

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 8/27/86 -- Vol. 5, No. 7

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.

LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; HO meetings are in HO 2N-523.

_D_A_T_E

_T_O_P_I_C

- 09/17 The Elric series by Michael Moorcock (Magic as Science)
(THE DREAMING CITY, THE SAILOR ON THE SEAS OF FATE,
?, THE SLEEPING SORCERESS, ?, STORMBRINGER, ELRIC AT
THE END OF TIME, THE SINGING CITADEL, and maybe others)
- 10/08 BLOOD MUSIC by Greg Bear (Genetics)
- 10/29 MALLWORLD by Somtow Sucharitkul (Commerce)
- 11/19 THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS by Ursula K. LeGuin (Sexual Identity)
- 12/10 NEUROMANCER by William Gibson (Consciousness)

HO Chair is John Jetzt, HO 4F-528A (834-1563). LZ Chair is Rob Mitchell, LZ 1B-306 (576-6106). MT Chair is Mark Leeper, MT 3E-433 (957-5619). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-427A (949-5866). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). MT Librarian is Bruce Szablak, MT 4C-418 (957-5868). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, MT 1F-329 (957-2070). All material copyright by author unless otherwise noted.

1. Yes, there is a Science Fiction Club library in Middletown. We have, in fact, just gotten an infusion of hardbacks from the infamous Rich "187-Straight-Hours-Playing-Trek" Koehler who is soon to be married and his fiance said it was the books or her and on the spur of the moment he chose wrong so we have the books and he has her. (Just as well, we don't have room to store her in the library.) Bruce Szablak (it is pronounced just like it is spelled (i.e. nearly impossibly)) is our new librarian. Drop in, talk to Bruce, leave a pencil on his desk (it will drive him crazy to figure out where all the pencils are coming from), and peruse the library. Somewhere in this notice you will probably find a list of the books in the library.

2. It is well known that people under conditions of severe stress do odd things. Everyone at the new AT&T is under pressure. I went down the the stockroom to get a purchase order form and other supplies. When I got down there the door was open but, the room

was dark. There was a note on the outside of the door that said, "We are open, come in." I figured it didn't apply me, but that I could just slip in and get the purchase order forms and leave. Purchase order forms are not controlled stock, so you don't even have to fill out a slip for them. So I went in the door and it was

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pitch dark inside. I could have picked up the forms if I could have seen them, but in the dark, all forms look alike. So I wanted to turn on the lights. Now, usually there is a light switch just inside the door. I was feeling around for it, and I found it and switched it on. The entire stockroom staff, standing there, yelled "Supplies!"

Mark Leeper
MT 3E-433 957-5619
...mtgzz!leeper

Mercury Capsules - August 24, 1986

"Mercury Capsules": SF review column, edited by Paul S. R. Chisholm. Appears in the "Lincroft-Holmdel SF Club Notice".

A medium for quick reviews of anything of interest in the world of science fiction. I'll pass along anything (not slanderous or scatological) without nasty comments. I prefer to get reviews by electronic mail: send to pa!psc from the AT&T-IS ENS systems in Lincroft, {pegasus,mtgzz,ihnp4}!lznv!psc from everywhere else. If that's impossible, I'm at 113A LZ 1D-212, 576-2374.

+o R_e_d_S_t_o_r_m_R_i_s_i_n_g: novel, Tom Clancy (and Larry Bond), 1986. 652 pages, \$19.95 (less in many stores). A damned good war novel, but without the universal appeal of T_h_e_H_u_n_t_f_o_r_R_e_d_O_c_t_o_b_e_r.

This book has cost me and my wife a week's good sleep each. An accident in Siberia (frighteningly like Chernobyl in some ways) leads Moscow to start a conventional (no ABC) World War III. On the plains of

West Germany, the shores of Iceland, the surface of the Atlantic Ocean, and the deeps of the Berents Sea, East meets West in combat.

If you're interested in war or wargaming, this is a must read. "Civilians" will probably be fascinated, too: war is hell, but it's rarely boring. But there's too much going on, and too many people with too little to differentiate each other, to be enjoyed as a regular novel. There are places where having an atlas at hand helps. You will *not* need any of the Jane's books.

R_e_d_S_t_o_r_m_R_i_s_i_n_g doesn't (necessarily) take place after the events of H_u_n_t_f_o_r_R_e_d_O_c_t_o_b_e_r. Clancy's next book, P_a_t_r_i_o_t_G_a_m_e_s, is a prequel to R_e_d_O_c_t_o_b_e_r, about terrorism and how Jack Ryan got his knighthood. T_h_e_C_a_r_d_i_n_a_l_o_f_t_h_e_K_r_e_m_l_i_n will also take place in the "Red October universe". And like R_e_d_S_t_o_r_m_R_i_s_i_n_g, I'll buy them as soon as they hit the stands, even in hardcover.

Paul S. R. Chisholm

+o S_p_l_i_t_I_n_f_i_n_i_t_y, B_l_u_e_A_d_e_p_t, J_u_x_t_a_p_o_s_i_t_i_o_n: novels, Piers Anthony, 1980, 1981, 1982. \$2.95 and roughly 250 pages each. In world of science, serfs have everything but freedom: in place of that, they have the Game. In a world of magic, the inhabitants have everything.

My twelve-year-old got these as a gift, and when he was grounded for a few weeks, well, he found time to read them. He recommended them to me.

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As pure entertainment, it was okay. But the plot seemed to follow Anthony's convenience, not its own course. (It has the worst deus ex machina since Varley's M_i_l_l_e_n_n_i_u_m.) None of the characters come alive: certainly not Stile, not his too many loves, not his uncountable enemies. The Game has some interesting bits, but I didn't appreciate hearing the rules of *every* competition. Nor could I believe how often Stile won. And I wish Anthony could have injected a *little* humor into a duet of two musicians playing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on harmonicas.

Not bad if you need something to read in the car while waiting for the auto club to bring help. If you want to leave your brain turned on through the entire performance, choose something else. (But my twelve-year-old liked it.)

Paul S. R. Chisholm

+o N_a_t_u_r_e'_s_E_n_d: novel, Whitley Strieber and James Kunetka, Warner, 1986, \$17.95. The faults that I found in Strieber's W_o_l_f_o_f_S_h_a_d_o_w_s are magnified here--but then this is about five times as long. It's preachy., God, is it preachy! Every ecological disaster warned against in the past ten years is in this book. Though it takes place forty years from now, there has evidently n_o_t been a major earthquake in California however, and I find the hi-tech aspects unlikely in a world as chaotic as Strieber and Kunetka describe. Little continuity flaws also mar the book--a character rescues his data disks by putting them in his wallet and, even though all his clothes are burned off, he still has the disks. There's also a secret enclave of genetically-enhanced super-intelligent children. (This really is a "kitchen-sink" novel.)

Perhaps the problem is that Strieber is still trying to write horror novels which rely more on emotion instead of science fiction novels which rely on intellect. Taken as a horror novel, this isn't bad, but as science fiction, it doesn't make it for me.

Evelyn C. Leeper

+o A_C_h_o_i_c_e_o_f_D_e_s_t_i_n_i_e_s: novel, Melissa Scott, Baen, 1986, \$2.95. What if? In this case, what if Alexander didn't invade India and die as a result? What if he turned west instead? Though my knowledge of the history of the period is not strong enough to judge this book in that regard, a friend who has a degree in history claims it is accurate. The near-term changes may be realistic, but the interludes, set over a millenium after Alexander, seem disconnected from the rest with no real groundwork laid for their basis. Better than many Baen books, but still not quite there for me.

Evelyn C. Leeper

+o A_B_a_r_o_q_u_e_F_a_b_l_e: novel, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Berkeley, 1986, \$3.50. This appears to have been written as a Gilbert & Sullivan operetta. Full of knights, dragons, princesses, and all the other trappings of chivalrous fantasy, it reminds me of nothing so much as W_i_z_a_r_d_s_a_n_d W_a_r_r_i_o_r_s. Okay, if a bit light-weight.

Evelyn C. Leeper

+o E_l_l_e_a_n_d_e_r_M_o_r_n_i_n_g: novel, Jerry Yulsman, St. Martin's Press, 1984, \$13.95. Elleander Morning is an enigmatic Edwardian woman who goes out one day in 1914 and shoots an anti-Semitic painter in a Vienna cafe. Now we all know who she shoots, so the question is "Why?" She obviously knows more about things than the average Edwardian, but how? Though the events that follow are well thought-out and for the most part follow naturally from this occurrence, the explanation for the occurrence itself is less than convincing and is in fact the weakest part of the novel. The gratuitous addition of H. G. Wells as a character is merely another example of the name-dropping that one often finds in historical fiction. Still, I would recommend this as one of the better alternate histories of late.

Evelyn C. Leeper

+o T_h_e_D_r_a_c_u_l_a_M_u_r_d_e_r_s: novel, Philip Daniels, Critic's Choice, 1986 (1983), \$2.95. A vampire-style murder at a Halloween dress ball starts Superintendent Vine on a quest for the killer. But is the killer a man or something else? The writing style is crisp, the characters well-drawn, but the novel lacks any real tension or surprises. I hate to say if this is the kind of book you like, then you'll like this book, but that about sums it up.

Evelyn C. Leeper

STAND BY ME

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Young men becoming adults on a quest is the subject of Rob Reiner's first film based on a Stephen King story. The film is solid and affecting but unoriginal.

We tend to shudder at George Orwell's concept of "double-think" and stories that in the modern U.S.S.R. people would rewrite even recent history. How is it possible for people to come to believe things that they can remember were just not so? But we do the same sort of thing in this country. What we come to lie to ourselves about is that childhood is happy and carefree. I don't know about you, but my adult life is a lot more fun than my childhood. S_t_a_n_d_B_y_M_e is a rite-of-passage film that is about many things, but mostly about the serious pain of being twelve years old.

Rob Reiner's third directorial effort (previously he did T_h_i_s_I_s_S_p_i_n_a_l_T_a_p and T_h_e_S_u_r_e_T_h_i_n_g) is the story of four boys on a hike to find the body of a complete stranger their own age who was hit by a train and killed. Take my word for it, that is what they are doing. Explaining why would take more space than this short review would allow. As the four boys walk they discuss their lives and matters of importance to themselves. The script is well-written, based on Stephen King's non-horror story "The Body" from his book D_i_f_f_e_r_e_n_t_S_e_a_s_o_n_s. Reiner's first non-comedy is surprisingly affecting. The four main characters are acted extremely well, as well as any adults in most films.

The faults of the film can be traced back to Stephen King's story. The overall plot and much of the style of the story have been done before in a similar and no less affecting film, B_l_e_s_s_t_h_e_B_e_a_s_t_s_a_n_d_C_h_i_l_d_r_e_n. The latter is an under-rated and overlooked film also with boys on a quest. But in that film it is at once a more believable and more noble quest. The main character's problems in S_t_a_n_d_B_y_M_e seem lifted out of O_r_d_i_n_a_r_y_P_e_o_p_l_e. In fact, each of the boys has a problem to overcome but the problems are too simple and extreme (in a word: melodramatic) to be really believable.

Stand_By_Me is a thoughtful film worth seeing. Give it a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

MANHUNTER

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: In spite of self-indulgent direction Manhunter looks at psychotic killers with the same sense of wonder mixed in its horror that the novel Dracula had. I think the book must have been pretty good.

I have to admit that for once I really have not done the homework I should have done in order to review Manhunter. It is not that I couldn't; I just haven't. For the last couple of years Thomas Harris's Red_Dragon has sat on my shelf as one of the next few books I intend to read. I haven't been avoiding reading it, I just haven't gotten to it. And with a hobby of watching feature films, I almost never watch commercial TV series. I have never seen an episode of "Miami Vice." So when Michael Mann (director of "Miami Vice"(?)) makes a film of Red_Dragon, I know little of what to expect. I think I came out of the film with more respect for Harris and less respect for Mann. Manhunter comes off as a film that had a good idea but was grossly mis-directed.

So how can I look at the film and say the credit for its virtues goes to Harris and the blame for its failings goes to Mann? Well, it doesn't hurt to have heard very good reports of the novel, but that really isn't it. What is bad about the film is a sort of pretentious cinematic expressionism. Directors like Fritz Lang could evoke

emotional responses by distorting their images in films like M_e_t_r_o_p_o_l_i_s and M, but Lang's best work was in silents and early sound. Expressionism has to be done subtly these days or it will fail entirely. This film is full of odd camera angles and distorted colors to disorient the audience, but Mann lays them on with a trowel. We see skies colors that no skies have ever been; we see scenes shot through horrid camera filters. Rather than disorient the viewer they are merely irritating. If they are trying to create the emotions of the psychopath in the audience, they are often used at totally inappropriate times. At one point the main characters steps through a door and we watch him from the ceiling, looking straight down. The scene only served to make me ask myself, "I don't care what h_i's emotional state is--what am I doing hanging from the ceiling?" Many of Mann's scenes last much too long. Too much of the dialogue is garbled. These are all signs of a director with more idea of what he wants to do than of how to do it.

What is good about the film is its sense of wonder about psychosis. This film does not just portray a psychotic as a man in a ski mask with a sharp knife. The film tries to enter the mind of the psychotic. There are three psychotics in this film: an old serial killer, a new serial killer, and the hero. The hero is not always psychotic. But he can, at will, cross the border between sanity and psychosis. Sometimes he can crawl back to the sane side; sometimes he cannot. But the

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psychotics in this film seem to have marvelous minds. The two serial killers communicate at will in spite of the fact that one is behind bars. In a sense this film gives the same perverse appeal to psychosis that Bram Stoker gave to vampirism. It is tough to imagine that a director who thinks that a man can maintain a four-day growth of beard for three weeks could have so well handled the psychotics in this film. That has to have come from Harris's novel.

This film has a lot going for it and a lot going against it. It has a high standard deviation along with its not-so-standard deviations. I hate to give it such a prosaic rating with it having so much that is extreme, but M_a_n_h_u_n_t_e_r gets a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale. Hey, Hollywood, any chance of a remake? Soon?

THE SHIPKILLER by Justin Scott
Fawcett Crest, 1978, \$2.50.
A book review by Mark R. Leeper

Peter Hardin and his wife Carolyn are out on their boat relaxing one day when a mountain of steel comes bearing down on them. The largest sea-going vessel that ever existed, the tanker Leviathan, a solid wall of force, crushes Hardin's boat. When Hardin wakes up his wife and his boat are gone. His first reaction is to sue the captain of the Leviathan. Dead end. He has no proof and the Captain denies the incident ever happened. So Hardin decides that his only recourse is to buy another boat and go to sea, under the sound principle, "You sank my boat, I'm going to sink yours."

 T h e S h i p k i l l e r is a page-turner of a novel of one man in a small boat setting out to kill the largest foe the sea has to offer. Justin

Scott has a clean, uncluttered writing style that would be a pleasure to

read no matter what he was writing about. T h e S h i p k i l l e r ranks with

 T h e

 H u n t f o r R e d O c t o b e r as being one of the most enjoyable sea adventures

I've ever read. I cannot claim to know enough about sailing to know if Scott got his facts right, but he tells a good story.

One drawback to T h e S h i p k i l l e r: if you want to read it, I am not sure where you can get it. It was published in 1978. I got it in a used book store and it took me a while to get around to reading it. But as a sort of "Moby Dick meets Middle East politics," it is an enjoyable evening's entertainment.

NOON WINE (with heavy plot spoilers)
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

_ N_ o_ o_ n_ W_ i_ n_ e is a feature-length film made for PBS's "American Playhouse" series. It is based on a story by Katherine Anne Porter and it is worth seeing. The story is about how a man destroys his life because of an imperfect conscience. Fred Ward plays a Texas dairy farmer of the 1890's who ekes out a poor living until he hires a mysterious Swedish drifter. With the drifter's help his business flourishes. Ward accidentally kills a man who he thinks has murdered his hired hand. Though he has done nothing wrong, he coerces his wife to testify in court that she witnessed the incident (which she didn't). The court, rightfully, finds Ward innocent of wrong-doing, but his own conscience is not so lenient. The more he protests his innocence, the less he really believes it.

The film is slow and deliberate as it relates its story. Little happens until the second half. But the story's basic irony makes it a thoughtful experience. Catch _ N_ o_ o_ n_ W_ i_ n_ e if you can.

MIDDLETOWN SCIENCE FICTION CLUB LIBRARY HOLDINGS

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_ N _ O _ T _ E _ S _ F _ R _ O _ M _ T _ H _ E _ N _ E _ T

Subject: Tales of the Velvet Comet
 Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!cbosgd!cbatt!clyde!watmath!jagardner

Date: Mon, 18-Aug-86 14:21:14 EST

Has anyone read Resnick's recent "Tales of the Velvet Comet" series? A friend of mine recommended it, but - ahem - let's just say our tastes in fiction frequently differ. I'd be interested in hearing other comments.

I read the first Velvet Comic and found it what I call "mentally transparent". My eyes ran over the words and I turned the pages and when it was done, I picked up a different book because I wanted to read something. I find this phenomenon interesting when it happens. I was never actively bored or turned off (and certainly not turned on); it just didn't affect me in any way.

To be less personal (but still subjective, of course), the story was predictable, the characters bland, and the setting far more mundane than you think an orbiting brothel would be. Yes, there is some amount of sex. I don't remember if it was explicit or not. That should tell you something.

Jim Gardner, University of Waterloo

Subject: _The_Game_of_Fox_and_Lion_by Robert R. Chase
Path: mtuxo!mtune!akguc!akgua!mcnc!rti-sel!dg_rtp!throopw
Date: Fri, 22-Aug-86 13:15:30 EST

I haven't heard of Robert R. Chase before. My loss, if he has written other books and they are as good as this one. It re-hashes old themes: war, superman (the main character has artificially enhanced intelligence, the "bad guys" have enhanced strength and endurance), politics, and so on and on. But it held my interest and made me think by using these old themes in pretty original ways.

Chase also has a pretty good turn of phrase. Some random snippets of conversation to show the general flavor:

"I have been sane for years, and it is much less than it is cracked up to be."

"Don't prattle on things beyond your understanding. Even now, if you had any true penitence, I might intercede for you. But all you have is fear for your own wretched hide. To regret doing a wrong

simply *because* it is wrong -- well, I can see from your face that the idea fills you with complete incomprehension. No, Couteau, your disloyalty is exceeded only by your shortsightedness. There is little in you for salvation and scarcely enough for damnation."

"There are some holy men here. There are even more who could be. I, however, coming to Ariel, considered transubstantiation and the Parousia one with phlogiston and the houses of the zodiac. "Then why did you come here?" she asked. "For the best reason in the world," he said lightly. "To keep on breathing."

"I am just about as clever and farseeing as my legends credit me with being. I can win this war, but even I cannot establish peace."

This fluent way with words, and the fact that the book deals with interesting ethical issues in a relatively deep non-sophomoric fashion makes the book well worth reading. And the fact that it is fun also makes it enjoyable to read. Very *very* nicely done.

Wayne Throop <the-known-world>!mcnc!rti-sel!dg_rtp!throopw

Subject: STAND BY ME ---Bravo!
Path: ihnp4!ucbvax!decwrl!boyajian@akov68.dec.com
Date: Sun, 17-Aug-86 03:26:46 EST

I saw the sneak preview tonight, and the thing that struck me most was the fact that not only is it possible to make a good movie from a Stephen King story, but the best chance of doing so is to be incredibly faithful to the source.

STAND BY ME is a brilliant piece of work. The characters are well-defined, the boys who played the characters turned in really fine performances, the dialogue flowed naturally. These struck me as *real* kids. The script was so faithful to King's story that I was surprised that he didn't write the screenplay (though I had already known that he didn't), the dialogue and narration having exactly the same feel as King's. Richard Dreyfuss, as the grown up Stephen K...I mean Gordon Lachance, did some wonderful overdubbed narration that added just the right aura of tale-spinning.

It's interesting that there does seem to be an attempt to hide the fact that this is a "Stephen King movie". In addition to the fact that the point isn't mentioned at all in the ads (or, in the case of the newspaper ads, mentioned only in the small print). And, oddly enough, there were no opening credits at all, so the unknowing viewer would not know that it's a King story until afterwards. And I agree with this, so

that people don't go into the movie with false expectations.

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I heartily recommend this film.

--- jayembee (Jerry Boyajian, DEC, Acton-Nagog, MA)

Subject: Stand By Me (a review, not a spoiler)
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!cbosgd!ucbvax!ucsfogl!pixar!upstill
Date: Mon, 18-Aug-86 21:02:10 EST

"Stand By Me", the third major film (after "Spinal Tap" and "The Sure Thing") by Rob Reiner, makes three winners out of three for the Meathead. This guy is a major talent.

Based on a novella by (Oh No!) Stephen King, the story is an adventure by four twelve-year-old boys in the late Fifties, who go off to find the body of another youth who has disappeared. That description gives you a feeling for how certain Stehen King elements are shoehorned into what is essentially a story of young-male bonding in a small Oregon town. One of the boys (who as a man narrates the film) is a career-bound son of unfeeling parents, and the other three are his disreputable friends.

The appeal of the film lies in the very qualities that made "The Sure Thing" endearing: ace comedy welded firmly to compelling human interaction, often both within the same line of dialogue. So many elements are perfectly realized: the identity of each character; the pre-adolescent's relationship to threats in a world that he senses better than he understands; the coexistence within the same person of both childish insensitivity and the insight of the newly aware; the desperation of a child to love the parent who has mutilated him; what it's like to have an older sibling who will forever overshadow you; the sense of unfairness at having an older brother whose bad reputation casts you.

As you can tell, it is difficult to convey the flavor of this movie, simply because so many of its strengths are so ethereal. The performances, by four young unknowns, are as close to perfect as I can

imagine: each character has a clear, distinct identity, and after the first scene, I believed in each of them completely. The dialogue rings true at every line, frequently hilariously so. And the comedy often has what great comedy has: a sense of the pain behind the laughter. Finally, Rob Reiner's direction keeps you in the scene at every turn. This is the most difficult quality of all to convey. I can't begin to describe my regard for the kind of humanism and subtlety, without sentiment or pretension, that Reiner manages.

There are, of course, a few caveats. You should be prepared to see twelve-year-olds with a self-awareness and maturity far beyond any actual twelve-year-old you're likely to see. Also, these kids touch each other with an unselfconsciousness that may seem absurd. However, it can also be seen as the movie is seen: through the filter of twenty

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years in the life of the adult narrator. This, in fact, makes it far more compelling as a tale of innocence lost. As a far-from-innocent 32-year-old, I found it deeply touching.

I give it ***1/2(out of four). You can do a lot worse.

Steve Upstill

Subject: notes on Manhunter
Path: topaz!ll-xn!cit-vax!elroy!smeagol!usc-oberon!sdcrcdf!ism780c!ism780!steven
Date: Mon, 18-Aug-86 16:01:00 EST

Every so often I get a screenplay well in advance of a motion picture's release and I get to play "studio executive". Would I make this movie?? My answer for "Manhunter" was NO. I may have been wrong.

FBI Agent Will Graham (William Petersen) has a special talent: he can help apprehend psychoticserial murderers who have convoluted motives by thinking like them, thus predicting their next victim. Graham's called out of retirement to stop a madman who kills entire families under the full moon. The killer has struck twice and now there's three weeks left in the lunar cycle...

I think any reviewer of this movie has the obligation to point out that Michael Mann is the Executive Producer of (get ready, folks) MIAMI VICE, that's MIAMI VICE, I repeat, MIAMI VICE, on NBC, MIAMI VICE, Friday Nights, MIAMI VICE, 9 Eastern, MIAMI VICE, influential MIAMI VICE. In "Manhunter", as in Mann's aforementioned effort, his directorial style can be best described as visually attractive to the point of annoyance. I mean, the POSTER for this movie has the following color scheme: aqua blue, cyan blue, orange, lavender and magenta.

To be fair, Mann is able to stage a scene for emotional impact and tension when he chooses but he's left somewhat stranded by his own screenplay adaptation. I mean, first off, he makes his lead character deliberately clamped down and emotionless. Petersen is effective as a tough guy but doesn't have enough real presence to bring across the softer sides of Will Graham. Mann provides some interesting police procedural stuff, as well as a one very creepy criminal in Graham's previous nemesis Dr. Lektor (Brian Cox). But he goes astray of things in the second half in an attempt to bring some dimension to the killer at large; from a dramatic standpoint, things stop dead for about 25 minutes.

Back to playing studio exec. If Dino clamped the budget down to about \$10,000,000 or so, and it looks like he has (shot in right-to-work states with leads of no appreciable star cost), he may turn a few bucks on this one. It's pretty good of its kind.

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Two and a half stars out of four.

Subject: notes on The Fly
Path: topaz!ll-xn!cit-vax!elroy!smeagol!usc-oberon!sdcrcdf!ism780c!ism780!steven
Date: Tue, 19-Aug-86 17:42:00 EST

David Cronenberg builds a better flytrap (mousetrap?) in this remake of the 1958 horror film.

"What am I working on?" replies scientist Seth Brundle (Jeff Goldblum) to reporter Veronica (Geena Davis) as the story begins. Turns out that

Seth has constructed a teleporter that will revolutionize the world as we know it. That is, it would have, if Seth hadn't gotten in the thing to test it out while a fly was buzzing around in the beam with him...

In the original, of course, David Hedison emerged from the teleporter booth with a gigantic fly head, while the fly had Hedison's head and one arm grafted onto its body. Goldblum appears to exit the machine a better man than before. His transition is more gradual, but he eventually becomes as loathsome looking as any self respecting movie monster. This approach gives "The Fly" a leg upon most monster movies; because the fantastic is put off for a while, it can tell also tell a tale with some contemporary meat to it. "The Fly" becomes a love story between a woman and man who just happens to have something terribly wrong with him.

Cronenberg further emphasizes this by populating the movie with three main characters who share 95% of the dialogue and screen time. The triangle includes Seth, Ronnie, and John Getz (from "Magruder and Loud" and "Blood Simple") as Ronnie's editor and former lover, the pompous Stathis Barnes.

Film is supposed to be "Gross", but in the high-tech special effects slime category rather than Cronenberg's earlier blood-and-guts explosive glory.

Three stars out of four.

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