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FILM & TV

Yours

ISSUE 93 // October 2025

RETRO

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Her son abandoned in the pursuit of fame



HAUNTED HOLLYWOOD

Film icons still being spotted
around Tinseltown

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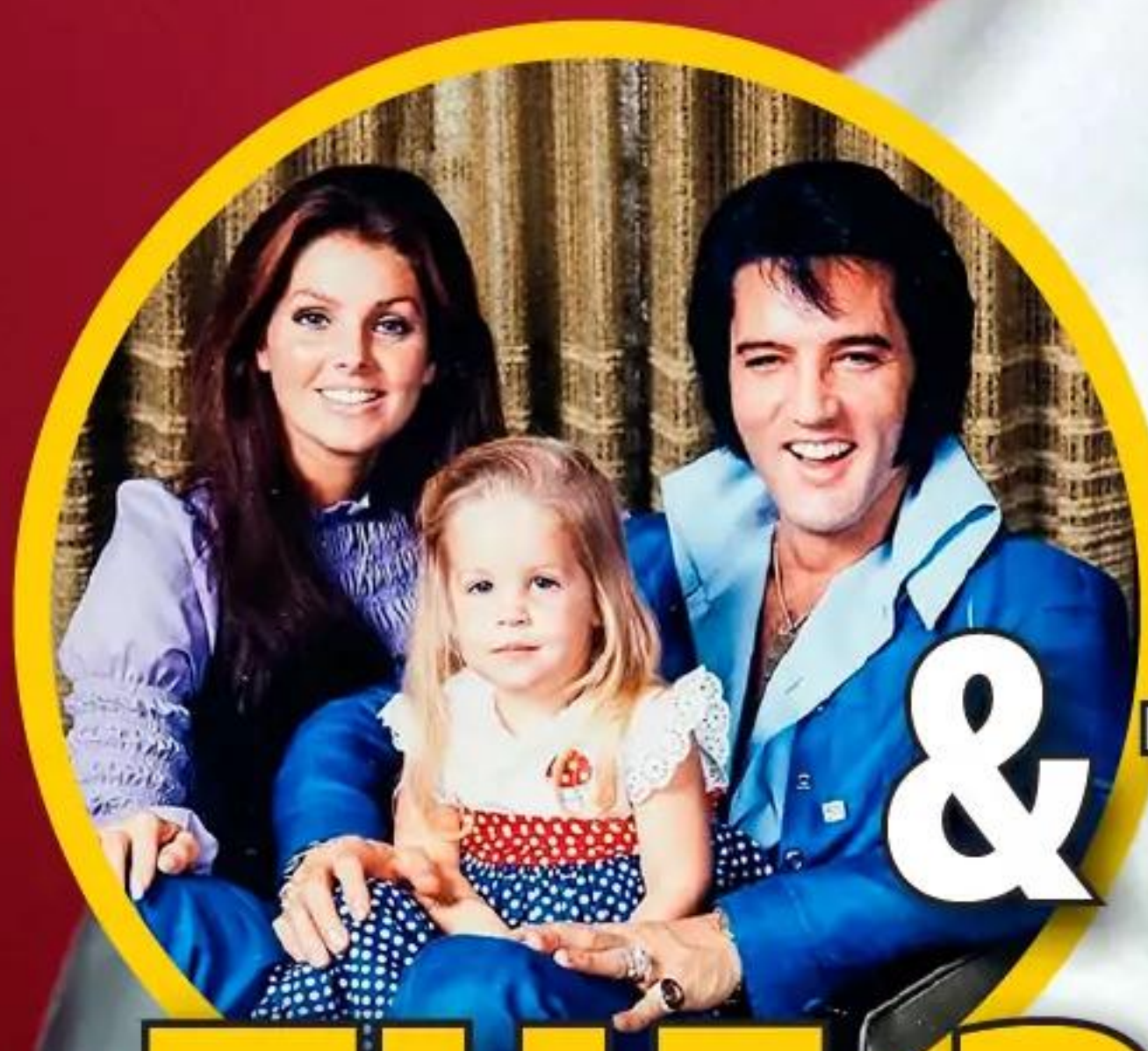


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behind screen
werewolves



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Which were cinema's
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& family reveal

THE REAL ELVIS

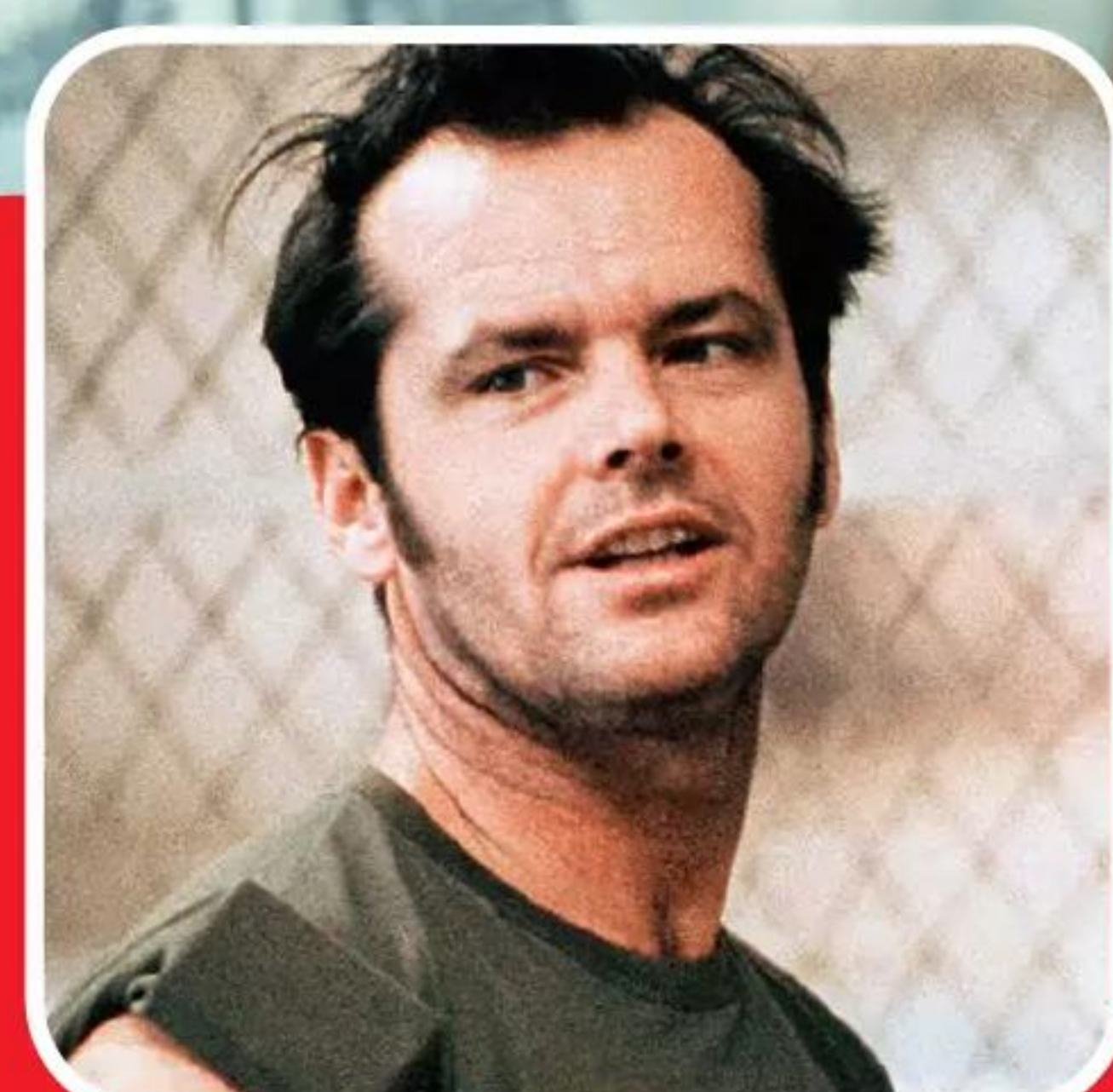
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most formidable foe



■ **CARY GRANT**
The secret behind his
screwball success



■ **CUCKOO'S NEST**
Breaking barriers
& box office records

CONRAD VEIDT: COURAGE IN THE FACE OF EVIL

Yours **RETRO** contents



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Hello again...

There's a slight Halloween theme running through this month's issue. Not only do we have a fascinating look at the career of George Romero (p74) who is considered the father of the zombie movie, but we also explore exactly what goes into bringing a werewolf to life on the big screen (p32). You can discover which Hollywood icons refuse to let death get in the way of being seen around town (p22) and why the Seventies was a boom time for scary TV shows in the UK.

Away from the spooks and spirits there's plenty more to be revealed, including the real-life story of Conrad Veidt (p57) who is known for playing Major Strasser in one of my all-time favourite films, *Casablanca*. It's real food for thought and means I'll certainly be watching the film with an increased sense pathos in future.

Sharon

Sharon EDITOR



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RETRO MAGAZINE, BAUER MEDIA PUBLISHING UK,
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Pictures: Alamy, BBC Archive, Imago, Getty Images,
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Yours Retro magazine is published by H Bauer Publishing, a company registered in England and Wales with company number LP003328, registered address The Lantern, 75 Hampstead Road, London, NW1 2PL

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Seven scenes

...in a diner

American as apple pie, these diners provide the backdrop for confessions, confrontations and memorable movie scenes



Mildred Pierce (1945)

Director Michael Curtiz and Joan Crawford were at loggerheads before filming began. Diva behaviour saw Curtiz label her 'Phony Joanie', Crawford, meanwhile, asked for her director to be replaced with 'a human being'.

RETRO says: Crawford had worked as a waitress before becoming an actress.



Taxi Driver (1976)

Robert De Niro and 12-year-old Jodie Foster met at a local diner every day to rehearse their scenes together. Foster later credited De Niro with introducing her to 'the true craft of acting' by improvising lines and helping her build a character beyond the script.

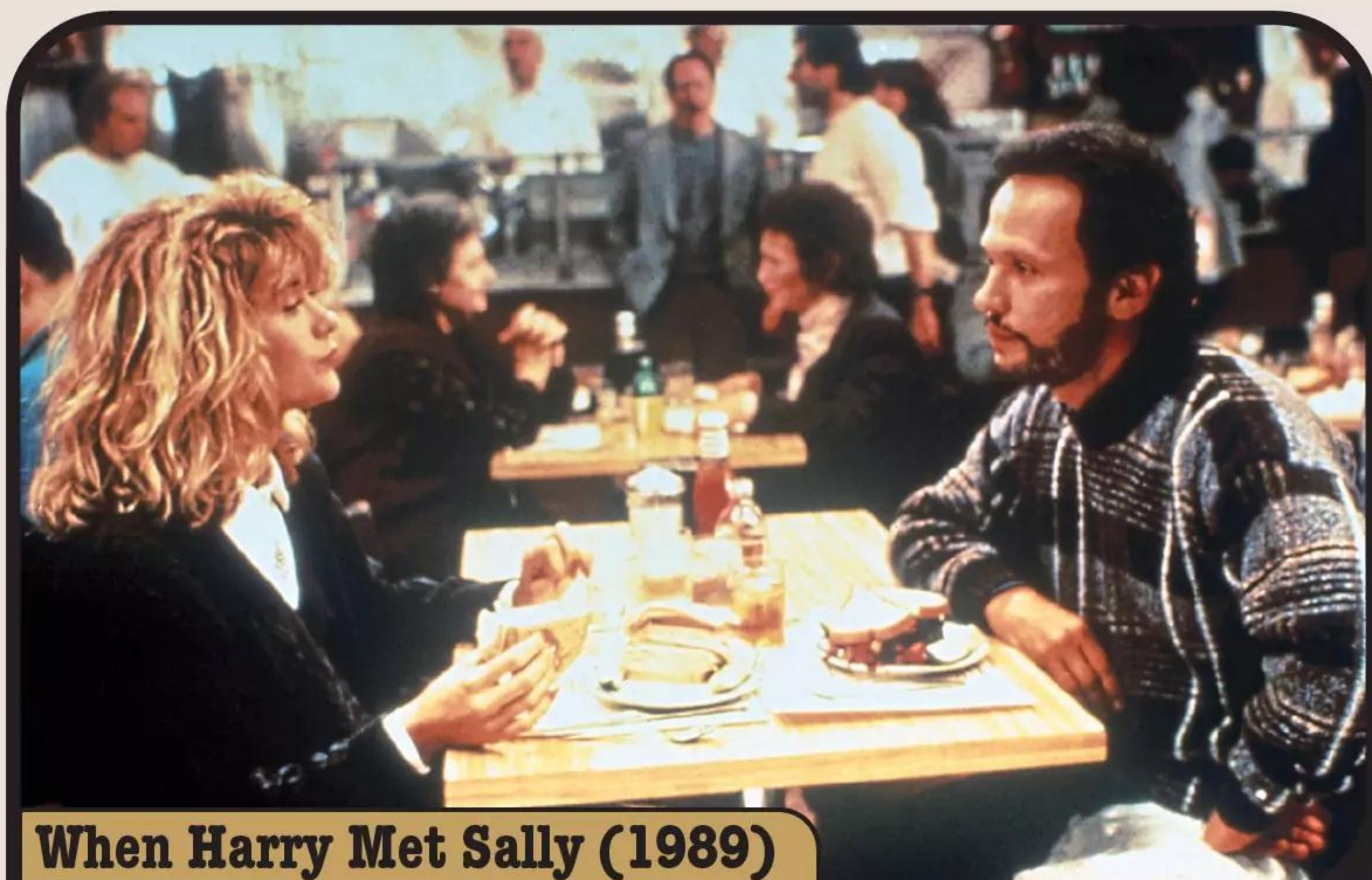
RETRO says: 250 actresses applied for the role of Iris.



As Good As it Gets (1997)

Cranky, obsessive and reclusive author Melvin Udall (Jack Nicholson) becomes so attached to the waitress (Helen Hunt) in his local diner that he has a meltdown when she takes a day off and isn't there to serve him.

RETRO says: The film secured Jack Nicholson a Best Actor Oscar. With 12 nominations and three wins, he's one of Hollywood's most decorated actors.



When Harry Met Sally (1989)

Probably the most famous diner scene in history. Filmed at Katz's Deli on New York's East Houston Street. The table where the scene was filmed is a popular tourist attraction and now carries a plaque on it that reads, 'Where Harry met Sally... hope you have what she had!'

RETRO says: The line, 'I'll have what she's having,' was delivered by director Rob Reiner's mother, Estelle.



Detour (1945)

This classic noir opens with Al Roberts (Tom Neal) in a dingy roadside diner narrating his story in flashback. The film bookends with Al back in the diner still lost and musing about fate and justice.

RETRO says: Shot in just 28 days at a cost of around \$100,000, Detour took more than \$1 million at the box office.



Grease (1978)

What Fifties teen musical would be complete without a diner scene or two? Where else but The Frosty Palace, with its colourful booths, jukebox, and waitresses on roller skates, would the T-Birds and the Pink Ladies meet for a root beer float?

RETRO says: A product-placement deal with PepsiCo meant CocaCola signs in The Frosty Palace had to be blurred in post-production.



Benny and Joon (1993)

Referencing Charlie Chaplin's famous 'roll dance' from The Gold Rush (1925), Sam (Johnny Depp) tries to charm anxious, shy Joon (Mary Stuart Masterson) at the diner.

RETRO says: The film featured I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles) by The Proclaimers giving them an unexpected American hit five years after its original release.

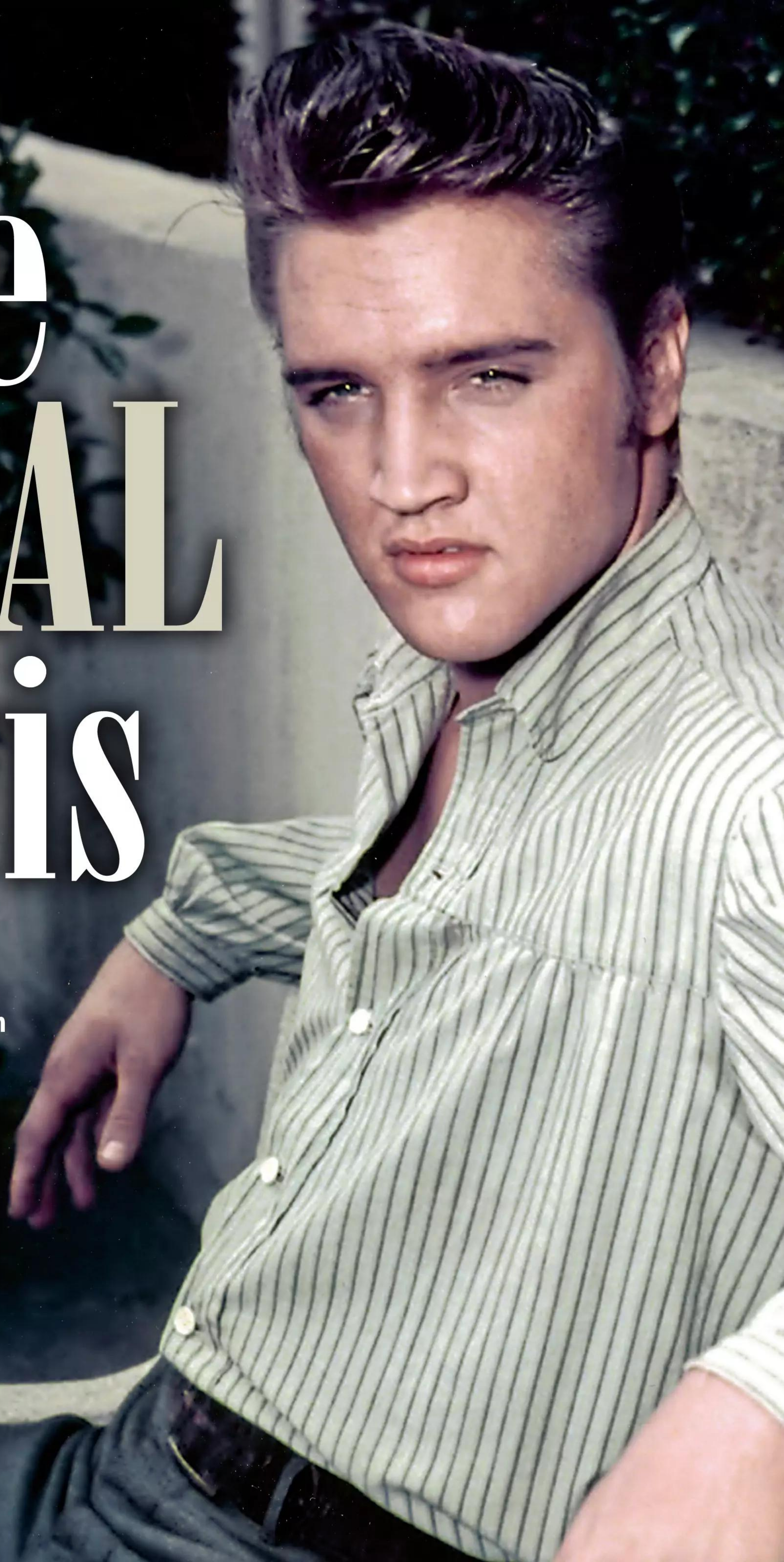


RETRO

Star story

The REAL Elvis

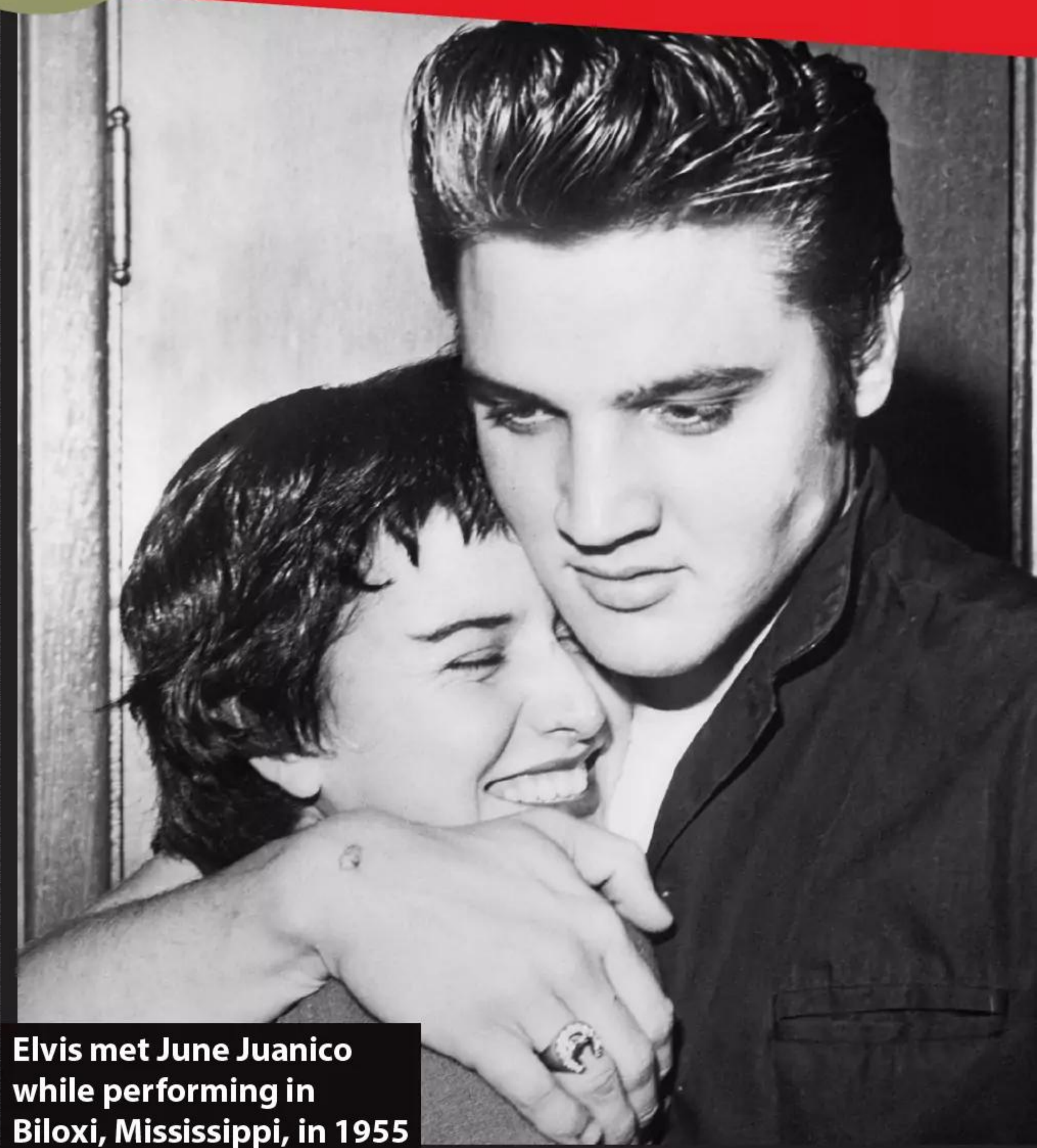
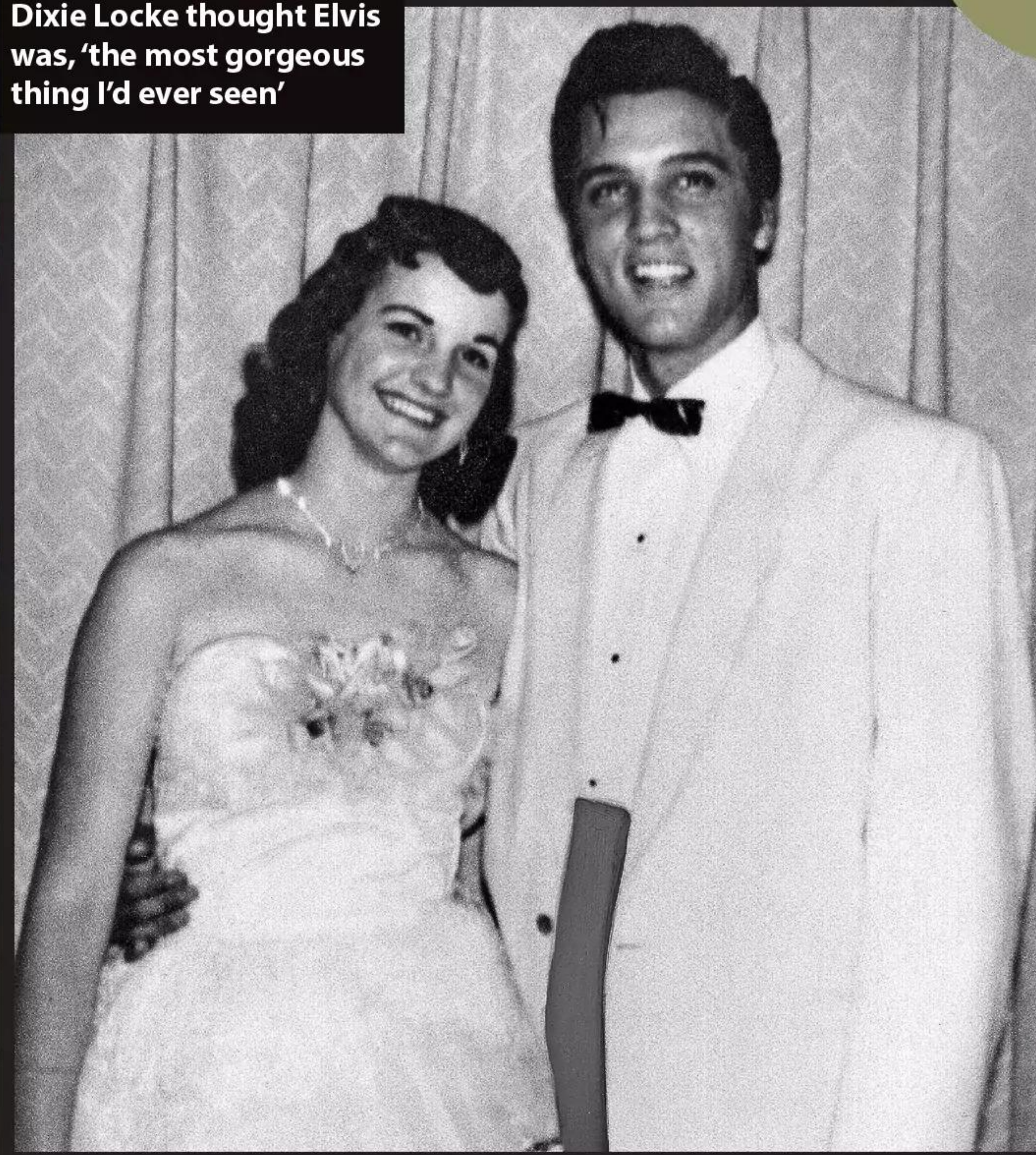
David Reid attempts to discover and reveal Elvis Aaron Presley, the man behind the myth, through the eyes and memories of those who loved and knew him best



DID YOU KNOW?

Elvis dreamed of becoming a serious actor like his idols, Marlon Brando and James Dean. He was disappointed it didn't work out, but his run of light-hearted musical pictures is much-loved.

Dixie Locke thought Elvis was, 'the most gorgeous thing I'd ever seen'



Elvis met June Juanico while performing in Biloxi, Mississippi, in 1955

One of the greatest icons of popular culture, Elvis Presley did not invent rock 'n' roll, but rather channelled his instinctive love and formidable flair for all music into something vibrant and unique. Along the way, he became a heartthrob and a symbol of rebellion instrumental in building bridges between disparate cultures in a racially divided America.

Elvis has become a legend, larger than life but obscured by half-truths and misdirection. But what was he really like? Was he the rebellious, bequipped young rocker who made girls scream and outraged the establishment? Or the charming, womanising everyman (who also happens to sing well) of his Hollywood movie years? Was he Comeback Elvis of the brilliant '68 TV special, dashing and dangerous, smouldering in black leather, Or, last but not least, Vegas Elvis: the glammed-up crooner, resplendent in white, rhinestone-encrusted jumpsuits, that began triumphant but sadly descended into tragic self-parody?

So much has been written, fictionalised, over-embellished, hyped and sensationalised. The only way to find, or at least get close to, the truth, is to explore what's been said by the people who really knew the still-undisputed King of rock 'n' roll...

AN INNOCENT MAN

Everyone who knew Elvis, from his early poverty-stricken childhood in Thirties Tupelo, to his final years of ill-health and addiction, recalls a sense of openness and innocence at his core. His father Vernon remembered, 'One time I asked him to go hunting with me, but he answered, "Daddy, I don't want to kill birds." I didn't try to persuade him to go against his feelings.'

Elvis's first steady girlfriend, Dixie Locke realised, 'He was not a phony, he was not a put-on, he was not a show-off... you could see his sweetness.' His future wife, Priscilla Beaulieu, had the same impression upon meeting him for the first time. She revealed, 'I found him extremely vulnerable and sweet. He had beautiful manners and an open heart. There was nothing false about him.' While ➔

their eventual marriage was marred by Elvis's later unravelling, Priscilla knew that her husband's innocence never left him. She fondly recalled, 'When it snowed one Christmas, Elvis was in heaven. We ran out and built a snowman. He became a little boy all over again, which, of course, was one of his most endearing qualities. The little boy in Elvis was always ready to go out and play.'

The special one

For all his apparent innocence, Elvis always knew he was different, even as a small child. His mother Gladys recounted, 'Elvis would hear us worrying about our debts, being out of work and sickness and he'd say, "Don't you worry none, Baby. When I grow up I'm going to buy you a fine house and pay everything you owe at the grocery store and get two Cadillacs".'

Upon encountering him at a bible study class, Dixie Locke saw that difference immediately, 'All the other guys were replicas of their dads. To watch him you would think, even then, he was really shy. What was so strange was that he would do anything to call attention to himself... I knew the first time I met him that he was not like other people.'



Elvis had a particularly close bond with his mother Gladys

Marion Keisker, assistant at the Memphis Recording Service, was taken with the shy young vocalist who began dropping by the studio in 1954 and engaged him in awkward conversation. She said, 'My total image of Elvis was as a child. His attitude towards people was the equivalent of tipping your hat as you walk down the street... but not showing off.'

As Elvis progressed, he met industry insiders including RCA records' promotion manager Chick Crumpacker who remembered, 'In walks the young star. And the first impression I had is the one that will always stick: that he was so unassuming... We liked him, immensely, from the start.'

From 1956, and the release of his single, Heartbreak Hotel, Presley rapidly skyrocketed to international fame and embarked on a parallel film career. But it didn't go to his head. He remained grounded and was popular with fellow actors including Millie Perkins, his co-star in Wild in the Country (1961), who stated, 'Elvis turned out to be someone I liked very much. I felt there was a man with a heart and soul who truly cared about people...' His friend, acclaimed actress Natalie Wood added, succinctly, 'He's a real pixie and has a wonderful little-boy quality.'

Elvis's life took an unexpected turn when he was drafted into military service, which he spent in Germany. His platoon leader William J Taylor reported, 'He was one of us. He cared about us. And he got back the respect and friendship he gave everyone else.'

However, Cliff Gleaves, friend, employee and member of Elvis's so-called Memphis Mafia entourage, noted, 'Elvis was an innocent. He didn't know about the tricks, the 'worldly ways'; he operated



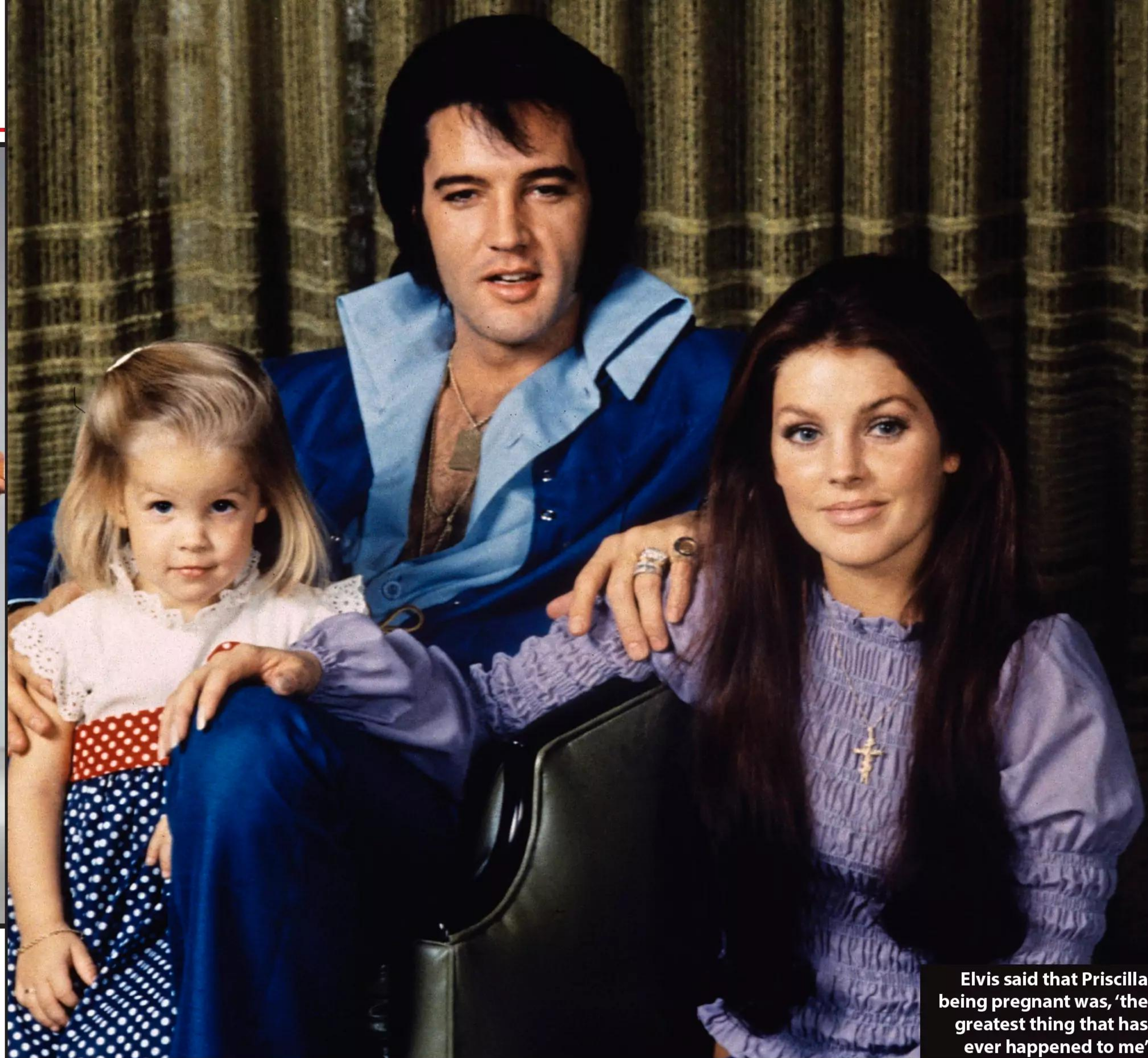
Ann-Margret, Elvis's co-star in Viva Las Vegas (1964) recalled, 'Music ignited a fiery pent-up passion inside Elvis'

on sheer instinct... He did not have the 'informal schooling' of being out in the world too long.'

A MAGNETIC PERSONALITY

If asked, teenaged Elvis would play guitar and sing for the young crowd he and Dixie hung out with and she noticed, 'Right from the start it was as if he had a power over people. It wasn't that he demanded their attention, but they certainly reacted that way.'

Guitarist Scotty Moore experienced this on a larger scale when he, bassist Bill Black, and a frankly terrified 19-year-old Elvis, opened for Slim Whitman at Overton Park, Memphis in July 1954. He explained, 'During the instrumental parts he (Elvis) would back off from the mic and be playing and shaking, and the crowd would just go wild.' His seemingly provocative, sexually charged moves would soon get him into trouble but Dixie knew, 'It was his natural way of performing... I don't



Elvis said that Priscilla being pregnant was, 'the greatest thing that has ever happened to me'

think he was prepared for what was about to happen. He knew this was what he wanted to do and that it was breaking for him, but I don't think he ever thought everybody would just go crazy...'

If Elvis didn't yet recognise his unique abilities, others including his cousin, Patsy Presley Geranen certainly did. She declaimed, 'Elvis had many wonderful character traits, but maybe the strongest was his ability to win over anyone in the world. You just naturally wanted to make him happy. He was irresistible.'

Priscilla Beaulieu's mother Ann agreed, 'You hear about people with magnetic personalities... No matter how strongly you might oppose his position, Elvis would charm you over to his side. He didn't do it through force or by

being pushy. He did it by being persistent and also, to a large degree, by being sweet.' Marion Keisker, meanwhile, connected Elvis's power with his innocence concluding, 'He was like a mirror in a way. Whatever you were looking for, you were going to find it in him. It was not in him to lie or be malicious. He had all the intricacy of the very simple.'

And Priscilla certainly knew, '...when Elvis wanted something with utter passion, Elvis could convince anyone of anything'.

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD

The Presleys were a deeply religious family. Young Elvis's earliest musical experiences were of singing gospel songs and hymns in church and

with his parents. Years later, in the opulent comfort of Graceland, Priscilla said, 'Elvis and his dad would sing Promised Land or Amazing Grace. Vernon had a good voice, and nothing calmed Elvis like harmonising to the songs he was raised up on. Gospel music was his deepest roots and, I believe, his deepest love.'

When she first spent time with Elvis, Natalie Wood was quite taken aback by his outlook and said, 'I hadn't been around anyone who was that religious. He felt he had been given this gift, this talent, by God. He didn't take it for granted. He thought it was something that he had to protect. He had to be ➔

DID YOU
KNOW?

By the time of his first recording session for RCA, Elvis was very much his own producer in the studio. While not a virtuoso, he played guitar, piano, organ and electric bass and would originate and take charge of all aspects of the musical arrangements.

Pills and paranoia

Elvis had a short temper. He could be possessive and demanding as his second serious girlfriend, June Juanico described, 'He always wanted me right there, right under his thumb. He'd always be looking for me and, when he found me it was always, "Where the hell have you been?" He was quick to fly off the handle...' but, she remembered, he would equally quickly back down and apologise.

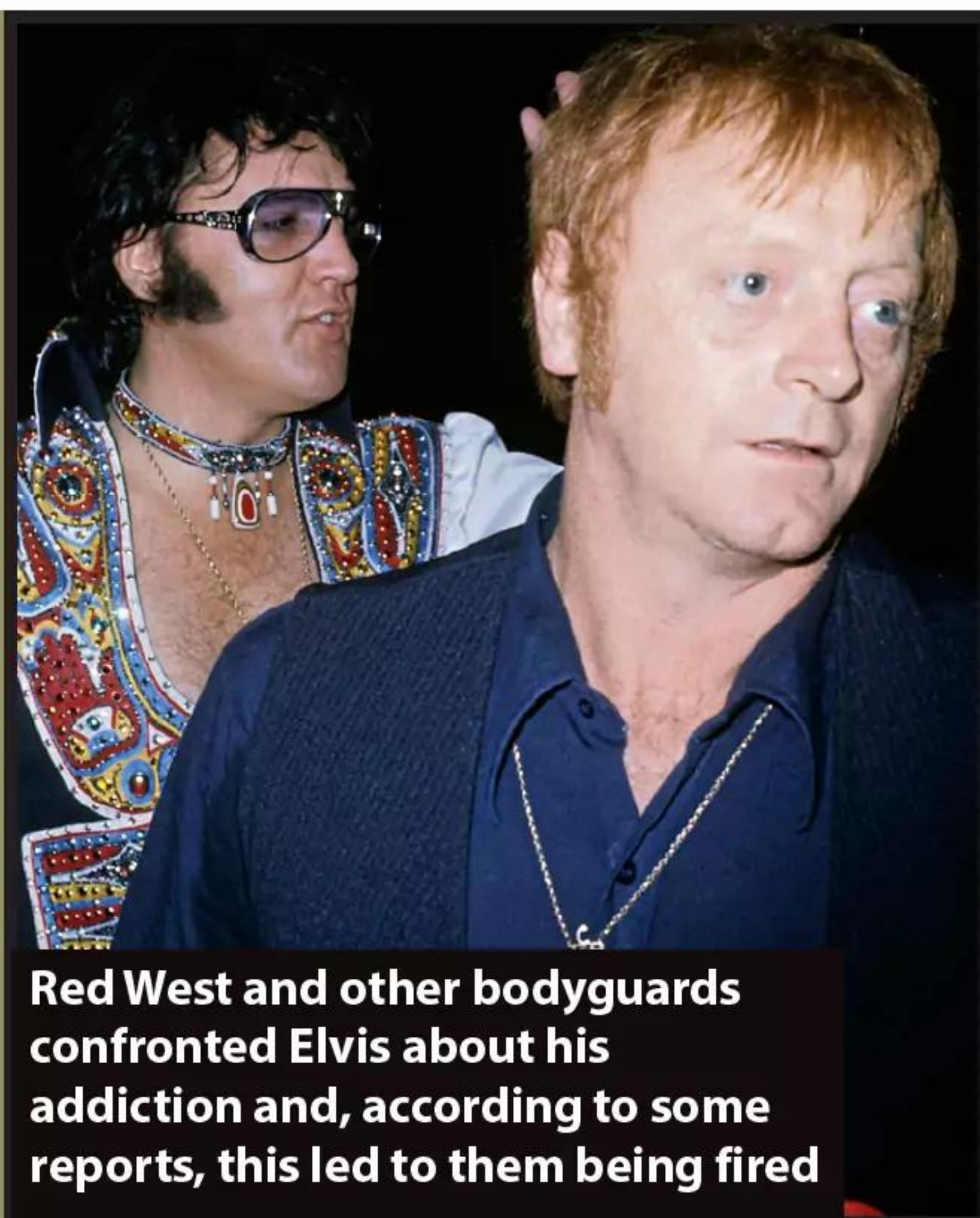
However, during military service, a sergeant introduced him to amphetamine pills. Everyone in the Army was taking them. He was elated and recommended their effects. They made him feel full of energy – now he never had to slow down.

Elvis firmly believed they were completely harmless, gave you 'more strength and stamina than you can imagine' and would keep a person slim as they were also appetite suppressants, prescribed by doctors to overweight people. But, as his intake increased, he began to exhibit unpredictable mood swings. Elisabeth Stefaniak, who dated Elvis in Germany, soon learned, 'One had to be very careful of what one

nice to people. Otherwise, God would take it all back.'

In 1964, Presley met Larry Geller, a hairdresser who became his unlikely spiritual advisor. Elvis asked Geller what he was into, and he replied, 'I do hair, but what I'm more interested in than anything else is trying to discover things like where we come from, why we are here...' and Elvis exclaimed, 'Whoa, whoa, Larry... I mean, what you are talking about is what I secretly think about all the time. I've always known that there had to be a purpose for my life... there's got to be a reason... why I was chosen to be Elvis Presley.'

From then on, much to the irritation of Priscilla and Elvis's inner circle, the pair spent



Red West and other bodyguards confronted Elvis about his addiction and, according to some reports, this led to them being fired

said around Elvis, because he could turn on you in a second. He was suspicious of everybody.'

1960 saw Elvis discharged from the Army, back in America and more successful than ever. On the way to Miami for a TV appearance on the Frank Sinatra Show, guitarist Scotty Moore was disturbed when Elvis suddenly offered him and drummer DJ Fontana a couple of little white pills and said, 'Here, these'll keep you awake. It's what they use in the Army, driving tanks.' Scotty added, 'I never did take mine – couldn't have been very much. But I had never known him to do that before.'

many hours – days – studying and talking about theology and spirituality. Eventually, Elvis and Larry shared a bizarre 'biblical vision', where they claimed the face of Joseph Stalin appeared in the sky! For Elvis, the inexplicable visage morphed into Jesus Christ and smiled at him. Elvis broke down and announced, 'Every fibre of my being felt it. For the first time in my life, God and Christ are a living reality.' Unfortunately, he didn't seem to recall that he had been awake for 36 hours straight, strung out on amphetamines.

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

As the Sixties drew in, his film work also came to a natural conclusion and Elvis, seemingly reenergised,



threw himself back into live performance – starting with his triumphant 1968 TV special – and new non-soundtrack recordings.

His outstanding Elvis from Memphis album (1969) was an artistic and commercial hit and, while his new creative peak didn't last, the early Seventies saw him become the biggest-drawing star in the history of Las Vegas. But Priscilla remembered, 'The paradox is that Las Vegas was a place that gave Elvis new life, even as his success there would ultimately endanger his life by putting him on a treadmill he couldn't get off... His dependence on pills – to chase away the blues or just give him the energy to make it through the day – became more extreme.' She added that, 'People have asked, "Why didn't you initiate an intervention?" People who ask that don't know Elvis... He never considered himself a drug addict. First his drugs were all prescribed. That made a big difference in his mind. And he hated street drugs and campaigned for their elimination. So how could he be an addict himself? He refused to believe he had a problem.'



Presley with Bill Black, Scotty Moore and producer Sam Phillips (*right*), who said Elvis had an 'intuitive musical ability'



Memphis Mafia members (*l to r*) Dick Grob, Sonny West, Red West, Jerry Schilling, Lamar Fike, Joe Esposito and Vernon Presley

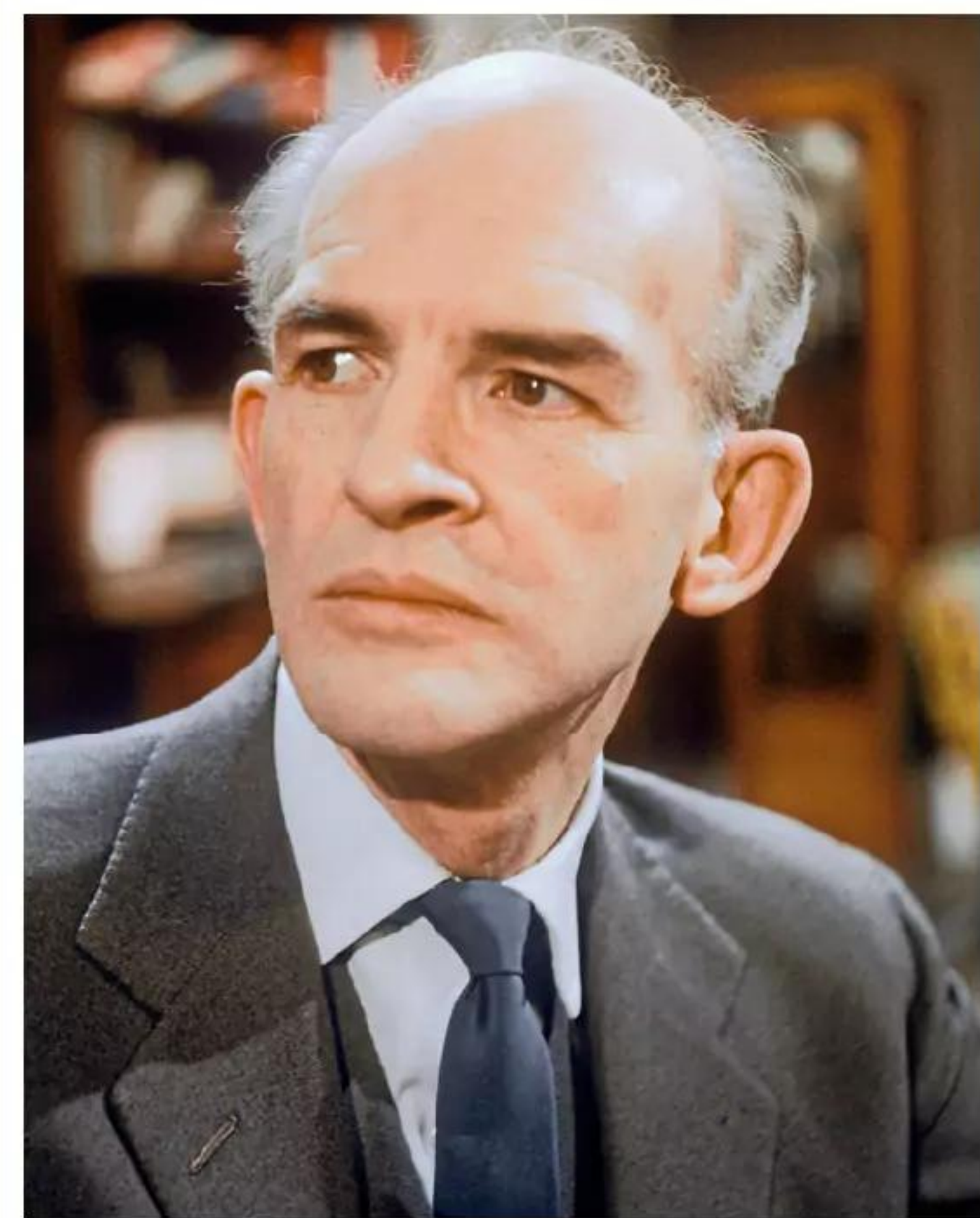
Elvis's friend, bodyguard and occasional songwriter Red West concurred, 'I don't think he ever knew it was a problem... I would say "What do you think's causing this", he'd say just a problem with his stomach, I'd say, you don't think it's because of the things you're taking?'

Elvis passed away on 16 August 1977. He was just 40 years old, but in less than two decades, he had changed the world. He touched

countless lives, both during that time and ever after, not least his cousin Patsy who concluded, 'He was a human being and that means he had faults. But his heart was bigger than all of Mississippi and Tennessee combined. And as long as there's some kind of gizmo to listen to music, people are going to be listening to Elvis. And loving him. Because all his love is right there in his music.'

I know the face...

PETER COPLEY



Born: 20 May 1915, Bushey, Hertfordshire

Died: 7 October 2008, Bristol

Screen debut: Tell Me if it Hurts (1934)

Screen credits: Over 200

Best known for: For more than seven decades Copley proved his ability to inhabit a wide range of characters from authoritarian figures to gentle personalities across dozens of iconic British TV series including *The Avengers* (1963-68), *The Saint* (1965), *The Forsyte Saga* (1967), and Agatha Christie's *Poirot* (1991). His notable film roles include *The Sword and the Rose* (1953), *Help!* (1965), *Quatermass and the Pit* (1967), *Mosquito Squadron* (1969), and Roman Polanski's *Oliver Twist* (2005). He continued acting well into his 90s, with his final screen appearance as Greyhald Spold in the Terry Pratchett adaptation *The Colour of Magic* (2008).

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■ Growing up in the Seventies I remember watching two foreign series (possibly French?) which I think were called The Aeronauts and Desert Crusader. Does anyone else remember them? Also, The Flaxton Boys shown on Sundays.
Jeff Mellstrom

Retro says: Over to you readers – can you fill in the gaps for Jeff?

AUCTION WATCH

■ A yellow Citroën 2CV, which Roger Moore said was his favourite Bond car, sold recently at auction for £112,000 (\$150,000). The classic French vehicle, which featured in For Your Eyes Only (1981), was discarded after filming and ended up in a Paris scrapyard, but it was later salvaged by a Citroën enthusiast.



CATCH IT NOW



A groundbreaking new exhibit devoted to David Bowie has opened at the V&A East Storehouse, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London. Offering fans an unprecedented look into the music icon's creative universe, the Bowie archive contains more than 90,000 items including costumes, handwritten lyrics, instruments and rarely seen photographs. Exhibit highlights include the Ziggy Stardust catsuits, props from Labyrinth (1986) and an acoustic guitar used on Let's Dance. Visitors can journey through the evolution of a legend, exploring both his musical genius and his influence on fashion, art and self-expression.

Tickets are free but must be pre-booked via the V&A website vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/david-bowie-centre

■ Your article on The Stranglers (**Retro 92**) reminded me of when I saw them live at the Brighton Centre. My friend and I had asked my grandmother to buy the tickets for us as she lived nearby. Needless to say the booking clerk was a little concerned that a sweet old lady was buying two tickets for a punk concert and wondered if Nan knew what she was letting herself in for.

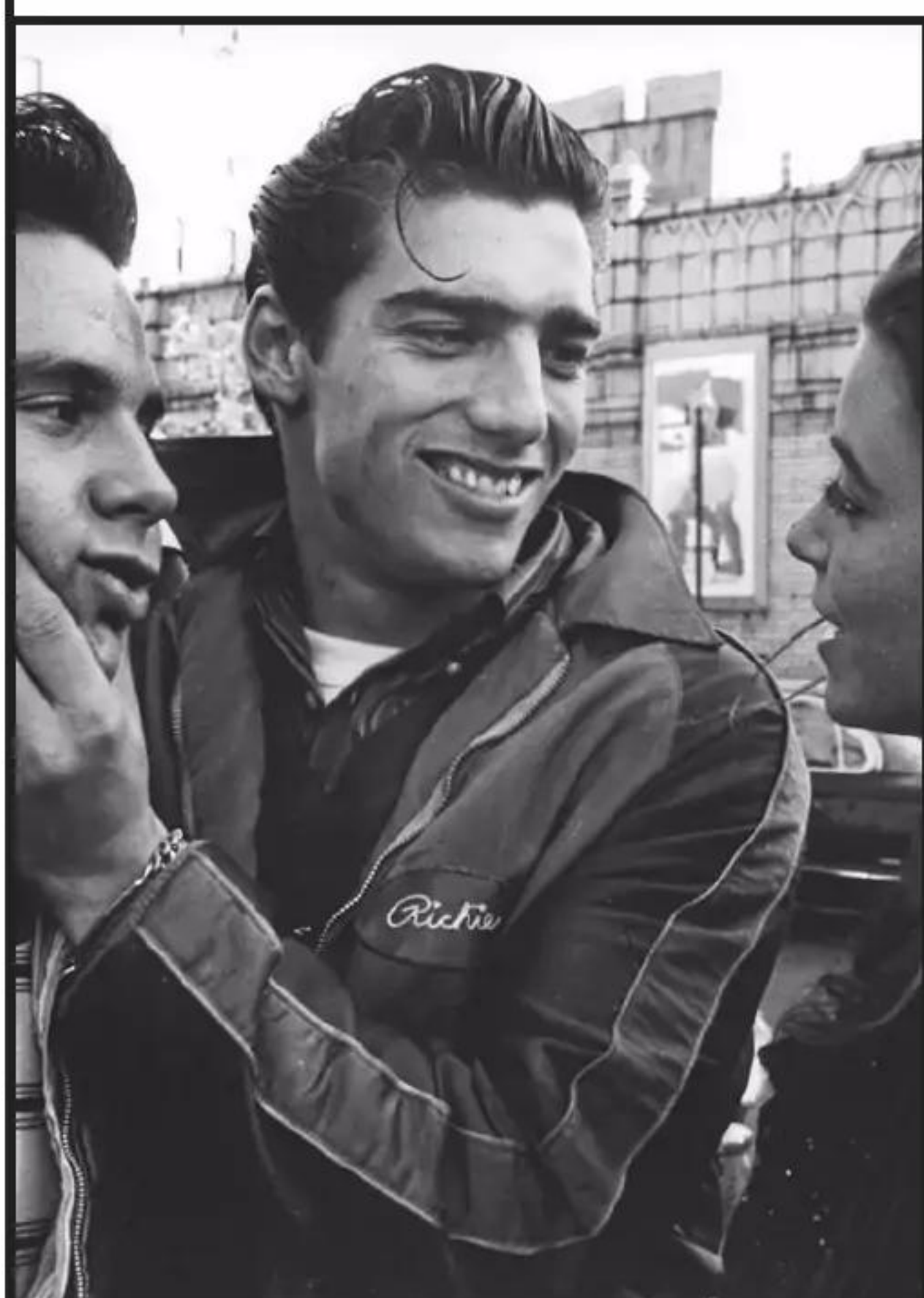
Sue Jones



51 years ago... 12 November 1973

Sitcom Last of the Summer Wine debuted on BBC. It went on to become the longest running sitcom ever, airing for 31 seasons.





■ I just wanted to mention a brilliant film that **Retro** readers may not have seen called *The Wanderers* (1979). It's a coming-of-age story set among street gangs in the Bronx, and has it all; comedy, drama and romance. I highly recommend catching it if you can.

Paul Murphy

Retro says: Many thanks for the suggestion Paul. Do other readers have any unsung or overlooked films they'd like to recommend?

■ What became of British actor Derren Nesbitt? I remember him as the Gestapo officer in *Where Eagles Dare* (1968).

Alan Morgan

Retro says: Often cast as a villain, Nesbitt was a regular face on *Sixties and Seventies* TV, with guest roles in *Danger Man*, *Doctor Who*, *The Prisoner*, *Gideon's Way* and *The Saint*, before becoming DCI Jordan in *Special Branch*. On the big screen he starred in war film, *The Blue Max* (1966), and espionage thriller, *The Naked Runner* (1967), among others, until a series of newspaper scandals seemed to stall his career. Now aged 90 and still working, Nesbitt most recently appeared in *The Haunting of Margam Castle* (2020).



■ I'm a huge fan of **Retro** but I'm also an incorrigible pedant, so must (reluctantly) point out an error in your otherwise excellent article on *Space 1999/UFO* (**Retro 92**). The lady pictured in the photo (pg 26) is not Dolores Mantez. It is, in fact, the wonderful Gabrielle Drake, in her role as Lieutenant Gay Ellis. I fell in love with Gabrielle at the tender age of seven and have been loyal to her ever since, so hope you can understand why I'm keen for her to receive due credit in your brilliant magazine.

Dave Barker

Retro says: Apologies, the identical purple wigs got us in a muddle!

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?



I recently watched a musical, *Sun Valley Serenade* (1941), that starred the beautiful Norwegian actress, Sonja Henie. Could you tell me about her?

David Goldsmith

Sonja Henie got her first pair of ice skates aged six, and by 15 she was an Olympic gold medallist. She won more Olympic and World titles than any other ladies' figure skater and, from 1936, toured with her own ice show. She signed to Fox and starred in 12 films between 1936 and 1948, mainly light comedies, beginning with *One in a Million* (1936). Such was her popularity, Henie was one of the highest-paid stars in Hollywood. Her films combined music and dazzling skating routines, which she choreographed herself. During the Second World War her popularity plummeted when a photo was published of her with Hitler, however Sonja, by then a US citizen, threw herself into supporting the USO. She retired from performing in 1960 but was one of the 10 wealthiest women in the world when she died in 1969.

Retro says: Is there a little-known star you'd like us to find out more about? Write to ask us to find out what happened to your favourites.



37 years ago... 13 November 1987

Sonny & Cher perform together for the final time, singing *I Got You Babe* on *Late Night with David Letterman*. The impromptu appearance came after the duo had been guests on the show.

You've got **MORE MAIL**

■ Like many **Retro** readers I watch a lot of old movies and one name that crops up time and time again is Muir Mathieson, mostly as conductor but sometimes as composer. Can you tell me more about him, please?

David Ward

Retro says: British film music director and conductor James Muir Mathieson helped shape British cinema's musical landscape. Born in 1911 in Stirling, Scotland, he studied at the Royal College of Music in London. He first worked in the movies on the quota quickies of the Thirties before becoming musical director for Alexander Korda in 1934 and, later, for the Rank Organisation. Mathieson rarely wrote music himself, but was responsible for commissioning, arranging and conducting the music of nearly 1000 films, including *Henry V* (1944) and *Hamlet* (1948).



REEL LOCATION



■ You recently printed a poster of *Treasure Island* (1950) in **Retro 91** and it set me wondering whereabouts in the UK it was filmed.

Frank Button

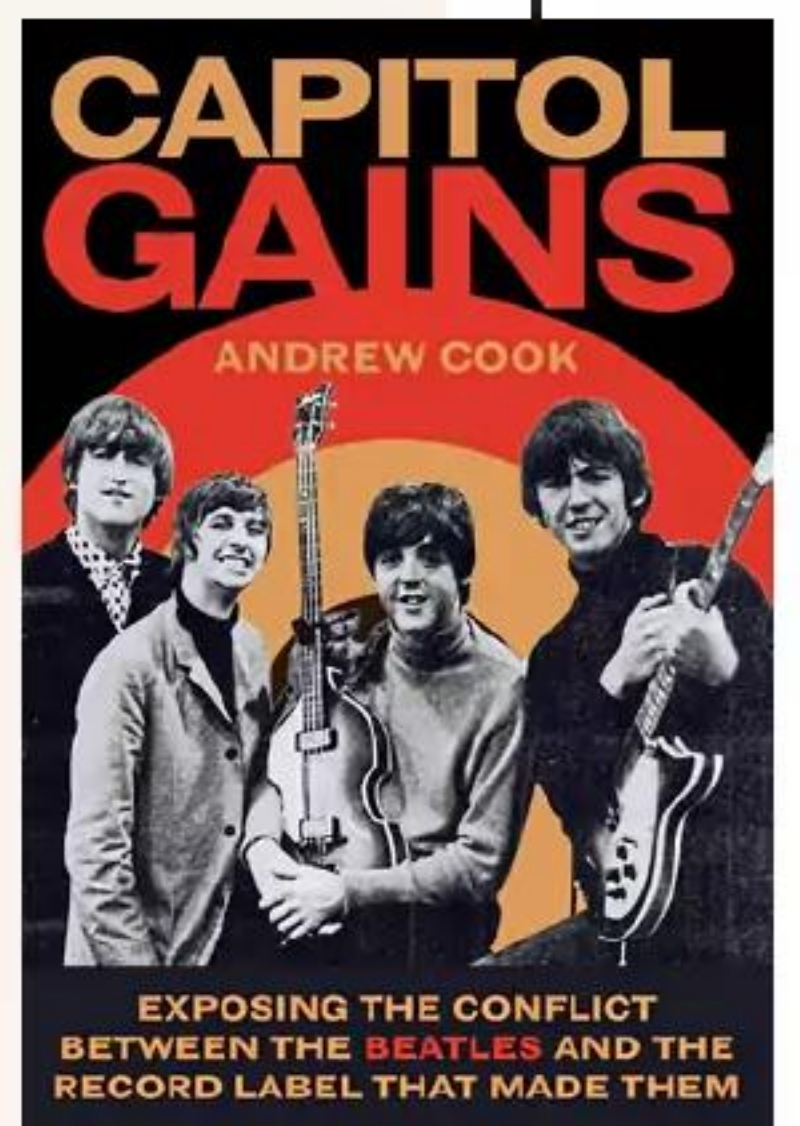
Retro says: Disney's *Treasure Island* was indeed filmed primarily on location in south west England, mostly around Cornwall – including Gull Rock, Carrick Roads, the River Fal and Helford River, Bristol harbour and wharf – and Devon for cliff scenes, while the Hartland Quay Hotel stood in for The Admiral Benbow Inn. This picturesque quay and hotel has been used for dozens of other films, including folk horror, *The Shout* (1978), fantasy drama, *Paperhouse* (1988), romance, *The Shell Seekers* (2006), BBC drama, *The Night Manager* (2016), Netflix's *Rebecca* (2020) and, most recently, *The Salt Path* (2024).



OUT NOW...

BUY THE BOOK

Andrew Cook's new book, *Capitol Gains*, reveals the behind-the-scenes battles between Brian Epstein, The Beatles, and Capitol Records during their breakthrough in America. Delving into newly revealed archives, the book exposes conflicts, creative compromises, and the calculated PR efforts that helped The Beatles conquer the US. **RRP £20**



WATCH ON BLU-RAY

To mark the 50th anniversary, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* will be released for the first time on 4K UHD on 10 November. It's one of only a handful of films to have won all five major Academy Awards. Check out our behind the scenes feature on page 40. **RRP £20**



PROMOTION



WATCH ON LEGEND CHARLIE'S ANGELS SEASON 3

Season Three picks up right where the drama left off, reuniting the Angels for more stylish adventures. Highlights include *Counterfeit Angels* in which three criminals pretend to be the Angels, spa suspense in *Angels in Springtime*, and a tense kidnapping in *Angel in a Box*. Glamorous, confident, and still full of charm.

Charlie's Angels Season 3 – 6pm
Weekdays on Legend (Available to watch on platforms: Sky, Virgin Media, Freeview, Freesat, Freely and Watch Free UK)

CATCH UP WITH A CLASSIC FILM



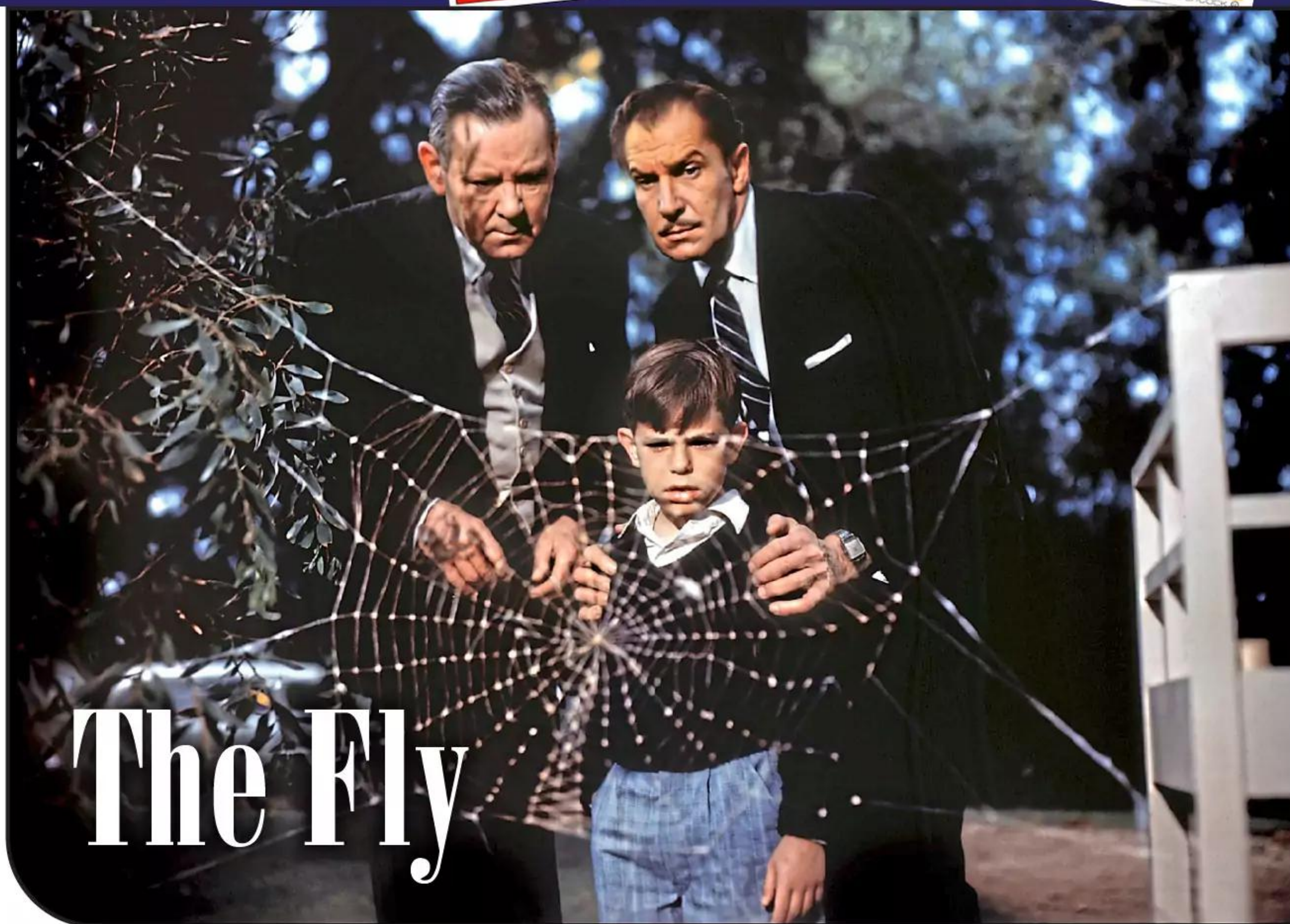
In the Fifties, as the American public grappled with the threat of communism, nuclear war, alien invasion and rampant technological progress, Hollywood was uniquely placed to exploit those fears, and the result was a huge boom in the sci-fi horror genre.

Films such as 1951's *The Thing From Another World* and 1956's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* – thinly veiled allegories that expertly tapped into people's dread of 'reds under the bed' – caught the imagination and cinema audiences couldn't get enough of them.

Veteran director Kurt Neumann had already had some success in the genre with the 1950 film *Rocketship X-M* and 1957's *She Devil*, when he stumbled across a short story in the June 1957 edition of *Playboy* magazine. (Back in the day *Playboy* was a cutting-edge publication that featured the work of literary greats such as Gore Vidal, Kurt Vonnegut and Ray Bradbury – one could legitimately claim to just 'read it for the articles'.)

The Fly, by British-French author George Langelaan, involved a French scientist who is working on a teleportation machine. Using himself as a guinea pig to test out his device, he inadvertently splices himself with a fly, to horrific effect. Neumann instantly saw the potential for a movie and took it to producer Robert L Lippert.

Having started out as a movie-obsessed teenager working at his local cinema, Lippert now owned movie theatres and drive-ins across the



country and had begun to produce films himself to keep up with the public's insatiable desire for celluloid entertainment. By 1951 he was so prolific – he once filmed six Westerns simultaneously in 28 days – that *Time* Magazine christened him 'The Quickie King'.

It was Lippert's idea to hire future Shogun author James Clavell to write what would become his first screenplay to go into production. Remaining broadly faithful to the original story, Clavell moved the setting to Montreal and, at Hollywood's insistence, made the ending a little less bleak.

Casting the role of scientist Andre Delambre proved difficult, mainly because whoever was to play the scientist would spend much of the film with his head covered, either with the prosthetic head of the fly or with the scarf that the character uses to conceal the awful consequences of his experiments from his wife.

'All the leading men turned it down,' recalled David Hedison, the actor who finally accepted the role. 'I said this is going to be a winner.' He was cast, along with Patricia Owens as Andre's wife, Helene, who, since Andre spends much of his time with his head covered or in his lab, is arguably the film's main protagonist.

But it was the casting of former leading man Herbert Marshall as Inspector Charas and Vincent Price, as Andre's brother François, that really ensured the success of the film, which would go on to become Kurt Neumann's biggest box office hit (sadly, he would never know, dying before it went on general release) and which spawned two sequels and David Cronenberg's famously gory 1986 remake, starring Jeff Goldblum.

For Price, who was well established as a character actor across all genres and who had starred in the 1953 horror movie *House of Wax*, it was the role that cemented his reputation as a horror actor of note; his performance in the trailer for *The Fly* is a delicious taste of what was to come. But even he had trouble keeping a straight face during filming.

'Oh, it was terrible,' said Price, about filming the movie's most iconic scene with Marshall. '...every time that little voice of the fly would say "Help me! Help me!" we would just scream with laughter. We ended up doing about 20 takes to finally get it.'

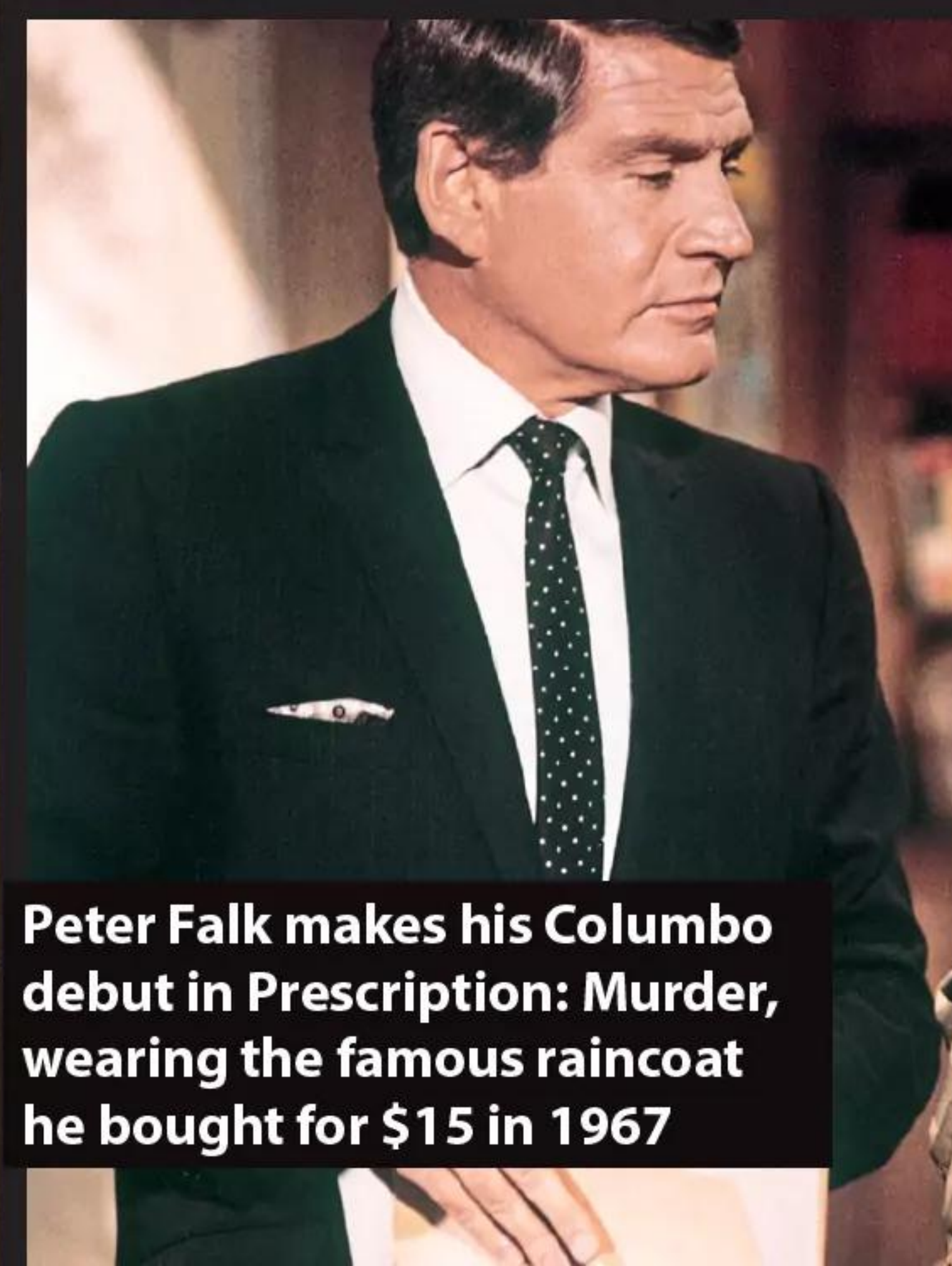
Watch on Talking Pictures. Tuesday 14 October 2025, 11.35pm



Kurt Neumann made the most of Patricia Owens' very real fear of insects by not allowing her to even see the Fly make-up until the unmasking scene

JUST ONE MORE MURDER...

Lt Columbo tracked down killers for more than 40 years, but the detective's greatest nemesis turned out to be the star who played him and the networks he appeared on, writes Steve Green



Peter Falk makes his Columbo debut in *Prescription: Murder*, wearing the famous raincoat he bought for \$15 in 1967

DID YOU KNOW?

Prolific American writer Harlan Ellison recounted how his friend Peter Falk would put pool opponents off by removing his glass right eye and suggesting he use it instead of the cue ball.

Ironically, it was an industrial dispute that propelled one of television's most beloved characters onto the screen. The fledgling writing team of Richard Levinson and William Link had moved from New York to California in 1959, where they were hired as staff writers by Four Star Television, earning \$1000 per week belting out episodes for western shows *The Rebel* and *Johnny Ringo*, as well as crime series *Michael Shayne* and *Richard Diamond, Private Detective*.

Unfortunately, this lucrative endeavour was derailed on 16 January 1960, when the Writers Guild of America pulled the plug on filmed drama. However, members such as Levinson and Link were still allowed to work for live television, and after hearing NBC was preparing to launch a new one-hour anthology, *The Chevy Mystery Show*, the pair decided to adapt a short story they'd recently sold to the popular pulp, *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*.

NBC liked the central twist – instead of a traditional whodunnit, the reader had to fathom how the sleuth catches the killer – and ordered a script. *Enough Rope* aired 31 July 1960 and featured Richard Carlson (*It Came from Outer Space* (1953)) as an adulterous psychiatrist whose deviation into marital homicide leads him to match wits with Lt Columbo, played here by Bert Freed (perhaps best known as the police chief in *Invaders from Mars* (1953)).

Despite their pleasure at making a sale, the writers were disappointed by the broadcast's production values and decided to quit television, move back to New York and rework 'Enough Rope' for the stage. As David Koenig recounts in his 2021 history, *Shooting Columbo*, one scene ran short, but rather than retype it in its entirety, the duo lazily had their protagonist re-enter with the soon-to-be-iconic line, 'Just one more thing...'.

CASTING COLUMBO

Retitled 'Prescription: Murder' for its January 1962 launch in San Francisco, the drama had a Hollywood cast, including Joseph Cotten, Agnes Moorehead and Thomas Mitchell (best known for playing Uncle Billy in *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946)) as Columbo himself. But just a month into the tour, Mitchell had to drop out due to ill health (he died that December, aged 70) and increasingly negative reviews killed the production's Broadway ambitions.

Levinson and Link exited with their rights intact, returning to California and writing for television, creating the CBS detective series *Mannix* (1967-75) along the way. But that disarming detective remained in their thoughts and, eventually, they decided to pitch a rewrite of their play to Universal, which was now producing two hour films for NBC.

When the writers' preferred choices, Lee J Cobb and Bing

Crosby proved unavailable to play the crumpled cop, studio exec Richard Irving mentioned Peter Falk – fresh from the critically well-received legal show, *The Trials of O'Brien* (1965-66) – he had seen the script and 'would kill to play that cop', but *Columbo's* creators were initially wary of Falk's reputation for being difficult to work with.

The actor's attraction to the character was genuine, as he discussed in his 2006 memoir, *Just One More Thing*, 'I was struck very early on by the dramatic possibilities of playing a man who housed within himself two opposing traits. On the one hand being a regular Joe, the guy next door, nothing special, and at the same time being the most brilliant detective on the globe. A guy with a mind like Einstein who sounded like the box boy at Food Giant.'

The new version of *Prescription: Murder* starring Peter Falk was shot during June 1967 for transmission the following February. It scored a 40% audience share – 25 million viewers – and came fourth in the week's ratings, but hopes for subsequent episodes were unexpectedly thrown into question when its star announced he had no wish to climb back onto a weekly treadmill.

NETWORK ERRORS

A solution offered itself when Universal suggested *Columbo* form one third of a programming 'wheel' with two other crime shows, *McCloud* (which had already ➔

William Shatner was one of many famous guest stars



Kate Mulgrew played Mrs Columbo in the disastrous spin-off series. Donald Pleasence appeared in one episode

proven popular) and McMillan & Wife. His commitment reduced to just six movies per year, allowing him the financial freedom to work on both Hollywood features and personal projects, Falk agreed to Universal's request for a second pilot, *Ransom for a Dead Man* which aired in March 1971, and when it proved another ratings winner, he signed on for an inaugural season.

Other than Falk's annual contract tussle with Universal, all went relatively smoothly until the spring of 1978, when NBC decided the need to revitalise its schedule in the face of increasingly youth-oriented competition from CBS and ABC outweighed any loyalty even to a show which could still pull in 20 million viewers and beat latecomers such as *Kojak* when a first-run episode aired. The actor's own perfectionism hadn't helped, regularly extending shoots and tipping them over budget.

NBC toyed with recasting the lead, but Universal exec Charles Engel shot that down. A misguided spin-off, *Mrs Columbo* (1979-80), proved so unpopular it went through three title changes before being cancelled after just 13 episodes. Falk indicated a willingness to negotiate, but NBC reportedly refused to reimburse Universal if costs escalated. 'I keep hoping Columbo isn't dead,' he said while promoting *The In-Laws* (1979), but discussions in 1981, 1984 and 1986 all floundered.



While promoting another film in Paris, Peter Falk wore a battered raincoat, making him look like the dishevelled detective

ANOTHER LIFELINE

Then, in 1987, ABC approached Universal with a view to adding *Columbo* to its own 'wheel'. The idea was backed by Link, who'd suffered the loss of his writing partner that March, and Falk finally came on board after an offer of \$650,000 per movie and a spacious office on the lot.

The relaunch was actually delayed by another Writers Guild strike, but the first new episode aired on 6 February 1989, with up to four additional instalments added yearly until 1998, when the episode *Ashes to Ashes* (directed by co-star Patrick McGoochan) recorded the show's lowest-ever first-run audience. ABC left the next movie, *Murder With Too Many Notes*

(starring Billy Connolly) on the shelf for two years, then got excited when it finally aired in March 2001 and earned solid ratings.

However, an attempt to add a little youthful glamour with *Columbo Likes the Nightlife* (2003) failed to ignite, and Falk's hopes to give his character a proper send-off – with one final tale involving a bestselling author who murders an investigative journalist – remained unproduced at the time of his death in 2011, aged 83. 'Columbo's Last Case was a wonderful script,' Charles Engel told David Koenig, 'but his health was going and we never could get it shot. He had written it himself. Unfortunately, we never got there.'

In December 2023, the trade magazine *Variety* placed *Columbo* 85th in its '100 Greatest TV Shows of All Time', calling the format an 'actor's feast'. For millions of original fans and the many who have discovered the show since, through reruns and streaming, Peter Falk's bloodhound in a raincoat still leaves them wanting... just one more thing.



Columbo's famous Peugeot convertible can be seen on the Universal Studios

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Enchanted Hill, a 120-acre Beverly Hills estate, provided the backdrop for three *Columbo* mysteries, including *Fade In to Murder* (1976) which starred William Shatner as an egotistical actor famed for playing a television detective.

The Angels are back!

Discover which Charlie's Angel you are most like with our fun quiz!

The 1970s were bold, beautiful, and gloriously glam. And when Charlie's Angels burst onto TV screens in 1976 it perfectly captured that spirit with strong female leads, feathered hair, flared jeans, and undercover crime-fighting. Audiences were captivated, not just by the action, but by the Angels themselves, and the actresses became fashion and beauty icons. Their stories didn't end with the credits. What they wore, how they fought, and who they became left a legacy that still inspires today.

Which Original Charlie's Angel Are You?

Pick the letter that best matches you and tally them at the end!

1. How do you solve problems?

- A. With logic and strategy
- B. With boldness and instinct
- C. By trusting your heart and reading people

2. What's your dream job?

- A. Lawyer or journalist
- B. Athlete or stuntwoman
- C. Fashion designer, counsellor, or teacher

3. What's your go-to fashion style?

- A. Professional, with a hint of Seventies chic
- B. Sporty and playful
- C. Feminine, flowing, and classy

4. What do people admire most about you?

- A. Your intelligence and leadership

- B. Your confidence and energy
- C. Your grace and warmth

5. How do you handle pressure?

- A. Stay calm and take control
- B. Dive in and take risks
- C. Read the room and adapt

6. What's your ideal vacation?

- A. Exploring a historic city with a full itinerary
- B. Surfing or skiing somewhere adventurous
- C. Relaxing on a beach with a good book

Mostly As: You're Sabrina Duncan

You're the brainy, no-nonsense leader. Cool under pressure, Sabrina is the glue that holds the Angels together. You prefer reason over impulse, and people rely on your sharp mind and quiet strength.

Mostly Bs: You're Jill Munroe

You're fun, fearless, and a natural at just about everything. With your sporty spirit and dazzling smile, you're always up for a challenge. Jill is the thrillseeker of the group, never afraid to get her hands dirty – or jump behind the wheel of a fast car.

Mostly Cs: You're Kelly Garrett

Elegant, thoughtful, and deeply intuitive, Kelly leads with her heart. You understand people and situations on a deeper level, and you bring calm to chaos. Don't be fooled by your soft demeanour, you're tough when it counts.

TUNE IN!

LEGEND is a free-to-air UK TV channel dedicated to classic and cult entertainment. Specializing in science fiction, fantasy, horror, thrillers and retro TV, LEGEND offers a nostalgic escape for fans of vintage storytelling. From iconic series

like Star Trek to Knight Rider, to beloved cult films and horror classics, it brings timeless favourites back to life. Previously known as the Horror Channel, LEGEND is the go-to destination for viewers who love TV with attitude.

■ Charlie's Angels Season 3 starts on LEGEND Friday 31 October at 6pm

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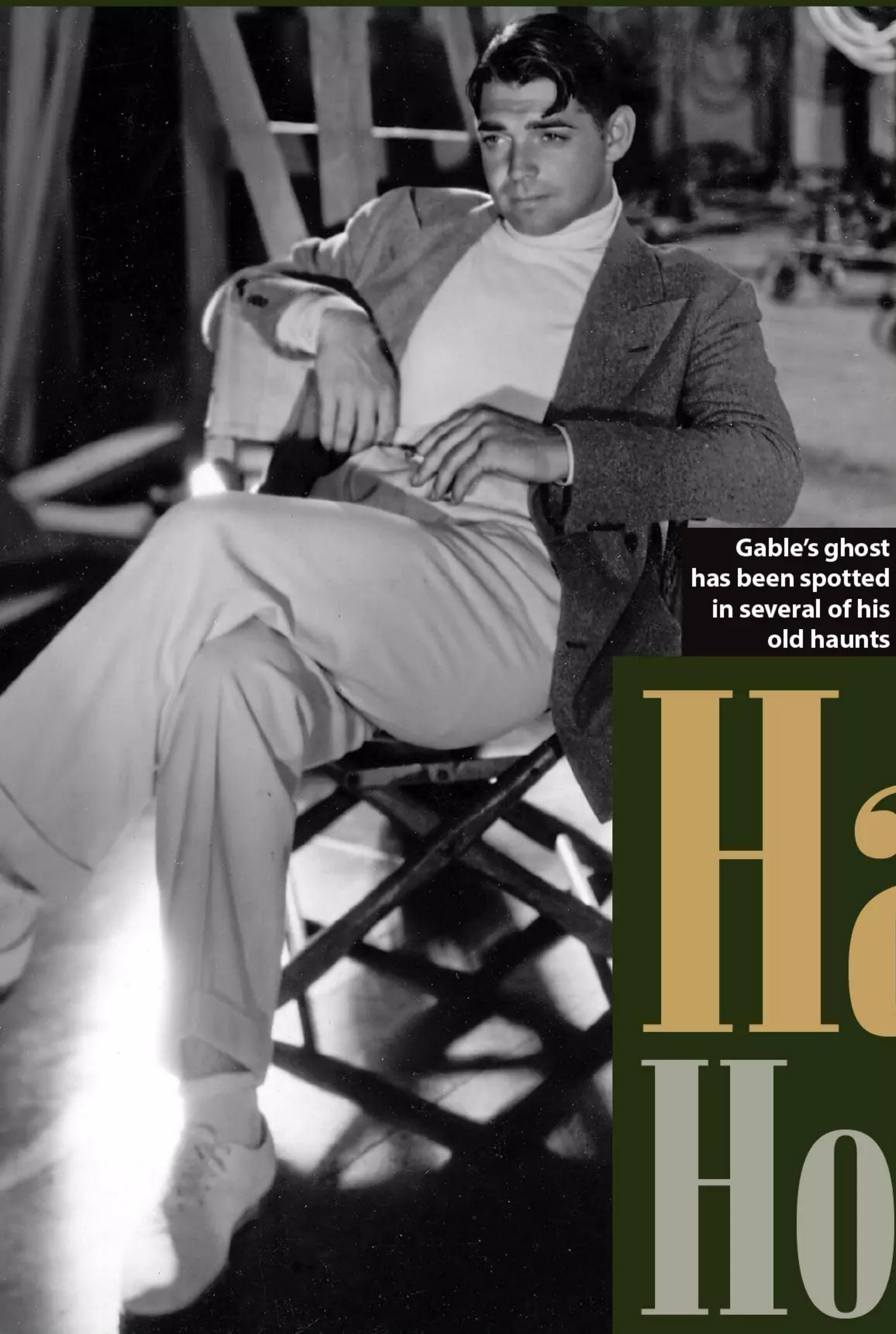


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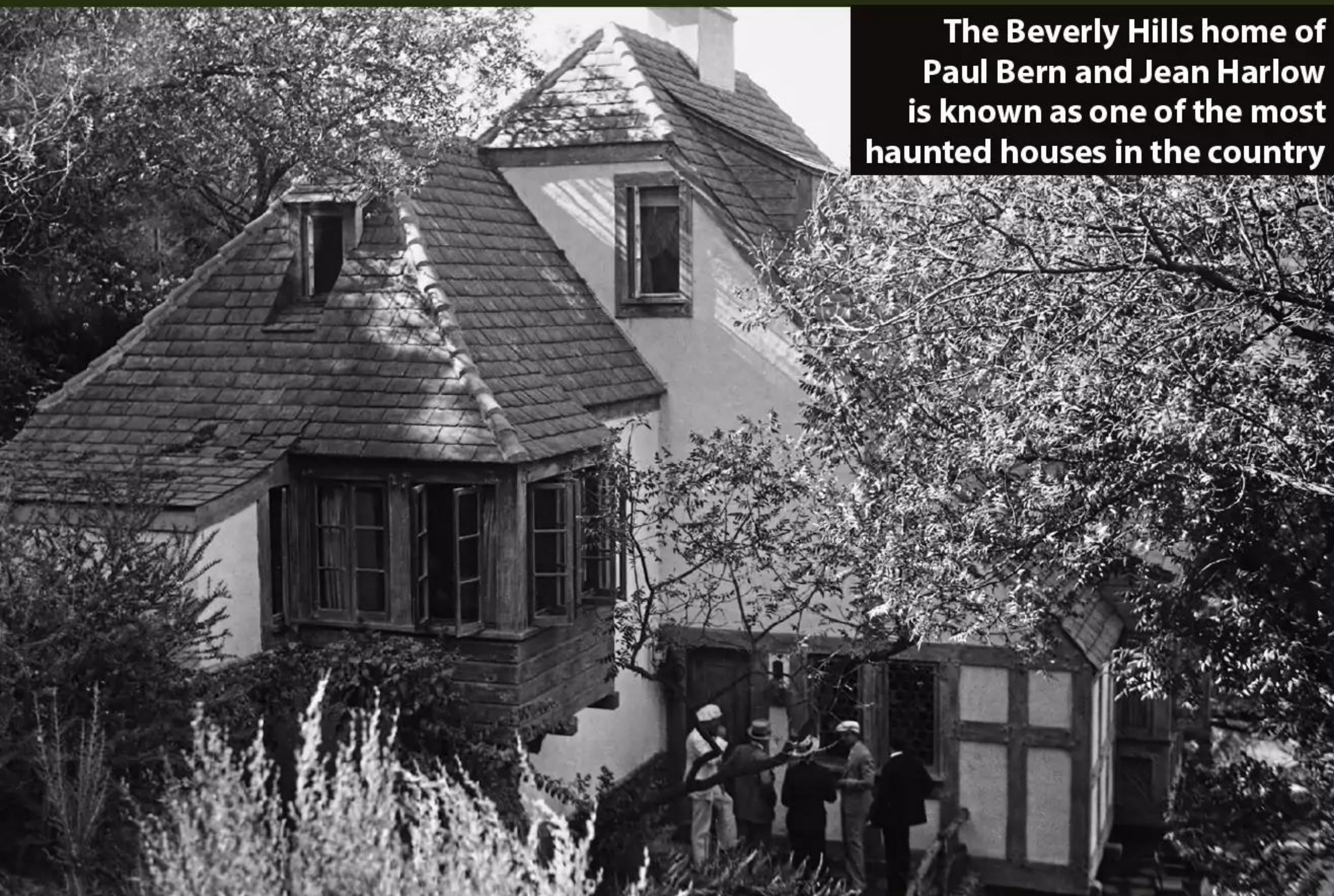


Gable's ghost has been spotted in several of his old haunts

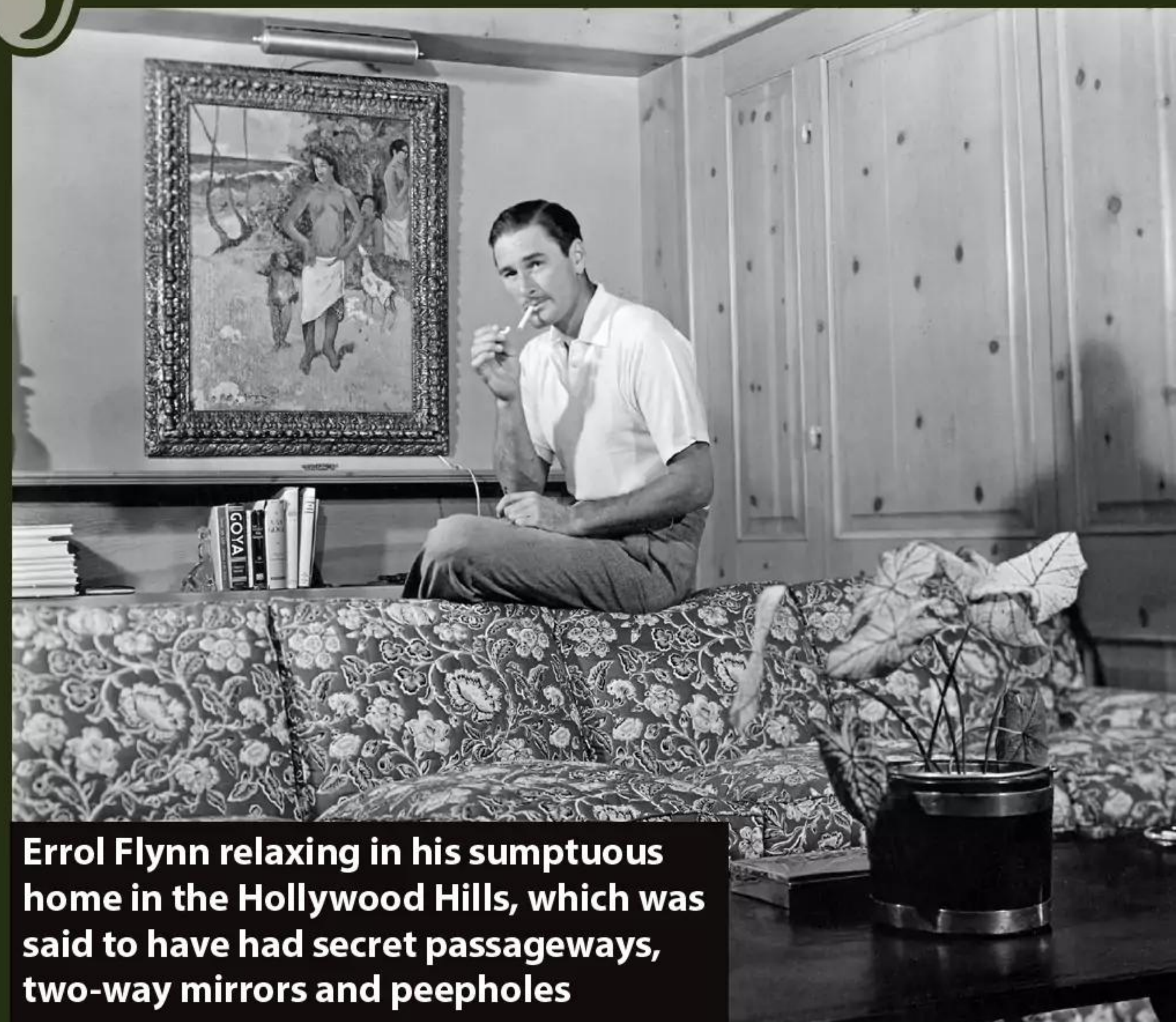
Still on the menu at this Hollywood restaurant is a Fettucine Alfredo, a recipe Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford brought back from their honeymoon in Italy



Haunted Hollywood!



The Beverly Hills home of Paul Bern and Jean Harlow is known as one of the most haunted houses in the country



Errol Flynn relaxing in his sumptuous home in the Hollywood Hills, which was said to have had secret passageways, two-way mirrors and peepholes

Brian J Robb reveals the film icons who are still roaming the City of Dreams – long after their deaths...

Some movie stars simply don't know when it's time to leave the stage, even when they've been dead for many decades! Halloween may be the time of year when ghosts make an appearance, but the stars of yesteryear, such as James Dean, Errol Flynn and Charlie Chaplin, like to do things *their* way, hanging out in their old homes all year round and haunting the town that brought them fame and fortune whenever the mood takes them.

Orson Welles was a regular at his favourite restaurant, Ma Maison on Melrose Avenue. From its opening in 1973, up to his death in October 1985, Welles had his own table. When he died, the table remained out of use up to the closure of Ma Maison itself the following month. The site where the restaurant once was is now a bakery and café. The writer-director-star of *Citizen Kane* (1941), who'd earlier terrified America with his radio broadcast of HG Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1938), is still a regular, four decades after his death. Bakery patrons report Welles's ghost as 'a large man in a white suit', enveloped in a cloud of cigar smoke accompanied by the aroma of his favourite brandy.

SPOOKY BOOTHS

Another restaurant haunted by a Hollywood star is the famous Musso & Frank Grill on Hollywood Boulevard. Still operating today, it opened in 1919 and an early patron was Charlie Chaplin, then working on his first feature, *The Kid* (1921). The restaurant boasts large leather-lined booths, and booth number one, in the Old Room, the only one with a window, was Chaplin's favourite place for lunch. It apparently remained his favourite after death, with a visitor claiming to have snapped a rather blurry photo of Chaplin in his booth. Musso & Frank was a popular hangout for celebrities, and Chaplin has been accompanied by the shades of Douglas Fairbanks (booth one), Marilyn Monroe (booth three), and Rudolph Valentino (by the old phones) – perhaps they appreciate that very little has changed inside since 1919?

High on Mount Hollywood stands the Griffith Observatory, home to a popular

planetarium. Built in 1935, it has featured in many movies but is best remembered for 1955's *Rebel Without a Cause*, with James Dean (a bust of the actor stands at the site). Dean, who only completed three major films: *Rebel*, *East of Eden* (1955), and *Giant* (1956), died aged just 24 when his Porsche sports car collided with another car on 30 September 1955. Reports have Dean's ghost walking the Observatory grounds in his signature white T-shirt. One group of teens experienced 'cold patches' and witnessed a 'dark shadow with red eyes', said to be Dean, before running downhill to safety.

Also notorious was Dean's 'cursed' car. Following his death, the car was sold and parts recycled into other vehicles. A car with Dean's engine crashed at the October 1956 Pomona Race, but the driver WR Turner survived, while ➔

Gable was so devastated by his wife Carole Lombard's tragic death that, according to friends, he developed a 'strange inner sadness' that never left him

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Hollywoodland (2006), starring Ben Affleck, dramatised the George Reeves story, offering multiple solutions to the star's death.

another with the transmission crashed in the same race, killing driver Tony McHenry, aged 44. The remains of Dean's 'cursed' car toured vehicle shows before going up in flames while in storage in Fresno. The last vestiges of Dean's Porsche vanished when being transported from Miami to Los Angeles in 1960.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

The other most frequent locations for the ghosts of Hollywood stars to haunt, are their own houses. While it might be fun to own a home once inhabited by Clark Gable, Jean Harlow, or Joan Crawford, the attraction fades a little when it seems the star never left...

Thirties comedienne Thelma Todd, who'd appeared alongside Laurel and Hardy and the Marx Brothers, died mysteriously aged just 29. Officially, her death was due to carbon monoxide poisoning in her car in her garage in December 1935. She'd been locked out by her partner, director Roland West, so turned on the engine to keep warm,

inadvertently poisoning herself. However, there were reports of unexplained injuries and rumours of connections with gangster 'Lucky' Luciano, an associate of her violent ex-husband Pat DiCicco, suggesting foul play. Todd's ghost has appeared at her former Pacific Palisades apartment and at her Sidewalk Cafe on the Pacific Coast Highway – both buildings mysteriously survived the January 2025 wildfires.

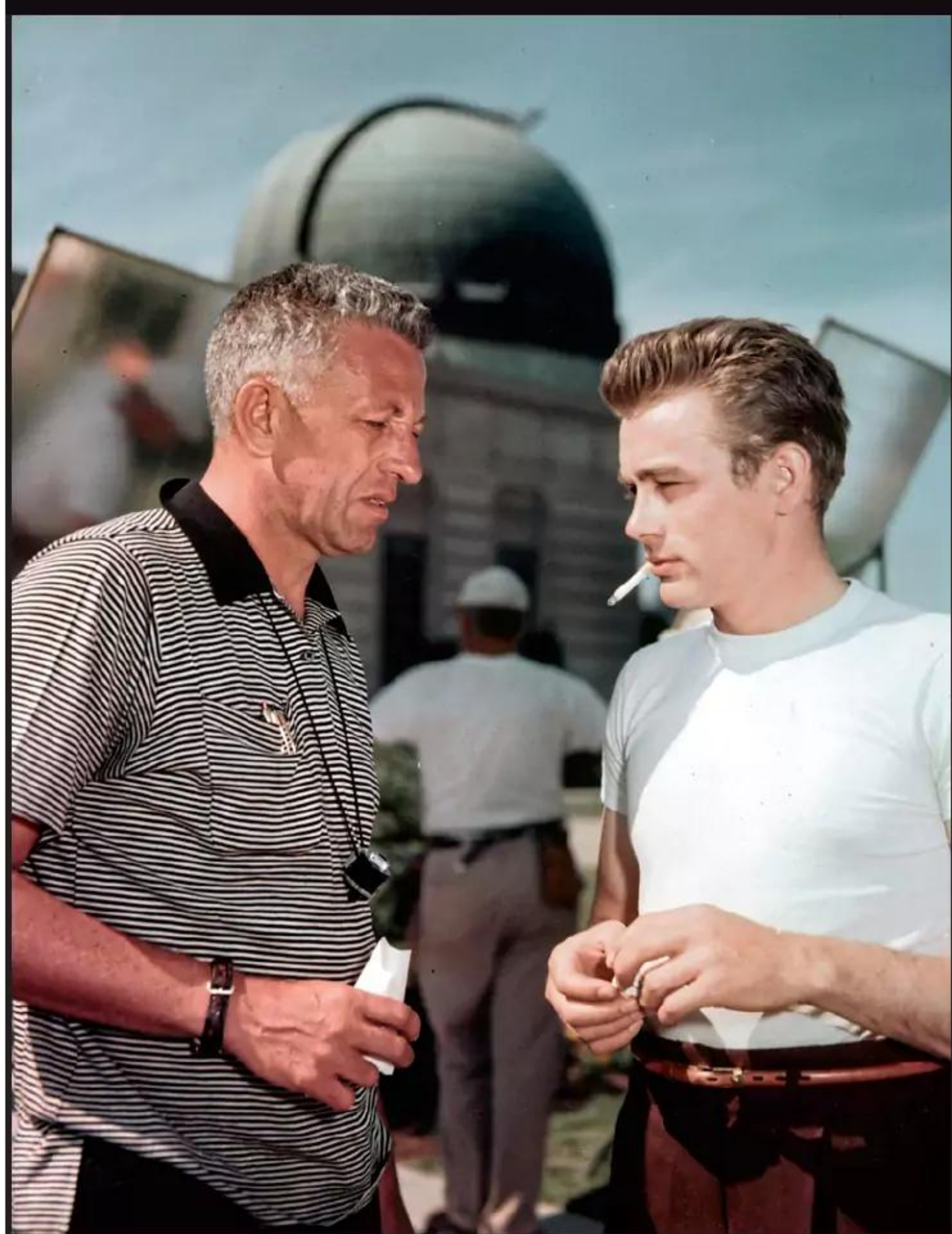
Starlet Jean Harlow found fame in 1930 in Howard Hughes's groundbreaking film *Hell's Angels*. The 'blonde bombshell' quickly caught on with audiences and, by 1932, she'd married Hollywood executive Paul Bern, two decades her senior. Just four months later, Bern was found dead at their home in mysterious circumstances, explained as suicide. Five years later in 1937, aged just 26, Harlow was dead of kidney failure. The house that Bern and Harlow briefly shared was haunted by the unfortunate couple.

In the Sixties, fellow starlet Sharon Tate stayed in Harlow's old bedroom in the house, then owned by celebrity hairdresser Jay Sebring. She awoke and saw an apparition of Bern. Heading downstairs, Tate had a vision of a blood-covered Sebring – both Tate and Sebring would be victims of the Manson gang in 1969 – her vision, it appears, was a premonition. The Cielo Drive house where Tate and four others were killed was demolished, but Tate's ghost haunts the 'Oman house' next door and the El Coyote Cafe, where she dined on her final night alive.

Harlow's frequent co-star Clark Gable is another of Hollywood's ghosts haunting locations significant to them in life. Gable wed Carole Lombard in Arizona in 1939, but their married life was brief – Lombard was killed in

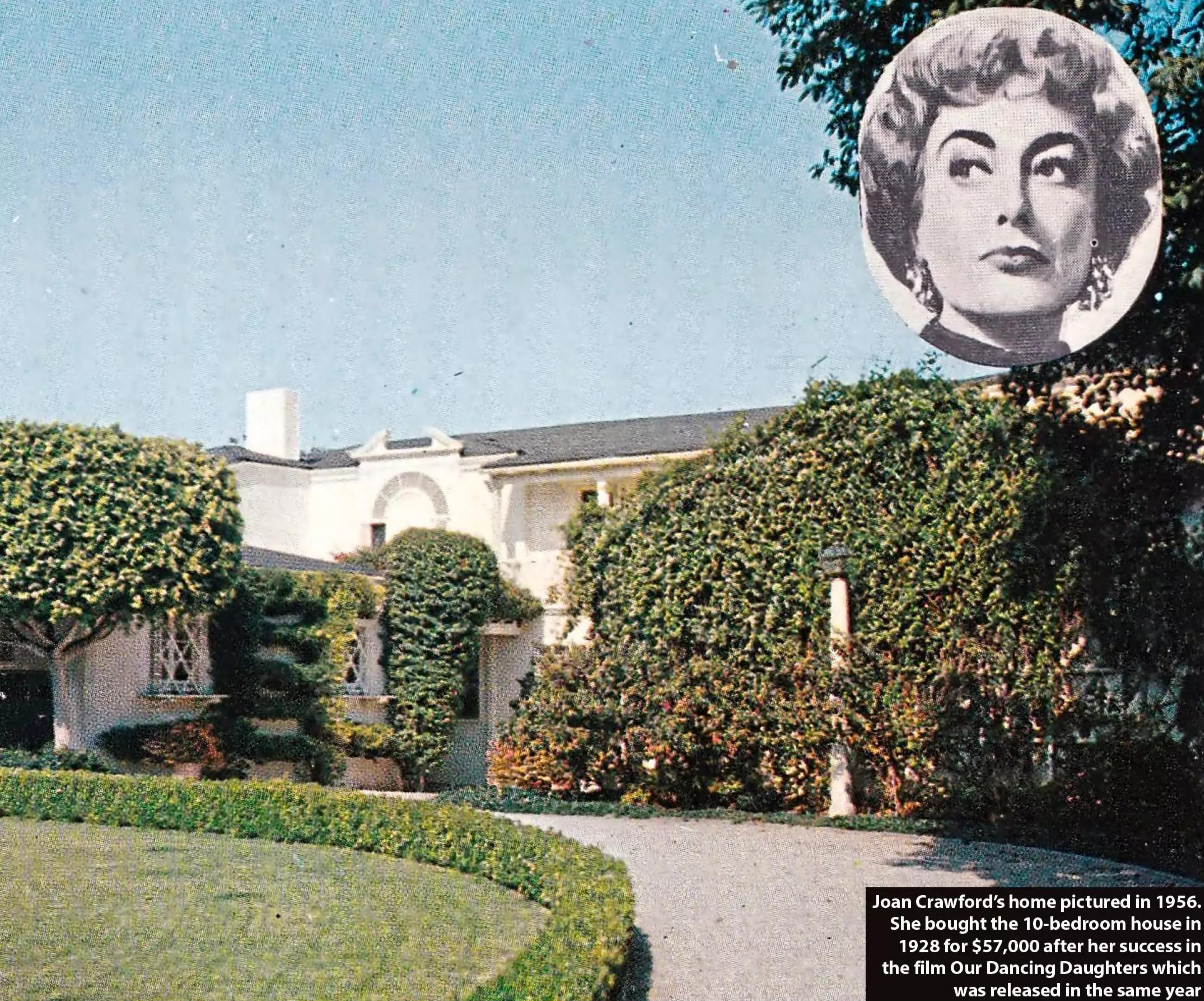


Director Nicholas Ray talking to James Dean at the Griffith Park Observatory while filming *Rebel Without a Cause*. Dean died a month before the film was released. Griffith Park itself is associated with several ghost stories and one curse...



a plane crash in 1942. The ghosts of Gable and Lombard haunt the Oatman Hotel, where they spent their honeymoon, while Gable's spectre walks alone at the Pioneer Saloon, Nevada, where the actor waited three days for news of his wife. Reports of a female ghost in the bathroom may be the lonely shade of Lombard herself. Her ghost has also been sighted by estate agents and psychics in the Hollywood home she rented between 1933 and 1937, including reports of her descending a staircase in a long red gown.

The notorious Errol Flynn was reluctant to give up the pleasures of life on Earth. Flynn's 'wicked ways' – booze and womanising – led to his early death aged just 50 in 1959. Flynn built a grand home in the Hollywood Hills, a farmhouse-style mansion on Mulholland Drive. Dubbed Mulholland House,



Joan Crawford's home pictured in 1956. She bought the 10-bedroom house in 1928 for \$57,000 after her success in the film *Our Dancing Daughters* which was released in the same year

the estate included a pool, tennis court and a casino. After Flynn's death, a gospel singer owned the home, before it passed to musician and actor Ricky Nelson in 1980. Nelson's daughter reported strange occurrences, describing the house as 'alive' and reporting sightings of Flynn's ghost. Nelson didn't live in Flynn's haunted house long – he died in a plane crash on New Year's Eve 1985. Was Flynn's ghost trying to warn Nelson of his tragic fate?

HAUNTED SOULS

Hollywood diva Joan Crawford died in 1977, but her spirit refused to quit the Beverly Hills home she'd bought in 1928. Every subsequent owner reported 'strange happenings' including repeated spontaneous fires and the sight of Crawford playing billiards! Crawford's spirit also swanned

around in a flowing white dress, while others heard the actress typing out one of her frequent letters on a manual typewriter. In 1989, the house owners summoned 'spiritual investigator' Reverend Rosalyn Bruyere to examine the paranormal activity; she described Crawford's former home as 'hub for spiritual energy'. Crawford's ghost also haunted the set of the 1981 biopic *Mommie Dearest*, starring Faye Dunaway as Crawford. Dunaway felt pursued by the 'tragic, haunted soul' of Crawford – on set she lost her voice, gowns disappeared, and an entire reel of film came out blank...

Finally, aged 45, Fifties TV Superman George Reeves shot himself in the bedroom of his Benedict Canyon home on 16 June 1959. Doubtful forensic evidence led to

suggestions Reeves was murdered, perhaps due to a love triangle between him, actress Toni Mannix, and her husband, MGM studio 'fixer' Eddie Mannix, rumoured to have mafia connections. The scene of the crime is haunted by Reeves in his Superman outfit pointing to bullet holes in the ceiling, and the sound of gunshots. No matter how often it was tidied, former home owners reported that Reeves's bedroom would be in a state of disarray and furniture would be repositioned. Even pets, such as cats and dogs, refused to enter Superman's haunted death room.

They say movie stars never truly die, but quite a few refuse even to fade away, still making their presence known in the places they loved the most.

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Many other ghosts have been spotted at Musso & Frank, including Errol Flynn, Jean Harlow and Orson Welles.

His favourite (screen) WIFE

Was Irene Dunne really
Cary Grant's perfect
leading lady? Chris
Hallam finds out...



Irene and Cary with innovative
director and comic genius Leo
McCarey. Under his direction,
Cary soon became so good at
improvising that it often led to
his co-stars breaking character



For some reason, the name Irene Dunne does not resonate down the corridors of Hollywood history as loudly today as it once did. This is surprising, for Irene was once a genuine star, widely lauded during American cinema's golden age as 'the First Lady of Hollywood'. She starred in 42 films and was nominated for an Oscar five times. She was a singer, actress and dancer and had a real flair for comedy. And she was rarely better than in the three films in which she starred opposite Cary Grant between 1937 and 1941. While Grant's struggle to find his permanent life partner saw him marrying five times, in Irene Dunne, he could at least claim to have found his perfect screen wife.

TRIUMPH FROM DISASTER

The year was 1937 and the film in production was in disarray. The movie was *The Awful Truth* and, as far as its three stars, Cary Grant, Irene Dunne and Ralph Bellamy were concerned the real awful truth was that the project was being steered to disaster by Leo McCarey, a novice director who didn't know what he was doing.

'At the end of the first day,' Bellamy remembered, 'Irene was

crying – she didn't know what kind of a part she was playing. Cary said, "Let me out of this and I'll do another picture for nothing". In fact, Grant went even further. At the end of the first week of shooting, he sent an eight-page memo entitled, 'What's Wrong With This Picture' to the notoriously tough head of Columbia, Harry Cohn. He also offered to pay \$5000 to be released from the film entirely. Cohn ignored him. The only one who seemed happy on the set was the dog actor, playing the couple's pet pooch, Mr Smith.

In time, however, the cast's faith in their director and his unusual methods grew. Recognising that the original script he was working from was 'terrible', McCarey encouraged his actors to play to their strengths by improvising large sections of dialogue.

Grant and Dunne played a married couple, Jerry and Lucy Warriner. The film opens with the Warriners' marriage breaking down over a fatal lack of trust. Jerry returns from a supposed holiday in Florida (he has, in fact, been playing cards in New York with 'the boys') only to find Lucy in the company of a handsome foreign voice coach, Armand (Alexander D'Arcy). With one or both parties possibly guilty of an extramarital affair (it is never clear), the couple ➔



Shot in just six weeks *The Awful Truth* was the only acting Oscar nomination for Ralph Bellamy (left). In 1987 he received honorary Oscar for his contribution to the acting profession

Irene loved *Penny Serenade* because the plot reminded her of her adopted daughter Mary Frances





Pet pooch Mr Smith (real name Skippy) was notorious for trying to bite the cast on set of *The Awful Truth*

divorce. Comic high points of the film included Grant noisily playing the piano during an unscheduled visit to the house to drown out the conversation between Lucy and her dull-witted prospective boyfriend (Bellamy) and Lucy's belated campaign to win Jerry back.

The end result was a screwball comedy triumph. The film was a box-office smash and McCarey won an Oscar for Best Director.

GOLDEN YEARS

In what seems like a further injustice, Grant was not even nominated for his great performance in *The Awful Truth*, but in some ways, it didn't matter. For this was the film that, for the very first time, transformed him into a genuine movie star. Grant's performance proved beyond all doubt that he had the range and



Cary felt this film, in which he had to break down and cry, was his finest performance

likeability to deliver in almost any possible role he was cast in. The next decade saw Grant secure a foothold in an avalanche of great films – *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), *Gunga Din* (1939), *His Girl Friday* (1940), *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944) and *Notorious* (1946). These were the golden years of Grant's Hollywood career.

He also starred in two more films with Irene Dunne: *My Favorite Wife* (1940) and *Penny Serenade* (1941). Both clearly had an excellent rapport on screen and off. But, while Grant enjoyed many romantic liaisons with a number of his female co-stars

over the years, his relationship with Dunne always remained platonic. Grant was between his first marriage to Virginia Cherrill (1934-35) and his second to the wealthy Barbara Hutton (1942-45), during this period. Dunne, a devout Roman Catholic remained happily married to her husband, dentist, Francis Griffin.

Grant remembered her fondly. 'Her timing was marvellous,' he said. 'She was so good that she made comedy look easy. If she'd made it look as difficult as it really is, she would have won her Oscar.'

Dunne retained fond memories of him too. 'Working with Cary Grant was different from working with other actors – he was much more fun!' she recalled. 'I think we were a successful team because we enjoyed working together tremendously, and that pleasure must have shown through onto the screen... I will always remember two compliments he made me. He said I had perfect timing in comedy and that I was the sweetest-smelling actress he ever worked with.' They were indeed the perfect screen couple.



Mary Lou Harrington and Scotty Beckett played the Ardens' children, Chinch and Tim, in *My Favorite Wife*

DID YOU KNOW?

Despite being nominated five times, Irene Dunne (like Cary Grant) never won an Academy Award. Alongside Agnes Moorehead, Rosalind Russell and Barbara Stanwyck, she is now widely regarded as one of the greatest screen actresses never to win an Oscar.

Masters of REINVENTION

Their extraordinary career spanned decades of musical innovation. Chris Twomey reveals how the Bee Gees' legacy goes far beyond the dance floor

For anyone who lived through the Seventies, there are certain unforgettable moments that summarise what life was like back then. There's probably no more iconic an image than the album cover of the Saturday Night Fever film soundtrack: John Travolta sashaying in his white disco suit in the foreground, the Bee Gees grinning slightly cheesily and more prominently in the background. Maurice, Barry and Robin Gibb, also white suited and booted, at the pinnacle of their career: the world's indisputable Disco Gods. ➤



DID YOU KNOW?

The Bee Gees started performing at sports events in Australia in the late Fifties to earn pocket money. It worked!

Forget David Bowie or Madonna, often heralded as the masters of reinvention, the Bee Gees were there first. Unlike The Beatles or The Rolling Stones, who took giant leaps forward from album to album, the Bee Gees completely reinvented themselves from decade to decade.

Their extraordinary lives began on the Isle of Man, they then went back to their dad's home city Manchester before the Gibb family moved lock, stock and barrel to Australia where the three brothers discovered they not only had a talent for songwriting, but when they melded their singing together, something truly magnificent happened. Younger brother Andy went his own way and had a briefly successful solo career before sadly dying of a drug overdose in 1988.

The early part of their career, which began in 1958, revolved around the skiffle which was de rigueur at the time. In Australia they gained traction and were invited on several TV shows. They slowly transformed into a very impressive folk/pop combo who eventually cornered public attention with their 1967 single Spicks and Specks a very catchy

Beatle-esque song that became a hit as the Gibb Family were returning the slow way home – by boat. The track was eventually declared Australia's single of the year. 1967 also saw them net two other massive hits: New York Mining Disaster 1941 and the US smash Massachusetts.

DISCO KINGS

But bands tended to get stuck in their own ruts back then, and one wave of success was all most could expect. Not the Bee Gees, though. On their return to the UK in 1967 they bumped into Robert Stigwood, the Australian-British impresario and entrepreneur who propelled them onto their next rebirth. The biggest one yet.

Their plan had been to entice The Beatles' manager Brian Epstein to manage them, but Stigwood, who was working for Epstein's NEMS company, pipped him to the post. Gradually they transformed from the slightly creaky has-beens into the hottest act in town: the disco boys who, for a couple of years, couldn't put a foot wrong. Hit after hit after hit: Night Fever, Jive Talkin', More Than a Woman, Tragedy... and so many more within just a couple of years.

And then suddenly it all went a bit quiet again. Barry recorded the enormously successful Guilty album with Barbra Streisand, and the brothers continued to write massive hit songs for the likes of Diana Ross and Dionne Warwick. But the Bee Gees themselves were briefly considered a legacy act much parodied by the likes of Kenny Everett and the Hee Bee Gee Bees, a spoof pop act (featuring Angus Deayton) who had a hit in 1980 with the rather cruel Meaningless Songs (In Very High Voices).

Until they started to become very relevant again. In the late Eighties and early Nineties, the brothers Gibb re-emerged as a mature, pleasingly melodic adult pop act... their last re-incarnation, which stuck with them to the end.

THE FAMOUS FOUR

Meeting the Bee Gees for the first time (and there would be two encounters in short succession) was a surreal experience. This writer had been a punk rocker and was therefore ideologically banned from liking their music. But it was all right actually. It was always there when you walked into a party or village disco – ha, ha,



Saturday Night Fever sold over 20 million copies and was the top-selling album in history until Michael Jackson's Thriller came out six years later



Robin, Maurice and Barry with brother Andy in Miami in 1978. Andy had three US No.1 hits as a solo artist by the time he was 21. He died just a few days after his 30th birthday

ha, ha stayin' alive stayin' alive – those slightly squeaky harmonies working perfectly together. And who could dispute that How Deep is Your Love is one of the sweetest songs ever written. It was difficult at times to dislike the enemy in the room.

And then the command arrived: The Bee Gees have a new album out and we'd like you to interview them. This was in 1993 and I arrived at a swish west London hotel, with its equally swish marble staircase leading up to a spectacular atrium (complete with palm tree!), only to spot Jesus, top of the stairs. Not the actual Jesus, obviously, but his doppelganger Barry Gibb.

'Hi Barry, I'm here to interview you.' He was slightly shorter than expected, given he looked like a giant on that Saturday Night Fever album cover. 'Great, nice to meet you.' A few minutes later we were escorted into a spacious



Rob Stigwood (left) with the brothers. In 1980 they sued Stigwood for unpaid royalties claiming the contracts they signed were predatory. Stigwood spent his later years as a near recluse living on the Isle of Wight

suite and joined by the very affable Maurice, who bounced around the room like a little puppy. I thought I was only interviewing Barry, so this was a nice surprise. And then Barry said 'Robin should be joining us later. He's currently stuck in traffic on the A40.'

Sure enough, Robin arrived. And then what followed was an extraordinary hour-long blokey chat where I forgot how famous these people were. It was like four guys in a pub talking about a shared love of music, about how their kids viewed their very famous dads (somewhat embarrassed, it turns out), about how fashions had changed – not always for the better – and eventually, their legacy.

In the meantime, Barry revealed he spent most of his time in Miami because he suffers from arthritis and he can't deal with the damp UK climate and kept talking about how his Miami neighbours Barbra (Streisand), Michael (Jackson) and Gloria (Estefan) kept popping around. Oh yeah, that's pretty normal then. But actually, it was completely normal to him because he'd been submerged in that

world for so long, and absolutely didn't need to namedrop.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

As for the Bee Gees' incredible legacy, the interview ended with me asking this simple question: Are there any misconceptions about the Bee Gees that get repeated?

Barry: There's probably the Fever one, that there was no life before it.

Maurice: As though it was the only thing we did good.

Barry: To us we made so many credible records that don't get remembered as much as Fever does because Fever made so much noise.

Robin: And in a sense it's still going on. We are one of the most successful groups in the history of music. We're very proud of Saturday Night Fever, we're very proud of the music we're doing now and of our history. I think we'll just keep going until we drop.'

Maurice Gibb died 10 years later in 2003. Robin Gibb in 2012. Which leaves eldest brother Barry, now 79, to continue to champion the Bee Gees' wonderful music on his own.

Barry and Barbra's hit single Woman in Love spent three weeks at No.1 and was one of the most successful songs of Streisand's long career



DID YOU KNOW?

Brothers Gibb are the third most successful band in US chart history... behind only The Beatles and The Supremes.

RETRO

Behind the lens

Howling at the moon

Jake Gwilliam charts the changing face of werewolf transformations on the big screen



Henry Hull was paid \$2750 a week for Werewolf of London



DID YOU KNOW?

Rick Baker has won seven Academy Awards for best make-up, most recently for *The Wolfman* (2010), a remake of the Lon Chaney Jr film that helped inspire him.

My my, grandma! What excellent special effects you have! All the better for scaring you with my dear!

Full moons. Big teeth. Bigger hair. Werewolves have become a mainstay of modern cinema, from *Twilight* to *Harry Potter*. Unlike many other movie monsters, the transformation from man to beast is often shown at painstaking lengths on screen. The bone-cracking, nail-growing, moon-howling metamorphosis is one of the werewolf's star appeals. This presented filmmakers with quite a large, and hairy, problem in the days before CGI. How do you show a total transformation, from man to wolf, on screen using practical effects?

Jack Pierce had an answer for 1941's *The Wolf Man*. With Lon Chaney Jr as a muse, Pierce was given the task of transforming the actor into one of the earliest cinematic depictions of a werewolf. The werewolf design for Lawrence Talbot, Lon Chaney Jr's character, was an adaptation of work Jack Pierce had originally done for the earlier *Werewolf in London* (1935). Henry Hull, who starred as the titular wolf, advocated for a more understated make-up so that his human face would still be recognisable.

No doubt he also found the incredibly laborious process of applying the creature's disguise unbearable. Lon Chaney Jr reportedly had to sit in Pierce's

chair for six hours to apply the make-up, comprised mostly of yak hair, and another three hours to have it removed.

The on-screen transformation is very subtly done. A distressed Talbot (Lon Chaney Jr), following an altercation with a wolf, stumbles into his study. Checking himself over for signs of change, he is relieved to find nothing on his arms or face. But when he sits and takes his shoes off, he finds his feet covered with a growth of hair. As the camera focuses on his feet, through a clever use of dissolve, one shot fades into the next and we see an incremental transformation, from slightly hairy foot to monstrous wolf paw. The full transformation becomes apparent when werewolf Talbot is seen stalking through the graveyard moments later.

BEASTLY FRENEMIES

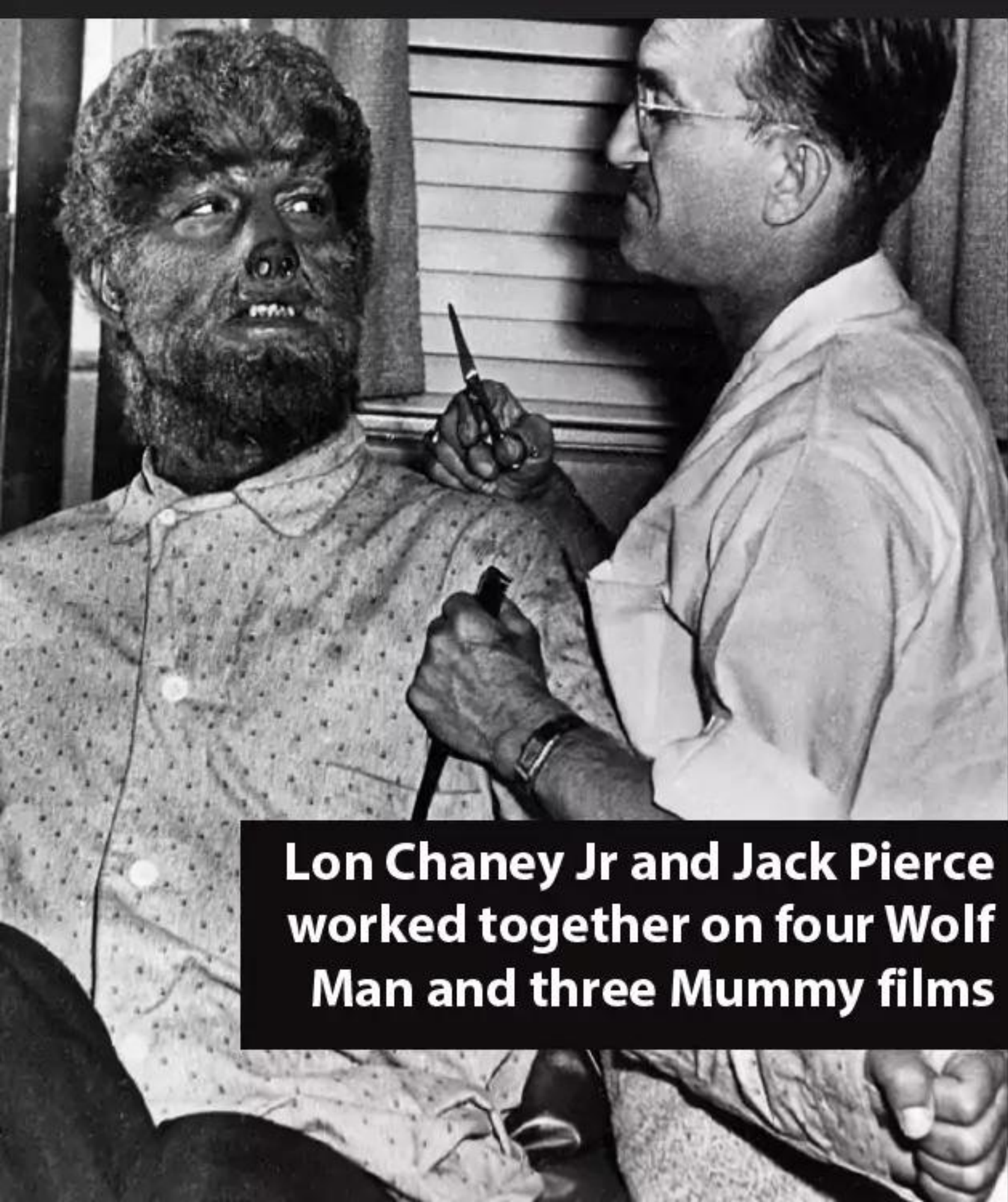
Jack Pierce and Lon Chaney Jr became frequent collaborators on the Universal Monster movies. Their partnership is often speculated upon with some suggesting that the long working hours led to a fractious and difficult relationship, while others argue that the pair had a mutual respect for one another's craft. 'What gets me is after work when I'm all hot and itchy and tired, and after I've got to sit in that chair for 45 minutes while Pierce just about kills me, ripping off the stuff he put on me in the morning,' Chaney said.



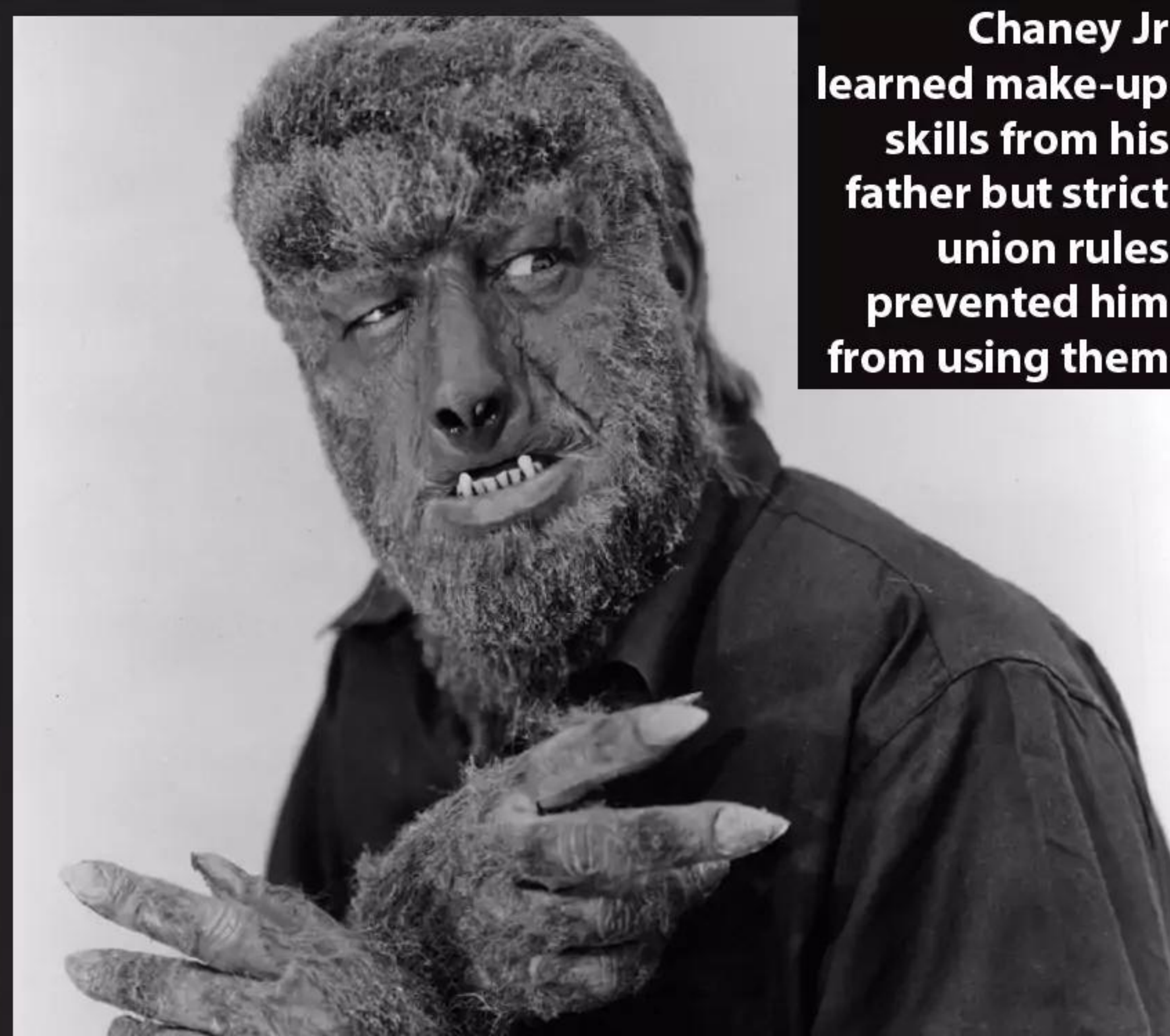
Rick Baker's first Oscar was presented by Vincent Price

Their next film together was *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (1943). Pierce had managed to cut down some of the time in the chair, but this time we see the face of Talbot as he transforms. As he lies in bed and a full moon becomes clear outside, Talbot begins to grow hairier and more beastly. The technique once again used a camera dissolve, which meant that Chaney had to keep his head in just the right position as incremental layers of hair and make-up were added as they shot only a handful of frames at a time.

It's no surprise, then, that Lon Chaney Jr referred to Pierce as ➤



Lon Chaney Jr and Jack Pierce worked together on four *Wolf Man* and three *Mummy* films



Chaney Jr learned make-up skills from his father but strict union rules prevented him from using them



Rick Baker perfecting David Naughton's look

David Naughton's facial transformation takes just seven seconds on screen



'the greatest goddamned sadist in the world' while also calling him 'one of the finest make-up men who ever lived.'

SEEING IS BELIEVING

It's a sentiment esteemed special effects artist Rick Baker agrees with. Citing him as a defining influence, Baker also said that no attempt at Frankenstein ever looked as good as Jack Pierce and Bela Lugosi.

While Chaney Jr and Pierce's werewolf helped to make the monster popular, Rick Baker, with the help of director John Landis, and actor David Naughton, would secure its status with 1981's *An American Werewolf in London*.

Created in part out of Landis's love for classic Universal horror films such as *The Wolf Man*, he was keen to show that the process of becoming a monster would be excruciating. Landis tasked Baker to 'figure out a way to do

a transformation, where you can move around and do things. And I want it to be painful.'

What we got, was exactly that. As Naughton transforms, he howls and screams for help. Hair growth is one thing, but what is perhaps most impressive is the way David's body appears to totally morph into a beast. His hands and feet elongate on camera, and we watch in horror as his face stretches to a wolf-like muzzle.

Baker accomplished this by creating casts of Naughton's body, then adding internal mechanisms that would expand and change shape. He noted a slight disappointment at the time of filming that what took months for him and his crew to create, only took seconds on film.

MAKE-UP MAESTRO

Adamant that the creature should be more wolf than man, Landis wanted the beast on four

legs rather than the traditional two. This presented a problem as, with one human actor in a suit, even on all fours they wouldn't move convincingly. Baker had a solution, inspired by, of all things, wheelbarrow races. Remembering the game from childhood, Baker had the puppeteer lie on a wheeled board with a wolf suit around it. Crew behind the wolf would control the movement, while the puppeteer would handle the head and legs. 'You never saw the rear end of the wolf because what there were two feet sticking out.'

Following increasing calls for better recognition within the industry the Academy instituted a new award, and the inaugural Oscar for Best Make-up went to Baker for his groundbreaking work on *An American Werewolf in London*.

Whether its Michael J Fox in *Teen Wolf* (1985) or David Thewlis in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), werewolves and the work it takes to bring them to our screens have become familiar in cinema. Though Jack Pierce may not have received much recognition at the time, his work helped to lay a foundation for special effects artists including Rick Baker accomplishing what previously may have seemed impossible... with just moonlight, the silver screen, and a lot of yak hair.



Before the film David Naughton was best known in America for a Dr Pepper ad campaign

DID YOU KNOW?

Jack Pierce was a lover of basketball, and coached the Universal Pictures team when they won the opportunity to represent the USA at the 1936 Olympics.

MOMENT IN TIME

• 14 November 1952 •

FIRST
UK NO.1
CHART
TOPPER

The UK's first singles chart, titled Record Hit Parade, was published and *Here in My Heart* by Al Martino (pictured below) was the first UK No.1. The chart was planned as a Top 12 but there were 15 records on it, because of ties at Nos.6, 7 and 11. Other hits included Jo Stafford (pictured below right) at No.2 with *You Belong to Me*, Nat King Cole in third place with *Somewhere Along the Way*, along with hits from Bing Crosby, Rosemary Clooney and Max Bygraves, with three entries by Vera Lynn.

The chart was the brainchild of Percy Dickins who co-founded *The New Musical Express* with journalist Ray Sonin. Publications were already printing a weekly chart for sheet music sales but Dickins, who was responsible for the NME's advertising sales, predicted that a weekly record chart would attract record company ads to the paper.

Rather than compiling sales figures for each record, Dickens phoned stores asking for their best sellers that week. He awarded 20 points to the top seller at each store, 19 points to the second-best seller and so on, then tallied up the totals to compile a chart.

A version of Dickins' method became the standard way of compiling charts for many years to come. In 1955 *Record Mirror* began putting together its own chart, with rival publication *Melody Maker* printing theirs from 1956.

Did you know?

Al Martino played singer Johnny Fontane in *The Godfather* (1972) and sang the film's theme *Speak Softly Love*.



'Brian Epstein was always phoning me to find out the chart positions'
Percy Dickins



**HOLLYWOOD'S
LOST
INTERVIEWS**



Retro is privileged to publish the 'lost' interviews of renowned journalist Roderick Mann. In the late Sixties Roderick spoke to Arlene Dahl about fame, fortune telling and femininity

'Trust in the stars'

When I ran across Miss Arlene Dahl she told me – with what I thought was considerable nerve – that, being a Sagittarius, the only women I could ever expect to be happy with were those born under the signs of Leo and Aries.

'The signs to avoid,' said Miss Dahl, (who is Leo herself) are Pisces, Cancer and Scorpio. All water signs. Hopeless for you. They're water signs. You're fire. They'll only put you out.'

'They will?'

'Of course. All fire people need air signs: Gemini, Libra and Aquarius.' She held up a hand and ordered some tea.

'If you study this business,' she said, 'you'd be amazed to find how much there is to it. After just a few minutes, you know, I can tell what sign a person was born under.'

'Sagittarians, incidentally, have always played a part in my life. My father is one. The rapport we have is quite extraordinary. Years ago, when I was modelling in New York

and going through a bad patch, I hadn't got enough money to pay the rent. And the very day it was due, an envelope arrived from my father – with the exact amount in it. How can you explain that?'

Tea arrived and, after I had drunk a cup, she made me turn it upside down and spin it round. Then she peered at the mound of leaves clinging to the base. 'Interesting,' she said. 'You're just emerging from under a black cloud...'

'You can say that again,' I said.

'You are just emerging from under a black cloud,' she said, obligingly. 'I see a chaise longue, and a dog and a violin.'

'I haven't got a dog,' I said.

'A dog means a faithful friend,' she said sharply. 'Surely you've got a faithful friend?'

'Not one who plays violin,' I said.

She peered more closely into the cup. 'It's Spain!' she said suddenly. 'The violin means music and dancing. Yes, it's definitely Spain.'

Suddenly she looked up. 'Do you know Ava Gardner?'

'I know Ava Gardner,' I said.

'She's got a chaise longue,' said Miss Dahl vaguely.

She put the cup down reluctantly.

'You know,' she said, 'you should read my book, *Always Ask a Man*. In it I try to show that women, especially American women, have become too aggressive for their own good.'

'Only the other day I read how, in a poll, American women admitted they dressed for other women. Good heavens! In no time at all we'll become a neuter race. I thought the idea was that we dressed for men.'

'Mind you, I approve of competition. After all, it's competition which keeps an awful lot of actresses looking sensational when other women of the same age are all ready for the old folk's home.'

'Women, you know, can be split into categories. I talk about this in the book. They're animal, vegetable, mineral or mental.'

'Ava Gardner, now, is animal; a panther. Liz Taylor is mineral; a stone, many-faceted. Marilyn Monroe was vegetable; a beautiful tomato. Clare Boothe Luce, [the writer and politician] now, is mental. Very, very bright.'

A waiter spiralled over with a faint show of distaste to clear the

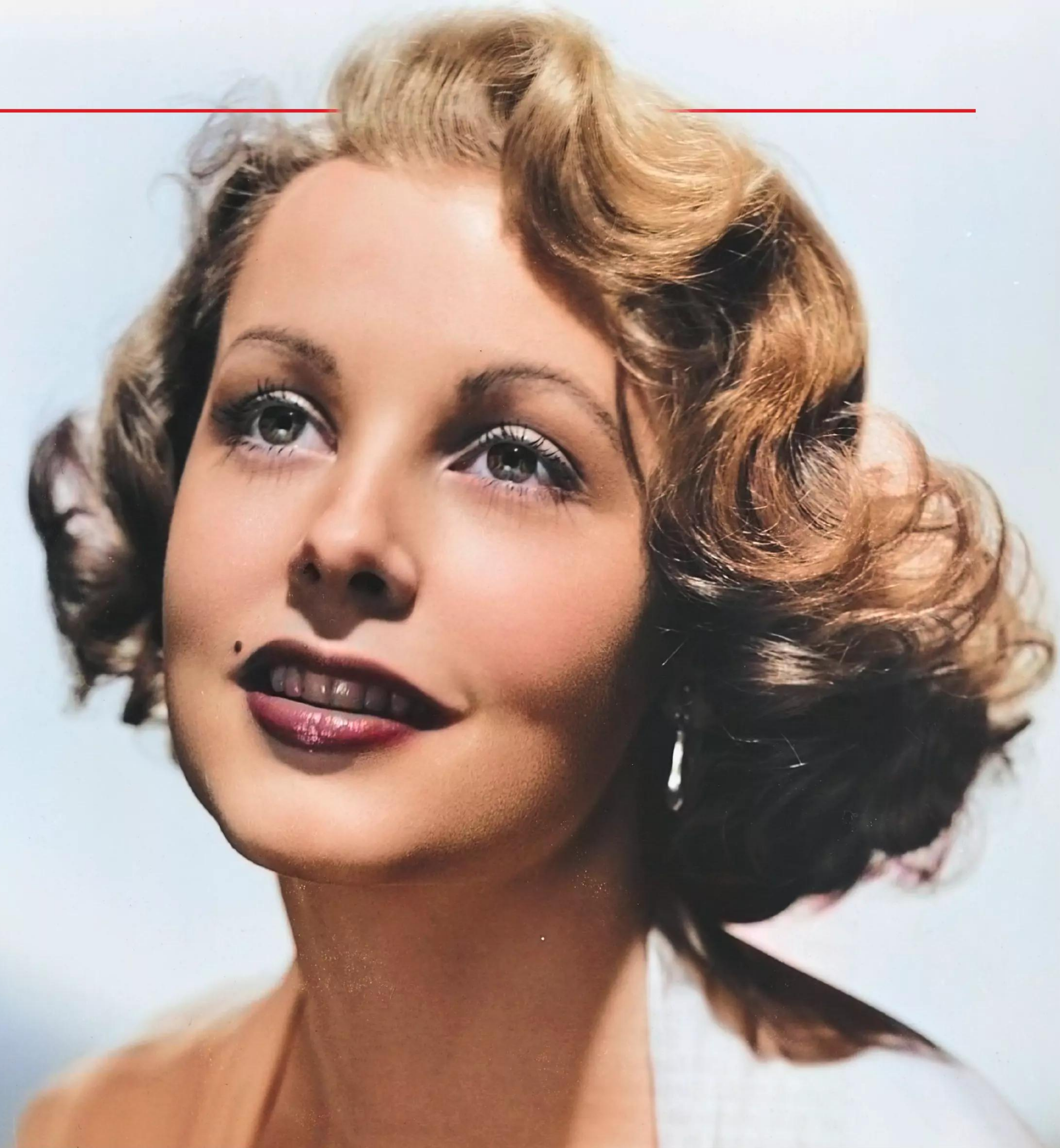


table which was now bespattered with tea leaves.

'Women,' said Miss Dahl firmly, 'should never show that they have brains. Men don't like it; they get scared.'

'Some men seem to think it's complimenting a girl to say she's brainy, but it isn't.'

'Brainy is the exact opposite of feminine, and any girl would rather be told she was beautiful than brainy. You can never tell

a woman she's beautiful often enough, you know.

'While on that subject,' I said, 'it occurs to me that not too many brainy women are asked to pose 'au naturel' in the American girlie magazine Playboy – which you did.'

'That's true,' Miss Dahl admitted. 'But as I said when I was criticised for doing it, I'm a working actress, not a stuffy institution.'

'I did worry about my father's reaction, though. But he was

marvellous. He said: "And to think I wanted a son".'

I left her at the lift. Arlene Dahl. Actress, authoress, nightclub vocalist and tea leaf temptress.

'Watch out for that chaise longue,' she called. 'Remember – the leaves cannot lie.'

Which way did Ava Gardner go? But wait – isn't she a Capricorn?

Interview written and edited by Roderick Mann

What do you get when
you cross Christmas
with a magazine?
A mag-nificent gift



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all under £20 with free delivery.
Now that's no joke!



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Reel obsession

Joy Auty from Coventry shares the seven films that have made a lasting impression on her

One of the first films I saw was **THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD**

(1938) (1). This version, in my view, cannot be beaten for pure fairytale entertainment. It starred swashbuckling Errol Flynn and the delicate Olivia de Havilland, with the marvellous Claude Rains and Basil Rathbone as Robin's adversaries. Maid Marian's horse Golden Cloud later became famous as Roy Rogers' horse Trigger.

In a very different vein is **BORN YESTERDAY (1950) (2)**. Judy Holliday's entrance, with a rasping voiced 'Whaaaaat!' following Broderick Crawford's bellow of 'Billieeeeeee', is just hilarious as are both the physical comedy and verbal sparring.

Another terrific comedy is **THE ODD COUPLE (1968) (3)**, with the irascible Walter Matthau and neurotic Jack Lemmon playing friends whose behaviours drive each other mad. It's funny, yet sad at the same time.

Walter Matthau is in another of my favourites, **THE TAKING OF PELHAM ONE TWO THREE (1974) (4)** which sees a group of thieves (led by the marvellous Robert Shaw) hijacking a New York subway car. It's tense and the

interplay between Matthau's policeman and the criminal mastermind is excellent.

Hilarious mishap and mayhem can be the only description for **IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD (1963) (5)**, in which just about every great American comic (plus Terry-Thomas) brings their own inimitable comedy to the fore. Loud-mouthed Ethel Merman, conniving Phil Silvers and rubber-faced Buddy Hackett are in a mad race across the country to find treasure hidden under a 'Big W'.

FATHER GOOSE (1964) (6) is quite a departure for the usually impeccably dressed Cary Grant – but he is fantastic as the scruffy alcoholic Navy plane spotter, isolated on a small island during the Second World War. Leslie Caron is a prim teacher also marooned there with a brood of schoolgirls. Gradually the pair warm to each other and hatch a plan to escape the island.

My family have had many happy times giggling at Laurel & Hardy's cleverly devised escapades. My favourite is **BLOTTO (1930) (7)**, when they plan to take Stan's wife's



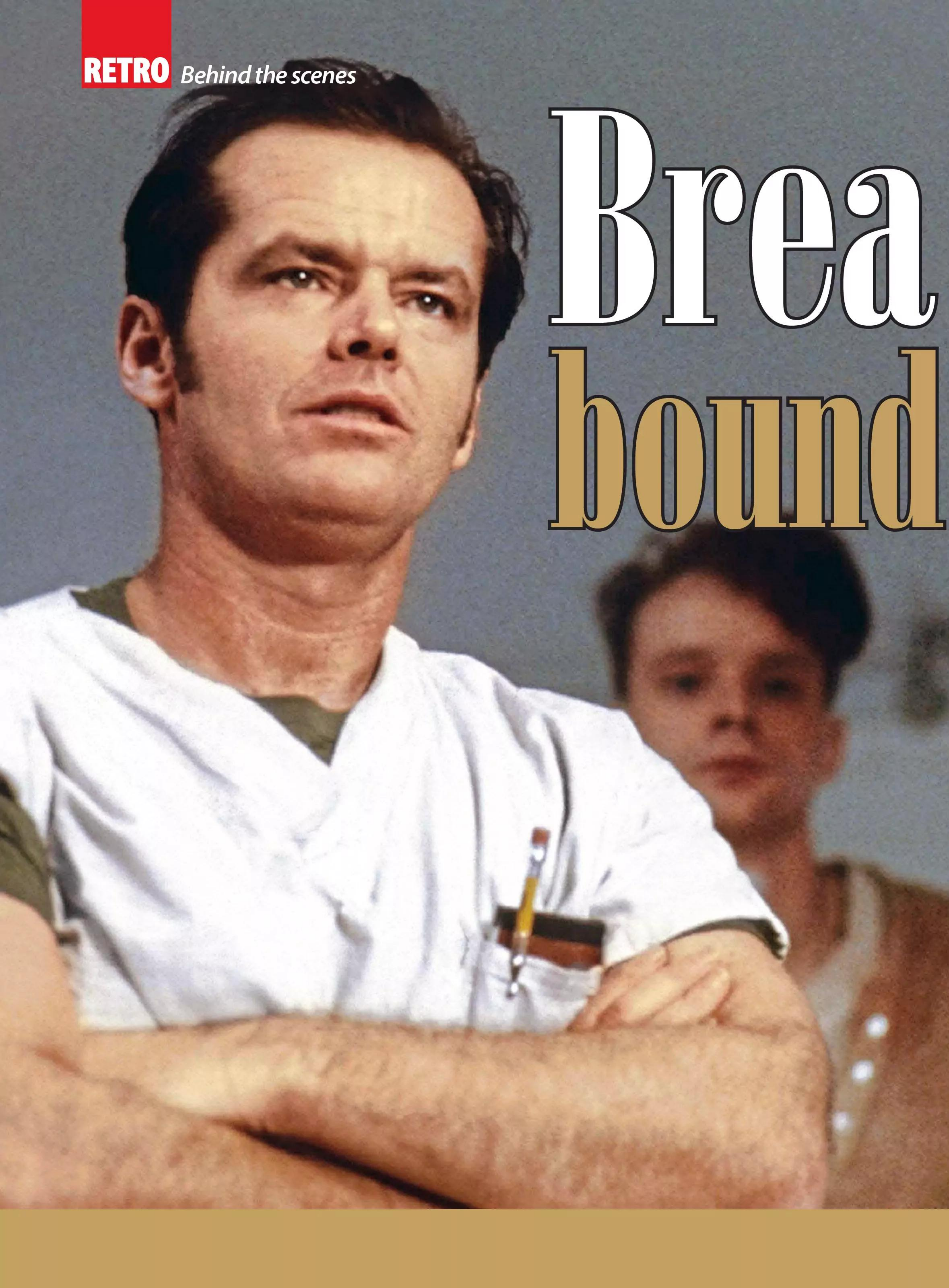
liquor and go to a nightclub without their wives. The sight and sound of them giggling as they 'think' they are getting drunk. When Stan's wife appears with a shotgun, announcing that what they've actually been drinking is cold tea, it immediately sobers them up.

Tell us your magnificent seven films and why they mean so much to you. Contact details on page 3

RETRO

Behind the scenes

Brea bound



King aries

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Co-producer Saul Zaentz entered the movie industry after a career as a record-label proprietor, earning a fortune from the hits of the group Creedence Clearwater Revival.



Danny DeVito was the first actor to be cast in this film, reprising his performance from a 1971 off-Broadway revival

Sean Egan discovers how a radical story about outsiders, told with authenticity and shot on a shoestring budget, ended up revolutionising both Hollywood standards and conversations about mental health

In 1976 a movie swept the board at the Oscars whose topic, timbre and milieu were such that many people were amazed it could have ever been made, let alone garner awards. Put bluntly, and in the un-PC lexicon of the time, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was about a bunch of freaks, loonies and psychos. Just as bad, the events in which they participated almost all occurred

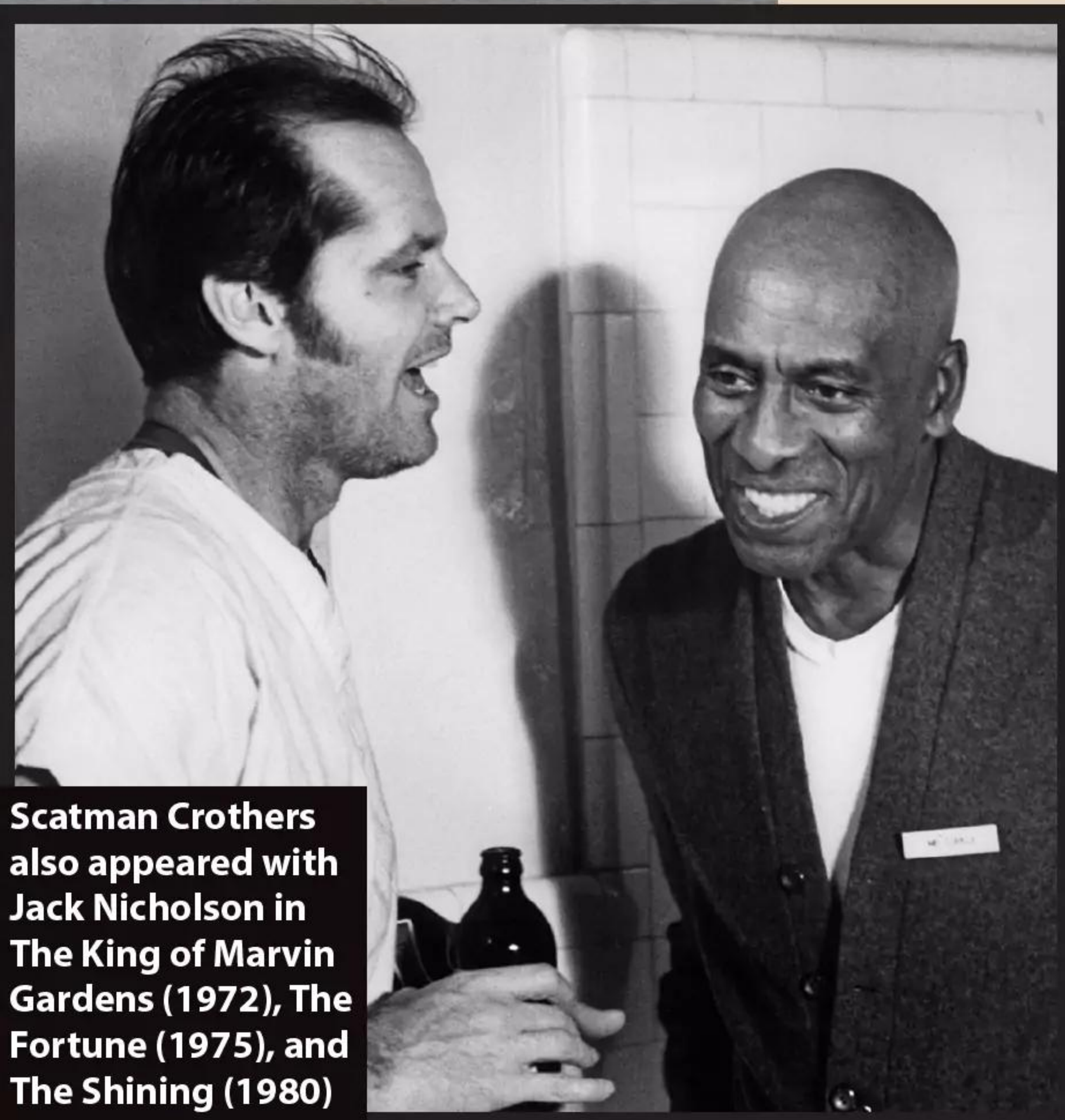
in the utterly sterile environs of a state mental institution. In the context of Hollywood glitz, the film was about as incongruous as could possibly be imagined. Its critical and commercial success, therefore, rewrote the rules of the movie industry.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest was originally a 1962 novel by Ken Kesey. It told the tale of Randle McMurphy, an habitual criminal

who, sentenced to imprisonment on a work farm, decides to escape the hard labour by feigning mental illness. However, he finds that the psychiatric institution in which he consequently ends up is even worse, with abuse of patients and in-fighting tolerated and encouraged by the sadistic supervising Nurse Ratched. He embarks on a campaign to undermine her and improve conditions, but doesn't count on the ruthlessness of the institution's regime, which ultimately lobotomises him so that he cannot cause any more trouble. 'Chief' Bromden, an oversized and ostensibly deaf-mute Native American, puts McMurphy out of his misery by suffocating him, before making his own escape.

UNKNOWN TERRITORY

The first adaptation of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was a 1963 Broadway show, which came about because actor Kirk Douglas was so impressed by the book that he bought the rights. The stage play had a stellar cast, including Douglas in the central role. ➔

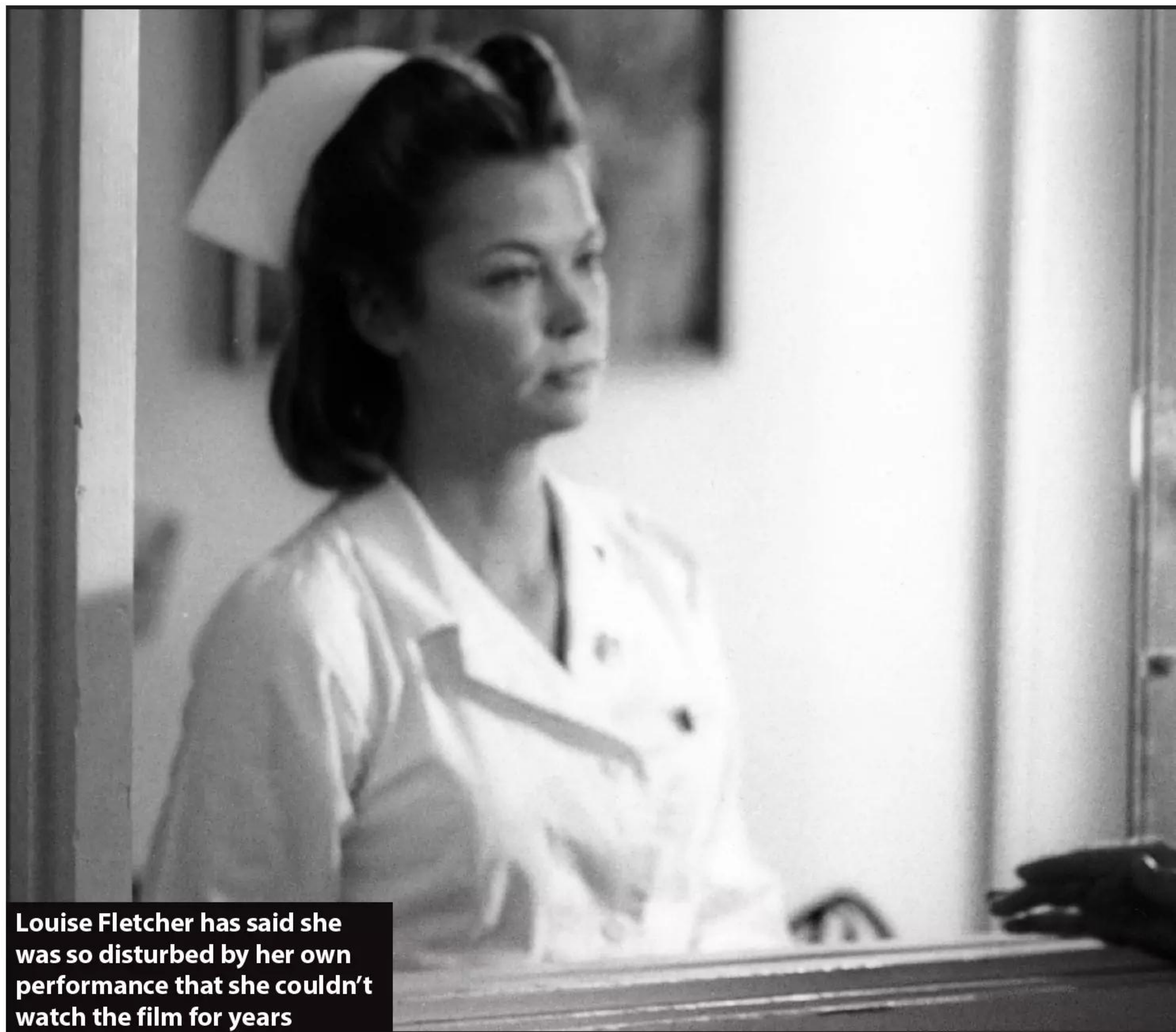


Scatman Crothers also appeared with Jack Nicholson in *The King of Marvin Gardens* (1972), *The Fortune* (1975), and *The Shining* (1980)

Douglas then endeavoured to get the property onto the silver screen, but had such difficulty that he lost interest and his son Michael – a budding producer as well as an actor – took over the project. Douglas Jr secured the services of his father's first choice of director, Miloš Forman. For Forman, the attraction was that he couldn't help but see the institution as a microcosm of his native Czech society. 'I know how these people feel,' he later said, no doubt to the bemusement of many of his compatriots.

Forman was a celebrated talent, but handily, he also came cheap. Hollywood studios transpired to be leery of a story populated with psychologically weak and physically odd characters. Consequently, Douglas and his production partner, Saul Zaentz, were obliged to shoot the film on a shoestring.

With the vast bulk of the film set in one small and utilitarian environment, the production's meagre finances were not



Louise Fletcher has said she was so disturbed by her own performance that she couldn't watch the film for years

necessarily going to be a huge problem. Moreover, aside from the lead role, Forman was determined to shoot with a cast of unknowns. The normal(ish) McMurphy, played by Oscar nominee Jack Nicholson, would represent the audience as they followed him into territory unknown to the general public.

CAPTIVE CAST

The casting is almost unsettlingly well-judged. Many of the actors have faces or physiques that make them – unkind as it may seem to say it – look like they genuinely are mental health patients, not least the wild-eyed Christopher Lloyd (later to become famous as Doc Brown in the Back to the

BOOK VERSUS FILM

Ken Kesey's acclaimed novel was hailed as a masterpiece, but the fact of its iconoclastic nature chiming with the times may have caused critics to overlook its shortcomings, which include a central character who is so poised and commanding as to feel superhero-like.

The film improves on the book in that area. Additionally, unlike the novel, it's not hamstrung by the practicality and plausibility issues involved in being seen through the eyes of the chief, who is in any case a deliberately unreliable narrator.

Where the film loses power is in the fact that the novel portrays Nurse Ratched in far more evil terms, showing her tolerating extreme maltreatment of patients, including implied sexual abuse. The clashes between Ratched and McMurphy in the film are largely about hospital procedure, and it's really a matter of opinion whether it's too authoritarian or simply something that's necessary in such a difficult environment.





Future trilogy) as Max Taber, the stocky, stropy Danny DeVito as Martini, and Vincent Schiavelli as the heavy-lidded, blood-drained, almond-faced Fredrickson.

Louise Fletcher as Nurse Ratched – cast after the role was spurned by several thespians, including Anne Bancroft and Angela Lansbury – is also an astute pick. Being an attractive woman dressed almost throughout in a nurse's uniform, she was fighting against the grain to convey something objectionable about her soul, but she had a pair of somehow dead-seeming eyes that handily served as shorthand for evil. Her acting chops did the rest.

No less astute was the decision to reject traditions of glamour and cast Nicholson. Although he has an undeniable charisma, he is dishevelled and thinning of hair. Gene Hackman and Marlon Brando declined the McMurphy part, but Nicholson was always Forman's first choice in any case and the only reason he wasn't immediately



Will Sampson went on to star opposite Clint Eastwood in *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976)

signed up was because he was contracted to make another film. So convinced was Forman that Nicholson was the right man that he persuaded the producers to stop exploring alternative possibilities and put the project on hold for six months until such time as Nicholson was free.

Perhaps surprisingly, the biggest casting problem revolved around the role of the chief, who had only a handful of lines to deliver. Although the character was less crucial in the film than in the book, he was still essential as the patient whom McMurphy considers his ally and the man who carries on his maverick legacy by breaking out at the climax. Finding an actor to play him proved difficult, simply because Native Americans are rarely large of

build. By pure happenstance, Michael Douglas met a man on a plane named Mel Lambert who was a provider of cars to Native Americans in the American Pacific northwest. Asked to look out for a big 'Indian', Lambert gave Douglas a call when he came across someone of that ethnic group named Will Sampson, who stood at 6ft 7in.

The auditions that Forman held for the supporting characters were not much different to the group therapy sessions depicted in the movie, with the actors invited in en masse and prodded into interacting with each other via Forman – taking the Ratched role – asking them random questions. ➡

DID YOU KNOW?

Mel Lambert was rewarded for finding the man to play 'Chief' Bromden by being given a role in the film as the harbour master who challenges McMurphy's right to take out a boat.

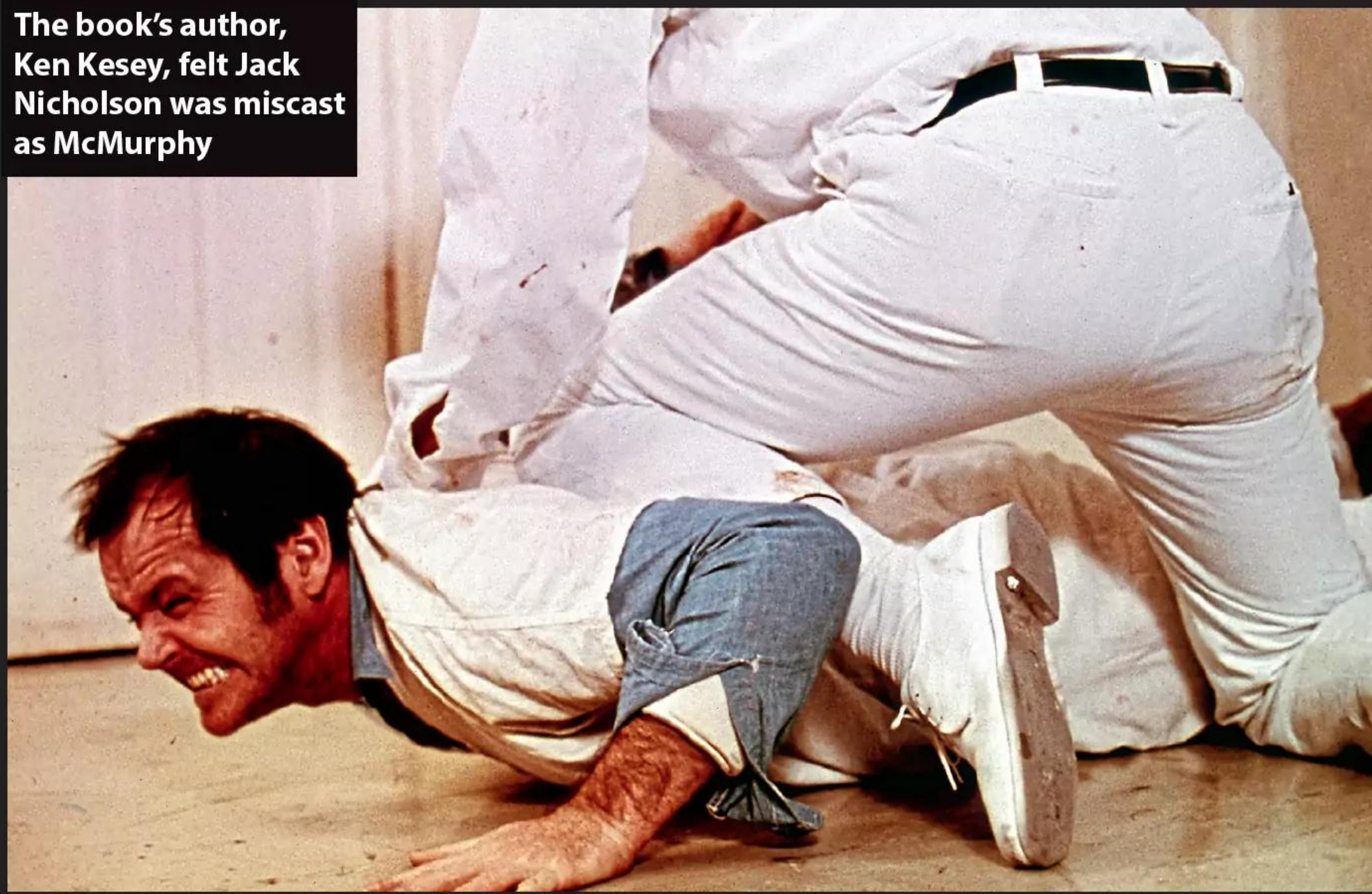
THAT IS NOT NATURAL!

Visually and geographically circumscribed as the film may seem, it was in fact shot entirely on location. The producers wanted a setting that had genuinely been used for the purposes in the story rather than a specially built set. The hospital they chose was Oregon State, which it so happens was where the original novel took place, but it was picked only because the staff there were familiar with the book. The decision also bagged them another cast member: the institution's superintendent Dr Dean Brooks was selected to play the movie's kindly but disapproving hospital head, Dr Spivey. He put in a surprisingly effective performance.

The actors would become amusedly familiar with scenes being brought to a halt by a mantra delivered in Forman's heavily accented voice, 'That is not natural!' Several measures were taken to ensure the authenticity for which Forman strived.

The start of the cast's rehearsal period was divided equally between running lines and settling into the dormitory where their characters lived. Some of the actors elected to sleep at night in the dormitory beds. The items on the nightstands beside those beds were personally chosen by the cast members. The actors got fully into the spirit by never breaking character, even during their leisure time. Forman ensured cameras were often

The book's author, Ken Kesey, felt Jack Nicholson was miscast as McMurphy



left rolling without the actors' knowledge so that scenes could be captured unselfconsciously.

PERSONAL PAIN

It so happened that Nicholson had recently gone through a very public trauma. A journalist had uncovered the fact that the woman whom he had always thought was his sister was in fact his mother. It has long been assumed that this fed into the manic edge to his performance.

Despite his inner turmoil, Nicholson impressed his colleagues mightily with his unselfishness, always ready to concede the spotlight and the best lines if it enhanced the scene. He also displayed incredible improvisational abilities, exemplified by him executing, without script or prompting,

a commentary on a baseball match on a switched-off television after *Ratched* refuses to let the patients watch the World Series.

Very unusually, almost all the scenes were shot in narrative sequence, thus enabling the actors to feel a through line in their respective character's progress. The sole exception was a segment in which Nicholson bunks the fence of the institution and hijacks a bus in order to take the inmates on an unauthorised fishing trip. Forman wasn't sure about this section because he felt that maximum narrative power would be obtained by the story taking place entirely within the claustrophobic walls of the institution. However, after

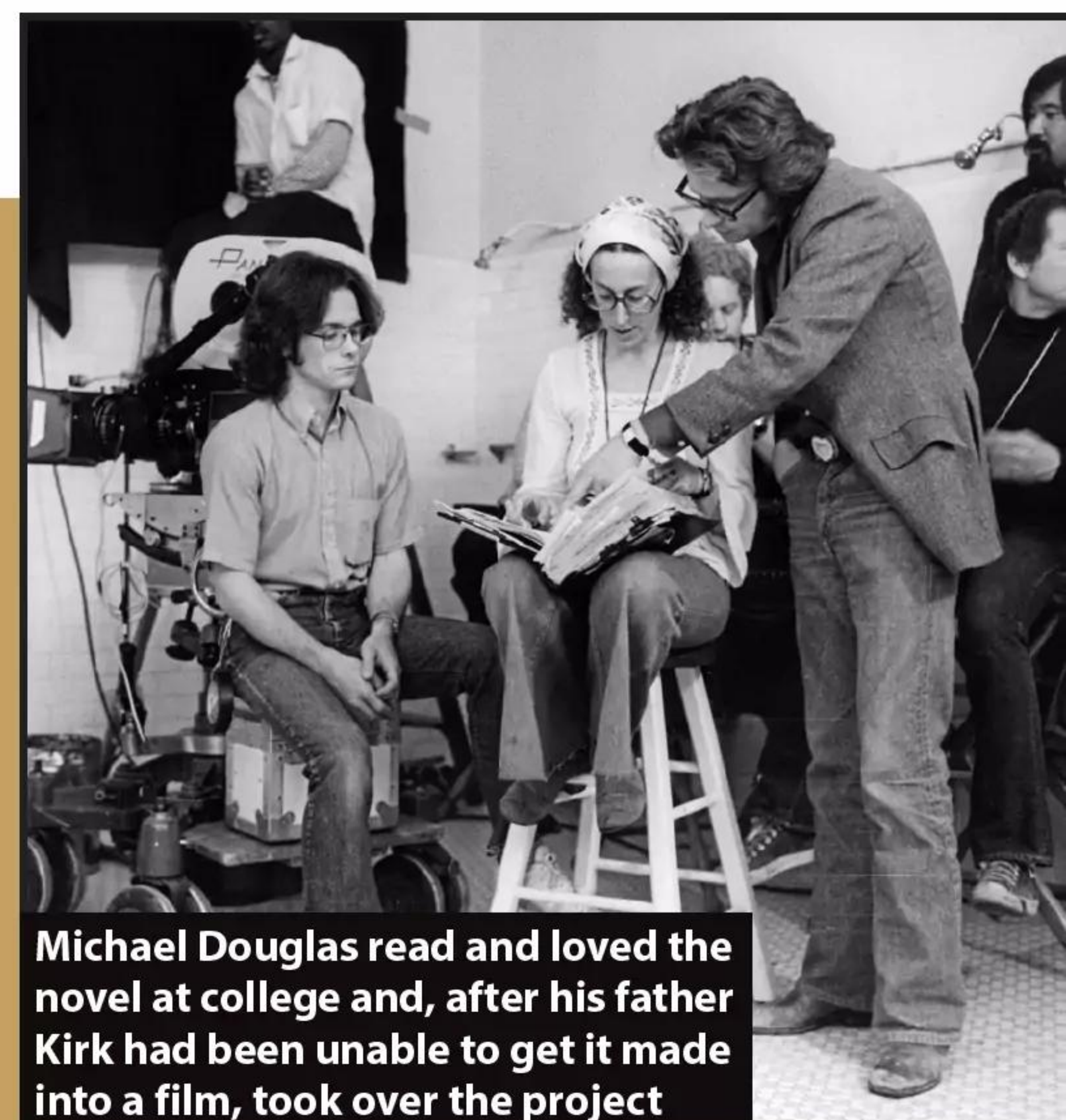
A TALE OF TWO SCRIPTWRITERS

The two novice movie writers credited for the *Cuckoo's Nest* script each won an Oscar, a Golden Globe and a Writers Guild of America Award. From this equal start, they went on to have vastly differing careers.

Lawrence Hauben, an actor by trade, turned in a first script that was felt to be a naïve, over-literal transfer of the book's contents. Bo Goldman was brought in to do a rewrite because

it was thought he could create something with real resonance.

Goldman ultimately had a string of well-known movies to his name, including *The Rose* (1979), *Shoot the Moon* (1982), *Scent of a Woman* (1992) and *Meet Joe Black* (1998). He won a second Oscar for his screenplay to 1980's *Melvin and Howard*. Hauben, on the other hand, never wrote anything else before his death from cancer in 1985.



Michael Douglas read and loved the novel at college and, after his father Kirk had been unable to get it made into a film, took over the project

TOP 5 BOX OFFICE GOLD...

JAMES CAGNEY



Yankee Doodle Dandy (1942)
\$546.4m



Mister Roberts (1955)
\$484.2m



Blood on the Sun (1945)
\$326.4m



Angels with Dirty Faces (1938)
\$281m



Love Me or Leave Me (1955)
\$260.5m

* Adjusted domestic box office gross using current movie ticket price (in millions) according to ultimatemovierankings.com



Jack Nicholson took a profit percentage in lieu of a small salary. The move paid off – the picture grossed over \$120 million

shooting it last and trying it in the designated place, he was won over to its merits. It certainly provides some of the film's most amusing moments, as the inmates sometimes exhibit less interest in fishing than in sniffing the bait and vainly trying to re-insert dead marine creatures' displaced eyes.

The scene in which the chief performs a mercy killing after finding, to his horror, that McMurphy has been rendered a vegetable was highly moving to cinema audiences, but even more so to cast member Sydney Lassick (the perpetually whinging Charlie Cheswick), who cried so much he had to be removed from the set. After that, the chief tears a huge sink unit from its moorings and hurls it through a window in order to make his escape. It was the only scene that required no retakes. The film's final shot is a beautiful piece of cinematography in which the camera simply lingers on the fleeing chief as his figure grows ever smaller against a picturesque natural backdrop.

After being turned down by every distributor except United Artists, the picture proceeded to amaze the film industry by the

chord it struck with the public. Despite not being released until 19 November 1975, it was the second highest-grossing movie in the US that year, and it then proceeded to be the highest grossing film of 1976.

THE BIG FIVE

It was just as popular with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, nominated for nine Oscars and becoming only the second movie ever to win the 'Big Five': Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best [Adapted] Screenplay. To this day, only one other film has swept the board in this way.

It also had a real-life impact. Michael Douglas credits *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* with making the mentally ill less inhibited about speaking about their condition. 'The film allowed them to be seen as human beings,' he said.

The film's most enduring industry achievement was in proving a valuable principle: that notions of acceptable beauty or palatable subject matter are, in the end, far less important than great acting, fine direction and heart-rending storytelling.

Karan David as Sita, Julie Dawn Cole as Jo, Clare Clifford as Shirley, Angela Bruce as Sandra, Érin Geraghty as Maureen, and Fiona Fullerton as Patricia



We're no Angels

Fifty years ago, a new series revolutionised the hospital-drama genre and had millions of viewers hooked. Steve Cain looks back at the impact of *Angels* and its lasting legacy

Long before *Casualty* (1986-) and *Holby City* (1999-2022), the BBC produced a groundbreaking hospital drama that kept viewers gripped. Chronicling the personal and professional lives of student nurses in the modern NHS, *Angels* (1975-83) ran for nine seasons (220 episodes). Conceived by Paula Milne, who had been a nurse herself, it was to be in the docu-drama style – the hospital equivalent of *Z-Cars* – gritty and uncompromising.

From the start *Angels* took a far less romanticised view of the role of nurses than shows like *Emergency-Ward 10* (1957-67) and *General Hospital* (1972-80) and, in doing so drew criticism in the press for its portrayal of aspects of their lives, which included alcoholism and promiscuity. Some real nurses objected too, claiming that the TV versions were mostly idle, coarse and insensitive. Julia Smith, who was a director of the series at the time, dismissed these protests, saying, 'There are a lot of tensions in a young nurse's life; it's no wonder some of them turn to drink. When you're 18 you've got a lot of growing up to do.'

Despite the criticism, *Angels* won over audiences and, even though it was shown opposite ITV's flagship soap, *Coronation Street*, it averaged a very respectable 12 million viewers per episode.

GROUNDBREAKING

The writing team, who were mostly female, included Jill Hyem and Anne Valery (who

together later co-wrote *Tenko*), and Adele Rose, who also wrote for *Coronation Street*.

'The scripts were very well researched,' says Julie Dawn Cole, who played second-year student nurse Jo Longhurst. 'The six of us, who were the original *Angels*, all had quite strong storylines – and to have a predominantly female-led drama that focused on young girls was unheard of. Up until that point, women on television were just eye candy.'

The series covered many controversial issues. 'We were the first to show a bare female breast in a hospital drama,' says Érin Geraghty, who played the naïve and unworldly Maureen Morahan. 'And we had the terrifyingly strict Sister Easby, played by June Watson, who turned out to be a lesbian – we didn't have such things on television in those days! It broke boundaries and was quite gritty for its time – and pre-watershed.'

In 1979, to strengthen the BBC's prime-time schedule, *Angels* was broadcast twice-weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The change in format coincided with Julia Smith taking over from Ron Craddock as series producer.

'Julia's goal had been to turn it into a soap, kind of a forerunner to *EastEnders*,' says Julie Dawn Cole. However, the decision was not popular with many of the original cast. 'I think us main girls were a little disappointed,' says Érin. 'The decision to "soap it up" seemed also to dumb it down.'

Smith's dictatorial approach also affected morale on set. 'Julia was a tough cookie,' says Julie. 'She'd often cast people she'd taught at Webber Douglas [Academy of Dramatic Art] because she knew she could rule the roost and intimidate them. They were terrified of her, everybody was terrified of her. She was formidable.'

The success of the series meant that its leading actresses had to endure increasing attention from the tabloid press. 'If there was a bit of scandal, the media would find it,' says Érin. 'But they didn't go poking in your bins or hacking your phone. I'm grateful we had our wild days – because the *Angels* girls worked hard and played hard – before social media and camera phones.'

While *Angels* made household names of actors including Érin Geraghty, Julie Dawn Cole, Lesley Dunlop and Clare Clifford, the series also featured established performers in guest-star roles.

FAMOUS FACES

'We had some lovely old girls in it,' recalls Érin. 'We had Irene Handl, June Brown, Rita Webb, Jean Kent – all these comedy greats. They would come in and do a few episodes as patients on the ward.'

'Miriam Margolyes played a district nurse, and she taught us so much and told lots of hilarious stories – none of which I can tell you!'

Twice during its run, the possibility of transmitting *Angels* every week of the year was investigated. It was deemed that it was technically too complicated a series to sustain for 12 months, so the idea was shelved on both occasions. However, feasibility studies suggested that viewers wanted an all-year-round drama series, and BBC bosses were warming to the idea of having their own successful 'soap'.

Angels finally finished in December 1983, vacating the slot that would be occupied by *EastEnders*, co-created by Julia Smith, little more than a year later. Yet, the impact of the series cannot be disputed.

It played a pivotal role in redefining the hospital drama, thus providing a link between the quaint *Emergency-Ward 10* and the hard-hitting *Casualty*.

Julie Dawn Cole began her career playing Veruca Salt in *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971)



RETRO *In focus*

Disney's long road TO OZ

Like Dorothy herself, Walt Disney found Oz to be full of unexpected challenges and daunting obstacles. JD Savage recalls his studio's decades-long attempt to follow up a beloved Thirties classic, leading to one of the darkest children's films Hollywood ever produced



DID YOU KNOW?

For the flood that takes Dorothy to Oz, a fast-flowing river was created on Elstree's Stage, with submersible pumps churning the water and hydraulic wires making the chicken coop bob like a boat.

L Frank Baum's novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* first appeared in 1900, introducing young readers to a fantasy world so vivid it seemed destined for the big screen. But the early silent adaptations, from shorts by Chicago's Selig Polyscope Company to full-length features from Baum's own Hollywood studio, all flopped.

In 1939, two decades after Baum's death, Oz's big-screen prospects changed. With a budget of \$2.8 million, MGM's lavish musical adaptation, *The Wizard of Oz*, was its priciest production to date. Judy Garland led a pitch-perfect ensemble in a Technicolor gem that ushered in the studio's golden age of musicals.

It didn't initially break even at the box office, but went on to have the longest continuous exposure of any film of the time. Regular re-releases kept it alive in theatres until television sealed its immortality.

In 1956, MGM leased the movie to CBS for an initial four broadcasts, netting \$900,000.

CBS aired it in November to an estimated audience of 35 million, saving the next screening for three years later, when regular annual TV broadcasts began and rewatching *The Wizard of Oz* became a tradition passed from generation to generation.

Walt Disney had long wanted to make his own Oz film, initially seeing it as an ideal follow-up feature to *Snow White* and the

Seven Dwarfs (1937). It was a major blow to discover MGM had already snapped up the rights, but he never let go of the dream. From 1954 to 1956, he bought the rights to Baum's 13 Oz sequel novels, and the film's TV triumph in 1956 could only have strengthened his resolve to bring Oz to life Disney-style.

Surprisingly, he initially envisioned the project as merely a two-part episode for his weekly TV show, *Disneyland*. But the material and his ambitions quickly outgrew the small screen. The project, titled *The Rainbow Road to Oz* and initially based on the seventh book, *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, was soon upgraded to a high-budget theatrical feature.

Yet Disney still planned to cast Darlene Gillespie (as Dorothy Gale), Annette Funicello, Cubby O'Brien, Bobby Burgess and their fellow fresh-faced Mouseketeers from his *Mickey Mouse Club* TV show in key roles.

MOUSEKETEER MUSICAL

Production was slated to start in November 1957, from a 115-page script written by Bill Walsh, who would later produce *Mary Poppins* (1964). Buddy Baker and Sid Miller began writing songs. To drum up interest, Walt staged a short preview for the 'Fourth Anniversary Special' of his *Disneyland* show. In a playful framing sequence, the mouse-eared poppets present 'Uncle Walt' with a shooting script and character designs in an attempt

to persuade him to abandon his animation plans and let them star in a live-action Oz film ('We've got to think of our future.'). They sway him into agreement by impressively performing sample numbers, *Patches*, *The Oz-kan Hop* and the title song in full costume. Yet these teasers were all the public would ever see of *The Rainbow Road to Oz*.

POISONED CHALICE

Officially, the movie lingered in development for years, cited as a multimillion-dollar spectacular likely to see release in 1963. In reality, it had clearly stalled and seemed to fizzle out completely after Walt's death in December 1966.

Disney's inaction may have been a blessing in disguise. Once Baum's novels slipped into the public domain, other filmmakers rushed in with results that rarely sparkled like Oz's *Emerald City* and barely registered. Not even the combined star power of Diana Ross and Michael Jackson could save the grandest attempt, the 1978 film adaptation of the Broadway musical smash *The Wiz*, from box-office disaster.

By the late Seventies, Oz seemed like a poisoned chalice, and Disney's long hesitation almost looked like uncanny foresight. But, in the next decade, ambitions for a Disney Oz film were unexpectedly revived – and then nearly crushed again. ➤

Dorothy was Fairuza Balk's first big-screen role



Jean Marsh played both Nurse Wilson and the creepy head-swapping Mombi



NEW DECADE, NEW DISNEY

By the early Eighties, the studio was experimenting with some very un-Disney-like projects. The *Watcher in the Woods* (1980) and *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1983) veered close to being horror movies for children.

In 1980, Walter Murch, respected as one of Hollywood's finest film editors and sound designers, found his name was on a shortlist of rising talent on the desk of Disney production vice-president Tom Wilhite.

Wilhite was intent on refreshing Disney with bold new voices, and the two discovered a shared passion for the Oz books. Murch was handed the keys to a world he'd loved since childhood, backed by a major studio finally ready to take risks. They agreed the new film would not be a musical. Yet Murch had never directed before, Disney's darker direction was an uneasy fit with its family-friendly legacy, and Murch's choice to leapfrog over the highly popular 1939 movie to return to Baum's books only deepened the gamble.

Cheaper construction costs pushed the shoot to Elstree, Hertfordshire, with location work across England. Instead of costumed actors playing Oz characters in the original movie's vaudeville tradition, this new film would embrace cutting-edge animatronics. Murch wasn't fazed as the puppetry and effects were entrusted to veterans of the *Muppets*, *Star Wars* (1977) and *The Dark Crystal* (1982). Special-effects

Tik-Tok captures the Lead Wheeler, forcing him to take them to Mombi's castle



pioneer Zoran Perisic, famed for making Christopher Reeve fly in *Superman* (1978), also bolstered the team.

Casting Dorothy took a long time. Ten-year-old Fairuza Balk, the youngest candidate considered, was finally chosen, but strict child-labour laws limited her to just four working hours per day.

YOU'RE FIRED!

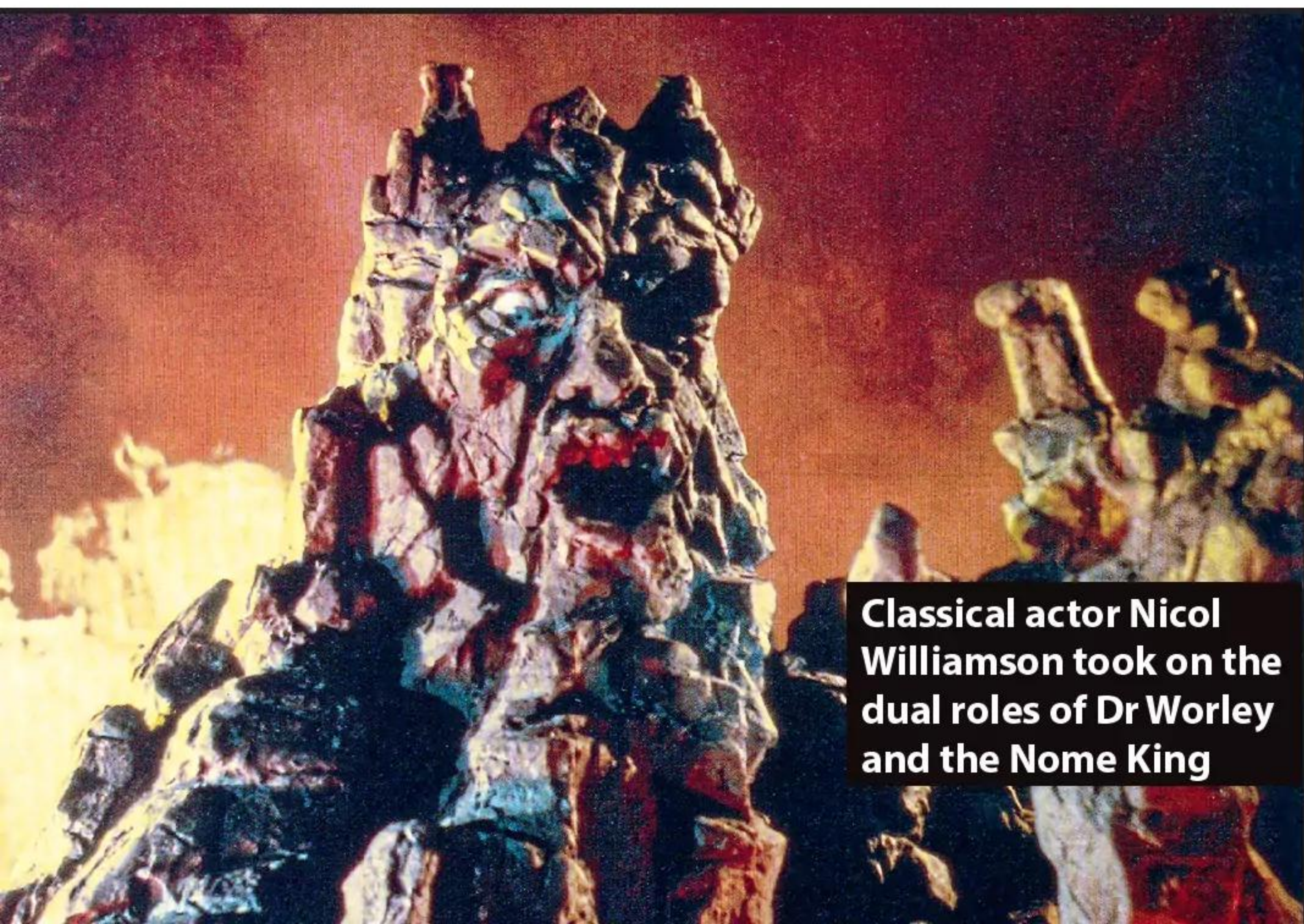
Eight weeks before filming, Disney abruptly halted production. It only restarted when new producer Paul Maslansky persuaded executives he could rein in its runaway budget. Once cameras rolled, however, Murch struggled to translate his ideas, his daily usable footage fell

well below requirements, and the shoot began slipping by nearly a day a week. He was fired.

In came the Hollywood cavalry. Murch had been a trusted technical collaborator for George Lucas, Steven Spielberg and Francis Ford Coppola early in their careers, and the powerful filmmaking trio now rallied to his side. They persuaded Disney to reinstate him, briefly stepped in to steady the production, and even promised to intervene if further trouble arose.

RETURN TO OZ

In the finished film, *Return to Oz* (1985), nearly a year has passed since Dorothy's adventures over the rainbow. Her Aunt Em



Classical actor Nicol Williamson took on the dual roles of Dr Worley and the Nome King



Dorothy and friends build a flying machine with sofas, a broom and the Gump (a talking moose head)



The Tin Man was brought to life by Deep Roy

dismisses her recollections of a living Scarecrow, Tin Man, Wicked Witch and others as recurring nightmares. She whisks Dorothy off to a sinister institute – screams ringing down its corridors – for quackish electric shock therapy. An older girl (Emma Ridley) who will later turn out to be Princess Ozma, rightful ruler of Oz, helps her escape, but a powerful storm and flood whisk Dorothy, afloat in a chicken coop, back to Oz. But the Yellow Brick

Road has been reduced to rubble, and the Emerald City lies in ruins, its citizens turned to stone or captured. This darker approach continues to overwhelm the whimsy as Dorothy is attacked by Wheelers, cackling men with wheels instead of hands and feet.

The fantastical inhabitants of Oz were vividly brought to life. Animatronics expert Lyle Conway created Billina, Dorothy's chatty hen companion,

a life-size replica with remote control units and over 100 moving parts crammed into her tiny head alone.

Trampolinist and later Blue Peter presenter Michael Sundin operated rotund soldier robot Tik-Tok from inside its stomach, with his head between his legs, viewing the world upside-down through a monitor. He had to walk backwards to make Tik-Tok move forward and could only endure the costume for under three minutes due to limited air.

The Nome King, a tyrant of living rock, has taken over Emerald City. Animator Will Vinton's Claymation-style effects depicted his evolution from rock to a more human-like appearance, eventually embodied by actor Nicol Williamson in three-and-a-half hours worth of rocky make-up.

Perisic created the eerie head-switching sequences for the headless Princess Mombi (Jean Marsh), who stored a hallway of disembodied heads to exchange atop her neck, Worzel Gummidge-style.

NIGHTMARE FUEL

A less-than-supportive Disney was unsure how to market the \$25 million movie and, when *Return to Oz* premiered in June 1985, it was a box-office flop, earning just \$11.1 million.

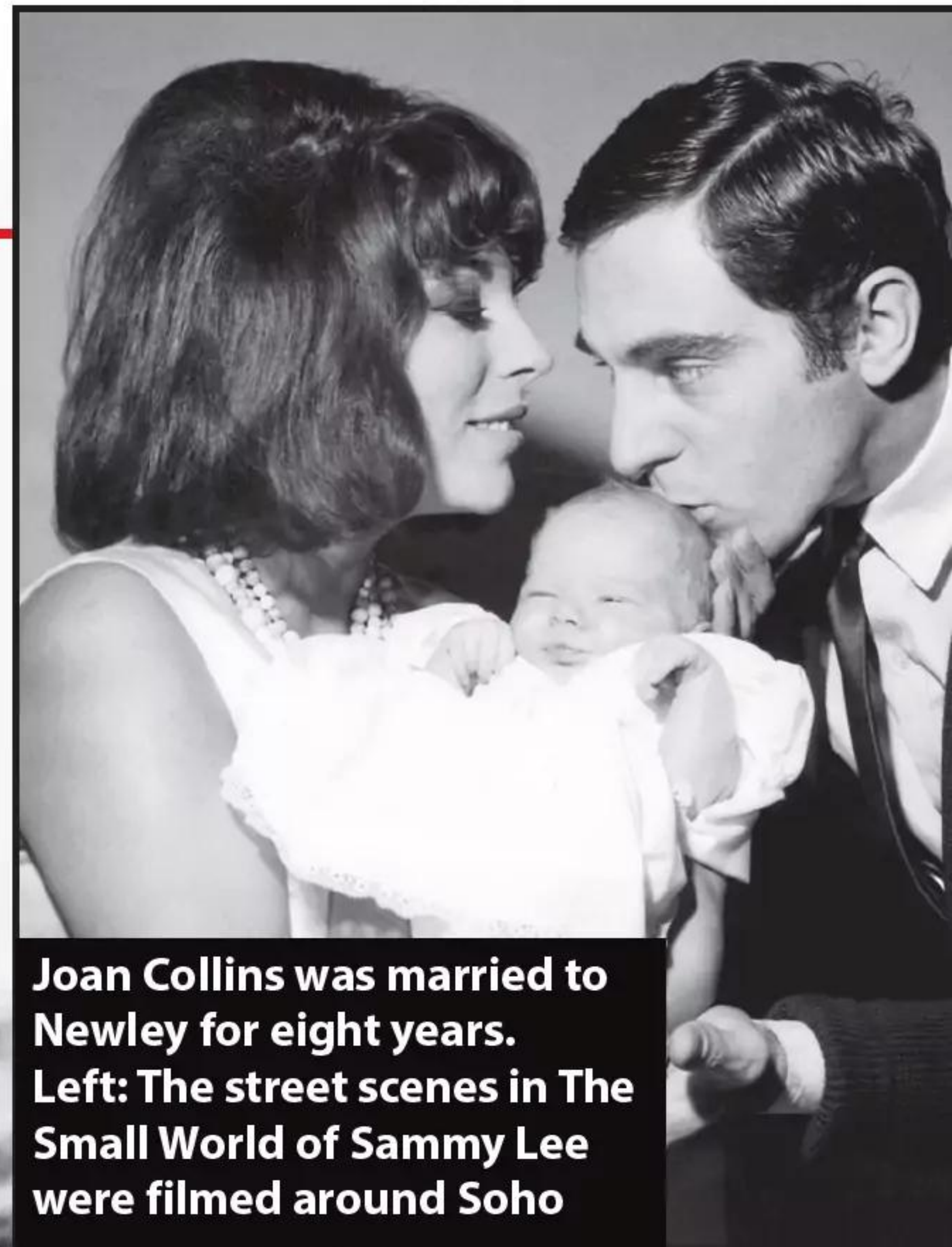
Many children found it pure nightmare fuel, and Murch would never direct another film.

Measuring it against the original *Wizard of Oz* musical and Disney's usual fare, audiences may have expected something more uplifting. In hindsight, however, it sits neatly alongside the decade's dark-tinted family fantasies like *The NeverEnding Story* (1984), *Labyrinth* (1986) and *The Dark Crystal*, and it now has a devoted following.

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

In the original book, silver, not ruby, slippers transport Dorothy back from Oz, but director Walter Murch kept MGM's iconic ruby pair – paying a steep licensing fee for the privilege.

A magnetic performer, prolific songwriter and restless innovator, but Anthony Newley's pursuit of fame came at a cost. Nick Smurthwaite charts the highs and lows of an extraordinary career marked by chart success, headlines and heartbreak



Joan Collins was married to Newley for eight years. Left: The street scenes in *The Small World of Sammy Lee* were filmed around Soho

A real Artful Dodger

Singer-songwriter, Anthony Newley had Top 10 hits with Why, Do You Mind, Personality, I've Waited So Long, as well as jazzed-up versions of Pop Goes the Weasel and Strawberry Fair. By 1959 he'd notched up 31 consecutive weeks in the British singles charts.

Like his contemporary Tommy Steele, who also started out as a pop star, the multi-talented Newley always intended to morph into an all-round entertainer, having started out as a child actor. His break-out role was the scene-stealing Artful Dodger in David Lean's classic 1948 film of Oliver Twist, starring Alec Guinness.

He'd already appeared in four films before Oliver Twist and had supporting roles in 20-odd British-made pictures in the Fifties before the film that really put him on the map, Idol on Parade (1959), about a pop star conscripted into the Army, loosely based on Elvis Presley's story.

Clearly this was a man in a hurry to become a star, and equally clearly, he had the talent and energy to make that happen. But how did he come by this ferocious determination to crack the big time?

LONDON LAD

The son of an unmarried mother – still something of a stigma when he was born in the Thirties – Newley lived through the early stages of the Blitz as a child, although he was soon evacuated aged eight, a trauma that stayed with him all

his life. After his mother remarried and moved to Scotland, the 14-year-old decided to remain in London, finding work as an office boy at the

Italia Conti stage school which helped to pay his way through their drama course.

Fast forward to 1959 and Idol on Parade, in which four of the five songs from the soundtrack made the UK Top 10. Almost overnight he had become a singing sensation as well as a film star, and went on to win the Variety Club of Great Britain's Most Promising Newcomer award of 1959. Between 1959 and 1961 he had seven Top 20 hits, two of which went to No.1.

Not surprisingly his career took off in all directions – record deals, personal appearances, film, TV and stage roles, more than any ordinary person could handle. But Newley was no ordinary person and he grabbed what he wanted with both hands. Looking at the timeline of his early success it's hard to believe he managed to fit it all in.

First there was The Strange World of Gurney Slade (1960) a groundbreaking TV comedy series, which acquired a cult following but proved to be a little too 'alternative' for mainstream viewing and was never re-commissioned after its initial run of six episodes. Next came his first transatlantic stage hit, Stop the World, I Want to Get Off (1961), co-written with his friend Leslie Bricusse, about the fleeting nature of worldly success. Its most memorable song, What Kind of Fool Am I? went on to be covered by countless recording stars. Five years later it was made into a film. Through all this he continued appearing in films, notably The Small World of Sammy Lee (1963), about a Soho hustler with gambling debts and, later, Doctor Dolittle (1967) opposite Rex Harrison.

INSTANT ATTRACTION

It was during the London run of Stop the World that he fell for the glamorous 27-year-old Joan Collins. Both had recently parted company with their previous spouses and felt an instant attraction to one another. In her



Can Heironymus Merkin Ever Forget Mercy Humppe and Find True Happiness? co-starred Joan Collins and Connie Kreski

memoir, Joan Collins: Passion for Life, the actress recalls, 'He was funny as hell, with an outrageous, self-deprecating wit underneath which raged deep insecurity and a basic fear of women.'

The young Joan Collins was fascinated by his 'talent, quirky humour and saucy Cockney charm', but she would soon discover that Anthony Newley's appeal came at a price.

They had two children, Tara and Sacha and, on moving to Los Angeles in 1965, lived the high life. An unashamedly determined philanderer, Newley wasn't content with a beautiful international film star for a wife.

Having turned a blind eye to Newley's affairs, the crunch came for Collins in 1968 when she was given a pre-release private viewing of his directorial debut, the surreal, semi-autobiographical (and ridiculously titled) Can Heironymus Merkin Ever Forget Mercy Humppe and Find True Happiness? The film sealed the fate of Newley's tempestuous marriage and, a box office flop, marked the end of his attempt to become the British Fellini. Nevertheless, he went on to write many memorable songs with Bricusse, including Who Can I Turn to, Candy Man, Goldfinger, and Pure Imagination.

Though Newley's personal and professional life had its share of ups and downs, his influence on British music and theatre remains unquestionable.



Newley was around 16 when he played Dodger in Oliver Twist

**THE WIZARD OF OZ
(1939)**

When a tornado drops Dorothy (Judy Garland) in the land of Oz, little Cairn terrier Toto (real name Terry) is right by her side. Without Toto, Dorothy may never have made it home from Oz. The dog fetches the lion, tin man and scarecrow to rescue Dorothy and escape the Wicked Witch's castle. And, in The Emerald City, she pulls back the curtain to reveal the 'wizard'.

The pair became close in real life when Terry spent two weeks recuperating at Judy's home after she was accidentally trodden on by one of the Winkie guards and suffered a broken foot. Judy even wanted to adopt Terry but Carl Spitz, her owner and trainer, refused.



A star's BEST FRIEND

For decades movie mutts have captured our hearts, as faithful companions or helping to fight the bad guys, these adorable pet partnerships are hard to beat

DID YOU KNOW?

Pal went on to star as Lassie in six more films plus two TV pilots before retiring and handing over the lead to his son, Lassie Jr, and other descendants. Spike (Old Yeller) also starred in eight episodes of TV's Lassie, adorably billed as Lassie's friend.



OLD YELLER (1957)

When a stray yellow mastador arrives at the Coates family ranch, young Travis (Tommy Kirk) is unimpressed. But gradually Old Yeller (real name Spike) ingratiates himself by saving the lives of the family – from a bear attack, wild boar and a rabid wolf. Old Yeller also helps Travis learn about friendship and loyalty and, of course ...[sob]... sacrifice.



LASSIE COME HOME (1943)

The word 'devoted' doesn't quite cover loyal collie Lassie (real name Pal). Sold by the Carracloough family when facing hard times, Lassie won't give up on her quest to be reunited with young Joe (Roddy McDowall) despite facing a series of obstacles on the journey from Scotland to Yorkshire. Pal was paid \$250 a week for the film while co-star Elizabeth Taylor, in her debut role for MGM, was paid \$100.

RIN TIN TIN (1923-32)

Over the course of nine years and 27 Hollywood movies, the first Rin Tin Tin, aka Rinty, continually impressed – his exploits included rescuing children, tracking down robbers, making friends with an elephant and generally bringing the bad guys to justice. The German shepherd was held responsible for saving Warners from bankruptcy, such was the success of his films. Rescued as a pup from wartime battlefield, Rinty's films were so popular that the whole nation went into mourning when he died.



BENJI (1974)

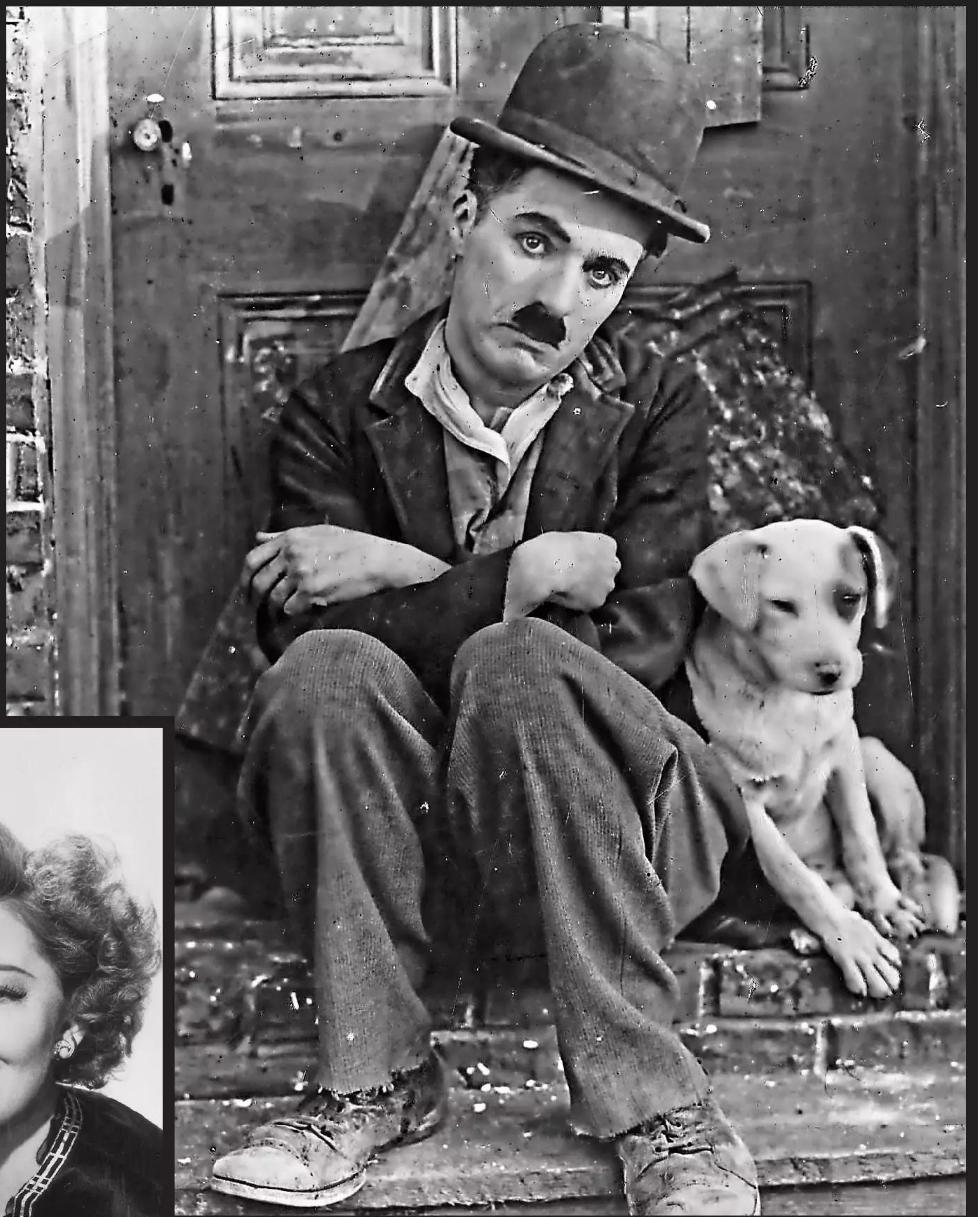
He may not be a pedigree, but stray dog Benji (real name Higgins) captures the hearts of the townspeople who give him food and attention. When the young Chapman children are kidnapped and the police and parents are at a loss, it's Benji who helps solve the case.

The canine star had previously appeared in long-running TV series Petticoat Junction (1963-70). His daughter Benjean took his role in the sequel films.

A DOG'S LIFE (1918)

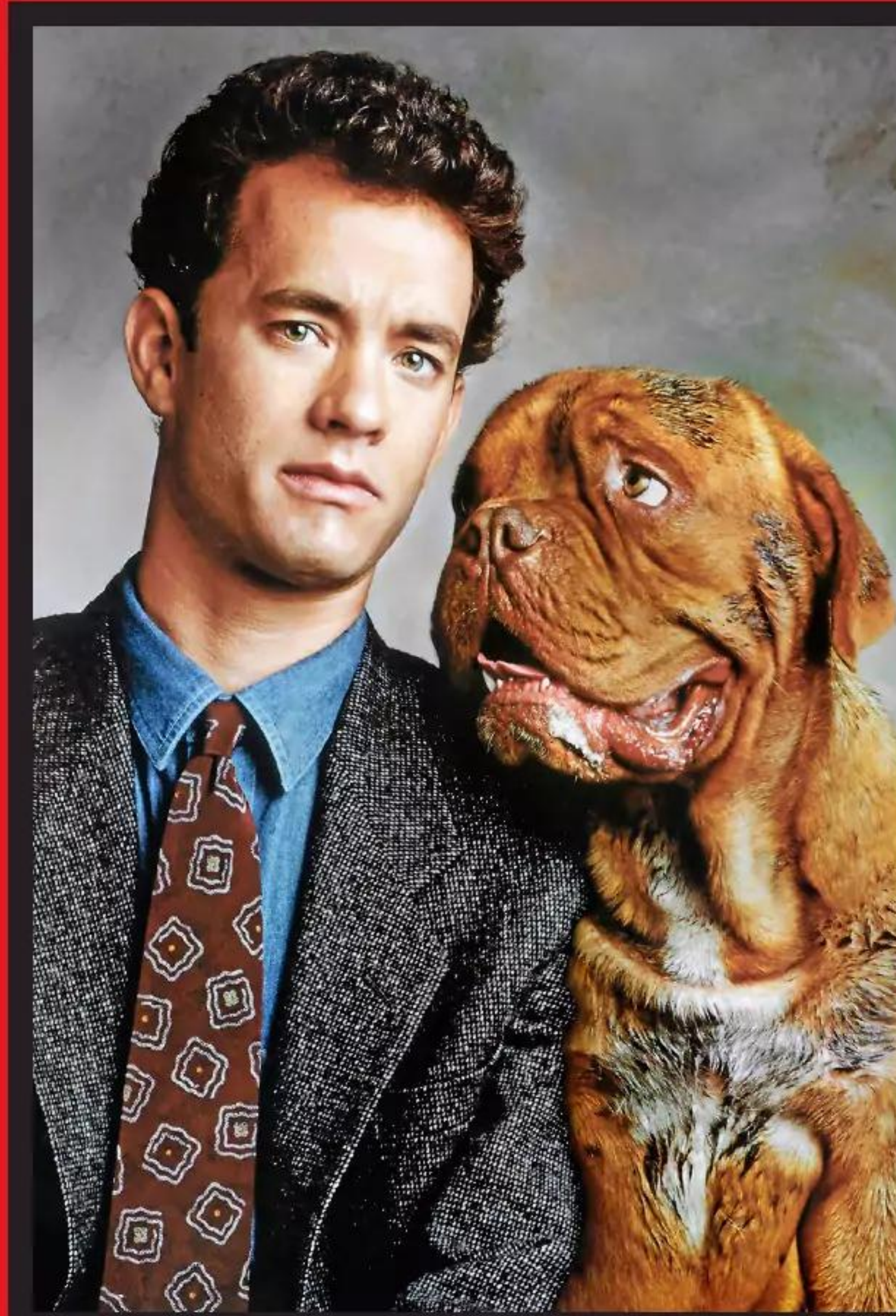
After Charlie Chaplin rescues Scraps (real name Mut) from a pack of stray dogs, the pair struggle to survive in the big city. This was Mut's only screen performance. Chaplin had rejected the idea of using a trained dog, 'These studio beasts are too well kept,' he said. Instead he adopted Mut from the local pound and planned to keep him as a studio mascot.

Tragically, Mut died of a broken heart because when Chaplin set off on a cross-country tour, the devoted pooch refused to eat.



THE THIN MAN (1934)

So much more than a family pet, wire fox terrier Asta (real name Skippy) is an integral part of the unlikely husband and wife crime-solving team of Nick (William Powell) and Nora (Myrna Loy). Intelligent but mischievous, unruly but respected, Asta's instincts are always right, whether he's finding clues, discovering dead bodies or even cowering and hiding!



TURNER AND HOOCH (1989)

Neat-freak detective Scott Turner (Tom Hanks) teams up with Hooch (real name Beasley) after the giant drooling mutt witnesses his master's murder. Over time the two develop an amazing affection for one another and Turner learns to cope better with his obsessive compulsions.

Conrad Veidt's FINEST HOUR

He stood up against the Nazis and created some of the screen's most recognisable villains, but Conrad Veidt's life would be cut cruelly short, as Jeff Billington reveals

Born in Berlin in 1893, Conrad Veidt grew up in a strict Lutheran family, seriously disappointing his conservative father when he became interested in acting. Young Conrad studied with the great Austrian impresario Max Reinhardt, but enlisted into the German Army during the First World War. Severely weakened by pneumonia, he was discharged, and returned to the theatre where he began to earn encouraging notices.

He was soon cast in silent films, and in 1920 he took a leading role

in a film that would be hugely influential, *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*. Veidt played Cesare, a somnambulist who sleeps in a coffin and acts under the hypnotic command of the twisted Dr Caligari. During the day he is exhibited as a sideshow attraction, but at night Caligari commands Cesare to murder his enemies...

What made the film remarkable was its nightmarish vision. One of the first films to utilise the current German vogue for Expressionism – the art movement in which reality was distorted in order

to illustrate inner torment – the film's producers employed avant-garde stage designers to create dazzling, twisted sets, streaked with patterns of light and shadow. The result was like nothing seen before, with its paranoid and oppressive tone, in which everyone was a suspect and nothing was as it seemed, the film struck a chord during the chaos of Weimar Germany, and proved a prophetic warning of the rise of Nazism.

The film made Veidt a major star. When American ➔

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Most of Veidt's early films were destroyed during wartime bombing raids.

reviewers hailed *Caligari* a 'revelation', he also spent a brief period in Hollywood, taking on the terrifying lead role in *The Man Who Laughs* (1928), where he played a man whose face was horrifically carved into a permanent smile through a nightmare-inducing make-up job. It was an image that would influence the design of Batman's nemesis, The Joker.

The advent of the talkies saw Veidt, whose English was then poor, return to Germany, where he starred in the country's first ever sound film, *Land Without Women* (1929).

MAKING A STAND

However 1933 saw two momentous events that would shape his future: in January, Hitler came to power, and the Nazis began reshaping Germany in the image of their fascist ideology; and in March, the recently divorced Veidt met the woman who would become his third wife, Lilli Greger.

'Lilli was the woman I had been seeking all my life... the perfect crystallisation in one lovely human

being,' he told reporters.

But Lilli was Jewish. As the Nazis tightened their grip, the previously apolitical Veidt decided to make a stand, incensing Goebbels by declaring himself a Jew on his film industry application form. Forbidden from working in Germany, Veidt was placed under house arrest until

diplomatic intervention. In April 1933, one week after they married, Conrad and Lilli emigrated to London, settling in the large Jewish community of Golders Green.

Determined to fight the antisemitism that had destroyed his own country, Veidt improved his English and portrayed Jewish characters in *The Wandering Jew* (1933) and *Jew Süss* (1934), two British films intended to challenge stereotypes and foster greater understanding. This further infuriated the Nazi leadership, who bemoaned the films as 'Jewish propaganda' and branded the actor

a traitor – Goebbels would later remake *Jew Süss* in virulently antisemitic form in 1940, a version Heinrich Himmler had screened to concentration camp guards.

Veidt's British career was initially somewhat spartan, but ironically the approaching war would elevate him back into the 'A' list when he played German officers in Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *The Spy in Black* (1939) and *Contraband* (1940). Powell, Pressburger and Veidt took an unexpected approach in portraying Veidt's German officers not as screaming madmen,



He starred alongside Robert Taylor and Norma Shearer in *Escape*, which was his Hollywood debut. The film was banned in Germany by Hitler because it was so anti-Nazi



Conrad as Cesare in *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*. The film was made before horror became a designated genre, but is now often cited as the first true horror film



Conrad arriving in London with his wife Lilli in April 1933. While he adored his wife and was always faithful, Conrad is thought to have been bisexual, 'Conrad also loved men, once in a while,' a friend noted



Above Suspicion was his second film with Joan Crawford. He died just two months after filming ended

but as urbane, sophisticated, and persuasive – making them even more frightening in the process.

PREACHING TOLERANCE

Veidt and his wife were utterly loyal to their adopted country, but left for Hollywood in 1940, tasked by the British government to encourage anti-Nazi films in the still neutral United States. Veidt insisted in his contract that any Nazi roles he played must be villains, beginning with a sadistic general in *Escape* (1940). But America's film industry was still worried about angering Hitler, and Veidt was often cast in lighter fare.

He and his wife sent money back to Britain, and funded packages of sweets and chocolate for children during the Blitz. Conrad became known around Hollywood for his outspoken liberal views, calling for tolerance and women's rights, and condemning what might now be called 'toxic masculinity'.

Despite his villainous roles, female movie fans adored him and bombarded him with fan

letters – in 1941 it was reported that he had ordered 500 headshots just to keep up with the demand for signatures.

The attack on Pearl Harbor drew the US into the war, and Veidt was cast as twin brothers in *Nazi Agent* (1942), but it was his next role that would become his most well known. While regarded today as a romantic drama, *Casablanca* (1942), released at the height of the Second World War, just after the Allied invasion of North Africa, was very much intended as an anti-Nazi film. The screenwriters were Jewish, while many of the cast and crew, including director Michael Curtiz, and actors Paul Henreid and Peter Lorre, were Jewish exiles from occupied Europe, many of whom Veidt had worked with in Germany.

The filmmakers' intention was to portray a similar group of multicultural exiles clustered around Rick's café, stressing their common humanity despite their varied backgrounds.

Though Veidt, playing Nazi General Strasser, was second billed to Humphrey Bogart, he was the highest paid member of the cast, and his urbane villain is one of the film's best remembered characters. The future seemed to be bright for Conrad Veidt but, tragically, he would not live to see his native country liberated from Nazi terror.

Veidt had inherited a heart condition that had killed his mother at an early age and, on 3 April 1943, just four months after the release of *Casablanca*, he succumbed to a massive heart attack while playing golf. Newspapers noted that his personal doctor was present but was unable to save him. He was just 50 years old. Fifty five years later, the Conrad Veidt Society would arrange for the ashes of Conrad and Lilli to be interred in Golders Green Crematorium, close to where the two had lived happily before the war.

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Gussy Holl, Veidt's first wife, divorced him after she found Conrad and his friends wearing her expensive dresses.

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

David Niven and Gary Cooper relax on the set of *The Real Glory* (1939). The film, which depicts the Moro Rebellion in 1906, sees Cooper and Niven as US Army officers training the native Philippine Constabulary to defend their country against guerrilla insurgents.

Niven felt he was badly miscast in the role, even though he had plenty of experience in uniform. Educated at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the British Army on 30 January 1930 and served two years in Malta before resigning his commission in 1933.

Soon after *The Real Glory* wrapped, war was declared and, against official advice, Niven immediately returned to Britain to be recommissioned as a lieutenant in the Rifle Brigade. He later transferred to the Commandos and was active in key operations such as the D-Day invasion and Operation Market Garden.

Cooper meanwhile, who was nine years Niven's senior, was considered too old to be drafted into the US Army during the Second World War. Nevertheless, he actively supported the war effort, volunteering as a civilian marksmanship instructor and participating in morale-boosting USO tours and visits to military hospitals.





DID YOU KNOW?

Cooper played numerous military men during his career, most famously in the film *Sergeant York* (1941), where he played the eponymous hero, Alvin C York, one of the most decorated American soldiers of the First World War.

Clockwise from left: Patrick Duffy, Victoria Principal, Barbara Bel Geddes, Larry Hagman, Linda Gray, Jim Davis and Charlene Tilton



Who shot JR?

45 years after the world was waiting for the answer to TV's biggest ever cliffhanger, we ask whatever happened to the cast of Dallas?

Dallas was the global TV phenomenon that had us glued to our sets for 13 years (1978-91). Plots involving shady business deals, dysfunctional families and scandalous affairs meant huge audiences tuned in every week to follow the trials and tribulations of the Ewing family. With their huge wealth and questionable morals the oil barons of Southfork ranch treated us to some memorable and occasionally outrageous storylines. Who could forget when Bobby

Ewing came back from the dead in season 10, writing off the entire previous season as a dream?

But the show's most audacious plot twist has to be the cliffhanger that ended season three, when the show's most infamous character JR Ewing was shot.

The media frenzy in the eight-month build-up to the reveal of the shooter was unprecedented. Speculation was rife in magazines and newspapers. T-shirts were printed with the slogan 'Who shot JR?', while bookies took record



Sue Ellen (Linda Gray) and Kristin (Mary Crosby) await news of JR

numbers of bets. The show's producers made sure the secret couldn't be leaked. Actor Larry Hagman, who played the devious oilman, was allegedly offered £100,000 to reveal the identity of the shooter while on holiday in the UK. But Hagman wasn't being tight-lipped, he genuinely didn't know, because every actor had been filmed shooting JR to keep the guilty party's identity secret.

A global audience of around 350 million tuned in on 21 November 1980 to discover the culprit was none other than JR's sister-in-law/mistress Kristin Shepard (played by Mary Crosby).

With all that drama it was inevitable that the stars of *Dallas* became household names, but what happened when the show came to an end?

LARRY HAGMAN JOHN ROSS 'JR' EWING

Hagman, son of legendary actress Mary Martin, had a film and TV career – most notably starring alongside Barbara Eden in *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965-70) – long before playing egocentric and amoral JR in all 356 episodes of *Dallas*'s original run. After *Dallas* he continued to appear in hit shows such as *Desperate Housewives* and *Nip/Tuck*, until poor health cut his career short. He died in November 2012.

LINDA GRAY SUE ELLEN EWING

As long-suffering wife of JR, Linda Gray was inevitably glugging vodka or indulging in ill-advised affairs. Gray described her character as 'The original *Desperate Housewife*' but insists she's nothing like her in real life. After *Dallas*, Gray made several TV movies and guest appearances in *Lovejoy* alongside Ian McShane. Now 85, Gray returned, along with other members of the original cast, for the 2012 reboot of *Dallas*.

VICTORIA PRINCIPAL PAMELA BARNES EWING

One of *Dallas*'s very own star-crossed lovers, Victoria Principal played Pamela Barnes, who fell in love with Bobby Ewing, much to the chagrin of her family (and his). Since leaving *Dallas* Principal started her own skincare company and has written several diet and beauty books. Most recently 75-year-old Victoria has set up a charity to help tackle environmental disasters.

PATRICK DUFFY BOBBY EWING

After appearing in the underwater sci-fi series *Man from Atlantis* (1977-78), Patrick Duffy got his big break as the Ewing's youngest son Bobby. Duffy has arguably had the most successful post-*Dallas* career with a long-running part in American soap *The Bold and the Beautiful* (2006-23). But 76-year-old Duffy's personal life has been marred by tragedy. His parents were murdered in an armed robbery in 1986 and his wife of 41 years, dancer Carlyn Rosser, died in 2017.

CHARLENE TILTON LUCY EWING

Seventeen-year-old Charlene Tilton was the show's wild child, earning her the cheeky nickname

'the poison dwarf' due to her small, 4ft 11in, stature. After a brief pop career in the Eighties, Tilton went on to appear in TV shows such as *Murder She Wrote* and *The Love Boat*. In 2012 she was a contestant on ITV's *Dancing on Ice*. Outside of acting 66-year-old Charlene is an advocate for autism awareness.

BARBARA BEL GEDDES ELLIE EWING

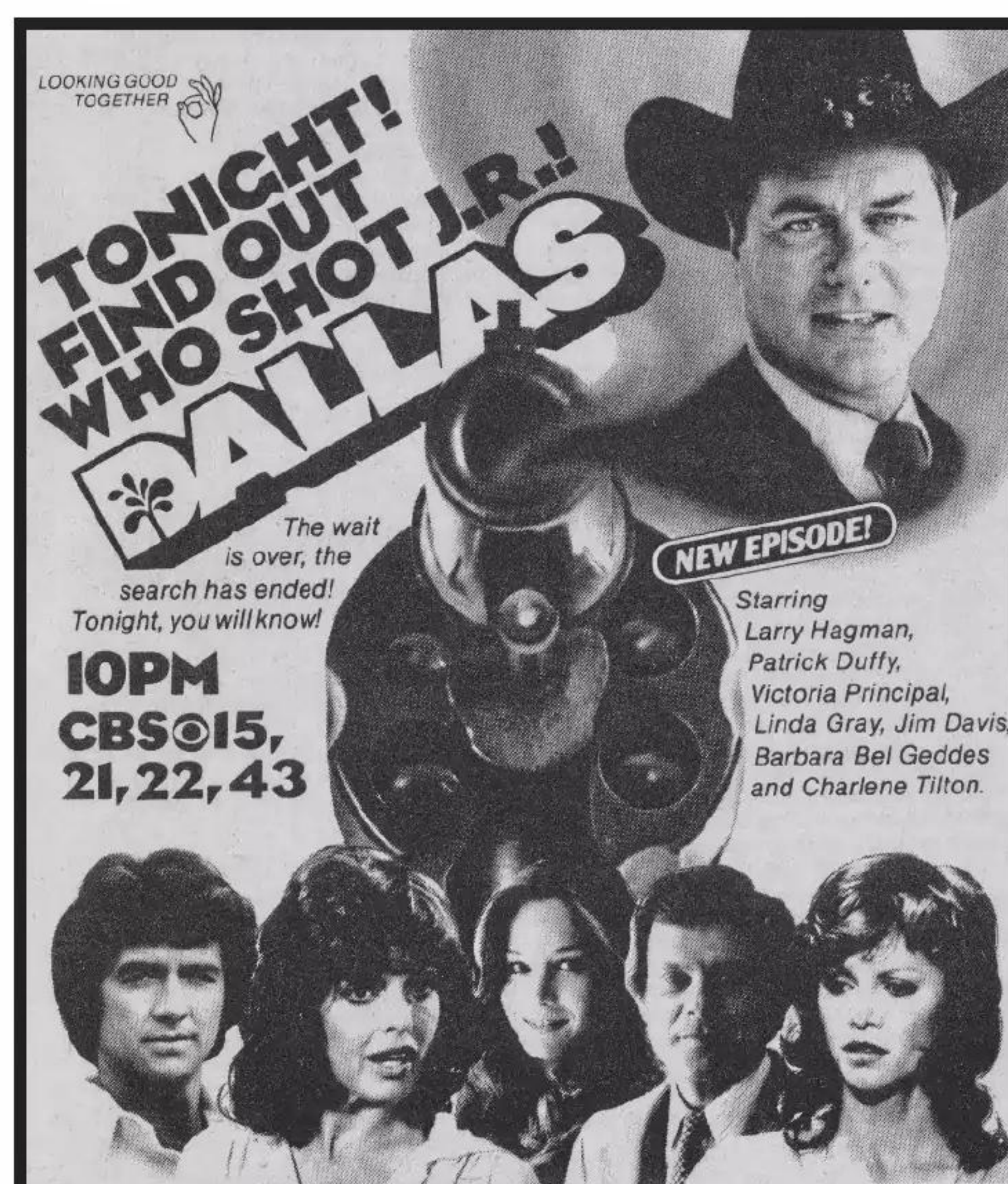
Oscar-nominated actress Barbara Bel Geddes played Miss Ellie, the formidable matriarch of the Ewing clan. Prior to *Dallas* she had a long career on stage and screen appearing in, among others, Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* on Broadway. When the show ended she retired from acting and worked as an artist and children's author. She died in August 2005, aged 82.

JIM DAVIS JOCK EWING

Jim Davis had spent much of his career in Westerns before securing the role as the head of the Ewing family. Sadly Davis was diagnosed with blood cancer during the fourth series, having to wear a hairpiece to cover the effects of chemotherapy. He died in 1981 and his character was written out of the show a few episodes later.

MARY CROSBY KRISTIN SHEPARD

With an actor's equity card from the age of four, Mary made her TV debut, along with her siblings, on one of her father Bing's TV Christmas specials, but struggled to step out of his shadow. 'All my life people have thought of me as Bing Crosby's daughter. Now they'll remember me as the person who shot JR,' she said after the big reveal. After *Dallas* she made a few TV movies and guested on shows such as *Starsky and Hutch*, *Murder, She Wrote* and *The Love Boat* and now lives a quiet life with her husband and two sons.





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Comedy historian Robert Ross pays tribute to some of the finest and funniest, but often overlooked, names in showbiz

Forgotten Heroes of Comedy...



If Hollywood needed a supercilious butler for the 25 years from 1930, the chances were Eric Blore's agent would get a call. With a seemingly unending stream of shocked grimaces and sarcastic grovelling, Blore was the personification of the English domestic.

He had been born, just before Christmas 1887, in Finchley, north London, making his stage debut, in the saucy musical comedy *The Girl from Kays*, in 1908. Five years later he was in the West End, chalking up hit revues *All the Winners* and *Nuts and Wine*, the latter based on the writings of PG Wodehouse. Perfect Eric Blore fare.

Blore was no mean writer himself, penning many sketches, including *The Disorderly Room*, which was performed on stage and radio by Tommy Handley.

By the summer of 1923 Blore was in New York, where he would star in Arnold Ridley's *The Ghost*

Train, and make one of his first films, *Laughter* (1930).

While appearing on Broadway, playing the waiter opposite Fred Astaire in Cole Porter's musical *Gay Divorce*, Blore was also making a film with Astaire, playing Butterbass, the assistant to Franklin Pangborn's hotel

manager, in *Flying Down to Rio* (1933). When *Gay Divorce* transferred to London in 1933, Blore went home with it. He returned to America to reprise his role for the film version, renamed *The Gay Divorcee* (1934).

Blore would turn up, to great comic effect, as assorted gentlemen's gentlemen, in other Astaire films, as well as many comedies out of RKO, notably *Smartest Girl in Town* (1936), with Gene Raymond,

Breakfast for Two (1937), with Herbert Marshall, and *Joy of Living* (1938), with Douglas Fairbanks Jr.

Blore returned to England to star in his own comedy film, *A Gentleman's Gentleman* (1939), before returning to Hollywood.

'With shocked grimaces and sarcastic grovelling, Blore was the perfect English domestic'

Preston Sturges would cast him to type, as Joel McCrea's valet in *Sullivan's Travels* (1941), as well as duplicitous toff, Sir Alfred McGlennan Keith in *The Lady Eve* (1941).

Throughout the war years, Blore played the butler, Jamison, in the light-hearted crime film series, the *Lone Wolf*. Having retired from the stage in 1945, he continued to support Hollywood's greatest comedians, including the Marx Brothers, in *Love Happy* (1949) and Bob Hope and Lucille Ball in *Fancy Pants* (1950). Blore achieved a little bit of film immortality, as the voice of Mr J Thaddeus Toad for Walt Disney's *The Wind in the Willows* (1949), and was still stealing scenes, from Leo Gorcey and Huntz Hall, as the mischievous genie in *Bowery to Bagdad* (1954).

He suffered a stroke the following year, and saw out his final days at the Motion Picture Country Hospital, where he died, of a heart attack, at the age of 71.

■ Visit the website of Robert Ross, Britain's Comedy Historian, at robertross.co.uk

>> MOVIE MASTERCLASSES No.51

From the moment the crew started creating a frozen landscape in a scorching Madrid summer, it was clear *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) would be a difficult but remarkable film



Yuri Zhivago (Omar Sharif) is a young Russian doctor facing the hardships of the First World War, the Bolshevik revolution... and a love triangle. Though married to the devoted Tonya (Geraldine Chaplin), Zhivago is drawn to the enigmatic Lara (Julie Christie), whose own life is marked by tragedy and survival. Their forbidden love story unfolds amid hardship and loss, and

the shifting tides of fate continually drive them apart. The film is based on the 1957 novel by Russian-born Boris Pasternak, which had been smuggled out of Soviet Russia to be published in Italy. Carlo Ponti bought the rights as a potential vehicle for his soon-to-be wife, Sophia Loren, and David Lean, fresh from the success of *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), was brought in to direct.



Ponti and Lean, keen to stay true to the novel, asked permission to film in the Soviet Union, but were refused. Yugoslavia and Scandinavia were rejected for being 'too cold' and the team finally settled on filming in Madrid, Spain. Over the next 18 months 800 craftsmen built a mammoth set, recreating two full-size Moscow streets. To emulate a snowy landscape, white marble was crushed and spread over white plastic sheets. Meanwhile, the interior of the ice palace was made of wax and the 'frozen' lake was a riverbed covered with a cast iron sheet and fake snow.

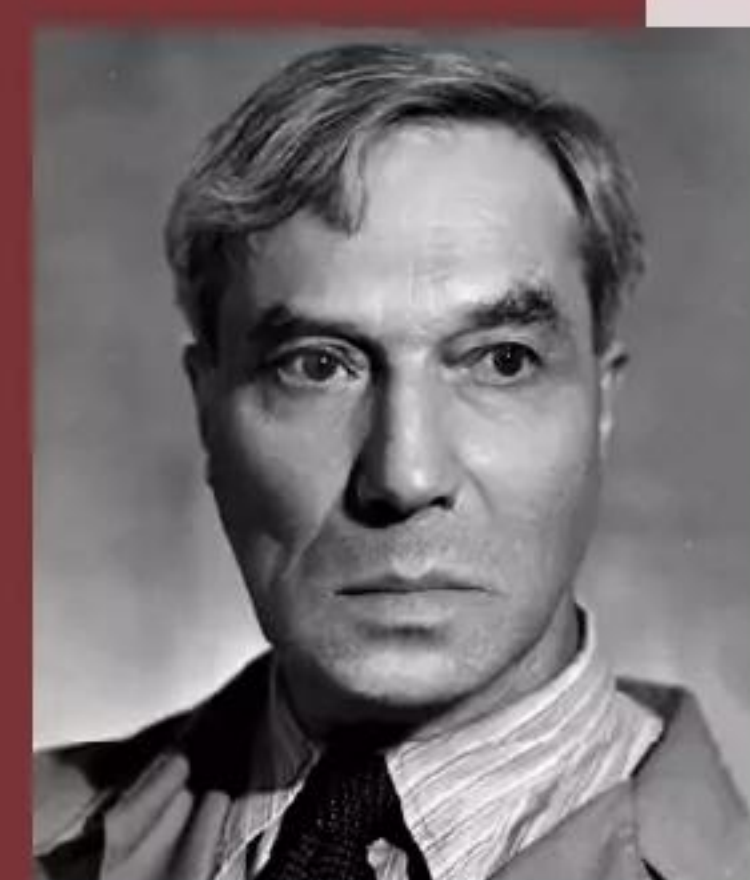


David Lean (*above left*) didn't do anything by halves. Well known as a perfectionist, no detail was too small for him – from an accurate replica of the trains to replica underwear for every member of the cast even though it was never seen on screen. The film took more than two years to film during which time the budget spiralled from \$5 to \$15 million.



The 30°C Spanish sun proved an issue for the poor cast, whose costumes involved huge, thick coats and wool hats. An army of assistants were tasked with making sure overheated extras weren't tempted to remove their coats for fear of them being caught without on camera.

When Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1958, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were enraged and he was forced to decline the prize. However, his book has been part of the Russian school curriculum since 2003.



Lean was not easy to work with and had a fractious relationship with several of the cast. Alec Guinness accused the director of arrogance saying he was 'acting the part of a super-star director' after Lean criticised his performance. They didn't work together again until *A Passage to India* (1984).



After a slow start the film became the second highest grossing film of 1965 with bumper box-office revenues of over \$200 million worldwide. It also scored five Oscars from 10 nominations.

The Lost Boy

Barbara Stanwyck won plaudits for her portrayal of a devoted mother in *Stella Dallas*. But as Chris Hallam reveals, her relationship with her own adopted son was very different...



Dion, aged around six here, was reportedly bequeathed some money from his mother's estate on condition he did not speak publicly about her



They may look cosy, but Barbara would sometimes flee to her neighbour Joan Crawford's house when Frank was on the rampage

On 17 May 2006, Anthony Dion Fay died on at the age of 74. If the name doesn't ring any bells with you, don't worry. Anthony was never really famous in his own right. He remains best known for being the adopted son of Hollywood legend, Barbara Stanwyck. Born at the height of the Great Depression in 1932, some observers might have considered it the peak of good fortune for the young orphan to have been taken in by a woman already well on the way to becoming a successful and wealthy screen actress. In fact, though we will never know how his life would have turned out otherwise, it seems quite possible in the light of what followed, being adopted by Barbara Stanwyck was the worst thing that ever happened to him.

AND BABY MAKES THREE...

The story really began four years before Frank's birth in 1928 when the 21-year-old Broadway performer, Barbara Stanwyck was first introduced to the vaudeville comedian, Frank Fay. The twice divorced comic was 16 years older than the young, streetwise dancer but was immediately impressed by Stanwyck's innate toughness and her sharp-tongued, foul-mouthed banter. They were soon married.

But by 1932, the marriage was in serious trouble. After a slow start, Stanwyck's film career was clearly in the ascent following her success in Frank Capra's *Ladies of Leisure* (1930) while Fay's had floundered with the coming of sound. An intensely possessive alcoholic egomaniac, Fay was increasingly prone to sometimes violent bouts of drunken rage. Stanwyck was nevertheless determined to save her marriage and had an idea how to do it: by having a child. Unable to conceive herself following a botched illegal abortion conducted when she was a chorus girl, it was decided they would adopt a baby. The 10-month-old boy who they

would name Dion (adding the name Anthony later) was adopted from the Children's Home Society in December 1932.

Unfortunately, this quickly proved to be a terrible decision. Stanwyck's own childhood had been brutal. Her mother had died after falling off a trolley car when her daughter was two, while her father had deserted the family to go and work on the Panama Canal and had never been seen again. Through no fault of her own, Stanwyck had grown up with no idea of what being a mother really involved. Even now, she seemed uninterested in motherhood or in Dion. With Frank a violent drunk and Stanwyck busy attending nightclubs and parties when not making films, Dion was largely brought up by nannies.

The adoption of Dion did not even help save the marriage. With Stanwyck increasingly enamoured with the man who would become her second husband and the true love of her life, actor Robert Taylor, she and Fay divorced in 1935. Thanks to a bitterly fought 1938 custody battle, the true horror of Fay and Stanwyck's lives together soon became very public.

Among other things, Fay was revealed to have beaten Stanwyck in front of their child. During one drunken spree he even threw baby Dion into a swimming pool. Neither parent came out of the court battle well with both sides seemingly more interested in fighting each other than securing the best outcome for their adopted son.

In 1935, Stanwyck received acclaim for her performance as a devoted mother in *Stella Dallas*. In a Christmas magazine interview at the time she said, 'There's nothing more fun in the whole world than seeing a child open a present at Christmas. To have a six-year-old boy stroke a bicycle with his eyes, not daring to touch and turn to ask, "Is it mine? Really mine?" That's part of my future.'

At six, Dion was sent off to military school. During the summer, he was sent to camp on Catalina Island. He was not invited home for weekends and his mother didn't visit, even when he was hospitalised by a severe injury when he was 12. He barely saw his mother for 10 days a year at first and even more rarely after that. As Stanwyck's star rose, all media references to her having a son ceased entirely.

BAD BLOOD

Little wonder that Dion grew up bitter and resentful. He struggled at school and increasingly misbehaved. After 1952, he never saw his adoptive mother again. Stanwyck sent gifts when Dion married and on hearing of the birth of his son. But she never met his new family.

In 1960, Dion, who lived modestly and worked in a motel, attracted headlines when he was arrested for selling pornographic material. At this point, Stanwyck closed the door on her now estranged adopted son forever. 'Some kids are born with bad blood just like horses,' she remarked, speaking generally. 'When a parent has done everything possible, the only solution is to save yourself.'

Many observers would question whether Stanwyck really did everything to help Dion. 'Sure, I've had my troubles, but they all came after Mother cut me completely out of her life,' Dion argued. In the Eighties, Dion attempted to reach out to his now elderly mother again. 'I think it's time to make peace,' he declared. But when Stanwyck shunned him again, he ended up selling his story to the tabloids.

Stanwyck clearly viewed Dion as an unwelcome reminder of a dark chapter in her life, which she preferred to forget. There was to be no happy Hollywood ending. It was a sad end to an unhappy relationship.

Decade of DREAD

The Seventies is seen as the heyday of spooky TV in the UK. Steve O'Brien remembers some of the scariest classics of the era

What television programmes do you most remember from your youth? For many of us, it's the shows that terrified and disturbed us, that got under our skins, that linger longest in our minds, and Seventies TV offered more than its fair share of scares.

In fact, that decade is now seen as the golden age of spooky TV. From the soul-freezing ghost tales of MR James that were a staple of the Christmas schedules, to one-off plays such as Nigel Kneale's *The Stone Tape* (1972) and John Bowen's *Robin Redbreast* (1970), through to children's favourites such as *Children of the Stones* (1977) and *Sky* (1975), it was a time when horror seemed to be as much as part of the TV landscape as police procedurals and sitcoms.

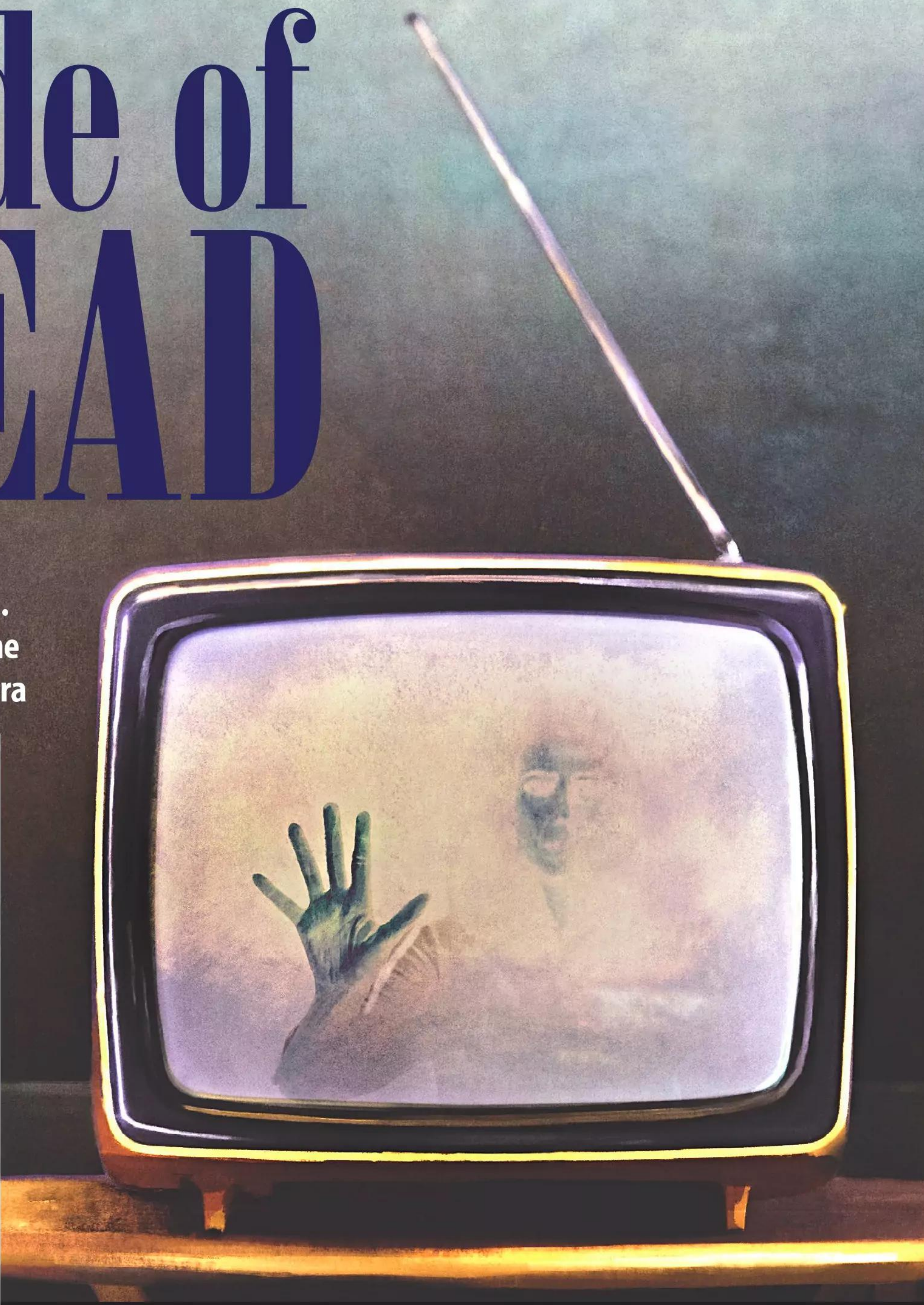
'There were great supernatural shows in the Seventies because literary snobbery had not become entrenched at the BBC and ITV,'

says horror screenwriter Stephen Volk. 'The Seventies were not more scary than any other decade, it's just that the commissioners were more open and daring. As a result, the programme makers had a freer rein to be imaginative.'

In British cinema, horror was having as much of a renaissance as it was on television, with chill-fests such as *The Wicker Man*,

Don't Look Now (both 1973) and *To the Devil a Daughter* (1976), but there's something arguably more impactful about horror on the small screen. Maybe it's the medium's more intimate nature that allows it to burrow into our psyches with such force.

But why was TV suddenly getting into themes of the supernatural, after a decade in which its





Sapphire & Steel was originally intended as a children's TV show called *The Time Menders*, but when Joanna Lumley and David McCallum were cast, costs spiralled and the target audience shifted to young adult

DID YOU KNOW?

The *Stone Tape* and *Beasts* were written by Nigel Kneale, the creator of *Quatermass*. *Children of the Stones* was remade by BBC Radio 4 in 2010, starring The League of Gentlemen's Reece Shearsmith.

Seventies classics – *Luther* (2010-19) creator Neil Cross has talked admiringly about *Sapphire & Steel* (1979-82), a sci-fi-flavoured horror in which time itself was the antagonist, while *Sherlock* co-creator Mark Gatiss was such a fan of the BBC's *A Ghost Story for Christmas*, he revived the strand in 2013.

The Seventies were also the glory years of the anthology series. From *Armchair Thriller* (1978-81)

echoes of *Children of the Stones* in such modern-day folk horrors as Dennis Kelly's *The Third Day* (2020) and Toby Whithouse's *The Red King* (2024).

Though the supernatural drama is far from dead on television, it's not the mainstay now as it was 50 years ago. 'From the Eighties the popular genre was looked down upon by commissioners and seen as "niche" even though the audience still remembers such series to this day,' says Volk. 'The received wisdom was, "If they wanted horror they could go and see films: it's really not our kind of thing." You were laughed at if you pitched anything that wasn't cops, docs or social realism.'

For Volk, part of the power of those dramas was that they arrived without hype, and without a torrent of pre-publicity telling audiences what to expect. This was TV that unsettled its audience by nature of surprise.

'What's missing in today's infinite, streamery landscape,' he says, 'is everything is so manufactured and pre-sold, and spoiled by the internet. Nothing can creep up on you... Literally!'

worthiest programmes – *Z-Cars* (1962-78), *Cathy Come Home* (1966), *Up the Junction* (1968) – were defiantly realistic? For author Jon Dear, who's currently writing a book about the BBC's *A Ghost Story for Christmas* (1971-78) series, it's to do with the age of the writers and directors who were coming up through the system.

'This was a time when the first generation of TV makers not to have fought in the Second World War were getting into positions of influence,' he says. 'New scientific breakthroughs go hand in hand with spiritual bunkum and can produce good drama – *The Stone Tape* (1972), *The Breakthrough* (1975) and *The Mind Beyond: The Daedalus Equations* (1976) all focus on practical science's encounters with ghosts, the soul and spiritualism.'

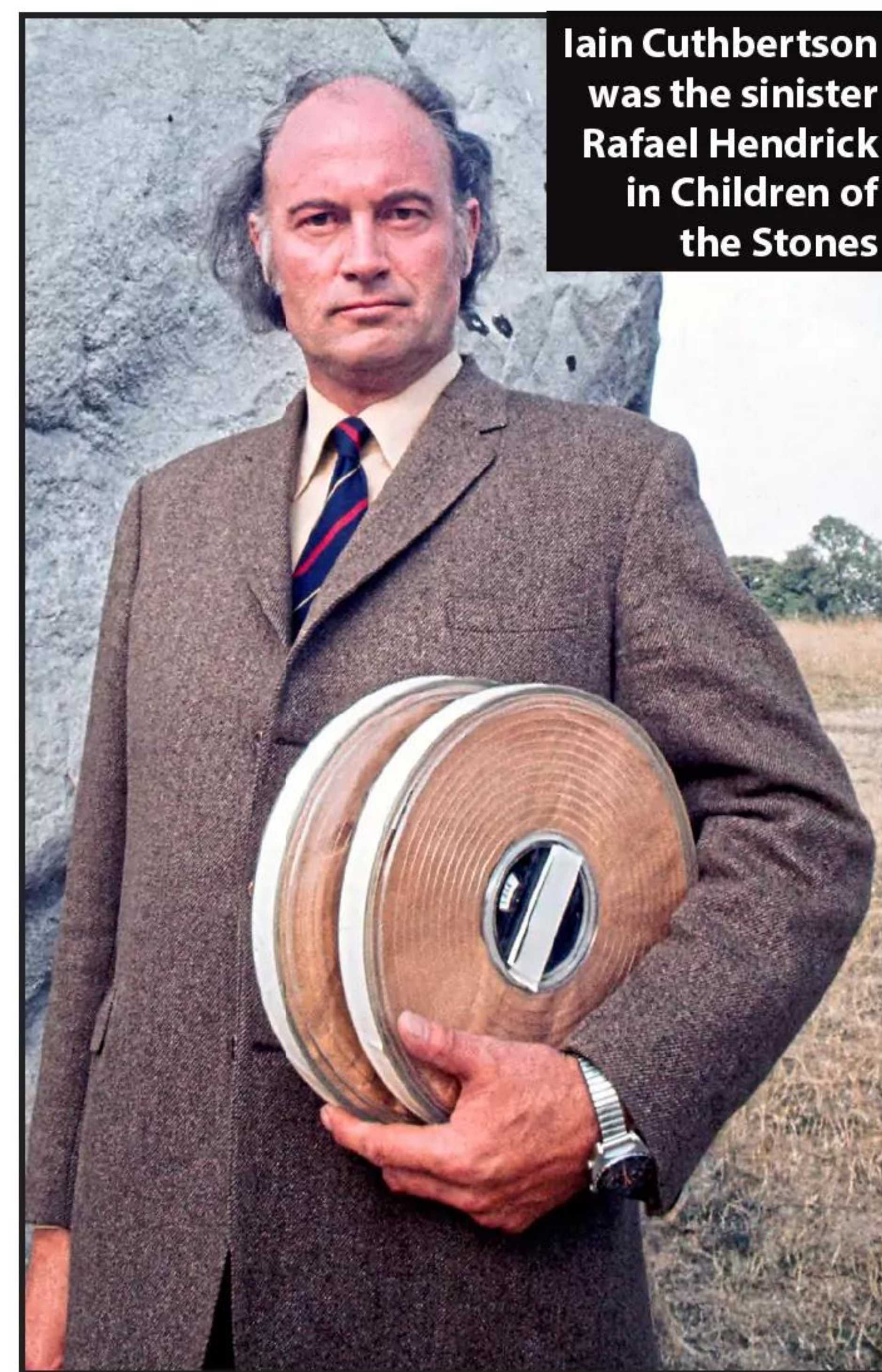
Whereas horror today can mean anything from the blood 'n' guts of the *Saw* movies to the subtler chills of *The Conjuring* films, the TV shows of the Seventies prioritised suggestion over explicitness, shadows above gore. A slasher film can gross you out, but something more suggestive, more creepy, will remain with you long after the end credits have rolled. That's why so many modern-day TV writers hark back to those

or *Play for Today* (1970-84) to *Thirty-Minute Theatre* (1965-73), the channels were awash with one-off dramas that changed their casts from week to week. So it was only natural that the BBC and ITV would create their own horror anthologies, from *Dead of Night* (1972) to *Beasts* (1976) and *Shadows* (1975-78) and *Leap in the Dark* (1973-80). These shows contain some of the era's most nightmare-inducing moments – *Doctor Who* showrunner Russell T Davies has said of the *Beasts* episode *Baby* that its ending was, 'the most frightening thing I've ever seen'.

HORROR WITHOUT HYPE

Those shows, then, inspired many of the TV writers of the next generation. 'The *Stone Tape* by Nigel Kneale was a watershed moment for me,' reflects Stephen Volk. 'It showed me horror could be intelligent and adult and was a huge influence when I created *Ghostwatch* (1992).'

There are elements of Seventies horror in many of Russell T Davies's most acclaimed *Doctor Who* episodes, *Midnight* and *73 Yards* among them, while the *A Ghost Story for Christmas* series continues every December, thanks to Mark Gatiss's love of that original run. And it's hard not to see



Iain Cuthbertson was the sinister Rafael Hendrick in *Children of the Stones*



The late bloomer

She made the transition from stage to screen at the grand age of 72 and was soon a film icon. Rose Collis takes a look at the extraordinary life and career of Dame May Whitty

When she was three years old May (Mary Louise) Whitty was taken to see a pantomime called *The Three Bears* which so terrified her that she screamed and had to be carried out. It was a memorable if unfortunate introduction to a world in which this great character actress would one day flourish.

Luckily a family friend was able to help young May overcome her fear by providing occasional free theatre tickets for her and her two siblings and, by the age of 16, she was hooked. The same friend then introduced her to the eminent actress, Madge Kendal, and she was eventually given small roles in plays produced by Madge's husband, William.

In one, *Young Folks' Ways*, she understudied Annie Webster – elder sister of the actor-manager Ben Webster. After a seven-year courtship, she and Ben married in 1892 and continued the Webster family's theatrical dynasty. Their daughter Margaret also became a renowned actress and director. In fact, no fewer than 27 members of the Whitty-Webster families were active in the stage profession over a period of 150 years. So perhaps it was no accident that, in 1930, Whitty and Webster were among the group of performers who founded Equity, the actors' union.

May, meanwhile, had great



May starred alongside Henry Travers (left) in *Mrs Miniver*, which Winston Churchill said did more for the war effort than a flotilla of destroyers

success on the stage and starred in a few British-made silent films, but it was a Hollywood adaptation of Emlyn Williams's dark and disturbing 1935 stage thriller, *Night Must Fall* (1937) – a huge success in London and on Broadway – that made her the unlikeliest of screen stars.

Ironically, she hadn't been enthusiastic about appearing in the play; telling her daughter, 'Well, it's just a thriller and it won't run and she's an old beast in a wheelchair, but I suppose I'd better do it...'

The 'old beast' was the tyrannical and unsympathetic wheelchair-bound Mrs Bramson, who feigns lameness and other maladies, and viciously lambasts all those around her, until a smooth-talking young Irish handyman called Danny inveigles his way into her home and heart – with deadly consequences.

SENIOR SENSATION

And so, Whitty arrived in Los Angeles aged 72 to recreate her role as Mrs Bramson and found herself working with Robert Montgomery and Rosalind Russell. Her move to American cinema was not born of desperation or declining opportunities, but rather reflected the broader migration of British theatrical talent to Hollywood during the Thirties, when major studios actively sought experienced performers who could bring gravitas and authenticity to their productions.

And her transition from stage to screen acting was seamless, as if to the manor born, and she was soon proud of her acquired nickname 'One-Take Whitty'.

In fact May's compelling performance was considered so strong that she received a Best Actress Oscar nomination and went on to play supporting but pivotal roles in a string of cinema classics, including *Conquest* (1937), Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*



Chatting with Edward G Robinson and Vincent Price as they recorded a radio anthology series

(1938) and *Suspicion* (1941); Mrs Miniver (1942), *Madame Curie* (1943) and *Gaslight* (1944).

But did this consummately British actress, with vast theatrical experience, actually enjoy this new life in the sunshine? Her MGM profile from 1937 reveals crucial insights into her state of mind during this period, describing her as someone who 'has already earned for herself the reputation of being a real troupier in Hollywood.' and noting that 'she is very happy in Hollywood, and is living in Santa Monica within view of the Pacific.' She and husband Ben moved permanently to the US in 1939, setting up home in Beverly Hills.

This apparent contentment suggests she may have approached the role she remains most famous for in *The Lady Vanishes* with enthusiasm. Playing Miss Froy, a music teacher who mysteriously vanishes from a European train compartment, much to the consternation of fellow passenger Margaret Lockwood, was certainly a novelty.

Whitty told her daughter, 'I have spent this last week in a continental train being shot at, secreted in a very small cupboard with my feet in a washbasin, being lifted out by Michael Redgrave, climbing out of a window and running away over very uneven ground under a heavy fusillade of shots. I have never been asked to do

things like that in the theatre.' Her portrayal of Miss Froy as an active, capable, and heroic older woman also challenged contemporary stereotypes about elderly characters in popular entertainment, perhaps even expanding possibilities for older actresses in film roles.

GOLDEN YEARS

In *Mrs Miniver*, Whitty took on a more aristocratic role as the haughty, snobbish Lady Beldon, who was, by custom,

the perennial winner of the village flower show. However, the onset of the Second World War shatters conventions and brings her closer to the lower classed Miniver family when they mutually suffer a grievous loss.

Widely regarded as a propaganda film designed to influence public opinion, particularly in America, encouraging support for the Allied war effort, the film enjoyed phenomenal success. It was the most popular movie of the year in Britain and the US, and won six Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Actress, and Whitty received her second Best Supporting Actress nomination. As one critic said, 'She, at the age of 77, acts all the rest of them off the film.'

The following year *Lassie Come Home* (which had an all-British cast including youngsters Elizabeth Taylor and Roddy McDowall) brought May and her husband Ben together on film for the first time. Sadly within five years both would be gone. Ben first in February 1947 and May the following year from cancer, on 29 May 1948.

Though they both died in Hollywood, this British theatrical tour de force did return home. A memorial service was held in 1948 at The Actors' Church in Covent Garden where the couple's ashes are interred in the east wall, along with their daughter Margaret, with a plaque inscribed to their memory.

RETRO

Behind the lens



In 1968, a young commercials director called George A Romero invented the modern horror movie and accidentally birthed a Hollywood monster that refuses to die, discovers Adam Smith

George Romero: Dad of th

DID YOU KNOW?

Even though *Night of the Living Dead* made money on its original release, Romero didn't see much of it. The young filmmakers had forgotten to include a copyright notice in the end credits. By the time they sued, the distributors had gone out of business.

Romero began making movies at the age of 14 with an 8mm camera

There are a handful of moments in the movies when the whole industry changes forever. The moment when Al Jolson speaks in *The Jazz Singer* (1927) is one such. That breathtaking transition into luminous Technicolor in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) is another. These are pivotal instants where the whole trajectory of the movies shifts.

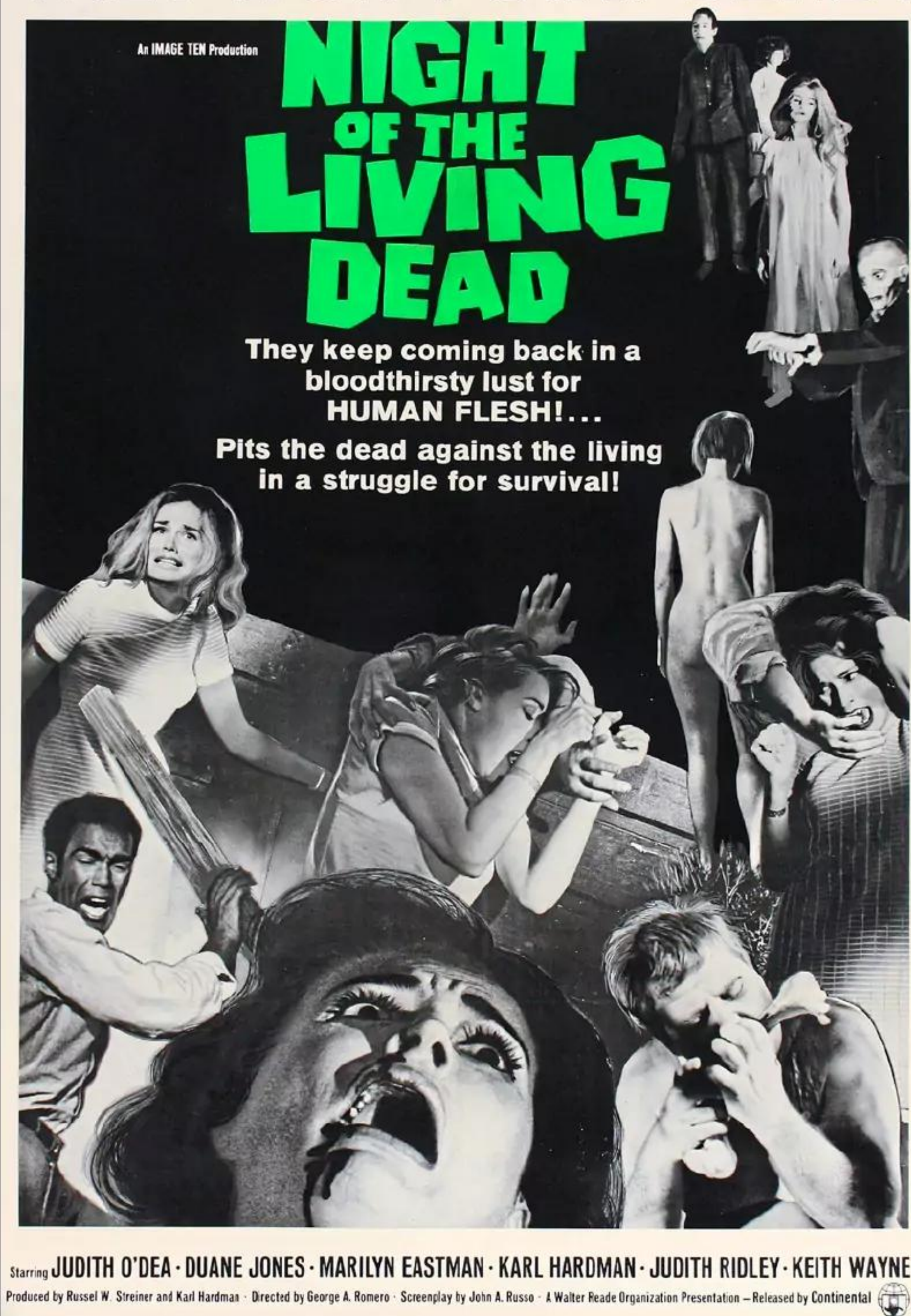
And, perhaps surprisingly, there's one such moment in George A. Romero's horror classic *Night of the Living Dead* (1968).

The film begins with a gag. A couple fool around in a deserted graveyard. The boy sticks his arms out. 'They're coming to get you, Barbara!' he jokes. But in the background, unnoticed, something strange wanders, almost comically into view – a shambling, cadaverous figure who eventually attacks the boy and kills him. Barbara, terrified, screaming, flees.

In that tiny moment, the horror movie was reborn. By the late Sixties, the genre was running on fumes; the glory days of the Universal monster cycle had given way to the trashy drive-in movies of AIP. Horror was tacky, childish, and not serious. By the time Barbara arrives at a deserted farmhouse, where she meets a group of survivors attempting to endure the zombie holocaust, it will be very serious indeed. Any air of camp or irony was replaced with gruelling, hopeless terror.

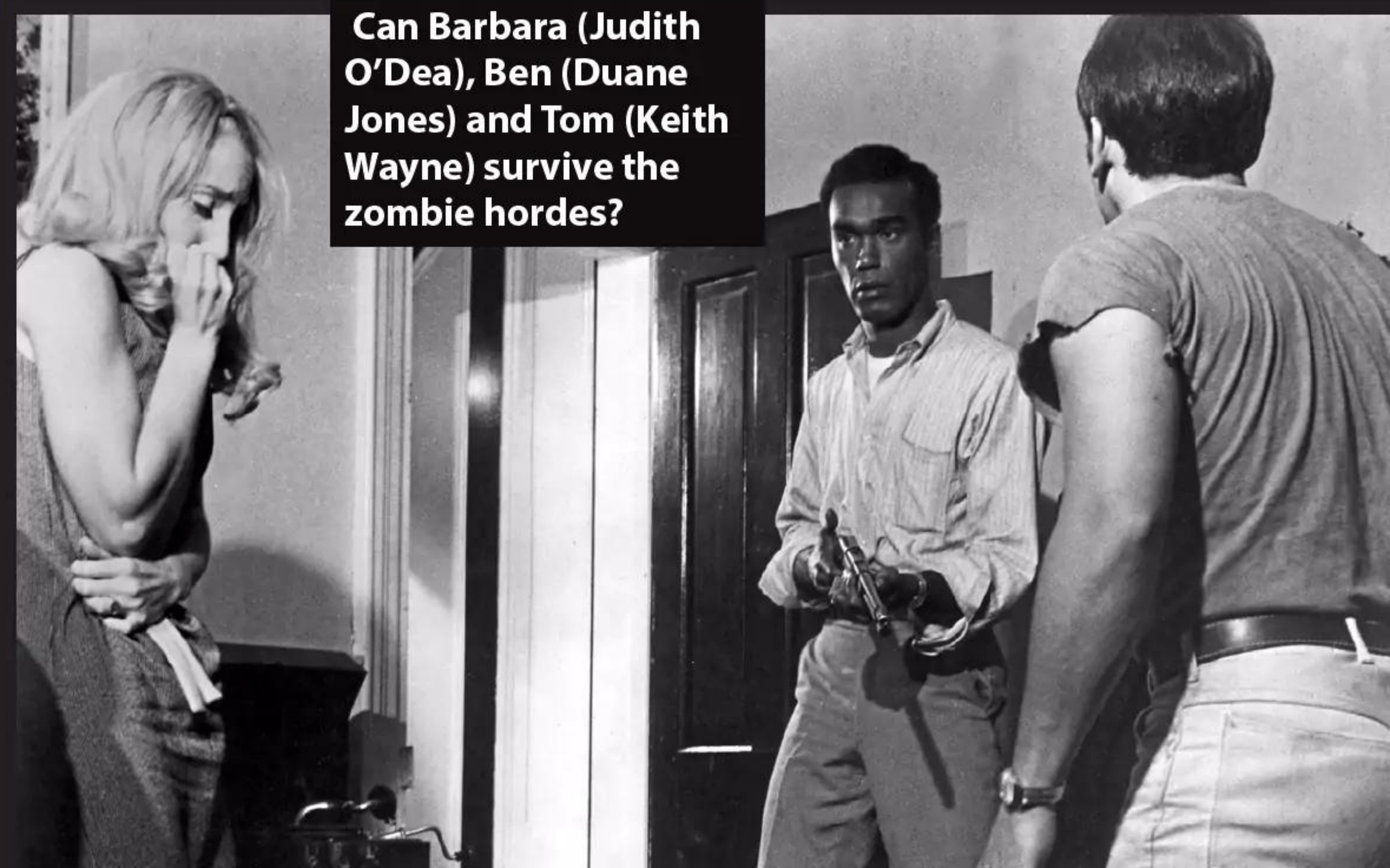
While *Night of the Living Dead* starts with a joke, it ends with one of the bleakest moments in all of cinema: the black protagonist shot dead, killed not by the zombie hordes, but by trigger-happy, racist rednecks. And so, a full year before *Easy Rider* would declare 'We blew it,' it was *Night of the Living Dead*, released as America was convulsed by the Vietnam War and the assassination of Martin Luther King, that held a mirror up to a nation in turmoil, and declared the grass-tinged Age of Aquarius quite definitely over. ➔

THEY WON'T STAY DEAD!



e dead

Can Barbara (Judith O'Dea), Ben (Duane Jones) and Tom (Keith Wayne) survive the zombie hordes?



Which is all the more surprising given that its 26-year-old director hadn't even wanted to make a horror movie in the first place.

PITTSBURGH PALS

George Romero used to like to tell people that the most frightening thing he had directed before *Night of the Living Dead* was *Mr Rogers Gets a Tonsillectomy*. He had indeed directed inserts for the legendary American preschool show, as well as highly successful commercials. Based in his hometown of Pittsburgh, which he would make his moviemaking home, he and a group of friends had long discussed making a film. They had an arthouse flick in mind, something serious, that might channel some of the cinematic pyrotechnics currently convulsing European cinema, which became known as *la nouvelle vague*. A Bergman-esque coming-of-age tale set in the Dark Ages titled, somewhat unpromisingly, *Whine of the Fawn* was mooted.

But soon, appropriately enough for a bunch of ad directors, commercial reality intruded. 'Before we made *Night of the Living Dead*, we had this little company



Night of the Living Dead was one of the most profitable independent movies ever, making over 263 times its budget

doing beer commercials and industrial films, and we wanted to make a movie,' Romero said. 'I wrote this script, which was very sort of Bergman-esque, because, you know, the *Seventh Seal* and the *Virgin Spring* and those movies were happening. And we couldn't get investors. Literally, everybody said "What's this garbage?" So I said, "Well, why don't we make a horror movie? I think maybe we can make a good one".'

Romero's screenplay was heavily influenced by Richard Matheson's 1954 vampire novel *I Am Legend*. 'I couldn't use vampires because Matheson did,' he said. 'So I wanted something that would be an earth-shaking change. So I said, "What if the dead stop staying dead?" That tapped into the attractive notion of living forever – until you realised what that entailed.'

There had, of course, been zombie movies before. *White Zombie* (1932) and *I Walked with*

a *Zombie* (1943) had both mined Haitian Voodoo for their undead villains. And Universal's *Mummy* movies bore the striking influence of zombie lore. But the zombie had always played second fiddle to Dracula and Frankenstein's monsters; they just didn't seem that cinematically *interesting*.

But, for Romero, they offered an opportunity to hold up a mirror to ourselves. The monsters would be our neighbours, our former friends, but the horror would come from our own reactions to the developing catastrophe.

'My stories are about humans and how they react, or fail to react, or react stupidly. I'm pointing the finger at us, not at the zombies. I try to respect and sympathise with the zombies as much as possible,' he later said.

Romero and his rag-tag crew shot for seven months, often at weekends and when they could afford to buy film stock. *Evans City Cemetery*, just outside Pittsburgh, was used for the iconic



Romero said *Martin*, one of his favourite films, was the one that remained closest to the vision he had

Diary of the Dead (2007) was the fifth and penultimate film in the 'Dead' franchise





Creepshow starring Leslie Nielsen was the only Romero film to open up at No.1 at the weekend box office

opening scene. The cabin where the survivors hole up was an abandoned farmhouse just outside town. (It was in such a poor state of repair that it was demolished shortly after filming.)

Working with little-to-no budget, the crew were forced to improvise. Taking a leaf from Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), chocolate syrup was used for blood. Ghastly wounds were sculpted from mortician's wax. 'One of the investors was a butcher,' Romero remembered shortly after the film's release. 'That's where we got the intestines. He brought them over to the set and I said, "That's great!"'

It was the definition of guerrilla filmmaking. But neither Romero nor any of his cast or crew could have had any idea of the impact their little backwoods horror movie was about to make.

ZOMBIE TRAILBLAZER

It's almost impossible to overstate the influence this single movie, made on a shoestring by a group of enthusiasts, would have. To start with, most obviously, there are all the damned zombies. From films like Danny Boyle's *28 Days* franchise, *World War Z* (2013) and *Train to Busan* (2016), to TV behemoths like *The Walking Dead* (2010-22) and *The Last of*

Us (2023-) to video games, comic books, and even art, the animated corpse would become a perennial, indestructible part of culture. In 2011 alone, the zombie economy was worth \$5 billion, making Romero easily the single most financially influential movie director of all time.

But he changed the nature of movies forever, too, blazing a trail for independent directors to make their mark with low-budget horror. Without him, no Tobe Hooper (*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, 1974), Sam Raimi (*The Evil Dead*, 1981), Wes Craven (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*, 1984) or John Carpenter (*Halloween*, 1978). With its grainy, newsreel look, *Night of the Living Dead* provided the roots of the found footage genre, launched by *The Blair Witch Project* in 1999. And the notion that horror could carry a message, could be serious cinema, arrives with Romero, and is still alive in the 'elevated horror' of Jordan Peele (*Get Out*, 2017), Ari Aster (*Hereditary*, 2018) and Robert Eggers (*The Witch*, 2015).

Even the spandex-clad superheroes who colonise our multiplexes every summer owe a debt to Romero. The notion of a 'shared universe', now the powerhouse behind almost

every major studio's business model, in which unlinked stories share the same fictional world, has its roots in Romero's original zombie movies.

Romero stayed in Pittsburgh for the remainder of his working life, expanding his zombie empire with four sequels to *Night of the Living Dead*, as well as making a few, always fascinating, departures from zombie flicks (1977's *Martin*, in which he turns his humanistic, sympathetic eye to vampires, is a neglected standout). He resisted Hollywood's lure, though he did collaborate with Stephen King on the portmanteau tribute to EC comics, *Creepshow* in 1987.

For the most part he remained non-committal about the tsunami of zombie movies that were inspired by his micro-budgeted classic, but in a candid 2017 interview, he admitted that the transformation of the genre into unimaginative blockbuster fare had disappointed him.

'I used to be the only guy on the zombie playground, and unfortunately, Brad Pitt and *The Walking Dead* have made it Hollywood-ised. I've had a terrific run. Mine have always been political. It's not gore, it's not just horror – I've always tried to put a little something in there. I felt that I had almost found a niche, but it was bound to happen.'

Romero died shortly after that interview, from lung cancer, at the age of 77. His legacy was undeniable. He had changed cinema and the art of the horror movie forever. Despite the later commercialisation of the genre he birthed, he had proved that horror movies could be socially critical, intelligent and humane. And in the meantime, his creation, for good or ill, seems set to lurch ever onwards. Nearly 60 years later, they're still coming to get us...

DID YOU
KNOW?

During his childhood in the Bronx, Romero used to check out films from the local library. When he tried to borrow Powell & Pressburger's *The Tales of Hoffman* (1951), he found it already on loan. 'M Scorsese' read the library card.

SCREEN CHIC MOVIE STYLE

FILM: THE BOY FRIEND (1971)

ICONIC COSTUME: A glitter and sequin-encrusted musical-themed mini dress with dramatic midriff-revealing side cutaways and an elaborate headpiece.

SHE WORE IT WELL: Twiggy as Polly

DESIGNED BY: Shirley Russell

SHOWSTOPPING SCENE: Part of an extravagant fantasy musical number designed to evoke a Busby Berkeley-style spectacle.

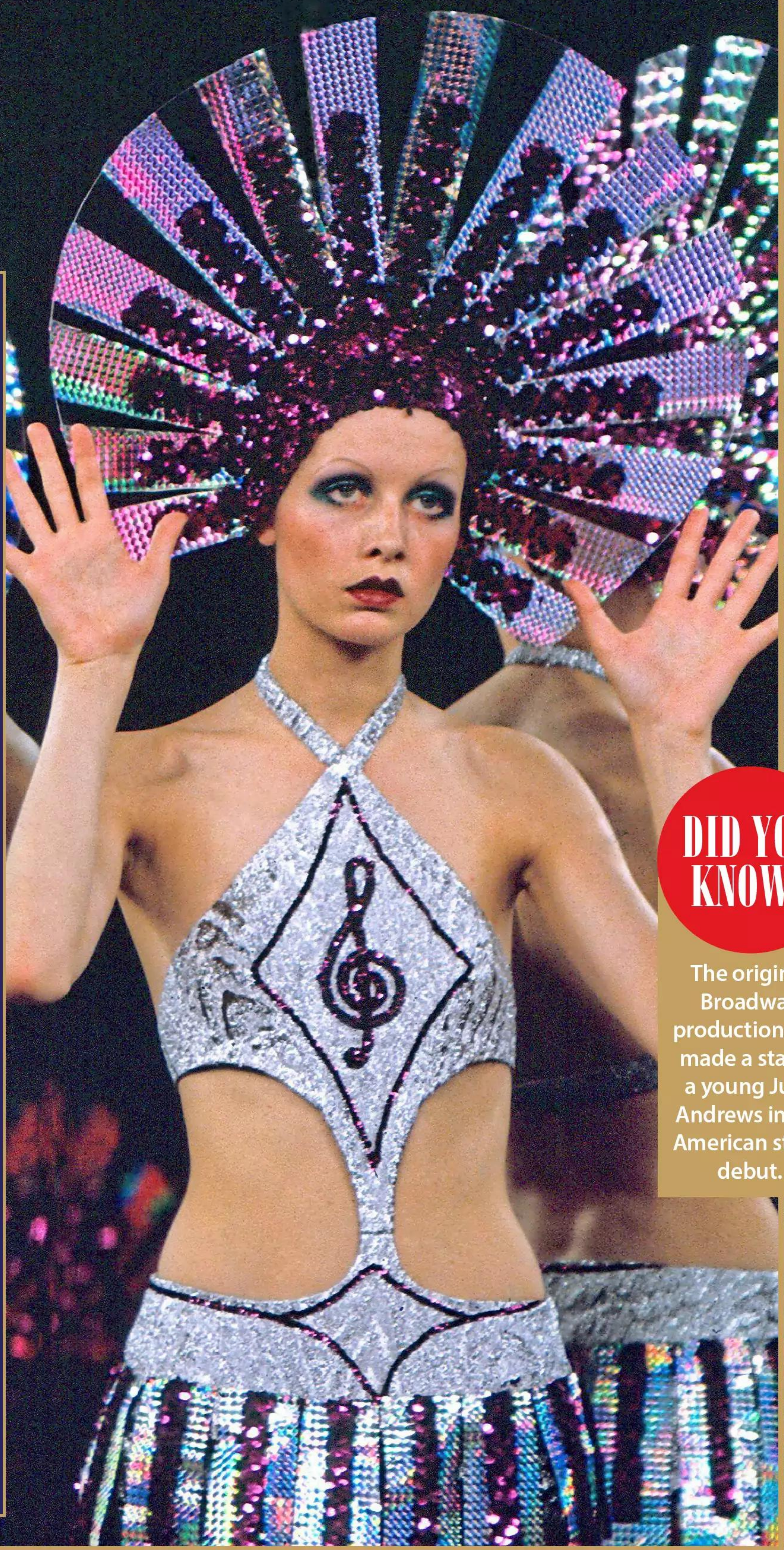
■ As the costume designer, Shirley Russell created the film's 'witty and eye-popping costumes', working alongside director, her then husband, Ken Russell.

■ Set in the French Riviera of the Twenties, Polly, the assistant stage manager of a low-budget theatre troupe is forced to perform after the show's star sprains her ankle.

■ A loving homage to the jazz age, the costumes feature flapper dresses with fringing, beading, dropped waists, and plenty of Art Deco embellishments.

■ The costumes contrasted life on and off stage, with glamorous, glitzy fantasy production numbers and more modest pieces worn by the characters in their backstage, 'real life' moments.

■ MGM was concerned about Twiggy's feature film debut but Ken Russell vowed, 'give me three months and I'll have her dancing like Ginger Rogers and singing like Judy Garland.'



DID YOU KNOW?

The original Broadway production had made a star of a young Julie Andrews in her American stage debut.

**DR WHO AND THE DALEKS (1965) IS 60 YEARS OLD THIS YEAR.
HOW MUCH DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE DOCTOR'S BIG-SCREEN DEBUT?**

**Are you
a movie
buff?**



1 Who took on the role of the Doctor from his TV incarnation William Hartnell?
2 What are the names of the Doctor's two

granddaughters?
3 To which fictional planet do the characters travel?
4 Name Barbara's boyfriend and the actor

who played him.
5 Which race is at war with the Daleks?
6 How is the TARDIS activated at the beginning of the film?

7 What do the Daleks plan to release to destroy their enemy?
8 What happens to the TARDIS at the end of the film?

Who am I?

How many clues do you need to identify this star?

1 I was born in London, England, in 1928 and began acting as a child, my first film was Murder in the Family (1938),
2 My family moved to the US during the Second World War and, soon after, I secured to part of Huw in How Green Was My Valley (1941).

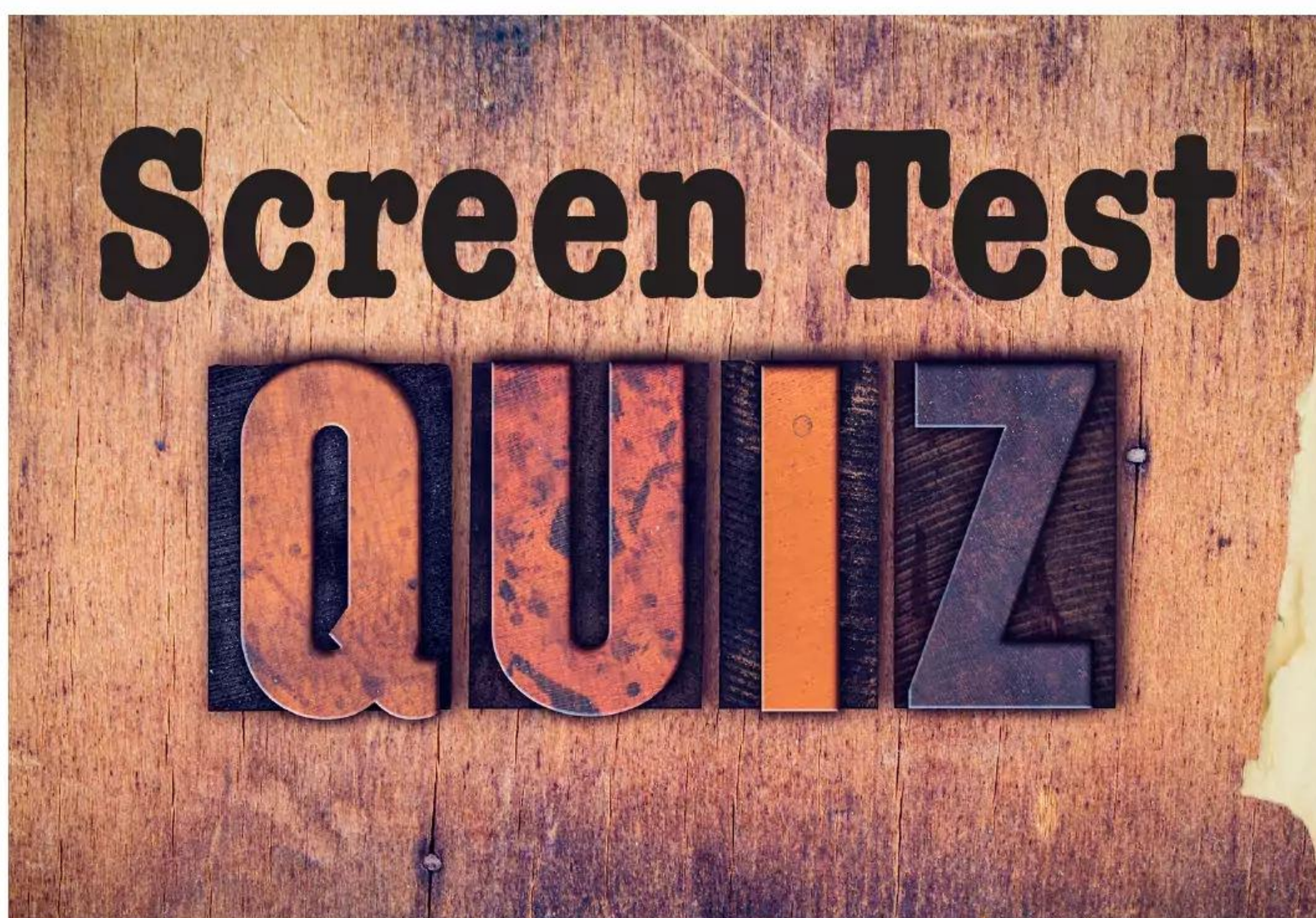
3 My other child roles included My Friend Flicka (1943) and Lassie Come Home (1943) where I formed a lifelong friendship with Elizabeth Taylor.

4 I amassed over 270 acting credits but I'm probably best known for playing an ape in cult sci-fi film Planet of the Apes (1972).

PIXELLATE

Can you identify which Hollywood legend is missing from this scene in The Maltese Falcon (1941)?

Time to test your film knowledge.
It may be just for fun but pride is at stake...




IN A SPIN

Can you unravel these anagrams to reveal the titles of five Jane Fonda films?
1 OUT BACALL
2 ITALIANISE CORFU
3 GO LONDON PEND
4 FETE IN VINO
5 COOK BULB



ANSWERS: ARE YOU A MOVIE BUFF? 1 Peter Cushing. 2 Barbara and Susan, 3 Skaro, 4 Ian Chesterton played by Roy Castle, 5 The Thals, 6 Ian accidentally leans on the control and activates it, 7 Radiation, 8 It lands in the middle of a Roman army. IN A SPIN: 1 Cat Ballou, 2 California Suite, 3 On Golden Pond, 4 Nine to Five, 5 Book Club. WHO AM I? Roddy McDowall. PIXELLATE: Mary Astor.



From struggling actors to stars in the spotlight, Lin Bensley takes a look at the long and happy marriage of Michael Denison and Dulcie Gray

Love actually

Few marriages have survived the rigours of show business quite so contentedly as that of Michael Denison and Dulcie Gray, who enjoyed 59 blissful years together in the spotlight.

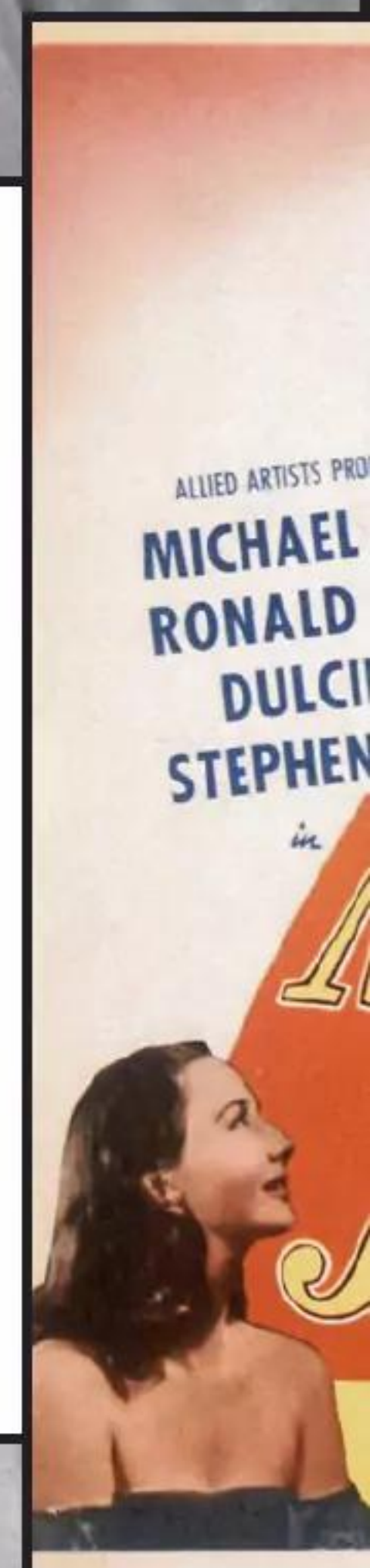
But the English rose and her handsome husband came from rather different backgrounds. Dulcie was born in Kuala Lumpur though educated in

England. Before acting, she had first studied art at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts under the celebrated French Cubist painter, Amédée Ozenfant, but it wasn't long before she decided that a career on the stage might prove more beneficial in financial terms.

In 1937, aged 21, she won a scholarship to the Webber-Douglas School of Singing and Dramatic Art in London,

where she lived on 6d a day for food, often going hungry. A few months later she was joined by an impeccably attired and self-possessed young man called Michael Denison who had also decided to tread the boards.

Having evaded invitations to join his grandfather's insurance firm and promising careers in the diplomatic service, law, medicine, and even the church,



DID YOU KNOW?

Since childhood Dulcie had always retained an interest in butterflies and wrote an authoritative work on the subject entitled *Butterflies on My Mind* (1978) that won a Times Educational Supplement award.

Michael opted to join the Oxford University Dramatic Society, where he found his vocation, despite the reservations of fellow student John Gielgud, who had directed him in *Richard II*!

Working together he and Dulcie found they shared many of the same interests and soon formed a close friendship. In the course of rehearsals for the political drama *Parnell*, Michael enjoyed the pleasurable experience of holding Dulcie in his arms and declaring his love, and it wasn't long before feigned emotions were exchanged for genuine affections.

RAVE REVIEWS

Although often short on money, love conquered all and they married on 29 April 1939 at St Saviours in South Kensington. After spending a night at the Dorchester, their brief honeymoon was over, and they travelled up to Aberdeen where they made their acting debut together in Noël Coward's *Hay Fever* at His Majesty's Theatre.

During the 16-week season they spent in Aberdeen, they appeared in a variety of plays, including *Arms and the Man* by George Bernard Shaw – regarded by many as his wittiest play. The range and scope of both actors was impressive in two so young, and both won rave notices for their performances.

But the nature of their work frequently meant working at opposite ends of the country.

It was perhaps a testament to the strength of their relationship that they were able to endure months of separation; an acknowledged necessity if they wished to advance their careers on an equal footing.

BETTER TOGETHER

Michael made his screen debut in *Tilly of Bloomsbury* (1940) shortly before he was called up for military service with the Royal Signals. Dulcie, meanwhile, made her film debut in *Banana Ridge* (1942), but it wasn't until they starred in their first film together, the gritty Black Country drama, *My Brother Jonathan* (1948), that success really came. Dulcie and Michael became an instant box-office hit. The couple enjoyed further on-screen successes in *The Glass Mountain* (1949), *Angels One Five* (1952), and *There Was a Young Lady* (1953).

Though the theatre remained their first love, both took readily to radio, film and television, all of which presented new challenges and opportunities.

During the war years, Dulcie had established herself as a radio star in a propaganda serial called *Front Line Family*, appearing in an impressive 395 episodes. In the Fifties, Michael landed the leading role in a BBC courtroom drama series, *Boyd QC*, which ran for 80 episodes from 1956-64. Such work gave them security in the form of a regular income against a backdrop of austerity during the early post-war years.

Dulcie was also a talented author, penning 18 murder mystery novels including *Murder on the Stairs* (1957) and *No Quarter for a Star* (1964). Never short of a plot, she continued writing her whodunnits for nearly 30 years.

MARRIAGE SECRET

The Sixties, meanwhile, proved a golden era for the couple as Dulcie recalled in her autobiography, *Looking Forward, Looking Back* (1991). 'We were almost constantly



In later life, Dulcie found TV fame when she starred as Kate Harvey in *Howards' Way* (1985-90)

in work and together, which we always enjoyed. People seem to find this hard to understand, but as we enjoy each other's company and enjoy work, it seems obvious that we should enjoy working together.'

The stresses and strains of touring regularly never affected the constancy of their love for each other. 'Marriage is a difficult, even if rewarding business,' admitted Dulcie in her memoir, 'We are often asked the secret of our long marriage. How do we know? Perhaps it is that we have always been passionate friends, and we have a similarity of taste (awful to live in a home which made you wince every time you entered), and although we are very different in temperament we do have the same ideas about money... Sex has never been a problem, and Michael is a good actor which is important to me. We have a need to cherish and Michael is tolerant and amusing.'

They appeared together in more than 100 West End theatre productions and gave their last performance in *Curtain Up – An Evening with Michael Denison and Dulcie Gray* at the Jermyn Street Theatre in 1998.

After a brief illness, Michael died in 1998, aged 82. Dulcie died in 2011, aged 95. Both had been awarded CBEs in 1983, a fitting accolade for a couple whose inspired stagecraft lit up the entertainment industry for six decades.



After nine years of marriage the couple made their first film together

NEXT ISSUE



Growing up in Tinseltown

Natalie Wood had to fight to be taken seriously as she transitioned from child star to leading lady.

Behind the scenes of Holy Grail

How, despite a tight budget and shambolic five-week shoot, the Monty Python team created comedy gold.

65 years of Coronation Street

Ten iconic moments from the nation's favourite soap.

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How Edmund Gwenn became the definitive Father Christmas.

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FREE CLASSIC POSTER

The extent to which America's League of Decency demanded cuts to *Black Narcissus* (1947) prompted director Michael Powell to observe, 'They couldn't leave a picture with nuns in it alone.'

The organisation dedicated to identifying 'objectionable content' in films, on behalf of Catholic audiences, objected to many aspects of Powell and Pressburger's drama about a group of nuns living in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Although passed (with some reservations) by the Production Code Administration, the Legion gave the film a C (Condemned) rating due to the depiction of nuns struggling with repressed sexual desires and mental instability. The LA Catholic newspaper, *The Tidings*, reported, 'It is a long time since the American public has been handed such a perverted specimen of bad taste, vicious inaccuracies, and ludicrous improbabilities.'

To get US distribution Powell and Pressburger were forced to agree to cuts including, Sister Clodagh's (Deborah Kerr) flashbacks to her life in Ireland, dialogue considered salacious, and the striking scene of Sister Ruth (Kathleen Byron) putting on red lipstick. The filmmakers were also required to add a foreword making it clear that the nuns were Anglican.

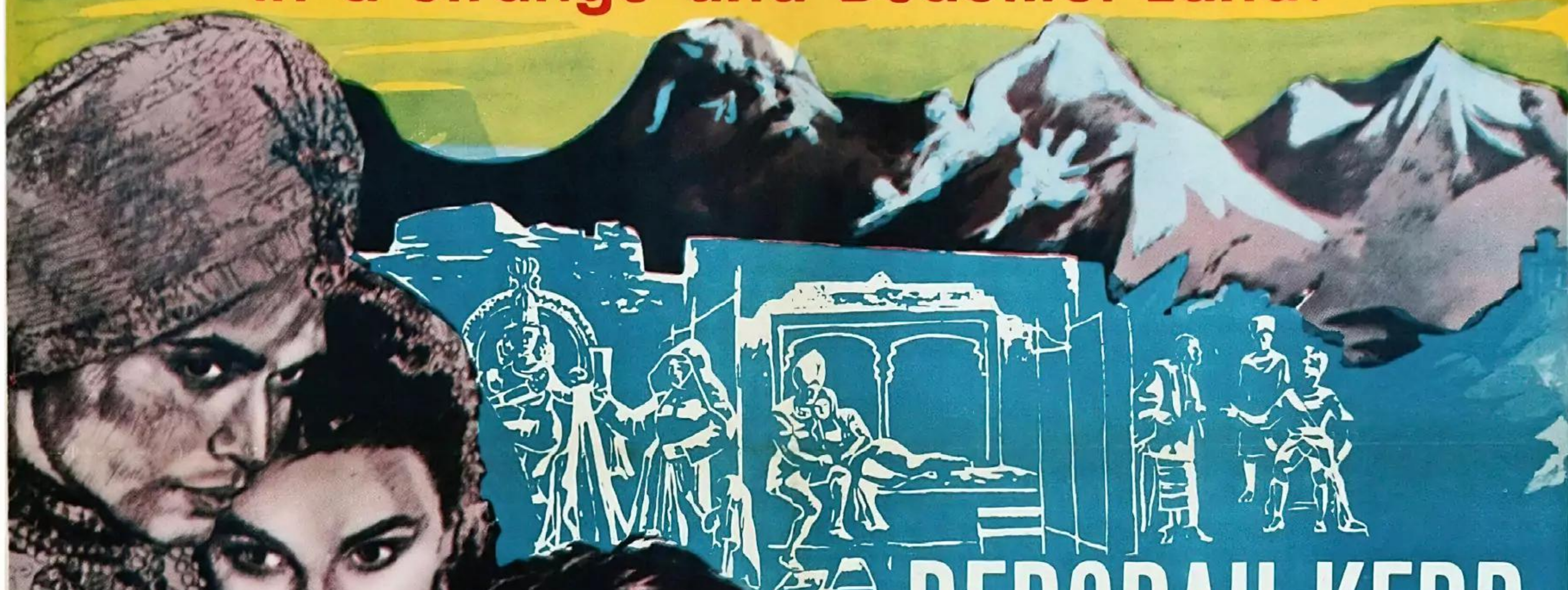
DID YOU KNOW? Fifty years after playing neurotic Sister Ruth, Kathleen Byron had a small cameo as Mother Superior in *Les Misérables* (1998).

For many years this was the only version available in the USA until Powell and Pressburger fans Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola prompted a critical reappraisal of their works, which led to the uncut version being released.



The spectacular Himalayan scenery was all created in the studio with glass paintings. The film won two Oscars for Art Direction and Cinematography

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