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This Issue: Interviews with Angus Scrimm-Phantasm's Tall Man
and Michael T. Gilbert-Creator of Mr.Monster

On The Cover: Commander USA poses with a model assembled and painted by a fan.

"Commander USA's WORLD OF HORROR"

Editor-Darren Gross

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Interview With :

Michael T. Gilbert -Creator Of

MR. MONSTER

(Michael T. Gilbert is one of the hottest new talents in the comic field. His highly popular series, "Mr. Monster" was cancelled by Eclipse Comics after ten issues and eight specials, only to be renewed by Dark Horse Comics months later in Black and White.

In the following interview, Michael T. Gilbert discusses the past, present, and future of his career as well as his comic book character)

WOH: When and where were you born ?

GILBERT: I was born in New York City on May 7th, 1951.

WOH: When did you decide that you wanted to be a comic book writer/artist ?

GILBERT: Well, It's hard to pin down precisely, but I know I was reading comics since I was a very little kid (About six or seven years old) and I'd draw my favorite superheroes from far back then.

As a matter of fact, I have some drawings of Superman fighting Batman from first grade and Batman has a "B" on his chest instead of a bat.

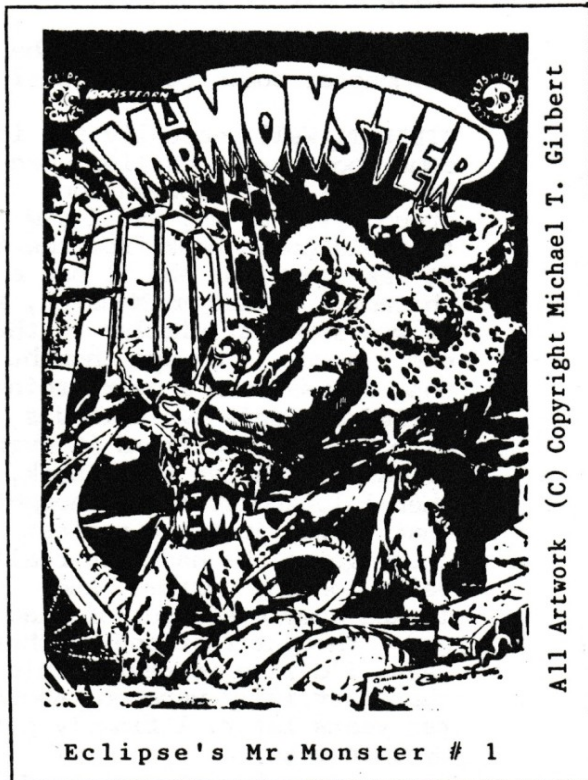
I certainly knew that I wanted to be a cartoonist as early as twelve or thirteen. It's just something that I've always wanted to do.

WOH: What other comic characters do you remember from childhood ?

GILBERT: I was one of those "Read anything I can get my hands on" comic fans. I was in love with the early Fantastic Four and Spider-Man. I used to really enjoy The Flash and Green Lantern. I'd read just about anything. I would even force myself to read "Classics Illustrated" (Laughs) !

WOH: Was there any particular writer or artist that inspired you ?

GILBERT: The big ones, I suppose, would be



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Eclipse's Mr. Monster # 1

Jack Kirby, Will Eisner, and Steve Ditko. Those, I suppose would be the earliest influences and they still remain wonderful inspirations.

WOH: What was the first comic book you ever worked on ?

GILBERT: The first comic book I ever worked on was New Paltz Comics which was made at my college. I actually published that comic book. We eventually wound up putting out about four issues under different subtitles and just broke even a couple of times. It was more for enjoyment and the experience and everything else of seeing your stuff in print. We had some good people working on it. We had Brian Buniak who's done "Thunder Bunny" and a few other people that went on to professional work. It was essentially an underground comic. You can sometimes find them in old headshops, and they still pop up here and there.

My first professional work happened just two or three years later when I started working for "Quack!" comics. It was a funny-animal comic that was very popular when "Howard The Duck" suddenly got hot.

I did a character called "The Wraith", who was sort of a dog detective. That was really my first "Big Break".

WOH: What schools or education did you have ?

GILBERT: Well, I graduated from New Paltz University. I had an art teaching degree which I very quickly found I didn't want



Excerpt From The 6 Part 'Origins'



Mr. Monster Prepares For Battle

to use. I graduated in early 1973, and started looking for a job in New York City. At this point, I got a job at NBC News doing their TV graphics.

WOH: How did the idea for the Mr. Monster comic come about ?

GILBERT: Well, actually the idea came about years earlier when I went to a comic convention around 1971 or so, and I saw this old comic book from the 40's. It was coverless and it had a character called Mr. Monster, and it was somewhat similar to the one I have. I always thought that it was such a weird thing. There were only two episodes with this character in it ever. It was a Canadian comic book, and when I looked at it, I thought that it was just the coolest thing going. He had this really weird looking costume, and looked completely out of place, and I thought that one of these days, I'd like to revive this character in my version. About ten years later, I finally got my chance to.

I was working, at this point, on the "Elric" comic (A sword and sorcery comic book) for Pacific Comics and they had another title called "Vanguard Illustrated"-sort of an anthology title. There was a short break between series'. We had just finished the first Elric series, and the second one wasn't quite ready to start, and I had a little time on my hands. So, I asked them if I could do a little series for Vanguard Illustrated, and they said, "Okay, do what ever you want". So I started wracking my brains, trying to think of something to do, and when I was looking through my old comics, I came upon the Mr.Monster story again. I thought that the guy was the weirdest in the world and that only two people must have bought this comic when it came out, and that it would be kind of neat to revive and revamp the most obscure superhero in the universe. I told the editors about what I wanted to do and they looked at me kind of strangely, probably thinking that I had lost my mind, but they O.K.'d it. I got together with Bill Loeb, who was an artist that I admired and Ken Bruzenak who was a letterer (The best



Mr.Monster Triumphant

letterer in the business. He was doing "American Flag" at the time.) and basically orchestrated the first Mr.Monster book.

WOH: I heard that there were problems with the first appearance..

GILBERT: Yes, we did. It was originally supposed to be in three chapters in the Vanguard magazine. The first one came out a little later than they'd planned. We weren't sure why they were so long in doing this, but we found out, because the company, which seemed like one of the strongest independents in the business, was out of business. I was out of a job, with Elric gone, and only one episode of the Mr.Monster story out there.

All three episodes had been completed long before, at this point, I had been sitting back, waiting and waiting for the second episode and it never came. It turns out that the Mr.Monster story in Vanguard was one of the last books that Pacific ever published. It had got in just under the wire.

I wasn't sure what was going to happen, but my agent, Mike



Mr.Monster Attacks The Terror Of Trezma

Friedrich, showed it to a couple of different comic companies and Eclipse (Who had been purchasing a number of the Pacific Comics titles like "The Rocketeer" and "Alien Worlds" and such) decided they'd take a chance on Mr.Monster too.

WOH: Originally, the first issue of Mr.Monster was a one-shot. Am I correct ?

GILBERT: Yes, we were trying it out. They were at least willing to give it a chance with that, and if we got enough interest in it in letters and sales, they would continue it. We did, and it did.

WOH: Where was Mr.Monster's first appearance in that 1940's comic book ?

GILBERT: It was a Canadian comic called Super Duper Comics # 3. Which I didn't find out until years later, because the copy I had was coverless and didn't say what year it was or what it was from. It was only through a little bit of research years later , that I was able to stumble on to what it really was and where it was from. Strangely enough, it came from a Company that was also about to go under. The appearance of Mr.Monster was one of the last books they published, much like Pacific Comics.

WOH: How did you like working for Eclipse Comics ?

GILBERT: For the most part, it was pretty good. I had a good amount of freedom and they had some very good production values. We

produced some very nice books while I was there.

WOH: What other comic work have you done ?

GILBERT: I've done a number of comics. I did the first eighteen issues of the Elric comic book with George Freeman, Roy Thomas, and Craig Russel. Two of the series have been collected into graphic albums and the third one will be out next year.

I've worked on a number of underground comics-American Splendor, Bizarre Sex, The Spirit Magazine. They had a jam session and I had a chance to to the Spirit. I did my own anthology book called "Strange Brew" from Aardvark-Vanaheim. Originally it was supposed to be a 64-page softcover book and they decided that it would be a little too slim to make into a book, so



they made it into an oversized comic book. It was sort of a collection of my earlier work. Short stories, and different art styles, writing styles and what not. It had science-fiction stories, it had horror stories, it had slice-of-life. A little bit of everything. Kind of a Gilbert-Sampler.

WOH: Why was Mr. Monster cancelled by Eclipse ?

GILBERT: One of the big reasons was the black and white glut that came out at the time. To those readers out there who don't know what I'm talking about, about a year or so ago the "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" first appeared which was marketed into a very successful magazine and suddenly there were fifty thousand imitations that came out at the same time. The retailers (The people who sell the comics), instead of supporting the books that had proven to be good solid comic books, decided that they were going to put all their money into this quick, hot fad. So they spent all their money on that and cut back on a lot of really good titles, ("Zot!" was hurt and so were a lot of the Fantagraphics books) and they got their short term profits. They had made a lot of quick money with this thing, but it had hurt the industry. Later on, they got theirs because they continued ordering these Black and Whites, and suddenly everyone who had originally been buying these things, decided that they were really pretty lousy books and stopped buying them immediately, leaving all these retailers with tons of unsellable garbage books.

I think that the whole industry was hurt. I know that Mr. Monster's sales were lost because of that. We lost around 25% of our sales.

The decision to cancel it

was mutual. We didn't actually cancel it, per se. We were originally up for a twelve issue contract, and we renegotiated at that point. (We had put out ten issues) Instead of doing two more issues, we put out a double-sized issue of an Airboy-Mr. Monster Special, once again dealing with the retailers who prefer a number one issue to anything else and consequently

we actually sold quite a bit more simply because of that.

WOH: Why was the decision made to change Mr. Monster from color to Black and White ?

GILBERT: There were a couple of reasons. One of them was economics- as I said, as a result of the glut, we had been selling fewer at that point and you can sell a lot fewer Black and Whites and make a



Excerpt From Dark Horse Presents # 20

nice profit as opposed to full color. The other thing was artistic. In the earlier issues, I had been working with a lot of different people, having a co-artist and a co-writer. Sometimes full writer, full artist, sometimes colorist. On the new series, I wanted to get back to basics again and start doing everything myself, (Doing all the pencilling and inking) and I didn't want to fool around with the coloring, too. It took a lot of extra time because I had to go over it with whatever colorist was doing it, and tell him what colors I wanted, and keep in contact with him. It was just a lot

of effort. So, I figured, I was doing a somewhat more serious in tone, Mr. Monster series this time. I wanted it to look different. I wanted it to read different than the last one and the Black and White really fit in. I hadn't worked in Black and White in a few years, and I wanted to get back to it, because I really did enjoy it.

WOH: Which do you prefer for the finished artwork-color or Black and White ?

GILBERT: That's really a hard one. I'm somewhat inclined to say color if it's the appropriate subject matter and it's

done really well. But, Black and White is every bit as good or better for other things. If you're trying to get a more serious, somber, film noir look to something-Black and White works better.

WOH: What differences are there between the Eclipse series and the Dark Horse series ?

GILBERT: Well, in the Eclipse series, I was actively trying to get a nutzo, crazy, fun book where everything and anything would go. Sort of trying to distill the spirit of the comics of the 40's and 50's where they didn't take themselves very seriously, they just had a good time. I wanted to do every schmalzy thing I've ever wanted to in comics. Because I've done a lot of understated comics in the past, and I'd never done a superhero. And I figured if I wanted to do a superhero this time, I wanted it to be the ultimate superhero. With lightening bolts blasting off his chest and muscles bulging from every inch of the way and this and that. I did that for the ten issues and had a lot of fun doing it, it was just terrific fun.

But when I started this new series, I decided that now I wanted to try my hand and see if I could do Mr. Monster as a serious book for a while. To see if I could do a longer, more emotionally complex story still using the same characters, without one negating the other-just being the opposite side

Special Card Sent To Mr. Monster Letter Writers

DB: AN EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL MY MR. MONSTER FANS FOR YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT... AND TAKING THE TIME TO WRITE YOUR CONTINUED CRITICISM AND COMMENTS ON OUR NEW SERIES WILL BE EAGERLY AWAITED... SO KEEP THOSE LETTERS AND DRAWINGS COMING!!

of the same coin. One of the things that made me decide to do that was that I wanted to do the origin of Mr. Monster, which I knew was going to be a pretty long, involved story. In the past I had done single issue comics, in the original color Eclipse series. Humor works well for that, you can do some really sharp humor in short doses, but if you're doing something really serious, a longer, more serious format works very well. I wanted to try that. I had never done a full length graphic novel by myself. The closest I had come was adapting and co-adapting the Elric novels. So this is a new challenge for me. I'm very pleased how it's been shaping up.

Once, I get this 'Origins' story out of the way, I'm going to do some more "anything goes" stories to cleanse the palate. Then, maybe I'll go into another more longer, serious story. I don't think that they're necessarily incompatible. I think that they can both work. I enjoy both. I enjoy going crazy, and I enjoy trying to see how restrained and subtle I can be, or if I can be.

WOH: Do you like working for Dark Horse ?

GILBERT: Yeah, it's been very nice. They've been very supportive. They enjoy comics, and they've got some really nice titles in their lineup. We're working on an interesting project now. We recently put together a Dark Horse Presents Annual (#20) with Concrete, Flaming Carrot, and Mr. Monster among others. Those are two comics I really enjoy, so it's kind of neat being in the same company. We're currently working on a "Big Little Book", which should be out not too far after this interview sees print. Big Little Books were just what they sound like-small mini books that were three hundred and somewhat pages long.



Excerpt From Origins

They were very popular in the 30's and 40's. They pretty much died out in the sixties. This is the first time that they'll be coming out since then. So, that's kind of an exciting little project. As the original Big Little Books did in the 40's, we're going to be reprinting some of the old Mr. Monster stories, that I felt would be particularly appropriate to this format. We'll be

essentially "cutting and pasting" a lot of the artwork, redrawing some of the sections and completely rewriting it. We're going to get rid of the word balloons and things like that. I'm going to rewrite the whole stories to fit this format. The art will have seen print before, but the cover will be new and the writing will be new, and it's just a neat and unusual format that hasn't



Excerpt From Origins

been seen in twenty years.

WOH: Are there any differences between working for Eclipse and Dark Horse ?

GILBERT: There are differences. I feel even more freedom at Dark Horse editorially. Essentially, I just do my work and send it in. They see it when it's finished. It's the way I prefer working. I've never worked in the "Marvel Bullpen" type of setting. The closest I suppose, would be in

the Elric series. I prefer to be a self starter since I tend to write, and draw, and color. I like having total control, or as much control as possible, which is one of the real joys of working with Mr. Monster.

WOH: How many issues is 'Origins' going to run ?

GILBERT: It's looking like it will be about eight. It will be somewhere between six and eight parts. Most

origin stories tend to be about some guy that get's bitten by a radioactive spider and suddenly, he's a super hero. I have the advantage, at this point, of having a number of issues of Mr. Monster out already. We haven't done any definitive origins, but we've had a lot of mini-origins. Sort of semi-real, semi-phony origins that we've thrown out just for fun. The advantage is that we already know the character. We don't have to throw something to you quickly, and say "this is how he came to be. This is the first issue, so we've got to give him an origin." I can actually go back. I've actually taken three issues to find out how his parents first met. The earlier Mr. Monster, actually the Mr. Monster that I found in that first comic book. I decided that that Mr. Monster was going to be the father of our Mr. Monster, and we're actually taking time to actually see how he is Mr. Monster, why he quits, how he gets married, and finally we're having the birth of our Mr. Monster. We're going to see him as a child growing up, what it's like to be a young monster fighter and how he got into it. It's turning out to be a very interesting, very complex story.

Currently, I'm working on issue # 5. All the rest of the issues are in my head, I know what's going to happen, but I leave room, so that I can add things or subtract things, or change things around. I know the whole basic plot, but as you work on these things, you get a neat idea here and there or you find that something you thought was good, doesn't work out. I've got the whole basic thrust of it in my head.

WOH: After the 'Origins' story, do you think Dr.NoZone or Hemo Boy will return ?

GILBERT: NoZone, undoubtedly will return. He is our grade "B" villain that gets Mr. Monster into strange dimensions and such. He's kind of the Dr. Doom of Mr. Monster, only not taking himself as seriously.

Hemo Boy I would like to return, but I've got to make sure that it's a story worthy of his return. If I come up with something good enough, he'll be back.

The story I have tentatively planned after this current one finishes, is a neat old villain that Mr. Monster has never tackled, but you may have seen him. He was in the Mr. Monster Hi-Shock Schlock book. He's the Flatman- a guy that's been run over by a steamroller and survived. He'll be coming back meaner than ever. This is going to be kind of a deep story, because they take his remains and through them in a paper pulp. He winds up returning as a Sunday comics section. So I'm going to be doing a lot of fun things- parodies of newspaper comic strips of the thirties and forties. As a matter of fact, for that story, I'm going to treat it as if Mr. Monster was a 30's and 40's Sunday comics page. That story may run two issues. It's a neat little story, and I want to make sure we have enough room to show it.

WOH: What basic guidelines are you given, as far as language and violence limitations?

GILBERT: There are no overt guidelines. There doesn't seem to be much concern about violence. The nature of Mr. Monster is a rather violent comic book, although with a fair amount of humor to lighten it. As far as the language goes, I myself, try to keep it a little on the clean side, because I want to be able to have kids read this. With this newer series, if

there's harsh language, I can live with it. I'll put it in if I feel it's appropriate. I don't go out of my way for it.

WOH: What do you feel about the censorship issue?

GILBERT: It concerns me. I don't believe in total license, but I don't believe certain distributors etc. should be in the position to make judgements about what I or any other person

should have the economic clout to do that. Because they're just an individual, and a single individual or a group of a few should not be able to determine what I'm writing. It really depends on what your audience is. If you're doing a kid's comic, then certainly, there are things that you shouldn't be doing. If you're doing it for adults, or mature teenagers, or this or that, then I think you should be able to do whatever you feel is appropriate.



Excerpt From Origins

WOH: What age range would you say Mr.Monster is for ?

GILBERT: For the first series, I would say from eight or ten years old up through seventy. (Laughs) This series, is probably for a little bit older, simply because we are dealing with more mature themes here...more subtle complexity, but again, I'm trying to do something that an intelligent twelve year old should be able to read this and enjoy it.

WOH: Do you intend to have other artists or writers come in like on the first series ?

GILBERT: Possibly eventually, but not during this origin series. This is going to be totally Gilbert.

WOH: Are you going to reprint old comics like your Mr.Monster Super Duper Specials ?

GILBERT: We won't be having a separate series, but I will probably be doing some of the Dr.Drew series as a Mr.Monster backup. They were wonderfully drawn stories. There was only a handful of them done back in the forties, and they had the style of Will Eisner. I like to read them all very much.

WOH: Are there any plans to put the complete 'Origins' story into a color graphic novel ?

GILBERT: We'll definitely be doing it as a collection, and I think we'll be doing it as a color. It'll probably come out a year or two from now.

The style of the Dark Horse Presents story is like the old Mr.Monster-wacky, crazy, anything goes. It's a short, four pager that's just a fun little piece. It was something, I was originally thinking of doing as a backup for the first series. It wouldn't be appropriate for



Excerpt From Origins

the regular series, but it certainly works in the Dark Horse Presents Annual.

WOH: How close are you working with the Total Eclipse series ?

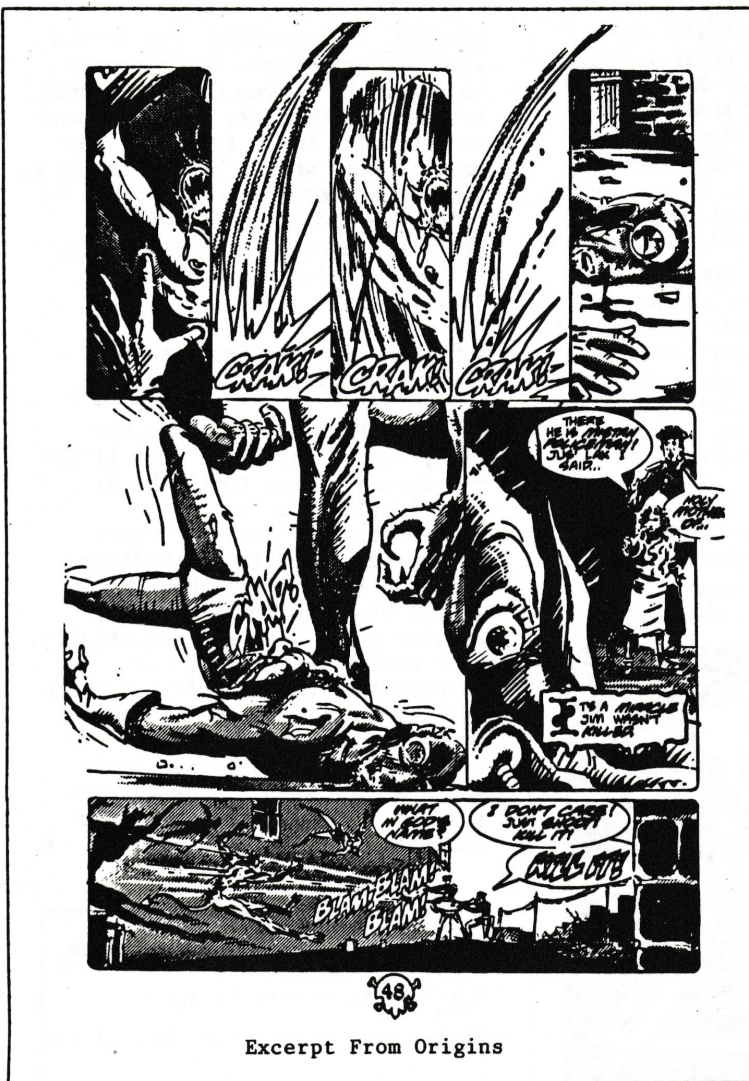
GILBERT: Not very close at all. Mr.Monster is only going to be in there for a couple of pages. They have their storyline, and they called me up and said, "This is what we're gonna do.Is this okay?" I told them to send

me the final script, and I'll look over that and make sure it's okay.I think that it appears in issue three of four.

In the changeover contract, we agreed that they can use my character for the tenth anniversary and small appearances.

WOH: How far ahead of schedule do you work ?

GILBERT: Very close to schedule. Deadlines are always a pain in the neck. The deadline for the work is usually the



Excerpt From Origins

last minute.

WOH: What time of day do you work best ?

GILBERT: I usually work best in the mornings or afternoons. It'll vary. Sometimes, I work at night if I feel better, but generally I'm a "day" person.

WOH: Are you familiar with Commander USA ?

GILBERT: Yes, I've seen some of the shows. I

think that Commander USA is pretty cool. He reminds me of the old horror host I had when I was a kid. We had Zacherley, which was terrific. It's really fun seeing Commander USA. I enjoy the fact that he doesn't take it very seriously. He has a lot of fun with the cigar chomping and making fun of the movies and having cute skits and such. It's usually worth it just to watch him. It's a tradition in these

sort of things to have great horror hosts to make up for the lousy movies. All these guys tend to break into the middle of these movies and make cute comments and what not.

WOH: What work did you do on the Chronicle books ?

GILBERT: I did a drawing of Daredevil. A comparison of the 1940's Daredevil to the present day Daredevil. I also did a picture of the Avengers and Spider-Man.

WOH: Would you like to market Mr.Monster in other ways ?

GILBERT: Yes, certainly. There's been some interest in a Mr.Monster movie, so we're looking into that. We've already put out two different types of Mr.Monster T-shirts and buttons. Right now we're doing the Big Little Book. If they're fun, quality products, we'd love to market them. If I had the time, I'd love to do a nice schlocky fan club.

WOH: What comics do you read now ?

GILBERT: I read quite a bit of them. I enjoy "Zot!", "Nexus", "Swamp Thing", basically anything Alan Moore or Frank Miller work on. There's a lot of good books out there. There's a new humor book from Fantagraphics called "Yahoo!", that I enjoy.

WOH: What other artists or writers do you enjoy working with ?

GILBERT: I enjoyed working with Bill Freeman, Craig Russel, and Bill Loeb. I really enjoy working with Ken Bruzenak, who is the letterer. He can actually bring to the forefront, an emotional idea that you'd

like to get across. One of the things that I've always tried to do with Mr.Monster, was to use all the elements together. If I wanted anger, I would try to get all the pencilling, inking, writing, lettering and coloring all pushing towards that one goal. It's good to have people that can do that sort of thing.

WOH: Are you a movie goer ?

GILBERT: I'm not a super fanatic, but I do go. The last good fantasy film I saw was

Roger Rabbit, which I enjoyed quite a bit. I've seen Robocop and enjoyed that. I saw Beetlejuice, which I thought had some neat elements, but was very disappointing on the whole. Bull Durham was good. I guess that you'd expect someone that would come up with Mr.Monster would be a slasher movie fan, but I'm not into those type of movies. I'm more of a "B" movie fan.

WOH: Do you have any tips for anyone that would like to write or draw comics ?

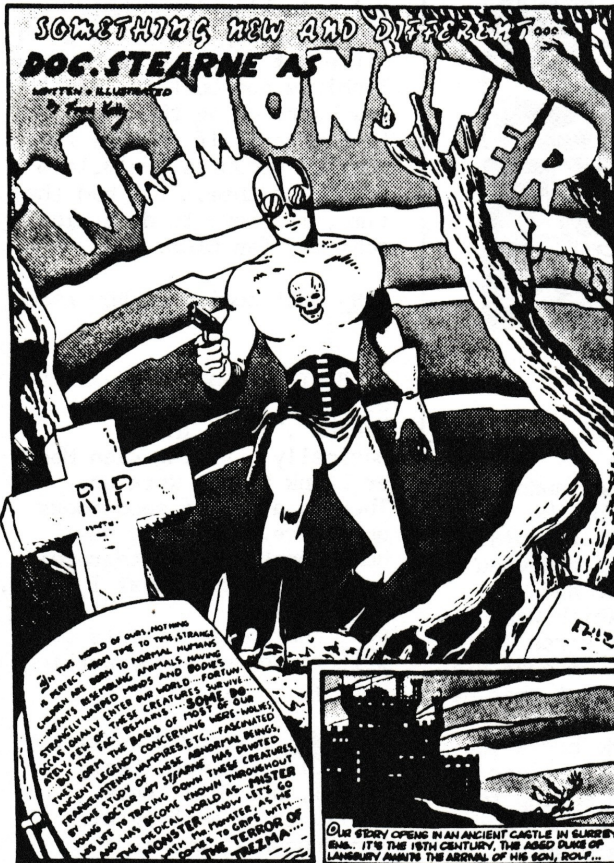
GILBERT: If, possible, try to own your own creations. Don't expect to get rich. If you do, it's great, but don't expect it. Also, try and be yourself. Don't feel that you have to copy what's hot at the time, because whatever's hot is gonna be cold. Try and be an individual. There are enough hacks out there, but we can always use an individual.

WOH: What is your favorite Mr. Monster story ?

GILBERT: Probably the hemo boy story. Which was about this little boy with a plasma bottle head. Poor little hemo boy!

Probably, my favorite short Mr.Monster story is the Bedtime story in issue seven which had a little Mickey Gilbert with a monster under his bed essentially. He's unable to convince his parents that a monster's out there waiting to get him, until the monster gets his parents.

I get a tremendous sense of satisfaction when I look back at the old Eclipse Mr.Monsters, the specials, and the current ones. *



The Fateful Comic Responsible For Mr.Monster

Here's a list of all Michael T. Gilbert's Mr.Monster appearances.

Eclipse: Mr.Monster 1-10

Mr.Monster Super Duper Special 1-8

Airboy # 28

Airboy/Mr.Monster Special # 1

Dark Horse Comics: Mr.Monster 1-?

Dark Horse Presents # 14

Dark Horse Presents # 20

Wacky Squirrel Halloween Adventure # 1

Special thanks for the interview go to Michael T.Gilbert and his wife Janet.

Interview With : Angus Scrimm- The Tall Man Of



(Angus Scrimm is one of the scariest horror movie characters in film history. His highly acclaimed portrayals of "The Tall Man" in the classic "Phantasm", and "Phantasm II" have earned him a reputation for doing horror roles. He has had a diverse career in the entertainment industry; acting in TV and feature films, as well as writing for TV Guide and the now cancelled "Cinema". He also does Liner Notes for records. In the following interview, Angus Scrimm discusses his acting work-past and future, the Phantasm films and the horror movie industry. The big shock is that Angus

Scrimm (Unlike his tall man character) is the nicest, most open guy, this interviewer has ever talked to. By the way, for you trivia buffs out there, his real name is Laurence Guy.)

WOH: What inspired you to go into acting ?

SCRIMM: Back in grammar school, I was in some sort of a little play about a prince, a princess, and a duke. I played the third role-I played the duke. (Laughs) The other two kids were marvelous, but they got on stage and got nervous and started to giggle

and broke up. I kept my presence and ad-libbed for them and carried on. This was about the age of six or seven. I got so much approbation from my teachers and members of the audience, because I had completely showed-up the other two children. That was all I needed. I had found my niche, I thought.

Then, I went on to do school plays and radio work in Kansas City (Where I grew up) and studied drama, as well as journalism. There has always been that dichotomy there, where I've thoroughly enjoyed both professions, but unlike a person that can write fluently and act as well, I don't have the vigor, the energy, or quite that high an I.Q. to do both simultaneously. Although, when we were filming *Phantasm II*, I was on staff at Angel Records again for the same six months. That was not easy. I shouldn't have done that. In the scene where the house explodes, I had been working all day at Capitol Records and I went out to film that at night. In that scene, I think 'The Tall Man' looks rather tired. I would never, ever do that again. It's not fair to the film.

WOH: Did you go to any schools or colleges for drama ?

SCRIMM: I graduated from High School in Kansas City, and came home from graduation in the middle of World War II and I assumed that I was going to go into the army. I had about two years until I was old enough, so I came out and got a job as an usher at the Paramount downtown theater in the midst of war time. It was just wonderful. The theaters were crowded. They ran "Frankenstein Meets The Wolf Man" for three weeks and it played to packed houses. Then, I got a job at the RKO Studio commissary, after about two



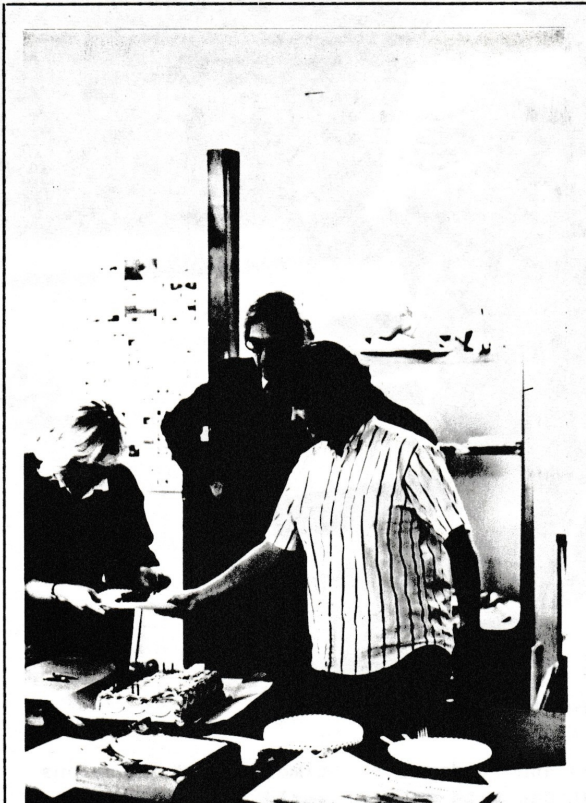
'The Tall Man' Prepares To Embalm Liz

months. They were making musicals and war films, and all sorts of things. Frank Sinatra, Ginger Rogers, Cary Grant and Eddie Cantor were on the lot, and I was making ice cream sodas for all of them.

Then, I went to USC and majored in drama for four or five years. When I was there, we had a great group of people. The war was over and most of the G.I.s were returning on what was called the GI Bill, and among my acquaintances were Art

Buchwald. As a matter of fact, the first play I did on campus was the one and only play Art Buchwald did there. He absolutely stole the show. I met Sam Peckinpah. I wrote a small one act play that Sam directed. I went on to do a play for him called "Arsenic And Old Lace." Not the Boris Karloff role, incidentally.

WOH: What was your first paid acting job ?



Scrimm At Production Asst. Kristen Deem's Birthday Party Held On The Phantasm II Set

SCRIMM: The first thing I did was an Encyclopedia Britannica short subject called "Abraham Lincoln", where I played the title role. This was about 1951.

WOH: What was your first movie role ?

SCRIMM: This came years later in 1971. I had gone to work at Capitol Records in 1960 or '61, and a man named James R. Silke started a magazine called 'Cinema' which had beautiful art direction and dealt

with movie production and personalities. The magazine changed owners and the one who currently owned it, directed his first movie called "Sweet Kill" for Roger Corman. Curtis Hanson knew I had acted in the past, and knew I could do characters, so he wrote a small role for me. Isabella Jewel played the main character, and I played her live-in handyman. There was sort of an illicit relationship implied there. That was my first movie part.

I haven't done many TV things, but I did an episode of Trapper John M.D., Salvage One, Santa Barbara, Project UFO, Walt Disney: One Man's Dream-where I played his father.

WOH: What did you think of the movie "Jim, The World's Greatest"?

SCRIMM: It was an excellent little movie. Don Coscarelli and a friend started working on it when they were very young. When I finished working on "Sweet Kill", I noticed a one inch ad in the trade papers that said a film was being cast. The casting call was at the Century Plaza Hotel. I had been to some really sleazy joints for some non-union parts. Places that were obviously totally corrupt. People that wanted to charge you three hundred dollars to be in their movie, or I would find out that it was either soft-core porno or something else that I didn't want to do. This was at the Century Plaza, so I figured that it ought to be fairly decent. There was Don and his partner interviewing- these two young kids. I was impressed by the suite, not too much by the two young kids who were doing the movie, but I gave them my photo and resume and was called down to Long Beach to do a test on videotape and got the part. Gregory Harrison was helping these two other kids pick the guy who was going to play the father. I had been up all night the night before, so I was really dead on my feet. I was holding the script and acting. He goes, "I'm not getting anything from your eyes." I said, "Look, how can you see through the script to see my eyes!" We had a little tangle right there. I turned to Don and said, "Look, I really don't want to be involved with driving down from Los Angeles to Long Beach, so why don't you find another actor." So, I left, but they persisted on calling me, and I wasn't doing anything else, so I took the part.

They completed the film and invited a newsman named Charles Champlin out to see it. He liked it so much that when he was having lunch with Sid Sheinberg of Universal the next day, he recommended it to him. Sheinberg saw it and Universal had just come

off releasing American Graffiti—a kid movie that was a multimillion dollar success. He thought that we couldn't go wrong with another "Kid" movie. It, unfortunately did not do very well at the box office, but it was a very interesting little film, and it was the first feature film that dealt with the subject of child abuse. The father was a drunkard who's wife had left him, and he had come to the conclusion that the little boy was not his. In his uncontrollable rages, he would beat the kid around, and finally towards the end of the movie, he killed him. The little kid was so charming that it absolutely sunk the picture. We ultimately decided that the kid should have been hurt and hospitalized and the picture might have been successful. Of course, it was more realistic the other way.

WOH: Would you say that you're a movie goer ?

SCRIMM: Oh, yes. very much so. Although I tend to be very lazy and watch a lot of videotapes too. I know that when I was a baby, my mother would nurse me in the theaters when they were much darker. My father liked westerns, and he would take me in the middle of the week, on a school night. Then my mother and sister would take me on Fridays, and



Angus Scrimm As Dr. Sin-Do In "The Lost Empire" (1983)

sometimes Saturdays and Sundays, I would go to the matinee with my cousin. When I was about seven, I was taken to a double bill with my mother and sister. It was a romantic movie called "Break Of Hearts". The other picture was "Charlie Chan In Egypt." In those days, you went during the middle of the movie and waited to see the beginning. We came in the middle of the picture they wanted to see. Then "Charlie Chan In Egypt" came on and I got really spooked when they opened up the tomb. I couldn't stay and started to protest, so we left. They were quite miffed, because they couldn't see the romantic movie, so I wasn't allowed to see any horror movies. When I was twelve though, I tricked my father into taking me to see a double bill of "Frankenstein" and "Dracula", by telling him that Frankenstein was a western! (Laughs) By the time he had bought the tickets, and we got into the lobby, I'm sure he knew better! But, just walking into the lobby with those standees of Karloff and Lugosi made me enter, for the first

time, a most marvelous world. Those pictures were really awesome to someone who had never seen a horror film. They were just creepy from beginning to end. There was a little neighborhood theater that I could walk to, and every Saturday or Friday, they would have a horror double or triple bill of all the horror films that had been made since the beginning of the talkies. So, I saw things like "Vampire Bat", and "White Zombie", and the other Karloff and Lugosi's. So, I was at least going once a week to see a horror film. It was just great, great fun.

The last good one I saw was "A Fish Called Wanda", which was very funny. "American

Werewolf In London" was great fun. I've seen one or two of the Nightmare On Elm Streets which are very effective. I liked "Halloween" and thought that "Night Of The Living Dead" was good. "Alien" and "Aliens" were marvelous. The first "Alien" gave me that same creepy feeling that "Charlie Chan In Egypt" gave me. I love stories about the walking dead, they're really creepy.

The greatest film experience I've ever had was the "Apu Trilogy". They were three films-"Pather Panchali", "Aparajito",

and "The World Of Apu". It simply traces an indian family from the time when they're an impoverished little mother, father, boy, and girl living on the fringe of a very small town in a little hut. The father comes back and takes them all to Calcutta where he tries to make a modest little existence, catches Cholera and dies. The mother has to look after the little boy, sending him to school. It just traces his family until he

gets married and loses his wife in childbirth and becomes alienated from his son who lived. It is just absolutely enthralling.

WOH: When and where were you born ?

SCRIMM: I was born in Kansas City, Kansas on Minnesota avenue in 1926 and grew up there.

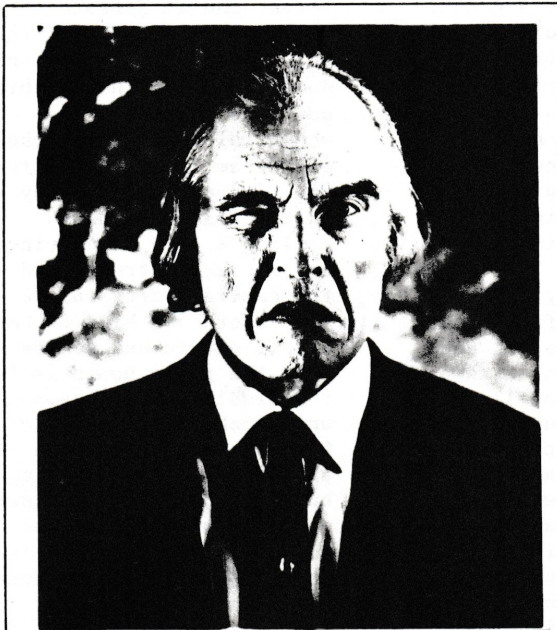
By descent, I'm English, Irish, Scotch, Pennsylvania Dutch, and Cherokee Indian.

WOH: How tall is "The Tall Man"?

SCRIMM: In his mid-thirties, he was about six foot four. As you get older, you shrink. Now, he's about six-two. I think I've maintained my height for both "Phantasm" films, though I wore those boots with the two inch soles. Even so, I don't quite measure up to being as tall as Don Coscarelli who is six foot five.

WOH: What made you decide to go for horror roles ?

SCRIMM: It never would have occurred to me. But, when we were shooting "Jim, The World's Greatest" and I had to do the scene where I had to kill the little kid, he was really spooked. Just to put him at his ease and relax him before the scene, I started making funny faces, and among the faces I made was the one that would ultimately become "The Tall Man's": The left eyebrow lifted and the lower teeth jutting out. Don always remembered that, and at the time, he felt I would make a good villain or pirate. So, when he conceived the idea of doing a horror film, he thought of me instantly to play his "Tall Man". He pretty much tailored the role to what he thought I could do. It came as a complete surprise to me. I had always thought of doing sophisticated comedy. I love



ANGUS SCRIMM As 'The Tall Man' (1988)

doing old plays and things with witty dialogue. I would have loved to do that kind of part, had I the opportunity to do it. But, I had done the part of George on the stage version of "Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?". That was an exhausting role.

WOH: Do you like working with Don Coscarelli ?

SCRIMM: It's just great. I loved it from the beginning, even when Don was a young guy. The other guy he worked with was a guy named Craig Mitchell, and the only problem I had with the two of them was this: After we would shoot a scene, Don would come up and say "That was good, but could you give me a little bit more ?" Then he would walk away and Craig would come up and say "Could you give me a little bit less ?" Then I would do my best to give them both something different. But, other than that, it worked out fine.

When we did "Phantasm", it was over a long period of shooting. The good thing about Don is that he is so even tempered. No matter what the stress of the situation, he never loses his temper. He's always congenial with actors and crew. He hardly ever even gets slightly irritable.



'The Tall Man' Confronts Liz. From Phantasm II

There have been times when he's had enough and it's been a long hard day, but it never shows. That's great, because I have worked with one or two directors that I just wanted to hit on the chin. Don is also good at asking how you want to play a particular scene, and talking it over with you. He's very open minded to dialogue suggestions if you want to change a line or two. He's just utterly congenial. He grew up in a family that had a lot of love for each other, so he's an extremely secure man emotionally, and it's reflected. He's just great to work with. I also think that he's a great director with a wonderful cinematic eye. As a writer, he has very magical ideas. I think the reason the first "Phantasm" was such a success was his magically visual ideas that were total surprises. The thing with putting the hand in the box, the finger that drips yellow blood then animates after it's been chopped off and

then changes into a bug. And the scene where "The Tall Man" goes down the street and is arrested by the mist coming out of the ice cream wagon, stops and does this indefinable thing and goes on. Plus, the wonderful scene where the ice cream truck is overturned, and the scene where Jody is in the telephone booth calling Reg to come bring his ice cream truck, and the camera starts inside the booth and kind of does a semi-circle and we see that the phone booth is in the middle of nowhere, which makes no logic. There's no reason for a phone booth to be there, but the booth in the midst of all that darkness is just a striking cinematic image. He's great at those. He has great control of all the cinematic arts. He knows exactly what he wants in the film's score. He goes over in great detail with Fred Myrow what he wants, and Myrow of course, is marvelous at executing it.

Did you know that the entire score of "Phantasm II" was made with a synthesizer ? It was not an orchestra and not a chorus. Fred would most of the time, work the keyboard himself. The soundtrack to the first film is available and there is a contract for the second one. (At press time, Varese Saraband ,who produces the Phantasm soundtrack along with other rare film soundtracks announced that they have stopped printing the Phantasm soundtrack and the contract for the second Phantasm fell through-Editor)

WOH: I heard that some scenes were cut from both films to avoid an X-rating. Is this true ?

SCRIMM: The only part we had trouble with was when the ball hits my henchman and the blood pumps out of his head, but Charles Champlin came to our defense. The ratings board was persuaded that the whole thing really wasn't gory because the audiences would invariably laugh at the end because it was so outrageous to see all that blood pumping out. So, they reversed themselves and gave us an R.

However, this time they really cracked down. Initially, the scene where the priest gets the ball



A Special FX 'Tall Man' Head Menaces Kim Dominguez Of Wardrobe

in the head,so the ratings board would not be offended,Don timed it so that the blood coming out of the priest's head would be precisely the same number of frames as the scene in the original. The ratings board did not buy that. They said that we got them in trouble with the first one, and they were already letting so much violence go by.So, as you notice there is hardly a drop of blood seen coming out of that silver ball when the priest gets it. You see it on the floor afterwards. There are cutaways to the girl and "The Tall Man" looking on. I don't think the ratings board has anything to do with videotape, so I think that it will be restored when it is released there as well as a couple of other things that were modified. The scene where Mark Anthony Major gets the silver sphere, and it burrows through his back and goes out through his

mouth, you actually saw the blades ripping up his chest. But, the ratings board insisted that it be refilmed where you see his chest just sort of imploding. It's a nasty scene, but extremely effective. I think that the ratings board clamped down this time because they had got so many protests for letting the first one pass. Those were the only ones that had to be toned down. The ratings board didn't object at all when "The Tall Man" got it in the head. It didn't bother them a bit. To answer the question, "How did the Tall Man come back?" there was a scene in which Reggie sets the place on fire and the "Tall Man" is killed off, and they go. We then flash back to the space gate room, and we saw another "Tall Man", identical , played by me, emerge from the space gate. He walked over and with a wry smile, picked up the corpse of the old "Tall Man" , carried him back and threw him through the space gate. Then, with a sardonic smile

on his face, walked right into the flames. Of course, flames don't bother him. They cut that out because the ending didn't work then. When you see "The Tall Man" at the end, it was no surprise Universal had a series of invitational previews, and at the first preview the sequence was there and everybody complained that the ending was not a surprise. They liked everything about the film except the ending. So, that scene was eliminated and they added the scene where Alchemy is seen with her car breaking down, and going to the hearse looking rather fearful and getting in. This is to throw you off to think that this gal is O.K. The ending now does work better and comes as a surprise to the audience. So, for many reasons, that first screening was not too

effective. But, the last screening (After it had all been finished) was just tremendous ! We thought that we had a megahit on our hands, because the audience nearly tore the place apart. They stood and gave standing ovations and such.

But, I think the reason the "Tall Man" comes back is that, thus far he's just indestructible by any means known to man. Now, I suspect that on his planet or dimension, there are ways of killing people off. So, if they ever could get enough of a budget to recreate that whole other world for a "Phantasm III", it would probably be as expensive as "Aliens", because you have to really create a whole different planet.

Don and I remain in social contact between pictures. After the first Phantasm, Avco Embassy sent us both on four or five different trips. They had a different releasing pattern. (Universal released Phantasm

II in twelve hundred theaters all across the U.S. simultaneously.) Avco opened regionally. We started, I think in San Antonio and San Francisco. Don and I flew to both those cities and did personal appearances and media interviews. That was successful, so we made three or four more trips which took us to Kansas City, Dallas, Fort Worth, Miami, Fort Lauderdale, St. Augustine, New York, Boston, Washington D.C., Salt Lake City and many more. With all those plane flights and meals we had together with reporters, we got to know each other even better than before. Then we made a three week trip to Australia that was an absolute gas. We had a wonderful time. The Australian media people are just great, but so are the Americans. I've had no trouble with journalists ever, probably since I've been in journalism so I know what it's like. Palling around with other journalists is always just great fun, so we had some marvelous times. And, of course everything was the works; first class flights, limousines to meet you and take you anywhere, first class restaurants, and such. So, Don and I got to know



Makeup Lady Melanie Kay Hairsprays A Truculent Angus Scrimm

each other real well, and I fairly like the man, his wife and his two kids. Raising a family hasn't been something I've gotten around to yet.

I've seen things that collectors have from Phantasm I that I didn't even know existed. Things like foreign film posters, a phony yellow finger given out by Avco Embassy as a promotional premium.

WOH: In the first film, how did you pick up the five hundred pound coffin ?

SCRIMM: Well, we removed the dead body. It was very lightweight, made of balsa, and the handles were styrofoam cups. But, as I remember, it was very clumsy to lift. We did three takes that were precarious, because every time I would lift the thing, something would fall off. So, we got it on the third take, luckily otherwise the whole thing might have collapsed.

On the second film we filmed me breaking through the pane glass to snatch the girl out early on. We got it done on the first take, but they did a second one for security. The house exploding occurred very early on in production. We started December ninth, but I can't remember what we did first.

WOH: Why do you think Phantasm II didn't do well ?

SCRIMM: That it didn't do well is a little before the fact, because it hasn't been released on home video yet. Obviously, one of the reasons is that it is a little \$2.75 million dollar film which came out in the biggest summer in



Photo Of Angus Scrimm When He Was Known As Laurence Guy

Hollywood's history. It was up against blockbuster films costing anywhere between twelve and forty million, and there's just too much out there for people to see.

I was a critic back on Cinema magazine and when I would have to see seven pictures in a seven day period, I began not to like any of them. One's judgement is affected when you're absolutely inundated with films. You stop being able to enjoy them. It's like having too much of anything.

I think that Universal now regrets putting it out when they did. Their

original thinking was that they would put it out in July. As a matter of fact, they broke Coscarelli's back to get it completed for a July 9th release, because there was no other horror film being released that particular week. It was after Poltergeist III and before Nightmare On Elm Street Four, so they really didn't keep an eye on what else was out because they figured every summer there are a lot of films coming out.

Unfortunately, every film that's come out this summer has been a hit of considerable magnitude, and there was no way of foreseeing that.

I was thinking that Poltergeist III was the first horror film to open and it shot immediately to number one the first weekend, displacing some very big hits, and then plummeted down to nothing the second weekend because it was such a disappointment to the audiences. I was wondering if the horror fans were so disappointed with that, they kind of got their hands burnt and decided not to rush out to see Phantasm II.

From the preview audiences, we thought we had a runaway hit, but then it opened and ... I don't know what happened. I've been out to see it four or five times all over southern California and the reaction to it is always wonderful. If it had done well, we probably would've started production on Phantasm III this winter.

WOH: How did you get the part for Phantasm?

SCRIMM: Having worked with Don in Jim, The World's Greatest, he more or less conceived and wrote the part for me. I was pre-cast. He had also worked with Mike Baldwin before, so I think he wrote it with people in mind for it.



One Of 'The Tall Man's Henchmen Is Attacked By One Of The Flying Silver Spheres

WOH: What did you think of the original Phantasm script when you read it ?

SCRIMM: The original script was quite different from the one that ended up on the screen. Initially, the first forty minutes of the film dealt with the two boys and the two girls. The ones you see in the antique shop. They had a scene in an ice cream shop where they made a sundae out of Mike Baldwin. It was hysterical, but after it had all been shot, Don realized that the picture really started after the stuff in the graveyard starts to take place. Those scenes were taken out, much to the disadvantage of those two poor girls who had much larger parts in the original.

WOH: Do you like the "Tall Man" character ?

SCRIMM: Well, what I think of him ethically and

morally, I don't know (Laughs)! But, I love the role. It's marvelous to have so indelible a character to be associated with. Otherwise, my motion picture career at this point, would be pretty palid at this point, but I am known all over the world for this single role. It's a great advantage and I have a warm affection for the old son of a gun.

WOH: Do you like the plot of the Phantasm films ?

SCRIMM: Yes ! They're two really quite different films; the first one is very light and filled with delightful humor and the second one is a darker and more meaner film, but it's extremely moody and surrealist. Almost germanic in the early section. Some of it is very deliberately paced. One review that I read from Erie, Pennsylvania said that Don has no pacing. I think that that is completely off. I think that pacing is one of Don's strong points. In this film what's so interesting is that after the dynamite opening, he then paces

rather deliberately and slowly and it picks up velocity as you go along until the end, then slam! Bang! I think that all works very well. I think the first film has more plot; after all the mystery of just what is going on up there and then the discovery of what is going on in terms of "The Tall Man" being a creature from another dimension, and he's shipping dead bodies back. So you kind of have a mystery and a discovery. In this picture, what we essentially have is a chase. Nothing is discovered that wasn't already known. It's just further laid out and exemplified in very colorful, very vivid ways. Then we have the seeming destruction of "The Tall Man" who then comes back once again.

WOH: What was your critical opinion of Phantasm?

SCRIMM: I just think it works marvelously. I thoroughly



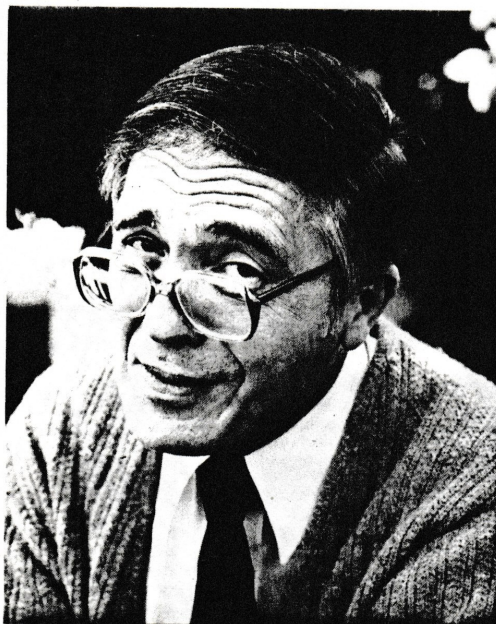
Angus Scrimm In A Scene From 'Nightkill' Which Was Cut Out To Fit On TV

enjoyed it. It's just a first rate film. I think Don has made two films that are going to gain in reputation over the years. When Phantasm I first came out it was not very highly evaluated by the critics, but now they're all saying that the first one was a cult masterpiece and the second one doesn't measure up. I think in another nine years, they're going to be saying the second was a classic, because it was extremely innovative. It's "Grand Guignol."

For those of you that don't know what Grand Guignol is, it simply was a theater in Paris, and they could simulate all kinds of effects live on the stage. Heads were chopped off, arms were lopped off and all kinds of horrible things happening, and it was very

popular with the French people. So, when the MPAA (The Motion Picture Association Of America) gets terribly upset about blood, they simply don't realize that this has always been a part of theater (Laughs)! There was some pretty bloody action in some of Shakespeare's historical plays. Essentially, the second film is Grand Guignol. With the silver balls doing all sorts of demonic destructive things to the human corpse. It's not gratuitous in the films and it's usually the villain who gets it. He seldom kills an innocent, and in this case the exception is the priest. But, in the first film the really gory murder is one of the "Tall Man's" own henchmen. The really gory one in the second is also the "Tall Man's" henchman.

Quite the most vivid killing is of the "Tall Man" himself, but my feeling about that is that the "Tall Man's" job is to collect dead bodies, reanimate



Angus Scrimm-Humble And Dignified

them and send them back as slaves. This must get rather boring, the "Tall Man's" done it for centuries undetected. But, when Mike and his brother came along in the first film and provided a little diversion. It's all been so easy for "The Tall Man", nobody cares about corpses, or what happens to small towns, nobody seems to notice what he's doing. He's never gone after a major city... yet, so he gets away with it. But, these kids have so much fortitude, determination and spunk that they keep coming after him, and it's really kind of a delightful diversion for him. So, he kids them along and lets them think they're trapping him and killing him off, to keep them coming at him. I don't think he wants the game to end. I don't think they're in any real danger, because it's the only entertainment "The Tall Man" has. So, I think when he picks up Liz and tosses her against the wall, obviously she isn't killed. He doesn't throw

her with any great force. Then when he brings her in and puts her on the table and looks like he's going to embalm her, I don't think he has any intention of doing that. I think he sort of anticipates everything. I think when Mike hits him on the head with the silver ball, the "Tall Man" is absolutely delighted! He crushes the ball and throws it away, then when the kids fill him up with embalming fluid, he goes along with the gag and performs a death scene for them (Laughs)! He couldn't be happier. They go away believing they killed him off and he's had a great joke. Then at the end...there he is again (Laughs)! He snatched them out, but I don't think they're in any peril. I don't think Reggie is either. I think he'll very handily be shown to have survived so "The Tall Man" can have another game. Eventually, he'll probably get tired and turn them all into slaves, but I think they're quite okay for the next picture. This is my idea, not Don's, so who knows ?

WOH: How did they film the spheres ?

SCRIMM: I wasn't there when they filmed that, but I know on the first picture, they hired one of the Los Angeles Dodgers, I think, to throw the ball so it would go in a straight line. And many times, they would film things in reverse and use wires. But, just throwing the ball works best. They use some optical illusion where the ball is stationary. When the ball strikes me in the head, what they did was fix the ball to my head, then pull it off with wires and show it in reverse. The ball that I crushed in my hand was made out of styrofoam painted silver.

WOH: It is said that you "disappeared" for ten years between films. What happened ?

SCRIMM: I didn't really disappear, I did a few things. After Phantasm, I almost immediately made a film with Jaclyn Smith, but was then cut out of it. The picture was called "Nightkill" and it had Robert Mitchum and James Franciscus. The producer had seen Phantasm and also noticed that they had my image on a theater in Japan miles high. He said, " He's a huge star in Japan and he's had all this publicity here. Lets's see if we can write something for him in this picture. There was a scene where Jaclyn Smith takes her husband's body out to an abandoned mine in the desert to get rid of it, and they decided to have me crop up as a rapist! I said, "Look, I don't want to be seen on the

screen trying to rape a young girl. Can you think of something different?" They asked me if I could write something, so I made him out as a very lonely old desert rat, and when this girl came, he decided to befriend her. I played it for comedy. The picture didn't do well, and they decided not to release it

theatrically, and sold it to NBC as the movie of the week. To cut it down to fit a two hour or ninety minute slot, they had to eliminate something and my scene was totally extraneous to the rest of the film. It was high comedy, and not keeping with the mood, so that scene was the first to go.

Next, I played Elias Disney (Walt Disney's father) in a TV movie called "Walt Disney: One Man's Dream." Walt's father was an old tyrant who was very cruel to the boy. That had an all star cast.

Then, I did "The Lost Empire." In that, I played a villainous character called Dr. Sin-Dog and ageless oriental villain who was trying to take over the world. Some beautiful girls, like Charlie's Angels, come out to his island to do away with him. It was a spoof, and a nice change. I had to walk around all the time with a ten-foot Burmese Python wrapped around me. It was rather like a cartoon. I thought it was delightful. The budget was one million dollars and the producer insisted on sticking to it, so in the end they had to skimp on the special effects. I think for that reason, the picture didn't do well.

I've had six or seven Grammy Award Nominations for the liner notes on records (The information on the back of the record that tells you about the musician and the feel of the music.) and won one. This was before doing Phantasm though.



The Genius Behind The 'Phantasm' Films-Director Don Coscarelli

WOH: When and how were you told that there would be a sequel to Phantasm and what were your feelings towards it ?

SCRIMM: I was working at Angel Records last summer and Don suggested we go see a movie a friend of ours had made and afterward, we had lunch at a little Italian restaurant, and he told me he was considering starting Phantasm II in January. He let me see the script and month or two later, he took me out to dinner and said that Universal was interested in it, so it would have a bigger budget. As a matter of fact, this all happened a year ago, last August. So, I started to let my hair grow and went on a diet and lost thirty pounds to make "The Tall Man" look more cadaverous.

I was delighted about it. I really was. I had been hoping for it for a long, long time. On the screen, I've liked doing "The Tall Man" the most. It's a part that most actors don't get. The "Tall Man" seems to be the most memorable role I've done, to most people. On stage, I really

enjoyed playing George in "Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?"

WOH: I heard that you refused a stuntman for certain scenes. What scenes ?

SCRIMM: In the first Phantasm, I had to do all my own stunts because we couldn't afford a stunt man. The producer would work out the stunts first and do anything he could to make it as safe as possible. There was a scene that was cut out where the "Tall Man" is hung by a noose and yanked into the air. He did that. Falling into the pit I did. I sprained an ankle, so they put alot more foam rubber down there. Even so, I fell into that pit at least two dozen times, and would scrape my face along the side end end up with a mouth, eyes and ears full of dirt. There was another scene where Mike and Jody, thinking that "The Tall Man" is from a hot planet, maybe they can kill him off by spraying him with a fire extinguisher-incredibly cold stuff. So they sprayed me down, and "The Tall Man" falls to the floor and melts into nothing but the suit. The reason those scenes were cut was that the "Tall Man" had simply been done away with too many times. It just ceased to work. The interesting thing is that came right after a scene where I grabbed Jody by the neck, picked him up off the floor and said to him "You think that when you die you go to heaven. You come to us!" Don liked the line so much and the reading so much, he decided to put it in the second film. I wouldn't be surprised if that single line brought about the idea of using a priest, because obviously it works much better when it's said to a priest. Universal was determined to use the sequence where I say "No, It's not!" in the movie trailer. Don felt it would ruin the effectiveness of the ending, so we shot that scene again entirely for the commercial, where it's said in the mausoleum, not the hearse. We actually filmed the scene in the hearse twice. In the actual scene where I appear in the hearse window, the camera dollies in swiftly right to full face where I say, "No



Actor Angus Scrimm In A Press Picture

It's not!" Originally, they had the camera hold, and I liked that take the best, but the producer liked the other. They tried that sequence two different ways also. One way, to make the point that the "Tall Man" had been Alchemy, Mark Shostrom-The makeup effects designer, made a half mask of Alchemy's face which was put over the left side of my face, so when I say "No, it's not", "The Tall Man" has a face that's half his, half Alchemy's. It just didn't work. The recognition value of half a face just wasn't that good. By the twelfth time I filmed that, my hair was full of Mark Shostrom's jello and gooey stuff that they were using to stick the thing to my face. I had to go into the men's room and wash my hair out in the sink. Shampoo myself, dry it and get a whole new makeup job. What they had in

REVIEWS

(Movies Reviewed On A Scale From 1 To 5 Stars)

THE BLOB

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of 'The Blob'- a late fifties science fiction movie that starred Steve McQueen (In one of his earliest roles) as a teenager in the small town of Arborville, who tries to warn the people that the town is in danger from a blood-red slimy amoebic creature from outer space. The film became a cult classic over the years and Chuck Russel (Director of 'A Nightmare On Elm Street 3) thought of the idea of doing an updated remake for an 80's movie crowd. And what a movie it is ! This time the blob isn't slow like in the first film, it explodes out of drains, leaps,oozes, and is much more hungry than in the first.

The acting is good, the best being from Candy Clark who unfortunately meets her demise in a very inventive phone booth scene. Kevin Dillon (Brother of Matt Dillon) plays the tough-guy hero of this movie along with Shawnee Smith who has a personal vendetta against the creature.

The special effects are top notch, especially in a scene where the blob is persuing Shawnee Smith, her brother , and his friend through the sewer system of Arborville. Makeup effects on the various melted, and half-melted were done by Tony Gardner and crew and are extremely well done.

The only problems with the film are the idea of making it the product of germ warfare, and the way it crystalizes when frozen.

Unfortunately, due to the rush of blockbusters at the time, the blob did not do nearly as well as it should have. It cost \$19

million to make and only made around \$5 million. Pick it up when it comes to video.

Rating: * * * *

PHANTASM II

This year was very good to horror fans. With the release of the aforementioned 'The Blob', 'Monkey Shines' and the king of horror movies this year- 'Phantasm II'. This film is the best sequel to come along in years. (Except, of course for 'Aliens') The screenplay is excellent, camera effects fantastic, acting superb, special effects top notch, and great direction.

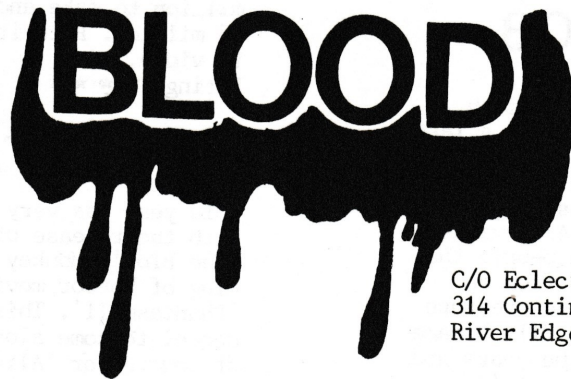
The story takes place nine years after the first film, and shows what happened after Michael was pulled through the mirror by the dwarfs at the end of the first, and follows Reggie, Michael, and Newcomer Liz as they try to find 'The Tall Man' portrayed again by the magnificent Angus Scrimm, and destroy him. What they find is very disturbing-It seems 'The Tall Man' has moved from Morningside Cemetary and has decimated several small towns along the way. The spheres are back also, this time there's three. A priest played by Ken Tigar gets 'sphered' as well as Mark Anthony Major who plays one of the tall man's henchman. Sphere effects are greatly improved over the first film, by Steve Patino. Michael is played this time by James Le Gros, Reggie is played by Reggie Bannister, Paula Irvine plays Liz and Samantha Phililips plays a young hitchhiker named Alchemy.

The film was made for \$2.7 million and made back about \$5 million. Hopefully, if it does well enough on home video, Don Coscarelli will make the third and final Phantasm, which will have a cemetary that deals with 5,00 bodies a day. So rent,rent rent !!

Rating: * * * * ½

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Welcome to our Written In Blood section of 'Commander USA's World Of Horror'. In future this is going to be a letters page, where you can write in your comments and criticisms. But, since this is the first issue, we'll use it as an Editor's page and to tell you news on the upcoming horror or science-fiction movies. All the titles listed below are tentative, there is always the possibility of the name being changed or the release date being delayed.

September: 'The Kiss', 'Lucky Stiff', 'Elvira, Mistress Of The Dark', 'Waxwork'.

October: 'They Live', 'Halloween IV: The Return Of Michael Myers', 'Fright Night Part 2', 'Alien Nation', 'The Missing Link'.

November: 'High Spirits', 'Witch Hunt', 'Hellbound: Hellraiser II', 'Cocoon: The Return', 'The Land Before Time', 'The Watchers', 'Haunted Summer'.

December: 'Twins', 'My Stepmother Is An Alien'

1989: 'The Batman', 'Homicide', 'The Witches', 'The Abyss', 'Flight Of The Witches', 'The Punisher'.

Over the next few months, we're planning on having interviews with Zacherley-The original horror host from 1958-1988, Elvira, Anthony Perkins, and Darren McGavin. Depending on the magazines popularity, we'll probably be going Bi-Monthly in a few months. If you want this, write in and tell us. Only you readers can make it happen.

Also, planned for the future is a change to a format bound on the side, like a more mainstream magazine. Better photo reproduction is a definite. On September 10th and 11th the Fantacon tenth anniversary convention is being held, and we're going to be promoting the magazine and looking for a distributor. (It's probably where you picked up this issue) If a good distributor is found, you'll probably find this magazine at your local newsstand or comic book shop regularly.

Advertising space is now available for the second issue, write us for the rates.

Hope you enjoyed issue one as much as we enjoyed putting it together-Editor

Next Issue: Interview with Chuck Russel-director of 'The Blob' and 'Nightmare On Elm Street 3', Part 2 of the Angus Scrimm Interview, plus news, reviews, horror movie host update, and more!

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BLOOD-SPATTERED	HOUSE THAT SCREAMED
BRIDE/I DISMEMBER MAMA	GOD TOLD ME TO
CANNIBAL GIRLS	HORROR ON SNAPE ISLAND
TORSO	NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD
FLESH FEAST	DIABOLICAL DR. Z
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THE GHASTLY ONES	MAN FROM DEEP RIVER
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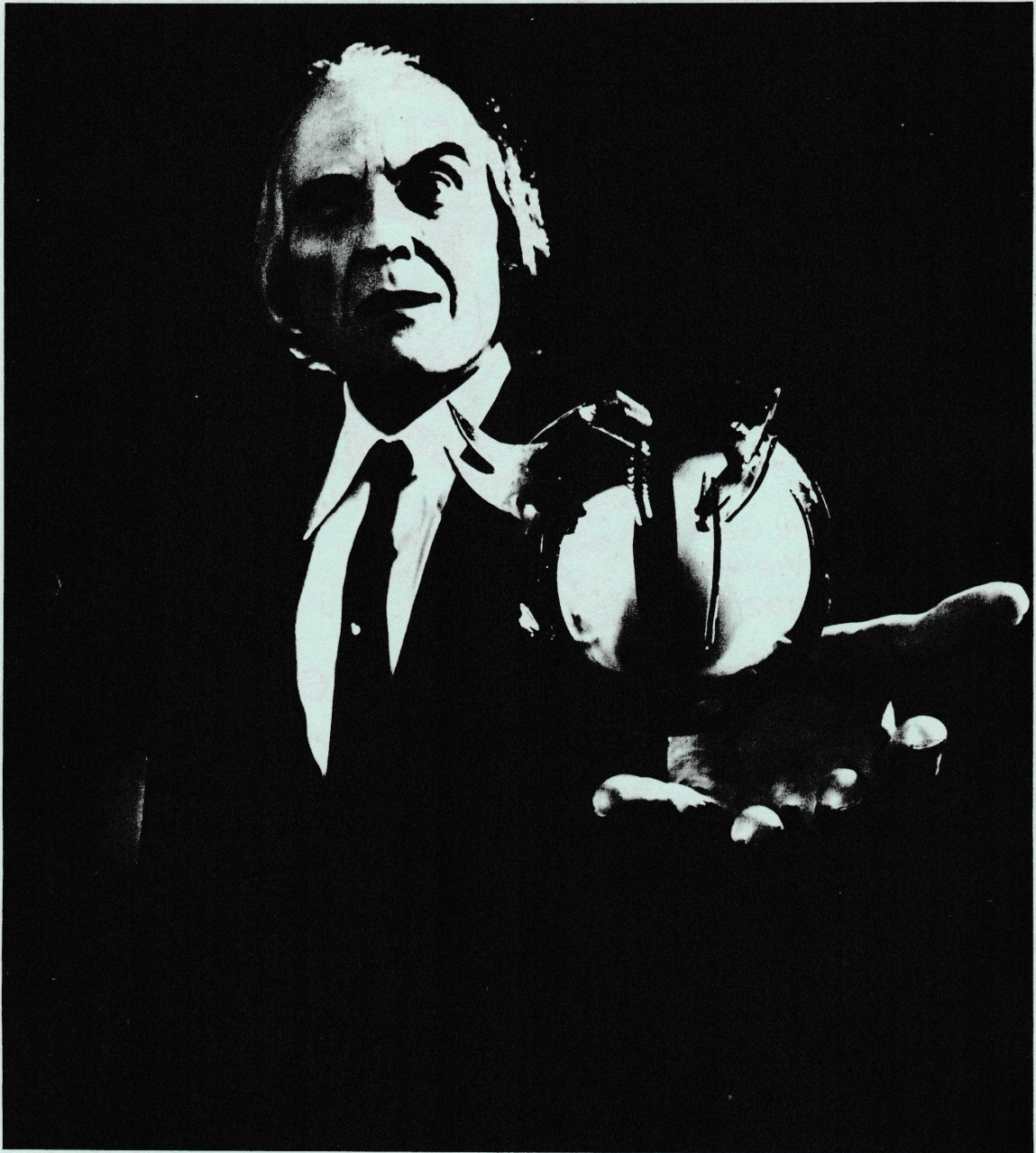
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ANGUS SCRIMM, holding the lethal silver sphere in Phantasm II

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