

# CINEFANTASTIQUE™

Volume 3 Number 4

\$2

**THE  
EXORCIST**





# WINTER

# FEATURES

**PUBLISHER & EDITOR**  
Frederick S. Clarke

**CORRESPONDENTS**  
David Bartholomew (New York)  
Robert L. Jerome (Miami)  
Chris Knight (London)  
Stuart M. Kaminsky (Chicago)  
Tim Lucas (Cincinnati)  
Mick Martin (San Francisco)  
Jean-Claude Morlot (Paris)  
Dan R. Scapperotti (New York)  
Dale Winogura (Hollywood)

**CONTRIBUTORS**  
Kay Anderson  
Mark Carducci  
John Duvoli  
Dorene Hazell  
Reynold Humphries  
Frank Jackson  
John McCarty  
Douglas Olson  
Harry Ringel  
Steve Rubin  
Bill Warren

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** ABC-TV (Vic Ghidalia), American-International Pictures, John Carpenter, Cinemation Industries, Joe Clark, William Feeney, Dennis S. Johnson, Mammoth Films, Inc., NBC-TV, Peter Nicholson, Paramount Pictures (Randi Werbsha), Dick Smith, 20th Century-Fox (Barry Fishel), Warner Bros (Stuart Roeder).

**CINEFANTASTIQUE** is published quarterly at P. O. Box 270, Oak Park, Illinois 60303. Single copies when purchased from the publisher are \$3. Subscriptions: one year (4 issues) \$8, two years (8 issues) \$15, three years (12 issues) \$20. Foreign subscriptions (including Canada and Mexico): one year \$12, two years \$20, three years \$30, payable by International Postal Money Order or a check drawn in U. S. funds on any American bank. Contributions of art, articles, photos and reviews are heartily encouraged but not paid for. On substantial projects, a discussion in advance will often save wasted time and effort. Contributors receive a minimum of three copies of the issue containing their work, on publication. Display advertising rates and specifications are available on request. For classified advertising rates and information see page 47. No correspondence will be answered unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at Oak Park, Illinois. Printed in U. S. A. Contents are copyright © 1974 by Frederick S. Clarke.

**RETAIL DISTRIBUTION:** In the United States and Canada by B. DeBoer, 188 High Street, Nutley, New Jersey 07110. Other countries please apply to the publisher for our liberal discount and terms of sale.

**THE EXORCIST: THE BOOK, THE MOVIE, THE PHENOMENON** by David Bartholomew 8  
As few films ever do, THE EXORCIST has made history. David Bartholomew traces the development of the phenomenon from the writing of the novel, to the creation of the motion picture, to the mania which obsessed the country with its release.

**JASON MILLER** an interview conducted by Dale Winogura 13  
A talented new actor discusses his Oscar-nominated performance as Father Karras and provides important insights toward a better understanding of the film.

**WILLIAM FRIEDKIN** an interview conducted by Dale Winogura 14  
Director William Friedkin discusses more fully the ambiguities and misconceptions that have arisen from the public reaction and critical response to his film.

**DICK SMITH** an interview conducted by David Bartholomew 17  
The makeup artist responsible for much of the film's shocking impact discusses his contribution to the film from a technical standpoint.

**RETROSPECT: THEM!** by Steve Rubin 22  
In 1954 this film delivered a subtle, but crucial, message on the hazards of the nuclear age. Steve Rubin traces its rocky production history at Warner Bros.

# REVIEWS

**CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER** by Tim Lucas 29

**DARK STAR** by Dale Winogura 40

**FLESH GORDON** by Bill Warren 7

**FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL** by John McCarty 30

**JONATHAN** by David Bartholomew 30

**THE PARALLAX VIEW** by Dale Winogura 29

**PHASE IV** by Frank Jackson 31

**THE TERMINAL MAN** by Stuart M. Kaminsky 28

# NEWS & NOTES

**FLESH GORDON** an interview conducted by Mark Carducci and Douglas Olson 4  
Howard Ziehm, the producer, co-director and bankroller of one of the most outrageous fantasy films of all time tells why it took three years and \$1,000,000 to produce.

**DARK STAR** an interview conducted by Dale Winogura 40  
Young director John Carpenter tells how he turned a 40 minute student film into a major theatrical feature in commercial release.

**YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN** an interview conducted by Dale Winogura 44  
Madcap Mel Brooks plays vocal ping-pong with Dale Winogura while telling us all about the filming of his black-and-white ode to James Whale and the Universal horror classics.

**BIBLIOFANTASTIQUE** book review by Reynold Humphries 43

**COMING** some interesting film projects we find on the horizon 43

**FILM RATINGS** the staff gets together to disagree about the films they like 36

**LETTERS** readers tell us where we went wrong 47

**SENSE OF WONDER** editorial remarks by Frederick S. Clarke 39

**SHORT NOTICES** capsule comments on current releases 32

**VIDEOFANTASTIQUE** reviews of television series, specials and movies of interest 34

Front Cover: Artist Jim Thomas captures the fear of the unknown which pervades THE EXORCIST  
The great god Porno and Queen Amoura's Swan Ship, two scenes from FLESH GORDON :Back Cover

# VOLUME 3

# NUMBER 4







# EXORCIS

THE BOOK, THE MOVIE, THE PHENOMENON  
by David Bartholomew with interviews conducted by Dale Winogura

As few films ever do, THE EXORCIST has made history.

William Friedkin began shooting THE EXORCIST on August 14, 1972, in a hospital on Welfare Island, in New York. Neither he nor author and producer William Peter Blatty could possibly have been prepared for the scope of the experience that followed, and to a very real extent, still continues to develop.

The novel on which the film was based goes back to the late '40s and Blatty's college days at Georgetown University, where he read newspaper accounts of an exorcism incident involving a Mt. Rainier, Maryland, boy in 1949. Blatty, who had once considered entering the priesthood and becoming a Jesuit, began a massive research into the subjects of possession and demonology that only ended with the writing of the novel, having finally, almost accidentally, at a dinner party, interested a publisher (Bantam Books) in the project. Every other publisher approached by Blatty had flatly rejected the book. By this time, he had been typed as a writer of comedy, capers and whodunits. Blatty based his novel not only on the 1949 case, but also on an earlier one in Earlring, Iowa, in 1928, and on a host of historical cases dating back to the subject's Biblical origins, all of which he had unearthed in his studies. The novel, which Blatty has described as "a 350-page thank-you-note to the Jesuits" for his education, was completed by the summer of 1970. Bantam sold hardcover rights to Harper and Row who published it the following Spring. Almost immediately it became a best-seller, battling Thomas Tryon's *The Other*, published at roughly the same time, for the top of the charts.

As a veteran screenwriter, Blatty knew very well the dangers that movie producers posed to the writer and his work when purchased for film production. Determined to avoid this situation at all costs, Blatty decided to take on the deal-making himself. He interested producer Paul Monash (who bought the book on the profits of his BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID success) in a six-month option, and he, in turn, interested Warner Bros, for a reported purchase price of \$641,000, in making the film and agreeing to Blatty's strict, self-protective condition that he produce the script. Monash eventually left the deal with a hefty 9% cut of the film's eventual profits. Some say he was forced out by Blatty, a

stolen file, and a Warner Bros xerox machine, all involved in a brash bit of derring-do right out of one of Blatty's own screenplays. This maneuver left Blatty the sole producer.

Warner Bros insisted on mutual approval of director. Blatty was pushing a young director named Billy Friedkin. They had met a year before when Blatty and Blake Edwards were trying to find a director for GUNN, and later, when Blatty and Friedkin attempted to put together a production deal on *Twinkle, Twinkle, Killer Kane*. Soon, one by one, all of the Warner Bros choices declined: Arthur Penn was too busy teaching at Yale; Stanley Kubrick would not do it unless he could produce as well; and Mike Nichols, according to Blatty, "didn't want to hazard a film whose success might depend upon a child's performance." There were also several "mystery" directors suggested by Warner Bros but nixed by Blatty including one who Blatty, in his recent screenplay volume, dubs "Edmund de Vere" and who smacks pretty sharply of John Cassavetes. Other directors have now surfaced, proudly claiming to have refused the project, now that it has become fashionable to put down the film, with the latest being Peter Bogdanovich, in a recent issue of *Interview*. Blatty continued to push Friedkin. Fortuitously, 20th Century-Fox released THE FRENCH CONNECTION and that finally ended Warner Bros' reluctance. Friedkin was hired and went to work on Blatty's nearly un-

filmable first draft screenplay (which runs to 226 pages in the present published edition). Ironically enough, Friedkin immediately charged Blatty with straying too far from his own novel.

In August of 1972, the *New York Times* devoted most of its Sunday "Arts and Leisure" section on movies to the start of filming of THE EXORCIST, the first of an unprecedented six times the *Times* would carry major articles in the weekly section on a single film. The Warner Bros publicity mill, without ever actually starting up, then died down. Most people, probably many in the trade included, promptly forgot about the filming.

Then came a coup of publicity that Harold Newman, who headed the publicity unit on the film, or anyone else in the business for that matter, could ever have even hoped to concoct. In a General Audience on November 15, 1972, Pope Paul VI delivered an address on the Devil and evil. According to the text in the Vatican newspaper, the Pope declared, "Evil is not merely a lack of something, but an effective agent, a living spiritual being, perverted and perverting. A terrible reality. . . So we know that this dark and disturbing Spirit really exists and that he still acts with treacherous cunning: he is the secret enemy that sows errors and misfortunes in human history. This question of the Devil and the influence he can exert on individual persons as well as on communities. . . is a very important chapter of Catholic doctrine which is given little attention today, though it should be studied again." With these words, the Pope shifted from the spiritual into the secular ad-pub business.

A bit later, the rumors began. The press seemed to have been unofficially banished from the film's shooting. By March, 1973, the film was reported (always vaguely) as over-budget and behind schedule. The original shooting plan of 105 days was stretched to 200 days. When one reporter asked Blatty when production had begun he replied, "I think it was 1822." Yet Friedkin maintained that Warner Bros, and especially its chief, Ted Ashley, were behind him 100% and were generously allowing him the kind of costly perfectionism usually foreign to Hollywood films. Consequently, the budget kept expanding: originally the film was to have cost \$4 million, then it was hiked to \$6 million (April, 1973), then to "over \$7 million" (May, 1973), and by the film's opening in December, to between \$8 and \$10 million. The figure, which has not been officially confirmed, is now rumored between \$10 and \$11 million.

The amount of truth in most of the stories that managed to filter out one way or another into the

David Bartholomew, our New York correspondent, is a film specialist for the New York Public Library Theatre Collection at Lincoln Center. He reviews films regularly for such disparate publications as *Film Information* and *The Monster Times*. He has published free-lance in various other film periodicals and will soon begin reviewing film books for *The Library Journal*. David is married and has two cats.

Dale Winogura, our Hollywood correspondent, is a full-time student at the University of Southern California, majoring in film history and criticism. He reviews films for the *USC Daily Trojan*, *The L.A. Voice*, and the newly-founded *Cinecom* magazine. Dale is currently preparing a book entitled *The Films of Robert Redford*.

Top Left: Merrin stands on a pinnacle in Iraq to face an old enemy in one of his many guises. Bottom Left: During the exorcism the participants see, or think they see, the statue of Pazuzu.



press will probably never be fully determined. The rumors actually began with the novel. Blatty admits that he wrote it for, and with the mother/actress character Chris MacNeil modeled after, Shirley MacLaine, his then-neighbor in California. MacLaine liked the book, recognized that bits of dialogue in the book were her own words and phrases used in various conversations with Blatty, and was prepared to drop her current plans in order to film it. She was, however, unable to convince her business partner, British producer Sir Lew Grade, to buy the book. (She later went on to film her own occult thriller for Paramount, *THE POSSESSION OF JOEL DELANEY*.) Columnists later rather cruelly latched on to this MacLaine connection and suggested that the novel was essentially a thinly disguised true tale of MacLaine and her own daughter Sachi. According to Blatty, MacLaine still accuses him of "lifting" a photograph of Sachi to use, in distorted form, as the front cover artwork of the novel's hardcover edition. (Blatty believes that the photograph actually resembles his daughter.)

Linda Blair also became the subject of several stories. A former model with only minor acting experience (the two features in which she had bit parts are always unnamed), Linda was chosen by Friedkin from a field of 500 girls not only because she was not the typical Hollywood "moppet" who might take the role seriously and use it as a stepping-stone to a career, but also because she looked amazingly compatible with her screen mother Ellen Burstyn. She was 12 when the film began pre-production and 14 by the time it hit the theatre screens. She has not suffered the breakdowns, nightmares, or traumatic experiences as proclaimed in the press, nor has lightning struck her mother (as fiercely as Pauline Kael's scorn) for allowing her daughter to take the role. ("We saw the ad," says Mrs. Blair, "and thought it sounded like a fun part.") Although Mrs. Blair denies it, Friedkin claims to have given Linda a series of psychological and physical tests to make sure she could handle the rigors of the film role. Linda declares she simply followed Billy's orders and startles skeptical questioners with statements like "It could have been about a girl eating a lollipop." Although she says she'd rather be a horsewoman or veterinarian than an actress, Blair has since done a rather raw TV movie called *BORN INNOCENT*, in which she plays a young innocent corrupted at a reformatory for girls.

There is literally no end to the stories that floated through the media. When information is not forthcoming and questions remain unanswered, the imagination is free to roam. And Newman's publicity people were probably not altogether displeased to read how their film project, because of its subject matter, might be jinxed.

A replica of the house in Georgetown had been carefully constructed for interiors. At 2:30 one Sunday morning, with the building empty save for one guard, an electrical fire swept through it and burned it to the ground. It took six weeks to rebuild a two-story copy of it. By this time the crew had moved to the old Fox Movietone News studio in New York on West 54th Street. The bedroom set, built on a gyro the size and shape of a bowling ball, so that the entire room could be instantly shifted to any angle, went through many design changes before a workable one was discovered. Over \$75,000 worth of refrigeration equipment had to be lugged in and installed, just for the added realism of producing white spurts of breath from the actors' mouths. The extreme cold added severe problems to the shooting. At one point, the set's sprinkler system broke down, flooding the main set, causing a two week delay.

Almost all the actors had troubles of one sort or another. Von Sydow's brother died just as the Swedish actor had arrived in New York for his first scenes; he was later out ill for a week during the first week of shooting. The most tragic, of course, was the death of Irish actor Jack MacGowran (Burke Dennings) who died preparing a stage production of "The Plough and the Stars" one week after completing his death scenes in the film. Ellen Burstyn wrenched her back and was out for several weeks. Friedkin reports that Jason Miller's young son was "struck down on an empty beach by a motorcycle that appeared out of nowhere, and his life [hung] in the balance for several weeks." Friedkin goes on, "All of the spe-

cial effects caused any number of injuries to the actors. There are strange images and visions that showed up on film that were never planned. There are double exposures in the little girl's face at the end of one reel that are unbelievable." A lot of costly reshooting was required. Not even the technicians escaped unscathed; during the shooting, one of the carpenters cut off a thumb, and a gaffer lost a toe.

In Iraq, the statue of Pazuzu was lost, causing a two week delay. The entire location trip was delayed from the Spring, which is relatively cool, to July, the hottest part of the summer when the temperature there soars to 130 degrees and more. Friedkin reports that out of an 18-man crew, he lost the services of 9 at one time or another due to sunstroke and dysentery.

Before the film was completed tempers flared, and Friedkin had Blatty barred from all post-production work. Four teams of editors frantically rushed to finish the film for its Fall dates. These eventually had to be delayed further as Friedkin fired Lalo Schifrin just as he was about to finish scoring the film and then desperately searched around for new music. Although nobody is really sure how, the film was finally completed, tradescreened in Los Angeles and New York on December 21, and opened in the 20 key U.S. cities on the day after Christmas, 1973.

The response from the New York and national reviewers was almost predictable, from a star-spewing rave from the *Daily News* (Kathleen Carroll) to a harsh raspberry from Vincent Canby, who with unusual fervor eventually took to the pages of *The New York Times* twice to denounce the film. According to the *Times* compilation, the critical tally was as follows: 8 favorable (including the *News*, *Post*, Rex Reed, *Cue* and *Saturday Review/World*), 4 mixed (including Andrew Sarris and Crist), and 8 negative (including Canby, Kael, *Time* and *Newsweek*). A few months later, the more detailed criticism of the little magazines appeared, again, to predictable response, since the film had by then entered the backlash of opinion that all initially successful films eventually seem to suffer, particularly when the film-as-art snobism inherent to many of the film periodicals begins to treat a hugely popular movie. Interestingly enough, at the same time they were panning the film, they also cashed in on it by using stills from the film on their covers, and in one case (*Film Comment*) publishing pirated visual material. (Warner Bros, in strict accord with Friedkin, had put a clamp on all illustrations or stills of the film's makeup and special effects.)

*THE EXORCIST* inspired a great deal of comment from a host of figures in all areas of life who normally seldom function as film critics. Among them were:

Hal Lindsey (fundamentalist author): "There's a lot more going on in that film than just shock value. There are... powers at work during the showing of that film... setting the stage for the future attack of Satan."

Frank Kveton (theatre manager in Oakbrook): "My janitors are going crazy wiping up the vomit."

Sergei Kondrashov (Washington correspondent for the official Soviet journal *Investia*): "The culmination of the film is an extremely naturalistic mixture of pornography and sadism. Having made this Christmas gift to its God-fearing country, Warner Bros is rejoicing at the money being taken in... and predict more gigantic profits."

Rabbi Julius G. Neumann (Chairman, Morality in Media): "The movie is adding to the frustration and confusion of our youth claiming that whatever they do contrary to accepted religious and society's norm is not really of their own making, but that of the devil inside them."

Edwin Newman (NBC): "I am beginning to wish that somebody would exorcise exorcism. I think I'd even rather hear about the lines at service stations."

Rev. Billy Graham (who read the novel, tore it up, flushed it down the toilet and who refuses to see the film): "I would be opening myself up to satanic forces. I think we are dealing with a very dangerous and very strange situation. I

don't believe believers can be possessed by the devil."

Joe Flaherty (*Village Voice* writer): "The penance for those who contributed consciously to this travesty should not be exorcism but exercise, and the area recommended is between the ears."

Jerry Rubin (former political radical): "After seeing *THE EXORCIST* I got more in touch with the irrational within me. I am Regan. You are Regan. No Catholic ritual, no therapist, no miracle formula, no specific behavior can exorcise the unconscious, conditioned demons from us. Only we can do it... It can begin by realizing that *THE EXORCIST* is not an escapist movie. It is a mirror."

Samuel Z. Arkoff (AIP President): "The film is really a superhorror picture. But it's not looked at that way by the pseudointellectuals and artsy [types] who are putting it in a context way beyond that... [Audiences] have psyched themselves out on it. They want it that way."

Ted Fishman (New York City line standee in zero-degree weather, quoted in the *Times*): "We're here because we're nuts and because we wanted to be a part of the madness."

Jack Douglas (humorist): "I sure wish Karras were still alive—I've got a couple of kids I'd like to have him take a look at."

The audience response was immediate... and overwhelming. Warner Bros discovered to their surprise that little adpub work was necessary. According to *Variety*, they spent less than \$80,000 to open it in New York, a sum quite small for such a major and expensive feature with less than unanimous reviews going for it. Attendance records were set in most theatres where the film opened, instantly burying the negative reviews. The film was critic-proof, but then it moved far beyond that. In New York *THE EXORCIST* became the "hot" ticket. Scalpers with a good place in line could command an outrageous sum, and get it. People stood in lines for over four hours in all the nastiest weather a wintry Manhattan could throw at them: icestorms, snow or rain and bitterly cold winds. On January 18th, 3 more first-run theatres were pressed into service, and their previous box-office records promptly fell. A fifth house was added two weeks later.

It was the same story all over the country. The film ran into censorship problems only in Washington, D.C., where the U.S. District Attorney's office overruled the MPAA and banned all patrons under 17 years of age (with or without an accompanying adult) from the film, and in Boston, where the D.A. and The Sack Theatre chain agreed to observe an X rating.

The troubles, of course, only added fuel to the inferno. Stories flowed to the press and TV of people fainting and vomiting (most reportedly just after the masturbation scene). H. Robert Honahan, a district manager of a theatre chain in Berkeley, exclaimed, "I've never seen anything like it in the 24 years I've been working in theatres." People left the film shaking and nauseous and, at least a few, screaming. Heart attacks and at least one miscarriage were reported. In a Berkeley theatre, one man charged the screen to get the demon. Others couldn't sleep when they went home. At the very least, most viewers lost their appetites for a while. People began to seek psychiatric help in greater numbers, blaming the film for their problems. Church attendance began to rise in some areas; a minister in Oakbrook proudly noted, "We turned them away by the hundreds from my *EXORCIST* sermon." Priests began receiving more and more strange calls from troubled people who insisted they needed an exorcist. Theatre managers, bearing the brunt of the film's effect, reported that women succumbed to the film's power in larger numbers than men. (Incidentally, Friedkin noted in *Variety*, with no elaboration whatsoever, that he considers *THE EXORCIST* "a woman's picture.")

The crowds turning out for the film seemed to get rougher. The film's attraction for black audiences, which Warner Bros had absolutely not foreseen, began to heat into mildly racial confrontations, as white neighborhoods (as in New York, the chic East Side where the film originally open-



ed) and shopping and restaurant areas felt the unaccustomed crunch. In New York, fires were ignited along the street by line standees to keep warm. Although the film drew all kinds of people, oftimes an uglier crowd prevailed. At the Paramount Theatre in New York, the last showing one particularly cold evening in February had to be cancelled when the crowd, afraid they wouldn't all get in after hours of waiting, mobbed the theatre. Henry Marshall, the first exhibitor to play the film in Toronto, reported, "It's a brutal crowd. I see nice people in the lineup and I tell them not to come in but they do anyway."

And indeed they did. But as so often happens, a string of wild successes simply prepares the way for failure. Warner Bros found, in extending bookings into smaller areas through the U.S., that many theatres had trouble in maintaining their 15 week minimums. On June 19, in a controversial move, Warner Bros four-walled the film into 110 theatres in the metropolitan New York City area alone with six-week minimum runs. The saturation booking failed by overkill; by the 5th week, the grosses had slipped to \$300,000 from the first week's total of over \$3 million. Although as of this writing the film is still playing on 42nd St in New York, for all practical purposes, *THE EXORCIST* has had done with New York.

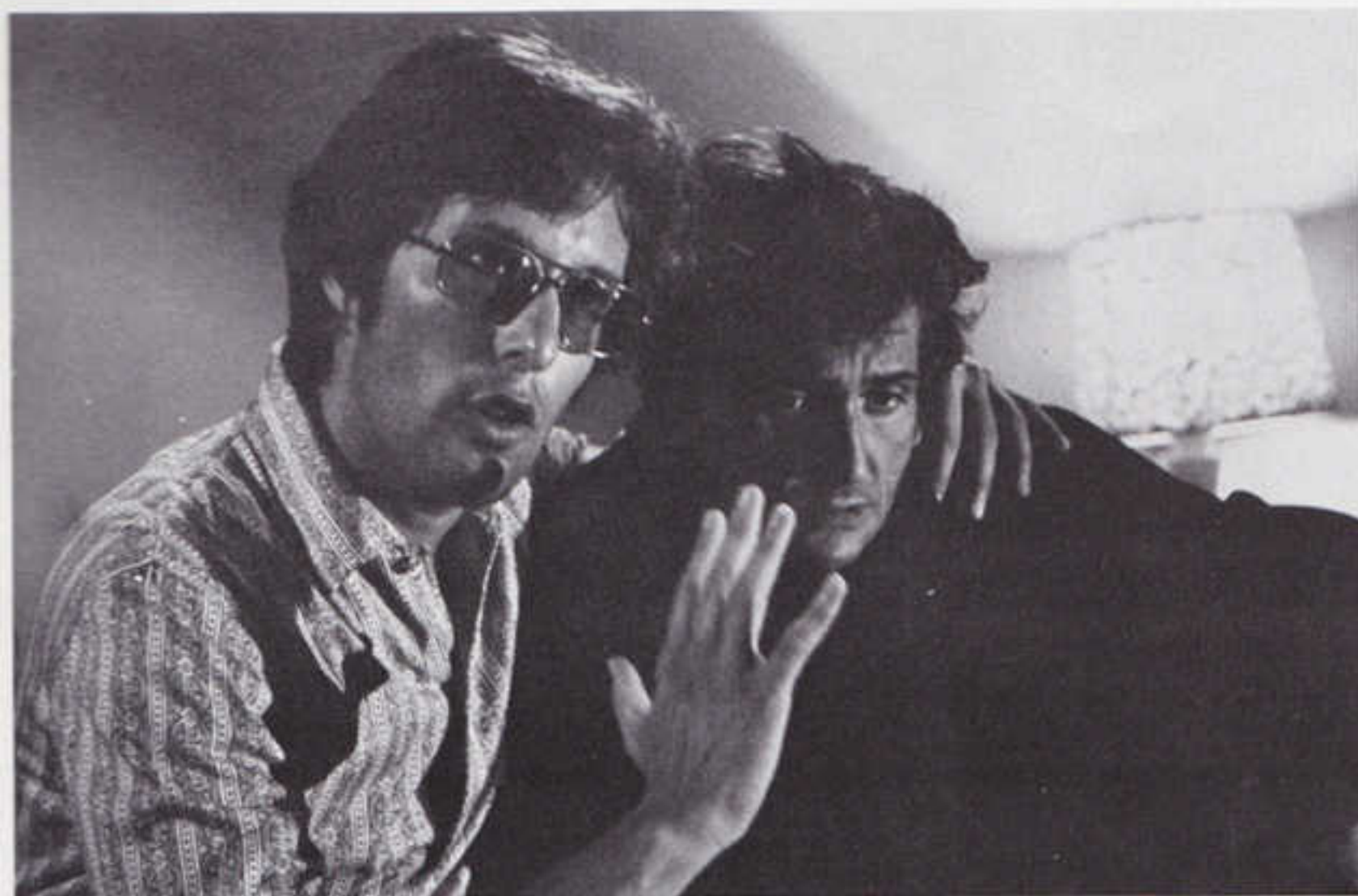
A bit of perspective might be in order, at least from the point of view of audience response. The power of *THE EXORCIST* hitting the screens had a precedent of sorts in the opening in November, 1931, of the original *FRANKENSTEIN*. To ward off potential trouble (and perhaps to shrewdly ballyhoo it further), Carl Leammle ordered a "warning" to be delivered by Edward Van Sloan in a prologue to the movie. Denis Gifford, in his book on Karloff, notes that at previews people ran screaming from the theatre during the film. Other sources report ambulances standing ready at curbside for action and that theatre managers soon learned to keep a good supply of smelling salts handy. There was a loud cry of rage from parents and civic groups that the film was too horrifying and should play to adults only. As it was, the public objected so strenuously to the sequence with the Monster and the little girl that it was snipped from the American version and the ending altered as well. A contemporary trade reviewer for *Film Weekly* concluded his critique of *FRANKENSTEIN*: "The film has no theme and points no moral, but is simply a shocker beside which the Grand Guignol was a kindergarten... It is the kind of film which could only induce nightmares." Sound familiar?

Controversial films mean, if they're really not fooling around, lawsuits, or their threat. And *THE EXORCIST* has cooked a fine brew of them. The first to surface was a distraught Mercedes MacCambridge who claimed, perhaps excessively, that in providing the demon's voice, she was responsible for its power on the screen. ("If there was any horror in the exorcism, it was me!") She claims Friedkin promised her a credit line and then welched. Her tale of how she recorded the cries (and whispers) and vomiting sounds makes extremely bizarre reading, including her self-induced regurgitation ("swallowed 18 raw eggs and a pulpy apple") and physical restraint ("I had the crew tear up a sheet and bind me hand and foot") with the result of complete physical exhaustion and a ruined voice "for weeks." Friedkin answered by noting that her contract did not call for a screen credit (although one was quickly inserted into the film) and that he had been overruled on the issue by the Warner Bros legal department. He added that not all of the demon voice was solely hers, that a barrage of noises and sounds were incorporated and, indeed, that her words as originally recorded were "vari-pitched and re-recorded at slower speeds," all of which finally

The exorcism of Regan. Top: Father Merrin (Max von Sydow) incants the Roman ritual and Regan (Linda Blair) squirms in agony. Middle: The two priests watch in amazement as the little girl's body rises from the bed. Bottom: The end is near. Father Karras (Jason Miller) finds the body of stricken Father Merrin. Is evil triumphant or defeated? While Blatty's book is quite specific on the matter, Friedkin's film is tantalizingly ambiguous.







resulted in the final voice on the soundtrack. The squabble developed into a fairly bitter personal battle between the two with MacCambridge, after receiving her on-screen credit, demanding a direct and public apology from Friedkin. She received no such apology, but she did exert considerable pressure to get one by withholding her permission for Warner Bros to release a soundtrack album including scenes and dialogue from the film. In mid-October an arbitration board of Screen Actors Guild decided that MacCambridge was to receive 3.6% of all album royalties, an advance of \$3,000 and billing on the album jacket to be 100% the size of the other actors and with the additional billing "as the voice of the demon," but no apology, an area which the board declared was outside the realm of existing contractual obligations. For the record, for her film work MacCambridge received \$2,000 per week for four weeks work and \$2,000 for one additional day.

Actress Eileen Dietz was the second complainant to appear. In a dispute that has become quite nasty, she charged that she was the double for Linda Blair for much of the film and that most of the crucial scenes in the film were played by her and that Blair was receiving credit, and perhaps an award or two, for what was mostly Dietz's work. Almost everyone concerned with the film labeled her a self-server and discounted her charges. Dietz countered with a letter to *Variety* in March. Warner Bros then stopwatched the film and finally admitted that Dietz was on-screen for 28 1/4 seconds but still maintained that her work was hardly of the importance she claimed. Dietz has since curiously refused to participate in a Screen Actors Guild arbitration requested by Blair's lawyers. Dubbed the "Great Pea Soup War," the issue is still unsettled.

Other legal problems include a suit against *Newsweek* for publishing photos of Blair in demon makeup which were apparently snapped from a screen during a showing and published in an interview with Blair in the 1/21/74 issue. Also, Ken Nordine, a musician and soundman, has sued Warner Bros for \$35,000 due him for work done on setting up sound effects and voice-overs but not paid for. His lawyers contend that Blatty was responsible for not accepting the work.

Other non-legal hassles include the possible bad blood between Friedkin and Ted Ashley as the December openings grew near and Friedkin, having fired Schifrin, pleaded for an extension to work out a new score for the film (Friedkin originally wanted Bernard Herrmann to do the music) and later, when Friedkin felt that the Warner Bros publicity department should push Jason Miller harder for the various best acting awards. This is not to mention the fueding between Friedkin and Blatty during the latter stages of shooting and post-production, although these problems, with a great show of mutual backslapping and boyish grins, at least for the photographers, seem to have been patched over.

The religious furor the film aroused centered, as was to be expected, in the Catholic Church. Friedkin had used three priests as advisors and given one of them, Rev. William O'Malley, S.J., a featured acting role. Many commentators seemed upset not with the fact of the film as much as with the participation of the priests, as if their work on it contrived to lend the support of the Church to the film.

None of the religious experts could agree on the film's effect although most were negative. One of the positive views came from Father Michael Callahan in Los Angeles who stated, "If it makes people think about the meaning of good and evil for an hour, it'll do more good than a lot of religious study programmes." Most were not that optimistic. The Rev. Juan Cortes, a Jesuit at Georgetown University, calls the film "not help-



Jason Miller as Father Karras. Top: Director William Friedkin discusses the motivation of Karras during the exorcism with Miller and von Sydow (off camera). Middle: Karras bears the burden when his Uncle (Titos Vandis) has his mother committed, "What I going to do? Put her in big hospital, Timmy! Who going to pay for that?" Bottom: Karras ministers to his aging mother on one of his visits. Moreso than the novel, *THE EXORCIST* is the story of Karras.



# Jason MILLER



Jason Miller received an Academy Award nomination for his portrayal of Father Karras in *THE EXORCIST*, his first motion picture role. The character of Karras, moreso than in Blatty's novel, is the center of the film's story, and I sought out Miller to discuss how the character developed. I found him working on his latest picture, *NICKEL RIDE* for 20th Century-Fox and director Robert Mulligan, in which he again works as an actor, in the lead role of a gangster. Acting fame, however, is only a recent development for Miller, who is better known for his achievement as a writer. In 1972 his play *That Championship Season* received the New York Drama Critics Award, a Tony Award, and the Pulitzer Prize as the best play of the year. Miller is currently writing a screenplay based on his award-winning play to be directed by Franklin J. Schaffner.

CFQ: How were you chosen to play Karras?

MILLER: Billy Friedkin went to see *That Championship Season*, and there is a lot of mention of Jesuits in there. On the back of the program was a picture of me, and also the fact that I was an actor. Billy operates a lot on intuition, so he contacted my agent who contacted me. I thought at first he wanted me to do a screenplay of the book. When I went to see him, I found he wanted me to read the script in terms of acting Karras. He gave me the script, I read it, liked it (the first draft, the one in the book *William Peter Blatty On The Exorcist*), and said I would like to try it. I came to LA to do the screen test in some big old warehouse, with a papier-mache bridge. I said I didn't want to do anything from the script, I'll just improvise. So we did the scene on the bridge with Ellen. Then, I had to say Mass. I had every vestment for a High Mass: for the chalice they had an old grapefruit can, the Host was a Ritz cracker, and the Gospel was Blatty's book.

CFQ: Do you think the picture is basically about Karras and his change of character?

MILLER: I think that's part of it. I think Blatty balances it very well, but inescapably the main attention of the audience is Regan, the girl possessed. I've often maintained, and I was talking with Billy and Blatty about this, if you take the

Interview conducted by Dale Winogura at Columbia Pictures, Hollywood, June 1974. This transcript has been edited slightly.

ful to society... You can't bring people to God by scaring them to death. You can't do a positive thing by negative means." Theologians warned that the film distorted church teachings about the Devil, exorcism, and the function and mien of priests. The Rev. Richard Woods of Loyola University strangely noted that the priests, in reality, would not have been allowed to perform the exorcism—a belief that backs up what many feel to be one of the indictments of *THE EXORCIST* against the Church—and he adds, "They departed from the ritual in the most stupid and reckless manner [trying] to fight the demon hand to hand instead of relying on the power of God." Rev. Eugene Kennedy, also at Loyola, faulted the film for ascribing "mysterious and mystical power to the priest." He calls the film "the GOING MY WAY of the nineteen-seventies." Rev. Woods concludes that the film regrettably stirred up "memories of all those descriptions of hell that you got from nuns" and that it "reflects the view that you are doing people a spiritual favor if you scare the hell out of them." The Archbishop of Canterbury, perhaps volleying the Pope's 1972 message, said that the film created a "credence for demonic possession which is mostly fiddlesticks." Most shrill of all, according to a letter writer to *Films and Filming*, was a leading member of the Church of Scotland who indicated he'd "rather take a bath in pig manure than see the film."

More mundane complaints included the film's lack of authentic detail, that, for instance, Jason Miller failed to say his Masses properly. Still, the priests who served as technical advisors continue to stand, for the most part, behind the film. Rev. O'Malley, writing an article for *The Jesuit*, indeed treated the subject matter and its potential effects rather matter-of-factly and dwelled instead on the novelty, for him, of movie-making. Another, the Rev. John J. Nicola, thinks that the reaction to the movie equals the Middle Ages' St. Vitus's Dance, and while not faulting the morality of the film, suggests that because of the "hysteria" produced, the general public should perhaps not have been offered the film. The largest part of the problem, perhaps, were all the people running off to priests demanding an exorcism in the belief they were possessed. Although most were directed to psychiatrists, others were believed.

Doctors, psychiatrists, and psychologists, reacting to the reported flood of people seeking help, and perhaps because their professions, too, were not treated so rosily in the film, approached it from a different angle. Dr. Louis Schlan, a Chicago psychiatrist, states flat out, "There is no way you can sit through that film without receiving some lasting negative or disturbing effects." The key word there is "lasting." Writing in *Saturday Review/World* in June, Dr. Ralph R. Greensen of UCLA calls the film "a menace to the mental health of our community.... It pours acid on our already corroded values and ideals. In the days when we all had more trust in our government, our friends, and ourselves, *THE EXORCIST* would have been a bad joke. Today, it is a danger." Dr. Judd Marmor, from Los Angeles, concurs, "We have many disturbed people in our society and a film like *THE EXORCIST* will spread like an infection." It is interesting to note that many seemed to blame the film for simply reflecting the corruption of society, skewering the film as disease, not symptom.

However, as with the religious criticism, no consensus of opinion, plus or minus, could be reached. Dr. David Abrahamsen, a psychiatrist, applauds the film for the opposite reason, that it offers to a hero-less age "a sense of identification," and while cleverly exploiting pre-existent audience guilt, it offers genuine esthetic catharsis. Dr. Walter Brown, a psychiatrist at Mt. Sinai, recognized a linkage to his own function: "I believe in all that stuff. In a way, all psycho-analysis and psychotherapy are forms of exorcism, of getting rid of demons."

Much of the ruckus raised by the film, not only from the medical and religious camps but from virtually every area of society, zeroed in on the film's receiving an R rather than an X rating. The Catholic conference, usually stricter than the MPAA, gave *THE EXORCIST* an unharsh A-IV rating, an adult classification which means the film is moral but may offend some (adult) viewers. Several commentators hinted that with such

high finance at stake, Warner Bros played a little game of politics with the MPAA for the lesser rating. The charge was stoutly denied by MPAA head Jack Valenti. Replying in the *New York Times* in February, he mentioned what he felt to be the film's unwavering morality, the thematic necessity of the strong language, and specifically, "There is no overt sex" and "no excessive violence." He was strongly debated on the latter account, a charge to which the MPAA has always been particularly prone, of punishing films via ratings for sexual content and going easy on violence. Most criticism depended on the individual critic's overall view of the film, and oddly enough, audiences seemed almost evenly divided as to whether the film's ending was positive (Good triumphs) or negative (Evil triumphs). To this effect, *Newsweek* picked up a rumor that Blatty and Friedkin were going to shoot a new ending to clarify the film, which set off some amount of telephoned questions to Warner Bros, but the story was not true.

It is highly indicative of the atmosphere the film created that such a rumor could take hold so quickly. Another began when Warner Bros opened the film in the 100-theatre spread in New York City mentioned earlier. A story began circulating that the film had been cut for the wider distribution. One fan claimed that when he'd seen the film in its original booking, it had been over three hours long. Warner Bros was swamped with calls which forced them to take out expensive newspaper ads verifying the film's completeness: "Contrary to rumors, *THE EXORCIST* that is now playing in all 100 theatres is the original—the full and complete film. Nothing has been cut. Not one single frame. Not one single word. Warner Bros guarantees it."

With the hefty U.S. grosses (the film alone accounted for 14% of the total U.S. boxoffice for January, 1974) added to the bright foreign outlook, Ted Ashley announced in the *New York Times* that he expects the film to amass \$110 million worldwide. (This figure is down from an earlier one of \$180 million. For comparison, the gross of *THE GODFATHER* now stands at \$155 million worldwide.) The film has also spurred sales of Blatty's novel. Before the film had opened, the novel in hard covers had appeared on the *Times*' bestseller list for 55 weeks. The Bantam paper edition sold 5.5 million copies, and with the film, Bantam printed an additional ten press runs amounting to another 5.5 million copies, which makes it the 2nd all-time best-selling paperback (after *The Godfather* at 12 million). It has been translated into over a dozen languages.

*THE EXORCIST* has not collected all the awards Warner Bros and other observers had expected. The first of the major glamour awards, given in January, are the Golden Globes, and the film captured four: film, director, screenplay, supporting actress (Blair). However, the industry awards, such as those of the Directors Guild of America and the Writers Guild, bypassed the film completely, as did, for the most part, the Oscars. Out of ten nominations for the latter, *THE EXORCIST* won only two (sound recording and screenplay) which prompted Blatty to publicly blast the Academy; he called the awards a "disgrace" and added, "The Academy should fold its tents and go back to baking apple strudel or whatever they can do well." In the *Hollywood Reporter*, Blatty claimed that George Cukor had led the attack on the film and denounced it to the Academy membership who shortly after collectively decided that no special effects or makeup awards were to be given. In Blatty's eyes, it seemed another Watergate.

Billy Friedkin continued to work from his office at Warner Bros in Hollywood, overseeing the preparation of the foreign language versions of the film. In September, he closed down the office, his work completed, and shifted to Universal where he began setting up his next project. Ironically enough, Friedkin left Warner Bros within a few days of the announcement of the departure from Warner Bros of Ted Ashley, who had backed Friedkin and the film so faithfully through what must have been a corporate hellfire. As few films ever do, *THE EXORCIST* has made history, for whatever reasons, and now it seemed to close an era, at least for Warner Bros.

David Bartholomew



exorcism out of the picture, with the kind of Dostoevskian character Blatty created in Karras, you can do an entire movie out of him, without touching on the supernatural. You are dealing here with mythical guilt, a guilt that forces transcendence by some kind of sacrificial act. It's not simply the clinical guilt that we're inundated with in magazine articles. I mean you associate it with Kafka and Dostoevski—it's deep.

Although we call it Mother Church, to Karras it's Father Church. Most of the older Jesuits he talked to when he said, "I've lost my faith," he's really giving confession to his father. You'll notice that there's a complete absence or no mention of his father—not even a picture.

You are dealing with a profound metaphysical change in terms of Karras, because that which has sustained him on a spiritual and emotional level has shifted away from him, and he's really in a void. He is a man of science as well as a man of religion, and it's the irreconcilable opposites that drive him mad, and creates this enormous guilt. So his entire life is going through a profound change, and in the middle of it, he's faced with incorporating himself into an experience that is kept in the closet by his church, and his rational mind says it does not, cannot exist. The only way he can meet it is on grounds of compassion and faith. But he feels that his faith is lost. It can only, finally, come out in an act of violence, which is a terrific irony. Presumably, his compassion for the little girl only takes him so far, then suddenly the existence of The Devil forces a mental thrust into re-contemplating the existence of God. The sacrifice, the return of his faith, is through a violent, half-mad gesture. His faith, by a confrontation with evil, is restored. Yet the final image is always ambiguous. You cannot become symmetrical in dealing with good and evil.

CFQ: There are strong indications that it all could be happening in the mind of Karras.

MILLER: I think that's a very interesting technique that Billy's applied here, where there is that ambiguity. I think, on a subliminal level, that's one of the powers of the film. Some of those multi-dimensional layers aren't really explored by the critics because they're not capable of it. They do not possess sensibilities of that subtlety. After a while they get like busdrivers—they hate the job. They become desensitized, impersonal, and destructive. Their rage and frustration at their own, quite possibly, unrealized creative efforts is a weapon they use to attack many films with. A really good critic should be like a really good film.

CFQ: I would disagree with the many critics who do not see THE EXORCIST as a compassionate film.

MILLER: They're used to seeing films of the genre being treated with sentimentality instead of compassion. When it is treated with compassion, they can't recognize it. What they were looking for was that softening influence, that lukewarm sentimentality, which Friedkin and Blatty both denied them, and rightly so. What occurred then was compassion.

CFQ: What are your feelings about the Motion Picture Academy?

MILLER: It's community out here. There are power cliques that run it, with taste-makers and taste-deciders. The line between admiration and envy is the width of a hair.

CFQ: Some people can't relate to the film's message that there are a lot of mysteries we can't solve. They want easy answers.

MILLER: That's the significance of one of the most terrific scenes in the film—the pneumoencephalogram. It's not there to shock or disgust, it's there to graphically show the inability of our sciences to define just what is possessing this girl. It's interesting that it's a psychiatrist who mentions exorcism. That's a lovely irony.

Even the technical, clinical jargon, after a while suddenly becomes (and it's paced very well) a little ridiculous to an audience, in the face of what they have been experiencing behind that door. It questions the efficacy of science in its inability to define certain phenomena, and leaves us with the fact that we are prey to mystery.

CFQ: One of the secrets of the film's success are the many different aspects one finds on consecutive viewings.

MILLER: The texture is so dense, and there are so many things that Billy threw away or hid that will be discovered in successive viewings. Nothing is really wasted. It's impossible to receive the full dimension in one sitting.

CFQ: When you read the script did Karras appeal to you as being part of your own experience?

MILLER: Oh, very much so. I was raised as an Irish Catholic, and had a great deal of influence from the church, raised within its cultures, rubrics, and rites. I was struck by what Blatty had caught, that elusive mystery of a man becoming a priest, and the quiet tragedy of a man losing his faith. He really is "the exorcist," Merrin is the "formal exorcist." A formal exorcism doesn't work here, it's an act of human love that works, coming out of violence.

CFQ: Did you find, in the fragmentation of the shooting, that your concept of Karras changed?

MILLER: That's the danger of shooting out of sequence, and having 2-to-3 weeks off between shots. The character can suddenly let go of you because the reality of everyday life starts to intrude. I did a great deal of preparation, and the 2-to-3 weeks I had off, I used it to let the character mature, and let it ripen. Before I played a scene, I saw or felt it maybe five or six different ways, and it was just a matter of eliminating, and finding the best approach, without painting everything in huge, gashing strokes. That was one of the great dangers with Karras, it could lend itself to all kinds of gross self-indulgence.

CFQ: That crane shot introducing Karras is quite remarkable.

MILLER: During that shot, you hear Ellen saying, "You have to change within the system." That's where he's at. The audience may get it on a very peripheral level, many of them won't, but the fact is that it's there in the overall concept, and for the hyper-sensitive viewer to pick up.

CFQ: THE EXORCIST affects people not just because of the makeup and special effects, but because of the layers beneath that.

MILLER: Almost every sanctuary in the film is violated—the church, a child's room, a hospital. All the sanctuaries people use are questioned in THE EXORCIST. That's what really disturbs people at a very deep and vulnerable level of their being. Karras' sanctuary, the church, has no solace for him. His privacy is also desecrated because of the possession, in the fact that he has to deal with it.

CFQ: That scene in the mental hospital is very revealing of the character of Karras.

MILLER: These deranged, abandoned people, coming to him, to that black symbol he wears, respond to what he represents. By pushing them away, he's telling us what he feels, what his interior state is. That gesture tells you more about Karras than the dialog. It's the same with the park sequence when he tries to push the mother away. Because of his lack of faith, he's no longer equipped to deal with what his vocation deals with: human pain, misery, and suffering.

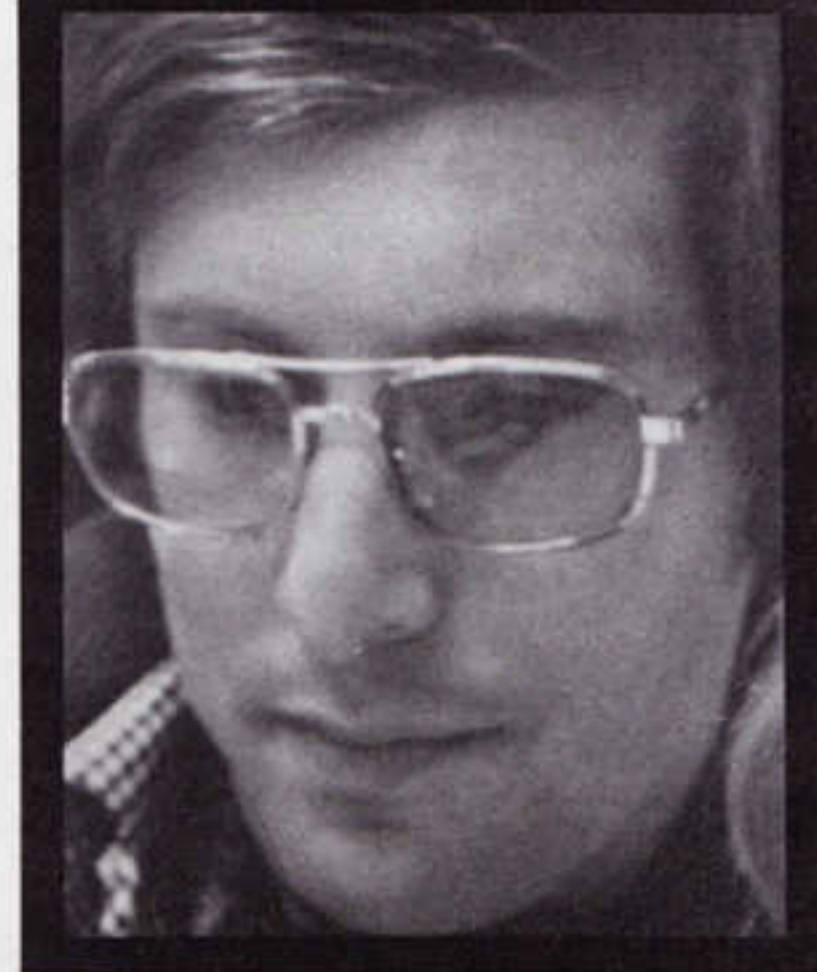
What Friedkin and Blatty also did was give the inanimate a lot of life, like the medal, the statue, the prayer book, and the medical machines. Little things are beautifully weaved into the overall texture. When I go downstairs and look at her paintings, after she throws up on me, if you look closely there's some red-and-green putty she has that the statue was desecrated with. It doesn't satisfy anything, but it keeps alive doubt.

CFQ: Were there any specific directions Billy gave you that really stand out in your mind?

MILLER: He gave me a thousand bucks, and told me to live in Georgetown for three weeks with the Jesuits. That was the best direction he could've given me. The suit that I wore—I went down into the cellar of the Jesuits' seminary, and there are these rows of black suits on hangars that had been worn by deceased Jesuits. So I went down and picked out my suit.

Billy, Blatty, and myself worked very closely on the interior construction of the character. One of the things Friedkin did that was invaluable, we had rehearsal two-to-three days before we shot a scene. The material was constantly being deepened, and Blatty would re-write, and he and Billy would discuss with everyone. It was a process of creative sharing, and Billy would place a design on it and stage it. They were ideal circumstances for an actor.

# William FRIEDKIN



Although we published an extensive interview with director William Friedkin concerning his work on THE EXORCIST in our previous issue, I felt that it did not adequately penetrate the controversy and smokescreen of erroneous criticism and misinterpretation that has arisen to surround the film. I interviewed Friedkin to learn and clarify his opinions concerning these areas of controversy. Many months after the release of THE EXORCIST, he was still to be found in his mammoth office at Warner Bros, preparing the foreign language versions of the film. Friedkin is possessed of a pleasingly relaxed and assured attitude, as well might be one who has directed two extremely successful films in a row (the previous one, THE FRENCH CONNECTION). He has a powerful ego, but one tempered with humility and understanding, that makes talking with him both a challenge and a great experience. Friedkin has since moved over to Universal Pictures to prepare his next, undisclosed, film project.

CFQ: Do you think psychiatrists are exaggerating about the effect THE EXORCIST has had on people?

FRIEDKIN: I don't really know. I don't want to say there is no reason for concern on the part of psychiatrists. I personally don't feel that any picture by itself, without certain social conditions being given up front, has the power to turn somebody into a raving maniac.

I was in Pittsburgh not long ago, and I read an account there of a doctor who said he took twelve mental patients to see it, and the picture irrevocably drew them into hopeless insanity, and that they were now beyond cure. You have to take into account (and this is something the newspapers never do) the mental condition of the person before he went in. It is possible of course that somebody seeing THE EXORCIST, or any other work given much less attention by the newspapers or by the public, in a state of mental imbalance can become further unbalanced by an encounter with a friend, a relative, or a stranger.

I don't think there's a convincing argument that freedom of the screen should be limited, or that "this or that" picture is harmful to someone's stability, even including hardcore porno-

Interview conducted by Dale Winogura, May 14, 1974 at the Warner Bros studio in Burbank, California. The transcript has been edited slightly.



graphy which I find personally to be harmless.

CFQ: The *NSA Quarterly* said the film's shock value is a way of giving people's fears a kind of expression to which they relate. Do you agree?

FRIEDKIN: No, I don't. It was not my intention to do this. I made the film because it was a good story. I never thought of what psychological effect it would have on anyone. I intended to make a picture that would first and foremost be an engrossing work of fascinating entertainment. The hullabaloo that's taken place is a big mystery to me frankly.

I saw *PSYCHO* when I was a kid, and I was very terrified by it. Fortunately, I was able to overcome that. I have friends who are very intelligent who can't bring themselves to see the picture because they know what it's liable to do to them. I understand that.

I made the film as an overview of an event involving five characters who interested me. I don't know the probability as regards literal possession and the possibility of exorcism. I'm not knowledgeable enough in that area.

CFQ: Are you reluctant to discuss the implications of what you were trying to do in the film?

FRIEDKIN: I'm not reluctant. I have thought about these things. I tend to think about the physical problems of production, which are many. Occasionally, things occur to me in terms of deeper meaning. But the main thing that concerns me is how to achieve the story. If there is deeper meaning, it's only "by the way."

A friend of mine in the clergy sent me an article from a Catholic paper. Some clergyman suggested that the story was a homosexual fantasy, that Karras and Merrin were in a male bond to physically torture this little girl. The girl stabbing the vagina was a gesture of female hatred, and the passionate involvement of these two men ends in death over the actions of this little girl and her vaginal problems. Presumably, anyone looking for that sort of thing is going to come up with something equally as far-fetched. I must say it never occurred to me, but when the guy puts up such a convincing case, what can I tell you?

CFQ: Do you believe in the devil?

FRIEDKIN: I think it is possible that many people form a moral code based on beliefs that are outside the tangible and rational. My moral standards were formed when I was very young, and they did have a lot to do with the belief that I would not get my ultimate reward in heaven if I fucked-up here on earth. Those are hard things to shake, and the older I get, I don't find any reason to abandon that. I find more reason to say anything is possible. The more time I spend thinking about those concerns outside my own narrow ones, the more I think it's possible that higher and deeper levels of consciousness are out there, and the life we lead here is just a little ways along.

CFQ: You believe in heaven and hell then?

FRIEDKIN: I believe that heaven and hell exist, as other levels of consciousness. I'm fascinated not by the universe that encompasses mankind, but by the mind that encompasses the universe. That is one underlying factor of my interest in this picture, and all the pictures I've made, but this one especially. The mind that can conceive of possession and exorcism exists within ourselves, not outside.

CFQ: Do you feel the belief in a personified devil is an escapist viewpoint?

FRIEDKIN: It depends on the individual. I don't think you can make a generality out of that. It isn't what you believe, it's how you act on your beliefs. I find many worthwhile things in Catholic doctrine. I can't accept the whole enchilada however.

CFQ: In the opening Iraq scenes there is a feeling that something is closing in on Merrin.

Director William Friedkin at work. Top: Friedkin gives instructions to Linda Blair to prepare her for a scene with Ellen Burstyn. Middle: Billy, as everyone calls him, listens to cinematographer Owen Roizman explain a camera set-up on location in New York. Bottom: Friedkin goes over critical action in the levitation scene with Miller and von Sydow. The refrigerated set necessitated the wearing of insulated clothing. Friedkin calls his film a drama, not a horror film.





# Dick SMITH



Dick Smith created the makeup seen in *THE EXORCIST*. It is interesting that makeup men are artists/technicians who labor totally behind the scenes perfecting others' faces, yet are themselves, as far as the public is concerned, quite faceless. Smith seems genuinely delighted to talk about his craft, and I sought him out to learn the story behind his work on *THE EXORCIST* and the development of the demon makeup, a visage that has literally haunted millions of movie-goers. Dick is not a self-server and seems not overly concerned with achieving public fame. The Academy Awards had been doled out several days before our talk, and the fact that not only *THE EXORCIST* but the entire area of film makeup and special effects had been snubbed did not seem to bother him. Smith literally founded the first makeup department in television, at NBC during the fifties, and has subsequently distinguished himself in his field with exceptional work in both film and theatre. He is currently serving as the makeup consultant on the film production of Ira Levin's *THE STEPFORD WIVES*. His idol is Jack Pierce.

CFQ: At what point were you brought in on the pre-production of *THE EXORCIST*?

SMITH: About five months before we started shooting. I and the special effects chap, Marcel Vercoetere, were both involved at the beginning when they first got Linda Blair and were initially discussing it in New York.

CFQ: What preparations did you undertake in designing the makeup for Linda Blair as the possessed Regan, other than reading the novel which isn't explicit on that account?

SMITH: I dug through all the books I could find on demonology and looked at paintings and drawings of demons and devils. I looked through all of what I had at home—and I have extensive files on... everything. I dug out every picture I could find of anything that suggested evil and researched them all for ideas to help me. As it turned out, there was very little there in the sources that I found really useful. I must have done at least a dozen different makeups on Linda, and by that I mean really different approaches. Some of them were total disasters, just not workable at all.

Interview conducted by David Bartholomew April 4, 1974 on the set of *GODFATHER II* in New York City. The transcript has been edited slightly.

I'm as interested in people who react negatively to the ending as those who react positively. I was surprised at first to find so many negative reactions.

CFQ: Everyone takes for granted that it's a demon inside Regan. They pass over the indications that it's not a case of possession.

FRIEDKIN: Because they have to. It's more comfortable to say it's "the devil," and therefore dismiss it. A kind of mass hysteria is another valid way of seeing the film. If rationale is necessary for me, then that would be the way I see it, as people in a heightened state, under tremendous strain.

CFQ: One feels that Kinderman knows a lot, but in the last scene we see total bewilderment on his face.

FRIEDKIN: I had shot another scene, the ending of the book, with the same dialogue, but I wanted to leave the audience with their own ending and not deflate the mood that was there. I'm very conscious of making a movie that will enter the minds of those who see it, that will grow in their minds and alter and affect them. One way to do that is to take out all overt meanings and explanations, and that's what I tried to do. Kinderman brings a touch of the "common man," the guy who is going to be relatively unaffected by the action. Occasionally, it's nice to have a character like that. He doesn't solve the case, so critics say Lee J. Cobb is wasted in the picture. Why have the detective if he's not going to be effective? They also serve who play a supporting role in the main event. We don't always find solutions.

CFQ: Like Kinderman, the doctors are also trying to impose order.

FRIEDKIN: Everything they say is actual medical dialogue. For the most part, audiences today reject scientific solutions. We're living in an age where people are unwilling to accept pat, hand-out solutions.

CFQ: The dream Karras has seems to be a combination of guilt-expression and premonition.

FRIEDKIN: I was playing with the notion that it is possible that something that happened to somebody in Iraq, 7000 miles away, turns up in someone else's dream, like the clock and the dogs.

CFQ: You rarely use fades or dissolves in your films, mostly direct cuts. This adds to the film's disturbing quality.

FRIEDKIN: I try not to use fades or dissolves only because I like speed on the screen. The dissolves at the beginning of *THE EXORCIST* are the first I've ever used I think. I have a theory that the audience is way ahead of the filmmaker. I'm looking forward to a kind of filmmaking that breaks with the mechanical overlay of structure that I see in most films.

CFQ: You're very astute in conveying the outward deceptions and inner fears of your characters. Do you work a lot with actors?

FRIEDKIN: Yes, totally, to get those levels. I don't just stage the action. I have long discussions about the internal aspect of the characters, and the emotional barometer from one stage to the next.

CFQ: The hospital scenes are terrifyingly objective in contrast to most of the rest of the film which is subjective. Was this intentional?

FRIEDKIN: Not consciously. It boils down to "what's the best way to shoot this," to give the audience the most information, or the least. It's a specific problem that varies from shot to shot, and scene to scene.

CFQ: Do you see the force inside Regan as a manifestation of her super-ego?

FRIEDKIN: I don't think so, Dale. I think that what happens to her is out of her control, and is imposed. I think it's a disease for which there is no name.

I think a large part of our entertainment today is a result of the national nervous breakdown since the three assassinations and the Vietnam War. I think we are coming out of another kind of seizure with the Nixon administration.

CFQ: There's something about *THE EXORCIST* that its imitators can't match. I think the picture is a classic.

FRIEDKIN: I feel that there's certainly a hell of a lot there that people understand but that has not been mined. It has a lot to say to future generations, if only on a historical basis.

CFQ: When we first see Burke, there is something unreal about him.

FRIEDKIN: I was conscious of introducing all the major characters, except Karras, from behind. Everybody is sort-of snuck up on, or discovered. We come up behind them, almost like an unseen force. Karras, on the other hand, is the person to whom the whole thing is directed. He is met head-on. We literally push in on Burke because he's the first to go. What lead me into that is my belief that fear is always something behind you.

CFQ: On Karras' second visit the demon says "What an excellent day for an exorcism," as if it's teasing him to do something.

FRIEDKIN: My attitude about that scene was two-fold. First of all, we needed some levity somewhere along the line. My feeling is that if one were spirited off by the Frankenstein monster, after you got over the initial shock of being in the presence of this thing, you'd soon be playing chess together, trying to do something to pass the time. I put the scene on that level, and did it as kind of a Shavian dialogue, wherein they're exchanging pleasantries and witticisms.

CFQ: In the scene where Chris and Regan are playfully rolling on the floor, the camera moves in placing them in shadows and tellingly revealing the lies they live with.

FRIEDKIN: I think that's very apt. What the shot is saying is that, and the fact that they're like minor canvas characters in a much larger canvas.

CFQ: I get the feeling the demon has been in that house a long time.

FRIEDKIN: My feeling is that the demon just arrives at that point in the story when we want it to arrive, just as any character walks in the door. As in *THE BIRTHDAY PARTY*, Goldberg and McCann just walk in. What is it about this little girl that made her be possessed? Who the hell knows? It's not the author's province to speculate. If we had cluttered up *THE EXORCIST* with a lot of cockamamie explanations...

CFQ: ...it wouldn't be effective because the audience would be more concerned with the explanations than the people. That's why Hitchcock rarely has any.

FRIEDKIN: Except for *PSYCHO* at the end, with that lousy, gratuitous explanation directed at a ten-year-old mind.

CFQ: On his way to visit his mother Karras sees kids demolishing a car. Was it just there?

FRIEDKIN: Yeah, they just happened to be there. When you're making a film on location, you have greater opportunity to seek out and find these things. You're always looking for something that relates to your story. I'm always jotting down things in a notebook that either fit the project I'm working on or something in the future.

CFQ: Do you see a subconscious connection between the car being wrecked and the desecration in the church?

FRIEDKIN: Absolutely, and the little girl's body being desecrated also. In another way, Karras' mother is an old wreck.

CFQ: The feeling you establish is that of a world controlled by the devil long before he appears, as Harry Ringel said in his review.

FRIEDKIN: Yes, but I don't think too much about "the devil," you know. I think it's more a metaphysical force.

CFQ: As with Chris and Regan, one senses a lie in the relationship of Karras with his mother.

FRIEDKIN: There's a lie in every relationship, to a degree. There's tremendous guilt in Karras in the relationship with his mother.

CFQ: I can't see how anyone can misinterpret the ending as a failure for Karras and a victory for the demon. The demon has no reason to destroy itself, but Karras does. Why do you feel people misconstrue this?

FRIEDKIN: Because it's within them to begin with. One thing you cannot exorcise is the deep-seated tenets within people who come to see a movie that deals on such a primitive level with their emotions. Karras' deed is understandable to anyone who has read *A Tale of Two Cities*.

CFQ: When the book came out, I think people had a better grasp of this kind of heroism.

FRIEDKIN: Blatty also tells you how you should think about it. One thing I don't want to do is tell people how they should think about a film.



For instance, I found that adding to her nose even the tiniest amount, to give her a hook nose, looked ludicrous on that little face. It made her look like a midget, or something strange. You just could not put a mature nose on her—it just didn't go. But the point is, we tried many things. Some worked out well from a makeup standpoint. What we wound up with was based simply on my own ideas.

CFQ: Did you sketch your ideas fully, then go to the makeup, or vice-versa, or don't you work that way?

SMITH: The process is this: first of all I get a life mask of the subject, Linda. Then I make several copies, so that I have perhaps six heads of Linda, in plaster. Then I'll get out my clay, my plasteline, and sculpt additions on to them. Obviously, in makeup you can only add three-dimensionally, you can't carve anything away. So with a little girl like Linda with a chubby face the trick is to add to it in such a way that it will look thinner instead of fatter. You sit down, and as you sculpt, say, a nose, you try a hump, you try it wide, long, narrow and so on and you see right before your eyes whether it looks great or dumb. It's a process of trial and error. Working from your own thought, you narrow it down to two or three good possibilities, different approaches, which look like they will work. However, what you sculpt on a life mask may not work well when worn by the performer and photographed on film. For instance, I could give Linda's life mask cheekbones and a strong jaw and even create the illusion of hollow cheeks, and it would all look great on the life mask. But to transform something like that into a foam latex mask and apply it to her face, the minute she smiled, her cheeks would puff out and the whole illusion would be destroyed. It wouldn't appear as part of her own flesh. You have to work out something that when applied to the face moves with every expression and seems part of the person's natural face. Now, working with a little girl's face like Linda's, with the butterball nose she has and the full lips and chubby cheeks, was really rough. She's so whole-some looking.

CFQ: You're constantly doing research on new techniques and materials. Was there anything new that you used on Linda or in THE EXORCIST that was innovative?

SMITH: Oh, yes. For instance, we were working for the most part—as I guess everyone knows—on a refrigerated set. It averaged about 10°. At times, Linda had to have her legs exposed, when she levitated, and other times, and since the makeup on her face was very pale and sick, her legs obviously had to match. Pancake makeup, which we normally use for body makeup, just wouldn't hold up. Since it was impossible to keep going in to touch up her makeup with a cold wet sponge under those freezing conditions, I had to develop a plastic makeup. I mixed up a kind of vinyl paint that I could spray on with a paint sprayer. We were able to use it on her legs. It wasn't harmful and could be cleaned off with no real problem and would stay on during filming perfectly and not rub off. We used it on her arms and legs to give the basic color. Then I did another type of makeup to stipple on bruises on top of that. It held up really well and saved Linda a lot of discomfort.

CFQ: Did the cold affect the latex appliances?

SMITH: No, it didn't. They are so thin and so light, I think you could put a foam latex piece in a refrigerator and it wouldn't be affected. I think that the only thing affected by the cold—and I'm not even too sure of this—was the liquid latex formula applied to the hands of Max von Sydow to bring out the lines and wrinkles. Normally his hands are very smooth. It did crack and peel some which may have been due to the cold. That's probably the only thing.

CFQ: Can you define for us the dividing line between what is makeup and what is special effects? The head-turning dummy used in THE EXORCIST seems to cut across both areas.

SMITH: Yes, that's true. It is one of those things that you work out—who does what—depending on each case. Basically, we can put it this way: anything that is put on the skin, applied to the skin, usually has to be done by the makeup artist. If it is something like the dummy, where a person's face and body have to be cast, a make-

up artist is better equipped to do that. But as far as the mechanics of the dummy are concerned, putting in the mechanism that moves the eyeballs or turns the head, that was done by special effects. So we do work very closely. I would not do anything without consulting with the special effects guy first to make sure that he then could handle the situation. I would put in the eyeballs and little levers, for instance, in such a way that I knew his devices could be attached, so that the whole thing could function the way we wanted it to. Vercoutere [pronounced ver-coo-tear] did use a marvelous device, it was a radio-controlled thing that they use in flying model airplanes which controls the flight. The unit has a little lever which swings back and forth, so we attached that to the eyeballs to make them move any way we wanted. It was very sensitive. With the transmitter, we could push a lever and make the eyeballs shift a tiny amount or swing wildly. It was very realistic, although I'm not sure how much showed up in the film.

CFQ: You see the dummy for too short a period of time to really notice fine points. The effect of the breath condensation in the cold room was more apparent and effective than anything.

SMITH: That was something that was added later. That was actually the third time we had done this particular scene with the dummy. One of the difficulties was that I had to make the dummy very early before I had any idea how Billy Friedkin was going to use it. I made a dummy from head to toe, to be used in a sitting position on the bed, and that was all I knew at the time.

I molded Linda's body in sections and made a dummy which was basically latex filled with polyurethane foam, a soft foam. I did try to have the joints at the arms and legs bendable so that we could alter the position somewhat. The head and shoulders were made out of a polyester resin because they had to be rigid enough to install the mechanism to make the head pivot smoothly.

But, getting back to the coordination of special effects and makeup, the vomiting was something which I did almost entirely by myself because it involved making flattened tubes that fitted across the cheeks of the actress. They were connected to a tube which went across the mouth from corner to corner—kind of like the bit of a horse's bridle—and it had in it a nozzle. Now, the rear part of this apparatus went back below her ears and was connected to rubber hoses which went down her back. Now that's where the special effects man came in. He had the responsibility of having the pea soup at the proper temperature (laughs) and properly seasoned. We never realized that people would tumble onto the fact that it was pea soup so rapidly. It was picked as a convenient item that seemed to be a color close to bile-like vomit. I think if we had been aware of that response we would have changed the color somewhat. One thing that always happens is that the final print that goes into theatres is often different from what we see in the rushes. In the rushes, the color was simply not that vivid.

CFQ: What would you say was your most difficult task in working on the film?

SMITH: The vomiting, by all means, was the most difficult. You see, the first thing I did was relatively simple. I assumed that they would shoot her from a 3/4 view, so I had a tube going into the off-camera side of her mouth and then covered that by making a "new" corner to her mouth. It was a good "cheat" because you could see the whole mouth and you saw that the vomit was definitely coming out of the mouth. But Billy just insisted that the shot had to be full-face. And I said: "But you can't do it full-face—it's impossible!" He replied: "Well, we'll fix it with lighting or something." I continued to protest: "But you will still see that bulge over there..." But then his own perfectionism just kind of goaded me into striving for something better.

It will sound simple the way I describe it, but actually devising the damned thing was very complicated and not exactly in an area I am technologically familiar with. I used thin sheets of plexiglass and heat formed them. It so happened that I had bought a flameless heat gun, like a high-powered hair dryer, which puts out temperatures of up to 1000°. I had bought this thing for the stomach effect, and it was just a happy convenience that I had it to play around with for it enabled me

to heat-form the thin plastic sheets over a life mask of the actress. Incidentally, this particular life mask was cast with the mouth open and the corners of the lips retracted. When I heat-formed this device, it had the effect not only of carrying the vomit, but the plastic was formed so that the corners of the mouth were retracted and held. The retracting part connected with the device that went into her mouth that held the nozzle. Now all of this had to be made as thin as possible because over it I had to apply a very thin foam latex mask which included the lower lip, and mouth corners to cover this thing where it went into her mouth. The final effect then, with the makeup and all, and a wig on top to cover the harness that held it all on, was a very good duplication of the demon makeup with the mouth open. She couldn't close her mouth at all. This wasn't exactly comfortable to wear, of course. So that was what we finally used, and it was only shown for a split second. How much of a cut is actually used where this device is on, I would assume is only during the actual spasm of vomiting. There is another vomiting scene, where she is lying down, and a thick lava-like flow comes out of her mouth. The same device was used, simply with thicker soup made to flow slower. It fills up the mouth and comes out and that to me in some ways is even more repulsive.

CFQ: How difficult was it for you to work with Linda Blair?

SMITH: She's a most unusual little girl, and I can't imagine anyone else enduring—being as patient—as well as she. She was, of course, a child, and the most patient child in the world is not the same as an adult. The makeup involved approximately two hours or more every morning. We would start around 7 A.M. She was bored by the whole thing—you can't blame her—so we had a little TV set sitting on a shelf on the opposite wall which she could see by looking in the mirror. It got to be a bit dodgy at times, because if I would get in the way of the reflection of the TV set, she would move her head in order to continue seeing what "The Flying Nun" was up to, and it just made it difficult to do the makeup. The only thing that bugged Linda was that she has lovely hair that she is very proud of—she's a very neat young lady who takes good care of herself. One of the things she hated was to have anything in her hair. And, of course, we had to glop it up every day. That really upset her, so finally, instead of putting on what we had been using—a kind of liquid wax that I used on Dustin Hoffman in MIDNIGHT COWBOY—which took her three shampoos to get out, we used liquid shampoo, applied right out of the bottle onto her hair. The hair stylist, incidentally, was a great guy, and stylist, named Bill Farley. This was his chore every morning, to glop up Linda's hair. But that was the only thing with which we had difficulty with Linda.

CFQ: Did you find any problems that were insurmountable—things you might have discussed doing but had to discard?

SMITH: The obvious thing is that it was impossible to make Linda look gaunt. You just can't take a chubby-cheeked little girl and make her look gaunt. Owen Roizman, the cinematographer, worked valiently with his lighting, trying to make her look as gaunt as possible, but there were times, particularly if she were supposed to smile demonically, when those chubby cheeks would puff out. That, of course, was something I was unhappy about, but there was no way out of it.

CFQ: There is speculation that many effects actually shot for the film were left out of the final cut. I believe Friedkin himself often makes mention of it.

SMITH: The only thing I can think of, off-hand, is that originally they were going to have a scene where Linda comes down the stairs in her nightgown, and she comes down kind of upside down, like a spider, or a snake, something loathsome. In the book, this is where the long tongue was supposed to come out. We took it several times, and Billy finally decided he just didn't like the scene, and it was cut. The only time we used this tongue was, I think, in one spot during the exorcism scene. It is a foam rubber tongue which is attached with dental plate adhesive. Of all the effects, it was the easiest to do. When I read the script, I thought: "Oh God, what am I going to use for that?" And it turned out to be so simple that I



have since made up some and given them away to a few close friends for gags. You can stick them on with peanut butter and they are very funny. Another effect which seemed very difficult but for which a simple solution was eventually found was the writing on Regan's stomach. Latex reacts to certain solvents, so we painted the letters with cleaning fluid over her latex-covered stomach.

**CFQ:** Over the length of the film there seem to be a series of stages to Blair's makeup. Were these definite stages that you designed as a progression of ever more horrific appearance?

**SMITH:** Yes... well, I think I have to go back and tell you what actually happened to us. As I said, I started five months or so before we started shooting. Now, we did, at the very beginning, six or eight different makeups and tests. Then a second series of tests which refined it further. So after all these steps we finally arrived at a makeup which was actually much more demonic than what we used in the film. Billy liked it with a few reservations—he wanted me to eliminate several little wrinkles that he thought made her look too old, but generally we agreed. That was it; we had the green light to go ahead, which means that I could correct the molds and go into the business of manufacturing masks. I can only make a couple a day, because the mixture and the baking of the foam latex in these molds takes four to six hours. I had an estimate that the shooting schedule would run X number of weeks. You have to make a mask for every day's use, and some to spare. Of course, when I say "mask," it is not literally in one piece. They are made up in sections that cover certain parts of her brow, mid-face, chin, and so forth. Also, her hands were involved and also her neck. And, we had planned various stages, as you originally asked. There were some tiny pieces to start off with, and a modified version of the demon makeup that was supposed to come into the film in the scene with the psychiatrist. Incidentally, we had several different shades of contact lenses which we made up, with a progression planned for these also.

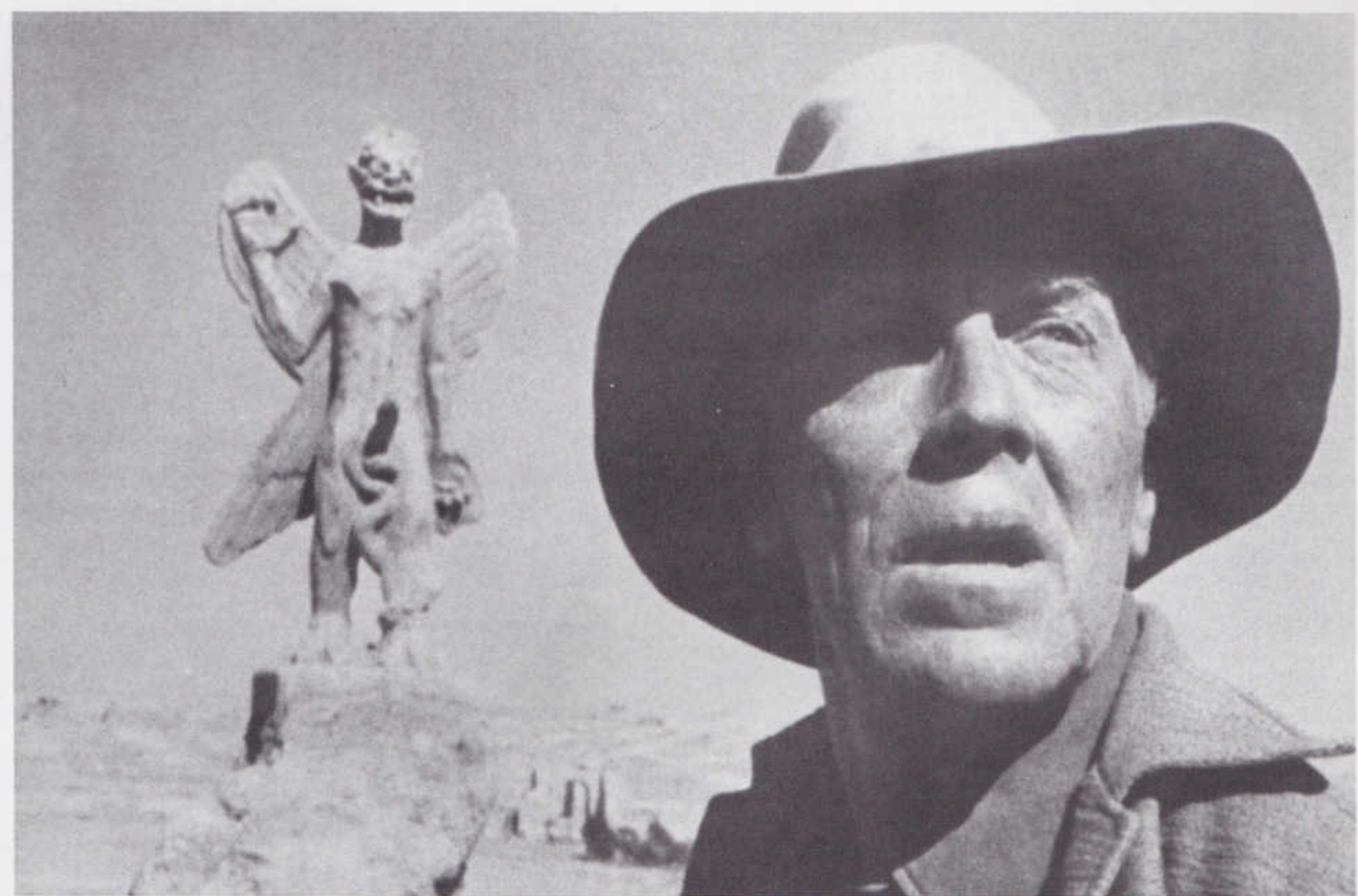
Anyway, we finally started filming September, 1972 and it wasn't until a couple months later that we came around to doing the earliest manifestation of the demon. This was the scene with the psychiatrist and I used this early version of the demon makeup for it. I wasn't too happy with it because I didn't think she looked demonic enough. I had in my mind the struggle to make her look really fiendish, because her facial expressions were very limited. At the beginning it was hard for her even to frown. But we got to this scene with the mother and the psychiatrist and filmed it, and it was a disaster because Linda really looked so physically different. This sweet little girl had turned into something pretty loathsome, and the dialogue of the adults in the scene just became funny. No one could say those things and yet sit in a room in real life with someone who looked like that. So, we re-scheduled shooting for the scene, and I started doing more makeup testing on Linda. Billy decided that it had to be—his favorite word—"organic," it had to grow from within. We had many consultations, and I brought in all kinds of pictures to show him. It was difficult because at this point, I didn't know what to do. I had used my best ideas—I had done it as well as I could, and now Billy wanted something different.

I'd show him a picture of Claude Rains as the Phantom of the Opera, with half his face burned off. And he'd say: "Yeah, let's do something like that. I like the asymmetrical thing, that's really good." I said: "Well, let's make it look like some sort of disease rather than an obvious burn, some sort of half-distorted face, as if she's gotten sick." Billy wanted to keep everyone guessing as to whether she was truly possessed, or whether

Makeup artist Dick Smith at work. Top: Smith touches-up Linda Blair's makeup on location in a scene that was edited from the final film. Middle: Smith and assistant Bob Laden adjust the hair around Linda Blair's neck for a scene that will be cut in right after the dummy head-turning. Bottom: Linda Blair is shown the life-mask made by Smith and used to design and create the rubber latex makeup appliances which must fit snugly and exactly to the contours of her face.









it was just an aberration of some sort. With my original makeup, there would have been no question. So, we started to try makeups based on our talks. One of the things that came along in this stage was—I'm not sure if it's in the book or the script or what but it certainly was in Billy's head—that there were cuts somewhere on her and that they could be self-inflicted, or they could be demonic manifestations. Whichever, it didn't have to be stated. So I did a thing with a lot of cuts and gashes on one side of her face, and this is finally what we did. I took this cut idea and saved from the earlier makeup the slightest suggestion of a demonic brow because, of course, the eyes were still the focal point, and the contact lenses alone were not enough. In fact, we didn't go to them until the exorcism scenes. The eyes were without eyebrows—it was the kind of hideous skull-like look of the Phantom of the Opera, the Lon Chaney version. It has a stark quality, with the dark around the eyes. It's about as evil as you can get with a little girl, I think. Then with that, we placed cuts very carefully in such a way as to make her face look as lop-sided as possible. Then I did appliances around her mouth which cancelled her own cupid's bow mouth, thickened it somewhat and carried it over to the left side to give a droop to the corner of her mouth. So we had distortion there. Incidentally, we had also planned to use false teeth. We had a number of sets of them made up, also in a progression, and started to use them, but Billy decided he might very well want to use Linda's voice and since she was having a little difficulty speaking with them, we scrapped the teeth. Subsequently, I just painted her teeth with tooth enamel to make them look rotten. Originally, we had also planned to use a wig, but we scrapped that also and used Linda's own hair. The important point is that we got closer and closer to Linda herself, and therefore, it became more and more believable. She was really almost recognizable, at least it was the most moderate kind of transformation that we could do.

I should explain that all the time I was trying to devise this new makeup we were filming other scenes so nothing was held up. But I had to create this new makeup under great pressure, and when we finally did test it satisfactorily and Billy gave me the go-ahead, there was the question of manufacturing the masks again. I couldn't do that and be on the set for my other work at the same time, so I brought in a young friend of mine from California who I think is a genius and will one day beat me at my own trade. His name is Rick Baker. He came and lived at my house—my laboratory is in the basement—and he baked all the pieces for me after I had gotten all the molds made.

Having established the basic look, then came the question of various stages to it. We never tested these and I had to guess at how far I could go in making the various changes and still not exceed Billy's limits of what he would accept. Therefore, I had to be fairly conservative. There are definite stages. The first was simple little fresh cuts. Then we go to the first really ugly stage which involved the appliances; they were kind of swollen, scabby, pus-filled cuts. The third stage was even worse in that they were all thicker and more swollen and more distorting. Then, when we actually got to the exorcism, they were actually less severe. This was Billy's idea. I feel that if we had had more time to do tests, I would have liked to have gone further for the exorcism, to have gotten even more demonic. But under the circumstances, I think it came off OK, the best that we could do considering everything.

CFQ: You have said in another interview that you usually like to teach a subordinate or even the actor himself to do his own makeup. Was this

practice observed on THE EXORCIST?

SMITH: No. I never teach an actor to do his own makeup. I think a makeup artist who encourages an actor to do his own makeup is usually simply being lazy. I do try to spread around information. The most important thing is to have good assistants, because you can't do it all yourself. Now, I was lucky in not only having Rick Baker doing some lab work and also helping on the dummy, but also, on Max von Sydow's makeup, Bob Laden from New York, who is a terrific makeup artist in all ways. He has worked with me quite a number of times before, so after I had worked out von Sydow's makeup, he stepped right in.

Max von Sydow's makeup was actually much more extensive than Linda Blair's. It was a three-hour makeup job and a very difficult one. Aside from Dustin Hoffman's makeup on LITTLE BIG MAN, it was the most complex, most difficult old-age makeup I've ever done. One of the reasons it was so complex was that Friedkin was taking tight closeups without any diffusion on Max. We had foam latex pieces on Max's face and a heavy rubber mask greasepaint kind of makeup, yet it looks very real. That required great technical and artistic perfection. I don't think most people realize just how much makeup is on Max's face. Max is really only about 44 years old. I tried to use the same technique to age Max that I used on Marlon Brando in THE GODFATHER. Marlon had a simple makeup really. He didn't want anything elaborate, so what we worked out was a liquid latex formula that you stipple onto the face with a sponge, then stretch the skin and dry it with a hair dryer. What that does is lengthen the skin and makes it leathery, so that when you let it go, it breaks into a bunch of little wrinkles. If you do it a certain way, you get wrinkles that are really natural. It worked fine on Marlon, who was about the same age as Max, but on Max it just wasn't sufficient. I had to make appliances which virtually covered the entire sides of his face, his upper lip, his chin and the wattle over the Adam's apple, that little area over the neck. The rest—the eyes, the back and sides of the neck—was done with "old-age stipple." Also, his hands were done with a special latex stipple formula.

Incidentally, you had asked me before about innovations, it suddenly occurs to me that one was that I worked out new ageing formulas of the latex materials that gave a much better effect and didn't come off as easily as they usually do. That is the problem with these things, they tend to come loose and peel when a person perspires underneath it. I had a lot of trouble with Marlon's for that reason. I was even able to invent some formulas that stood up in Iraq where temperatures were up to 115° in the shade. They were virtually waterproof. On that subject I'll add one more thing—almost every color and material used was something that I had to mix up from various colors and materials to make it suitable for what we were doing. So I now have boxes and boxes of jars of all these odd things. Black and blue colors, I have dozens of them (laughter)...

CFQ: Some people have called THE EXORCIST a jinxed film, linking the subject matter to certain incidents during filming, such as the death of Jack MacGowran, the delays, the fire on the set, etc. Do you feel this at all?

SMITH: No, no, I don't think so. On every film there are bad things that happen. The first film I ever worked on I lost a finger. On LITTLE BIG MAN, one of the actors died right in the middle of shooting and had to be replaced by a double. I've known people to break legs, lose eyes, do all kinds of things while working on films.

CFQ: Of course, but this has been blown all out of proportion on this film.

SMITH: Oh, it's incredible. It makes good copy. There are a lot of funny stories about the film. I think the loss of the Pazuzu statue, which turned up in Hong Kong, is amusing. The big statue which is shown in Iraq was made here in New York and shipped over along with a lot of other stuff via air freight. It was supposed to be taken off at Bagdad Airport and trucked up to our location. The truck arrived with everything else, but no statue. I mean, how can you lose a 6-foot statue? It seemed like the demon had taken off by himself—it was really great! And, of course, how

odd that they found it in Hong Kong. There was a logical explanation. It had been packed in the wrong compartment of the cargo plane because there wasn't room in the correct one. By the plane's route, it wound up in Hong Kong, and when they got there and still had a package, they took it off there.

One other story that I like also involved the statue. When they finally got it in position for shooting, Billy Friedkin wanted hawks to fly overhead. They brought hawks down from England at great expense, but they wouldn't fly in the hot weather, so that plan was abandoned. But they didn't give up. The production manager went to a little native village and got a couple of dead lambs and stuck them up by the statue on the mountain hoping to draw vultures, or something. No vultures came, but what happened was that the villagers began talking about this strange old man from America who had come to Hatra—the name of the ancient city there—brought his own statue and was making animal sacrifices to his own God!

CFQ: Friedkin has indicated that everyone working on the film became very tightly-knit—he used the term "spiritual community" in his interview at the AFL. Did you feel any of this?

SMITH: Most film crews, at least ones that I've worked on, are composed of a lot of really hard-working people. There's a certain solidarity among most members of crews. They are very professional people, and they all pull together. There's always a couple of people who don't, but that's just the way it is. On THE EXORCIST there was a particularly good crew, certainly. They were all top people, but I hesitate to say there was any "spiritual" (laughs) togetherness here. We had a very challenging job, and we all worked at it. I look back on it fondly because I had more time on it to experiment and develop things than I've ever had on any other film, and that's always marvelous. I would love to do something like that again, to work with Friedkin again. When it was all over, I would say that it was kind of like a trial by fire, and the relationships that were formed had certainly been tested by some of the most difficult and aggravating conditions. There were a couple of times where the conditions were such that I wanted to quit and did virtually tender my resignation.

CFQ: Was this frustration with the work?

SMITH: I don't really want to get into it. Let's just say that there were a couple of phases of the operation which were exceedingly trying. But we did get over them. Not everything went smoothly, by any means. We had some very rough spots, but we all weathered them and it came out well. It was finally very gratifying, and relationships that may have been rocky at one point were good at the end.

CFQ: You mentioned having seen THE EXORCIST only once. What was your opinion of it?

SMITH: I saw it at a private screening just before its release. I thought it was marvelous. I had seen some of it when Billy was editing it, while I was working on GODFATHER II in California. I'd run over and visit him sometimes. I remember when I saw the masturbation scene. They finally finished putting it together and they ran the whole scene, which only runs a minute or so. And even though I knew everything that was in it, I sat there and the chills went up and down my spine. I remember thinking at the time, "This is really going to do it. This is really going to be fantastic."

CFQ: Do you prefer doing horror films rather than, say, what you're doing now on GODFATHER II?

SMITH: No. GODFATHER II has nothing really extensive of any sort. It's a lot of little things. The only thing at all complicated was a throat-cut I had to do in which the throat continues to bleed, to spurt blood, and that was tricky. The film is entirely different from THE EXORCIST because there was no preparation involved for me. We're winging it as we go along. Whatever effect is needed I have to try to cook something up on the job. It's not as convenient a way to work.

CFQ: Some people—particularly Catholics—feel THE EXORCIST is obscene. Do you agree?

SMITH: No. I don't think it is obscene. It is a matter of personal opinion I guess.

CFQ