

ISFJA NEWS

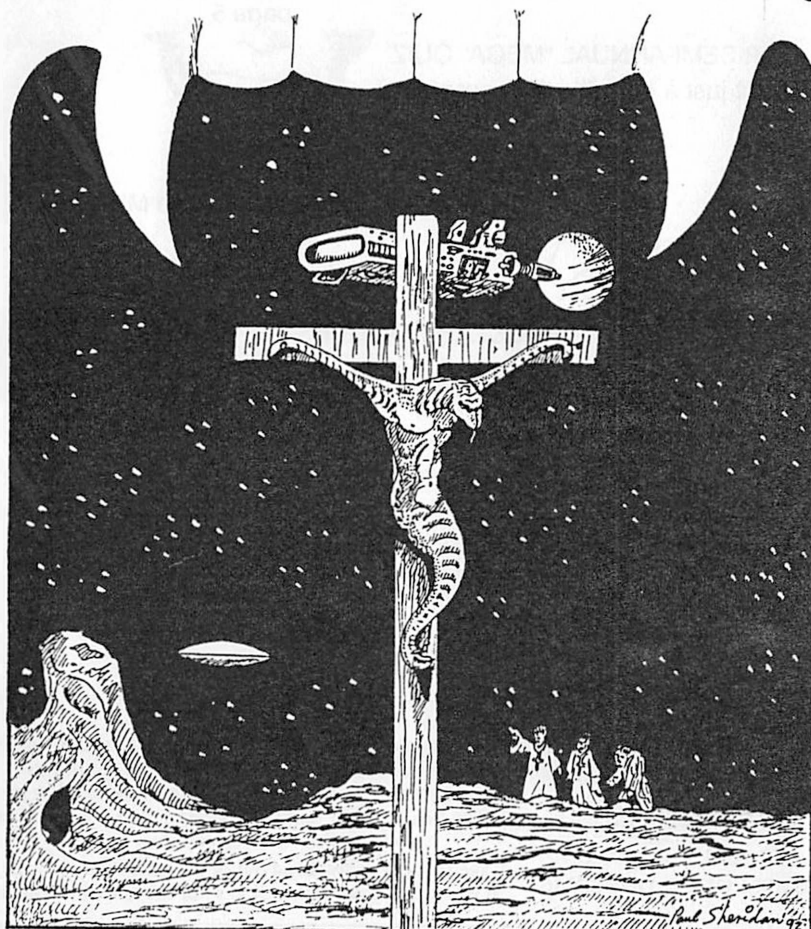
NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

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RAMSEY CAMPBELL INTERVIEWED

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FURTHER INFORMATION
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We welcome unsolicited manuscripts on the basis that the ISFA is poor, and if we don't actually pay contributors it doesn't mean we don't appreciate them. So send us your news. Send us your opinions. Send us your doodles. Send us your shorts. But wash 'em first.

Take that old dusty Royal out of the wardrobe and type it, if you can. If you can't, well, it's not the end of the world.

NOTE: OPINIONS EXPRESSED ARE NOT THOSE OF
THE ISFA, EXCEPT WHERE STATED AS SUCH

NEWS

Rings, No Strings

As part of the Galway Arts Festival which ran from 15-26 July, the Canadian Theatre Sans Fils (No Strings Theatre Company) performed *Lord of the Rings*. The show featured more than 60 characters played by 12 puppeteers, and played to an audience of more than 1,000. Mimes, glove puppets, and suit puppets, some as tall as 10 feet, were used to recreate Tolkien's epic. This is the first of only two of these productions which the company will mount this year.

Foundation Movie Due

The Foundation Trilogy by Isaac Asimov has been sold to Tristar Pictures, who will make one movie based on parts of the three books, with options for TV, video game, and merchandising rights.

Leiber Finally Ties Knot

Fritz Leiber has finally married his companion of 20 years, Margo Skinner. The wedding took place at San Francisco City Hall. Leiber is 81, ten years older than his new bride.

BarkerVerse

Clive Barker is to create the BarkerVerse for Marvel Comics. He has recently produced a children's book for Harper Collins called *The Thief of All Ways*.

Crypt Creator Dies

William M. Gaines, publisher of *Mad* magazine and the EC comics line which included *Weird Science*, *Tales from the Crypt*, and *The Vault of Horror*, died in Manhattan in June, at the age of 70.

In brief..

It is rumoured that Douglas Adams finished *Mostly Harmless*, the fifth *Hitchhiker* book, on the plane to the Annual Booksellers Association convention in May.

Movie News

Spielberg Walks the Dinosaur

This month sees the start of shooting on Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*, based on Michael Crichton's novel about a theme park which features genetically-resurrected dinosaurs who run amok à la *Westworld*. Jeff Goldblum has replaced Richard Dreyfuss as leading contender for the hero role.

In brief

The script of *Predator vs Alien* has been completed, and now needs a green light from director Walter Hill to go into development.

Anthony Hopkins will star in Francis Coppola's *Dracula*, which is now set to arrive here in early 1993.

Inverted Comments

"I am writing the script for **Terminator 3**, which I am calling **The Final Battle**, but I am running out of ideas. Please tell me how I can get in touch with James Cameron or other people who were involved in the **Terminator** films."

- letter to **Film Review** magazine

"I'm not by nature a fighter, I'm a lover. But my films have not so far reflected this. I want them to."

-Jean-Claude Van Damme, who will next star with Rosanna Arquette in **Pals**, an action/romance/thriller sort of thing.

ISFA News

The Artists and Writers workshop on Tuesday, August 18, will feature a discussion regarding future projects. ISFA members who wish to work on an "Alien Lenses" slide story are also welcome to attend. We are offering free slide film for the first project.

An ISFA/Dublin Filmmakers' Club joint venture: a celebration of Halloween on Saturday, October 31, in the "Wonderful Barn", Leixlip (used in the Vampire 2092 section of "Alien Lenses"). Witches, Warlocks and Wizards costumes. Not a Halloween party, although food and drink will be available, but a celebration of the true traditions of Halloween.

September Meeting:

the ISFA Pub Quiz. Questions will be set by the winners of the previous quiz, who are Robert Elliott and some other people.

Conventions

O3 - Octocon '92, 16-18 October, the Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin. Registration (until Sept 1) Attending £13, Suppor-

ting £6, Junior (under 16) £6. Guest of Honour Orson Scott Card. Other confirmed guests: Gill Alderman, Graham Andrews, Catherine Brophy, Diane Duane, Martin Duffy, Nicholas Emmett, Katherine Kurtz, Scott McMillan, Anne McCaffrey, Peter Morwood, Geoff Ryman, Michael Scott, James White. "Green" theme and a Tolkien celebration. Progress report 1 now available to members only. Membership etc available from

O3, 30 Beverly Downs, Knocklyon Road, Templeogue, Dublin 16. Telephone 934712 anytime. (Note: anyone wishing to help out on the organisation of the con ring the number above anytime - it's a big job!)

If you're going to Glasgow in the near future, don't forget to check out **Alien War**. For £3 for 15 minutes, you can experience the horror of being stalked by the Alien, or at least a fair replica of one. The game started in April, and is set in a vault below the city's railway station. It was the subject of a feature in this month's **Time** magazine, who reported that "fright intensifies with each step until, hearts racing, they stamped out of the darkness."

Safety in Numbness: Some Increasingly familiar SF film clichés

The thing/villain is impossible to defeat, until the hero kicks him in the nuts (**Cast a Deadly Spell**, etc)

The hero turns on the television and sees nothing but death and destruction [what, no game shows?] (**Hardware**, **Lawnmower Man**)

The thing/villain, after a whole movie of great chases and evil doings and threats to Western civilisation, is killed by a gun (**Exorcist III**, **The First Power**, etc etc)

The hero's girlfriend/accomplice turns out to be one of them.

A spinning, flying thing is seen hurtling towards its victim as if the camera was perched on top of it (**Dark Angel**, **War of the Roses**, **Evil Dead 2**, **Batman Returns**, **Crimewave**)

The camera zooms out on someone but moves towards them, as seen first on Roy Scheider in **Jaws** (at least once in just about every horror movie since then)

In the first scene of the movie someone is being chased by a horrible creature, but it turns out to be (a) a dream, (b) a film the characters are watching (**Day of the Dead**, **Jack's Back**, **Thriller** etc etc)

Imagine, if you will, Alan Bleasdale, the acclaimed playwright who gave us *GBH* and *Boys from the Black-stuff*, giving an interview in *The Face* saying that he had just signed a deal with Channel Four to do a 26-part series of half-hour dramas. And that the basis of the series would be science fiction.

Unlikely. Even more unlikely if Michael Grade said he planned to put the new series up against *Eldorado* on Wednesday evenings.

And it was just as unlikely back in 1959, when Rod Serling did the equivalent.

The Twilight Zone, from the beginning, was an idea larger than its execution. It is variously described now as corny, sentimental, predictable, wordy, and quaint. It is all those things. But there is one facet which it had when audiences saw it for the first time, and which it retains today in re-runs. It is what Serling intended, what audiences responded to, and what has inspired several generations of writers since.

The *Twilight Zone* is real.

The reason why it is real goes back to the source of all science fiction. One might say that if there were no censorship, there would be no sf.

Fantasy and sf are vehicles for ideas, as well as entertainments. In a time of sexual repression, tales of vampires and werewolves illustrate sexual desires and dangers without ever admitting it. When it's taboo to talk

about cancer and disability, one allows zombies and chainsaw murders.

In 1959 the Vietnam War was still a well-kept secret. In America there was a general unease about the threat from the Russians. Many were demoralised by the launch of Sputnik in 1957. This was intensified by the shooting down of Gary Powers in the U2 spy plane, when for the first time Americans heard the president admit he had lied to them.

American television was controlled, in effect, by the sponsors. They were large, conservative-minded companies like General Elec-

tric, Kraft, U S Steel, and Kimberly-Clark. If the sponsors didn't like the political content of a programme, or if it some how reflected badly on the product, they could pull the plug.

The challenge for a conscientious writer in this climate was to still get across a message, to talk about the way the country was going, about stupid people, crazy ideas, lost ideals, but the make the sponsors think it was just another show.

So Rod Serling managed to criticise American involvement in Vietnam before most people

knew there was any. Richard Matheson told America that sometimes America can be the bad guy. In the guise of fantasy, Serling and the other writers put across more reality than they ever could have with "straight" drama.

Above all, thought, *The Twilight Zone* was well-written entertainment. Even the stories that didn't hit the mark were, and still are, better than most of what's on television. But about one-third of the 156 episodes in the original series are excellent, and there are at least a dozen classics. Among them are "The After Hours", "The Last Flight", "To Serve Man", "Time Enough at Last", "The Eye of the Beholder", "Night of the Meek", "Nightmare



* The first line of the introduction originally read "There is a sixth dimension beyond that which is known to man". Then producer Bill Self pointed out to Serling after the first broadcast that he could only think of four.

* "The Time Element", about a man who tries to warn people about an attack on Pearl Harbor, was the well-received drama which convinced CBS to give Serling his own fantasy series. But it might never have been made had it not been for the support of Desi Arnaz. It aired on the Westinghouse Desilu Playhouse on 24 November, 1958.

* The most popular choice for narrator was

* In flying, the moment when a plane is about to land and the pilot cannot see the horizon is called the twilight zone.

* The series was shot on the soundstages at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in Hollywood.

* Both Serling and the writer who contributed the third-highest number of scripts, Richard Matheson, served in World War Two.

* Well-known faces appearing in the series included Burgess Meredith (four episodes), Roddy McDowall, William Shatner (two episodes), Anne Francis, Robert Redford, Jack Klugman (four episodes), Dick York, Burt Reynolds, Robert Duvall, Art Carney, Cliff Robertson, Dennis Weaver,

Sixteen Things You Didn't Know About *The Twilight Zone*

Orson Welles. But the producers couldn't afford him.

* Serling produced each script for **The Twilight Zone** in about four days.

* In 1953 Serling had written a teleplay called "A Long Time Till Dawn" which marked the first public appearance of James Dean.

* Serling won a career total of six Emmys, the television equivalent of the Oscar.

* **The Twilight Zone** was awarded three Hugos, and numerous directors and producers awards.

* The first **Twilight Zone** was broadcast on 2 October, 1959. It was called "Where is Everybody", was written by Serling, and starred Earl Holliman. The score was by Bernard Herrmann, who would go on to write the score for **Psycho**.

Dennis Hopper, Charles Bronson, Lee Marvin, Leonard Nimoy, Buster Keaton, James Coburn, Donald Pleasance, Mickey Rooney, and Elizabeth Montgomery.

* Composers who scored episodes included Jerry Goldsmith.

* In pre-launch publicity for the series, Serling said to one interviewer "It's about people - about human beings involved in extraordinary circumstances."

* The average audience for the first series was 20 million.

* The final **Twilight Zone** of the original series was, because of budget limitations, bought entirely from another source. It was the French-made "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge", which had won the 1962 Cannes Film Festival short subject prize. It aired on 28 February, 1964.

at 20,000 Feet", "The Bard", "The Dummy", "Nothing in the Dark", and "Shadow Play".

The Twilight Zone is important not so much for what it was as for what it inspired. Compared with **Star Trek**, for instance, **Trek's** legacy is one of merchandising, and a sub-Hubbardian cult of anal-retentive fans. The message of **Trek**, it seems, was that it doesn't matter what you look like, or where you come from, that if we look deep down we're all much the same. And what do its most ardent fans do? They wear a uniform.

I would hope that **Twilight Zone** fans respond to something other than the way the characters dressed, and you're unlikely to see them walking around at a convention dressed in 50s clothes. Serling addressed time and again the dangers of this type of conformity, in stories like "The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street".

If you want to know the difference between a show that relies on effects, and one that relies on story, try telling someone the plot of one of the shows. You can relate a **Zone** plot around a campfire, and still get a chill.

LETTERS

Dear Brendan

Or should that be Michael? I just received the May issue of the Newsletter and thought it was about time I got off my arse and wrote something to you..

[The Newsletter is] damned impressive. The scanned photographs on the covers of recent issues have made me mightily jealous, they add an enormous amount to the overall look of the NL and go particularly well with the interviews. The layout is generally simple and all the better for it: it's easy to read and comes across well. Perhaps a greater separation between different sections?

Contents-wise I'm not as enthusiastic I'm afraid. Of the last few issues (Jan-Apr) I've enjoyed the interviews most, though even then I think they are too short and, well it has to be said, there are far too many references to *Star Trek* in them. Joe Halderman and Greg Bear are not world-renowned for their *ST* output and their more important works were not dwelled upon enough. It is a shame to say that the best thing in the NLs isn't itself good.

FTL: I'm sure you've already heard it all, but the average member must still feel disappointed, even something of a stronger ilk. Six months have passed since I last saw **FTL**. I'm more than willing to wait for something as glossy and well put together as **FTL**; I can certainly appreciate the complete nightmare it is putting it together and then getting it out (two completely different jobs). But six months is a long time to wait for anything.

I've very little interest in Nicholas Meyer but for this letter I started to read the interview. I stopped when I realised that not only was this not what Meyer had been saying but that it as a second generation TRANSLATED version of what David remembered him saying. Whoa, watch those litigation suits flying. Really, this was more of an event report than an interview. Letters: Yes, now this is where the NL comes up to par. Michael Carroll would now appear to be a marked man. I know the people he is talking about and, even better, I can put names to them, something he wisely leaves out of his letter. This may influence some of my comments but, to be frank, not that much. The man is talking complete bollocks. I'm a veteran of

five British Easter cons, numerous regional cons, two Unicons and have run and organised four Northern Irish Conventions (NICONs) and have yet to meet a friendlier bunch of people as the Trincon 400 committee. They simply could not do enough for the seven people and myself who travelled down from Belfast for the con: we were personally welcomed at the con, the layout and location was explained and arrangements made for crashing with someone. I can't thank them enough. The con itself I can fault; that's easy to do, there were a number of problems. The split location is the most evident, it simply didn't work. The lack of a bar or similar social setting inside Trinity gave that end of the con no focal point. The number of people in **ST:TNG** suits and badges and the like and taking themselves seriously. Here I bow to Joe McNally's descriptive talents:

"I decided that the masquerade would be a good thing to go to...and noticed that there was somebody standing beside me dressed as Data (possibly - life's too short to check the names of characters in *Star Trek*). He was chatting to his mate about the problems he'd been having putting his costume together - "Yeah, I was a bit worried, because I don't have a very good freeze-frame on my video, and I couldn't quite work out whether the piping was supposed to be black or charcoal..." ("Kill a Trekkie for Christ" in Tash 6.5 The Trincon Special)

Isaac Asimov tributes. Well he was good but now he's dead. See Matrix 100.

Greg Bear: Now this I really enjoyed, possibly because I had been chatting with him at Trincon.

Tony Glynn is damned good - can I have his address? Please?

Summation: Excellent technical work on the magazine. Good interviews, interesting letters and nice illustrations. Then: poor news quality, very poor reviewing and STILL to much **ST**!

Look forward to hearing from you, and apologies for not writing sooner.

Yours

Tommy Ferguson
Co-editor
Götterdämmerung
26 Elaine Street
Belfast BT9

The making of the first part of the Vampire bit of

Alien Lenscapes

An on-the-set report by Michael Carroll

Overdramatis Personae

Paddy as the Vampire

Leonia Mooney and Theresa O'Conner as the vampire babes

Michael Carroll and Robert "D" Elliott as the huntless vampire fearers

It was a balmy Sunday afternoon when I received the call from the Chief, Paul "Paul" Sheridan. It seemed that some fiendish vampire-like character had stolen the secret plans to Alien Lenscapes, a top-secret secret known only to Paul and a handful of select others. Paul quickly took little more than an hour to explain the situation - they needed help, and they needed it fast.

I contacted my colleagues - Robert D. "Bruce" Elliott, Theresa O'Conner and my fiancée, the beautiful, demure Leonia, who was at the time working as a social worker helping local impoverished children improve their boxing.

The plan was to meet up with Paul in Leixlip, a quiet town on the east coast of Kildare. Paul was to be disguised as a man in a car, and we were to recognise him by the way he'd beep the horn and wave out the window. We were taking no chances.

The day arrived. Myself and Raw Bert Telly Hut had just finished a case, so - after we'd disposed of the empties - we climbed into the ToyotaMobile and zoomed over to Leonia's hideout, where she was disguised as someone who lives in a house.

As luck would have it, Theresa was there as well, so we all clambered back into the ToyotaMobile and - pausing only to activate the Leixlip detector - we were on our way...

It's not so easy to explain exactly what Alien Lenscapes is all about, so I'll start at the end. It's a good idea, and a lot of fun. There, that wasn't quite so difficult. Let me elucidate a bit. Oh, man, the colours.

Gather together a writer, an artist, a photographer, a graphics artist, a lot of people willing to stand still and look horrified for long periods of time, or any combination of the above. Shuffle them about a bit and suggest that they all work together to create a visual presentation.

This is what Paul Sheridan (our beloved and esteemed leader of the ISFA) has done. Armed with only a camera and a professional Dracula impersonator, Paul took Theresa O'Conner, Leonia Mooney, Robert "D" Elliott and myself to Leixlip, where we were to play the part of vampires and vampire hunters.

Paul was very reticent about revealing the plot details, so the following is a brief summary as far as I understand it. It seems that about a hundred years ago Robert and myself manage to track down and kill a particularly vicious vampire. He's buried with a silver stake through his heart (silver because it won't corrode). However, two or three hundred years later, in a futuristic city where everybody looks like members of the ISFA, explorer Pete Queally (minus his beard - it took me ages to figure out who he was) uncovers the vampire's tomb...

Alien Lenscapes consisted of three stories, shown to the ISFA in slide-show format at last month's meeting. The first was (sadly) incomplete, but it looked fantastic. It's a futuristic story dealing with religion. I'm not allowed to say anything about the plot, but some of the photography is excellent. Many shots of the actors have been superimposed on still backgrounds using the very latest in non-travelling matte techniques (they were cut out and stuck down). Everyone seems very keen to see the completed work - I reckon it'd make a nice feature for Octocon.

Next up was the only work to be completed in time for the meeting - A series of computer images that looked a lot like a vivid comic strip, with narrative boxes and speech bubbles. I thought it worked very well - the story was well-paced and had a rather sardonic twist at the end. The only complaint about this piece was that the abundance of captions led to a frenzied outbreak

of caption-muttering. This is a disease which infects the person sitting behind you and causes them to read aloud every word that appears on the screen.

The final piece of the evening was the previously mentioned vampire story. The first part of this was shown in its entirety, but we'll have to wait to see the outcome of the story.

All in all, it was a fun meeting and a great project in which to be involved. Both Paul and the ISFA were delighted with the response, and with the number of people who expressed interest in creating their own. Hopefully, we'll see a number of projects from members, the best of which will be shown at Octocon this year. Those interested can contact Paul Sheridan via the ISFA; he can also be found at the artists' workshop on the third Tuesday of the month in the Vintage pub on Camden Street from about 8:00, waiting eagerly for you to come along and ask him about it.

MOVIES

The Lawnmower Man

starring Pierce Brosnan, Jeff Fahey

Stephen King's **The Lawnmower Man** (or, as the poster in the Savoy says "s **The Lawnmower Man** - I would have disowned it too) purports to be one of the first Virtual Reality films. It contains about 22 minutes of spectacular computer graphics, and another hour and half of really bad film.

But enough diatribe (for now) - on with the plot (such as it is). Pierce Brosnan plays a scientist working with VR, particular the use of VR to increase intelligence. He used it to make monkeys smarter, but needs a human subject. Along ambles Joab, a simple gardener with not even enough brains to turn down a part in a really bad movie.

The process works; Joab gets smarter through the process but... (cue sinister music) things go wrong! You know that part in some movies where you want to walk out? There's only one of these in **The Lawnmower Man**, but it lasts for nearly two hours. And just when you thought it couldn't get worse, the last 20 minutes go from awful to really awful. The scientist, filled with remorse over the monster he has created (wow, *deja vu* all over again), tries to hack into the ultra-sophisticated military computer. A few keystrokes later - "someone's written a virus into the mainframe, they're shutting it down!"

And as for the cunning transformation from Virtual Reality to Actual Reality... to quote Bill the Cat, "ack, barf". This is probably one of those movies where the viewer's knowledge of computers is inversely proportional to

their enjoyment of the movie. God, I must know a lot about computers.

Universal Soldier

starring Jean-Claude Van Damme, Dolph Lundgren

The film starts off in Viet Nam, with Jean Claude (good guy) and Dolph (bad guy), both American soldiers, trading blows and crap dialogue. They kill each other, and when found are frozen cryogenically (the guy in the seat behind me tried to explain cryonics to his girlfriend, and failed miserably - he hadn't a clue himself), and are brought back to life in the present day as super-soldiers. Perfect in every way, with only their ability to act affected by thirty years of freezing.

Despite the fact that their minds have been totally wiped, they both get back major chunks of their past lives; enough to know that they have to kill each other (again), and ultimately to live (or die) normally. I should be so lucky with my hard disk.

Anyway, despite some really silly bits (like when Jean Claude takes all his clothes off and asks the plucky, fearless female reporter to find the implanted homing device ("look for something hard")), this isn't actually a bad movie.

Lots of martial arts, loads and loads of really naff dialogue and the odd attempt at Arnesque witties (I won't tell you what the response to "Say goodnight, asshole" was, but the audience thought it was hilarious) mean that this is a film worth seeing if you don't expect too much.

VIDEOS

Cast a Deadly Spell

Starring Fred Ward.

A mildly amusing fantasy. It would have been interesting to see how the availability of magic would have changed the world of the Philip Marlowe-type detective story. According to this film, though, it would have been much the same, with the odd zombie henchman and voodoo murder thrown in. Which begs the question: why bother? Characters do have names like H Philip Lovecraft, Bradbury, etc, which shows that at least the writer is a connoisseur of horror fiction. And gremlins might fly out of my butt.

Body Parts

Starring Jeff Fahey, Lindsay Duncan.

I resisted getting this for a time because it sounded like *The Hand* all over again. Then *The Lawnmower Man* came out, and I decided to see if Jeff Fahey could act.

You can tell in the first five minutes of this movie that more care and thought has gone into it than most horror pics. The dialogue sounds right. The direction is smooth. Even the obligatory loving-husband-and-father scene is acceptable. All this makes the horror, when it comes, that much more disturbing. The scene where Fahey has the accident which leads to the loss of his arm is all too plausible.

There are many reasons for getting this movie, even if it turns out in the end to have simply been another mad-scientist lark. The acting, especially that of Fahey's fellow patient who has lost his legs, is professional. The chase scene towards the end, which should really have been the end, is nail-biting. And the scientist is played by GBH's Lindsay Duncan, who lends an extra air of menace to the atmospherics.

The end, though, is altogether too neat. If every element of a story has been resolved by the finale it makes it appear that the people's lives could stop there. This reminds us that we have been watching made-up characters, which undoes the work of the plot.

Popcorn

This film starts out well - a group of students stage a festival of 50s horror classics [all of which are excellently-made parodies of the genre] - but stops being original around the time it turns into another slasher movie. When will they learn: finding a new way to kill someone is not the key to a good horror movie? Neither a good late-nighter nor a film to watch after a candlelit dinner. More something to enjoy alone, fast-forwarding through the second half.

The Pit and the Pendulum

Uh-oh. After an excellent beginning in which a corpse is disinterred so that it can stand trial before the Inquisition, we have a lovey-dovey scene before witch-to-be and her baker husband which for all the world looks like it came from *Up Pompeii*, sets and all. After that, it's the usual she's a witch - oh no she's not - oh yes she is routine. The climax, where hero and villains are fighting in a room through which the razor-sharp pendulum is cutting a swathe, is slightly engaging. Overall, though, it's run-of-the-mill.

HORROR HEROES # 312



PETER CUSHION

QUIZ

The quiz is divided into two parts, this month dealing with films. The answers, and the second part on books and comics, will follow next month.

Part One: Cinema

1. In what 1988 film, directed by Ron Howard, was the special effects technique known as morphing first used?
2. What film had the tagline "Sorry Jack, Chuck's Back!", and who was Jack?
3. And which film had a tagline which included the phrase "We're back!"
4. Concluding this sub-section on people who are back, what's the connection between Johnny Carson and Jack Nicholson?
5. In what film did the Great God Porno appear?
6. Where did **Buckaroo Banzai** have his Adventures?
7. Who owns the items of apparel below?



8. Now for some taglines. What film had the line "It's nothing personal"?
9. What film took place in "A world light-years beyond your imagination"?

10. What film featured "A totally lethal alien", and what was its alternate title?

11. What had the tagline "In space...there's no escape from what you cannot see?"

12. Finally, what was "the story of an uncommonly gentle man"?

13. What are the real names of this man's worst enemies?



14. What's the connection between Liam Neeson, Dolph Lundgren, and Dan O'Bannon?

15. Who will play the Riddler in the next **Batman** movie?

16. Who should have played Catwoman in **Batman Returns**?

17. What was Dolph Lundgren's first movie, in 1985?

18. What film features a mutant half-man half-goat taking revenge on his dad?

19. Who is the police officer who investigates the kidnapping of Robin Williams' children in **Hook**?

20. In what film was this man a spy boss?



It's not enough these days to portray a man to turning into a werewolf by showing a rubber hand getting longer, or for Jekyll to turn into Hyde in a series of dissolves. To

satisfy a public who can see through previous generations of special effects, filmmakers have teamed up with computer programmers, and morphing is the result.

This is how a floor turned into a man in **Terminator 2**. It has also been used in Michael Jackson's **Black and White** video, and most recently, in the carbon copy ad for Braun's Style'n'Go.

The process used in **T2** was developed by George Lucas's old crew Industrial Light and Magic, but it could not be duplicated until a British company named 5D

Solutions released **T-Morph**, a commercial package aimed at film and TV effects depart-

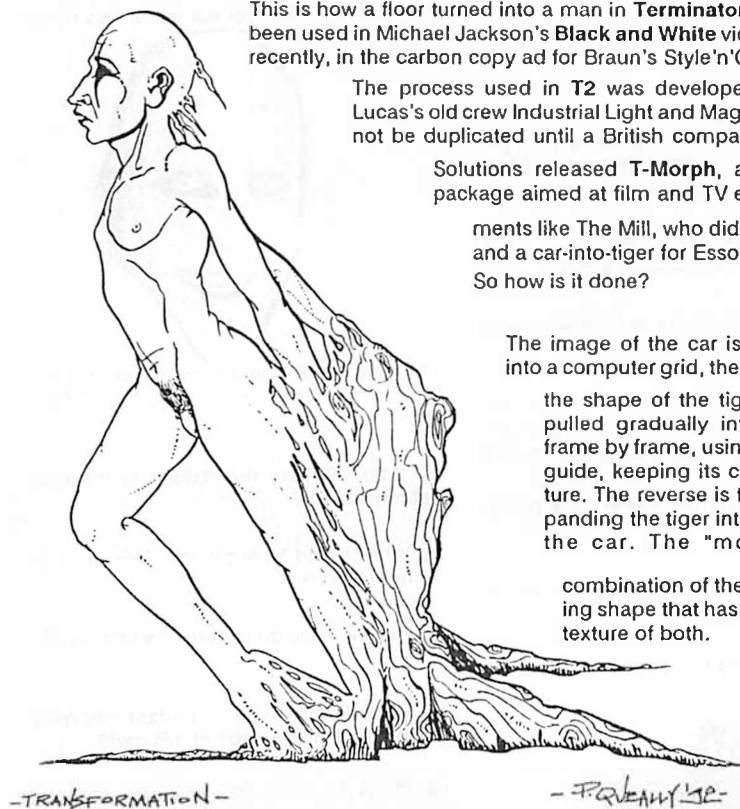
ments like The Mill, who did the Braun ad, and a car-into-tiger for Esso.

So how is it done?

The image of the car is first scanned into a computer grid, then overlaid with

the shape of the tiger. The car is pulled gradually into the shape, frame by frame, using the grid as a guide, keeping its colour and texture. The reverse is then done, expanding the tiger into the shape of the car. The "morph" is the

combination of the two, a changing shape that has the colour and texture of both.



Get a Morph

Illustration by Peter Queally

RAMSEY CAMPBELL INTERVIEW



r: Miracle of technology, miracle of technology! This is science fiction in the making.

b: You were born in Liverpool, I believe. What sort of influence did this have on you?

r: Well, there are several different questions - all at once - Ask me one question, and then shut up for fifteen minutes, and all this stuff comes spilling out... Let's think of a couple of answers to that one. I was born, I was brought up in a conservation area of Liverpool, a garden suburb - one of the first - which meant that you had these small, compact houses which were two rooms down-stairs, three bedrooms and a bathroom up; big gardens front and rear; all these big trees and all this stuff. I don't know how much you know about my childhood, do you want the childhood routine?

b: Why not?

r: Well, very briefly, my parents were spectacularly estranged before I was really in any position to be aware of it. Certainly by the age of three I was aware of it, like I was aware of the fact that they didn't speak very much. By the time I was five they didn't speak at all, except to have violent arguments usually while I was in bed. What makes this considerably more bizarre as a background was that although they were separated when I was very young, they continued to live in the same house, they didn't speak to each other so I became a messenger. I got to be the guy

who was told, "Go tell your father this, go and tell your mother that". This escalated to the point where my father became a presence in the house whose face I didn't see for twenty years. He was there but he was on the other side of the door, or he was the footsteps I heard coming up the stairs at night. The only regular break in this routine was Christmas Day when my mother would have this change of heart and she'd say "Go up and ask your father if he wants to come down for Christmas dinner", and I went upstairs in a panic and banged on the bedroom door and I would hear this mumble of refusal on the other side, and I would then scurry off downstairs and think "Thank God that's over for another year. And that basically was the extent of my relationship with my father. I actually didn't see him face to face until he was on his death bed in a hospital twenty years later."

"From an early age I

b: It must have been like living with a ghost

got the seeds of the things

r: It was precisely, absolutely true. When I was a teenager, when I was off to work, and I was off to the movies and I was coming home roughly when he was coming home he would still contrive it so that he got in the house first, so I still didn't see him.

I write from the kind of life

That was the half of it. The other half, just to make life additionally interesting, my mother was clinically schizophrenic, and from an early age I became aware that she was reading things like newspaper cartoons and radio plays as coded messages addressed to her by people who either had her interests at heart or who were deeply hostile to her. In fact, normally the way it went, she thought these were benevolent messages which then, when they didn't prove to predict what happened, she then decided they were messages from some malevolent group which was trying to trick her into believing something was going to happen which then didn't. So from a very early age I suppose I got the seeds of the things I write from the kind of life I was leading. In particular one thing which was certainly true from just about as young as I remember was that I was in a position where I had to sort that what other people saw as

I was leading"

real wasn't necessarily what WAS real, certainly wasn't what I could see as real. I couldn't have been more than six or seven when I found myself thinking, 'My mother is saying this - but it's not true, it's what SHE sees. In fact what IS there is not what she sees'.

It is probably fair to say that my stories have been preoccupied very deeply with this sort of thing ever since.

b: you are definitely not a hack and slash merchant

r: In the main not, although 'Face of the' has its hacking moments

I guess the other thing which occurs to me in retrospect is this thing about childhood, where your childhood doesn't seem to be that peculiar, because its happening to you and you're a kid, what do you know. You don't know it's not supposed to be that way and it only later you think, 'Hang on most people actually see both their parents and they don't live in opposite bits of the house. So I got on with it. I read a lot of fiction because I was solitary kid -

b: We're onto my next question, which is, your influences..

r: I was obese as kid, and I tended to read a whole lot, and I read a lot of fantasy as

far back as I remember. Perhaps more importantly all my memories of childhood reading are of things that frightened me, things that stuck in my mind. Starting with **Rupert Bear**, one particularly story - it's interesting, perhaps there is a whole area to be mined here of the influence of Rupert Bear on horror fiction because I gather that Mark Morris had a similar thing, there's an episode about this creature out of **Rupert Bear** which appears in his novel. That's not the same thing as mine, I didn't actually ever write it up. There is an old Rupert Bear annual of the late 40's in which Rupert goes off to go get a Christmas tree from the forest. On Christmas day Rupert hears a voice which seems to be behind it, a little squeaky voice, but there is nothing there. I found this in itself unnerving. That night he wakes up and hears a creaking noise downstairs, looks out the window and sees this thin

shadow waltzing away across the garden out into the night. He finds the tub which contained the tree is empty and there is a trail of earth leading out of the front door. Now all of this is classic M.R. James'ian, isn't it? The trail of earth, and the shadow, and the sounds and the things you don't quite see. And it scared the living shit out of me, basically for about a week! I was lying awake at night and I think it must have been taken away from me because I was having nightmares, because I know pretty soon after that I was taken of to the child psychiatrist - probably not purely because of **Rupert Bear** but it must have been one of the factors. There's your title! **Rupert Bear Did It To Me!**

b: What other books do you think influenced you?

r: I guess the next thing was George McDonald, **The Princess and the Goblin**, which once again I remember hung around me for weeks. There was a scene in that in which these animals which have been kept down the goblin mines for generations spill out into the palace grounds and are glimpsed by footmen and guardsmen and so forth.

Presumably because McDonald was obviously writing a children's story he doesn't describe them very fully; he describes them fairly obliquely, which just made the whole thing a great deal worse for

Rupert the Bear did it to me!

me because it simply triggered my imagination in the way I believe a lot of good horror fiction does. Again it seems straight along to M.R. James, or even more specifically in terms of that scene I always felt there is a direct parallel with "The Colour Out Of Space" the Lovecraft story where you have these mutated animals in the early stages of the story. The way Lovecraft handles that stylistically is very similar to the McDonald thing. I know he did admire McDonald, whether he read that.... I wouldn't be at all surprised if there were some element there.

Interview continued next issue.
Thanks to Helen Ryder for transcription.

CAPTIVES

Shaun Hutson

Macdonald, 432pp, UK £14.95

THE SHEE

Joe Donnelly

Century, 407pp, UK £14.99

VOYAGE TO THE RED PLANET

Terry Bisson

Pan, 236pp, UK £4.50

Captives is written in an urgent flowing style that allows the reader race through the pages without the effort of thinking about the plot or the words. This is a wonderfully easy read. The presentation and clarity of the work is one that shouts out loud that this author works hard on his language, and skill. The subject matter of **Captives** is that of punishing the violent members of our society by imprisoning them in gaols or institutions. Because of the setting, ie prison and asylum, the book is mainly about the male population. The pages are full of violent happening. The females in the book are victims and, as such, are treated as subordinates.

Enter the healer, Dr Robert Dexter. These people are, according to him, brain-damaged, and with his skill, plus modern technology, he can reverse the damage. He performs surgery and allows the patient back into society. The police inspector gets involved. So does Scott, a manager of a London sex show.

The book is about the destruction of violence and obsession, and to my mind very much about men. The skill of the writer leaves the impression that each one, in his own way, is held captive by his personality. Rather morbid.

In both **Bane** and **The Shee**, Joe Donnelly takes isolated Celtic communities and wreaks havoc upon them. In **The Shee** he has taken Ireland as his country. The village in question (Kilgallan) is a sleepy place where life meanders along quietly away from the hustle and bustle of modern life

until a small group of archaeologists start a dig on a local tor.

Donnelly has IRA members, a professional photographer, a journalist, a group of oil men (here for the fishing) and a honeymoon couple (American, of course) in Kilgallan along with the locals. They are difficult to assimilate in this context. The archaeologists interfere with a tomb and evil is let loose on the village. The IRA do their usual act of destruction.

In case anyone would suspect the happenings are just an evil spirit visiting the population, let me assure you that there is sufficient blood and guts, manners of death and misadventure to satisfy the most ardent horror reader.

However, the hero, Sean McCullain, didn't ring true and at the end I was distracted with too many women helping him. The connection with Irish mythology throughout the book didn't work for me, because Joe Donnelly left too many questions unanswered. Also, while the Shee herself was a shape-shifter (there is no problem with that piece of sf) at the end of the book I had the weird feeling that she was nothing as interesting as a shape shifter.

The book flows in parts, but with so many characters running around, it read like a report on the tragedy at Kilgallan.

Terry Bisson has won a number of awards for his writing. **Voyage to the Red Planet**, to my mind, is a smart send-up of the film industry and the American way of life. His writing comes over to me as a person who tries hard to make it funny, but humour is person and for me this book is an annoyance. The characters are cardboard cutouts, the kind one sees promoting books, without any substance behind them - but they at least a doing a job.

I felt all the time while I was reading that he was trying hard to get images of shallow people. If that was the case he succeeded. This is full of gadgets. Even the spaceships appear to be gadgets, and life never gets past the embryonic stage. Pity. He tried to pull off an idea of the shallowness of society without ever understanding the cause. The reflections reflected the absence of human life and that is unforgivable. People are real and should be treated as such.

NU LYONS

The Square Root of Man

William Tenn

Ballantine 1971, Paperback, 30p, 221 pages
What, really only 30p for this book? Yes, but that was in 1971, when this edition was published.

So who's this William Tenn guy anyway? I'm glad you asked. I don't know. The SF encyclopaedias don't have much to say about him. Tenn is a mostly forgotten author, which is a very sad thing as I've only read two of his books (including this one) and already I think he's one of the best short story writers I've ever read.

No way! Way. Would I lie to you? If you look back a couple of months in time you'll see in the ISFA newsletter my review of *There Won't Be War* (ed. Harrison and McAllister). I mention that the book included a couple of stories by William Tenn. It's possible that these are the only two stories by the man that are currently in print, so buy it today.

So what's this book like, then. Well, **The Square Root of Man** is a collection of shorts that tease the thoughts, manipulate the mind, stimulate the senses and Hoover the carpet. Tenn's first ever story "Alexander the Bait" is included here, a cleverly-plotted and characterised tale of Man's journey to the stars. "The Jester" and "Venus is a Man's World" are good examples of classic SF - worth the price of the book alone. The last and strangest story in the book is "The Lemon-Green Spaghetti-Loud Dynamite-Dribble Day", which isn't really SF, it's a very plausible story of New York gone mad. I like it.

Well, where can I get a copy of this book? Geez, you do ask a lot of questions, don't you? Well, you can't. Unless some enterprising publisher once more takes up the reins and gives Mr. Tenn a big push, you'll have to hunt it down in a second-hand book store, and while you're there could you look out for a copy of Frederik Brown's **Nightmares and Gezenstacks** for me? I'll pay you when I get the money.

The City, Not Long After

Pat Murphy

Pan 1991, Paperback, 4.99, 320 pages

A rollicking good read, this book. Set in post-apocalyptic America, the city of San Francisco has been taken over by artists, sculptors, musicians, librarians, all the really arty types. But... In Sacramento a madman by the name of General Fourstar has plans to rebuild the states. He sees San Fran as a good place to really get going, and attempts to take over the city.

The central characters are Danny-boy, a young man who was a mere sprog when the Plague came, and a young woman led to the city by the spirit of her dead mother. The young woman doesn't have a name until she comes to the city, where she finds a Scrabble board. Three of the tiles turn themselves over and make the word "Jax", which she adopts as her name. It's not a bad name and - despite sounding like a toilet - it's worth over fifty points on a triple word score box.

Jax informs the denizens of the city about the plans of the general to take over, and Danny-boy decides that they can't fight the General in his own way. They must fight a psychological battle, and persuade the General's men to turn back.

This is where the book really takes off. The artists use some really ingenious methods of unnerving the soldiers, and they give us all a lesson in Chaos over Order as a means of survival.

The best character in the book is The Machine - an electronics genius who firmly believes that he is not human, but a machine built by the man whom he once believed to be his father. The Machine is very taken with Jax; she's the first person who's ever tried to treat him as a human - the artists all leave each other pretty much alone. The Machine is at first puzzled by the feelings of friendship he has for her, but gradually he begins to see himself as a human.

The City, Not Long After is only partly SF - there are ghosts wandering the streets of San Francisco, and the city itself is sentient, changing the weather to hinder the general's progress.

The City, Not Long After is one of those books that you finish and say to yourself "I wish I'd written that". Then you read it again because you had so much fun the last time.

REVIEWS

DAYS OF ATONEMENT

Walter Jon Williams

Grafton, 437pp, £4.99

According to the blurb, the small mining town of Atocha, New Mexico, is having trouble coping with the 21st century. It's a place where old family values still hold strong, where Loren Hawn, chief of police, can usually solve any crime because he knows everyone and all their secrets. But this sleepy backwater is about to confront the 21st century, as high-energy physics meets small-town politics. On the outskirts of town there's a new government laboratory where scientists are experimenting with the nature of space and time...

Trouble is the opening chapters are too full of the clutter of small-town life. Williams is long on description, short on science fiction - at least until page 90, that is, when the government laboratory suddenly becomes relevant to the plot. For this reviewer, the novel then takes off and from there on is well worth reading.

Strong on cyberpunk, very male-oriented, the absence of any female character of consequence (apart from Hawn's thoroughly predictable wife and daughters) makes it a bit one-sided. Hawn is a hard-nosed, cynical, religious, small-town cop who is not altogether likable. This anti-hero treatment doesn't always work - particularly in the first 90 pages - but once things get going Williams draws us over to Hawn's side and the plot takes wing.

The author shows the unsavoury aspects of small-town police work: the corruption, the bribery, the threats; how to make people sweat; how to milk information, as well as cooperation, by threatening to un-cupboard their well-kept secrets. A good present for anyone interested in (or involved in) police work - provided they're not too precious about it!

This is Williams' seventh book, so he isn't exactly a novice. He lives in New Mexico, by the way, and gleaned a lot of information from the Albuquerque police department, so his writing is authoritative. It's also lucid, economical and well-paced. One quibble: he relies too much on a stylistic foible, a tendency to interperse bursts of speech

with adverbs - just to make sure we catch the mood of the speaker. You know the sort of thing: "Ouch!" painfully. "Your stilleto's just gone through my foot!" We don't need "painfully", we already know that from the dialogue. It's a bit like going to a play and hearing stage directions announced from the wings.

Enough negativity. This is a fine novel, recommended despite the initial 90 pages. Get past those and the remaining 350 will flow. A good read.

DAVID MURPHY

THE LAST HERALD MAGE TRILOGY

Mercedes Lackey

Penguin Roc

Mercedes Lackey has created a land unlike any other I've come across in several years of reading fantasy. In Valdemar, King and country are protected by the Heralds (spies, messengers, law bringers, auxiliary defence forces - you name it, they do it!). They are aided in this task by their Companions (super- intelligent, telepathic beings which look like very beautiful white horses), their own Gifts of Mind-Magic (telepathy, clairvoyance, etc) and, in the case of the Herald-Mages, True Magic.

Vanyel is the last Herald-Mage, and these three books chronicle his life, from his arrival at the capital city, Haven, as a nervous, unhappy 16-year-old, to his final stand in the defence of Valdemar, some 20 or so years later. Although by the end of the trilogy he is Valdemar's one hope, the books are not about a Great HeroTM. They are about a young man who is often frightened, lonely and unsure of himself and his powers. Vanyel could be any of us, and we can all identify with him at some point.

The Last Herald-Mage Trilogy has everything a good fantasy story needs - good, (mostly) likable characters, a strong plot, drama, excitement, true love, tragedy, and very nasty villains. And the boos are as unputdownable on the tenth reading as they are on the first. Go, buy, read - become hooked.

DORIAN GRAY

Comics Column

by Mark Bagnall

Reviewed this issue :

Spawn#1

Image/1.85

Youngblood #1

Image is a new line of creator owned projects from Malibu Graphics. Malibu have managed to persuade some of the biggest names in the comics world to work exclusively for them, people such as Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Erik Larsen and Jim Lee. Sounds like a good idea, the people involved will write without aiming for a younger market; without having the "big two" having control over what is finally printed. It could work, but based on the first two comics, nothing has changed.

Spawn is written and drawn by Todd "Spiderman" McFarlane. It is, at first glance, yet another Batman rip-off. The story begins with the funeral of Lt. Colonel Al Simmons, he was a patriotic soldier who was killed in the line of duty. Our hero wakes up with amnesia, all he knows is he died, and he can remember the face of a woman. The story continues as Spawn violently kills the baddies. At this stage I thought BORING, there's nothing here that hasn't been done before, and no doubt will be done again. But the final four pages come as a big surprise, maybe there's hope for this title. The artwork is excellent throughout plus there are two illustrations by Dale Keown and George Perez. I'll certainly buy the next issue.

The same cannot be said of Rob Liefeld's Youngblood. Youngblood consists of two groups of six mutants. One group - the Home team - deals with American problems, while the other group - the Away team - tackles foreign affairs. The actual comic consists of two stories, one for each team and, to make sure the really stupid readers

(they're the ones who buy it because they think it's a good comic) realise this the second story is printed upside down. In the first few pages the leader of the home team is targeted by a sniper who of course misses. The leader then kills him by throwing a biro at him. That sets the tone for the rest of the issue, and probably the next 300 issues too. The Away team story involves the assassination of a Saddam Hussein lookalike. Liefeld may have been able to get away with crap like this at Marvel but when has complete control it's unforgivable. Youngblood is a waste of rainforests.

Youngblood set a new independent comics record by selling 1.3 million issues. Spawn then beat it by selling around 1. million, and it looks like the next image comic - Jim Lee's WildCATs will beat Youngblood's record. So investors beware, it's going to take an awful long time for these comics to show any significant increases in value. Anyway, you should be ashamed of yourselves, comics should be bought to be read and enjoyed, not as an investment.



This illustration comes from DOMINION TANK POLICE, acts one and two, which was released by Manga Video this month.

DRABBLES

Untitled

The Ocenti had created a highly advanced civilisation, held in awe by all others for its delicate balance of scientific pragmatism and aesthetic sensibilities. One need look no further than their exquisitely beautiful toe massagers for an example. However, the mere smell of a jawbone sent them spiralling backwards into a seething genetic vortex of blood-lust and violence. At battle their sleek warships thunder forward, cannons glittering with fiery energy. Then the warriors, or Innes, eager to get their hands on the enemy, run straight out of the nearest airlock, naked.

The first casualties of war are the Inne Ocenti.

Nigel Quinlan
The Garage



Our second drabble entry comes with the following message:

Daryl F Mallett suggested I send this "Drabble" to you. Please let me know if you can use it.

Judith Lynn Petersen 944 Pine Grove Avenue Los Angeles CA 90042

Fight for Death Valley

The mud ball hit Jamie between the shoulders. He stretched out his middle leg catching the Samshe in its right eye. Flipping and sliding on the hard packed mud racetrack, he slammed the Samshe in the stomach. It spewed up the blue lizard from breakfast. Quickly Jamie ground its face into the hard mud. Samshe held up the hand signal of defeat. Folding his three legs into a tripod, Jamie watched the Samshe slowly rise, blow mud from its nostrils and retreat to its vehicle. Samshe flew away yelling "You can keep this hot mud flat!"





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"FATHER FIDO", FROM
STEPHEN KING'S
NEW MOVIE
PET SEMINARY

Cover art:

ALIEN
LENSCAPES