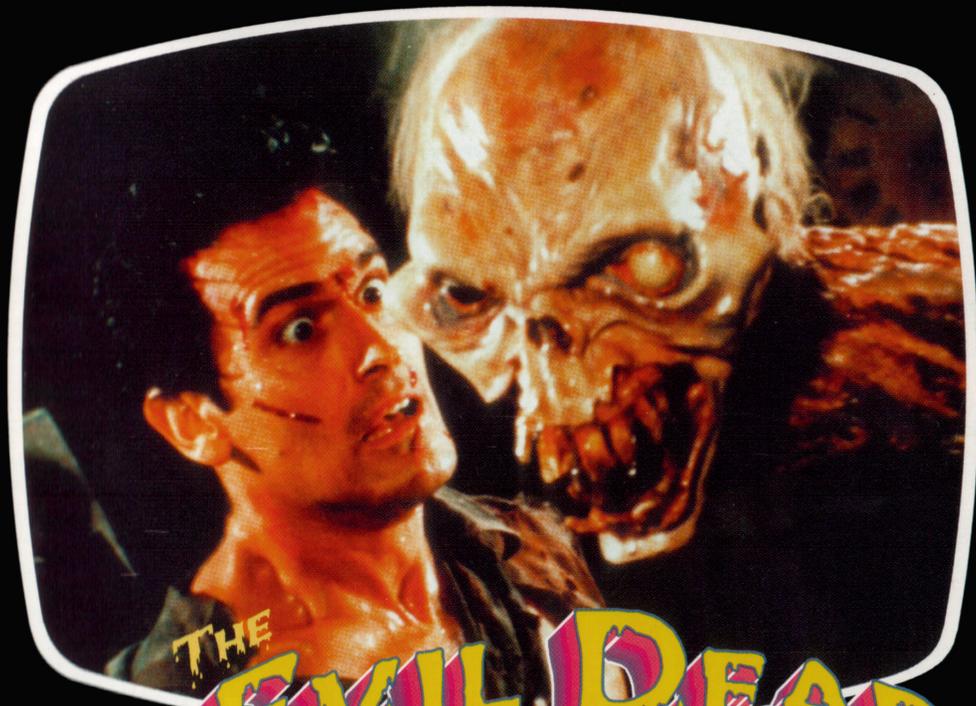


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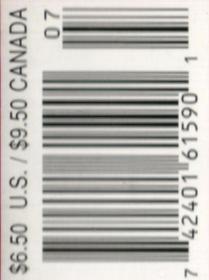


THE **EVIL DEAD TRILOGY**

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—ANONYMOUS

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HOT COFFEE AND COLD BLOOD

THE MAKING OF THE EVIL DEAD

BY BILL WARREN



The following is an edited excerpt from an unpublished book, which means it hardly exists at all.

Several years ago, Rob Tapert and Sam Raimi, two of the nicest goremeisters you'd ever want to meet, approached me to write *THE EVIL DEAD COMPANION*, a making-of history of the three Evil Dead movies: **THE EVIL DEAD** (1983), **EVIL DEAD 2: DEAD BY DAWN** (1987) and **ARMY OF DARKNESS** (1993). The emphasis was always intended to be on the first film in the series, because the story of its production—which follows—is much more interesting than the stories of the other two. The first was made by college students who'd never even been on a movie set, much less actually made a whole entire real movie. The second two were made by hardened veterans of the movie wars. Same guys, further down the line.

Tapert, Raimi, Bruce Campbell, Ellen Sandweiss and others were very helpful and forthcoming during the writing of the book, Bruce in particular; he acted out not only scenes from the movies, but scenes from the making of the movies. Working with these people was a genuine pleasure.

THE EVIL DEAD COMPANION was written for a particular line of books planned by a particular publisher (Dell) who "dropped" that line while the book was being written. I fondly hope that it will still find a publisher willing to take it on. —BW

THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY with real movie equipment, real film stock, real actors, and a real script—although it was only 66 pages long. They didn't know that, on the average, movie scripts are figured at about a page a minute.

Most people interested in a particular movie want to read anecdotes about the making of it, and as producer Rob Tapert says, with **THE EVIL DEAD**—filmed under the working title **BOOK OF THE DEAD**—"the thing is one long anecdote." Sam Raimi and Rob rode down to Tennessee together in a U-Haul truck. "It was kind of a bummer," Sam recalls, "because the truck was governed at 55 mph—it wouldn't go any faster than that, and going up hills, it would go like 35. It was unbelievable, a journey that lasted forever." On the way, naturally, they talked; Tapert is still impressed by how Sam outlined an especially striking scene during the trip; he knew Sam was good—but he wasn't expecting this. "It was fascinating for me, I'll tell you," Tapert recalls. "It was maybe a twelve-hour drive, but there was at least an hour of him explaining how he was going to do it, and I thought it was a great idea."

It's the sequence in which Ash chains Linda's body to a workbench, intending to dismember her with a chain saw. The scene is shot in an unusually

aggressive, spare style: there are closeups of objects, chains, hands, light bulbs, etc., with one sharp sound matched to the image. The cutting is very quick, with all extraneous action removed. There's nothing remotely like it in any of the Super-8 movies Raimi made, and very few other scenes like it in any movie prior to **THE EVIL DEAD**.

"I had been studying time cuts," Raimi explains, "which are jumps forward in time in movies. The most famous, and most extreme, example is the cut in **2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY** from the bone the ape tosses to the satellite in orbit around Earth, thousands of years later. I was trying to come up with a stylistic approach to the scene where Bruce feels that he must destroy this demon that resides inside the woman he loves. I really wanted to present it like a juggernaut, he's going to do it, he's going to do it—and then he can't, because he realizes that he loves her.

"In the truck, I thought about this, and felt that I'd do a sequence of cuts in which there would be one, two or three second cuts, each developing on the previous, leading us to believe that Ash was going to destroy the woman he loves." The sequence is striking, and has the exact effect that Raimi was aiming for: we're pulled through the sequence by the scruff of the neck, our certainty building with each cut that we're about to see a man hack his beloved to bloody chunks with a roaring chain saw—only to be brought up short, in sympathetic sorrow, when he weeps into his hands instead, unable to go through with it. Raimi uses

◀ Bruce Campbell and Ellen Sandweiss in a publicity shot for **THE EVIL DEAD**.



Swamped on location: Rob Tapert, Steve Porter, Sam Raimi, Tim Philo and Josh Becker. "We were kneeling to make the water look deeper," Sam confesses.

similar sequences in **EVIL DEAD 2** and **ARMY OF DARKNESS**, but the effect is very different; both of these sequences end with a satisfied Ash staring at a new mechanical appendage, and murmuring "Groovy."

Tapert was impressed by Raimi's improvisation in the truck, but even more impressed, if that's the word, to discover that the cabin, located for them by the Tennessee Film Commission, was not available after all. "The owners had got cold feet and pulled out," Campbell says. "So here we were with everybody sitting around, and we had to go on this desperate search. We hooked up with a local guy named Gary Holt; his famous phrase was, 'Now here's the deal I've worked out...'"

Holt was very useful. "He was a local hustler," Campbell goes on, "a Vietnam veteran with big rings on his fingers, and oh man, was he wired into Morristown, Tennessee. He got into early dwarf-tossing in bars around there, with this black dwarf named Percy Ray, who had a Mohawk. Holt had been a chauffeur, too; his big boast was that he drove Elvis around a couple of times. He said, 'I ain't queer or nothin', but he had a magnetism.' Gary had produced a record in Nashville, which he played for us." This regional wonder was so useful that he wound up with the credit of "assistant producer" on **THE EVIL DEAD**.

Holt found a huge, rambling old house that was perfect for the entire company to stay in. After a few days, they found a cabin that they could use as the location for the movie. Of course, the cabin did have a few problems, as Rob explains. "It was completely overgrown, and cows had free run of the place; there was four inches of cow manure on all the floors. It was small, confined, and had low ceilings."

And other potential drawbacks. Unlike the first cabin they'd chosen, the new one was, well, haunted. The Tennessee Film Commission told them the cabin had been built around the time of the Civil War, and as its builder was placing the final brick on his chimney, he was struck by lightning and killed. "Apparently," Raimi recalls, "this cabin is in the center of a valley that is surrounded by mountains of ore. Basically it draws a lot of lightning to this area."

"When we got there," he goes on, "we saw that the top brick was still missing from the chimney, as though it had never been placed there. And then as we started meeting the locals, we learned more about it. After the fellow died, the place was considered haunted, and no one stayed there for something like 40 years. Around 1925, a family that was very poor didn't care about the haunted house story any more, and three generations of women, a

mother, her daughter, and the grandmother, moved in because they had no place else to go.

"The first night they were in this place, the little girl woke up to another lightning storm and ran screaming into her mother's room, and then her grandmother's; by coincidence, both had died of natural causes the same night. So this little girl ran screaming out into the rain; she was found at a nearby farmhouse about half a day later, in a state of shock; she never really recovered from that. The family there raised her. And that was the whole story." Well, almost the whole story.

There was a lightning storm while they were shooting the picture. "It was very intense," Raimi remembers, "much more intense than any I'd seen before, with very loud booming lightning bolts coming a little too close for my comfort. This pickup drives up this one-mile mud road to the cabin, and the people ask, 'Have you seen Abigail?' We ask, 'Who's that?' They explained that she was the daughter who'd run off years before, the one who had found both her mother and grandmother dead in the cabin the same night. She was somewhere around 60 years old. They told us she got kind of confused during thunderstorms, and would wander off into the woods, returning to the cabin, calling for her mother and grandmother. They didn't find her all the time we were there. After we left, the cabin was struck by lightning and burned to the ground." Whoooooeeeee.

Time and winter were pressing upon the plucky little band, and they went with the haunted cabin for want of anything better. But of course, there was all that cow flop on the floor, and a few other minor matters. Sam, cameraman Tim Philo and some of the crew went off to shoot the scenes of the car and the truck driving in the Tennessee mountains, while the rest of the **BOOK OF THE DEAD** bunch began shoveling cow poop.

Campbell recalls, "We worked out a deal with the owners that we would leave it no worse than we found it, which even if we destroyed the place would have been no real change. It had a power box but no power, no running water, it was just an abandoned cabin in a beautiful hollow. But it was a really cool area, very convenient."

"We blazed a new road because it was all overgrown, ran power in there, took out all the ceilings in the main room, and tore out the middle wall. (In **EVIL DEAD 2**, when they recreated the cabin, they built it with half the room made of slatted wood, half with plaster, just as in the original cabin. The two rooms we made into one had been done differently; the production designer for the sequel picked up on that detail probably without realizing what it meant.)

"We had to tear out the ceilings because we needed to light from above. We hung the lights. After we scraped all the cow manure off, we found beautiful tongue-and-groove flooring. The first week or ten days there we spent just getting the cabin ready. We brought down a guy named Steve Frankel, who could use tools; he could build anything. He built wood furniture for the cabin, he built the swing out front, he helped us trim off the front of the cabin. We had to build a trap door, and had to dig a cellar of sorts. We knew we could use the Tapert farmhouse in Marshall, Michigan to shoot the scenes set in the cellar, because it had a great dirt floor and rock walls all around."

Sam Raimi adds that the cows had broken down the door of the cabin, so that had to be replaced. The **BOOK OF THE DEAD** team was involved also in "repainting the walls, getting rid of bats' nests that were in there, etc. Then we brought in furniture from a local furniture place, antique stores and the like."

Whoever had free time devoted it to digging out the hole under the trap door in the floor of the cabin. Eventually, the task was done, with the help of those who'd been out shooting the drive-by shots of the car. "We were shooting the ride up to the cabin," Raimi says, "needlessly shooting and shooting and shooting the ride up to the cabin. We were stuck for like two weeks without a chance to go near the cabin; we had to keep shooting. I should have stopped shooting and worked on the cabin."

They did some good stuff soon after they arrived. Early in the movie, as the spell that awakes the demons of the forest is read, outside the cabin the ground cracks, smoke seeps out, and red light glares. This was one of the earliest scenes shot for the movie, and done much more cheaply and quickly than you might expect. First, it was a forced-perspective shot; that is, the cracking earth in the foreground is much nearer to the camera than it appears to be. The cracking was caused by a teeter-totter arrangement, and the red light and smoke were, well, red light and smoke seeping out of dirt and leaves on top of the teeterboard.

At the huge old house where they were staying, Sam prepared storyboards. Aware that, like his cast and crew, he was green at this moviemaking stuff, at least as far as feature films went, Raimi wanted clarity at all times. He drew stick-figure storyboards himself and mounted them on the refrigerator at their house for all to see. "They were basic illustrations," Raimi says, "starting with a head-to-toe of a figure, then the next picture would be just the two eyeballs. That would indicate a movie-in from head-to-toe on Bruce to just his eyes, but maybe what wouldn't be indicated in the storyboards was

that the camera would start on the ground, and move up to eye level as we move in. There are changes like that which would take place from my boards to the actual execution of the shot. They were very exacting, but there was still plenty of room for interpretation when I got there."

On the other hand, Tapert says, "When we got to the set we'd never do what was on the storyboards. But I think he had already developed the style that he stuck with, visually maximizing everything prior to shooting."

Sam was surprising everyone with his creativity, including long-time friend Bruce Campbell. "Sam showed more savvy during the making of **EVIL DEAD** than I had ever seen before. I didn't know where he was getting all this nonsense, but it was finally his chance to use every trick he had learned to that point, and he just kept laying it on. Everything became a tricky shot, and Tim Philo was up to it. We all kicked around a bunch of ideas how to shoot some stuff, and that's how we got the idea for the 'Shaky-Cam.' That's a two-by-four with a guy on either end to stabilize it, the camera in the middle; you could go over bushes and logs, it was an incredibly versatile thing." This was, of course, their improved replacement for the costly Steadicam.

They had chosen Tennessee over Michigan because it was further south, and therefore likely to be warmer. It turned out to be the coldest winter Tennessee had experienced in decades (and the warmest winter in Michigan). "It was freezing," Campbell recalls with a shudder, "and of course the cast had to pretend it was fall. We were running around without any winter coats on. We didn't get snow, but it was freezing cold." Between takes, the shuddering actors would be draped in blankets, but in front of the cameras, without long johns, they had to smile and pretend it was a balmy fall.

Tom Sullivan came along to do the makeup, having come aboard with **WITHIN THE WOODS**. "Once we had all the actors, the people that got possessed and stuff," Campbell recalls, "we had to get their legs molded, or their arms, or their heads, and these casts were made directly with plaster. I remember when they took a cast of the face of Betsy Baker, who played Linda, my girlfriend in the movie. They put Vaseline on her face, then poured plaster of Paris over it, which heats up as it hardens. We gave her a piece of paper to write on if necessary. And she kept writing 'getting very light-headed' as the plaster was heating up. When it came time to pull it off, we couldn't, because her

eyelashes were stuck in the plaster. We finally pulled it off, leaving her lashes stuck in the plaster and her face beet red."

Sullivan got a little too creative, in one sense. He wanted to make the sacrificial knife out of real chicken bones. Sullivan had set up shop in the laundry room of the rambling old house, and assembled the prop there. Later on, a horrible smell began wafting out of the room; they found a bag of rotting chicken bones left over from his making the knife (it turns up in the first two movies).

Campbell recalls the early production period as "some of the funniest nights. If I wasn't acting, I was a member of the crew. I just put the glasses back on, and put a coat over my bloody outfit, and moved lights around."

"I'd never worked so hard or so long in my life," Raimi remembers. "It got so cold there. After Tim Philo left and I had to operate the camera, be my own first assistant and load the cameras, et cetera, I also had to help blood up Bruce." They were using dyed Karo syrup for blood, and that stuff's very sticky. "My hands would be covered in syrup," Sam goes on, "and I'd realize, I gotta change the film magazine, I gotta change the lenses, so I would have to wash this blood off my hands. It was like 15 degrees in this place, and there was no heat. The only thing we had was the coffee maker, full of coffee, not water. So I had to pour hot coffee over my hands to get the blood off them, and to warm them up enough to be able to load the 16mm cameras. It was a very hard, physically difficult experience. We should have taken days off, we should have rested, but it got to the point where we'd work 18 hour days nonstop for, it seemed like, months."

Early in the production, jokes were possible, so at one point, when Campbell was so exhausted he was dozing, after finishing his scenes Rob and Sam told the confused Bruce that he had to go shoot the wood-chopping scene *right now*. Then, when he swung the axe, they'd impatiently interrupt, telling him he wasn't doing it just right. Eventually they allowed him to chop the wood—which he did diligently for 45 minutes until he became aware that Sam and Rob were falling down laughing; *there was no wood-chopping scene for Ash!* Still, Rob says, "We did keep that wood-chopping scene in the movie for the longest time."

Occasionally during shooting, when Campbell seemed a little lethargic, Rob and Sam would poke at him with sticks to arouse his actor's attention. (When Sam began production of **THE QUICK AND THE DEAD**, Campbell sent him a fax asking if he was going to poke Sharon Stone and Gene Hackman with sharp sticks to get them to act.) For his



Ash (Bruce Campbell) takes a chainsaw to possessed girlfriend Linda (Betsy Baker).

part, Campbell sprained his ankle charging down a hill while goofing off with the cast and crew, but had to walk normally in the scenes shot that day. And Josh Becker reveals that Bruce used a "big character builder" for some scenes in **THE EVIL DEAD**. "He would take one of those plastic bottles you use to spray water on house plants, and he'd shove it up his nose and spray like a pint of water up each nostril. This would really get him into character; once he did that, he didn't care what he did."

Becker is very admiring of Campbell's willingness to do just about anything as an actor, particularly for Sam Raimi. "Sam would ask him to climb up on a roof and jump off on his neck. Bruce would take a couple of minutes to get into character, then he'd do it. In character." He's convinced Campbell will eventually make a good producer. When they did the later Super-8 movie **STRYKER'S WAR**, "I'd get over to Bruce's house at six o'clock in the morning when we had a 7:30 call. Bruce had already been up for two hours washing all the uniforms and pressing them. He loves to make lists and break things down, and he's liked to do that from the very beginning."

In **FANGORIA #65**, Bruce Campbell told journalist Will Murray that, as a movie actor, he was pretty green while shooting **BOOK OF THE DEAD**. "I didn't really know how to conduct myself 100%, how big or how little to be... If the camera's really

close, I had to learn to just use my eyes. If it's a long shot, then I can go crazy. I also had to learn that if we shot the opening scene and the final scene on the first day, I had to try to imagine everything in between. So it's all like a puzzle. For example, if we're shooting something where I'm being chased by this evil entity, I have to remember a scene I shot a week ago and compare it with what I was doing so that it will match."

Despite his work in theater in Detroit, Campbell told Murray, "I don't have any formal training, and I'm sure many people will say it's obvious. You get tons of theory in school. You know: 'Lie on the stage and fry like a piece of bacon.' I learned more from Sam looking through the camera and saying, 'No, cheek one inch up, nose two inches over. Now go back and land in that position.' To me, that's been as good a training as anything."

Not only did making **BOOK OF THE DEAD** provide Bruce with good experience as an actor, it cemented a relationship. Until they began production, Rob Tapert regarded Bruce Campbell as just a friend of Sam's, "but we spent day after day for weeks together in the summer before we began production, and Bruce and I went to a lot of investor meetings together, doing this stuff."

"Bruce was living in some shabby basement apartment somewhere smoking clove cigarettes"—Campbell has now given up smoking anything—



Ash's Deadite sister Cheryl (Ellen Sandweiss) beckons from the trapdoor cellar.

"and I remember endless times of him and I looking up VARIETY's lists of rental champs." This period, plus the incredible efforts Bruce went to on *BOOK OF THE DEAD* firmed up their relationship as friends, and as working partners. When you go through the fires together like this, you usually emerge friends. And that happened to Tapert and Campbell.

About the shooting, Campbell says, "the cabin was slowly being destroyed. Here we were using Karo syrup-based blood, tons of it, and the floor was getting horribly sticky. So we'd take ashes from the fireplace to put on the floor to get rid of the stickiness, so the floor was turning from brown to this sort of gray color."

Then there was the night the power tools disappeared. They were shooting nights and staggering back to the big old house to sleep when the sun came up. Apparently some locals felt this meant the stuff they left behind was fair game. "When we came back one morning," Bruce says, "all the power tools were gone, but they didn't touch a \$20,000 Arriflex camera, a \$5,000 Nagra [sound recording gadget]—these had no value to these people. We had seen guys up on the hills at night, just squatting, watching us. Once, I was carrying groceries down to the cabin one morning, both arms full, and a guy with this long red beard and a hunter's

outfit on, bandoleer of shotgun shells across his chest, was coming from the direction of the cabin. What do you say? I just said, 'Good morning,' and he said 'Mornin',' and kept going. We did get a taste of the South."

Sometimes the taste was pretty colorful, as in learning how to tell good moonshine from bad moonshine, a lesson that has stayed with Campbell to this day. The way you tell the difference is simple: you set the stuff on fire. "You pour a little into the lid of the Mason jar, and light it; if it's a soft blue flame, that's good. If it's an orange flame, it's been distilled in a car radiator, so you better watch out. Also, the size of the bubbles in the stuff was an indicator. If you had tiny bubbles, no troubles. We did get drunk on moonshine a couple of nights, but soon found that was a big mistake, so just before the camera rolled, we'd throw it into the fireplace. Pa-whoosh! Great blaze, and we'd start shooting." They kept the hooch in Styrofoam cups, which would slowly dissolve...

The cast worked hard, very hard. "We were shooting Ellen Sandweiss being chased through the woods by the force, and she's in that little nightgown, barefoot," Becker recalls. "We had the camera set up on plywood for a couple hundred feet, so we could follow her in the wheelchair with the

camera on it—there was no dolly on that picture. It's one of the coldest nights of the year, about 30 degrees, and we're shooting all night long. She's running and falling, and running and falling for hours. She got completely wound down, and as it was nearing dawn, she said, 'That's it, you don't get any more.' She was in tears, and just ran away.

"Rob and I are coiling up cables and pulling all the stuff out of there. And as we're doing this, we see blood all over the plywood; her feet had obviously been ripped to shreds by roots and stuff. And Rob says, 'I love it when actors give me that much!'"

Reminded of this, Rob's a little embarrassed. "I was kind of joking," he admits. "Taken out of context, it's kind of horrible, but at the moment, it seemed like a funny, appropriate thing." In any event, Ellen Sandweiss did give up acting, a career she had originally intended to pursue.

Sandweiss also recalls the making of the film. "I scraped the hell out of myself. But the makeup ordeal was also horrendous—because everything was so low-budget, everything was really an ordeal. We didn't quite have the right anything, whether it was the right makeup, or enough people to help with it. Those contacts in the eyes were really something," she says.

"There was a lot of pain involved with that movie. There was pain with makeup, there was pain with running through woods. In the scene where I fall back into the cellar, at one point I didn't quite make it through the hole, and slammed my head on something. I remember how strange it was, staying up all night and sleeping through the day. I felt like a real zombie—but I was 20 years old, and it was very exciting, and I was with friends."

She had taken time off from her theater studies at the University of Michigan to make *BOOK OF THE DEAD*, but claims it wasn't the making of the film that steered her away from acting. "I went on to get a master's degree in arts administration, and went into the business end of theater; I was manager of a symphony orchestra for a while in North Carolina. I lived in Asheville for ten years, and was involved in that career, and also got married and had children, so acting just didn't fit into my life."

Her only regret about making the movie was the scene in which she's raped by the vine. "I guess I didn't really realize what that was going to look like on the big screen; that's actually the reason I don't want my kids to see it."

While shooting was continuing in the cabin, Rob Tapert and others prepared the bridge. They had been given permission by the Tennessee road department to do whatever they wanted to a nearby abandoned bridge, as long as they paid for the

cutting and welding. The idea was to make the bridge's beams curl up like clutching fingers. This is what they did, but the shot doesn't really work. "Normally," Bruce admits, "we could have done it much cheaper with styrofoam beams, because we lit it so dark—we didn't have the lights to show that there was no bridge. It was actually this epic job that we did; we tore up the girders of the bridge, a hundred feet above the water; it was tremendously visually stunning, but you would never know it. It looks like it was shot in Sam's back yard."

They ran into problems they didn't expect, difficulties they weren't prepared for, and shooting dragged on. It reached the end of the six weeks they'd planned for, and still they weren't done. October stretched on into November, and then December.

In mid-December, a problem arose that they couldn't gallop enthusiastically over: they were running out of money and time. Becker says, "Five weeks into the picture, the sound man, who had been a film instructor of Bruce's at Wayne State University, quit, so I took over the sound recording." And in fact, the cast and crew had already stayed some time longer than they expected to; they had lives to return to back in Michigan. Becker recalls the night the big change came. "I was sitting on the steps in the house, and upstairs were Sam, Bruce and Rob. They're discussing how they can take this tiny amount of money they have and somehow spread it out so they can shoot for another couple of weeks.

"Meanwhile, downstairs, it's like the camera tilts down and I can see the cast and crew. They're all going, 'So you're driving the van? Can I ride back with you to Michigan?' 'No, no, you go in this car, and you'll go in that car.' And then you tilt back up, where Bruce, Sam and Rob are saying, 'Okay, I think we've got this worked out, we'll just offer them thirty dollars a week, and we can shoot for three more weeks.'

"They come downstairs, passing me on the step, and present their proposition. 'You'll get the rest from profits, because we need to shoot for three more weeks.' Everybody said, 'What? We're leaving tomorrow morning.' And they did. So, suddenly, five of us then shot for the next five weeks." Scenes were hastily rewritten, and some invented, to cover for the fact that of the actors, they now had only Bruce. Fake-Shemping went on like mad (Tapert appears in drag as Ellen's character).

Bruce says, "It was such a whirlwind, nonstop, twenty-hour-a-day sort of life, it's a big jumble of



HEL-LO! Abandoned by most of their actors, Raimi and Co. recruited "fake Shemps" like this to attack Bruce Campbell.

who exactly said what. At one point, Josh was bitching about something, and Sam turned around and said, 'Okay, what's the first bus we can put him on?' He is right about everyone leaving, but in a way, it didn't matter to us. We'd been abandoned [by the cast and others] on **IT'S MURDER** and every Super-8 movie we made, and that's the absolute truth."

The cast and crew left, leaving behind only Bruce, Sam, Rob, Josh and David Goodman, the cook and general gofer. "At that point," Becker says, "I took over the lighting as well as keeping the camera clean, and Sam took over shooting. So for the remainder of the shoot, I was doing both sound recording and lighting."

Tim Philo had brought the cameras with him, borrowed from Wayne State University; he had to take the equipment back with him when he left after the money ran out. According to Becker, "Sam said, 'You can't take the Arriflex BL; I can't shoot the rest of this movie with the Arri S—you know, the little one. But Tim said he couldn't leave it behind. Now this is Sam Raimi's logic; I love this. He goes, 'Tell you what, Tim. Leave the Arri BL, we won't use it. But what if the Arri S breaks? Then I don't have a camera; you leave the Arri BL, and we won't use it, because the Arri S isn't going to break, but I need a backup camera. Tim finally agrees,

gets in his car and drives away. His car is not out of sight before Sam turns to me and says, 'Okay, load the BL.'"

Sam just kept going and going. "He pretty much tested all of us on just what our limits of stamina were," says Becker. "Every day was 18-20 hours on that film. He just loved to keep going and keep going; Sam has more energy than anyone else. Once, as we were getting near the end of this thing, and he felt like he had to get everything he could down there in Tennessee before we left, which was reasonable, we shot for 62 hours straight."

While they were shooting, Becker says, "we would send all the footage to Du-Art, and would get the footage back twice a week, 3-4,000 feet of film at a time. We'd set up these giant reels of 16mm, and we'd put them on the projector, and we'd turn them on to watch them—and then everybody would fall asleep. We'd all be awakened by the flap-flap-flap of the tail of the film hitting the projector housing. We never did watch dailies down there because we fell asleep during every one of them."

"A lot got cut from the script when everyone went home," Rob Tapert admits, "but there's more tension in Bruce being driven slowly insane from being trapped in the cabin, with the girl in the cellar and the other guy dying on the couch, and him being totally unable to do anything. I bet we cut

10m of that story subplot. It was all character shit, of him going crazy, so it was much more. We shot a lot of that, but cut it out."

The defection of the cast required Rob and Josh to double occasionally for dead bodies, or Deadites banging at the door, seen from behind. As for Sam Raimi, Bruce says, "I think he pretty much had it instilled in him, okay, if you're going to be a filmmaker, then you better shine, you better do it different than everybody else. And after the others left, he started coming up with entire new sequences. The whole sequence of me alone in the cabin where everything is shot at a 45° angle he just came up with one night." Because he *had* to.

Becker claims, "Anything I say about this movie will get Sam mad, but that's life. There was no ending on the script; when we got down there, nobody knew how the story ended. Rob kept asking Sam how it ended, and Sam would say, 'I don't know, but I do know I need a crane.' So Rob rented a cherry-picker crane, which sat there for weeks. Rob would say, 'I'm paying \$50 or \$75 a day for this thing—what's the end of the movie?' Sam kept saying he'd figure it out.

"So one day, I'm sitting there, and I'm thinking, and thinking, and I realized I knew what the end of the film should be. The camera starts on a leaf, pans to the back door of the cabin, comes down through the back door, which flies open, goes through the next door, which comes flat down, goes out through the front door, which blows out in pieces, and goes right into Bruce's mouth. I storyboarded it and showed Sam, and he said, 'I don't think so.' Oh. Okay.

"So the cherry picker sits there, and the cherry picker sits there. Finally, we shot everything we can shoot, and Rob insists that we had to shoot some kind of ending as long as we're down there. Sam says he still doesn't have an ending, but Rob says, 'Well, there's that ending Josh came up with.' Sam is very reluctant to use anyone else's ideas, since it's his movie, but Rob forced him: 'We've got to shoot something. That doesn't mean you have to use it.' "So Sam operated camera on it, and I'm up in the rafters kicking that second door down. I'm the one who cut the front door to pieces so it would blow out, so the camera could go through there and hit Bruce. I basically set the whole thing up, because I thought it up, it was my shot, and I really wanted it to work right. It's the end of the movie; they never thought of an ending they liked better."

As for the idle cherry-picker crane, it was used

when Ash carries Linda's body out for burial. "There's one crane up, and one crane down," according to Josh Becker. However, Sam Raimi says that they did use the crane for more shots that didn't end up in the movie. At one point, he was up in the crane to shoot a few scenes of the bridge being altered, and he fell asleep with the camera running. After a while, people began to wonder where the heck Sam was, until someone thought to bring the crane down again.

Just when things couldn't get worse, they did. The **BOOK OF THE DEAD** bunch was evicted from the house where they had been staying, because the owner was moving in a lot of brass beds: he turned it into a warehouse. With nowhere else to go, the cast and crew stayed in the cabin where they were shooting. "That was horrible," sighs Tapert. "One night, either I drank a cup of coffee or I was wired and couldn't go to sleep. Everyone else did, and slept for eight hours. I couldn't fall asleep to save my life, I just couldn't. I got up and wandered around.

"When they got up, we had to put a ceiling back in this place; being the math one, I had figured it all out on paper. We need this many sheets of plywood, and this is how they all go in, and here's what we have to do. They were clearing everything out, while I fell asleep standing up in a mud puddle, and just toppled over. Somebody found me and they put me on the couch, where I fell asleep again, and they couldn't wake me up. They kept asking, 'How many sheets of plywood? Ah, yeah, plywood, I'd think, and tell them something. They got the plywood, but then couldn't get me to stay awake long enough to tell them how it all fit in. But eventually it got figured out.

"Then we did a couple of really crazy things. I was wide awake and refreshed from two hours of sleep, so we went out back and lit the biggest bonfire you've ever seen in your life. We were catching the woods on fire." Bruce remembers the fire, too. "It was really stupid. It was 20 feet around. We had to make dive bombing runs past it to throw stuff on it, because it was so hot we couldn't get close. We were so lame."

Finally, they buried a time capsule in the area they'd dug out beneath the trap door. It contained "messages, notes, little trinkets from the film, stuff like that," Bruce explains. And then, at last, says Rob, "Bruce and I took a shotgun and a hundred shells and blew up every single prop in the house. We went crazy."

But crazy or not, they had finished shooting in Tennessee.

The Epic Horror of the EVIL DEAD Trilogy: From the Backwoods of Tennessee to Lord Arthur's Court

By Rebecca and Sam Umland



The chief enemy of creativity is "good" taste.

—Pablo Picasso

PERHAPS the most crucial moment in the careers of director Sam Raimi and his star Bruce Campbell occurred at 68m 29s into **THE EVIL DEAD** (CAV frames 22926-22943 on Side 2 of the Cineasta LD). It is at this moment they discovered the film they really wanted to make—which was not, precisely, **THE EVIL DEAD**.

Ash (Campbell) has just driven the possessed Cheryl out of the front door of the cabin. He turns, leans against the door and, before he has time to relax, in a moment of sudden insight, mutters to himself, "The back door," and runs through the cabin to secure the rear entrance. Henceforth, the imagery becomes decidedly more experimental and daring (e.g., Ash in the cellar pausing in front of the projector screen), and the film ceases merely to shock. As we shall see, **THE EVIL DEAD** shows the influence of the avant-garde or "experimental" (non-narrative) film, although it is most certainly steeped in a knowledge of the horror genre as well.

More importantly, the significance of this scene is that the film is turned over, as it were, to Bruce Campbell. Had this crucial moment not occurred, there would be no further Evil Dead films—assuming, of course, that they are legitimately connected at all. Without prior knowledge, how could one connect **THE EVIL DEAD** to **ARMY OF DARKNESS**—the latter released a decade after the former—beyond the most contingent associations? If one were to remove Bruce Campbell from this trilogy of films, there is no "glue" to hold them together, and frankly, no reason for them to be. He is the trilogy; without him, there is nothing left, no center. While we do not want to slight the artistic contributions of others involved—most certainly not the films' director and consistent co-writer, Sam Raimi—it seems to us a rather banal commonplace that the films comprising the Evil Dead trilogy are vehicles for Bruce Campbell, who was not only their star, but an executive producer on all three films as well.

Certainly there would be no **EVIL DEAD 2: DEAD BY DAWN**. (We are deferring to the popularly used Arabic numeral "2" along with the subtitle used in publicity materials for the film, although the film's

title sequence uses the Roman numeral "II" without a subtitle.) By the way, we shall argue that **EVIL DEAD 2** is neither a sequel nor a remake of **THE EVIL DEAD**, although it certainly shares a family resemblance. For without **EVIL DEAD 2**, it is uncertain what the fortunes of **THE EVIL DEAD**—and hence, Raimi and Campbell, among others—would have been. Perhaps because it created a stir at the 1982 Cannes Film Festival, it was embraced by FANGORIA with a cover story in 1983. The endorsement of the film by Stephen King, used as the jacket blurb on the HBO/Cannon video release ("The most ferociously original horror film...") also bolstered its growing cult reputation.

Still, early estimates of the film were mixed. For instance, an early '80s guerilla publication, Chas. Balun's **THE CONNOISSEUR'S GUIDE TO THE CONTEMPORARY HORROR FILM** (Westminster CA, 1983, 2nd printing) rated it above average, yet argued that the popular estimate of the film was "grossly overrated." Balun writes that during his first viewing of the film, he found himself "muttering once or twice... 'Boy, is this some stupid shit.'" However, we believe that Balun's comment about **THE EVIL DEAD** being "stupid" in fact supports our thesis that it is a film which discovered itself during its making.

Yet, as we observed in our review of **EVIL DEAD 2: DEAD BY DAWN** [VW 45:51-53], for its wildly imaginative and unpredictable plot, visual flair and giddy inventiveness, **EVIL DEAD 2** is a much stronger film than its predecessor. The film established Sam Raimi and Bruce Campbell as major talents, in addition to launching into the major leagues the production company of Renaissance Pictures. Simultaneously, it launched the careers of producer Robert Tapert (**XENA, THE WARRIOR PRINCESS**), of Peter Deming—cinematographer for the David Lynch-directed **HOTEL ROOM** episodes (HBO, 1993) and **LOST HIGHWAY** (1997)—and special make-up effects supervisor Greg Nicotero, who subsequently co-founded the KNB (Kurtzman, Nicotero, and Berger) EFX Group (**FROM DUSK TILL DAWN**, 1996). Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that **THE EVIL DEAD**'s "cult" film status was virtually instantaneous, as it never really made the slow transition from drive-in gorefest to art house film—as did, for instance, **THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE**.¹

◀ Ellen Sandweiss in the classic promotional image of 1980's horror: **THE EVIL DEAD**.

THE EVIL DEAD

1982, HBO/Cannon Video

#TVB 1979 (VHS), OP, 85m 6s

Cineasta #STLI-3001 (LD) (Japan), D/+, ¥3,800

We have had access to several source materials for this article. For **THE EVIL DEAD**, we used the most commonly available edition, the old HBO/Cannon video cassette, still available in rental stores, which was struck from a New Line Cinema release print. A pan&scan Japanese LD was released in 1986 (#SF078-5044) and, as we understand it, a German PAL LD release two or three years ago, neither of which we have had the opportunity to screen.² The best evidence indicates that **THE EVIL DEAD** is not presently available on laserdisc except from Japan (Cineasta #STLI-3001, CLV/CAV), and despite the fact that it is a P&S transfer, the crispness of the image, with its accurate hues and improved sound, is so good as to make the venerable HBO/Cannon Video edition virtually unwatchable. The Cineasta laserdisc provides fourteen chapter stops, allotting, appropriately, thirteen—serviceable, though skimpy—to the film, reserving the first chapter to a 2m 2s trailer, probably the original. The Side 1 break occurs at 58:17, 55m 53s into the film, at the moment when Ash is just about to open the trap door to the cellar, having been summoned by his possessed sister Cheryl (who refers to him as Ashley). Our observations are based upon these source materials.

Legend has it that Raimi and Campbell, then students at Michigan State University, used a 16mm short, titled **WITHIN THE WOODS** (ca. 1979), to entice investors into contributing the money that was used to finance the independent feature eventually known as **THE EVIL DEAD**. **THE EVIL DEAD** seems to be a story about the transgression of a taboo, in this case, a mere mortal's desire to usurp the power of the resurrection of the dead, which, as the books of Daniel and Revelation reveal, is God's sovereign power. For his attempt to seize this life-giving power for himself, the mortal must suffer the consequences: the Frankenstein monster stalks the countryside, runs amok, and commits mayhem. In the film, five youngsters (they seem too old to be teenagers), consisting of Ashley, or "Ash" (Campbell), his girl friend Linda (Betsy Baker), his sister Cheryl (Ellen Sandweiss), along with his friend Scotty (Hal Delrich) and Hal's girl friend Shelly (Sarah York), have arranged for a relaxing weekend at a remote cabin somewhere in the remote Tennessee backwoods. Sometime earlier, before their arrival, at this same cabin, unbeknownst to

them, a professor of the occult (whose voice is that of Bob Dorian, later to become a host on AMC, American Movie Classics) had secluded himself and his wife in order to study and translate an ancient Sumerian text, the (phonetically transcribed) "*Morturum Demonto*" or "Book of the Dead." (It is not, at this point, referred to as the *Necronomicon Ex Mortis*, as it would be in the subsequent films.) Passages recited from this book had been recorded onto a tape recorder by the professor, which is discovered by Scotty and Ash soon after their arrival. Upon playing back these tape-recorded passages, Ash unwittingly unleashes into the woods the Evil Force(s) from another world, which begin to possess each member of the group in turn. But what have Ash and the others done to deserve such punishment, merely by playing back the tape recorder? The legend of the Sorcerer's Apprentice, in which the young adept is unable to reverse his master's spell, is an unavoidable association, but this observation is more accurately said of **EVIL DEAD 2** than **THE EVIL DEAD**: the utterly unpredictable, stunning conclusion of **EVIL DEAD 2** is the proper (although giddy) result. But what then happens to this theme in **THE EVIL DEAD**? Unhappily, it remains undeveloped and the answer remains undisclosed.

In addition to the influence of the Cthulu Mythos stories of H.P. Lovecraft, the most obvious influences on **THE EVIL DEAD** consist of an inventory of highly visible horror films of the 1960s and '70s, all of which pushed the genre's aesthetics toward what George A. Romero dubbed the "splatter film." A minimal splatterography³ would include the once-reviled **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**, 1968 (demonic resurrection, mass murder elements), **THE EXORCIST**, 1973 (demonic possession), **THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE**, 1974 (the demented, relentlessly violent assault on middle-class white kids), **HALLOWEEN**, 1978 (ditto), and the sf/horror hybrid, **ALIEN**, 1979 (backstory device, claustrophobic set). A not so obvious, non-splatter film influence, however, is George Pal's **THE TIME MACHINE** (1960), whose intimidating Morlocks seem the model for the atavistic, cannibalistic, glowing-eyed demons (endearingly termed "Fake Shemps" by Raimi after his love of *The Three Stooges*) of **THE EVIL DEAD**. The moment when Ash pulls the skull-knife from out of the back of the possessed Scotty seems to be a nod to the moment in Don Chaffey's **JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS** (1963), when Ray Harryhausen's giant automaton, Talos, is dispatched by draining him of icor, accomplished through pulling the plug, as it were, on his Achilles' Heel.



Bruce Campbell—the heart and soul of *The Evil Dead Trilogy*.

Having cited these films and influences, we wish to make clear that we are not suggesting that Sam Raimi is merely an imitator, or only derivative of other filmmakers. Rather, we are trying place him in a tradition that he has largely internalized, and it is likely that some of the influences we have mentioned were not even conscious at the time of filming. For instance, he may have borrowed the uncanny device of booming walls and doors from Robert Wise's **THE HAUNTING** (1963), but his originality lies in the way he adapts the device for his own purposes. Moreover, Raimi is more apt to distort the image by the use of an anamorphic lens during a close-up; he also employs canted framing much more than most directors, as well as low-angle shots. In addition, one of the characteristics of the Evil Dead trilogy is the predatory, prowling, subjective camera, which threatens to—and often, in fact, does—collide with objects appearing in its field. (In the **ARMY OF DARKNESS** script, discussed later, this technique is referred to as the "SAM-O-CAM.") The lens of the camera seems

as if it is being used like the head of a hammer, or mounted on the thin edge of a wedge.

Jonathan Rosenbaum, in the book **MIDNIGHT MOVIES** (Harper & Row, 1983) which he co-authored with J. Hoberman, observed about David Lynch's **ERASERHEAD** (1977), "It's a movie that one betrays as soon as one gives it a synopsis. It's not so much its development as its overall sameness and persistence that's so powerful" (p. 309). Precisely the same observation holds for **THE EVIL DEAD**: its power is not in its narrative (unlike **EVIL DEAD 2**) but in its relentless, ever-escalating violent imagery—although no image in it is stronger than the eye-slitting scene (for instance) in Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's experimental short, **Un Chien Andalou** (1928). To be sure, Raimi's and Campbell's ties to the avant-garde film movement are even more tenuous than Lynch's, but like avant-garde filmmakers, they produce, script, shoot, edit (and often act) in their own idiosyncratic and deeply personal films. We are not trying to make Raimi or Campbell into avant-gardists, or surrealists (perhaps true of Lynch), although they have imitated



A classic example of Raimi's hyperbolic visual style.

becomes an industrial boom. To be sure, these devices are utilized in **EVIL DEAD 2**: the ludicrously vast bridge spanning the chasm leading to a lone, out-of-the-way, dilapidated cabin, or the immensely large trunk Jake foolishly agrees to carry for Annie.

We have extracted the following dislocatable moments and images to illustrate our point. These do not comprise an exhaustive inventory, but represent those features we find to be the most interesting or memorable:

- 0m 18s The subjective camera ("SAM-O-CAM") moves across the lake and into the woods
- 1m 50s Near collision—a paranoid moment charged by coincidental alignment of unrelated actions
- 4m 00s The hyperbolic boom of the porch swing begins
- 8m 14s Sketching the wall clock, Cheryl finds she has an alien hand (31s)
- 13m 32s Exaggerated sound of dripping pipes (7s)
- 18m 37s Another coincidental alignment: Cheryl screaming as tree limb falls through window; paranoia increases
- 24m 34s SAM-O-CAM returns
- 36m 38s No. 2 pencil used as weapon
- 45m 32s Shelly's prolonged scream (34s)
- 60m 31s Workshed becomes defamiliarized (alien)
- 68m 26s "The back door"; film turned over to B.C.
- 69m 41s Pipe breaks, showering Ash in red fluid (blood?)
- 69m 51s Light bulb begins to fill with blood (?)
- 69m 55s Victrola turns on
- 70m 2s Projector turns on
- 72m Industrial boom of pendulum swing
- 72m 22s Film frame turns upside down
- 72m 46s Canted framing of doorway (one of many instances)
- 73m 43s Ash puts hand through mirror
- 76m 49s Skull knife removed from Scotty's back; icor drains out
- 77m 57s Ash begins to use locket to save himself

More moments could be identified. Despite all this, **THE EVIL DEAD** is an immature—albeit successful—film. In stark contrast to the two films that followed it, it runs out of ideas fast. Similar to the spaceship *Nostromo* in Ridley Scott's **ALIEN** (1979), the isolated cabin is nothing more than a gothic haunted house; like the plot in **ALIEN**, it is nothing more than a banal "Ten Little Indians" game of eradication, with the suspenseful question, "Who's going to survive?" sustaining the viewer's interest. Finally, it has a non-ending—after, as stated above, several interesting minutes of experimental imagery. Raimi had not yet integrated his use of the

dark side of Three Stooges slapstick, nor fully exploited his internalized knowledge of European psychodrama. **THE EVIL DEAD** was "splatterpunk" *avant le lettre*, but how could anyone have anticipated **EVIL DEAD 2**?⁴

EVIL DEAD 2: DEAD BY DAWN

1987, Vestron Video #5212 (VHS), OP, 83m 55s
 Elite Entertainment #EE3845 (LD),
 D/LB/MA/+, \$49.98
 Anchor Bay Entertainment #10320 (VHS),
 D/LB/+, \$14.98
 Cineasta #STLI-3021 (LD) (Japan), D, ¥4,700, 84m

Just so the point cannot be conveniently neglected, **EVIL DEAD 2** is neither a sequel nor a remake of **THE EVIL DEAD**.⁵ As we shall see, **EVIL DEAD 2** expands moments found in the earlier film, reinvents some, and omits still others. While this uncanny effect creates a certain family resemblance between the two films, it unfortunately creates an initial impression that **EVIL DEAD 2** is simply **THE EVIL DEAD** as it "should have been," or "was supposed to be" or perhaps represents certain promises of **THE EVIL DEAD** "fulfilled." But what if **THE EVIL DEAD** is a film that represents its makers discovering their own artistic or creative interests? What then do we do with its putative "sequel"? The fact is, while **EVIL DEAD 2** uses the earlier film as a point of departure, it is blithely unconcerned about maintaining narrative continuity or remaining consistent with the previous film. This, however, is not a fault with the film; on the contrary, it is a statement of artistic independence.

Any plot synopsis of **EVIL DEAD 2** will fail to convey its richness of invention, its unpredictable swerves, and its crazy-quilt patchwork, or sheer density, of allusions. It blends European psychodrama with Three Stooges slapstick, and mixes a knowledge of occult mythology with horror film spoofs. Ash (Campbell), seeking a quiet weekend in the country with his girl friend Linda (Denise Bixler), arrives at a secluded cabin where, earlier, Professor Knowby (John Peaks), an occult scientist, had been busy conducting research on an ancient book bound in human flesh, the *Necronomicon Ex Mortis*, "The Book of the Dead." Professor Knowby had recorded onto a tape recorder some of the "demon resurrection passages" from the *Necronomicon*, which had resulted in a horrific demise for himself and his wife, Henrietta (Lou Hancock). Curious about the tape recorder's presence in the cabin, Ash plays the tape on which Professor Knowby had recorded some of the incantations found in the *Necronomicon*, unwittingly

unleashing the evil demons from beyond once again. Meanwhile, the Knowbys' daughter, Annie (Sarah Berry) is travelling to the cabin with her boy friend Ed (Richard Domeier) to deliver some missing pages of the *Necronomicon*. When they discover that the bridge to the cabin is impassable, Annie and Ed enlist the help of two local yokels—Jake (Dan Hicks) and Bobbie Joe (Kassie Wesley)—to guide them through the unfamiliar terrain. This group arrives at the cabin in the midst of Ash's lone battle with the Evil Force(s), which by this time has become a game of psychological warfare. In a wonderfully ironic twist, the group members wrongly surmise that Ash is guilty of murdering Knowby and his wife. But where, one might ask, does it go from here?

Our sources for this article were the old Vestron Video full-frame video (#5212), still available in some rental shops. Vestron also released a pan&scan LD (IDVL #5212) early in 1988 with somewhat improved sound over the video edition, but the improved image is unremarkable by today's standards. By far the best and preferred version is the recently-released Elite Entertainment LD (#EE3845), although the Anchor Bay Entertainment (#10320) VHS release is quite serviceable, despite the fact that the letterboxed image in both is presented at 1.66:1 rather than 1.85:1. (Information on the jacket sleeves wrongly avers the latter). We also referred to the P&S Japanese LD (#STLI-3021) which, despite its extremely dark transfer, is interesting because its source was most likely a release print. It contains, unlike any other editions we have seen, the MPAA disclaimer at the beginning for R-rated pictures ("Warning: This film contains scenes which may be too intense for persons under the age of seventeen") before the Rosebud Releasing Corporation card, and also has the Rosebud Releasing card at the end of the film, absent in all other versions we've seen. Other than this slight variation, again, no variants of this film exist to our knowledge. The slight discrepancy in playing time we've noted between the old Vestron Video VHS version and the Japanese LD is due to the Rosebud Releasing card tagged on the end of the latter version. The Elite disc allots a generous 24 stops to the film, while the Japanese LD has only 13. The Japanese LD breaks at 42:44, 42m 14s into the picture, while Jake and Ash are kneeling on top of the trap door to the cellar, preventing the possessed Henrietta's escape. The Elite disc breaks at 56:50 on Side 1, at 55m 11s in the film, at a more felicitous moment, when Jake, holding the shotgun on Ash and Annie, utters the imperative: "Now Move!" The Elite LD also contains an



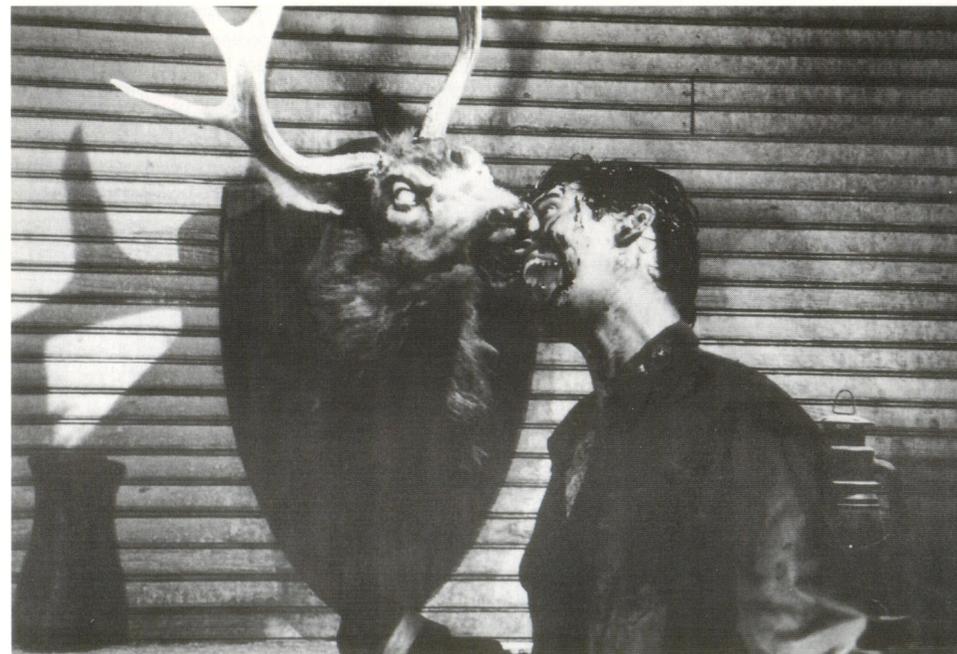
Sarah Berry meets a startling product of the KNB workshop in *EVIL DEAD 2: DEAD BY DAWN*.

amusing commentary on the analogue track by director Sam Raimi, star Bruce Campbell, co-writer Scott Spiegel, and special effects make-up supervisor Greg Nicotero, a 1m 30s trailer, and as an added feature a "making of" video diary, *BEHIND-THE-SCREAMS* (27m 35s).

EVIL DEAD 2 shares a certain family resemblance with its predecessor, but *THE EVIL DEAD* it is not. Indeed, in parodic fashion, it announces its independence from *THE EVIL DEAD* during a sequence that begins at 6m 29s, when the shot that concluded *THE EVIL DEAD* is reprised. The sequence expands on the first film's ending, in which the Evil Force (or the subjective camera, technically achieved by a camera mounted on the front of a motorcycle driven by Raimi—the "SAM-O-CAM") rushes into Ash's face as the film cuts to black. (Raimi's use of the subjective POV camera in the films may be a deliberate parody of John Carpenter's use of it in the opening moments of *HALLOWEEN*, where the POV turns out to be that of the evil Michael Myers.) In *EVIL DEAD 2*, the Evil Force rushes up into Ash's face—and propels him, spinning cruciform into the woods, until he collides with an immense tree and plummets head-

first into a puddle of water. Apparently possessed by this Evil Force, Ash is subsequently saved by the purifying effect of the sun, which exorcises the demon. However, beginning at 11m 28s, as Ash stands at the destroyed bridge and the sun begins to set, the Evil Force returns—beginning an extended sequence in which it again pursues Ash, chasing him through the woods and into the cabin. The clever Ash outsmarts it, though, by hiding down in the cellar. This 2m sequence ends at 13m 28s, effectively putting an end to the film's relationship—tenuous in any case—with *THE EVIL DEAD*, by mocking and deflating the original (he can actually *hide* from the Evil Force?).

It is important to note that it is only after this 13m 28s point, beginning at 13m 55s, that Annie and Ed are introduced—along with the missing pages of the *Necronomicon*. A crucial plot development, it begins the film's slow, mature employment of the legend of the Sorcerer's Apprentice. As the child of a professor of the occult, Annie, reluctantly, is the young adept, but is unable, finally, to reverse her master's spell. "For God's sake, how do you stop it?" Ash screams out. The answer is, alas, you can't.



You know that's gotta hurt! Ash learns not to nose around the hunting trophies in Prof. Knowby's cabin.

For convenience, we have provided a short checklist of features comparing and contrasting *THE EVIL DEAD* with *EVIL DEAD 2*. The list contains both plot and technical elements:

Feature	ED	ED2
Prologue (v.o.)	N	Y
Tape recorder	Y	Y
Flashback	N	Y
'73 Olds Delta 88	Y	Y
Book of the Dead	Y	Y
<i>Necronomicon</i>	N	Y
Ash	Y	Y
Axe	Y	Y
Bone knife	Y	Y
No. 2 Pencil	Y	N
Work shed	Y	Y
Chain saw prothesis	N	Y
Dancing Linda	N	Y
Laughing furniture	N	Y
Alien hand	Y	Y
Ash severs hand	N	Y
Crawling hand	N	Y
Timeslip	N	Y
Knights in armor	N	Y

Obviously this list is constructed so as to privilege the differences between the films, but even in its similarities specific features are deployed differently. Ash, i.e., Campbell, is given center stage in *EVIL DEAD 2*, and after his hand "goes bad," there is an extended sequence in which the hand assaults him by blows to his face and by smashing plates over his head, an inspired bit of slapstick comedy. Another instance is the bone knife, which has an essential role in *EVIL DEAD 2* (and is more ornately designed as well). It is used during a gruesomely funny moment when Annie mistakenly stabs Jake with it, thinking he's the possessed Ash, and later when the evil, crawling hand uses it to kill Annie before she can complete the incantation. Plot-wise, in an utterly unpredictable and stunning turn, Ash, along with his '73 Oldsmobile Delta 88, is drawn into a time portal—or experiences a timeslip—allowing the filmmakers to enter territory previously explored by the films based on or derived from Mark Twain's novel *A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT* (1889).



Ash survives, only to be transported to Medieval times at the end of *EVIL DEAD 2*.

ARMY OF DARKNESS (1993)

MCA/Universal #81288 (VHS),
HF/S/SS/CC, NSR, 80m 20s
MCA/Universal #41288 (LD), D/S/SS/CC, \$19.98
MCA/Universal #41603 (LD),
D/LB/S/SS/CC, \$19.98
Jei Wea #JWL-160 (LD) (Singapore),
D/S/SS, 119,90 DM, 96m 8s
Director's Cut (bootleg VHS), 96m
TV Version, 88m 25s

CAPTAIN SUPERMARKET: EVIL DEAD III

Towa Video #PILF-7265 (LD) (Japan), D/S/SS/+,
¥4700, 88m 28s

Improbably, **THE EVIL DEAD** series continued on, but the films began to get increasingly impatient, seemingly frustrated by the demands of running time that restricted the flow of inventive ideas. Each successive film tended to explore, expand on, and omit elements found in the previous one (or ones), as if, unsatisfied with the development of a previous sketch or comic bit, each one sought

in some way to parody the one preceding it. For instance, the *doppelgänger* motif of **EVIL DEAD 2**—Ash grabbing himself by the throat in front of the mirror—becomes, in **ARMY OF DARKNESS**, an inspired sequence in which Ash crashes into a mirror and a multitude of Lilliputian Ashs spring out of the individual fragments. The hand that Ash lops off in **EVIL DEAD 2** becomes the “Bad Ash” (i.e., “bad ass”) of **ARMY OF DARKNESS**. To be sure, **ARMY OF DARKNESS** contains parodies of and homages to other films: **THE MANSTER** (1961) during the windmill sequence, for instance, or the parody of the Grail quest in **INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE** (1989) when, in the graveyard, Ash is forced to decide which is the right *Necronomicon* among three choices. (Predictably, it takes him three tries before he gets the right one.)

ARMY OF DARKNESS completed filming in 1991 but was held up for release until 1993. Better than the Raimi-directed film that preceded it, the soulless **DARKMAN** (1990), for unaccountable reasons it has never been released in its original—and more compelling—cut. After substantial cuts and a period of post-production photography, it was released in a highly truncated version (80m

20s) with a re-shot ending. The MCA Universal editions contain the re-shot ending, in which Ash fights yet another Deadite at the conclusion, back at the S-Mart. (Was the S-Mart re-shoot a result of test audience dislike of the original ending?) As we shall see, this truncated version cut almost 16m from Raimi's original 96m cut. The MCA Universal video cassette slightly crops the original 1.85:1 aspect ratio, although the film is available in letterboxed (#41603) and full-frame (#41288) laserdiscs as well.

For a long while, the Towa Video (Japan) pan&scan LD (#PILF-7265) of **ARMY OF DARKNESS**, implausibly titled **CAPTAIN SUPERMARKET: EVIL DEAD III** (88m 28s), was the longest version available. It has an exceptionally crisp and colorful image, and contains footage and deleted scenes not available in the domestic release, and also has the advantage of including, as a bonus chapter, the original ending, in which Ash, after having taken one too many drops of the magic potion, ends up stranded in an apocalyptic future. Perhaps the saga would have ended here, with these two versions of the film popularly available. In 1997, however, the Sci-Fi and USA Network Channels premiered a *third* version (88m 25s), containing footage not found in either the MCA releases, the Towa Video LD—or the director's cut. We were able to view Sam Raimi's original cut in two formats—a VHS bootleg (bought at a horror convention prior to the film's theatrical release), and a hard-to-find pan&scan laserdisc from Singapore that is virtually identical (96m and 96m 8s respectively).

Thus there are several sources, comprising 4 different versions of the film, which we have examined: the identical MCA Universal domestic releases on VHS and LD (AOD); a bootleg VHS of the director's cut originally submitted to Dino DeLaurentis (DC); the Jei Wea pan&scan LD,⁶ identical to the DC but with an improved image and a magnificent surround sound audio track and a generous 20 chapter stops (JW, very likely a bootleg); the Japanese P&S LD entitled **CAPTAIN SUPERMARKET** (CS); and the televised version that appeared on the Sci-Fi and USA Network Channels in 1997 (TV). We also had occasion to refer to a shooting script by Sam Raimi and Ivan Raimi, dated 2/26/91. Perhaps by comparing and contrasting these four versions, together with the script, we can re-member the film; that is, by fighting the vicissitudes of time and neglect, put it back together.

Like **EVIL DEAD 2**, **ARMY OF DARKNESS** is highly energetic and imaginative, loosely beginning where **EVIL DEAD 2** ended. Through the device of the timeslip, the Yankee Ash (Bruce Campbell) lands

in what is apparently medieval England. Ruled by Lord Arthur (Marcus Gilbert), the kingdom is under siege by evil Deadites. Wiseman (Ian Abercrombie) believes Ash to be the “Promised One” prophesied in the *Necronomicon*, a powerful warrior from the sky who will free the kingdom from the terror of the Deadites. Ash discovers that in order to be able to return to his own time, he must retrieve the *Necronomicon* which contains the necessary instructions to allow him to do so. Before setting off on his quest for the book, Ash romances the beautiful maiden Sheila (Embeth Davidtz). During his subsequent journey, Ash takes refuge in an abandoned windmill where he encounters his dark double, “Bad Ash,” whom he dispatches with his shotgun and chain saw. Unfortunately, Ash botches the proper incantation that would allow him to take the *Necronomicon* from its graveyard resting place, instead unleashing from the earth the remains of all warriors who have died in battle—including Bad Ash, who leads the skeletal soldiers in a battle against Good Ash and Arthur's people. The climactic battle with the Deadites is a wonderful tribute to the old masters of stop-motion animation, especially Ray Harryhausen's army of skeletons in **JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS**. The alternating, pre-battle speeches, as the film switches between the two warring camps, derives its structure from the medieval epic tradition.

The sublime ending of **EVIL DEAD 2**, in which Ash undergoes a timeslip, allowed Raimi entrance to the genre of films that have adapted or borrowed ideas from Twain's **A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT**. The sheer number of films which have been based on Twain's source novel argue for these films to be considered a legitimate subgenre of the motion picture, and **ARMY OF DARKNESS** properly would be among them. (The narrative device of the timeslip was Twain's invention, and one of his major contributions to SF.)⁷ **ARMY OF DARKNESS** is indebted to **A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT** given that Ash, the Enlightened Yankee—armed with his shotgun, chain saw, and a naive theory of progress—feels morally superior to the medieval peasants (including Lord Arthur—*not* King Arthur) among whom he finds himself strangely placed. In showing off his shotgun, which he claims is a “boomstick” to the gathered flock of great unwashed, he addresses them as “primates” and “primitive screwheads,” and, in the original ending, after he stumbles out of the cave in which he has slumbered for seven (one too many) centuries, à la Rip Van Winkle, he believes he has arrived home by his cheerfully uttered cry of “manufactured

products" as he stumbles into discarded piles of junk and garbage.

The original, apocalyptic ending of **ARMY OF DARKNESS** can be traced to the Time Traveller's vision of the entropic end of time in H.G. Wells' **THE TIME MACHINE** (1895), but we find it is also a nod to the conclusion of **PLANET OF THE APES** (1968), with its famous shot of the Statue of Liberty buried in the sand.⁹ **PLANET OF THE APES** inverts the **CONNECTICUT YANKEE** timeslip device. In the former, astronauts travel two thousand years into the future; when they land, it is not on a distant planet but earth, which has devolved as a result of a nuclear war. Although ostensibly agrarian and pastoral, the ape society is in fact a totalitarian one, achieving obedience through the power of the Minister of Science. Wielding Inquisitorial power, he controls his scientists with threats of heresy, collapsing the categories of religion and science. Thus the power of the government is analogous to that of the medieval one that Twain had imagined in his novel. We will remember that Ash addresses the peasants as "primates." There is also a moment when Ash paraphrases Charlton Heston's famous line from **PLANET OF THE APES** ("Get your stinking paws off me you damned, dirty ape!") when, after botching the words to the *Necronomicon*, he escapes from the graveyard. As he snaps off at the elbow the arm of a skeleton that had been accosting him, Campbell pastiches Heston in his delivery of the line, "Keep your damned filthy bones out of my mouth!"

In order to point out and identify the differences among the four existing versions, will we partition our discussion into easily identifiable sequences from the film. This is perhaps not the most original or stimulating form of organization, but it is convenient and makes for easy reference. We should also note that our timing of the TV begins at the point the disclaimer appears stating that this particular version of **ARMY OF DARKNESS** "has been modified from its original version. It has been formatted to fit this screen and edited to run in the time allotted and for content," which precedes the Universal logo. We are aware of the fact that timings of source materials normally begin at the point the opening logo fades out; however, because the disclaimer indicates that the film has been modified, we feel this is relevant information to be included in the timing (it adds 28s to the total running time). In place of the Universal logo, CS and the JW contain the Dino De Laurentiis Communications logo, over which the opening theme music begins. Our timings of these particular versions thus begin at the moment the Dino De Laurentiis

logo appears. This creates a discrepancy in the running time between the two source materials of the VHS DC (with the Universal logo) and the JW, although the two versions are identical beyond this point. We should also note that CS and the JW are identical until the windmill sequence, at a moment identified below.

Opening Sequence

As indicated above, the S-Mart ending—in which Ash battles yet another Deadite—was the result of a re-shoot. It is unclear whether this fact, or Bridget Fonda's interest in playing a part in the film, necessitated adding a brief S-Mart sequence during the opening montage, during which Ash introduces his girl friend Linda (Fonda). We say this because the 2/26/91 shooting script does not include any references to S-Mart, but opens with a close-up on Ash:

GRAINY BLACK AND WHITE—CLOSE UP

This is Ash, mid twenties, square jaw firmly set and a pair of haunted eyes which dart about quickly in fear. Ash speaks to the CAMERA with urgency:

ASH: Why would you say that I am insane? I wouldn't say that I've lost my mind simply because I've heard the voices and seen the godless things moving in the woods. If anything, I think more clearly now than ever before. I know now that there is such a thing as a living Evil. A dark and shapeless thing that lives not in the spaces we know, but between them. In the Dark. In the night. And it wants the exact same thing as you and I: a chance at warm life on this Earth. It doesn't care that is [sic] already had that chance... once. Now listen closely because there isn't much time. Listen and believe, because it's all true.

DISSOLVE TO: EXT. A LOG CABIN—NIGHT nestled in a dark forest. Through the window, we see the tiny figure of Ash picking up a book from a desk.

Which is, of course, the *Necronomicon*. In all existing versions, the film opens with Ash in chains, accompanied by his own voice-over: "My name is Ash, and I am a slave. Close as I can figure it, the year is 1300 AD, and I am being dragged to my death. It wasn't always like this... I had a real life, once. A job." As Ash says "once" the image dissolves to 19s of material in the Housewares Department at S-Mart. None of this material is in the shooting script; rather, as indicated above, Ash is alone in the cabin, without his girl friend Linda. The shooting script contains about two and a half pages of material before the opening title sequence begins ("Bruce Campbell vs. **ARMY OF DARKNESS**"), although it does not indicate that footage from **EVIL DEAD 2** would be included.



"This is my BOOMSTICK," Ash informs the ancient unwashed in **ARMY OF DARKNESS**.

Ash's "Arrival"

The TV contains 1m 36s of material, absent from all other versions of the film, shortly after Ash (literally) drops in on Arthur's kingdom, beginning at 5m 14s in the TV, 4m 45s in the AOD, and 4m 54s in CS and the JW. At 4m 43-44s in the AOD, Lord Arthur exclaims, "I say, to the pit with him!" followed by a cut to Ash, who looks off to his left at 4m 45-46s, followed by a cut that pans across cheering knights, then a cut back to Lord Arthur, who, wielding his sword high, yells, "To the pit!" At 5m 13s in the TV, Ash looks to his left following Arthur's exhortation, "I say, to the pit with him!" but the edit is shortened, and we hear Gold Tooth (Michael Earl Reid) exclaim, "To the pit with the blackguard." Arthur's line, "To the pit!" is omitted. The 1m 36s sequence is as follows:

GOLD TOOTH: To the pit with the blackguard! He shall make sport for the villagers!

He charges Ash on his horse. Ash swings the shotgun into the knight's chest armor, knocking him off his horse.

ASH: (to Gold Tooth) I wasn't lookin' for no trouble.

From behind, a sword handle slams Ash on the back of his skull and he falls to the dusty (crusty?) ground.

ARTHUR: (stepping up to Ash) I cannot feel crust.

ASH: Oh yeah? (on his knees) Well let's talk about somethin'... I don't like. I don't like... bein' sucker-punched!

Ash slams Arthur sharply in the chest with the barrel-end of his shotgun. Falling backward, Arthur's sword flies from his hand and Ash catches it, putting it to Arthur's throat.

ASH: (to Arthur's knights) Back off! (to Arthur) Get the gum out of your ears and listen up. I didn't ask to come here. This whole thing is some kind of big mistake. (slowly) So you just leave it be.

He plunges the sword like a spear into the ground near Arthur's ear, and steps back. Arthur slowly stands, eyeing him, and moves toward him. Suddenly, he delivers a vicious back-hand blow to Ash, who stumbles backward to the ground.

ARTHUR: Secure the prisoner!

Several of Arthur's knights quickly encircle him and pull him to his feet.

In all versions, following Arthur's second exhortation of "To the pit!" to rally his troops, there is a cut to Ash striving vainly to cast off his captors, which is the end of the sequence reproduced above. The sequence has a certain value given that it has the advantage of introducing Gold Tooth, who is seen in brief cuts during the opening montage, giving Ash the whip. His and Ash's early confrontation explains Ash's later animosity toward him following his escape from the Deadite pit ("You!

You want some more?"). In the shooting script, the above sequence comprised slightly more than four pages of action, although it was envisioned differently, with Ash battling jousting knights using his chain saw before he is cracked on the back of his hand with the handle of Arthur's sword. More action, but perhaps for budgetary reasons it was found too expensive and time-consuming to shoot.

The Approach to Arthur's Castle

Following Ash's capture, as the line of prisoners approaches Arthur's castle, at 5m 56s in the CS and JW, there is a 7s long shot of the prisoners entering the castle which shows that it is built on the edge of cliff, omitted from the AOD and TV. The 7s shot would occur at 5m 48s in the AOD, between the cut of the approaching prisoners through the rising gate and the close-up of Ash's face.

The Deadite Pit

A few minor changes occur during the scenes at the Deadite pit. As one might expect, some of Ash's language is censored in the TV: the word "shit" in Ash's line to Duke Henry, "You ain't leadin' but two things right now: Jack and Shit," becomes "spit." The word "assholes," in Ash's line, "Hey, I never even saw these assholes before," becomes "eggheads" (actually, a quite funny substitute, although out of character for Ash).

In the Deadite pit, at 14m in the AOD, a shot of black blood splashing against the wall of the pit as Ash dismembers the Deadite with his chainsaw has been edited out. The shot appears at 14m 14s in the CS and JW. (The shot is omitted from the TV also).

After Ash emerges from the Deadite pit, he approaches Arthur and tells him that his "shoelace is untied." After a moment's pause, Arthur glances down at his "shoe," at which point Ash delivers a sucker punch. The versions vary slightly in the editing beginning at 16m 7s in the AOD, when Ash turns to Gold Tooth, menacingly points his finger, and says "You." A 3s cut follows, of Gold Tooth in trepidation, over which one hears Ash inquire, "You want some more?" In CS and the JW, the cut to Gold Tooth occurs at 16m 22s, holds for 3s, then cuts back to Ash, whom we see deliver the line, "You want some more?" rather than hear him deliver it off-screen. Ash is more threatening in the sequence as a result.

Finally, a slight change occurs at 18m 34s in the AOD, 18m 53s in CS and the JW, when Ash, apparently cognizant of the Deadite who has used the chain to climb out of the pit, spins and fires his shotgun, severing the chain. In CS and JW, the shot of the Deadite struggling to maintain its balance is held for about 1s longer than in the AOD, before cutting to the crowd's reaction. This is followed by a cut back to the Deadite in medium close-up, followed by a cut to Ash who fires a second time, sending the Deadite somersaulting back in the pit.



The Deadite in the Pit.

Ash and Sheila

Following Ash's line, "Give me some sugar baby," Ash draws Sheila to him, and they embrace and kiss (the line, as well as the scene, is absent from the shooting script). In the AOD, the scene fades abruptly at 24m 35s, followed by a cut to a long shot of Ash, Wiseman, and the others galloping from Arthur's castle as Ash begins his quest for the *Necronomicon*. CS and the JW dissolve at 24m 54s to Ash and Sheila beginning a romantic embrace before a roaring fire. The moment continues to 25m 22s, at which point there is another dissolve, to a night scene revealing a pensive Ash standing at a castle parapet looking out over Arthur's kingdom. Sheila approaches from behind, and he pulls her near him. This dissolves at 25m 46s to Ash and the others in the long shot galloping from Arthur's castle. Remarkably, the TV has this 52s sequence restored. Incidentally, in the shooting script, Sheila is described as "a striking, blond haired maiden," a instruction that was slightly ignored by the casting of the dark-haired Embeth Davidtz.

The Forest Journey

As Ash gallops off from Wiseman after being (non)instructed in the proper words for removing the *Necronomicon*, there is an additional shot, beginning at 27m 10s in CS and the JW, of Ash riding through the rocks, followed by a cut to Ash rounding a rock and riding toward the camera as he enters thicker growth in the forest. The entire sequence in the forest is longer in CS and the JW as well, providing more time to build up suspense before cutting to the Evil Force (the subjective camera) that begins to pursue Ash. In the AOD, at 26m 48s, the shot of Ash galloping away from Wiseman dissolves to Ash already in the forest, omitting the two cuts mentioned above. The forest sequence in CS and the JW, beginning at the 27m 10s mark, continues to 29m 50s, the first shot of the windmill (a total of 2m 40s in length). In the AOD, beginning with the dissolve at 26m 48s, the sequence runs a total of 1m 44s, to 28m 32s (the first shot of the mill). The difference in time between the two sequences is thus 56s, consisting of longer takes of Ash riding, cuts establishing a threatening presence, Ash's recognition of the presence of the Evil Force, and a more extensive use of the subjective camera (the Evil Force).

The Windmill

As noted earlier, the JW and CS are identical until the windmill sequence, parting ways at 32m 35s. Why the two versions diverge at this point is anyone's guess; strangely, this wonderfully inventive and hilarious sequence was severely edited for the AOD, existing only in a slightly longer version in CS. Remarkably, none of the timings of the windmill sequence are identical in any of the four versions, although the TV contains the longest, and more or less complete, version. In order to establish the running time of the windmill sequence we began timing at the moment the windmill is first shown, stopping the timing at the moment when Ash rushes, panic-stricken, from the mill with Bad Ash growing inside him—beside him—shot against the full moon. Using these two moments as parameters, the times of the sequence in individual versions are as follows:

AOD: 4m 22s	CS: 4m 51s
JW: 7m 20s	TV: 8m 21s

We can identify the point where the versions begin to diverge: at 31m 51s in the TV, Ash, kneeling before the fireplace, tosses another log on the fire. The shot begins in close-up on the fireplace and pulls back. We hear a strange growling noise and, alarmed, Ash turns, listening intently. He stands, and at 31m 57s, a sequence begins in which Ash, armed with his shotgun, moves to the door, opens it cautiously, steps outside, and begins to investigate the area. At 32m 56s, Ash's horse whinnies and trots into the frame and bumps Ash, startling him (the strange noise, in other words, was the horse's whinny). As he ties up the horse, he becomes suspicious; the camera dollies around him to reveal a sinister figure—Ash's double—standing in the door of the mill (33m 25s). In a sequence that is slightly undercranked, Ash grabs his gun, runs into the mill—and crashes full-force into a full-length mirror (a rarity in medieval England), shattering it (33m 37s). In all other versions, the strange growling noise is omitted from the soundtrack; instead, Ash turns, sees his double, stands, and apparently with an intent to attack, charges him but instead smashes into the mirror. The 2m sequence in the TV thus introduces Ash's evil double before he grows inside him, and also provides a more plausible reason why Ash crashes, stupidly, into the mirror (probably designed for yucks).

In the AOD, Ash crashes into the mirror at 28m 25s (31m 52s in CS and the JW). (Using this moment as our starting point, and using as the stopping point the shot in which the Tiny, Lilliputian Ash dives into Ash's mouth, the total time Ash

engages in slapstick antics with the Tiny Ashs for each version is as follows:

AOD: 2m 25s CS: 1m 51s
 JW: 4m 12s TV: 3m 46s

The material omitted generally begins after the Tiny Ashs fire the shotgun blast that barely misses Ash. The version closest to the JW is the TV, which omits 14s of material following the shotgun blast. The 14s is actually rather critical material, as it shows Ash's puzzled reaction upon discovering the existence of the Tiny Ashs; in all versions but the JW, Ash is given no time to react to the sheer phenomenal existence of the Tiny Ashs, he just reacts. Also shown in the 14s of material is Ash pulling out the three-pronged fork from his rear end (accompanied by, appropriately, a "ploink") and deciding to use it as a weapon. After he succeeds in skewering the first Tiny Ash, the JW contains a 4s reaction shot of Ash: "Ha! Yeah! I'm gonna hunt down alla you—," at which point he is tripped by the broom handle. The TV cuts from the skewered Tiny Ash to Ash being tripped by the handle, omitting the line (although "alla you" is audible on the TV). After Ash awakens from his fall and discovers he is tied down, Lilliputian-style, also edited from the TV is a 3s shot of three Tiny Ashs standing at his feet, shown before the cut to the Little Ashs about to drop the diving Tiny Ash into Ash's mouth.

A key bit of business that is omitted in both the AOD and CS is Ash getting a bucket of grease dropped on his head, that follows him peeling his cheek, Three Stooges style, from off the hot stove (35m in the TV and 29m 45s in the AOD) with the fireplace shovel. In the AOD, after Ash succeeds in freeing himself from the stove, it cuts directly to Ash spotting a Tiny Ash and beginning "London Bridge Is Falling Down." This abrupt cut omits, in the JW, an intervening 1m 23s of material. The shooting script reads this way:

ASH stumbles over a broom handle that has been thrust out in front of him by other tiny ASHES. His head slams into a stove pipe. He crumples. He lands with his cheek pressed against the hot stove. SSSSSSSsss. He pries his face loose with a spatula.

A BUCKET OF GREASE is pushed off a high shelf CLANG! IT LANDS ON ASH'S HEAD and spills slippery grease about the floor.

ASH with an upside-down bucket on his head, slips and falls, back and forth on the grease. He stands and tries to dislodge the bucket. He trips over the broom handle, again thrust in his path. He falls backward, onto a crochet basket with knitting needles jutting from it. [This latter instruction is altered to the hot stove.]

BUCKET-HEADED ASH SCREAMS and jerks upward, slamming his bucket head into the stove pipe. CLANG! Ash rips the bucket from his head then yanks the needles from his buttocks. He looks about for the little imps.

TINY ASH #2 crouching behind a log attempting to hide. BUT...

ASH has seen him. He "accidentally" elbows the log and Tiny Ash #2 into the stove's fire.

ASH: Ooops.

TINY ASH #2 is burned alive. ASH glances downward at the pitter patter sound of tiny feet.

TINY ASH #3 is dashing across the open expanse of floor. Ash's gigantic foot comes down to crush the little man. Tiny Ash #3 raises a rusty nail into the path of the descending foot. RIP!!

The filmed version of this scene is hilarious, especially when Ash is trying to maintain his balance on the greasy floor; he even does a hand stand at one point. In a line not contained in the shooting script, as one of the Tiny Ashs pushes the bucket off the shelf, he calls to Ash: "Hey, dumb ass!"

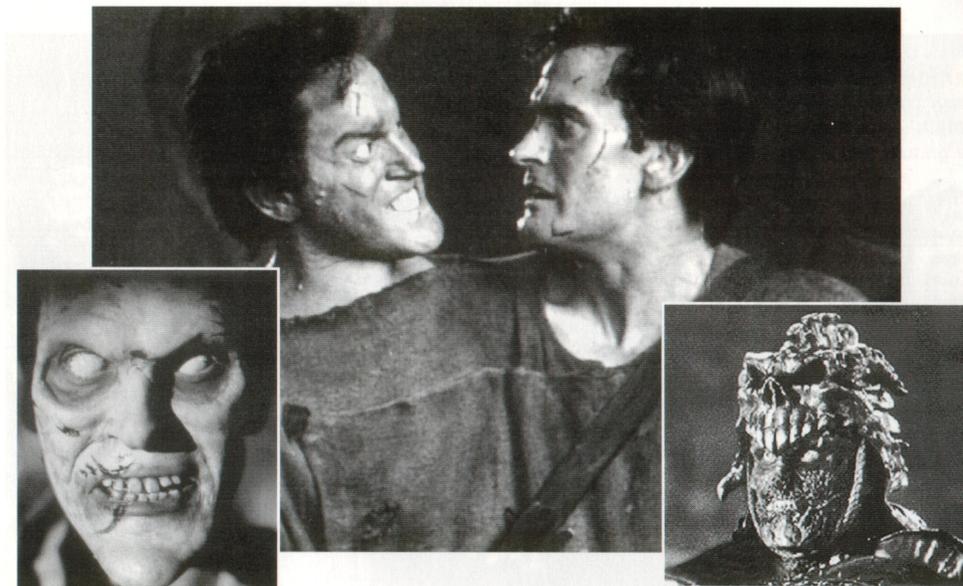
Bad Ash's (First) Demise

After Good Ash and Bad Ash undergo a rather painful mitosis, and after Good Ash dispatches Bad Ash with a shotgun blast, two different takes of Ash's follow-up line were obviously filmed. The camera swish pans right from the dead Bad Ash's body to stop on Ash, at 36m 40s in CS and 39m 10s in the JW. Stepping forward, looking down at the corpse, Ash delivers the line, "I ain't that good," in a flat monotone.

In the TV, the pan begins at 40m 20s, in the AOD at 33m 15s. Instead of the above line, however, Ash says, "Good. Bad. I'm the guy with the gun." This line is in fact closer to the line in the script as written, which reads, "Good... Bad... I'm the Ash with the gun." The latter reads like a (cloaked) Clint Eastwood line from one his Westerns, especially since following Ash's line there is cut to a close-up of Bad Ash's blasted (i.e., ugly) face. The more laconic, "I ain't that good," also sounds like an Eastwood line ca. the **HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER** (1973) period.

Sheila Meets Bad Ash

At 47m 53s in the AOD (55m 46s in the TV), sometime after being captured by the winged Deadite, Sheila is deposited at the feet of Bad Ash. Her arrival is announced by one of Bad Ash's skeletal troops, ordering, "Bring on the wench." In the AOD, the sequence runs 57s; in the TV, 42s—as a result of cuts, no doubt due to the censor, of the two scantily clad female slaves in chains being dragged into the camp by some evil warriors ("We have some plans for you, girly girl. Move!") Reverse necrophilia?



The evolution of Bad Ash (Bruce Campbell): The possessed hero of EVIL DEAD 2, The MANSTER-inspired split of ARMY OF DARKNESS and the resulting Sword and Sorcery villain.

In the JW and CS, the sequence runs 1m 12s, 15s longer than the AOD. Cut is 11s of footage of the leprous Bad Ash ripping Sheila's dress from her shoulders to her waist, accompanied by his pawing and a visceral growl of desire, and a 4s reaction shot of Sheila as she endures Bad Ash forcing upon her his lecherous kiss.⁹

The Battle

As one might expect, the total time of the battle sequence is different in the various versions. In order to determine the running time in each version, we chose as point zero the moment when the messenger, galloping toward Arthur's castle at night, delivers the line, "They're coming! The Deadites approach!" We chose as an end point a key moment that occurs after the battle, when Arthur and Duke Henry embrace and shake hands in peace. With these bookends, the times of the battle sequence in the individual versions are as follows:

AOD: 17m 54s CS: 19m 37s
 JW: 24m 1s TV: 20m 28s

Assuming the JW is the "proper" length of the battle sequence, the following amount of material has been cut in the individual versions:
 AOD: 6m 7s CS: 4m 24s TV: 3m 33s

To delineate each and every edited cut for each truncated version would be tedious, pulp-consuming, and finally not very informative. However, what is informative is to place the JW version against the one that has had the least material cut from it, in this case, the TV. We found this procedure to be quite interesting, as it revealed the structural changes that had to be made in order to make the three shortened versions work. In general, Arthur's role in the battle is greatly diminished, and, as might be expected, Ash's role is given center stage. Also shortened is some pre-attack footage of Bad Ash's army assembling ranks. In order to determine the kind and extent of cuts in the battle sequence, and the restructuring involved, we used as a key structural event the moment when the calvary arrives, i.e., Duke Henry and his men. Here's what we found (the "Battle Time" is the moment in the battle sequence when Duke Henry's arrival is announced; the "Remain Time" is the time remaining in the battle before Henry and Arthur shake hands):

Version	Battle Time	Remain Time
AOD	10m 12s	7m 42s
CS	13m 35s	6m 2s
JW	21m 44s	2m 17s
TV	12m 19s	8m 9s



The Harryhausen-inspired boneyard battalion of ARMY OF DARKNESS.

Intuitively, which version seems the most logical for Duke Henry's arrival? We would argue the JW, which holds Henry's arrival in doubt for the longest possible time. This is borne out by the fact that we don't see much action of Henry's men fighting Deadites with the castle walls. With this in mind, we placed the TV and JW side by side on two separate television screens. Here's what we found: the TV battle follows the logic of the JW except for a key edit, and we were able to identify the moment. Note that our procedure required that we use the version which has had the least material edited out.

In the following comparison chart, the term "anchor" stands (for lack of a better phrase) for an "anchoring moment," a way to synchronize events and action between the two versions. The numbers represent (in minutes and seconds) the time into the battle when the Evil Sheila appears to Ash as he is driving the Deathcoaster:

Anchor	JW	TV
Sheila	12.24	10.13

Thus, the material edited from the TV, at this point, constitutes 2m 9s of action. In the broadest approximation, the deleted material includes:

- Longer dolly shots of the army of skeletons standing in formation
- Bad Ash requesting his looking glass

- Longer dolly shot through the flag corps, ending on Bad Ash and Evil Sheila
- Bad Ash's line, "I shall rule, and you shall be my queen"
- Arthur and Ash requesting catapults be repositioned
- Because Ash vanishes to get the Deathcoaster, Arthur believes him to be a coward

The announcement of "The Red! The Red!" to declare Duke Henry's arrival, as an anchoring moment elicits the following numbers:

Anchor	JW	TV
"The Red!"	21.44	12.19

In the moments before 12m 19s, we see Arthur on the parapet battling warriors, including those attempting to climb the ladder. Fighting valiantly, an arrow strikes him on his right shoulder. Soldiers, standing guard by the *Necronomicon*, move to his aid, but he shouts at them, "Stay with the book!" Following more action of battling skeletons, Duke Henry's arrival is announced. But what action immediately follows Henry's arrival?

The following allows us to see the key moment in the structure of the battle scene. By "Arthur decked," we mean the moment when Bad Ash has managed to gain access to the parapet leading to the *Necronomicon*, and gives Arthur a massive

blow, sending him reeling against the castle wall and knocking him cold:

Anchor	JW	TV
Arthur decked	14.41	12.54

What do we find? Notice that in the TV, the announcement of Duke Henry's arrival occurs before Arthur is decked, but in the JW, Henry's arrival is much later. We discovered that in the original edit, Arthur is shown fighting valiantly on the walls, suffering heavy wounds, until Bad Ash knocks him unconscious (in the shooting script, Arthur is killed by Bad Ash at this point). Therefore, in the TV (and all other edited versions), Arthur's gallant and heroic stand to protect the *Necronomicon* is interrupted by the announcement of Henry's arrival! In effect, Arthur's key role in the battle is rendered invisible.

But if Henry's arrival is (wrongly) placed at this point in the TV, at what point in the "proper" or JW cut was his arrival announced? At 21m 40s into the battle, Skeleton Ash is sitting on the catapult on a satchel full of gunpowder, saying to Ash, "Now I'll have my vengeance!" This line is followed by the announcement of Duke Henry's arrival: "The Red! The Red! Duke Henry and his men have come!" followed by Skeleton Ash's response, "Bloody Hell!" In the JW, there is a shot of Bad Ash's head turning, reacting to the announcement. Thus, in the JW, Ash's great one-liner, "Buckle up, bonehead, 'cause yer goin' for a ride," occurs only 42s after Henry the Red arrives to save the day. Here's how the concluding moments read in the shooting script:

ANGLE ON SKELETON ASH

SKELETON ASH: You're finished.

He extends the *Necronomicon* to taunt Ash.

SKELETON ASH: I possess the *Necronomicon*. I've crushed your pathetic army. Now I'll have my vengeance!

He raises his sword for the death blow...

THE SHRILL CALL OF BATTLE TRUMPETS

GUARD: (o.s.) Duke Henry's men! They've come!

ASH AND THE SKELETON turn... A jubilant CHEER rises from the castle as...

DUKE HENRY THE RED AND FIFTY OF HIS MEN thunder down the hill, across the drawbridge and into the castle courtyard to attack the Deadites!

THE SKELETON—ATOP THE CATAPULT turns back to Ash and raises his sword for the kill.

ASH has grabbed a sword from a fallen warrior. With a single motion he slices the hand that holds the *Necronomicon* from Skeleton Ash. ASH snags the book with one hand and on the backswing, slices through the rope, springing the catapult.

THE SKELETON AND BURNING SATCHEL are flung over the castle wall.

In the AOD, at 69m 28s, a 3s shot of cowardly skeletons running in fear ("Let's get the hell out of here!") is inserted after Skeleton Ash's obliteration, which, in JW, appeared early in the battle—during Arthur's troops' initial, but short-lived, routing of Bad Ash's troops (68m 7–10s).

Ash Receiving the Potion

At 82m 29s in the TV, 61m 14s in the AOD, and 79m 22s in CS, there is a dissolve from cheering knights to a chamber in Arthur's castle, in which Ash is receiving the magic potion from Wiseman, for an 18s scene. Wiseman instructs Ash, "Once you drink this liquid, and recite the words, *Klaatu Verata Niktu*, thou shalt awaken in thine own time." This line was obviously dubbed in as a consequence of the re-shoot; more critically, it alters the nature of the potion. In the shooting script, Ash is given a potion that allows him to sleep for several centuries, until he awakens in his own time. In the JW, there is a dissolve rather than a cut, at 86m 16s, to a 22s scene in which Ash receives the potion. As he prepares it, Wiseman says, "The book tells us that each drop allows a man to sleep for a century. Swallow six drops, and thou shalt awaken in thine own time."

The re-shot ending thus created a rather awkward continuity error in the film, because if indeed all Ash has to do is recite the proper words and drink the liquid, why does he have to ride off from the castle? For what reason? He could have just as easily recited the words (properly, with Wiseman's coaching) and drunk the potion while remaining at the castle. In the original ending, the reason Ash rides off is because he is heading for the cave that will provide him a "safe" haven to sleep for the following six centuries. However, the continuity error did allow for a tearful, romantic parting of Ash and Sheila (accompanied by some of Joseph LoDuca's loveliest strains).

The Original Ending

As mentioned above, in the shooting script Arthur is killed in battle by Bad Ash, not knocked unconscious. Also scripted was the Evil Sheila's death, killed by Ash with a shotgun blast when she jumps on the Deathcoaster to attack him. In the shooting script, Arthur is given a Viking burial (flaming arrows are shot at a wooden ship containing the body of Arthur), at which point Ash's voice-over resumes:



Doomed to the last drop: The original ending of *ARMY OF DARKNESS* leaves Ash on the threshold of an apocalyptic nightmare.

THE ARROWS strike a wooden ship that holds the body of Arthur.

ASH: (v.o.) We said goodbye to Arthur. Sure we had our problems. But in the end, he was all right.

DISSOLVE TO: EXT. SEASHORE—DUSK

ASH AND THE OTHERS watch the funeral pyre sail off. Its flickering flames play upon their faces.

DISSOLVE TO: INT. CASTLE COURTYARD—NIGHT

ASH: (v.o.) Peace was made between the two peoples. And a new nation was formed. They offered me a chance to stay among them and teach them. A chance to lead them. To be King. But Sheila was gone. Besides, I had places to go.

At this point in the shooting script, Ash receives the potion, instructed to swallow six drops in order to return to his own time. He needs a "place to crash" for six centuries, and, single-handedly, with the help of his horse, he drags the Deathcoaster into a cave (and sets the horse free). Sealing the cave shut with black powder charges, Ash then settles in for a long sleep in the front seat of the Deathcoaster. Predictably, as he takes the potion, he screws up, counting out seven drops of the potion rather than six. Oversleeping his own age by a century, he awakens in a post-apocalyptic future. The shooting script reads:

A FUTURISTIC CITY—after the next Nuclear war: a dead land.

ASH'S P.O.V.

A FRACTURED CLOCK TOWER lays sprawled on its side. The time of mankind's death frozen on the cracked face of the clock.

A SHATTERED BRIDGE abruptly ends, a third of the way across a river it once spanned. Upon it, rusted taxicabs piled eight deep in some places.

CAMERA PULLS BACK from a stunned Ash, amidst the atomized pieces of iron and bone.

ASH: I found that I had slept too long.

ASH is so small a dot now, and so far away, that we almost can't hear his terrified SCREAM!

CUT TO BLACK.

As filmed, timed from the moment Ash gallops away from Shiela, the original ending is 3m 26s long (the S-Mart ending is 2m 41s). The shooting script was not precisely followed, although close. There is no voice-over, and a few of Arthur's soldiers assist Ash wheel the Deathcoaster into the cave. After a montage sequence consisting of images indicating the passage of time, Ash, with long, flowing hair and beard, stumbles out of the cave amid a pile of detritus (which he identifies as "manufactured products"). Before him (in a matte shot),

he sees the destroyed city. Crumpling to his knees, he cries, "I've slept too long," and begins laughing maniacally as the film cuts to black, with his laugh continuing a few seconds before the credits roll.

Do we prefer this ending? Yes, because it inverts the ending of *EVIL DEAD 2*: instead of traveling backward in time, Ash travels forward. Moreover, as we earlier indicated, it provides an interesting link to post-apocalyptic films such as *PLANET OF THE APES*, enriching its density of allusions. More imaginative viewers would also recognize that the ending also leaves open the possibility of Ash fighting Deadites—in the future.

There has been much wishing and hoping on Web chat groups about an "Evil Dead 4" someday. Our view is that, while it is certainly possible (anything is possible), is it probable? The ideal conditions for a sequel disappeared when the original ending of *ARMY OF DARKNESS* was removed and a different ending put in its place. If the series were to continue, a positive first step would be to re-release the film with the original ending restored. What a better way to continue the series than with Ash fighting Deadites amid the ruins of a future civilization? Think about it: assuming Ash is indeed cut loose in time, forever seeking a way to get home, what better way exists to keep him fighting Deadites? He is, after all, the best Deadite fighter in existence.

The shooting script dated 2/26/91 of *ARMY OF DARKNESS* is available at Robert E. Waring's *ARMY OF DARKNESS* Page, <http://www.a1.com/djanitors/aod.htm>.

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NOTES

- ¹ Douglas E. Winter, in *FACES OF FEAR* (Berkley Books, 1985) named *THE EVIL DEAD* one of "The Best of Horror Films 1951–1985," thus placing it with some pretty august company only three years after its initial release. Our research indicates that the first mainstream publication to endorse (in passing) *THE EVIL DEAD* was *FILM COMMENT* (September/October 1983), in an article by David Chute, "Outlaw Cinema" (pp. 9–15), a long rumination on J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum's recently published book, *MIDNIGHT MOVIES*.
- ² According to posts on *THE EVIL DEAD* available at *The Internet Movie Database* (<http://us.imdb.com>), the German edition of the film has been edited by some 45s and the UK video

edition by even more.

- ³ See John McCarty, *SPLATTER MOVIES* (Albany NY: FantaCo Enterprises, 1981). Note that the first edition of McCarty's book preceded the release of *THE EVIL DEAD* (a later edition was published by St. Martin's Press in 1984).
- ⁴ Before embarking on *EVIL DEAD 2*, Sam Raimi bankrolled the indie horror film, *THE DEAD NEXT DOOR* (1986), written and directed by Ohio movie magnate J.R. Bookwalter, and is properly derived from George Romero's *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* universe, not that of *THE EVIL DEAD*. However, the video cassette of *THE EVIL DEAD* is shown in the hands of a zombie in one scene in *THE DEAD NEXT DOOR*, and in yet another scene a clip from the film is playing on a television set. In-jokes abound: there is also a character named "Raimi."
- ⁵ A standard (mis)conception is that *EVIL DEAD 2* is, in the words of Julian Hoxter, simply *THE EVIL DEAD* "with the larger budget." See his "Die and Chase: From Slapstick to Splatstick," in Andy Black, Ed., *NECRONOMICON: BOOK ONE* (London: Creation Books, 1996), pp. 71–83. The thesis is simply not sustainable in this form.
- ⁶ We have listed the list price of the *Jeï Weï LD* price in German marks because we acquired the disc through a German vendor: Videodrom, Fürbringer Str. 17, 10961 Berlin. <http://www.videodrom.com>. The LD jacket incorrectly lists the running time as 92m.
- ⁷ Our book, *THE USE OF ARTHURIAN LEGEND IN HOLLYWOOD FILM: FROM CONNECTICUT YANKEES TO FISHER KINGS* (Greenwood Press, 1996), explores this subgenre in more detail. We also examine Twain's particular use of the timeslip that differed from his contemporaries. Briefly put, in Twain's novel, time travel is instantaneous.
- ⁸ We are compelled to note that Twain's novel also concludes with a climatic battle, consisting of Hank Morgan's (the Connecticut Yankee's) mass electrocution of an vast army of armored knights.
- ⁹ The illogic of licentious skeletons, and the leprous condition of Bad Ash, recall an episode from the medieval romance of Tristan and Iseult. These adulterous lovers were discovered by Iseult's husband and Tristan's uncle, King Mark. Mark, about to burn his wife at the stake, was persuaded by a colony of lepers to surrender her to their lechery. This film sequence may well be an allusion to the medieval connection between leprosy and lechery, as Bad Ash clearly defiles Sheila, who as a result is "infected." "I may be bad," she says, "but I feel good."

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