

SLEEPY HOLLOW: INSIDE TIM BURTON'S DARK VISION

WICKED

PREMIERE ISSUE

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
HORROR ENTERTAINMENT

THE **50**
GREATEST
HORROR MOVIES
of all time

THE GREEN MILE
Stephen King speaks!

THE BLAIR
WITCH PROJECT
Heather Donahue on the return
of the supernatural thriller

BRUCE CAMPBELL
predicts the future of horror



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WICKED

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"BY THE PRICKING OF MY THUMBS,
SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES."

—William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Welcome to *Wicked*. What you now hold in your hands is the premiere issue of a concept conceived more than 10 years ago in the auditorium of an Indianapolis cinema. In the grip of too much butter flavoring, my friends and I broke into an animated discussion about the horror films we someday planned to make, quickly lapsing into silence as the curtain rose on yet another R-rated gorefest our parents had no idea we were watching. As the opening credits on one of those countless films scrolled by, I stumbled onto an equally compelling idea—developing a new magazine to showcase all of that as-yet-unleashed creative force.

With hours spent viewing the best and worst of the genre and even more time collaborating with an indispensable team of editors and designers, that vision has now been realized. *Wicked* exists to bring you, the horror fan, the most comprehensive coverage of horror entertainment available, with detailed reports on the latest projects and in-depth interviews with key directors, actors and screenwriters.

In our premiere issue, you'll find a sneak peek at Tim Burton's homage to Hammer Film Productions, *Sleepy Hollow*, Kevin Williamson's thoughts on the final installment of his *Scream* franchise and a roundup of the 50 greatest horror films ever made. Also, actress Heather Donahue reveals the secrets of the Blair Witch, and Neil Gaiman offers some words to live by. To that boiling cauldron, add our up-to-the-minute reports from the worlds of new media, books, DVD/video and comics, and the first in a series of regular guest columns from none other than Bruce Campbell. It's a recipe we hope you'll come to savor as we serve up future issues. —Gina McIntyre, Editor

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NEWSREEL

THE GENRE THAT WOULD

The supernatural thriller rises from the grave to slay slashers in their box office tracks | by Chandra Palermò

Poor axe-wielding, homicidal maniacs. With a shockingly low budget, unknown actors and an improvised script, *The Blair Witch Project* proved that a genuinely good ghost story is all you need to scare up box office success—gory violence, teens from hot TV shows and hulking stalkers be damned.

Then came *The Sixth Sense* with its tale of a distressed little boy haunted by troubled souls. It out-spooked *Blair Witch*, held the top spot at the box office for weeks and surpassed *The Exorcist* as the highest-grossing horror film of all time—even inviting Oscar talk in the process.

This one-two punch at the end of a record-breaking summer for the film industry proved horror is still a powerful force at theaters. "And it's just a perfect time because most of the horror films were finally beginning to fade at the box office," says Robert Bucksbaum, president of box-office analysis firm Reel Source.

In 1996, the success of *Scream* grabbed the



attention of studio execs, reminding them of the profitability of the genre. But its clever blend of self-referential humor, pop culture savvy and horror didn't seem so original and fresh one sequel and about a dozen knock-offs later. And, not surprisingly, *Scream*-inspired films like *The Rage: Carrie 2*, *Idle Hands* and *Teaching Mrs. Tingle* bombed at the box office.

"*Scream* woke up a tired theme that didn't have anything original going for it for so long," Bucksbaum says. "And then we saw some copycat films, so many that audiences were really getting tired of them. *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, *The Faculty*, *Urban Legend*—they all fit the same mold. *Blair Witch* revitalized the industry once again and made audiences think for the first time. They wanted to believe it was a true story. Usually in horror films, you can tell by the music or whatever that something terrible's going to happen. But with *Blair Witch*, there's no music, there's no special effects, there's no frills."

So, *Scream* and its ilk have been at least temporarily pushed aside to make way for fresh takes on the genre leaning more toward psychological and supernatural thrills like recent offerings *Stigmata* and *Stir of Echoes*. "It's like anything in Hollywood," says director/producer Tim Burton. "It gets to be a trend and then they just beat it to death and people get onto something else for a while."



SCREAM TEST: [above] *The Blair Witch Project*; [top] *Stigmata*; [opposite page, left] *The Sixth Sense*; [opposite page, right] *The Mummy*

N'T DIE



Author Mike Mayo feels that despite its long-standing status as a genre staple, the teen-stalker film was doomed from the start in the '90s and would've been relegated to the video shelves whether or not the theater market was saturated.

"Every 10 years or so, the horror movie is reinvented," explains Mayo, who wrote *VideoHound's Horror Show: 999 Hair-Raising, Hellish and Humorous Movies*. "Somebody comes up with a new way of scaring people, and it generally comes from outside the studio system. You can take it back to *Psycho*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *Halloween*. It falls in roughly 10-year patterns. And even though *Scream* was fun, it was really just going back over old territory again and making fun of it."

The subgenre was hindered further by the outbreak of concern over teen violence that erupted after the tragic events at Columbine High School last spring. Episodes of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* were held back, promotional plans for *Idle Hands* were nixed, *Killing Mrs. Tingle* became *Teaching Mrs. Tingle* and theater chains promised to crack down on checking IDs for admittance to R-rated films, cutting off a big segment of the genre's audience.

Though the slasher film was stopped in its tracks, the extreme reaction hasn't hurt horror as a whole. *The Haunting* and *The Sixth Sense* both broke tradition and earned a PG-13 rating. And the pre-holiday slate of horror releases features an impressive amount of genre offerings, including *House on Haunted Hill*, *End of Days*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *The Ninth Gate* and *Scream 3*.

"I think the more, the better—all the different types, the better," says *Sleepy Hollow* director

Burton. "It's nice to see all different interpretations of it, and not just one thing. I like seeing it in as wide a variety as possible."

And this season certainly has variety, including—if *Scream 3* manages to reignite the magic of its original—a contender to resuscitate the slasher film.

"I, for one, hope that we're past that," says Mayo. "I'm just so tired of seeing all the bloody effects. I think they've really lost their power to shock anymore. We've seen everything now. I mean, gosh, we've seen heads explode, bodies ripped apart in every way, and we know that they're effects. It really just doesn't work anymore. You've got to scare us with something real—something like being lost in the woods." ■



> BOX OFFICE STATISTICS

\$216.7+ million	<i>The Sixth Sense</i>
\$155.3 million	<i>The Mummy</i>
\$138.9+ million	<i>The Blair Witch Project</i>
\$89.7 million	<i>The Haunting</i>
\$71.5+ million	<i>Deep Blue Sea</i>
\$35.7+ million	<i>Stigmata</i>
\$31.5+ million	<i>Lake Placid</i>
\$17.7 million	<i>The Rage: Carrie 2</i>
\$13.0+ million	<i>Stir of Echoes</i>
\$10.3+ million	<i>The Astronaut's Wife</i>
\$8.7+ million	<i>Teaching Mrs. Tingle</i>
\$4.1 million	<i>Idle Hands</i>

(Figures are based on North American box office receipts as of early fall 1999. All figures are estimates provided by Real Source and Exhibitor Relations Co. They do not necessarily reflect the most up-to-date grosses for the films listed.)



NEWSREEL

SYMPHONY FOR THE DE

Full Moon Releasing's new record label offers spooky mood music | by Jeff Berkwitz

When launching a record company devoted primarily to the music of horror films, eerie things can happen. Just ask Vaughn Thomas, the executive vice president of Big City Records, a brand-new label specifically created to develop and market scary soundtracks.

"An old friend of mine was managing this group," recalls Thomas, who earlier this year was seeking musical ideas for *Ragdoll*, a voodoo flick set in New Orleans. "And when he told me their name was Vouu Doux, I almost started laughing because I hadn't revealed to him the nature of the story or what the movie was about. And then he said they were from New Orleans and asked if I wanted to hear them. Well, I couldn't believe it! Not only did we put them in the soundtrack, we

put them in the movie and we shot a video, too. So you're going to see the birth of Vouu Doux as a by-product of *Ragdoll*."

Ragdoll: Music From and Inspired by the Motion Picture, which besides the R&B/hip-hop duo Vouu

Doux also features acts such as Booker T. Jones III and Freda Payne, will serve as Big City's first release next January. Timed to closely coincide with the direct-to-video debut of the film, the album will spotlight a fresh musical genre that Thomas defines as "new urban horror."

"The music will depict something rather dark and ominous that pertains to the film," he explains. "But there will also be some dance-oriented tunes that'll be commercially acceptable...It will be fairly clean and upbeat, although somewhat dark in nature."



An offshoot from Full Moon Pictures—the company responsible for such low-budget video adventures as *Curse of the Puppet Master* and *Subspecies 4: Bloodstorm*—Big City ultimately plans to issue all sorts of horrific harmonies. "We're starting with the urban genre," notes Thomas, adding that *Ragdoll* is being released by Alchemy Entertainment, another Full Moon subsidiary. "But we're not going to be entirely devoted to urban music. We'll gravitate to other forms, too, such as Latin music, as well as alternative and rock music, but all driven from the various films and movies that will come from Full Moon."

In fact, the next stage of that expansion will take place with the label's second project, the soundtrack for a flick titled *The Horrible Doctor Bones*. "We made *Doctor Bones* a club promoter, where through the

SOUND CHECK: [above] Jennia Watson and Freda Payne in *Ragdoll*; [right] Watson and Russell Richardson; [far right] punk icons The Misfits

VIL



promotion of raves he invites all these people and selects his next victims," reveals Thomas, who hopes to integrate at least a few electronic melodies into the picture. "Because there will be different types of raves and different types of locations, we'll be able to [musically] diversify a lot more."

And since Full Moon also produces frightful fantasy and science fiction features, Thomas expects Big City's upcoming releases to become even more stylistically varied. "It just so happens that our first slate of films will be of a horror nature," he states. "But later, there might be some that would be sci-fi. So we could have futuristic music, maybe with some sort of Art of Noise-type stuff...Musically, that opens up a whole other set of



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> WICKED WATCH:

ROMERO JOINS THE MISFITS

He's already made the greatest horror film. Ever. Now director George Romero is trying his hand at the music video biz. Teaming with punk rock icons The Misfits, Romero is stepping behind the camera to helm the video for the band's song "Scream," taken from their latest release, *Famous Monsters*. To mark the occasion, the ghoulish group is undergoing a slight image change—they're transforming themselves into zombies. (Perhaps they could do us all a favor and devour the Backstreet Boys while they're at it.)

In return, the band traveled to Canada to perform three songs (including "Scream") for a club scene in Romero's upcoming film *Bruiser*. Two of the tracks, "Fiend Without a Face" and "If Looks Could Kill," were written specifically for the movie, the tale of a man who wakes one day to discover his face is missing and embarks on a mission of vengeance against his boss, unfaithful girlfriend and others.

Although no release date has yet been set for the film, the video is available on the band's official Web site, www.Misfits.com—that is, if it hasn't made it onto MTV's heavy rotation roster by now.—Gina McIntyre



material that we can bring to the label."

In the meantime, over the next year the company plans to issue eight to 10 albums, most of which will focus upon Full Moon's horror output. "I think there'll be some real driving, contemporary, appealing music in the films," says Thomas. "You'll hear some good, exciting music that's going to make you dance, going to make you get scared and, hopefully, make you run out and buy it." ■

M O V I E S

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

Death stalks seven wayward souls in frightfest *Flight 180* | by Chandra Palermo

Who better to make a feature film version of a script originally intended to be an episode of *The X-Files* than Glen Morgan and James Wong, the writing team behind some of the hit show's best outings? No one, it would seem. In fact, when the duo was too busy to tackle the project, New Line Cinema put the film on hold until the pair could be wrangled.

And a good thing, too. The original script for the upcoming *Flight 180* featured a villain dressed as a personification of death, reducing it to another in a long line of slasher flicks in which a group of teens is hunted down by a psychotic killer in some spooky disguise. "We came in and we said, 'We like the idea, but we don't like the idea of death being a kind of Grim Reaper-type figure,'" explains Morgan, who also took on producing responsibilities on the movie. "So, we said, 'Can we do this with death as just sort of a force?' They liked that idea."



Morgan and Wong then completely rewrote the script, steering clear of overdone modern genre conventions and adding a dash of their own *X-Files*-ish paranormal paranoia to the plot. The result, they hope, is a fresh take on the teen horror genre that includes a figurative death out to reclaim those who have escaped its clutches.

"The basic idea is that a bunch of high school kids have a school trip to France for 10 days. Our hero, Alex, as he boards the plane, has a premonition that the plane is going to explode and he freaks out," says director Wong. "Six other people get off the plane with him, for other reasons. The plane actually explodes during takeoff, and so death is sort of cheated of these seven souls. And death comes after these seven kids in different ways, and Alex has to try to figure out what's going on and if there's anything he can do to prevent it."

The "death force" chasing the fate-thwarters will be presented through a kind of warped reality. Perspectives will be forced, and things will seem a little off-kilter. "We're not doing the Grim Reaper standing there with the scythe," says visual effects supervisor Ariel Velasco Shaw. "It's being done with more everyday occurrences—things like breezes, things like shadows—

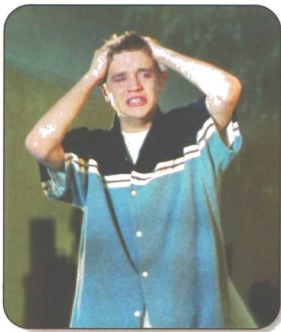




done in a slightly creepy, off-beat manner that illustrates something has gone awry."

A lifelong fan of horror, producer Craig Perry is excited about the possibilities Morgan and Wong's take on the script creates. He sees most recent genre offerings as stale, cliché and not very scary, and he's counting on *Flight 180* to bring back true fright to the cinema.

"The things that are really scary to me aren't a cat jumping out of a cabinet or somebody's innards unspooling onto the floor," Perry says. "For me, what's scary is, for example, when a character is at the top of a stairwell going into a basement, and you just see the stairs descending and dropping off into darkness. You know the character has to go down there to get something."



You don't know what's down there, but you know it's not like a monster or something creepy-crawly. But there's something, a presence, what might happen. The sense of dread is really to me this movie's stock in trade, and I think that's what attracted me most to it. It really operates off of atmosphere and tension. It harkens back to the

sort of classic films of the genre, *The Exorcist*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Omen*."

That's quite a bold statement for a film that, though touted for its originality, boasts a cast whose average age would place them somewhere between homeroom and study hall. "We are a young cast, but it's by no means a teen thriller."

The movie is much smarter than that," argues Ali Larter, the movie's female lead, Clear.

"There's so many aspects to it that I think different people are going to find. There's a little bit of the horror side of it, there's the drama that happens with the plane, there's the love story that happens between me and Alex. I think people just need to go and stay open to the movie and let it take them on a journey."

The elaborate staging behind the airplane's crash sequence, for which a 50-foot-long chunk of a 747 was built on massive hydraulic gimbals, gets actor Seann William Scott's vote for distinction. "I think the airplane sequence alone actually sets this movie apart from any teen thriller," says Scott, who plays one of the hunted teens. "It blows my mind. It's so trippy, it's so scary, it's so visual that I think it will definitely sit in people's minds for a while."

But Devon Sawa, the actor behind Alex, has a quite different idea of what distinguishes the movie from typical horror fare. "I'm in it, and like, you know, everybody wants to see a movie with me," he says, smiling.

As long as it's not *Idle Hands 2*, Devon. ■



High Anxiety: [from left] Sawa gets pre-flight jitters; Wong hopes his teens are head of the class; Sawa finally snaps; Sawa, Amanda Detmer and Smith fear the reaper

M O V I E S

BIRD OF PREY

Another lost soul returns seeking vengeance in *The Crow: Salvation* | by Jeff Berkwitz

For fans of the now legendary comic series created by James O'Barr, *The Crow* is a harrowing tale of heartbreak, violence and revenge. Yet for Eric Mabius, who stars as the latest incarnation of the haunted hero in the new movie *The Crow: Salvation*, the psychological underpinnings of the saga run significantly deeper.

"Vengeance is not the solution," he says when asked to succinctly sum up the message of *The Crow*. "My character is, in a sense, on a vengeance tour, but it doesn't quench the thirst that he feels...It's more about learning to make peace with the grayness of things and just how painful things can be."

Mabius portrays Alex Corvis, a young man wrongfully executed for the brutal stabbing of his girlfriend Lauren. But as folks familiar with earlier *Crow* adventures already know, his soul cannot rest until he seeks out and slays those individuals actually responsible for the murder.

To do so, Alex must persuade his lover's surviving sister Erin, played by Kirsten Dunst, that he is not only innocent, but also that her father might be involved, at least indirectly, in the killing.

"I'm trying to find an ally in Kirsten's character because no one else had the connection that she had with Lauren," Mabius explains. "No one else



SEEMS LIKE SALVATION: Eric Mabius (above) and Fred Ward (top) star in *The Crow: Salvation*; (opposite) Cole Hauser in *Pitch Black*

believes that I was innocent, and I'm trying to convince her and wear her down."

"In the beginning, I'm watching him get put to death, and I'm a very, very weak character," adds Dunst, noting that the film also serves as a gritty coming-of-age tale for Erin. "But I definitely become stronger through Alex. Meeting him teaches me about love and tells me that love never dies. So [I] become very strong and very independent by the end of the film."

Erin's personal growth is just one of many deviations from the traditional *Crow* storyline. Unlike the previous two movies, the police are, at least in part, the villains in this tale.

"We took great pains to make certain that what was emotionally involving about a *Crow* story was contained in this [film]," states producer Jeff Most. "However, we also wanted

"My character is, in a sense, on a vengeance tour, but it doesn't quench the thirst that he feels...It's more about learning to make peace with the grayness of things and just how painful things can be." —Eric Mabius

to break the bounds and tell the story in a completely different fashion. We wanted to make greater objectives for this *Crow*—that [the murder] be a mystery, that there would be a clearing of his name...It became a much more vital sense of storytelling. What we did was hark back to what it is about a *Crow* movie that really touches people."

Of course, any mention of the earlier pictures also elicits memories of the late Brandon Lee, who made an indelible impression as Eric Draven in the original 1994 feature. "Due to how amazing Brandon was, a lot of people understandably want to compare the successors," acknowledges Mabius. "But *The Crow* is a reference to the animal, not the person playing the character in the film. It's different people with different tragedies, and they're all trying to lay their restless souls to rest. That's why each film ends up having a different actor."

Regardless of the person portraying that "restless soul," throughout all of the productions a defining element of *The Crow* remains the character's eerie facial markings. "I spent two hours at the beginning of each day [having] prosthetics blended into my face, and then six layers of airbrushing," Mabius reveals. "And it took me an hour at night to get it off. But I never, never got sick of it. It was time to sit and think. It really was essential time for me."

Although the movie is now slated for a March 2000 release, at least one individual associated with the flick is already "crowing" about its potential for success.

"[Eric and Kirsten] have really made this film something that you want to warmly embrace," Most says. "It's a testament to their acting and to all of the people who were involved. I think this is a great work of filmmaking that will be remembered for a long time to come." ■



PITCH BLACK

"I wanted to have a really good character story at the heart of a science fiction/action story," says David Twohy, writer/director of the forthcoming sci-fi/horror outing *Pitch Black*. In the film, a transport ship crash lands on an arid, inhospitable planet, and the motley assortment of passengers—a commercial pilot and a convicted murderer among them—must band together to survive the attacks of alien inhabitants once night falls.

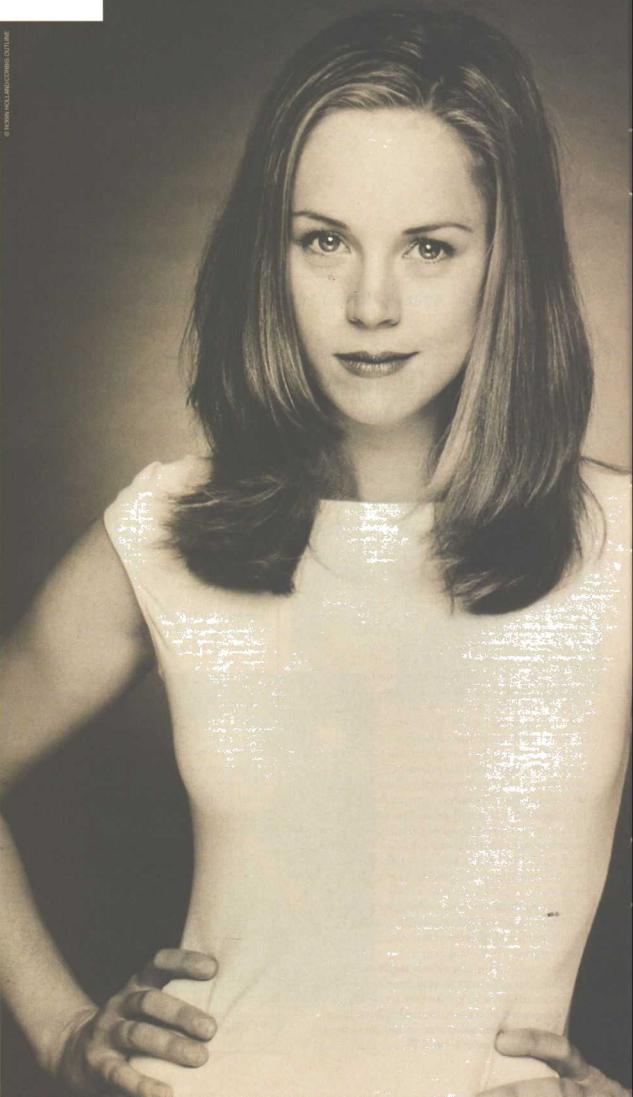
To ensure that the careful character dynamic was preserved in the midst of a gaggle of otherworldly special effects, Twohy enlisted the aid of decidedly non-genre stars Radha Mitchell (*High Art*), Cole Hauser (*Good Will Hunting*) and Vin Diesel (*The Iron Giant*). Employing actors with backgrounds in independent film and stage, Twohy says, elevated the film to a more dramatic exercise and an ultimately more interesting plane.

"Even the gold standard of this genre, which may be *Alien*, as good as it is, it uses pretty much stock characters off the shelf and has characters that react rather than plan and change according to what they have to react to," Twohy says. "I really wanted to make sure there were good human elements at work here. I think I've got three characters who actually change and evolve over the course of the story and that's very unusual for a [genre] film." —Gina McIntyre

By CHANDRA PALERMO

Horror's
"It" girl
reveals
how her
life has
changed
since she
died on
screen

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CHASING

HEATHER

Contrary to popular belief, Heather Donahue is alive and well. And even though many of the millions who forked over eight bucks to see her startling smash hit *The Blair Witch Project* thought they were watching her—not a fictitious character with the same name—get stalked, driven to the brink of madness and killed, she's enjoying the attention.

"My life is truly bizarre," Donahue says, with an incredulous nod of her head. "I'm actually not Heather Donahue. I'm a robotic replica made to look and sound just like her, except cuter and more marketable."

Clearly, the actress has not lost her sometimes self-effacing sense of humor, which is quite a feat for anybody who went from being someone nobody knew was alive to someone everybody thought was dead. "It's become a weird pop-culture phenomenon for some reason, and I imagine it will continue to grow, especially as they bring out those sequels," she says.

By now, America knows the *Blair Witch* story by heart. Three student filmmakers got lost in the woods while making a documentary about a legendary witch. One year later their footage was found. Yada, yada, yada.

To clarify for hopefully the last time, the

story is a fabrication. Heather Donahue's an actress. Born in Philadelphia, educated at the Walnut Theater School and the University of the Arts, Donahue tried her hand on the stage and shot a TV spot for the Psychic Friends Network before landing the role that thrust her into the limelight and her very own urban legend.

"I read an ad in *Back Stage* in New York where I was living at the time," Donahue says of her first step into the *Project*. "It said, 'An improvised feature film shot in a wooded location. It's going to be hell. Most of you who are reading this probably shouldn't even come. I mean, they used every possible deterrent.'"

Drawn by the rare freedom afforded actors through improvisation, Donahue went to the audition anyway and experienced perhaps the scariest moment of her entire *Blair Witch* experience.

"Dan Myrick, one of the directors, was the one who auditioned me, and he said, 'You've served seven years of a nine-year sentence, why should we let you out on parole?' And that was the audition," she recalls. "No monologue, no scene, no cold reading—just go off that and create a character and create a story without thinking for a second."

The next thing she knew Donahue was sent into the woods with Michael Williams, Joshua Leonard, a few cameras and a ton of batteries to make a movie. Of course, the actors weren't left completely in the dark. They knew the backstory, and they were given a vague

outline of the events to come. The crew kept tabs on their location in the forest through use of a global-positioning satellite receiver. And the trio received direction via notes left at checkpoints that set



CHASING HEATHER

THE THREE FACES OF HEATHER: [left] a dressed-up Donahue; [below] serving up Steak 'n Shake; [bottom and previous page] lost and afraid in *The Blair Witch Project*



never quite made it into frame because of the camera's jittery motion, but directors Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez never intended to give shape to the forest's mysterious menace anyway.

"This was about your imagination," Donahue explains. "What scares you? It was like a Mad Libs horror film. You had to fill it in with your own thoughts, with your own little neuroses whatever they may be, your own bogey man that hides out in the closet and under your bed. That's for you to go home and deal with. We don't want to make it that easy for you."

It certainly wasn't easy for the cast. The stress of their peculiar situation often got to them, many times setting Donahue and Leonard at each other's throats. As a result, plans to have Williams disappear changed, and Leonard was the one sent home early. Donahue recalls fondly that the "lucky bastard got to go back to New York when he disappeared, whereas me and Mike, we're still sitting there scratching our dirty scalps for the next three days."

Donahue swears the experience wasn't as torturous as it appears—but she's really glad it seems that way. "What's important is that you think I suffered psychological damage during the making of that film. And that means that's a

you've got to pick an agent, you've got to get a manager, get a lawyer, have a family of people in nice suits around you that you never knew before."

Donahue says her wonderfully supportive parents help keep her grounded. And she's now made the move to L.A., where she hopes to parlay her *Blair Witch* success into a feature film career (and leave behind her days shooting commercials for restaurant chain Steak 'n Shake). She already has a wish list of people with whom she hopes to work.

"There's so many," she says with barely contained excitement. "I love Alexander Payne, who did *Election* and *Citizen Ruth*. Wim Wenders would be another person whom I would love to work with. Susan Sarandon, Cate Blanchett, Kate Winslet—god, Johnny Depp is one of my all-time favorites. There are just so many people out there I have so much admiration for, like Jodie Foster. People who do it to the best of their ability on their own terms—they're the

up the day's scenarios.

"We would find these milk crates at wait points, and inside would be three little cans, each with our names on them," Donahue explains. "We'd open them up, and we would read our notes. We weren't allowed to show them to each other, so as the day progressed, we would sort of improvise around this story structure that the [filmmakers] had provided. And from there, we would go beyond what they'd given us. We would create scenes, and basically take these characters to places that the directors didn't even think they would go."

The crew did step in from time to time when pivotal shots were unintentionally skipped over. When Donahue and Williams found a stack of twigs bound by a strip of Leonard's flannel, Donahue originally tossed the twigs aside and hiked off. "The production designer stopped me and said, 'You've got to go back and open the twigs, man. It's my favorite gag in the whole movie,'" Donahue says. "And this is a guy who did makeup on [movies like] *Bloodsport 2*, so I knew this had to be as big a gorefest as this movie was ever going to be. So we went back, and I opened it up. Inside the twigs was hair, blood and teeth. It was actual human teeth that they had gotten from a Maryland dentist."

One member of the behind-the-scenes team nearly made a cameo in the film. When the campers ran out of their besignted, a strange man (who happened to be with the crew) chased after them dressed in a white gauze suit. He



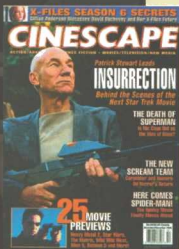
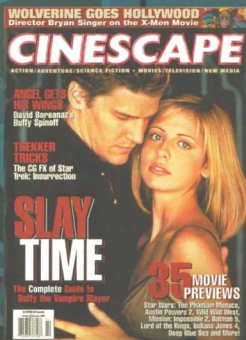
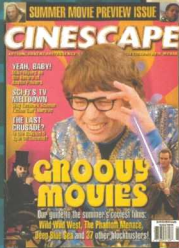
job well done," she says.

Mental maladies, in fact, came only after filming wrapped, when *Blair Witch* buzz turned her life into a veritable beehive of activity. "From the very first time I saw this movie, my life just got altered because it went right from that first screening to Sundance," she says. "After Sundance, there was the onslaught of



people I respect and admire."

But she's understandably worried that the same role that brought her success will pigeonhole her in the horror genre. "It's a hard genre. Even if you do one successful film in it, it is hard to continue to have variety over the course of a career," Donahue explains. "I'm a theater actress. This is a new game to me, and I've always enjoyed a great deal of variety. I'd like to keep doing a lot of different things that keep me challenged. That's the most important thing to me. I know I have a very small window of opportunity where I get to be the flavor-of-the-month girl, and obviously I want to bank on that, but I also would like to have a career as much on my terms as I possibly can." ■



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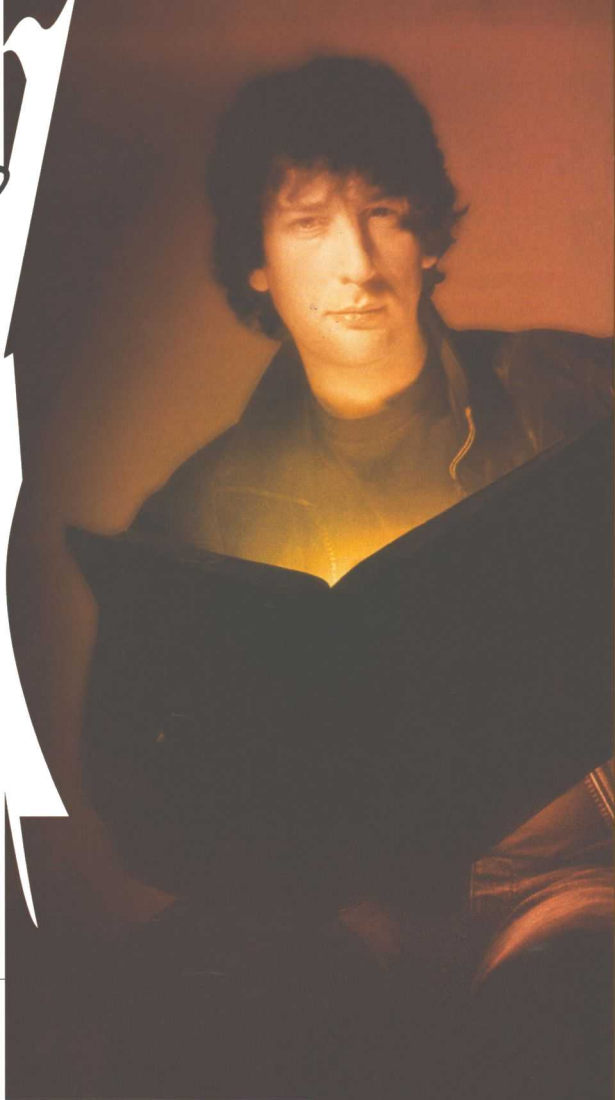
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NEIL GAIMAN COMFORTABLY
ASSUMES THE MANTLE OF DARK
FANTASY'S MOST PROLIFIC MIND

BY ANNABELLE VILLANUEVA

Neil Gaiman has his head in the clouds, but thousands of readers would agree that this is a good thing. Gaiman has made his living twisting dreams, shadows and illusions into darkly elegant modern fairy tales—sur-real, often fiercely funny stories that are equal parts Charles Perrault, C.S. Lewis and Clive Barker. After revolutionizing comic books with his haunting *Sandman* series, set amid a group of troubled immortals, the prolific writer successfully switched to prose and released two short-story collections and two bestselling fantasy novels, *Neverwhere* and *Stardust*, as well as an acclaimed children's book, *The Day I Swapped My Dad for 2 Goldfish*.

This fall, the Englishman's vast imagination is in high demand—DC Comics' Vertigo imprint is releasing a new, highly anticipated *Sandman* graphic novel, *The Dream Hunters*; meanwhile, Gaiman also scripted the dialogue for the English-language version of the animated Japanese movie hit *Princess Mononoke* and contributed a story to horror collection 999. He's currently working on a novel titled *American Gods* that will be released next summer, the screenplay of a movie based on *Neverwhere* for Miramax Films and Jim Henson Productions and another children's book. Still, Gaiman managed to pause from his crowded schedule to speak to *Wicked* from his Minnesota home, where he discussed the power of scary stories, his interest in Japanese myth and why he's compelled to write dark fantasy.

WICKED: SO, HOW IS EVERYTHING GOING?

NEIL GAIMAN Fairly well, I think,

although we need more eight-week months with 72-hour days in them and maybe some 25-day weeks as well. I just feel like I'm dancing as fast as I can. Somebody asked me the other day, "What are you working on?" And I took a deep breath and started to answer and just went on and on, and I could see their eyes start to glaze over.

W: HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY KEEP ALL OF YOUR PROJECTS STRAIGHT IN YOUR HEAD?

NG: Actually, keeping it straight in my head is not the biggest problem. I really like having more than one thing on the go, because very often if you get stuck on one thing you just move on to another and by the time you get back to the first thing it's unstuck itself. But what I miss right now is the concentrated amount of time just to work on something; you know, to sort of get that day-after-day rhythm.

[When] I was a guest of honor at the San Diego [Comic-Con in August], I went there by train from Minneapolis, which took about three days and was lovely, because nobody could ring me up and everything was very quiet. I ended up working on a book, a really scary, rather disturbing book for children that I began a number of years ago. I sat on the train and did about 8,000 words of this book, which is getting creepier and scarier. Actually, it keeps worrying me because on the one hand, people always say, "Kids love scary stuff, look at R.L. Stine and all that." And on the other hand, I say, "Yes, but this is scary." [Laughs]

W: WHAT'S IT ABOUT?



THE DREAMER: Gaiman [above] and his latest *Sandman* tome *The Dream Hunters* [below]; [opposite] two scenes from the Gaiman adaptation of *Princess Mononoke*

NG: It's about a little girl called Coraline who lives in a big old house that's been turned into flats, and there's a door in the house that opens onto a brick wall. One day she opens the door and it no longer opens onto a brick wall—it opens onto a corridor, and she goes down it and finds herself back in her own house, except it's not quite her own house anymore. Waiting for her is her other mother, who's a bit taller than the mother she left behind and has very white skin, very long fingers that are always wiggling, very long, black, wet-looking hair and big black buttons instead of eyes. She wants Coraline to stay with them for always and never to go back so they can love her and put big black buttons in her eyes, too. And that's just where it begins.

I did a little sort of midnight reading of the book in San Diego. I had people coming up to me the next day to say things like, "I had nightmares."

W: AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT GIVING PEOPLE NIGHTMARES?

NG: Good, actually. Because I give them good dreams, too. I don't think I could ever be exclusively a horror writer. When I've written horror over the years, there's a sort of place you have to go to in your head and it's not a place I particularly want to go and live for a very long period of time. But it's a wonderful place to visit. And I love some of the things that you can do with horror. It's visceral. You look at all of the genres there are, all the things that

you can do with stories, and there are only three genres in which you really know in a second if they're working or not: horror, humor and pornography. With pornography, if it's working you get physiological reactions. With humor, if it works the reader starts to laugh. And with horror, there's little goose pimples going up on the back of the neck.

W: WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE STATE OF HORROR AND FANTASY WRITING TODAY—IS THERE STUFF OUT THERE THAT ACTUALLY ELICITS GOOSE PIMPLES?

NG: I think overall the collapse of the horror genre has been very good for horror. If you go back to 1990, when anybody who could turn out 70,000 words of "the evil comes to town and terrible things happen over the next 30 short chapters to the 30 people in the town and then at the end it will blow up," you got an awful lot of really bad writing and there was this market that was glutted and then died. I was talking to a guy in a large chain bookstore where workers once had the task of closing down their horror section and deciding which books were going to go over to suspense and mystery and which books would go over into fantasy. But I think since you got that collapse, the horror that's out there has kind of improved.

With fantasy, the collapse doesn't seem to be imminent yet. I think that's kind of a pity because there's an awful lot of stuff out there that is ironically unimaginative. I say ironically because fantasy should be the one literature without limits, the one place without bounds. Having said that, of course, I am immediately reminded of Sturgeon's Law: The science-fiction writer Theodore Sturgeon once pointed out that while 90 percent of science fiction is crap, 90 percent of everything is crap.

W: SWITCHING GEARS FOR A MOMENT, *THE DREAM HUNTERS* IS YOUR FIRST *SANDMAN* STORY IN SEVERAL YEARS. HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT RETURNING TO COMICS AND REVISITING *SANDMAN*?

NG: It would have been easier if *Dream Hunters* had been a comic. What happened was I saw the poster that [Japanese artist] Yoshitaka Amano did for the *Sandman* tenth anniversary. I looked at it and went, "Wow, I never did a Japanese *Sandman* story." Bear in mind that I'd also spent a lot of last year writing the English dialogue for *Princess Mononoke*, and I really steeped myself in piles and piles of old Japanese mythology and fairy tales. When [DC/Vertigo editor] Karen Berger phoned and asked me to do another *Sandman* book I told her I'd do a graphic



novel if they could get Amano to draw it. When they called Amano in Japan he said, "I don't do comics—I did one many years ago and I wasn't happy with it—but I will do paintings, illustrations for a book." So what we decided to do was the text on one page, the illustration on the facing page, a double-page spread every chapter and when we actually get to meet the Sandman we have an eight-page gatefold painting of him. It is stunning.

The astonishing thing is that I sat down and wrote a Japanese fairy tale with the Sandman in it. And it was lovely going back to these characters, doing that weird kind of sweet and sour mix of *Sandman*. Having written things like *Stardust*, which had more or less happy endings, it was interesting writing something where all the characters move on but it's definitely not what one would quite describe as a happy ending. It has moments of romance and moments of mythic beauty and moments of sheer horror, I hope, what with this being *Sandman* and all. But mostly it's recognizably both an ancient Japanese fairy tale and a *Sandman* story, which is fun.

W: WAS THE WRITING PROCESS SIMILAR TO WHAT IT USED TO BE WITH *SANDMAN*, OR WAS YOUR APPROACH ALTERED BY WRITING *THE DREAM HUNTERS* IN PROSE?

NG: Actually, I kind of felt myself missing the things you can do in comics. You can't do a blank panel where nobody says anything in prose. Part of the thing of the Sandman is the rhythms of the way he speaks. Whenever he would be on stage, he would say something and then you would get a blank panel with his eyes glittering and then he would say something else. But here I didn't have the blank panel. And you can try and cover for that in prose—you know, writing "he stood there for a moment"—but it doesn't have anywhere near the same effect; you want something that just goes in viscerally. I still love comics. I still think they are the most wonderful medium, and if Amano had wanted to do a comic this would have been a comic. As it is, I think it's going to be something people are going to love. Even if they don't like the words, they'll have the pictures.

W: WHAT INTRIGUED YOU SO MUCH ABOUT JAPANESE MYTHOLOGY?

NG: Well my favorite part of it that I got to put in here was the idea of fox spirits and the way that the fox spirits would transform themselves into things: gods, temples, girls and so on. [*The Dream Hunters*] is kind of a romance about a fox girl who falls in love with a monk on the side of a mountain. An evil magician, who's a sort of yin-yang diviner who commands demons and vari-

ous other things, tries to steal the monk's life through his dreams. And the fox sets out to try and prevent this, which means she needs to obtain a favor from the King of All Night's Dreaming, which is the Sandman.

W: YOU'VE DISTANCED YOURSELF FROM THE *SANDMAN* MOVIE CURRENTLY TRAPPED IN DEVELOPMENT HELL, AND YOU'VE HAD OTHER UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES TRYING TO GET YOUR STORIES MADE INTO MOVIES. DID WORKING ON *PRINCESS MONONOKE* IMPROVE YOUR OPINION ABOUT HOLLYWOOD?

NG: Not really. The thing about *Mononoke* was that it was kind of off on the side, just by the nature of what I had to do. I mean, there was never a *Mononoke* pitch meeting. I still think that most people in Hollywood are idiots. I also think now that there are some who aren't, and the main trick to surviving is to work with the people who aren't.

W: YOU'RE ALSO WORKING ON A NEW NOVEL, *AMERICAN GODS*. CAN YOU TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

NG: I don't want to say too much about it because I'm writing it right now. The fundamental idea behind *American Gods* is that all the people who have come to America have brought their gods with them. When the Vikings came they brought the Norse pantheon with, etc. All the other people who've settled in America brought their gods with and then abandoned them and the gods have been eking out a sort of blue-collar living ever since, forgotten, uncared for and abandoned. They're grifters, they're hookers, they're



doing their best to survive. And all of a sudden, there's trouble that's been brewing for a long time and now it's all coming to a boil. And our hero, if that's what he is, finds himself up to his neck in weird stuff. So it's all about the new American gods of Internet and mobile phone and money and the freeway, and it's about the old gods and behind them, the even older gods of buffalo and land. It's also a kind of a way for me to try and write an American book...I mean

I've just written two very English books—*Nowhere* and *Stardust* are both more English than Hugh Grant. I've lived out here for six or seven years, and I thought it would be fun to write about it, to try and catch some of the speech patterns and that kind of thing.

W: HAVE YOU BEEN DOING ANY RESEARCH?

NG: Very lazily, yes. Not as much as I should have done; I keep promising myself that I will go hang out in bars and strip clubs and never quite get around to it. Most of the research one does is the research of living here and hanging around here for six or seven years. And going, "Isn't that interesting," and making these quiet and weird observations. This is my opportunity to say everything I think about America.

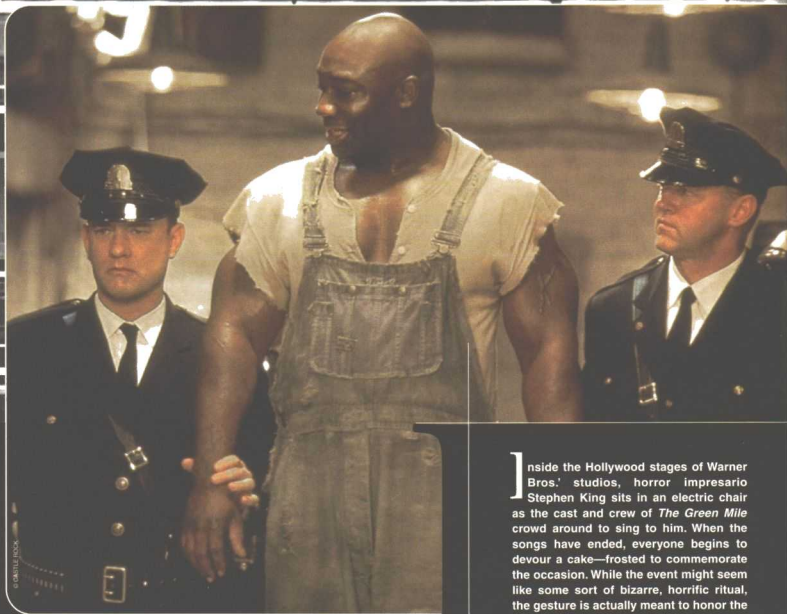
W: YOUR STORIES ARE SO CONSISTENTLY IMAGINATIVE—HAVE YOU EVER HAD THE DESIRE TO WRITE ABOUT SOMETHING COMPLETELY REALISTIC?

NG: I've never been convinced that the world I live in is completely realistic. I try to write things that feel right and are true on real emotional levels. But you start talking to people and their lives become tremendously unlikely—they are built on a procession of unlikely coincidences and bizarre happenings. And considering that 30 percent of everybody's day is spent



dreaming in a bizarre fantasy world in which they have gone stark-staring mad. I figure that my fiction is very honest and reflective.

People ask me why I write what I write. At the end of the day, the real answer is, "What makes you think I have any choice at all?" If you stick me and Stephen King and John Grisham in front of a decaying old house in the woods, Steve would probably come up with a story about the really nasty thing that lives in that house that's going to eat the couple lost in the woods who turn up there and John Grisham is probably going to do the novel saying that's the place where the young attorney fleeing from the city with secrets in his briefcase can go and hide. I'd wonder what would happen if the little shack in the woods got up on chicken legs and walked away. ■



Inside the Hollywood stages of Warner Bros.' studios, horror impresario Stephen King sits in an electric chair as the cast and crew of *The Green Mile* crowd around to sing to him. When the songs have ended, everyone begins to devour a cake—frosted to commemorate the occasion. While the event might seem like some sort of bizarre, horrific ritual, the gesture is actually meant to honor the author's 51st birthday, which he is spending on the set of the latest cinematic adaptation to issue from his enormous body of work.

A gripping paranormal drama, *The Green Mile* is set on Death Row in a Southern prison in 1935 and tells the remarkable story of the cell block's head guard, who develops a poignant, unusual



BY GINA MCINTYRE

[m i r a c l e]

ANOTHER STEPHEN KING TALE BLOSSOMS UNDER
THE WATCHFUL EYE OF DIRECTOR FRANK DARABONT

relationship with one inmate who possesses the mysterious power to heal.

Director/screenwriter Frank Darabont, who previously adapted King's short story "The Shawshank Redemption" to Academy Award-nominated acclaim, returns to lend his unique eye to the writer's prison fiction. Darabont says he was so struck when he read the beginning of King's serialized narrative that he immediately contacted him to gain the film rights to the story.

"I read the first installment, jumped on a plane and flew to Colorado, where King was doing the miniseries *The Shining*," Darabont says. "I drove up a mountain just like Jack Torrance in *The Shining* to try and find Stephen and say, 'Yes! I really want to do this.' I decided to make this

movie without having seen the other five installments."

The concepts that so struck Darabont had been stewing in King's brain for some time before he set them down on paper. The idea to publish the tale as a serial actually served as the catalyst for him to write the piece.

"I had been playing with a story idea I had always suspected I would get around to sooner or later—the electric chair," King recalls. "At the point I had come to, there are usually just two choices: put it away or cast everything else aside and chase. Ralph [Vicinanza, King's foreign rights agent] suggested a possible third alternative, a story that could be written the same way it would be read—in installments."

Although *The Green Mile* remains a sin-

gular achievement in King's canon—it is the only serialized story the author has produced—he was so pleased with Darabont's work on *The Shawshank Redemption* that he agreed to turn the story over to the director's capable hands.

Not long after the would-be director completed his screenplay, the script found its way onto the desk of two-time Oscar winning actor Tom Hanks (*Philadelphia*, *Forrest Gump*).

"Frank's screenplay was sort of on the wire," Hanks says. "Part of it was because of the Stephen King/Frank Darabont dialectic, but at the same time, it was also really good. So when I got it, all it required was a read. I had no knowledge of the original novel, so every moment was a surprise. I just thought that, pound for pound,



it was one of those great things that you want. The hardest thing to find is well-made material. It's a one-in-a-million shot when something lands on your desk, ready to make, needing no work. There've been a few tiny changes, but basically, it's just, 'Oh my god, all we had to do is show up

and make this movie.'"

Sufficiently impressed, Hanks signed on as prison guard Paul Edgecomb, who relates, in flashback, a mystical account of his tour-of-duty at Cold Mountain Penitentiary and his watch over a

quartet of convicted killers awaiting execution in the electric chair. Of course, the role offered Hanks other perks aside from another leading man credit.

"I get to be fat because I'm playing a prison guard in 1935," the actor says. "You don't want to look like you have buns of steel. The great thing is that I get to eat a few more cheeseburgers, which is fine with me."

For the pivotal role of condemned prisoner John Coffey, Darabont cast bouncer turned actor Michael Clarke Duncan, who previously starred in such films as *Friday* and *Armageddon*. "My good friend Bruce Willis drew me to this role," explains the 6-foot-5-inch, 315-pound Duncan. "He told me to go buy the novel and read it, so I

SERVING TIME: [left and below] Tom Hanks and David Morse; [bottom] Hanks; [previous page, left] Hanks, Michael Clarke Duncan, Morse; [previous page, right] Doug Hutchison, Morse, Hanks



King's dark vision to the screen with any success, Darabont says the trick lies exclusively in selecting the right material to adapt. "I think the secret is to pick and choose," he says. "I tend to be drawn toward the more character-driven stuff, the less graspable stuff. To me, that's the most rich material to mine. A lot of filmmakers are drawn to [King's] stuff by the fur and the fangs and that's what you end up with [on screen]. That tends to leave Steve behind; it leaves the flavor of him behind. When they get it right, it's fantastic,

"WALKING ONTO THE MILE [SET] WAS LIKE STEPPING INSIDE MY OWN MIND."

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could have some insight into the character and really study what this guy was about. And once I'd read it, it was like, 'That's me.' I knew it was me."

So far, the chemistry between the actors and the director has gelled. The author admits that watching Darabont's vision spring to life has surpassed his expectations. "Walking onto the *Mile* [set] was like stepping inside my own mind," King recalls, amidst posing for photos with the cast and crew. Aside from the casting and costume work, the spectacular prison interiors designed by Terence Marsh, who also worked on *Shawshank* with Darabont, contributed to the film's striking look.

While few have been able to bring

though. Cronenberg [with *The Dead Zone*], for example. Wow. It wasn't just about the psychic visions, it was about the characters. That was really, really great stuff."

As such, his relationship with King is strong, and Darabont says he intends to do nothing to interfere with that level of trust and mutual respect. "He's a passive observer, most definitely," Darabont says. "He tends to distance himself somewhat from the productions unless he has a direct hand. Because then if it goes in the toilet, he doesn't have to take the ride with it. Or in my case he pretty much trusts me and figures it will turn out OK." —additional reporting by Tyson Blue

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S C R E A M

P R E S E N T S

It's a risky proposition.

In the midst of the season of the *Witch*, Dimension Films and its parent company Miramax are banking on a teen slasher film to put the paranormal back in its place and finance one helluva holiday party. But it's not just any slasher flick—it's the presumably last installment of the trilogy that brought big-budget horror back from the dead.

Scream 3, the final saga of the beleaguered Sidney Prescott (Neve Campbell), features yet another batch of screen-friendly faces—franchise veterans Campbell, David Arquette and Courteney Cox Arquette, as well as new additions Parker Posey (*The House of Yes*), Kate Hudson (*200 Cigarettes*), Scott Foley (TV's *Felicity*) and Matt Keeslar (*The Last Days of Disco*). Naturally, viewers can expect that someone wearing an all too familiar-looking costume will be spending some serious time with a cellular phone. With any luck, audiences won't be screening their calls.

by Gina McIntyre





Kevin Williamson reveals why he bowed out of the final installment of his horror trilogy


N C E

Trouble erupted this summer when *Scream* creator and teen guru Kevin Williamson left the project after submitting a treatment for the film. Screenwriter Ehren Kruger (*Reindeer Games*) was enlisted to finish the script, and reports indicate that Laeta Kalogridis also contributed to the final screenplay. Williamson says that his departure had nothing to do with misgivings about the *Scream* franchise; he was simply too busy to tackle another assignment.

"I wanted to do *Scream 3*," Williamson explains. "We all wanted me to do it. But we all sat down and decided that I didn't have time. I didn't want to push the movie up earlier because then we would never get Neve and Courteney. They have a TV window they have to work within. So we had to make the movie during the summers. I couldn't write it because I was in the middle of directing *Teaching Mrs. Tingle* and doing the pilot for *Wasteland*. So, you know, I had to make a decision. It

was hard. Ehren Kruger is writing it, and he wrote a great read."

While Williamson's self-referential style might not be as pervasive in the film, his name will remain in the movie's credits. "I'm a producer on *Scream 3*, but I think that's because they're really nice to me. I shot *Wasteland* on the same lot as *Scream 3*," he continues. "I could look over and see them shooting *Scream 3*, and I [would] just kind of wave. It really is sad, but it was a family decision. We had to get together and work it out. Now I'll be an audience member."

Despite bumps in the film's production and the changing tastes of the horror moviegoing public, Williamson is confident that *Scream 3* will meet with the unmitigated success of its two predecessors. How can he be so sure? "We've got [legendary genre director] Wes Craven, and I'm sure it's going to be great," he says. "My money is on Wes. This movie is going to rock."—*additional reporting by Cindy Peariman* 

WITH HIS
RENOVATED
VERSION OF
HOUSE ON
HAUNTED HILL,
DIRECTOR WILLIAM
MALONE ADDS NEW
LAYERS OF TERROR
TO A VINCENT
PRICE CLASSIC

This OLD House



© MARSHALL BROWN



By Steve Hockensmith

Long before Hollywood entered the Digital Age thanks to CGI special effects, there was the Cheese Age. Lasting from the late '50s through the mid-'70s, this filmmaking epoch was characterized by such not-so-special effects as Glorious Smell-O-Vision! (which released scents into the theater during key scenes), Sensurround (wherein the bass on the soundtrack was turned up super-high to simulate the rumble of earthquakes and roller coasters) and Hallucinogenic Hypnosis (which required theater employees to run up and down the aisles dressed as zombies).

Perhaps the greatest genius of the Cheese Age was producer/director William Castle. To pump up the shock value—literally—of his 1959 creature feature *The Tingler*, Castle had low-voltage generators installed under theater seats. When the titular monster went on the rampage in the film, audience members would receive a sharp jolt to the posterior. For another film, the Vincent Price chiller *House on Haunted Hill*, Castle created Emergo, a “special effect” designed to one-up 3-D.

“I saw *House on Haunted Hill* when I was a kid and I can still remember

Emergo,” writer/director William Malone says with a chuckle. “It was nothing more than a balloon with a skeleton painted on it. It had a tendency to pop.”

Despite the fact that Emergo never caught on, Castle’s legacy remains. Earlier this year, megaproducer Joel Silver (the man responsible for the *Die Hard* and *Lethal Weapon* series) and *Back to the Future/Forrest Gump* director Robert Zemeckis created Dark Castle Entertainment, a production company devoted to creating Castle-style horror films. The new company’s first project, appropriately enough, is a remake of *House on Haunted Hill*...sans Emergo, of course. Instead, the new film will feature something Castle could never have afforded for his movies: awesome special effects and a top-notch cast.

Silver and Zemeckis asked Malone to renovate *House on Haunted Hill* based on his track record as a director for their HBO series *Tales from the Crypt*. Working with screenwriter Dick Beebe, Malone retooled Robb White’s original 1958 script, keeping the basic premise (a group of strangers spends the night in a supposedly haunted house) but expanding and

modernizing the plot.

“In the original, I think everyone was paid \$10,000 to stay the night in this haunted house,” Malone says. “Of course, we had to up the ante to a million dollars or nobody would show up.”

Malone also gave the house a detailed backstory based on his experience directing the *Tales from the Crypt* episode “Report from the Grave.”

“We were shooting in a former mental institution over in England, and we had to have an exorcist come in and exorcise it. It was a pretty medieval place. The crew wouldn’t go in the basement,” Malone says. “I remember thinking, ‘This would be a really cool place to set a horror film.’”

In Malone’s remake, horror film veteran Jeffrey Combs plays a scientist who’s as insane as the patients in the mental hospital he runs. (“I’d make him do lines from *Re-Animator* every time he came on the set,” Malone says of Combs. “He’d yell at me, ‘Get a job with a side-show!’”) Years later, the now-abandoned madhouse is the setting for a grotesque party organized for socialite Evelyn Price (Famke Janssen) by her spiteful husband (Geoffrey Rush).

“She and her husband have this thing



between them. They like to torment each other," Janssen explains. "For her birthday, she wanted a party at a haunted house. Her husband's against it, but in the end she gets her way. She makes a guest list of people, all her friends, and he changes the list to get back at her. So ultimately people show up nobody knows."

Among the strangers who end up crashing Evelyn's party are Peter Gallagher as a sleazy plastic surgeon, Bridgette Wilson as an ambitious TV reporter and *Saturday Night Live* cast member Chris Kattan as the house's down-on-his-luck owner. Though in the original film the ghouls and goblins ended up being nothing more than a *Scoby Doo*-style ruse to divert attention from a murder plot, the houseguests in Malone's version find themselves facing real ghosts—the traumatized spirits of the inmates Combs' character tormented decades before.

Despite all the changes, at least one important element from Castle's film lives on in the remake.

"Our characters are quite a bit different, although Geoffrey Rush, who plays the Vincent Price character, comes across very much like Vincent Price," Malone says. "It was actually sort of unintentional. Geoffrey had the notion of playing the character as [legendary *Pink Flamingos* director] John Waters, and strangely enough you put him in that outfit and give him that moustache and he looks exactly like Vincent Price."

Despite the presence (in spirit) of the ultra-campy Waters and the casting of *SNL*'s Kattan, Malone stresses that his film is not a comedy.

"In one of my first conversations I had with Chris Kattan, I told him I really wanted his character to be played straight, and even though he's got some funny things to do it should come out of the reality of the character," Malone says. "We do occasionally go to the edge, but I think it's a relatively serious movie. I think that audiences genuinely want to be frightened, and all humor in the movie should grow out of the characters and the situations [not out of making fun of them]. To my mind, horror-comedies generally don't work. We didn't want to go there."

Of course, if Malone wanted serious acting, he couldn't ask for a better star than



DEAD MAN'S PARTY: (clockwise from above) Ali Larter; Chris Kattan; Geoffrey Rush on the set; Taye Diggs; Larter with Peter Gallagher; [previous page, left] the residents of *House on Haunted Hill*; [opposite page, right] Bridgette Wilson

the Oscar-winning Rush, whose Serious Thespian rep helped draw other names to the project.

"I [took the role] primarily because Geoffrey Rush was part of the cast. I am a big fan of his," says Gallagher, who admits that he's not a fan of the horror genre.

"I am scared to death of scary movies," says the actor, who's best known for his roles in *sex, lies & videotape* and *While You Were Sleeping*. "I just can't watch them. It took me a week to get over *Alien*."

But despite his horrorphobia, Gallagher had a good time working on *House on Haunted Hill*.

"I had a blast. I loved working on this film. William Malone is a devotee of the

darned creepy.

"It was loaded with cobwebs, and it was dark and musty and damp and horrible. It was the worst working conditions I've ever experienced," says the actress, who plays one of the haunted houseguests (and will appear soon in the haunted-teen horror flick *Flight 180*). "I would be surprised if it's not a frightening film because when we were doing it we scared ourselves."

Larter got so scared, in fact, that the zombies and monsters prowling the set ended up being afraid of her.

"There was a sequence where zombies come out of the ground and start [attacking people]. When they would yell 'Action!' these zombies would go after Ali Larter,

and she was punching and screaming and doing everything she could to get away from them," says special effects makeup supervisor Greg Nicotero. "And then they'd yell 'Cut!' and we were like, 'Uhhhh. Ali, there's human beings in those suits so you've got to be careful.' She just got so

caught up in the sequence [she forgot it was make-believe]. The zombies were bruised afterwards where she'd punched and kicked them."

Of course, Nicotero should take Larter's terrified reaction as a compliment, since the company he co-owns, KNB EFX Group, supplied the film's obviously effective makeup gags.



genre and took delight in directing the movie," he says. "And the actors were terrific. Between Geoffrey [Rush] and Chris Kattan, we laughed a lot."

Though cast member Ali Larter also relished the chance to emote alongside Rush, she admits that she didn't have as many laughs as Gallagher. The problem? The atmosphere on the set was just too



"House on Haunted Hill was really fun," says Nicotero, whose other credits include *Evil Dead 2*, *Scream*, *Spawn*, *Boogie Nights* and the upcoming *End of Days*, *Supernova* and *Rocky & Bullwinkle*. "We got to do a little bit of everything in this movie. We got to do zombies, we got to do some neat ghosts, we got to do all these great supernatural creatures."

But despite the diverse lineup of creatures on display, Nicotero says *House on Haunted Hill* doesn't overdose on gore or ghoul.

"In a lot of our meetings, Bill [Malone] would stress a less-is-more approach to the design of these characters. They weren't going to be overdone or busy looking," Nicotero explains. "They were going to be simple, whether it was just a face with no eyes or a jaw that juts out. He wanted to play it more subtle, because it's the execution that will make it scary. It's much more like *Jacob's Ladder*, where you catch a little glimpse of something and you're not really sure what you saw."

According to Malone, the restrained, less-in-your-face style he chose for the film grew out of his love for the old classics of the horror genre. And when a true horror scholar like Malone cites "old classics," he's not talking about *Halloween* or *A Nightmare on Elm Street*.

"I want the film to feel like something made in Germany in 1923," he says. "That was my spin from the beginning. I watched *Faust* and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Nosferatu* and *The Black Cat* with the art department. We really tried to emulate that style."

Even the design of the insane asylum/haunted house was influenced by 1920s Berlin. "It's very Bauhaus, very Deco," Malone says. "Again, we went back to [the 1934 thriller] *The Black Cat* for the look. It's modernistic circa 1923."

That old-fashioned, expressionistic ethic even carried over to the film's ultra-modern visual effects, which are being supplied by Dennis and Robert Skotak (*Aliens*, *Terminator 2*).

"I told the effects guys I don't want glossy-looking CGI stuff," Malone says. "We do have some CGI in our picture, but that's not what the movie is about."

A haunted house flick that's not awash in "glossy-looking" computer-generated effects? Obviously, *House on Haunted Hill* will be significantly different than *The Haunting*, which scared up big profits this summer.

"Some people will probably think we're ripping them off, but we were in production months before they were. We just worked slower, I guess," Malone says with a somewhat rueful chuckle. "The titles were a real problem for a while. We kept getting their mail."

Nicotero got to experience *The Haunting/House on Haunted Hill* confusion first-hand: KNB EFX worked on Jan De Bont's *Haunting* remake, too.

"[During production] *The Haunting* was called *The Haunting of Hill House*, so everybody in the shop was very confused," he says. "We'd all be asking, 'Is this for *House on Haunted Hill* or *Haunting of Hill House*?'"

Although *House on Haunted Hill* faces the disadvantage of opening second,



HOUSE OF THE DEAD: [top] Rush with director Malone; Wilson; an uninvited guest; a confused group of partygoers investigates the *House on Haunted Hill*



Nicotero is convinced that Malone has nothing to worry about. According to him, *House* will easily out-scare *Haunting*.

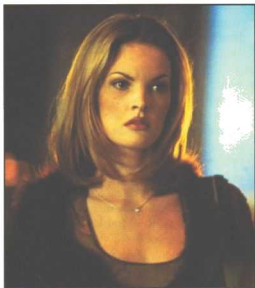
"*The Haunting* is probably the most unscary haunted house movie ever made," Nicotero says. "There's one scare in the whole movie—when the skeleton lunges out of the fireplace. We did that a month before the movie came out. It wasn't in the original [cut]. They said, 'Oh, we need a scare here,' and it's the only scare in the whole movie. The minute you see the little [CGI] kids' faces all over the place, it's not scary anymore. There's no suspense."

Malone stays mum on his feelings about the rival haunted house movie, which he has seen. "It's a very different movie" is about all he'll say. But the politically-correct Malone does reveal that he was heartened by *The Haunting's* box-office success.

"With the success of both *The Haunting* and *The Blair Witch Project*, I feel relieved. It's like a weight has been lifted,"

the director says. "*Halloween* was a great movie. I love it, but it put a blanket over horror films for 20 years. And that blanket was that the studios thought that horror movies were nothing but guys with knives. They just couldn't get away from that.

"Now they're beginning to realize that (A) there is a huge audience for these types of movies and (B) they can be something much more dynamic and interesting than the guy with a knife," he continues. "It's good to see. I just hope it keeps heading in that direction." ❧



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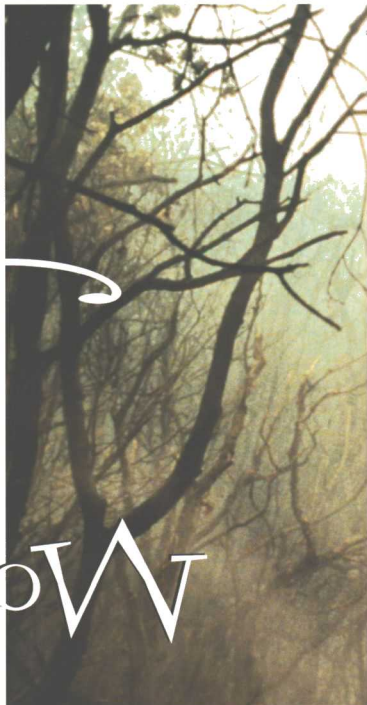
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TIM BURTON resurrects the spirit of classic British horror films with his Gothic

Hatful of HOLLOW



The Sleepy Hollow crew is having a little too much fun with this whole severed head thing.

"There's a funny thing that happens in *Sleepy Hollow*, people just keep losing their heads," says Casper Van Dien, who plays the burly Brom Van Brunt in Tim Burton's adaptation of Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

Funny? Wouldn't a tale about an awkward, cowardly schoolteacher stalked by a nightmarish apparition of a headless horseman be considered a little creepy, even scary?



"Having a guy with no head, I don't know how scary that truly is, we'll see. But it was fun," says director Burton.

Maybe he's right. With Burton in charge—the same man behind such fantastical oddities as *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*, *Beetlejuice*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *Batman* and *The Nightmare Before Christmas*—stories that could have been spooky usually become a bit kooky, as the director's macabre humor takes things a little left of center. Burton insists, however, that he handled *Sleepy Hollow* with more seriousness and less camp than his previous films, but he still doesn't know whether it will actually frighten people.

"It's hard for me to say because what scares me and what scares other people are oftentimes two different things. Nothing could be more frightening than my last meeting with the studio," Burton quips. "But we certainly went for more of an atmosphere like in an old-fashioned horror movie."

Strangely enough, this is the lifelong horror fan's first foray into the genre. *Sleepy Hollow* finally gave Burton the opportunity to pay homage to his favorite films, the hammy, romantically lush horror flicks of the '50s and '60s starring Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee and

Vincent Price, produced by British horror house Hammer Film Productions and its domestic counterpart American International Pictures.

"They're just so beautiful, those movies," Burton says. "All those great Hammer horror films, they had such beautiful atmosphere and a certain kind of horror that was more beautiful in a way.

Seeing those kind of movies on the big screen was always really fun. They weren't real, and they were lurid. There was blood in it, but it wasn't horrific. A Hammer horror film captured to me what a good

very dark writer, but with Tim on board and what he's been doing with Johnny Depp and the way these guys have been handling the characters, it adds another flavor to it, which will make it a much better film."

Depp is no stranger to crafting quirky characters with Burton, having previously collaborated with the director as the titular characters in *Edward Scissorhands* and *Ed Wood*. In Burton's *Sleepy Hollow*, Ichabod Crane is no longer Irving's gawky pedagogue tortured by terrifying fireside tales but rather a constable sent to a small town to investigate a series of decapitations. The superstitious populace believes a mysterious galloping ghoul is responsible, but early forensics expert Crane vows to capture the human serial killer behind the murders.

While undeniably the protagonist, the uptight character is still far from a traditional hero. Burton knew the part called



URBAN LEGEND: Johnny Depp [right] and Christina Ricci [opposite page, top] stalked by an apparition in Tim Burton's eerie *Sleepy Hollow*.



old fairy tale would, like a kid's story in a way, but with blood and sex."

Set in a secluded, early American locale, Irving's fairy tale easily lends itself to the Hammer style—and Burton's unmistakable visual sensibility. As the early 19th century writer describes the populace in *Legend*, "However wide awake they may have been before they entered that sleepy region, they are sure, in a little time, to inhale the witching influence of the air, and begin to grow imaginative—to dream dreams and see apparitions." It's easy to say the same of Burton's audiences.

In fact, it was so obvious that *Sleepy Hollow* was meant for the director that coproducer Kevin Yagher, who was originally slated to helm the project, stepped aside when Burton showed interest. "I used to joke, 'If we get Tim Burton to direct this, I would step down in a second,'" he says. "[Screenwriter Andrew Kevin Walker] is a

for an actor who wouldn't be afraid to take on the challenge of such an odd role; Depp was the man for the job.

"Johnny will do anything, and we've done some pretty nasty things," says Burton. "He's perfect for this. It's fun to work with somebody and each time [have] it be different. It gives you a good energy. He gets that kind of thing like Peter Cushing and Vincent Price got, that sort of weird ambiguousness, like these guys are too busy for a personal life. They're too busy with their work—god only knows what that is, but they don't have time for anything else, which is a great kind of character."

Complicating matters is Crane's affection for beauty Katrina Van Tassel (Christina Ricci), the daughter of local magnate Baltus Van Tassel (Michael Gambon). In the minds of many avid Burton fans, it was time the actress,



had been hypnotized by Dracula.”

In Burton's films, the atmosphere is almost another character—a vibrant entity as essential to the story as the script. Therefore, translating Burton's well-known surreal visuals into classic horror ambiance was an extremely high priority.

“The way [the setting is] described in Washington Irving's [version] is a very dreamlike space,” explains production designer Rick

Heinrichs. “The whole feeling you're going to get is going to be one of entering this different state of mind. That's what we're going for. It's just slightly mad up there, and of course, there's a headless

horseman running around.”

The film stock was altered to create the unique, demented fairy tale look.

“[Director of Photography Emmanuel Lubezki] is pushing the stock. He's desaturating the print,” Heinrichs says. “It creates very rich blacks and beautiful whites, and the colors become more muted. It's a little bit more like a black-and-white print that's been hand-tinted. We use smoke. Tim has always steered clear of smoke in all of his movies for the most part because it's so cliché as a technique. But it's important in order to achieve the kind of depth and to help with [the] forced perspectives we're trying to do on stage. It's really been important to us to help create the atmosphere also of—we're not supposed to call it a horror movie, so I won't call it that—a gothic fable.”

Obsessive need for control over every aspect of the film's design mixed the original plan to shoot *Sleepy Hollow* on location in the historical areas of the actual Tarrytown, NY (where the novella is set).

renowned for her critically acclaimed performances in indie films including *The Opposite of Sex* and *Buffalo 66*, joined forces with Burton. Ricci's classic looks and affinity for weird, eclectic fare made it

“A Hammer horror film captured to me what a good old fairy tale would, like a kid's story in a way, but with blood and sex.” —Tim Burton

clear to the director she was perfect for the part.

“She was hand-chosen,” Burton declares. “She's great. She's got an old, silent movie actor quality. I mean, I like people who are very expressive in their eyes and can convey a lot without having to convey a lot. She's got a real good quality of that.”

Perhaps the greatest personal casting coup for Burton was securing horror movie legend Christopher Lee for a cameo as the Burgomaster who sets Crane out on his journey. A huge fan of Lee's work in Hammer films, Burton felt the actor would bring a gravity to the opening scene. When Lee accepted his invitation, it was a dream come true for the director.

“When I first met [Lee], I sat there and I was hypnotized by him,” Burton recalls, stammering with excitement. “It's like, he is Dracula. Two hours go by and it's like you're hypnotized by him and his voice. He's got the greatest voice. It's so great to meet people who have inspired you, and it really kind of keeps you going, kind of keeps you from getting jaded or whatever. You meet these people who have given you so much pleasure, just watching them, and they're so great. They have so many weird stories. Like I said, I spent over two hours with him, and I like woke up. I was like, ‘Where did that time go?’ It's like I



The production moved to Leavesden and Shepperton Studios in England, and Heinrichs and his team went so far as to create a town from scratch at a cost of \$1.3 million in a valley an hour north of London.

"The architecture of the time, as great as it looks, there's sort of a purity to it, a simplicity to it that wasn't lending itself to the kind of story we were trying to tell," Heinrichs explains. "What we're trying to express is a little Dutch community in upstate New York that's just kind of huddled and fearful. There's just an unease when you walk into the town. As Tim said from the beginning, we're not trying to do a history lesson here. We're just trying to get a certain feeling."

That certain feeling not only diverted the crew from historical accuracy but also inspired them to push the boundaries of reality.

"Burton wanted to come up with ways to sever people's heads that were different," says Yagher, whose Kevin Yagher Productions Inc. provided *Sleepy Hollow*'s creature effects. "He has a character who gets his or her head cut off. The head ends up having to spin around several times and then flop over. We had to build a head-spinning rig. It wasn't blue screen. We had to do it all live. The sword that actually comes through and slices this person's head off will be digital. The head ends up spinning several times around, almost in a very borderline cartoon fashion. But it actually works quite well. We were able to make it spin once up to six times."

"We're treating this almost like a big stop-motion animation film," Heinrichs adds.

Burton's trademark black humor also permeates the film. A fan of the animated Disney adaptation of *Legend* rather than Irving's tale itself, Burton lightened up the



tone of Walker's originally very serious script.

"[Disney] created that really wonderful sense of it being funny and visceral and doing a lot of different things all at once," Burton says. "The layout and color and design were just so beautiful. I remember the feeling of seeing that and it tapped into lots of different things. It was funny and scary. It had a great energy all the way through. I didn't read the actual story until recently. It's funny because in America, most kids have never read the story, but they know the story of the headless horseman. I don't know quite where that comes from exactly."

As the director ponders the collective unconscious of American youth, Heinrichs speculates that drawing inspiration from his and Burton's former employer Disney will make *Sleepy Hollow* a success. "The thing I've always liked about Tim's work is that he walks that line between horror and humor," he says. "I think [*Sleepy Hollow*]'s going to be very thrilling." ■



SLEEPY TIME: (top) a view of Sleepytown; (left) perfectionist Burton puts finishing touches on the set

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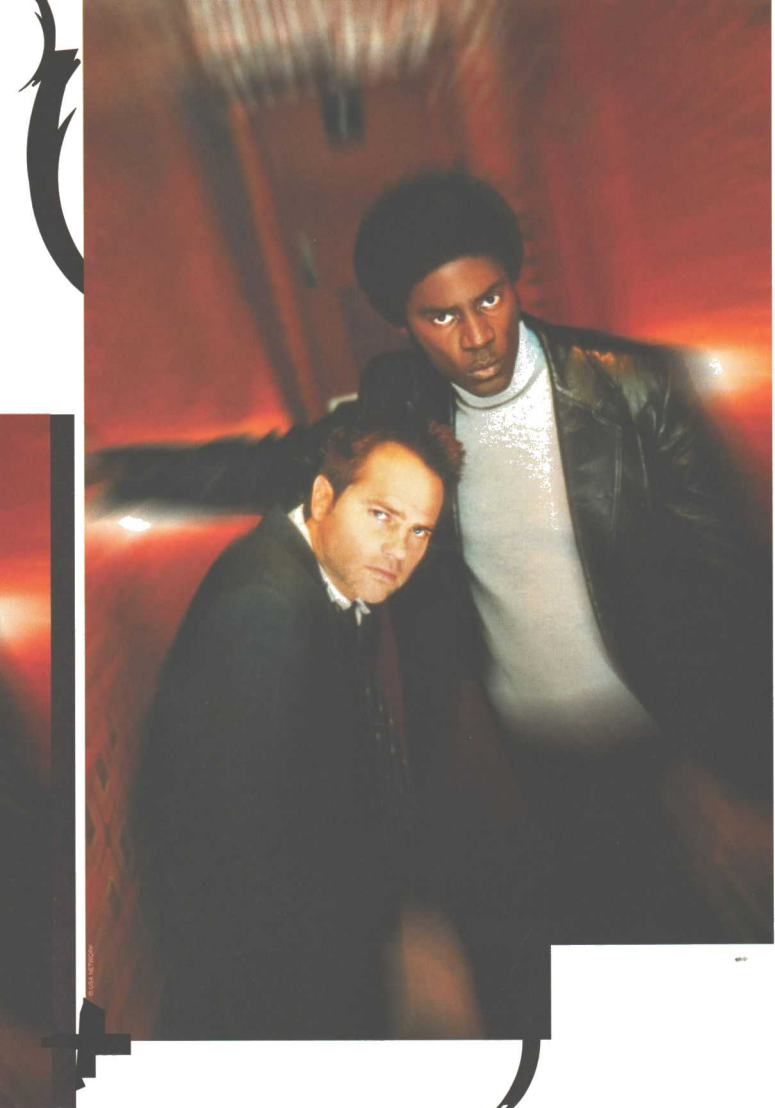
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The stars of cable's ultra-hip series *GvsE* reveal what it's like to deal with the devil

by Matt Springer

GVS E

THE GOOD FIGHT

They don't look like angels, that's for sure. Wearing a rumpled suit and an expression to match, Chandler Smythe projects the aura of a well-worn used car salesman, someone who's eager to help but also easily exasperated. His partner, Henry McNeil, looks like he'd be more at home in *Dolemite* than in Hollywood battling demons. They don't act much like Christian soldiers either, somehow nearly botching up every case they're assigned.

Yet they're the last line of defense between innocent souls and the forces of darkness on USA's new genre series *GvsE*. They're the border patrol on the highway to heaven. And though they might not always get the job done right—or even get the job done at all—they're certainly having a much better time than Michael Landon ever did.

"It's not like we're trying to be angels," confesses Richard Brooks, who portrays the laid-back Henry on the show. "We're bad good guys, so I don't even know if our service is really helping us get into heaven in a way, because we're still breaking the rules. It's totally wild to me."

Arriving on the cable network during the usually arid summer television season, it's safe to say that *GvsE* has been a surprise hit. It premiered in mid-July, bolstered by a moderate ad campaign and some powerful

Internet buzz. Its debut episode scored an impressive 2.7 rating for the network, ranking 32nd on a weekend when coverage of the JFK Jr. plane crash dominated the ratings listings. The show also garnered near-universal critical acclaim, making a powerful impression with viewers and reviewers.

"I think we were out of the ballpark the first day," says series co-star Clayton Rohner of *GvsE*'s impressive debut. "We set records. We're already doing well, but it'd be nice to see us grow just a little bit and give someone like *The Sopranos* a run for their money. I'm much more interested in the younger, hipper audience, and we've just been doing great. Even *The Wall Street Journal* loved us."

Some of the show's highest praise is originating from the very series with which it competes for Sunday night viewers' TV time. "I got the nicest call yesterday from Jeff [Bell], the guy who wrote the episode of *The X-Files* that I was in," explains

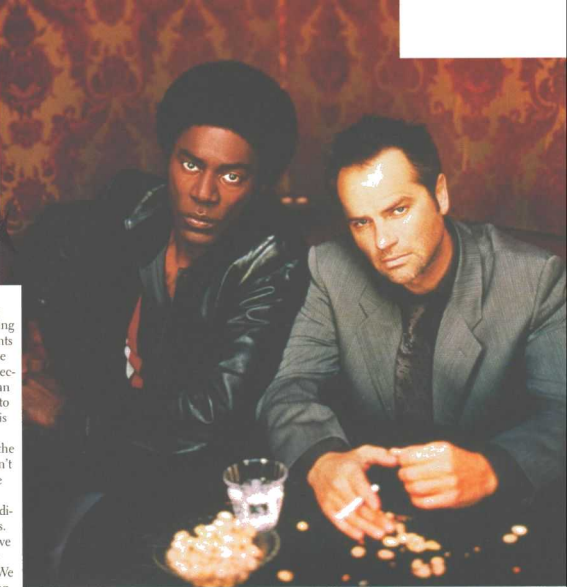
Rohner. "He said that they were all big *GvsE* fans over at *X-Files*, and they would bring a tape in and watch it at the office. I thought that's about as good a compliment as you can get, that the guys at *X-Files* bring your tape in and watch it and love it."

The critics are watching it, *The X-Files* crew is watching it, and somewhere high above us all, the Almighty is probably tuning in, too. For those not yet indoctrinated, here's what you need to know: Chandler (Rohner) is an unwitting witness to a murder in an alley, only the killers aren't your usual breed of street urchin. They're Morlocks, demons who have made

deals with the devil and surrendered their souls to Satan. They're on Earth to perpetuate their dark legion by cutting more deals with innocents, known as Faustians until their deals go through.

When Chandler is killed in a scuffle with these Morlocks, he's informed that the goodwill he's built up during his time on Earth just isn't quite enough to swing wide the pearl gates. However, he can earn





some holy brownie points and make it to heaven through work in the Corps, helping other purgatoried souls to rescue innocents who are in the grip of Faustian deals. The good news is that this gains Chandler a second chance; partnered with Henry, he can rescue folks in need and work his way into heaven at the same time. The bad news is that Corps agents are all-too-mortal; no super powers or invincibility come with the job. The worst news of all is that they can't fall prey to temptations of the flesh while on the job. In other words, no sex.

"We really try to live like we're just ordinary guys trying to fight evil," Brooks says. "We're not like superheroes; we don't have super-duper gadgets. It's just guys. At the same time, we both feel for the people. We can understand what the people are going through, or we might decide it's just time to bust some heads and knock some sense into these people."

Both Brooks and Rohrer dig into their roles with ferocious gusto, constantly ratcheting up the dial on *CvsE*'s energy level. "We just try to play it intensely, because we're already dead, so we really gotta live each moment like it could be our last," explains Brooks. "It really could be our last, and most of the time it is close to our last.

drama. The next, it's an outlandish action-comedy. Then it careens full-tilt into a dire life-or-death situation. The cast is constantly walking a tightrope above these various moods, and they're responsible for keeping the action afloat.

"What's interesting is that Clayton and I try to play the moments sincerely," Brooks says. "As long as we play our intentions right, I don't think it's that hard to go from a real serious situation right into a comedy part. It's actually what I really like doing in the show because I think that gives us much more room as actors to just play. We take the moments, and if it should be funny, it's funny. If there's action, there's gonna be action. If it's romantic, it's gonna be really romantic, you know what I mean?"

I think in a sense, kids like to be challenged. They do want to be knocked over the head, too, but they'd also like to catch jokes. Clever kids are still clever."

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of *CvsE*'s critical and commercial success is that the show sprang fully formed from the minds of two untested television producers. Josh and Jonas Pate, twin brothers and the co-creators of *CvsE*, began their Hollywood career as co-writers and directors of independent films, including 1996's *The Grave* and its follow-up *Deceiver*. The pair had never produced or written an ongoing television series but compensated for their inexperience with a willingness to throw out the rulebook and develop their own unique approach to the genre.



No more second chances. Judgment Day is gonna be there, and they're gonna decide whether we made it or not."

Alongside the intense performances, *CvsE* is defined by its continuous shifts in tone. One minute, it's a realistic character

"I think that [Josh and Jonas Pates'] vision is a sense of intelligence, the absurd, which is kind of what intelligence and humor-crossbred"

The show's intelligent approach allows viewers to connect with it on an entirely different level than most TV fare, theorizes Rohrer. "We don't talk down to our audience, just like *The Simpsons*," he explains. "We're not a bunch of dolts walkin' around.

"They're just chock-a-block full of ideas," says Rohrer of the Pates. "They're film aficionados. They'll know shot-for-shot what they want to do, borrowing from here and borrowing from there. It's really great. I think that their vision is a sense of intelli-

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL: [clockwise from left] Dynamic duo Richard Brooks and Clayton Rohner; Rohner solo: two scenes from "G...Your Hair Smells Evil"; [previous page, from left] Rohner and Brooks; men of The Corps



gence, a sense of humor and a sense of the absurd, which is kind of what intelligence and humor crossbred equals."

"They are, without a doubt, my favorite people to work with, and probably my favorite filmmakers ever to work with," Brooks says. "They really understand filmmaking, and at the same time, they're young and fearless, so they have no qualms with breaking [with] traditional filmmaking or television-making. Also, because they're young and I've done television before, I'm able to be the veteran. They're very open to my input. That is really great. Plus, we've been really blessed that they have been on the set directing so many of [the episodes]. On most shows your creators are just gone after the pilot, and they just hire writers and directors. I think that's why the show has this kind of freshness to it."

a sense of humor and a sense of equals." —Clayton Rohner

Though it was the show's freshness that helped attract Brooks to the project, it was a far different motivator that brought Rohner on board. "They offered me a job," he quips of the assignment. "They said they'd pay me, which was the second good thing I



If you've only come to recognize Clayton Rohner and Richard Brooks as the lead actors on *GvsE*, you're

missing one important component to the show's creative success. According to production designer Mark Hutman, there's one other lead character on the show, one who gets more screen time than Rohner and Brooks combined.

"It's very important that Hollywood and Los Angeles are really a character in our show," he says. "At one point, there's a reference to there being more deals with the Devil per capita here than anywhere. I hope that we've succeeded in trying to portray L.A. as a melting pot and represent the various people who live here."

As production designer, Hutman is largely responsible for the distinct look of the show's locations. He was recruited by college pal

THE STYLE COUNSEL

and *GvsE* executive producer Jonas Pate to design the show's pilot, and then hopped on board for the initial run of 13 episodes. From the start, Hutman worked with the Pates to highlight the southern California locations as a big part of the show's thematic aesthetic, consulting such classic L.A. films as *Chinatown*, *Touch of Evil* and *To Live and Die in L.A.* for inspiration.

"Our take on Los Angeles is that there is a beauty to the older buildings in Los Angeles," he says. "There's a sense of decay, that these buildings were once very beautiful places to live in the '30s and '40s, which was sort of a more innocent time. If these buildings embody innocence, then their decay represents an innocence lost. That theme sort of runs throughout, a common thread. That's apart from the fact that they're just beautiful."

The sense of innocence lost that echoes from the show's Los Angeles locations also lies at the root of many of *GvsE*'s devil-dealing plotlines. In a similar sense, Hutman sought to tie the look of another major show location, the Corps' warehouse headquarters, with its thematic meaning as a gathering place for lost souls.

"The Corps headquarters was largely inspired by the work of an architect named Frank Israel," he explains. "He's done a number of warehouses converted into office spaces—very modern and very cool color palettes. It's a combination of that very modern architecture and an industrial look. It comes out looking very cool and hopefully otherworldly a little bit. That was sort of the plan there."—M.S.



heard. Then the third thing was that I got to star in it, and I was sold."

Both Rohner and Brooks bring some unique previous television experience to *GvsE*. Rohner is a veteran of television guest spots, with appearances on such genre favorites as *The X-Files* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. He also portrayed a recurring character on the critically acclaimed series *Murder One*. As for Brooks, *GvsE* is his recurring character follow-up to a three-year stint as Assistant D.A. Paul Robinette on the perennially Emmy-nominated *Law & Order*. The leap from prosecuting criminals in an earthy courtroom to kicking Morlock ass on the mean streets of Hollywood was exactly why Brooks was so eager to hop on board the new show.

"What I really wanted to do was to find a character who was completely opposite [from Robinette] because my one big concern with television is in getting pigeonholed as one type of character," he explains. "I really wanted to find something that would be different. The funniness really attracted me, and the fact that the filmmakers were coming from an independent film style, so I knew that it would be real different and interesting stylistically. Also, the stories are so much more about my relationship with my

partner, as opposed to the cases. That just allows me to expand acting-wise and show a lot of different colors."

In developing the character, Brooks drew on some classic inspirations from the rich pool of '70s black cultural icons. "I've tried to make him more of a Marvin Gaye, Richard Pryor, *Shaft* type guy and just blend all that together," he says. "I'm sorta like every man in the '70s in a way, from the Black Panthers to Jim Kelly, the whole feeling. I feel like that gives me a lot of room to be whoever I have to be, and at the same time I want to bring the '90s style of humor to it."

As for Rohner's motivations on crafting Chandler Smythe's character, the actor takes a far more method approach to his work. "I don't know if I believe in all that crap," he says of meditative acting styles. "You know what? You stand and deliver. They stick you in a box, they start pouring water on your face. Just wait about three hours, you'll get pissed off. You don't have to do a lot of acting." The water-pouring to which Rohner refers took place in the series' third episode, "Buried," in



MEN IN BLACK: Brooks as Henry McNeil
[above]; Rohner as Chandler Smythe [below]

which Chandler was trapped by a band of Morlocks inside a wooden coffin rapidly filling with liquid. Henry and his fellow Corps officers have less than an hour to ascertain where Chandler is and rescue him from certain suffocation. Plots in which the characters are trapped by Morlocks in impossible situations have become an earmark of the show's first season—in "Airplane," they're on a plane without a pilot that's lost all its fuel, while in "Elevator" they're trapped in an elevator during a rescue attempt for a fellow Corps agent. But if you want Rohner's opinion, don't look in the first season for any truly classic *GvsE* episodes.

"I think my favorite episode will be [during] year two," he predicts, referring to the series' renewal for at least another nine episodes. "We need to do nine more to finish up this year, and we'll still be getting our sea legs. The second half of the second season, that should blow people away. I think it'll be fun to watch the show. Like an *X-Files*, it'll grow on you. I think we'll get better and better." ■



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COLOR 8"X10" PHOTOS



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1) NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD [1968]

Countless horror films have been made since George Romero's first zombie epic was released, yet none of them have equalled the unparalleled richness and dark complexity of *Night of the Living Dead*. Romero's inventive direction and the grainy black-and-white stock he used for his classic imbue the gruesome premise—strangers trapped inside an abandoned house must survive the attacks of an army of flesh-eating ghouls—with an astonishingly authentic feel; at times, the film seems more like a newsreel than a movie (a trick *The Blair Witch Project* wisely borrowed three decades

later). What sets *Night of the Living Dead* apart from other well-crafted frightfests, however, is its biting social commentary. Hero Ben, believably portrayed by actor Duane Jones, struggles as much against the undead as he does the willfulness and prejudice of his fellow would-be survivors. While his ultimate fate speaks volumes to the social conditions of the '60s, the film's powerful political stance is just as relevant today. All tolled, not even innumerable repeated viewings or the passage of 30 years can dull the film's incredible impact. For your unrivaled achievement, Mr. Romero, we applaud you.

2) THE EXORCIST (1973) One of the most intensely frightening films ever made, *The Exorcist* remains just as effective as when it was first released and grows perhaps even more disturbing with the passage of time. The now infamous story of young

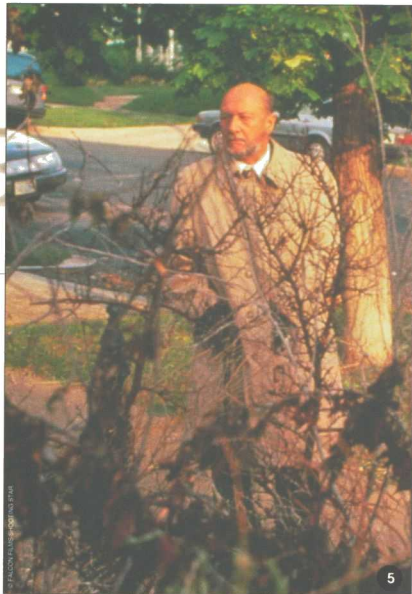
Regan MacNeil (Linda Blair) and her experiences in the grips of demonic possession is handled with the utmost seriousness by director William Friedkin; the plot, adapted from William Peter Blatty's novel of the same name, hurdles forward without a shred of comic relief. Audiences were sent reeling by a parade of visual shocks (Regan's head making a 360-degree turn, projectile green vomit issuing from the girl, her use of a crucifix to mutilate her body). But what is possibly the most horrifying

aspect of the film is the concept at its core: When we least expect it, true evil can consume anyone, even an innocent child. This is every parent's nightmare captured on celluloid.

3) THE HAUNTING (1963) A terribly underrated genre classic, *The Haunting* transports viewers into a nightmarish scenario, complete with chills, cold sweats and profuse blanket clutching. In an attempt to document a real haunting case, a scientist invites two women with histories of paranormal experiences to stay a few nights in a haunted house. The owner of the estate sends her skeptical nephew along as a chaperone of sorts, but his rock solid disbelief soon begins to melt as Hill House lives up to its reputation. Julie Harris' outstanding performance as Eleanor Lance, the woman most tormented by the house's tricks, is further enhanced by panic-stricken voice-overs that underscore her spiraling madness. Meanwhile, the house seems to come alive as a result of director Robert Wise's unique use of camera angles. His shifting perspectives make it seem as though the house is looking back at its victims, and every shot is a little off-center, just like the structure itself. When Harris calls the house "evil," we believe her. Don't watch this one alone in the dark.

4) PSYCHO (1960) This horror masterpiece from Alfred Hitchcock is undoubtedly best remembered for its famed shower scene. Early in the film, top-billed actress Janet Leigh is stabbed to death with a butcher knife; a jittery camera captures the struggle, often darting away so viewers are left with only the sounds of the weapon driving into her flesh. Blood spirals down the drain, and a long pull-away shot focuses on Leigh's lifeless eye. The sequence is unquestionably brilliant and shocking but often overshadows the rest of the stellar film. Leigh plays embezzler Marion Crane, who, while fleeing with stolen money, checks into the Bates Motel only to meet an untimely demise. When Marion's sister and boyfriend begin to search for her, they encounter reclusive motel manager Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) and inadvertently uncover his unnatural relationship with his mother. As the disturbed yet dutiful son, Perkins delivers one of the best performances in horror history, and director Hitchcock





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outdoes himself with vivid characters and extraordinary camera work that yield spine-tingling suspense. Perhaps his most outstanding achievement is capturing the actors' mesmerizing facial expressions—from Marion's dead stare to Norman's morbidly eerie glare as he watches his victim's car sink into a moat.

5) HALLOWEEN (1978) It's a formula so simple, anyone could do it. Take a masked madman, void of any soul or remorse, put him on the trail of a group of morally dubious Midwestern teens, arm him with some cutlery and a cheap William Shatner mask turned inside out, and you've got a great scary movie. Scores of filmmakers have tried it, but no one has ever devised such a simply brilliant horror film as director John Carpenter's first feature. The shining star among slasher outings, *Halloween* is more than just the story of escaped lunatic Michael Myers' rampage through sleepy Haddonfield, Ill. It launched the career of second-generation scream queen Jamie Lee Curtis and founded much of the mythos of contemporary horror films. Namely, the more taboos its teenagers break, the more quickly they will be killed; the character who understands the true nature of the horrific events will fail to find anyone who believes him; and of course, the homicidal maniac presumed to be dead will always



return one final time for a last round of carnage. While savvy scribe Kevin Williamson referenced these "rules" in his irreverent parody *Scream*, it was Carpenter who created them and it was his touch that brought to the screen one of the all-time classics of horror.

6) BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN

(1935) And even though Williamson is credited with introducing self-referential humor to the genre, it was director James Whale who first united comedy and horror. The amusing yet powerful sequel to his classic 1931 adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* possessed the same strengths as its predecessor while poking fun at its melodrama for clever comic relief. Returning as The Monster, Boris Karloff again manages to emote potently beneath layers of makeup, speaking in stilted words rather than mere grunts. The persecuted and misunderstood creature realizes his only chance at friendship and peace would be to exile himself with one of his kind. Another megalomaniac with a serious god complex, the gleefully sinister Dr. Praetorius (Ernest Thesiger) convinces Dr. Frankenstein (Colin Clive) to create a companion for his monster. The result is the bewitching bride (Elsa Lanchester), with her exaggerated movements, dagger-like glances and electrified hair. Great performances and excellent staging by Whale reign even in moments of extreme silliness—Dr. Praetorius' mini-people and The Monster's infamous line, "friend good, alone bad."



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7) THE TEXAS CHAINSAW

MASSACRE (1974) Tobe Hooper's tale of serial murder and cannibalism in rural Texas brought power tools to the slasher oeuvre and Leatherface, played by genre fave Gunnar Hansen, to the pantheon of horror villains. A group of teens visiting their late grandfather's farm meet the unemployed slaughterhouse workers who live next door and soon become the victims of terrible savagery perpetrated by the disfigured and deranged family. Through the eye of Hooper's camera, the audience is transformed into unwitting voyeurs powerless to stop the atrocities before them; the movie's grainy, low-budget look serves to make the horrific events seem all the more real. To his credit, the director depicts the acts of sadism and extreme violence using surprisingly little blood and gore. Instead, he relies on pure fear to move the film toward its inevitable, disconcerting denouement.

8) ALIEN (1979) Ridley Scott's sci-fi/horror tale began with a basic premise: People are trapped and hunted by a monster. But *Alien's* heart-pounding suspense brought new meaning to the phrase "edge-of-your-seat." A deep space cargo team lands on an unknown planet where an alien parasite attaches to crew member Kane's (John Hurt) face, laying

an egg from which a mysterious organism will later burst from his chest and grow to a nearly unstoppable entity. Cleverly, director Scott waits until the final sequences of the film to reveal the full-grown, H.R.

Giger-designed creature. Instead, he teases viewers with snippets of slimy, black appendages, inviting them to use their imaginations to fill in

the details. Equally laudable was the casting of Sigourney Weaver, one of the genre's first true take-charge females. For its identifiable characters, its tale that taps into the most primal of fears and its bleak vision of the future, *Alien* ranks among horror and science fiction's greatest.

9) EVIL DEAD II (1987) Who says demon possession is no laughing matter? Director Sam Raimi's cult masterpiece proved hilarious and horrifying with its surreal style of comedy and terror, blood and guts. On a romantic getaway, leading man Ash (Bruce Campbell) heads to a remote cabin with his girlfriend. After discovering a recording of demon resurrection passages translated from the book of the dead, all hell breaks loose and it's up to our hero to save the world from the evil he unknowingly unleashed. As



the beleaguered Ash, B-movie darling Campbell is a scream; it takes a special kind of man to perform countless *Three Stooges*-inspired pratfalls, battle a seemingly endless host of shape-shifting ancient demons and sever his own hand with a chainsaw—and keep his sense of humor. During a decade when slasher flicks were box office gold, Raimi's ultra-kinetic filmmaking broke new ground and proved, once again, that the cinematic potential of the horror genre is limitless. Anyone who has somehow missed this film should rent it immediately.





10) JAWS

(1975) The movie that kept people far away from beaches for a summer or two,

Jaws spawned numerous bad sequels (including the ghastly *Jaws 3-D*). But with an original this fantastic, no sequel could have stood ground next to it. Shark attacks just off the Amity Island coast send a local sheriff (Roy Scheider), a shark hunter (Robert Shaw) and a marine biologist (Richard Dreyfuss) out into the troubled waters to find the monstrous culprit. The now-famous theme music announcing the approach of the gargantuan, blood-thirsty great white set pulses throbbing with anticipation, but the interaction between the main characters is just as gripping. Outstanding performances by Scheider, Shaw and Dreyfuss, and a remarkable effort from young director Steven Spielberg make for a masterpiece of filmmaking, particularly notable for its flawless pacing and riveting suspense.

11) THE SHINING (1980) For some reason, author Stephen King was dissatisfied with the late Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of his novel. When viewing the delightfully thrilling majesty of the director's vision, his stance seems baffling. Struggling writer Jack Torrance (Jack Nicholson) accepts a position as winter caretaker at the Overlook Hotel, a scenic Colorado resort forced to close during the cold, winter months and settles in to spend the season with his wife and son. Weeks later, Jack, in collusion with friends he meets in visions, is chasing his family through the labyrinthine halls with an axe, bent on

backing them to bits. Under Kubrick's watchful, artistic lens emerge an array of unforgettable images—the ghosts of twin girls who haunt the young Torrance boy, seas of blood flooding the hotel's hallways, an elaborate 1920s cocktail party attended by elegant, malevolent ghosts. Careful to preserve a consistent sense of foreboding and restrained dread, the director effectively creates a dark,



12) POLTERGEIST (1982)

Busy with the soon-to-be-wildly successful family film *E.T.*, scripter Steven Spielberg handed over directing duties on his other, very different "family" film—*Poltergeist*—to genre vet Tobe Hooper. His instincts were right. Hooper's direction lends a powerful edge to the plight of the Freeling family, who are visited by forces far less cuddly than a candy-loving alien. When their youngest child is kidnapped by otherworldly pests, real estate agent Steve Freeling (Craig T. Nelson) and wife Diane (JoBeth Williams) call in some paranormal researchers and ghostbuster extraordinaire Tangina (Zelda Rubinstein). Great special effects make all the scares (monstrous faces appearing on walls, rotting corpses springing up from the ground) particularly effective, while the story itself taps into the deep-seated fear of what awaits us on the other side. It's the ultimate scary sleeper flick for young viewers and a horror classic worth revisiting for adults.



13) DRACULA (1931)

In 1931, Hungarian actor Bela Lugosi donned a black cloak and walked into immortality. Even though he was merely adapting his successful stage production of Bram Stoker's famous novel to the silver





screen, his performance electrified theater-goers and set the standard for vampires of the cinema for years to come. His otherworldly gaze, his distinct accent and sharp features embellished his portrayal of the undead count come to England to feast on the blood of the living. Lugosi's magnificent presence is key to the movie's rich atmosphere, which compensates for the occasionally plodding pace of the story. While repeated viewings amplify the film's flaws, *Dracula* deserves endless recognition for its impact on the horror genre. In addition to proving the all important financial lesson—audiences will happily shell over their hard-earned dollars to be scared—the movie put Universal Studios on the map and paved the way for other classics, *The Mummy* and *The Wolf Man* among them.

14) INVASION OF THE BODY

SNATCHERS (1956) One of the great paranoid classics, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* unfolds as a young doctor named Miles (Kevin McCarthy) begins to notice a growing number of cases of mass hysteria in his hometown—more and more people claim that their loved ones really aren't whom they purport to be. Slowly, Miles learns of extraterrestrial seed pods that duplicate human beings down to a single atom, and the threat they pose to good, old-fashioned American individualism. Too often seen as an allegorical examination of communist paranoia, the film should

instead be viewed as a valuable comment on contemporary society. In the story, one loses his individuality just by falling asleep, waking to a world where everyone wears the same clothes, sees the same movies, eats at the same restaurants. Today, with a densely populated suburban landscape marked by innumerable McDonalds, Starbucks and The Gap, the concept hits a little too close to home.

15) NOSFERATU, EINE SYMPHONIE DES GRAUENS (1922)

Even though this silent, German adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is old and dilapidated, its imperfections make it all the more creepy. One of the few films to portray Dracula as a gruesome



demon rather than a suave gentleman, Max Shreck's Count Orlok has the horrific appearance expected of an undead fiend—bald head, pointy ears and rat-like teeth. Director F. W. Murnau uses his disturbing visage to create some of the most chilling scenes in the vampire subgenre, such as Orlok silently stalking his prey down a darkened hallway or inhumanly rising from his coffin and darting through the streets with the casket tucked securely under his arm. And while Orlok was more monstrous than subsequent vampires, Murnau's depiction of the villain's demise is arguably more poignant than that of Lugosi's *Dracula*. Fans of Stoker's classic shouldn't miss this eerie entry.

16) THE BIRDS (1963) In the wrong hands, the premise could have been a disaster. But leave it to master of suspense Alfred Hitchcock to make a movie about birds attacking people in a small town a real nail-biter. Slowly building tension, the director first introduces us to the beauti-



ful, rich and free-spirited Melanie Daniels (Tippi Hedren) who, after being egged on by jibes from a handsome stranger (Rod Taylor), follows him to a small coastal community to play a prank. Already involved in the well-developed characters' lives, we share their sense of impending doom and ultimately their panic, as one or two strange encounters with



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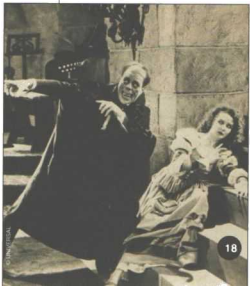
seagulls and crows leads to a full-on battle with an army of winged creatures apparently intent on waging an all-out war against mankind. An ominous tale with ageless appeal.

17) ROSEMARY'S BABY (1968)

When happily married couple Rosemary Woodhouse and her husband Guy discover a perfect apartment in an upscale Manhattan building, it seems too good to be true. And it is. The neighbors are Satanists who soon convince struggling actor Guy that if he loans his wife to the devil for a night so that she may conceive the Antichrist, he'll never have to worry about auditions again. Created by the powerhouse genre duo of producer William Castle and director/screenwriter Roman Polanski, the harrowing story follows sweetly naive Rosemary (Mia Farrow) as she slowly uncovers the conspiracy surrounding her unborn child. The insidious yet inescapable evil, personified by Oscar winner Ruth Gordon's nosy neighbor Minnie Castevet, traps the heroine on all sides, stymieing virtually all of her attempts to gain help from those outside the conspirators' circle. The narrative gradually builds up steam, hurtling toward a memorably blasphemous conclusion that features a coven of witches shouting, "God is dead. Satan lives!" Spooky.

18) THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1925)

Universal's silent adaptation of *The Phantom of the Opera* is one of the few films to boast a single shot that embodies cinematic horror: In front of his lady love Christine Daae (Mary Philbin), Erik the Phantom (Lon Chaney) removes his mask to reveal a hideously disfigured visage. The power of the scene is underscored by Chaney, the man of a thousand faces, who specialized in bringing to life society's outcasts. He lends a particular



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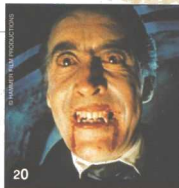
19) THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS (1991)

The only movie on this list to win an Academy Award for Best Picture, this adaptation of Thomas Harris' best-seller is pointedly unsettling. FBI trainee Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) must wrangle words of advice from brilliant psychiatrist turned serial killer Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins) as she attempts to track down another murderer. The subject matter alone is disturbing, but director

Jonathan Demme also explores a number of universal fears, effectively plucking strings of dread throughout the film. Viewers are subjected to everything from insects and monsters lurking in the dark to sexual perversion—as if the shockingly gruesome sight of the killers' deeds wasn't enough. Lecter, as portrayed by Hopkins, becomes the absolute embodiment of evil—a mesmerizing character both arrogant and intelligent, who moves with the demeanor of an animal about to pounce his prey. For its many achievements, *Lambs* is a superior slice of cinema.

20) HORROR OF DRACULA (1958)

A visually stunning adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel, *Horror of Dracula* is the first and best of Hammer Film Productions' popular Dracula series starring Christopher Lee as the count and Peter Cushing as his nemesis Dr. Van Helsing. Very loosely based



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on the original tale, the film has Dracula seeking revenge against Jonathan Harker and his loved ones for the murder of the vampire's concubine. Van Helsing teams up with Arthur Holmwood and uses his expansive knowledge of vampire lore to hunt down the prince of darkness before he takes another woman as his bride. Lee (who has donned the Count's cape more than any other actor on the big screen) uses his striking eyes and ominous poise to make his Dracula both frightening and alluring, defining the popular portrayal of vampires. The lush technicolor, hammy melodrama and romantic aura that are the trademarks of Hammer horror films helped *Horror of Dracula* set a genre watermark that many have attempted but failed to achieve.

21) THE EVIL DEAD (1983) Director Sam Raimi and crew retired to a miserable little shack in the wilds of Michigan to create the first film in the *Evil Dead* series.

They emerged with a revolutionary piece of filmmaking. A group of collegiates sets out to have some fun in a remote cabin, where they discover an audio tape of arcane readings from the book of the dead.

The passages on the tape release

that threatens to possess them all. The threadbare feel of the production only serves to lend an air of reality to all this weirdness. And with helmer Raimi's twisting/turning camera, not to mention buckets of gore, things definitely get weird. It all makes viewers darned uncomfortable, especially with Ash (Bruce Campbell) having to go it alone in the middle of nowhere. Compared to its sequels, *Evil Dead* is a (mostly) humorless film that is singled in its determination to scare the hell out of the viewer. It succeeds.

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22) A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (1984)

In an era of *Friday the 13th*/*Halloween*-inspired slasher flicks in which groups of teens were picked off one-by-one by a mindless killer, Wes Craven managed to refresh the genre with a clever premise and a likeable villain—Freddy Krueger. A child murderer burned to death by local parents comes back to haunt the dreams of his executioners' now-teenaged children. Soon, Nancy (Heather Langenkamp) and her friends, including Johnny Depp in his cinematic debut, realize these are more than just nightmares. While its six sequels evoked laughs, cheers and jeers, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* stands apart as a frightening, original exercise (despite a questionable ending).

Before he became a cult hero to horror fans and a purveyor of unforgivably cheesy one-liners, Freddy was actually a pretty scary bad guy, his burned face cloaked in darkness and witty repartee reduced to raspy-voiced threats.

23) SUSPIRIA (1977) A cult classic, Dario Argento's artsy witchcraft opus is best viewed in its uncut version. Jessica Harper plays a quiet, young American dancer who enrolls in an elite European ballet academy. The strict ways of her superiors seem merely prudish at first, but as girls disappear and die, she realizes malevolent forces are surely at work. And she may be the next victim! Despite story and style conventions that teeter on the edge of camp, Argento



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surprisingly manages to keep the atmosphere one of apprehension and maleficence. His ingenious use of vivid, startling colors evokes just the right response for specific scenes, and the relentlessly haunting score from the Goblins, filled with desperate moans and screams, keeps nerves on edge. With mesmerizing sequences of outright horror (particularly the opening scene) and an unusually satisfying ending, this visually entrancing film begs for repeat viewing.

24) SEVEN (1995) *Seven* stands as a shining example that a major studio can produce an uncompromising modern horror film with A-list actors and make money on the deal. One of the bleakest movies in recent memory, the story recounts the deeds of an insane serial killer out to illustrate the dangers of the seven deadly sins. The consummate acting team of Morgan Freeman and Brad Pitt are the detectives on the trail of the mysterious John Doe, played to the hilt by the ever brilliant Kevin Spacey. While some comparisons to *The Silence of the Lambs* are inevitable, *Seven* boldly depicts what the earlier film only suggests, revealing the extent of Doe's depravity with graphic, stomach-churning precision. Director David Fincher never exploits the extreme violence of the villain's acts, however. Instead, he relies on

expert pacing, a dark, heavy mood and outstanding performances from his cast to terrify audiences. Truly disturbing, *Seven* boasts a relentless intensity (and a suitably grim ending) that is all too rare in mainstream cinema. Well done.

25) DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

(1931) This stellar adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic story remains, even by contempo-

rary standards, disturbing and remarkable for its daring exploration of the nature of evil and sexual passion and obsession. As the doctor who concocts a formula that transforms him into a Neanderthal-like libidinous madman, actor Frederic March delivers a charged performance, for which he received an Oscar. His taut portrayal of a man bound so tightly by the rules of polite society that he seeks release as the violent and irrational

26) HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER (1990) Every now and then, horror films can impart serious lessons to their viewers. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* stressed the dangers of picking out hitchhikers. *Jaws* illustrates the importance of swimming in familiar, well-guarded public areas. *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* points out that under no circumstances should you ever stop on Chicago's Lower Wacker Drive at 2 a.m. to help two particularly seedy-looking stranded motorists (residents of the greater Chicagoland area were likely already familiar with this caveat). John McNaughton's disturbing account opens with Henry

(Michael Rooker) on the trail of a suburban woman whom he follows home from a local shopping mall and promptly murders. Henry soon introduces his demented friend Otis to the joys of homicide, and the pair embark on a deadly spree. Like his genre predecessors George Romero and Tobe Hooper, McNaughton wisely turns the movie's lack of budget to his advantage; the rough look of the film lends an eerily



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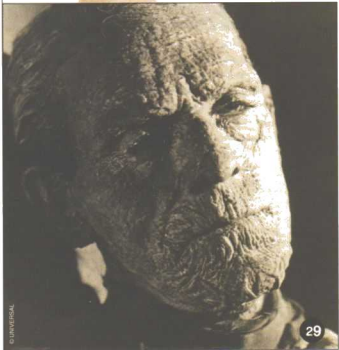
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ly realistic feel to the grim proceedings. Lead Rooker is almost too believable as the titular villain, and many of the scenes featuring Henry and Otis in action are difficult to shake. Not to be viewed by the faint of heart.

27) THE OMEN (1976) At some time during their lives, most parents have reached such a pinnacle of exasperation that they wonder if their children might indeed be the spawn of satan. In the case of *The Omen's* Robert Thorn (Gregory Peck), he's right. An American ambassador to England, Thorn's own son was stillborn, prompting the man to swap the infant for the orphan Damien to spare his wife the pain of losing a child. A series of bizarre events—Damien's anxiety attack upon nearing a church, a nanny's shocking suicide, Mrs. Thorn's second miscarriage, the apocalyptic warnings of a raving priest—cause Thorn to reassess his action. Composer Jerry Goldsmith won an Oscar for his chilling score, which does much to augment the melodramatic tension set up by director Richard Donner. Peck manages to competently display the magnitude of emotions a father might well experience upon discovering his child is the Antichrist.

28) WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE? (1962) A depressing tale, *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane* depicts an extreme landscape of failure, despair, madness and helplessness. Former child star Baby Jane Hudson, now middle-aged and alcoholic, is forced to care for her sister Blanche after a tragic accident strikes the woman down in the prime of her acting career. Consumed by bitterness and jealous of her sister's fame, Jane treats Blanche with contempt and cruelty, imprisoning her in the house they share. Vainly trying to recapture her days in the spotlight, Jane begins to lose her mind, all the while behav-

ing more sadistically toward Blanche. Bette Davis' performance in the titular role of this affecting tale earned her an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress, and co-star Joan Crawford is none too shabby herself as her crippled sister. Davis' layers of makeup emphasize her desperation to return to her youth and visually realize her convincing descent into madness.



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29) THE MUMMY (1932) Boris Karloff's compelling performance as the undead Imhotep and his alter ego, the fez-wearing Ardeth Bey, elevates *The Mummy* from a dry, plodding exercise to a landmark film. When archeologists uncover his lost tomb, Imhotep awakens and slowly regains his human form. He then meets an English woman named Helen (Zita Johann), whom he believes is his ancient lover, Princess Ananka, reincarnated. Ardeth Bey sets out to win back his lost love so that the couple may live as immortals. Even though Karloff only appears briefly in the traditional mummy wrappings, the film established virtually every cliché associated with the monster. *The Mummy*, however, remains unique in its own right, with Ardeth Bey more akin to Dracula (right down to the glowing eyes) than some musty old corpse.



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30) DAWN OF THE DEAD

(1979) No one knows zombies like George A. Romero, and the director proved it by expanding on his timeless classic *Night of the Living Dead*. In a world overrun with flesh-eating ghouls, a band of survival-minded humans hop a helicopter and head to an abandoned shopping mall, which they decide will do nicely as a makeshift bunker. Fending off relentless zombies proves to be particularly daunting, and the group must work together to defend against their attackers if they are to survive. Tom Savini's spectacular-as-always make-up effects splatter the screen in a higher-than-average gore quotient. Rather than detract from the action, the ample blood and guts only underscore the social message at the film's core. By comparing shoppers to mindless zombies, Romero launches a ruthless attack on American consumer culture.

31) THE WOLF MAN (1941)

It wasn't the first werewolf film, but *The Wolf Man* remains the most important in establishing the cinematic conventions attached to the subgenre. Lon Chaney Jr. stars as Lawrence Talbot, who returns to his father's mansion after studying abroad. During his visit, he is attacked by a vicious wolf and soon realizes that he has become cursed with a terrible

affliction. Originally, scriptwriter Curt Siodmak planned to give the story a more ambiguous feel by suggesting that Talbot's sickness might be wholly in his mind, but make-up artist Jack Pierce's excellent work allowed Chaney to be transformed into a convincing beast. Chaney elicits sympathy as the amiable Talbot, but is equally good as the wolf



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character, moving gracefully through the stylized set, his narrow, darting eyes seeking prey. The success of this film guaranteed the Wolf Man's addition to Universal's monster pantheon and the creature's appearances in numerous sequels. But unlike the other famous monsters, only one actor—Chaney—would ever play the role.

32) THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

(1961) In a popularity contest of Roger Corman's Edgar Allan Poe films, *The Pit and the Pendulum* would most likely win, thanks in part to its unmistakable title. To its credit, the film is enormously atmospheric and benefits from a great if over-the-top performance by the always enjoyable Vincent Price. Price plays Nicholas Medina, a man who fears he may have buried his wife, Elizabeth, alive. It is when Nicholas sinks into madness that the film works best—viewers wonder if they are observing Nicholas' insanity or if there truly is a malevolent spirit lurking behind the events that unfold. Although Price's torment may seem laughably overblown at times, the film's rich, grisly finale provides a memorable conclusion. *House of Usher* began the Corman/Poe cycle; *The Masque of the Red Death* was its most artistic. Though some may contend that *Tomb of Ligeia* is the best of the series, *The Pit and the Pendulum* is the most accessible of the lot, allowing more people to enjoy Price's performance, the exotic scenery and some chilling moments.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL BALLHAUS

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33) AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON (1981)

Director John Landis' brilliant combination of horror and dark comedy tells the tale of two American college boys who are attacked by a wolf while

backpacking through the English Moors. Though his friend is slaughtered in the fray, David Kessler (David Naughton) manages to escape with a few scrapes and a bite. Unfortunately, the bite bears a fate worse than death, as the full moon transforms him into a werewolf. Visits from his decaying friend warn of his fate (and provide a sick sort of comic relief). The film boasts one of the best werewolf transformation sequences, as David changes into a beast while "Blue Moon" plays in the background (all the songs in the movie have "moon" in their titles). An expertly shot chase scene through the London subway, a shockingly violent romp through Piccadilly Circus and a fabulously appropriate ending make this one of the few true modern classics of horror.

34) HELLRAISER (1987) "We have such sights to show you," promised *Hellraiser's* executive demon, and he wasn't exaggerating. Clive Barker's directorial debut was replete with horror, violence, sacrilege and sado-masochistic imagery. Based on his novella *The Hellbound Heart*, the film opens with squabbling husband and wife Larry and Julia moving into a new home, presumably searching for a fresh start. Things take a turn for the bizarre when Larry's brother Frank, with whom Julia had a torrid affair, returns from hell in near-skeletal form and demands that Julia bring him victims to murder so that he may regain his former appear-

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ance. On his trail are a band of torture-minded creatures known as the Cenobites, who are determined to take Frank back into their domain, where they spin pleasure from extreme amounts of unending pain. At its high-concept heart, *Hellraiser* closely follows the spirit of Barker's literary endeavors; the film transcends the physical plane to explore other worlds where sexual taboos do not exist and the realm of potential experiences is without limit. Imagination, the auteur insists, knows no bounds.

35) FRIDAY THE 13TH (1980) While you might (rightly) dismiss *Friday the 13th* as a low-budget exploitation romp, it does deserve recognition for its impressive box office success and its pervasive influence on the genre. The story centers on a group of teenagers trapped at a remote summer camp who become the victims of an unknown killer—before it became cliché. While the countless sequels and copycat movies it inspired are shaky at best, the original film nicely captures the creepy essence of the old campfire tale and introduces another of modern horror's famous monsters, Jason Voorhees, to the screen. Not to mention that upon its release, filmgoers were literally screaming in the aisles at the cinematic carnage. Despite its flaws, *Friday the 13th* is a thrill ride that dares you to take whatever it can deliver and warns you not to stray too far into the dark.



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36) GARRIE (1976)

For anyone who ever doubted that high school is hell, here's proof. Shy Carrie White (Sissy Spacek) has long been the object of derision by her classmates and the scorn of her religious zealot mother (Piper Laurie). The troubled girl believes her luck has changed for the better

when one of the school's elite invites her to the senior prom, only to find that she is the brunt of an unusually cruel joke. Using the telekinetic power she has only just begun to understand, a blood-drenched Carrie exacts revenge on the incrowd in an explosive finale that leaves the high school in flames and the popular kids dead. Spacek's scorching



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL BALLHAUS



performance as the young outcast is remarkable, as is Laurie's portrayal of murderously insane Margaret White. The unfathomable limits to which the students will go to torment the unstable girl lend much of the horror to the story; viewed in light of recent school tragedies, *Carrie* also serves as a powerful reminder to be kind even to the awkward students. You never know of what they might be capable.

37) CARNIVAL OF SOULS (1962)

When *Carnival of Souls* hit theaters, it barely made a ripple. But years of play on local television stations elevated the film to well-deserved cult status. Writer/director/producer Herk Harvey takes full advantage of unique locations while spinning the oddly compelling story of a woman (Candace Hilligoss) who accepts a job as a church organist in a small town. On the way to her new life, her car careens off a bridge into a river. Miraculously, she escapes from the wreckage but finds the world that awaits her somewhat off-kilter. Inexplicably, Candace hears long periods of eerie silence, experiences a sense of time standing still and receives visits from a ghastly, pallid man (played by Harvey). All the while, she struggles to understand what is happening around her. One can't help but wonder what else the imaginative Harvey might have accomplished if he had gone on to make subsequent films. As it stands, *Carnival of Souls* is the only tribute to his marked talent.

38) THE ABOMINABLE

DR. PHIBES (1971) One of the most aesthetically pleasing serial killer outings ever crafted, *The Abominable Dr. Phibes* stands unique among star Vincent Price's impressive body of work. A horribly disfigured Dr. Anton Phibes begins to exact revenge on the team of physicians that failed to save his beloved wife from the accident that claimed her life. He crafts a death for each man based on the plagues of ancient Egypt—locusts, frogs, bats, rats and



39) THE LEGEND OF HELL

HOUSE (1973) Adapted for the screen by the prolific Richard Matheson from his own novel, the premise of this ghostly tale is uncommonly similar to that of *The Haunting*. Two psychics, a ghostbuster and his wife spend the weekend in a supposedly haunted house to investigate what caused the many deaths that occurred there and to research the possibili-



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ty of life after death. It's not long before spectral visitors wreak havoc, turning the guests against one another. Roddy McDowall provides a stand-out performance as the one voice of reason in the group, Benjamin Franklin Fischer, sole survivor of a previous expedition. Although the movie doesn't have the impact of *The Haunting*, it uses the same successful method of appealing to the audience's imagination for most of the scares. The film falters only when it attempts to explain too much, with a poor finale sequence that tragically dampens an otherwise spooky movie with some memorable, startling scenes.

40) THE BLACK CAT (1934) No other classic Universal horror film is so relentlessly dark as *The Black Cat*, the first and best pairing of terror titans Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi. Karloff stars as Hjalmar Poelzig, the head of a Satanic cult who has built his Art Deco house on an old battlefield. His longtime rival Dr. Vitus Verdegast, played by Lugosi, pays a visit to ascertain the fate of his wife, whom Poelzig stole away while the doctor was at war. Bent on exacting revenge upon his all-too-polite host, Verdegast's plan suffers from an accident involving a coach brings a young, dull American couple to the house. Their presence tears asunder the carefully constructed shells of the adversaries, exposing years of hatred and pain. Excellent camera work, emotional performances and a riveting storyline contribute to the success of this often overlooked gem.

41) CAT PEOPLE (1942) A haunting tale of supernatural forces, this Jacques Tourneur movie stars Simone Simon as a strange Serbian girl, Irena Dubrovna, who believes that should she ever make love to a man, she will murder him. She does fall in love, but her faith in the folklore of her native land is so strong she insists that she and her husband sleep in separate rooms even after they're married. Irena is convinced that she is a descendant of a tribe of debauched heretics who mated with black panthers, and that if she feels jealousy she will turn into a cat



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and kill. Feeling disheartened, her husband Oliver (Kent Smith) soon falls in love with a co-worker (Alice Moore) and begins to question Irena's sanity. Threatening events involving Irena cause the other woman to think otherwise, however. Intriguing myths, an enticing, coquettish performance by Simon and the spooky visual presentation of the cat attacks make *Cat People* a classic.

42) BLACK SUNDAY

(1960) Former cinematographer Mario Bava's ability to evoke a rich atmosphere in his films was masterful. *Black Sunday* stands as a tribute to his gift, uniting all Bava's visual expertise with classic gothic images like decaying mansions, huge black bats and mist-enshrouded graveyards. In the story, co-written by Bava, two vampires are resurrected years after being sent to their graves and begin to pursue the descendants of those who attempted to destroy them. The story moves quickly, playing liberally with the vampire myths while treating the viewer to some chilling sights. Additionally, the film influenced a number of other Italian filmmakers, including Dario Argento, and introduced the oddly beautiful Barbara Steele to audiences. Her work in *Black Sunday* and subsequent horror films won her a devoted following among genre fans, making her one of the premiere scream queens.



42

43) MISERY (1990) With a terrific script from award-winning writer William Goldman and an Oscar-winning performance from Kathy Bates, this Stephen King adaptation successfully taps into the fear of helplessness and torment so expertly explored in *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane*. Best-selling author Paul Sheldon (James Caan) is severely injured in a car accident on a mountain road during a blizzard. Obsessed fan Annie Wilkes (Bates) finds him and uses her nursing skills to care for him. But when Annie dis-



43

covers the writer's plans to kill off her favorite character Misery in his upcoming novel, she then imprisons him and forces him to rewrite the book. Suffering unfathomable torture at the hands of his "number one fan," Paul feverishly plots his escape, and the action mounts with unrelenting suspense. With his second adaptation of a novel from horror royalty King (the first being *Stand By Me*), director Rob Reiner created an impressive examination of the dangers of obsession and the terrors of victimization.

44) THE DEAD ZONE (1983) /

THE FLY (1986) Yes, we're cheating, but choosing between David Cronenberg's two most accessible films is a difficult proposition. In *The Dead Zone*, based on the Stephen King novel of the same name, unassuming teacher Johnny Smith (Christopher Walken) becomes comatose following a severe car accident; he awakens five years later to discover he possesses strange psychic powers. In *The Fly*, an update of the Vincent Price classic, mad scientist Seth Brundle (Jeff Goldblum) suffers the effects of an experiment gone terribly wrong. Both present the director's unique vision in a slightly more palatable manner than some of his other lauded but disturbing efforts—namely, *The Brood*, *VideoDrome*, *Dead Ringers*—thus enabling his work to reach a broader audience. Cronenberg's obsession with disease and the weakness of the flesh is much in evidence in both films, which exude a strong physical horror and sense of dread.



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to the genre and turned leads Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee into international stars. Originally intended as a remake of Universal's 1931 *Frankenstein*, the filmmakers were forced to explore a new avenue when the competing studio forbade them to use their Karloffian monster design. Nevertheless, Jimmy Sangster delivered a crack script that depicts Cushing's Frankenstein as passionate in his work but devoid of any sympathy for his fellow man and his creation as a shoddy, horrific mess. Christopher Lee is outstanding as this most bestial of monsters, his eyes conveying nothing remotely human or humane. Helmer Terence Fisher, already a veteran director of numerous genre projects, made the relatively low-budget film seem positively lush, especially when compared to other material of its era. This film's surprise success prompted Hammer to reunite the team for *Horror of Dracula*.



45

46) THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT (1999)

Refreshingly innovative, *The Blair Witch Project* was designed by indie filmmakers Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez as a return to horror's glory days when



46

45) CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1957)

This, the first true Hammer horror film, not only served as the catalyst that would propel the studio to world fame as purveyors of great horror, it also brought vivid color



films were unpredictable and frightening. The ultra low-budget offering follows three students into the Maryland woods on a hunt for the elusive, legendary Blair Witch. As their search takes them ever deeper into the forest, the trio edges closer to an alarming fate. Dizzying hand-held camerawork underscores the frenzy seizing hold of the students as they realize they are desperately lost and the quarry of some unseen predator. Genre fans can only pray that some bottom-line-minded Hollywood exec doesn't decide to turn a concept so brilliant in its simplicity into an overblown franchise.

47) SCREAM (1996) A killer with a cellular phone fetish is loose in a small California town and must be found before he/she/they can strike again. There's one small catch: nearly everyone's a suspect. With genre vet Wes Craven at the helm and a cast of camera-friendly teen stars before the lens, the horrific who-done-it met with unprecedented prosperity, bringing in more dollars at the box office each successive week of its release for a dizzying first-run record. Writer Kevin Williamson's self-referential teen horror/comedy revitalized the genre in Hollywood and set the tone for a slew of imitators, among them a less satisfying sequel. And while *Scream* will likely be remembered more for the influence it exerted on the horror genre than for its cinematic achievement, the opening sequence featuring a ghost-faced stranger terrorizing Drew Barrymore is still pretty scary.



48) THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI (1919) Undeniably influential, this German expressionist masterpiece is still revered as one of the landmarks of cinema. Two friends recount the tale of Caligari, a seeming madman who opens a carnival featuring the somnambulist Cesare; the doctor and his odd protégé travel to the town of Holstenwall, where a series of murders inexplicably ensues. More notable for its bizarre, nightmarish sets than its haunting narrative, the film's powerful imagery

remains breathtaking even by modern standards. A must see.

49) HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL

(1958) Like most William Castle movies, this Vincent Price haunted house flick is campy, but it's great. Price plays a millionaire who dares seven strangers to spend the night in a house with a murder-laden history, with the prize of \$10,000 awarded to those who succeed. Price's performance is more understated than usual, yet he still exudes a nefarious charm. Even though the movie is not scary, *House on Haunted Hill* helped popularize a great staple of the horror and suspense genres—a group of mistrusting people trapped in a house and trying to survive until morning with an unidentified killer on the loose—and it presented the event with devilish glee. While original shocks, including severed heads and prancing skeletons, seem silly by today's standards, many eerie elements keep the movie worthwhile for horror buffs.



50) FREAKS (1932)

It's hard to believe *Freaks* was filmed in the 1930s. The story is straightforward enough: A despicable gold-digger marries the director of a traveling circus with designs to get her hands on his fortune. She begins to poison him, but his friends learn of her treachery and band together to save the man's life. The twist is, of course, that director Tod Browning cast real people with physical abnormalities as the stars of his film. However, the director elevates them to heroes—they are good, moral people with genuine compassion for others—and Browning ensures that the bad guys get theirs in the end. A singular motion picture experience. ■



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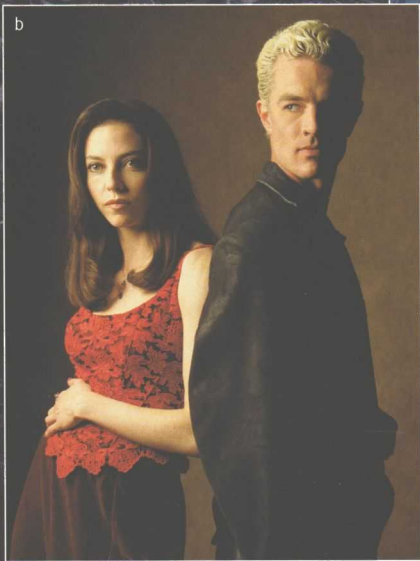
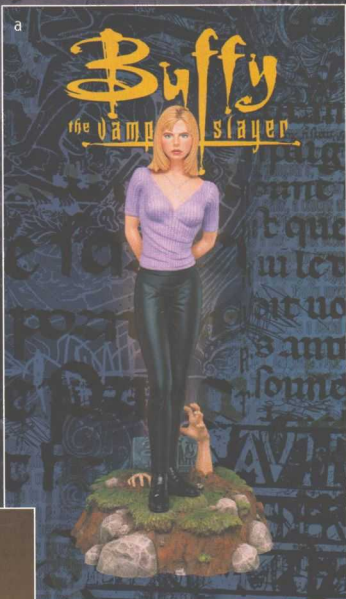
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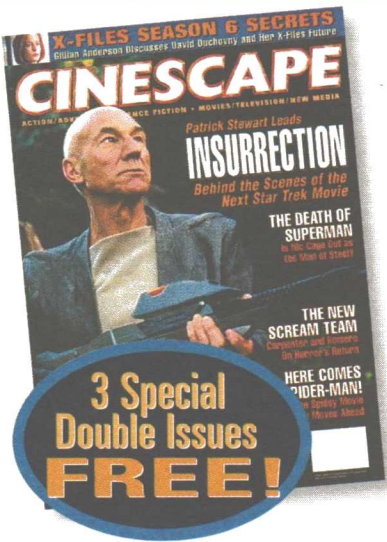
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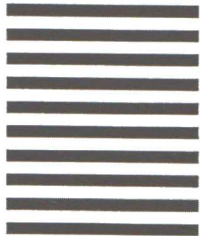
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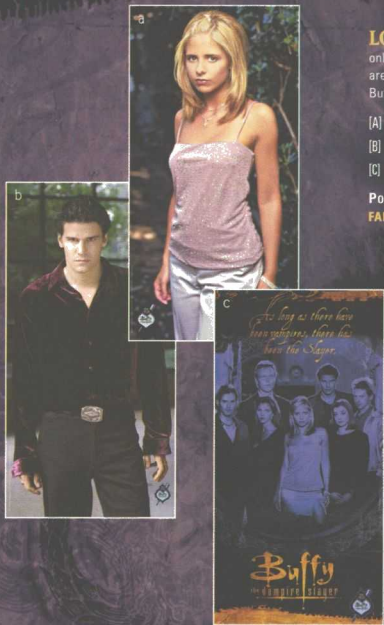
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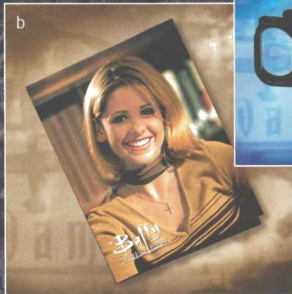
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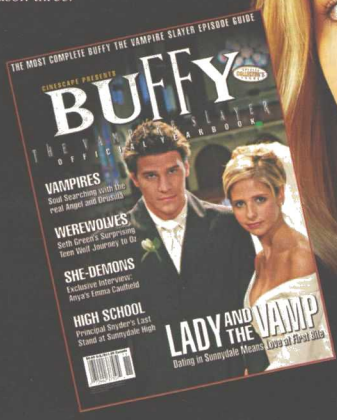
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Could DVD kill the video star? When it comes to genre titles, perhaps... | by Gina McIntyre

Horror fans beware. You are about to become the unwitting victims of a calculated attack by all manner of psychopaths, madmen and deviants. And when the marketing execs handling the upcoming release of countless genre titles on DVD have completed their assault on your checkbook, you'll feel as though your bank account has been ruthlessly slaughtered.

While the DVD market has already proven itself a safe haven for all things horror (who ever thought *Maniac* would be released in a digitally



remastered, widescreen format?), the fall '99 season seems like a particularly noteworthy time for genre goodies.

"We are currently in a horror tidal wave," explains Guido Henkel, editor of online publication *DVD Review*

(www.dvdreview.com). "The Hollywood studios, since the success of *Scream*, have not stopped pushing all kinds of new and old

horror properties out the door. With the box office success of films like *The Blair Witch Project* and *The Sixth Sense*, it is a great time for them to re-release titles like *Fright Night*, *Carrie*, *The Exorcist* and all the other films that would have gone mostly unnoted a few years ago."

Unnoticed no longer, a variety of titles from landmarks *Night of the Living Dead* and *Halloween* to classics like *Frankenstein* and *The Wolf Man* will tempt consumers in time for Christmas. The onslaught also includes old favorites like William Castle's *House on Haunted Hill* and Hammer Film Productions' *Plague of the Zombies*, as well as genre nouveau outings like *The Rage: Carrie II* and *Halloween: H20*.

No less plentiful are special collector's editions, but Freddy Krueger fans in particular will find New Line Home Video's *A Nightmare on Elm Street: Platinum Edition* DVD boxed set a welcome item. Each of the seven movies in the series has received a new High Definition transfer and is presented in its original widescreen format. A bonus disc, *The Nightmare Series Encyclopedia*, also features a new, 45-minute documentary *Welcome to Primetime*, which includes interviews with cast members, fans and all of the series' directors, such as Renny Harlin (*Die Hard 2*, *Cliffhanger*), Stephen Hopkins (*Lost In Space*) and Charles Russell (*The Mask*). Perhaps the biggest name leading the



DIGITAL UNDERGROUND: Scenes from the DVD editions of [above] *The Blair Witch Project* and [top] *House on Haunted Hill*; [opposite, left] Freddy Krueger; [opposite right] *Army of Darkness*



charge—and making one of the fastest recorded turn-arounds onto DVD—is indie-engine-that-could *The Blair Witch Project*. Augmented with “newly discovered” footage, the film is packaged with the mockumentary that originally aired on the Sci-Fi Channel, *The Curse of the Blair Witch*. Extras include a map of the Black Hills Forest and excerpts from the *Blair Witch* comic book.

“On the consumer side, I believe much of the interest comes from word-of-mouth, and the Internet helps a lot there—for the better and the worse,” Henkel says. “People who had never heard of *Re-Animator* all of a sudden heard on Web sites and in newsgroups what an incredible release it was. At a time where DVD releases were scarce—that was back when only a handful of major [studios] supported DVD—people literally examined every DVD that came out for the lack of product. Combined with the newfound interest in the genre itself, I am sure it attracted many people to take a first look at these films.”

While the format is drawing favor with shoppers, filmmakers, too, are turning to DVD as an alternative venue, says Robert Wederquist, editor of *The DVD Journal* (www.dvd-journal.com). “[DVD is] more attractive to directors and fans because it allows directors to bypass both the MPAA and studio-imposed test-audience system, allowing them to present unrated editions—that would include NC-17 by default—director’s cuts, deleted scenes, commentary tracks and all sorts of other minutiae that has no place in a movie theater,” Wederquist explains. “If the studios can make money on DVD, they’re happy as well. Special edition DVDs are currently the best way that directors can communicate directly with their most dedicated audience members. The cineplexes are out of the loop.”

Writer/director David Twohy agrees. Weeks before his new sci-fi/horror offering *Pitch Black* is

released, Twohy is eagerly anticipating the opportunity to craft a director’s cut for what is proving to be a revolutionary format. “We can do things in a technical sense [with DVD] that we can’t do in the film world because you can only push the photochemical process so much in terms of coloration before you hit the upper curve of the limits for film. When you get into the video realm, you can push those even further and in some ways, some directors prefer the look of their product once it’s been [transferred] because you can clean up things that always aggravated you when it was just restricted to film.”—*additional reporting by Marc Camron* ■



> WICKED WATCH:

ARMY OF DARKNESS

In the midst of the glut of horror offerings hitting the DVD market this season, keep an eye peeled for the special edition of the last installment in the greatest trilogy ever captured on film (that George Lucas had nothing to do with). Yes, the collector’s edition of Sam Raimi’s *Army of Darkness* is now available for mass consumption. Now, you can watch Ash battle nasty demons, rescue a distressed damsel or two and show retail drones how to really earn that employee-of-the-month parking space in all his digital glory. Anchor Bay’s new, limited edition, two-disc set also includes extra goodies, such as the film’s original ending, four deleted scenes, various storyboards, a trailer and a short featurette, “Men Behind the Army” narrated by *Wicked’s* own Bruce Campbell. Sounds groovy.—G.M.

C E L L A R D W E L L E R S

CURSE OF THE DEMON

Wicked rescues some of horror's finest offerings from looming obscurity | by Frank Kurtz

There's something about British horror films that lends even the most unlikely scenarios a sense of legitimacy. In *Curse of the Demon* (1957), the incredulous concept—a skeptical American professor becomes the target of a Satanic curse and must find a way to change his fate—works flawlessly, thanks in large part to director Jacques Tourneur (*I Walked With a Zombie*, *Cat People*) and the masterful subtlety with which he handles the story.

The film opens with Professor Harrington (Maurice Denham) driving out to the dark mansion of Dr. Julian Karswell (Niall MacGinnis). Harrington begs Karswell to abandon some name-

less scheme; in return, the professor will retract accusations regarding Karswell's witchcraft cult. Karswell sends the man on his way, but Harrington soon sees what looks like a small storm cloud moving through the upper limbs of a stand of trees. From the mist emerges a giant winged demon, the sight of which sends Harrington's car into a nest of power lines and the man to his death.

Soon after, an American psychologist named John Holden (Dana Andrews) comes to London to join Harrington's investigation of Karswell. Upon learning of the professor's death, he encounters the suspected warlock and reveals that he will carry on his colleague's work. Karswell surreptitiously plants

a small slip of paper with a series of runes on

Holden, thus placing a curse that will claim the man's life in only two weeks. As the days pass, Holden becomes increasingly paranoid, desperately searching for a way to stop the inevitable.

Andrews, a skilled actor who starred in such classics as *Laura* (1944) and *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), armed the production with an air of credibility. His heroic Holden is bullheadedly pragmatic in spite of the weirdness around him—not even when the cursed paper seems to leap from his hands does he break from his staunch skepticism.

While Andrews' performance is noteworthy, the laudable screenplay from the gifted team of Charles Bennett and Hal E. Chester also



© 2008 Universal Pictures



deserves credit for its diverse cast of characters, among them the bizarre yet fascinating Karswell.

As the delightfully wicked villain, MacGinnis provides the film's quiet threat, an evil madman who still embodies the polite demeanor of upper-crust British society. On the surface, he appears to be a harmless eccentric with unruly hair barely covering his balding head, but his small pointed beard gives him a vaguely sardonic look that hints at his malevolence. Presiding over the supernatural treachery, Karswell craftily manages to threaten his enemies, merely by suggesting that a terrible fate awaits them.

Interestingly enough, the physical embodiment of that terrible fate—the demon—was only added to placate studio execs who were concerned that a fire-breathing monster would sell the film more than an ambiguous narrative that never revealed whether its characters were in danger from *Beyond* or from their over-active imaginations. (Originally, Tourneur had intended that the audience would decide for themselves whether or not a demon would appear at the appointed hour.)

While the demon seems amateurish by today's high-tech standards, the ugly rubber monstrosity

is a forgivable addition to an otherwise outstanding tale of supernatural suspense. In the end, *Curse of the Demon* is skillfully crafted, enormously atmospheric and smart—truly worthy of rediscovery on video. ■



> GUILTY PLEASURE:
APRIL FOOL'S DAY

Judging *April Fool's Day* (1986) by only its setup, it's easy to shrug it off as just another '80s slasher flick in which a group of youngsters in a secluded place drink, have pre-marital sex and pay the horror movie price of getting mutilated by some psycho stalker. The movie was even produced by Frank Mancuso Jr. of *Friday the 13th* fame. But some pleasant surprises set this flick apart from the pack.

Muffy St. John (Deborah Foreman) invites a bunch of college friends (including one played by *GvsE's* Clayton Rohner) to spend spring break at the mansion she stands to inherit. Being that it is April 1, pranks abound from the get-go, but the mood darkens and things get tense as figurative skeletons are dragged out of closets and people start turning up dead.

In his attempt to marry murder mystery and horror, director Fred Walton steered clear of typical gory mayhem. And he even managed to throw in some character development, as the prospective victims have some time to chat about their post-collegiate plans before biting it. But the real delight is a fun plot-twist shocker at the end. *April Fool's Day* may not be what most would call a quality film, but for horror fans, it's an entertaining take on an overdone subgenre.—*Chandra Palermo*

NEW MEDIA

SURVIVING THE GAME

A new round of survival horror games pits players against monsters | by Steve Hockensmith

In your standard action/adventure game, the object is simple—kill, kill, *KILL!* But in the popular “survival horror” genre, gamers are often forced to take a much different approach: Run away!

“Survival horror isn’t action/adventure,” says Matt Atwood, manager of public relations for game developer Capcom. “It does have those elements, but the key is to survive rather than kill everything.”

Atwood should know what he’s talking about: Capcom invented the survival horror game with the 1996 launch of *Resident Evil*. Borrowing a large dose of inspiration from George Romero’s classic zombie trilogy—*Night of the Living Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead* and *Day of the Dead*—Capcom’s designers created a game that put players into the horrifying, run-for-your-life world of a gory horror movie. The game was a smash of monstrous proportions, spawning sequels, action figures, novels, comic books, talk of a movie adaptation and, of course, plenty of imitators.

Atwood stresses the difference between survival horror and action/adventure games like *Duke Nukem* or *Tomb Raider*, but the two genres share several similarities. For example, the player must solve puzzles while navi-

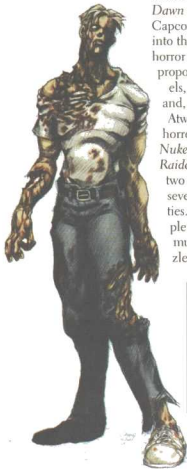
gating through the levels of the game. In survival horror games, though, the player faces a different kind of challenge. Rather than being the strongest character on the screen,

the player will find that there are monsters that can’t be easily beaten—instead, they must be avoided. If a player is lucky, he or she might get a chance to come back and kick some beastie butt later. Though Flagship (the division of Capcom behind the *Resident Evil* series) obviously gave gamers what they wanted with the original R.E., Atwood admits that the game wasn’t as spine-tling as it could have been. Key to putting the “horror” in survival horror games is the right mood—dark, ominous lighting, maybe a thunderstorm in the distance. Only a few years ago, the technology didn’t exist to cram that kind of atmosphere into a game. But Atwood says that’s not the case anymore.

“[The power] of these new [game platforms] means being able to bring survival horror games closer to reality,” he says.

Well, maybe if your reality involves brain-eating maniacs.

The *Resident Evil* franchise will take full advantage of these new opportunities for no-holds-barred creepiness by appearing on every major video game system between now and the beginning of 2000. The original game was released on the Game Boy



gating through the levels of the game. In survival horror games, though, the player faces a different kind of challenge. Rather than being the strongest character on the screen,

color system in September, while *Resident Evil 2* is due to make an appearance as a Nintendo 64 game just in time for Christmas. For those looking for something new, *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* will hit the PlayStation in November, and *Resident Evil: Code Veronica* should grace Sega’s new powerhouse, Dreamcast, in January or February 2000.

But don’t get the idea that the survival horror



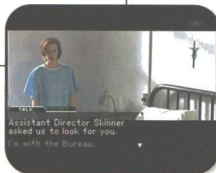
SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST: scenes from [clockwise from above] *Dino Crisis*; *The X-Files* PlayStation game; *Resident Evil: Code Veronica*; *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*

genre is a zombies-only club. An eagerly awaited new game from Capcom, *Dino Crisis*, will expand the genre by combining *Resident Evil* chills with *Jurassic Park* thrills. Instead of pitting players against murderous zombies, the new game will bring them face to face with rampaging dinosaurs. The premise might sound more sci-fi than horror, but the end result should be the same. After all, if being chased by a pack of velociraptors doesn't scare you, nothing will.

"*Dino Crisis* is a more military-action style of game," says Atwood. "It moves along faster and feels a little different, more of a panic-type horror."

Well aware that devoted gamers will want more, more, more, even after *Dino Crisis* and the new slew of *Resident Evil* games hits the stores, Atwood says Capcom is developing plenty of other games—and trying to expand the genre it created.

"Capcom would like to take the feel of Alfred Hitchcock movies and bring that into video games," he says. "[Hitchcock] made both *Psycho* and *The Birds*. They had a similar feel but completely different storylines. We are continuing the *Resident Evil* series but are exploring other storylines as well." —additional reporting by Marc Camron



File Under PLAYSTATION



Most PlayStation games revolve around running, jumping and shooting everything in sight. But the new *X-Files* PlayStation game throws in a healthy dose of thinking, too. Players aren't just trying to get to the next level or beat their buddies' high scores—they're trying to crack a conspiracy with the help of FBI Special Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully.

The X-Files PlayStation game is based on the computer game that took Macs and PCs by storm last year. Extensive footage shot for the original game featuring series stars David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson has been transferred onto four PlayStation discs, making the new version one of the most video-intensive PlayStation releases ever.

Players take the role of Special Agent Craig Willmore, who works with Mulder and Scully to solve a twisted mystery.

Willmore must interrogate suspects, collect clues, track down sources and avoid assassination in order to win the day. Along the way, Willmore encounters such popular supporting characters as Assistant Director Walter Skinner, the Lone Gunmen and X.

With so many familiar faces on hand and a storyline crafted by Chris Carter and series executive producer Frank Spotnitz, the game has the look and feel of an interactive *X-Files* episode. (Let's just hope it's not like one of those episodes from last year.)—Graham McPhearson

THE BOOK OF THE DEAD

Anthology 999 offers readers unabridged terror from horror's leading authors | by Chandra Palermo

Decisions, decisions, decisions. In this day and age, horror fans demand a little bit of variety. But judging from the dozens of releases lining the shelves of local bookstores, it might seem that all those choices present you, the reader, with too much of a good thing. Should you pick up the latest Stephen King novel? Perhaps a good vampire tale would satiate your thirst. Zombie stories are always a good bet, right?

Well, Avon Books hopes to help you out by packing all of the above and more into their horror anthology 999, the largest collection of previously unpublished horror stories without a theme ever released. And just for kicks, it's exactly 666 pages long. (Insert maniacal laughter here.)

Working from a list of top genre authors, editor Al

Sarrantonio collected short stories, novelets and novelettes that he felt would demonstrate the shape of horror fiction at the close of the century. He contributed his own short story *The Ropy Thing* to the mix.

"There were two ultimate hopes," he explains. "The short-term one was to reinvigorate, redirect and re-establish the horror genre in terms of literary viability. The longer-term hope was to produce a landmark book that you'll put on a special place on your shelf—and want to read again."

Sarrantonio certainly put forth quite a valiant effort to achieve the latter, wrangling 14 beloved horror scribes to write a wide range of genre offerings. "I think anyone who buys 999 will get way more than their money's worth," Sarrantonio says.

"There's something for everyone in there—Alfred Hitchcock-type suspense from David Morrell, EC Comics [*Tales from the Crypt*] horror from Stephen King, strange fantasy from Eric Van Lustbader, a haunted house novel from William Peter Blatty, *Twilight Zone*-type stories, Southern Gothic stories, a Northern Gothic lyrical piece from Joyce Carol Oates, a classic vampire tale, zombies, strange stories, even some humor."

Now, Sarrantonio feels, is the perfect time to reach his prime directive, as horror's chart-topping success at the box office has sparked renewed interest in the genre. His writers agree.

"The horror genre itself has been around for hundreds of years, may be older than anything else, probably goes back to caveman times when they'd talk about something scary beyond the fire. But I think that there is a little boost in it right now," says Joe R. Lansdale, who contributed the novella *Mad*

"Stephen King, me and Joyce Carol

Dog Summer. "I'm hoping that 999 will do for the horror genre somewhat what [Kirby McCauley's anthology] *Dark Forces* did for it in '79 or '80. When it came out, horror had begun to gain some momentum primarily through Stephen King, but also there was an undercurrent horror that a lot of people don't know about. When *Dark Forces* came along, it was sort of like everything came together into a sort of gestalt, so to speak. I would love to see that happen with 999."

Van Lustbader, who contributed the novelette *An Exaltation of Ternagants*, believes that unless the quality of genre material improves and grows more diverse, horror's recent prominence will amount to nothing more than a quick fad. He also says, however, that 999 succeeds at breaking new ground and just might serve as the inspiration Sarrantonio planned it to be.

"I think, quite frankly, that the horror genre is just treading water," he says. "There may be new voices, but it seems to me that they're telling the same old stories. These days the phrase 'horror liter-





ature" seems like an oxymoron. I'd like to see what's known as horror break out of the narrow ghetto it's now in. For instance, I grew up reading Poe and Roald Dahl, two of the most proficient practitioners of scary stuff. And yet the two of them were on opposite ends of the spectrum from a stylistic point of view. One was gothic, the other gentlemanly. But they could both scare the bejeezus out of you. Have you ever read *Lolita*? Now that's a truly frightening horror novel dissecting human obsessions. It seems to me we don't have that diversity in the field today.

"I think 999 is a truly kaleidoscopic look at the genre," he continues. "That's what got my heart racing when Al first proposed it to me. I mean, Stephen King, me and Joyce Carol Oates, now that's diversity, baby. This is the kind of book that would have made ol' Roald Dahl proud." ■

Oates. Now that's diversity, baby."

—Eric Van Lustbader, author of "An Exaltation of Tergamants"

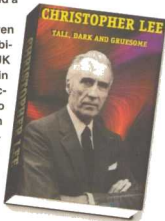


> WICKED WATCH:

TALL, DARK AND GRUESOME

Christopher Lee in a cute bunny suit. It's scarcely believable until you pick up a copy of his autobiography *Tall, Dark and Gruesome* and see the image for yourself. Granted, Lee was only about 8 years old at the time he donned the cuddly costume, but it's still incredibly amusing to see a man notorious for playing villains and monsters dressed with endearing pointy ears and a cotton tail.

Finally, Midnight Marquee Press has given American fans a U.S. edition of Lee's autobiography, which has been available in the UK for some time. A man who has appeared in more than 200 feature films and TV productions in his 77 years has plenty of stories to tell. With a slight seasoning of subtle British wit, Lee describes his childhood and military service during World War II and reflects on his film career and cherished friendships with, among others, fellow horror greats Peter Cushing, Vincent Price and Boris Karloff. Lee also handpicked more than 150 photographs, which range from archive selections to private moments with his family and friends to behind-the-scenes shots from movie sets. The latest edition of *Tall, Dark and Gruesome*, which features two new chapters, is on sale now.—C.P.



COMICS

GO TO HELL

Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell collect their groundbreaking account of the Jack the Ripper murders | by Matt Springer

Night. London, 1888. A dark figure slips from the shadows and approaches his prey. Without warning, he strikes. One quick slash, and it's over. He drags the victim away, back into the darkness of mystery and time.

This is the world of *From Hell*, a comics miniseries from industry legends Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell that chillingly reconstructs the Jack the Ripper murders based on meticulous research into the era of the killings and the theories surrounding the case. As their tale unfolds,

From Hell also conjures a gripping view of a killer's inner demons and an examination of the transformations that history can bring upon the truth of an event.

This November, Top Shelf Productions will at long last offer the first collection of the *From Hell* comics into one volume, a 560-page tome that brings together all 10

issues of the series along with the single-issue epilogue. With an erratic and uneven publishing schedule, it hasn't been easy for fans to keep track of *From Hell*, and the collection will allow fans put off by the title's infrequent appearance on the stands to finally own the entire work in one convenient package.

"It's been a long time, hasn't it?" quips Campbell of the series' publishing trials and tribulations. "It's been almost 10 years. If I'd known it was gonna take this long to finish, I don't know if I would have said yes."

If Campbell had declined Moore's proposal to collaborate, the world of horror comics would have been deprived of a landmark work, a story that manages to conjure its horror not just from blood and gore but from the dark unknown of a killer's psyche.

"On one level, it is somewhat of a horror book



in that Jack the Ripper conducts some gruesome acts in the book, but it's so much more than that," says Chris Staros, co-owner of Top Shelf Publications along with his business partner, Brett Warnock. "It's such an intellectual observation of the inner workings of man, and the whole ripple effect that stories like this have on a culture as time goes on, how the act itself is insignificant in comparison to the obsession. It's a very good yarn as well, a great page-turner, and Eddie's artwork is absolutely stunning, from a historical perspective as well as an emotional perspective."

To bring the London of the late 19th century to life, Campbell conducted extensive research into the time of the killings, seeking to capture the era not as a time long past but as something as real as the world of today to those who live in it. This approach gives a jarring weight to the main moments of violence in *From Hell*, those sequences when Saucy Jack is taking down his latest victim. It allows the reality crafted in *From Hell* to be shattered by these massacres, just as the world of 1880s London was shattered by the historic incidents.

Though part of the credit for *From Hell*'s critical triumph belongs to Campbell, Moore also deserves much of the praise. He's been associated with many of the art form's greatest achievements—horror comics fans may recall his landmark run on DC's *Swamp Thing*—and according to Staros, he's crafted yet another enduring comics masterpiece.

"Moore is the king of all the comics writers; there's no doubt about it," he gushes. "He's our shining star. He can write with all these things in his head and still make it be, on the surface, a

really suspenseful, intense page turner. That's what most pulp writers can only do, and most literary writers get deep without giving you that yarn as well. Alan's able to do all of those things at the same time, and that's what I think makes him the best comics writer around." ■



> WICKED WATCH:

OH MY GOTH!

Sure, the jokes are mostly intended for people who own the entire Bauhaus back catalog and multiple pairs of shiny black boots, but for those select few, comic miniseries *Oh My Goth* is a riotous romp simply too funny to pass up.

The story of bumbling extraterrestrial Hieronymous Posch of the planet Necrus and his adventures with the good people of Earth, the comic was originally created by musician Voltaire as a way to promote his live shows. After New Jersey's Sirius Entertainment expressed interest in the comic, *Oh My Goth* grew into a four-part serial, published earlier this year.



"I was inspired by those religious tracts that feature a drawing of Bart Simpson on the cover to lure you in and somehow end up with Scripture explaining why poor little Bart is going straight to Hell!" Voltaire writes on his Web site, (www.Voltaire.net). Although the first issue of the comic is sold out, the other three installments can be ordered via the Web site.—Gina McIntyre

D O N ' T G E T M E S T A R T E D

ANY WITCH WAY BUT LOOSE

B-movie superstar Bruce Campbell offers his take on all things *Wicked*

I have not seen *The Blair Witch Project*, but it's one of my new favorite films. The fact that something so amazingly low-budget (whatever the final tally really was) can crack the magic \$100 million mark gives me hope for an ailing industry. Dollar-for-dollar, it's got to be one of the most successful films of all time. Can't you just imagine the frenzy at Acme Studios the Monday morning after *Witch* was released?



"Jenkins, did you see these grosses?" the studio executive barked, waving a *Daily Variety* in the air.

"Sure did, JB," his assistant confirmed. "I think we need to make a *Witch* of our own!"

"Brilliant! How much did their film cost?"

"Gee, let me check," Jenkins said, ruffling through his *Blair*

Witch tracking folder. "Around \$40..."

"\$40 million? That's nothing!"

"No, no, JB—\$40,000..."

"Thousand? Are you out of your mind?"

Nobody can make a picture that cheap! Better try \$400,000."

"Well, sir, at that budget level, you wouldn't have bankable actors, directors or writers."

"Hmmm, forgot about that. OK, let's go for \$4 million—that's a bargain at twice the price!"

"Then of course, there's the digital effects and a big ad campaign."

"Right. Good point, Jenkins. We all know that word-of-mouth is too risky. Looks like it's gonna have to be \$40 million!"

"Sounds great, JB!"

"Congratulations, everyone, we're making our

own low-budget film!"

With the studio mind-set of more is more, you can see how a scenario like this might unfold. *The Blair Witch Project* celebrates the empowerment of technology. Just a few years ago, it would have been ludicrous to imagine a successful feature film shot on the format formerly attributed to amateurs. Tell that to George Lucas. Did you ever think the words "video" and "*Star Wars*" would be used in the same sentence?

Granted, *Witch* will spawn a myriad of imitators, 99.7 percent of whom are doomed to failure, but why the hell not? Given the state of our creatively bankrupt industry, who's to say that Joe Blow from Butt Lick, Ind., has any less of a right to make films than the ex-lawyers and hairdressers currently in charge? I worked on a film once where the head of production was a former tennis pro. If I wanted advice on my backhand that was one thing, but he didn't know how to fix a lagging Act II any more than my garage mechanic down the street.

Therefore, I encourage any truly committed filmmaker with a decent sense of storytelling to get that digital video camera from K-Mart, beef up the hard drive on your Gateway computer and whip out the ol' Visa. Hell, if you can make a film for the same amount as your Mom's minivan, what have you got to lose? *The Blair Witch Project* has thrown a lifesaver to a drowning industry. Let's hope the poor saps in the executive suites recognize this and hang on for dear life.

—Renaissance man Bruce Campbell can be seen as *Autolykus* on *Hercules*: The Legendary Journeys and *Xena*: Warrior Princess and has saved all of humanity from the threat

of demonic possession as *Ash* in the *Evil Dead* series. As if that weren't enough, Campbell is publishing a book about his adventures in the world of show business. Look for *Confessions of a B-Movie Actor, just in time for Christmas!* ■



FILMMAKING 101: (above) *The Blair Witch Project*; [top] our employee of the month, Bruce Campbell

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