easy categorization, and contains many different cinematic elements. "It's an epic film told in a small way," Roth says. "So it's a big movie in that sense. It spans a man's life, almost 100 years of our history. I wanted to make it a journey, an adventure story, and then there's this odd situation where a man grows in reverse and ages backward. I knew that would be interesting, because we would have to figure out a way to do that using the latest digital technology. But that magnificent technology services Benjamin's story, rather than showing what we can do. I thought that this was a journey worth taking for an audience. It's like a good novel, and it's a love story. It has all of the ingredients of a pretty wonderful movie."

When he began work on the script, Roth soon realized that he needed to develop Benjamin into a three-dimensional person whom audiences would follow throughout the course of the film. "I wanted to keep him simple—not simple-minded, but not much different than you or me," he comments. "And I wanted him to be a decent man who is confronted with all sorts of things, like we all are. It's the life of an individual, but obviously it's a unique life, because Benjamin is aging backward—and Brad Pitt is playing him!"

"I invented a fable around Benjamin, but I didn't want it to be hugely dramatic. I wanted his life to have the ups and downs, the joys and sadness of life. The story is in the tradition of Mark Twain, because it's a fable and a yarn, and there's an American quality to it. I thought if you put those ingredients together, it would make for an interesting movie. At face value, you would think that aging backward would be great, because you're getting younger, stronger, handsomer. But it *isn't* that simple. You also have to deal with



Photo: Digital Domain/Asylum

All Photos: Copyright 2008 Paramount Pictures Corp. & Warner Bros. Ent. All Rights Reserved.

mortality, loneliness and the passage of time.”

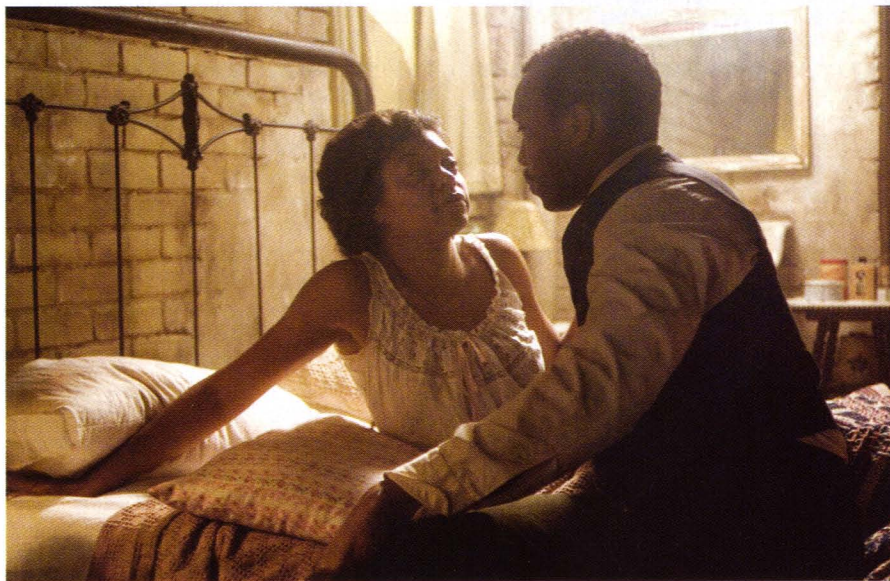
Fincher agreed to direct the project after Roth had been scripting it for some time, and the pair quickly formed a good working relationship. “I had already written two drafts,” Roth says. “Although David came along after I had been on it, he actually predated me, because he had been interested in this material, by the other writers, and had been monitoring it. However, the scripts never quite worked for him, and whatever I had in my screenplay did.”

“Fortunately, I’ve worked with many wonderful directors, and it’s always a great creative combat. It’s a good give-and-take when you have two people who respect each other. David respected my ideas, and I respected his. We were both on the same page about trying to do our best with what we hoped would be a good movie. And that isn’t unusual for really creative directors—they don’t have any ego about good ideas.”

Loving Forward

During the long writing process, the story went through a number of changes. “One big thing was the technology: Could we pull off this seamless [transition] where you believe

Sure, growing younger *sounds* great. But as Roth points out, it’s a double-edged sword which forces Benjamin to deal with mortality, loneliness and losing loved ones.



Abandoned at (fittingly) an old-age home, Benjamin is raised by Queenie (Taraji P. Henson, pictured here with Mahershali Hashbazi) at a place where he can go unnoticed.

that a person is *truly* aging in reverse? I wasn’t really sure they could do that without using three or four different actors,” he says. “Also, the themes became more evident as we were writing it. I wasn’t as articulate as I could have been, and once people, particularly David, started asking me the right questions, I began coalescing certain ideas about how nothing lasts. Or does it? And how we have to hold on to certain things in life and let other things go. It’s the whole notion of time passing, which is always important in my work. And what does that mean to a person like Benjamin Button?”

Makeup and CGI advancements allowed Roth more freedom in his writing. “It also made the movie possible, because they really were talking about using multiple well-known

actors for the various ages,” he notes. “David is a master at using digital technology. He paints every frame in a certain way, like New Orleans in 1920, and nobody can do it the way he can. [That technology allowed] us to do a whole century of history. More importantly, Benjamin’s character required CG, but in such a way that it wouldn’t be evident and becomes ingrained in the piece and part of the storytelling. I don’t think we could have done that four or five years ago.”

Casting Pitt delighted the screenwriter. “I was thrilled,” he enthuses. “Not everybody looks like Brad, and I know that isn’t always a good thing, so in a way, you’re bringing in an odd burden, but that’s what Benjamin’s life is about. You see that Benjamin is a happy man,

but he knows what it means to be different, and there are textures to that contrast. Obviously, casting an important actor, one of our biggest movie stars, helped get the film made. And I knew that Brad would be very capable and competent.”

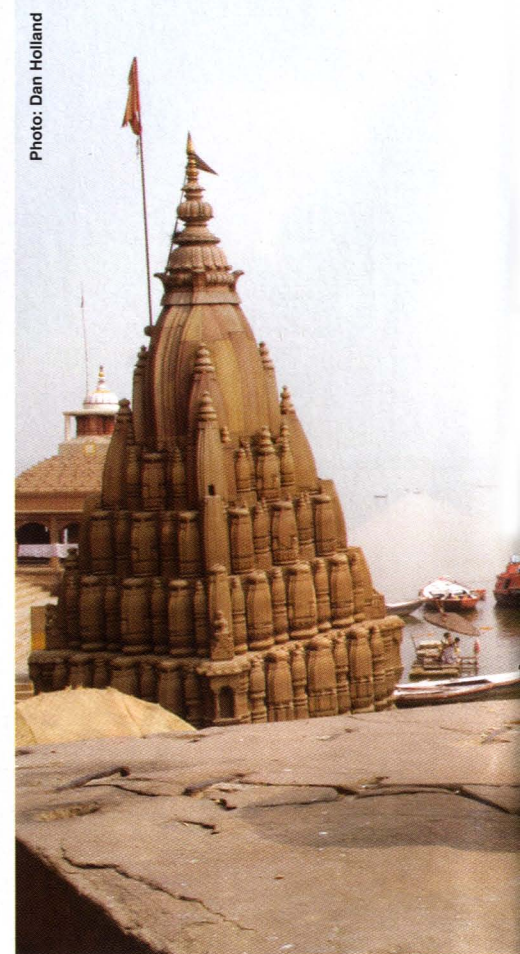


Photo: Dan Holland

The lifelong romance between Benjamin and Daisy (Cate Blanchett) is central to the story, and proved to be another obstacle that Roth had to overcome. "That was probably the hardest part, because I didn't want it to only be about fate stepping in," Roth says. "It had to feel like a real relationship, with missed opportunities and people at different stages in their lives when they meet and one person wanting to do one thing when the other does not. [I wanted to focus on] how this relationship withstood that, and they do come together in an interesting way. But then you'll see what [transpires], and what happens when people have to part. *Benjamin Button* is very much about hellos and goodbyes."

In addition to the romantic elements, *Benjamin Button* features war sequences that should appeal to the male demographic, covering all the bases of the moviegoing public. "As I said, it's an epic!" Roth laughs. "But the film is about something; it isn't just random stuff. Hopefully, *Benjamin Button* is a movie that will make people want to sit in a theater for more than two hours."

"Benjamin Button is very much about hellos and goodbyes."

Reflecting on the final result, Roth believes that David Fincher did a great job directing a picture that will not only touch people, but get them to ponder their own lives.



The "growing younger" conceit has appeared throughout history and literature, but Roth says that he didn't draw from any other sources. "I wish I could say there were, but there really wasn't," he remarks. "The only thing I knew about, and it's so sad, are those poor children who have this disease [progeria] that makes them age prematurely and die

young. It just points out the tenuous nature of life.

"My biggest challenge was trying to make the movie feel real but also emotional," Roth adds. "Also, just on a logistical basis, I had to keep track of [the different] times in this person's life. I always had to know where Benjamin was at emotionally and physically, what he could and couldn't do—even what color his hair was!"

As noted earlier, living backward isn't all it's cracked up to be. "The advantages are that you regain the things that you lose with age, particularly the physical—your skin, vitality, stamina and curiosity to some extent," Roth points out. "Going the other way, you might become more peaceful with things. On the other hand, the people you know are all going to die as you get younger. Oddly, I think you would probably lose some of your wisdom. It would be a little hard knowing that you're going to end up as your child's playmate!"

Asked what he thinks now that he has seen the film, Roth replies, "I like a lot of it, and David has translated the story about as well as it could be done. Without giving too much away, there's an interlude where Brad meets Tilda Swinton that's quite lovely—it's almost like a short story within the piece. There's a scene with Cate and Brad, where they meet in the middle and decide to be together, that's beautiful. Also, there's a sequence about the hand of fate or destiny or accident that is smart and emotionally effective.

"David has captured the emotions and qualities that I wanted this movie to have," Eric Roth concludes. "It causes you to think about your own life—but in a good way. Every day is important, and that's a great gift to utilize. The people around you help to define who you are. *Benjamin Button* is a lovely story with universal themes, and I don't mean that in a clichéd way. It touches on certain things in a way that people will recognize—and it will move them as well."

While the movie is intimate and emotional, Benjamin embarks on a long and adventurous journey. Roth remarks, "It's an epic film told in a small way."



Fans have expressed deep reservations about the remake of the classic 1951 film *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. And understandably so. For many, the original ranks as one of their all-time favorite genre movies, its powerful message and mature acting still resonating despite the passing of more than a half-century. No one wants to see a legend diminished. But the special FX in Robert Wise's groundbreaking picture have not aged well. Cutting-edge back in the day, they remain watchable but primitive by 21st-Century standards.

Thanks to the powerful tools that computer technology has created, 20th Century Fox and director Scott Derrickson saw a fighting chance to update the seminal SF film, and assembled a crack FX team dedicated to creating a brand new *Day*. "The elephant in the room is obviously the original film," acknowledges production designer David Brisbin, who previously worked with Derrickson on *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*. "When we looked at it, we saw this stuff that matches today so

nicely—the whole obsession with media, the wartime setting and being on the threshold of mass paranoia. It's also interesting that the movie was right at the edge of the fear of nuclear annihilation, whereas now we're at the threshold of the fear of eco-something. In both cases, you could argue that they're self-inflicted dangers. So, with all of those parallels, we thought, 'OK, let's make the movie.'

"There's one huge difference between the audience back then and [moviegoers in] 2008," he continues. "Every single person in today's audience has been to outer space. A lot. They've been there with George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Stanley Kubrick, Ridley Scott. It's a known thing. And what that said to us is that we had to make a completely different film."

Earth at Bay

Different perhaps. But Derrickson's *Day* tracks the source storyline fairly closely with its main characters and movements. Klaatu is here. And his robotic servitor, Gort. However,

except for Dr. Barnhardt, the human side is another matter. "Scott had a very specific take on this film," notes visual FX supervisor Jeffrey Okun. "And he charged us with an important mission. That mission makes this akin to *Blood Diamond* [Okun's last project], in that if you see our work, then we've ruined the movie. That's a really tough thing to do in a science fiction film. But Scott wants to make sure that everything feels like it *could* happen—and that it's real."

"It went beyond that," inserts Brisbin. "The producers were right there when we were trying to think out, 'How do we define this? What are the things that will resonate and follow the original movie, but won't feel old-fashioned?' We tried to figure that out [and take into consideration] this completely new post-space generation. How could we find the reality in *this* intrusion from another planet?"

The search for reality began with Klaatu, the alien played by Keanu Reeves in this redux. "We had to come up with lots of backstory and reverse-engineering to figure out how

THIS NEW *DAY* PROMISES THE LATEST IN CINEMAGIC.

By WILL MURRAY

STILL LIFE

all this stuff could actually be," relates Okun. "In looking at how vast the universe is, there are other life forms, and they may not breathe air. That's a simple premise, but that's what we brought to this whole process. There's the spaceship concept that's presented in the original movie vs. our spaceship. The original was based on if we were human, and then we were aliens, this is what we would do. But Scott's point-of-view on this is: If there really were aliens, what would they be like?"

Michael Rennie's Klaatu in the '51 film was unquestionably human—a storytelling necessity for Cold War moviegoers unaccustomed to cinematic aliens. Reeves' embodiment, though, goes far beyond that. "What if Klaatu's physical presence isn't a physical presence as we know it?" Okun posits. "What if it's a parallel reality, or something like that? That opens up our possibilities and increases our challenge back to: How do you make something that's fantastical to our way of thinking seem real?"

This Klaatu arrives on Earth not in a '50s-

style flying saucer, but rather in an energy orb measuring 300 feet across. Flying saucers weren't a consideration. "There was always this feeling of, 'I hope you aren't going to change that thing, because it was perfect!'" Brisbin admits. "But the reason we couldn't do the same thing is that, for most people, there's nothing more old-fashioned than a flying saucer. Flying saucers in 2008 would be a little bit funny. In the original, I don't think they meant it to be funny when the flying saucer lands. They wanted people to go, 'Oh, shit!' So how do we get people in 2008 to go, 'Oh, shit!?' [We decided against] a flying saucer. The orb is the conveyance in which Klaatu arrives."

Working with his longtime partner, visual FX producer Tom Boland, Okun conceptualized the vehicle. "Having worked on *Sphere*, Tom and I knew an awful lot about spheres," Okun notes. "We looked at every natural object out there: molecules, water drops, Saturn, Jupiter, Pluto, Io, Uranus, photos of the Sun. We referenced the movie *Sunshine*,

but we threw out the Sun concept early on. But we still have a traveling starburst. What we came up with is best described as a new interpretation of a Saturn-ish kind of gas ball that doesn't exist.

"Conceptually, the sphere is neither a physical entity nor a ball of gas. It's closer to a physical portal. There isn't any inside. At one point in the script, we went inside the sphere, and it was a white, limbo-y thing. We thought that was very cheesy. The original had some cool 1960s-style design work—looking 10 years in the future. Klaatu, in his original form, isn't anything that we could conceive of. It's odd to think that any entity would spend light years confined to space, traveling across the universe. So the orb is like a *Star Trek* [transporter], except that it travels on its own.

"When Klaatu first steps out of the sphere, he's made out of molded light that doesn't follow the laws of physics—he's contained without having a vessel. In developing the alien technology, David and Scott were very clear that it had to be of a whole. There had to be a

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Why would anyone want to remake *The Day the Earth Stood Still*? Well, for one, today's cutting-edge technology can improve upon the 1951 film's special FX.

to the audience as this crazy being. But during the surgery sequence—when they're treating his injuries—that outer material starts melting away and revealing his inner core. And that's done in CGI."

Working with Okun and Boland, Masters was committed to a realistic vision for *Day*, which means less CG is more. "Those guys have helped us bring practical stuff to the equation," Masters remarks. "Not that this is a hard and fast rule, but if you can shoot it practically, you *should*."

For different reasons than constrained Wise, the FX team decided to stay away from "otherworldliness" when it came to Klaatu's final incarnation. "Originally, we talked about doing it with a puppet," reveals Masters, "but so much was going on, and with a shorter and



Much thought and work went into designing the movie's sphere, which FX supervisor Jeffrey Okun describes as "a Saturn-ish kind of gas ball."

throughline. We couldn't have objects with no relation to each other just because they're cool."

The Alien Way

Todd Masters of MastersFX was in charge of the makeup and bringing Klaatu into our reality in transformative stages—which includes a prosthetic version of the familiar alien that Masters calls "the Grey." "Klaatu comes out of his orb looking like 'the Grey,' but he's more translucent," he explains. "That will be CG and created by Weta Digital. Klaatu gets shot, falls into Helen's arms and bleeds all over her. He's entirely CG at that point. And as he's losing his life force, Klaatu becomes less translucent and more opaque.

"Then there's a time-cut transition, a helicopter trip to the OR. Once he's being pushed down the hall in this hyperbaric chamber, that's when he's a practical piece. Klaatu is rushed into the OR, and the surgery scenes are all practical—until the big reveal, when we see

his inner being. That's mainly a CG model with our skin and remnants all over the place."

When asked how he created Klaatu's rubbery prosthetic arm, which looks like it's made of jellied elephant flesh, Masters jokes, "This is alien skin, imported from Mars. Actually, it's from our shop. It's made of thermoplastic and silicone. Ours is one of the only studios that uses this material. We actually hired a gentleman who worked in the sex-toy business, and he has the greatest materials I've ever seen. We bought a sex-toy machine, and now we can make this weird stuff that nobody else can!"

The grey skin comes into play during the surgery sequence. "When they cut into this disgusting business, you see Klaatu's inner being, which eventually develops into our buddy, Keanu," Masters relates. "It isn't supposed to be an alien, necessarily. In our story, it's his outer fat-suit. In a sense, it's Klaatu's walking womb that protects him when he goes to other planets. We wanted him to first appear

shorter shooting schedule, a decision was made to pick our battles. At one point, we talked about doing some subtle stuff with Keanu, but it was decided that he's our star. We really want to see Keanu the way he is. There aren't any crazy prosthetics on him.

"We did a head cast of him, and we were going to do a bald cap and very subtle eyebrows growing out of his skin. We're still going to do a close-up macro-version of hair growing out of his arm *à la An American Werewolf in London*. We took a mold of the skin of one of our artists and enlarged it through chemical processes. So we have this gigantic chunk of skin with these very detailed pores. And we built large hairs to curl out of that, which will be filmed in reverse, much like *American Werewolf*."

The humanoid robot Gort was played in the '51 film by human giant Lock Martin, who was encased in a cumbersome, thick foam-rubber suit. For the new movie, Gort is entirely CG, and while he's superficially similar to

If New Yorkers thought Brett Favre joining the Jets was a big event, wait until they see what's in store for the Meadowlands when disaster strikes the New Jersey stadium.



the original model (he retains the cyclopean electronic eye and visor), there have been major revisions.

"I can tell you about the evolution of Gort," Brisbin notes, "but I can't tell you too much about him. The first thing we realized was that people would laugh if a two-legged robot came out of a spaceship. How could we seriously do a robot in 2008? So we started going down this path where Gort would come out in a completely different guise, and *not* even be a humanoid form."

However, after a protracted selection process of considering fish-and-fowl forms—and many variations in-between—it was ultimately decided to let Gort be Gort. "But he's *really* big," says Brisbin. "He's in the realm of 25 to 35 feet. We need to use Gort in different contexts, so he isn't exactly the same size every time. If the shot comparison or emotional relationship between the characters works better if he's 25 feet tall, then [we alter his

height to suit that]."

Like Gort, the orb is CG. It's also, in its own way, a character, and changes color in response to its environment. "We use the orb as an emotional device," explains Okun. "Its happy nascent state is jade green. When the alien is shot, in a prelude to Gort, things are getting angry and upset, so it becomes red. Later on, the sphere does other things. There's more than one sphere, and they have different purposes. They land everywhere, and they've come through all of time."

A New Day

Although *Day* plays as a contemporary story, in terms of Earth's technology, it's set just around the corner. "Helen [Jennifer Connelly] is a trained scientist," Brisbin states. "She's technologically adept. Helen becomes involved in the whole process of trying to figure out this creature. So for Scott, the technology around her was very important."



There isn't anything inside this orb. The sphere is neither a physical entity nor a ball of gas, but rather a physical portal for transportation.

To that end, the production team visited Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Washington to peek into the future. "They showed us the spread of what they think they're going to be putting on the consumer table in the near future," Brisbin says. "We started thinking about, 'How does that fit into the story?' Actually, we grouped some of the technology around Helen's scientific specialty."

One device soon to be introduced is a coffee-table-sized platform that reads out the price and other information of any object placed on top of it. "We had to think about how we could put that into our story," Brisbin says. "We introduce it in the genetics lab. Helen plops down a little vial containing the alien specimen, and out spills the DNA."

Another major difference between this film and the original, of course, is that the first *Day* was shot in black-and-white. "The color palette is a big area of collaboration between Scott and I," Brisbin offers. "Scott has some DNA thing, or something happened in his childhood, because he's obsessed with color. We could be [shooting at] an enormous football stadium, with one red tomato far on the other side, and Scott would say, 'Brisbin! What's that red doing there? We don't do red.' I went through this on *Emily Rose*. We're looking for the right palette that will psychologically resonate with the story."

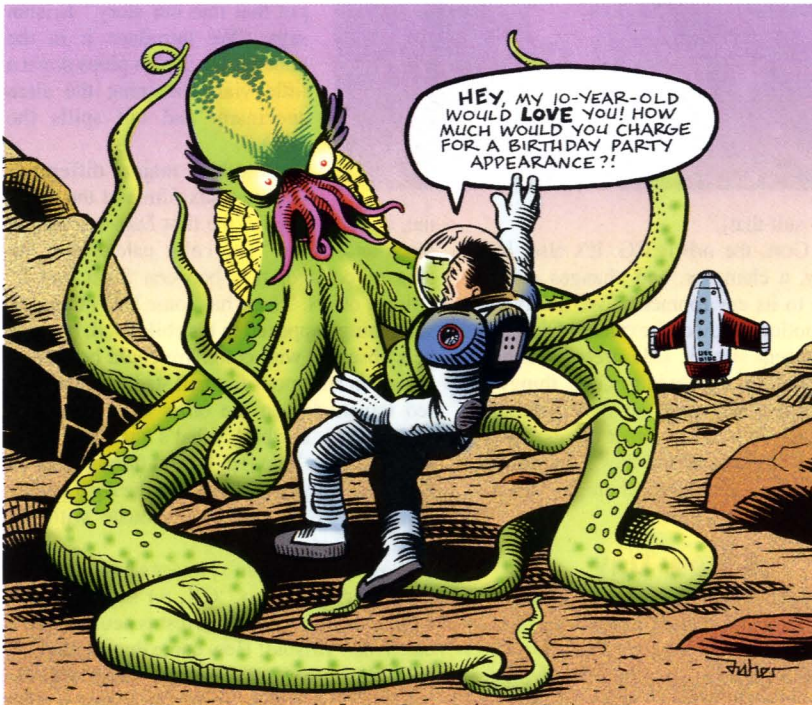
"Most [of the film's] images have very few colors. Scott will say, 'OK, for such and such a set, that color rules. The rest is neutral.' He'll catch me: 'Brisbin! How come that stoplight is red? Maybe we can gel it and fiddle with the color so it isn't quite as red.' In a way, it's the same kind of compression that they had to deal with in the black-and-white original. They had to figure out, say, which of three greens would appear as grey [on screen]. It's an amazing way to work."

So is this *Day* a remake or a reimagining? "We aren't sticking to the original's dry, pedantic tone," Okun says. "We're sticking to the original concept, but updating it so that the movie has value and meaning—as well as being a really good yarn—for today's audience. It deals with the self-destruction of our own planet. What species are worth saving? Ultimately, Klaatu has to decide if humans are worth saving, as he did in the first film. As a race of sentient creatures, what is our connection to the Universe? It's heady stuff—and it comes down to a movie with globes and robots and drama and action scenes."

"I think *The Day the Earth Stood Still* is going to be something special," Jeffrey Okun concludes. "Whether it nests with people on a conscious or subconscious level, we hope that it nests with *younger* minds—and that they'll save us from ourselves." ★

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Art: Mike Fisher



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