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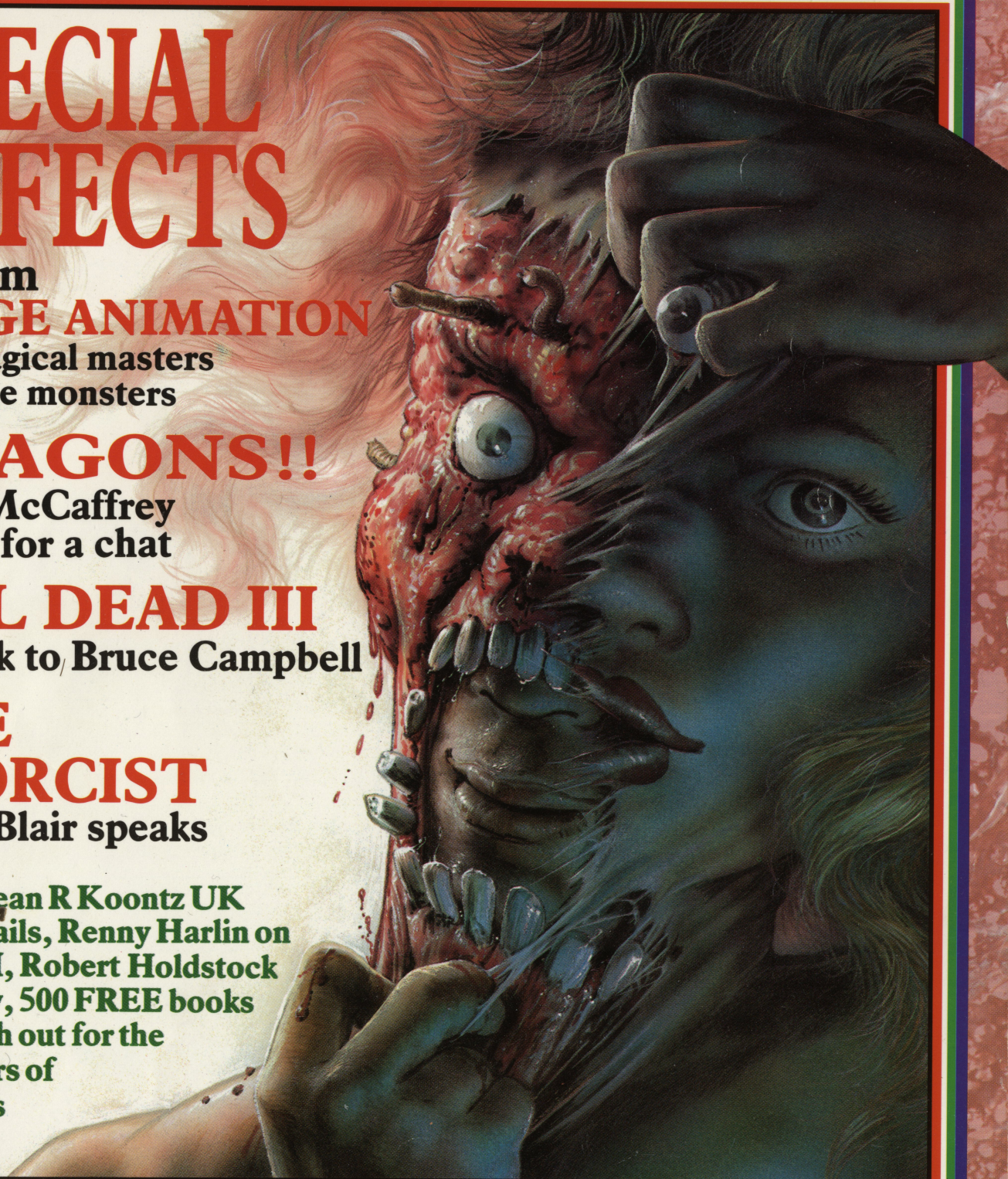
We talk to Bruce Campbell

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# MANIAC COP

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MUSIC BY JAY CHATTAWAY EDITOR DAVID KERN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JAMES GLICKENHAUS CO-PRODUCER JEF RICHARD WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY LARRY COHEN DIRECTED BY WILLIAM LUSTIG  
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# KILLER COP

**Maniac Cop star Bruce Campbell has time for only the briefest of vacations before starting work on *Evil Dead III* which, he reveals to Allan Bryce, may be filmed in England.**

**I**t's just possible that jut-jawed Bruce Campbell could become the Number One horror hero of the Nineties. He's certainly limbering up well for the challenge, having tackled assorted demons in Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead* movies, killer robots in the upcoming *Moontrap*, cowboy vampires in a new flick called *Sundown*, and, of course, an unstoppable zombie rozzler in the subtly-titled *Maniac Cop*.

But in spite of all this exposure, the beleaguered actor complains that nobody ever recognises him in the street. 'I'm Mr Invisible,' he says sheepishly. 'I've been able to sit behind people in a theatre while the movie's playing and get up and talk to them afterwards and they don't know it's me. It's very much a Clark Kent sort of thing. First of all why would they assume I would be there? Secondly I'm always covered with blood, and I'm sweating, and my hair is curly. For whatever reason they don't make the connection. The closest I've come is when some guy told me I looked a little bit like the guy who starred in *Evil Dead*. I told him it was my brother!'

Campbell's latest film, *Maniac Cop*, debuts on video this month from Medusa. The film gives Campbell the role of police officer Jack Forrest, who through a set of circumstances familiar to anyone who regu-

larly watches American cop shows becomes the prime suspect in a series of brutal slayings. The only way to prove his innocence is to team up with a leggy lady colleague Laurene Landon and track down the real culprit, living dead lawman Matt Cordell (Robert Z'Dar), a gruesome looking chap.

The movie is directed by the notorious William Lustig, whose hardcore gore opus *Maniac* is regarded as one of the most stomach-churning chillers of all time (thanks to its incredibly sleazy point of view and the uncomfortably graphic scalping sequences provided by Tom Savini). 'Bill got a lot of static from that,' notes Campbell. 'But the film ended up making a lot of money, and that's what this business is finally all about.'

## MANIAC RETURNS

According to Campbell, the idea of a badge-toting slasher first surfaced two years ago when Lustig booked a quick lunch with Larry Cohen. 'It kinda went like this,' he chuckles, clearing his throat to emulate Lustig's gruff deep down Noo Yawk accent: 'Bill turns to Larry and says 'Y'know Larry? I wanna make another movie like *Maniac*, but I don't want to

do a sequel.' And Larry Cohen, who gets a million ideas a minute, says 'Well how's about *Maniac Cop*?' – because I know Larry has an interest in kinda subversive concepts, and he had had this idea floating around about some kind of supernatural cop that you can't kill, which would put society on edge a little bit. And so those two brilliant masterminds teamed up, hence your finished project.'

Bruce recalls his own involvement when Lustig called him up early in '87 and said (once more the gruff Bronx accent): 'Hey, Brucie, I want you to be in my new picture, so you gotta be in New York in two days'. And I say 'Well tell me what the movie's about'. And he says 'It's about this guy and this cop. You know. Well, hell, I can't really say any more because we haven't written it yet. But we've got to shoot this footage for the St Patrick's Day Parade, that we can use in the climax.'

'So I said 'Okay Bill. I'm gonna trust you'. And I went out to New York and did all this footage of running around through the crowds. That's also where they shot the little section where you will see Sam [Raimi] doing a cameo bit as a newsreader. However, in the end they scrapped most of the parade footage and it became just a backdrop during the latter part of the movie.'

## WILD IN THE WOODS

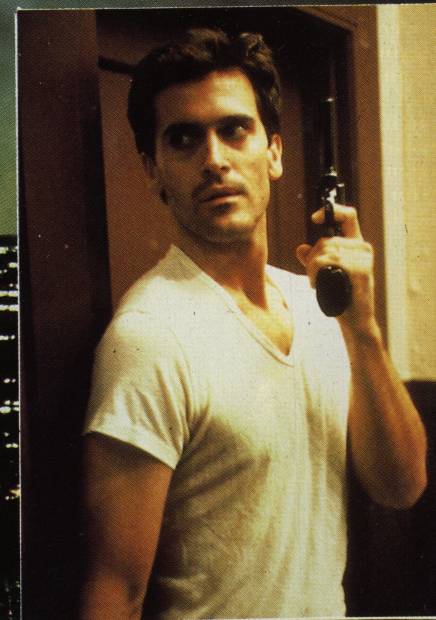
A 26-year-old native of Detroit, Bruce went to the same high school as *Evil Dead* director Sam Raimi, where a shared interest in drama led to the two of them becoming firm friends. The way he recalls it: 'Sam and I got together and made a bunch of really silly Super-8 movies – each one costing anything from fifty to five hundred dollars each. I remember my favourite as being *The Happy Valley Kid: The Story of a Student Driven Mad*, which was about this kid cracking up after being abused by his teachers and dumped by his girlfriend. We were into some pretty heavy drama in those days.'

Campbell, Raimi and company left school and decided they wanted to turn their hobby into a career and make a full-blown movie. 'We planned to make a horror film first because they've always been around – from Lon Chaney on – and seemed the safest bet if we wanted to see a return on our investment. With this in mind we made a modest thirty-minute Super-8 version of *Evil Dead* called *Within the Woods* – to show people we meant business.'

'We went to attorneys,' Campbell continues, 'and got them to make this legal offering – about two hundred pages



Campbell in *Maniac Cop*



**"I love horror movies and I'm happy to stay with them for a while to come"**



thick – which basically said ‘Don’t invest because it’s too risky!’ And we literally sold shares in the movie door-to-door; doctors, dentists, lawyers – we showed them the film and the legal package, and if they were interested they’d invest. But mostly they didn’t.’

## CABIN FEVER

Looking back, Campbell describes the making of the first *Evil Dead* as the biggest nightmare of his life! ‘We were shooting seven days a week for 12 weeks, and it was always freezing cold on location in this little cabin in the middle of Nowheresville, Tennessee. I guess some of our problems came from the fact that a lot of Sam’s shots were very ambitious, and as young film-makers we didn’t know the easiest way to go about getting them. I remember us taking an entire day for the one shot in the nightmare sequence where I put my hand through the mirror. That was really difficult stuff.’

Of course it all seemed worthwhile when the film became a cult success. But it was awhile before Raimi and his team began to see any financial return for their labour. ‘There is a major criminal element at work in the movie world,’ sighs Bruce. ‘We rather naively thought that we would release the movie in the United States and get our money back immediately and all the accounting procedures would be easy to follow. Conversely we were resigned to the fact that you’d sell the movie overseas and never see another dime.’

‘In the end it turned out the opposite. Palace Pictures in England – who were responsible for the film’s success in the first place – were incredibly

honest. They paid us every penny that was coming to us, and we got much more than we expected. But in America we were paid a flat fee by New Line Pictures and never saw a another cent. So I guess we can thank Mother England and a lot of other foreign territories for really being honest and straightforward and helping us continue in our film-making careers.’

## WRIST ACTION

Raimi and Campbell followed up their first movie hit with a zany comedy called *Crimewave*, in which the latter appeared to good effect as a smooth-talking heel who steals the nerdish hero’s girlfriend. Nowadays, Campbell is philosophical about the picture’s merits: ‘Sam wanted to make a movie that you could take a date to and have a good time watching. I got to do a fun dance routine and had some nice comedy moments, but as a whole the picture was unsuccessful. The distributors felt it was too abstract, too wild, too much of a cult movie, so they took it away from us and made it into something incomprehensible. In the end it was neither fish nor fowl. We learned some very valuable lessons on that.’

Those lessons were certainly put to good use in *Evil Dead II*, which was made for roughly ten times the budget of the original and found Campbell slugging it out with those demonic zombies once more, this time having to chainsaw his own arm off to avoid joining their number. When I mentioned the fact that I and many other genre buffs found the opening scenes confusing, Campbell agreed wholeheartedly. ‘We had real trouble getting into that again,’ he says. ‘You’ve got to remember that the first *Evil*

*Dead* just . . . ended. This was back in the days when you finished a movie and walked away from it. What we had to do at the start of *Evil Dead II* was figure out how to pick up the threads of the first, you know what I mean? In many cases it works better if you see the film as a remake – a different version of the first one.’

*Maniac Cop* came next, and since completing that Campbell has also starred (alongside *Star Trek*’s Walter Koenig) in a low budget (\$3.5 million) science-fiction movie called *Moontrap*, playing an astronaut who travels to the moon and gets captured by a race of deadly robots. ‘That’s an interesting picture,’ he notes. ‘It’s made sort of in the style of those old George Pal fantasy flicks of the Fifties, with monsters to fight and maidens to be rescued. I think it has been picked up for British distribution and you should be seeing it later this year.’

‘Then I did a film called *Sundown*. Are you a Hammer fan? Well I’m supposed to be a descendant of this guy Van Helsing, who used to be played in most of the Hammer pictures by Peter Cushing. It’s kind of a western vampire movie, directed by Anthony Hickox, who recently did another pretty good horror picture called *Waxworks*. David Carradine plays Dracula and there are a lot of other good character actors in it as well.’

## GAG REFLEX

But the big news for genre buffs is that in August of this year Campbell will start work on the long-awaited *Evil Dead III*, which Dino De Laurentis Productions will be financing

to the tune of \$8 million – more than twice the cost of *II*. It has been suggested it may be called *Medieval Dead*, but Campbell refuses to comment on the truth of the rumour. ‘All I can tell you right now,’ he says mysteriously, ‘is that it will be a little bit like *Excalibur* and a little bit like *Jabberwocky*, and a little bit like that old Kirk Douglas movie *The Vikings*.’ He also promises that the third in the series will be far less campy than its predecessor. ‘Sam has told me that the story will be a horror-adventure this time,’ says Bruce. ‘There may still be gags, but they will be played down’

Campbell thinks that the UK is a distinct possibility for shooting: ‘There’s a lot of need for a castle. So it could be Spain, it could be England or Scotland. Whichever country can offer the best castle that we can abuse and have some full-scale battles on, then that will be the one for us. If Mother England shows us a good castle then I’m sure we’ll give it preferential treatment.’

Having made his name in the horror genre, Campbell wants it to be known that he intends to continue in the same macabre vein. ‘I love horror movies,’ he says enthusiastically, ‘and I’m happy to stay with them for a while to come. In fact I have a pet project that I’m trying to get off the ground at the moment called *The Man with the Screaming Brain*. It’s a great story – kind of like *Body Heat* with a brain transplant. And what about that title?’ He grins broadly. ‘It’s like *Maniac Cop*. Kinda rolls off the tongue, doesn’t it?’

“Campbell describes the making of the first *Evil Dead* as the biggest nightmare of his life!”



Sam Raimi and Campbell had a much bigger budget for *Evil Dead II*