

WHERE MAN ONCE STOOD SUPREME--NOW RULE THE APES!

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PLANET
OF
THE
APES **8p**

**MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP**

PLANET OF THE APES

NO. 15

WEEK ENDING FEB. 1, 1975

TM

**TO ESCAPE THE
PLANET OF THE APES!
JASON AND ALEXANDER
MUST FIRST
DESTROY IT!**



BONUS!
JOURNEY
TO THE
PLANET OF
THE APES!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **PLANET OF THE APES!**TM

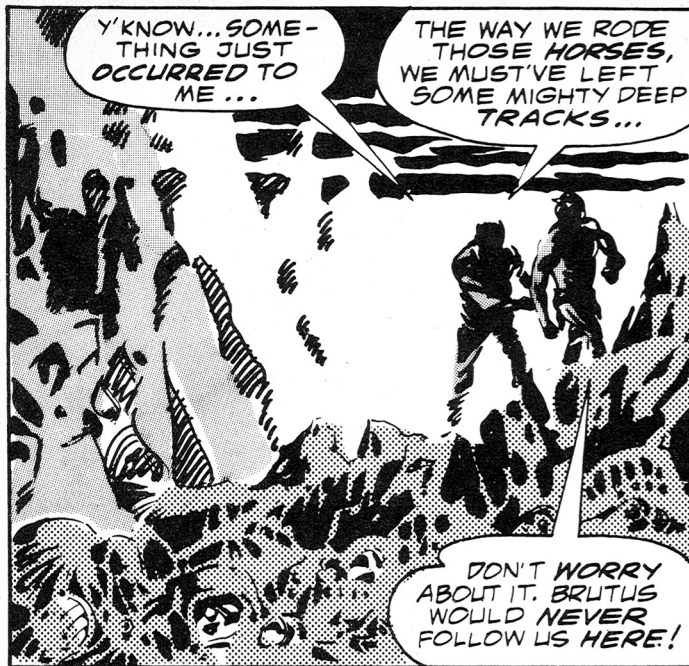






THE FORBIDDEN ZONE: A SPRAWLING LANDSCAPE OF CHARRED, TWISTED RUBBLE AND RUIN... SMOTHERED BY AN OMINOUS BLANKET OF CLINGING PURPLE MIST...





Y'KNOW...SOME-
THING JUST
OCCURRED TO
ME...

THE WAY WE RODE
THOSE HORSES,
WE MUST'VE LEFT
SOME MIGHTY DEEP
TRACKS...

DON'T WORRY
ABOUT IT. BRUTUS
WOULD NEVER
FOLLOW US HERE!



WHILE, AT THE CREST OF THE PALISADE...

IT'S THEM, ALL RIGHT...
AND THEY'VE
ABANDONED THEIR
HORSES.



FOLLOW THEM-- WHILE
I RETURN TO THE
VILLAGE TO ORGANIZE
A GROUP OF POLICE!

HAIL
BRUTUS!



--A LOT OF JUNK
AROUND HERE.

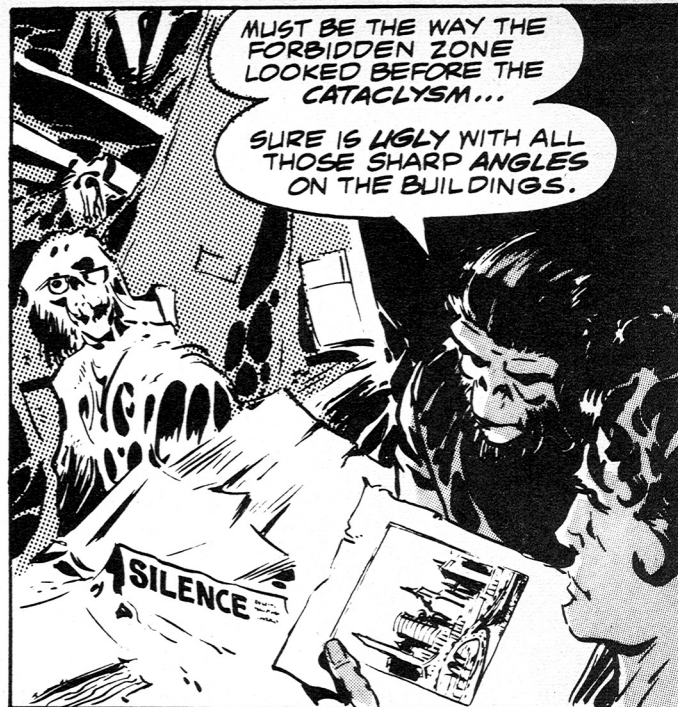
PRE-CATACLYSM
ARTIFACTS, ALEX.
THE SCIENTISTS MIGHT
LEARN A GREAT DEAL
ABOUT OUR PAST
IF THEY WEREN'T SO
AFRAID OF THIS
PLACE...



HEY...WHERE
ARE YOU
GOING?

I DON'T
KNOW...

BUT IT'S THE ONLY
BUILDING WE'VE COME
ACROSS THAT ISN'T
COMPLETELY
DEMOLISHED.
LOOKS
INTERESTING...





...BUT THIS THING
OBVIOUSLY FITS
INTO THIS SLOT...

AND...



BLAM!

YIII!!!



WELL...
I'LL...
BE...

JASON... DO YOU SUPPOSE
THIS COULD BE THE
PLACE THE LAWGIVER
HAS LECTURED
ABOUT...?

...THE PLACE
CALLED "HELL"...
WHERE EVIL
INSTRUMENTS CAUSE
GREAT EXPLOSIONS
AND DEATH...?



NAH. WE'RE
STILL ALIVE,
AREN'T WE?

GUESS
YOU'RE
RIGHT!

SAYYYY...



...THESE
JUST MIGHT
COME IN HANDY...
ONCE WE SHAKE
THE COBWEBS
OFF.



THEN, EXITING THE MUSTY, ARCHAIC
BUILDING...

WHAT
THE--?!

LOOKS LIKE
YOUR EYES
WEREN'T
KIDDING YOU,
JASE... WE'RE
NOT ALONE--!



EASY, JASON--
YOU CAN PUT
YOUR SWORD
DOWN...

THEY DON'T
LOOK LIKE
THEY'RE ABOUT
TO ATTACK...

IN FACT, THEY
SEEM TO BE
AFRAID
OF US.

URG

URG URG



YEAH, THEY ARE
TIMID. MUST'VE
BEEN CURIOUS
ABOUT US...

WHAT DO YOU
THINK THEY
ARE?



I DON'T KNOW.
THEY'VE GOT THE
FEATURES OF
BOTH APES AND
HUMANS...

SAY, YOU DON'T
SUPPOSE...

URG
URMP

NO,
COULDN'T
BE.



THEY SURE SCATTERED
FAST ENOUGH. LET'S
FOLLOW THIS LAST
ONE BEFORE HE
SLIPS AWAY...

YEAH. IT'S A
LONG SHOT-- BUT
MAYBE HE'LL LEAD
US TO THE LAW-
GIVER...



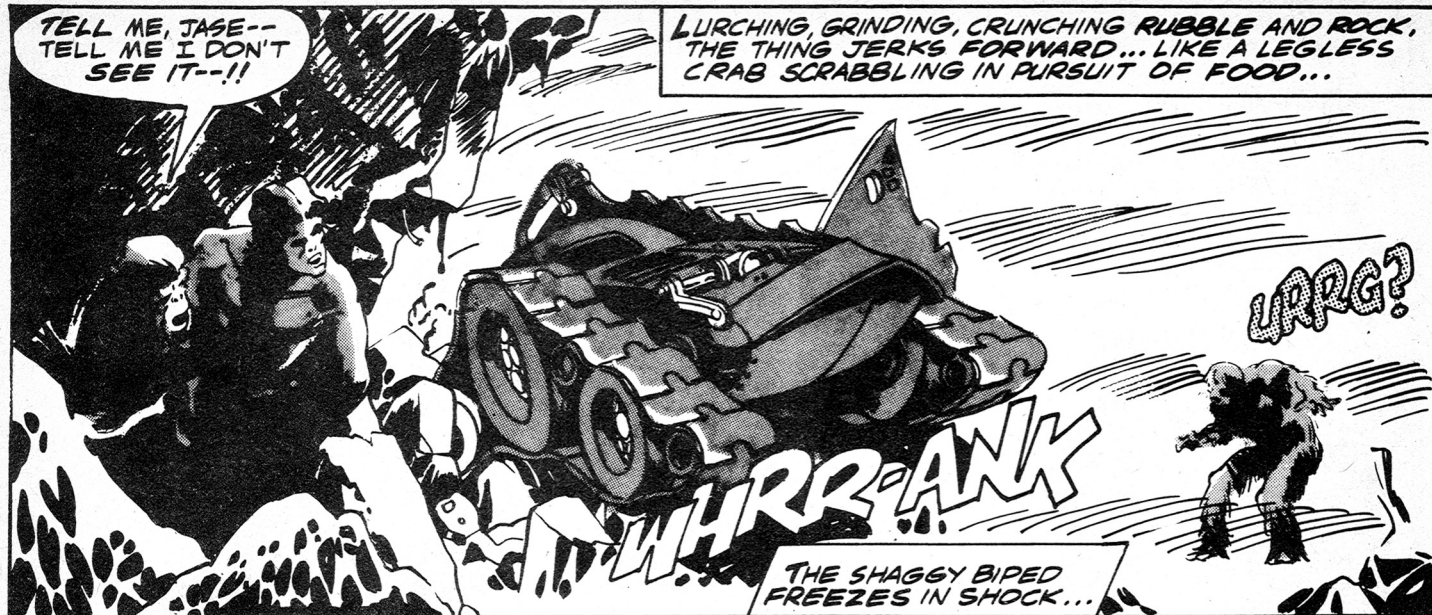
WAIT A MINUTE.
DO YOU HEAR
THAT?

URG

WHRR-ANK

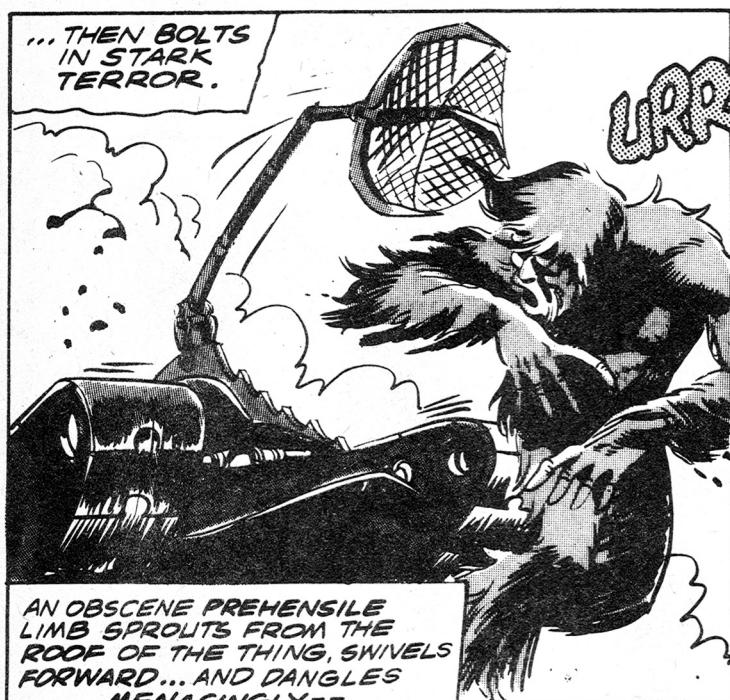
TELL ME, JASE--
TELL ME I DON'T
SEE IT--!!

LURCHING, GRINDING, CRUNCHING RUBBLE AND ROCK,
THE THING JERKS FORWARD... LIKE A LEGLESS
CRAB SCRABBLING IN PURSUIT OF FOOD...



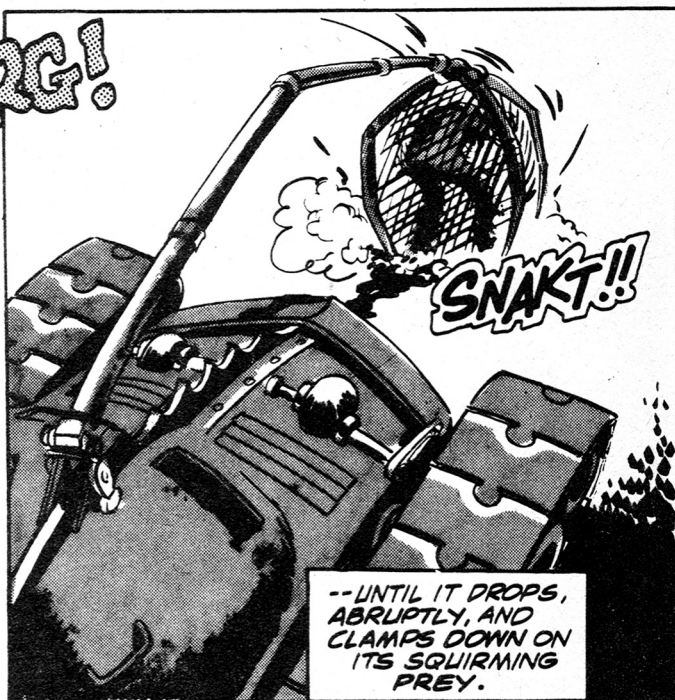
THE SHAGGY BIPED
FREEZES IN SHOCK...

...THEN BOLTS
IN STARK
TERROR.



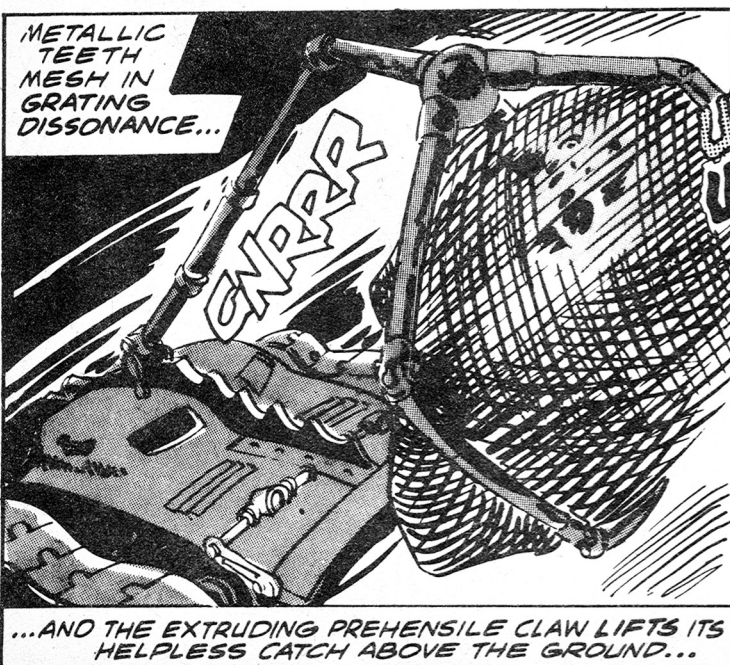
URRG!

AN OBSCENE PREHENSILE
LIMB SPROUTS FROM THE
ROOF OF THE THING, SWIVELS
FORWARD... AND DANGLES
MENACINGLY--



--UNTIL IT DROPS,
ABRUPTLY, AND
CLAMPS DOWN ON
ITS SQUIRMING
PREY.

METALLIC
TEETH
MESH IN
GRATING
DISSONANCE...



UR-RAG!
UR-RAG!

...AND THE EXTRUDING PREHENSILE CLAW LIFTS ITS
HELPLESS CATCH ABOVE THE GROUND...

THEN, WITH ALMOST SMUG DIS-
DAIN, THE THING CLANKS AND
LURCHES AWAY.



IT'S A MONSTER,
ALEX!

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.
IF YOU'D PAY ATTENTION IN
CLASS, YOU'D KNOW THAT
WAS A PRE-HOLOCAUST
MACHINE.



IT IS A SIGHT FORGED IN FERTILE
HELL, A SCENE OF LIVID
TORMENT AND BLEAK DESPAIR...

HEAT TO PARCH THE THROAT
AND SEAR THE LUNGS WITH
CHAFING GRIT AND ASHEN
PLUNGENCY...



SOUNDS TO PIERCE THE EARS AND
DROWN THE MIND IN A CACOPHONY
OF SLUGGISH CADENCE...



YOU THERE--
QUIT
STRAGGLING!

CHANK



YOU HEARD ME--
ON YOUR FEET
AND MOVE
SHARPLY!

URG-?



I SAID
GET UP,
YOU STUPID
BEAST!!

THE FURRY
CREATURE
TASTES THE
LASH
ONCE...

UR-RRG!



...THEN SPURTS
AWAY TO
FLEE...



--FOR ALL OF A
DOZEN PAGES...

SPREE!



...BEFORE BEING
REDUCED TO A
SMOLDERING
HEAP OF
ASHES!



IT'S
MADNESS,
ALEX!

WHAT
ARE
THEY?!

THE CREATOR
HAVE PITY ON YOU,
JASON...THEY'RE
YOUR ANCESTORS...

MUTANTS

SO...



NEXT ISSUE: SPAWN OF THE MUTANT-PIT!

JOURNEY TO THE PLANET OF THE APES



It took me roughly a day to get to the Planet of the Apes. An hour driving from Manhattan to Kennedy International Airport; six hours jammed into a very crowded 747 eating soggy Hungarian Goulash and wondering all the while why I'd been fool enough to fork out three bucks for the privilege of watching a truly lousy film; an hour of kicking, screaming, gouging, cursing, kung fu—you name it—just to get my bags and get the hell out of Los Angeles International Airport—which is a pretty horrific nightmare in itself, mad bombers notwithstanding—and, finally, a couple of truly hectic hours spent driving around the Los Angeles freeway system, wondering why I'm heading towards San Clemente when I wanted to go to Hollywood, wondering why everyone drives at seventy or they drive at seven, wondering who the creep was who invented the automobile and why I don't wring the little bum's neck. And eventually—after much trial and error and a few near-collisions—finding myself heading north on the San Diego Freeway to Olympic Boulevard, hanging a right and trucking on down to the Avenue of the Stars, hanging another right on West Pico and...bingo!

Twentieth Century-Fox. Home of *Planet of the Apes*. I have arrived.

A brief digression. And we flip backwards through the time stream to 1968 and the premiere of a hit film, the Fox/ApJac production of Pierre Boulle's novel, *Planet of the Apes*. Produced by Arthur P. Jacobs, directed by Franklin Schaffner, starring Charlton Heston, Roddy McDowall and Kim Hunter, the film turned out to be a runaway success. Which—in the manner of many studio runaway successes—spawned a sequel, *BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES*. Which—lo and behold—spawned a sequel of its own, *ESCAPE FROM...* This pattern repeated itself through a total of five films (the original *PLANET*, *BENEATH...*, *ESCAPE...*, *CONQUEST...*, and *BATTLE...*), all phenomenally successful, though many viewers felt that the sequels never really re-captured the strength and alien beauty of the original—on the other hand, there were many who felt that those lacks were more than compensated for by better concepts and better scripts; the arguments can go either way equally well.

Anyway, CBS-TV bought the TV rights to the original film, and they plopped it on the home screen one weekday evening and—WOW!—the film rolled up some of the highest ratings ever seen in the history of the business. Which added considerable impetus to the drive by certain interested parties to get the *Apes* series/concepts/what-have-you onto the prime time video airwaves.

Which resulted, eventually, in a TV series, *Planet of the Apes*, produced by Herbert Hirschman and Stan Hough, and starring Roddy McDowall as the renegade chimpanzee, Galen—one of the few Apes in this strange, alien world of the future willing to befriend the two astronauts from out of Earth's past—Ron Harper as Astronaut Alan Virton, James Naughton as his companion in nightmare, Astronaut Pete Burke; with Mark Lenard and Booth Colman doing the honours in the tenacious villain department, with Lenard playing Urko

—a gorilla, chief military officer of the Ape council and their chief of security; the number one heavy—and Colman playing Dr. Zaius—orangutan and head of the Ape scientific community (Colman reprising the role created in the first two films of the series by noted British actor, *Maurice Evans*; which brings to mind an interesting—and ironic—footnote: you see, many years ago, when Booth Colman was a much younger, struggling actor, one of his first professional jobs on the Broadway stage was playing the role of Guildenstern in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the title role played by—you guessed it!—*Maurice Evans*. In a sense, Colman's career to date has gone full circle; he began with *Maurice Evans* and now he is taking over a role created by *Evans*.)

Which is where I come in. For, when one's company—in my case, *Marvel*—is actively involved in publishing a magazine, *Planet of the Apes*; and one of the TV networks is filming a series entitled, *Planet of the Apes*, it is only logical that the two projects should dovetail, each branch of the media being curious about the other, wondering what the other is doing, for example, and how they are doing it. Being the more eager of the two, *Marvel* struck first, and this reporter found himself strapped into a big, crowded 747 flying westward into the Angeleno smog, laden with camera and tape recorder and reams of orders and advice. (Unfortunately, CBS has yet to evince a similar interest in *Marvel* but we're still hoping—any day now the front doors will open and there will be Dan Rather or Morley Safer or—if worst comes to worst—Jim Bouton, microphone in hand, camera crew in tow, ready to ambush anyone available and find out what's cookin' in comics.)

But I digress overmuch. After all, this piece is about *Planet of the Apes*.

To continue...

The series is shot on the lot at Twentieth Century-Fox's West Pico Boulevard studio complex, and on location at the Fox Ranch out in Malibu Canyon, about thirty-odd miles outside Los Angeles proper. The studio itself has shrunk tremendously from the "boom" days of the thirties and forties and—perhaps—early fifties, a vast tract of back lot having been gouged up and transformed into Century City—which movie-goers saw razed and destroyed by fire and simian revolt in the mini-classic *CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES*. And yet, even today, with the studio proper reduced to a mass of sound-stages huddled together on the few acres that remain of the mighty Fox lot, there is an eerie feeling about the place. Because this is where the movies came from—and where some of them still do come from—and the magic is still there.

I turned in off West Pico and, almost immediately, I was literally enveloped by some massive pieces left over from the *huge* Parade set from *HELLO, DOLLY!*, a set that includes a few hundred yards of full-sized two- and three-story buildings and what—from not very far away—looks like a practical, though ancient, elevated subway line and station. It isn't practical, of course—that would have been a ridiculous piece of extravagance (though—speaking of extravagance—set designers once executed a full-size mock-up of the deck and upperworks of a Japanese battleship for the Fox epic, *TORA! TORA! TORA!*)—but the illusion is an incredibly powerful one; and that sets one to thinking. Because if there is any one thing that *Planet of the Apes*—films and TV series both—needs to survive, it is illusion, the suspension of disbelief by the audience; the willingness of the people

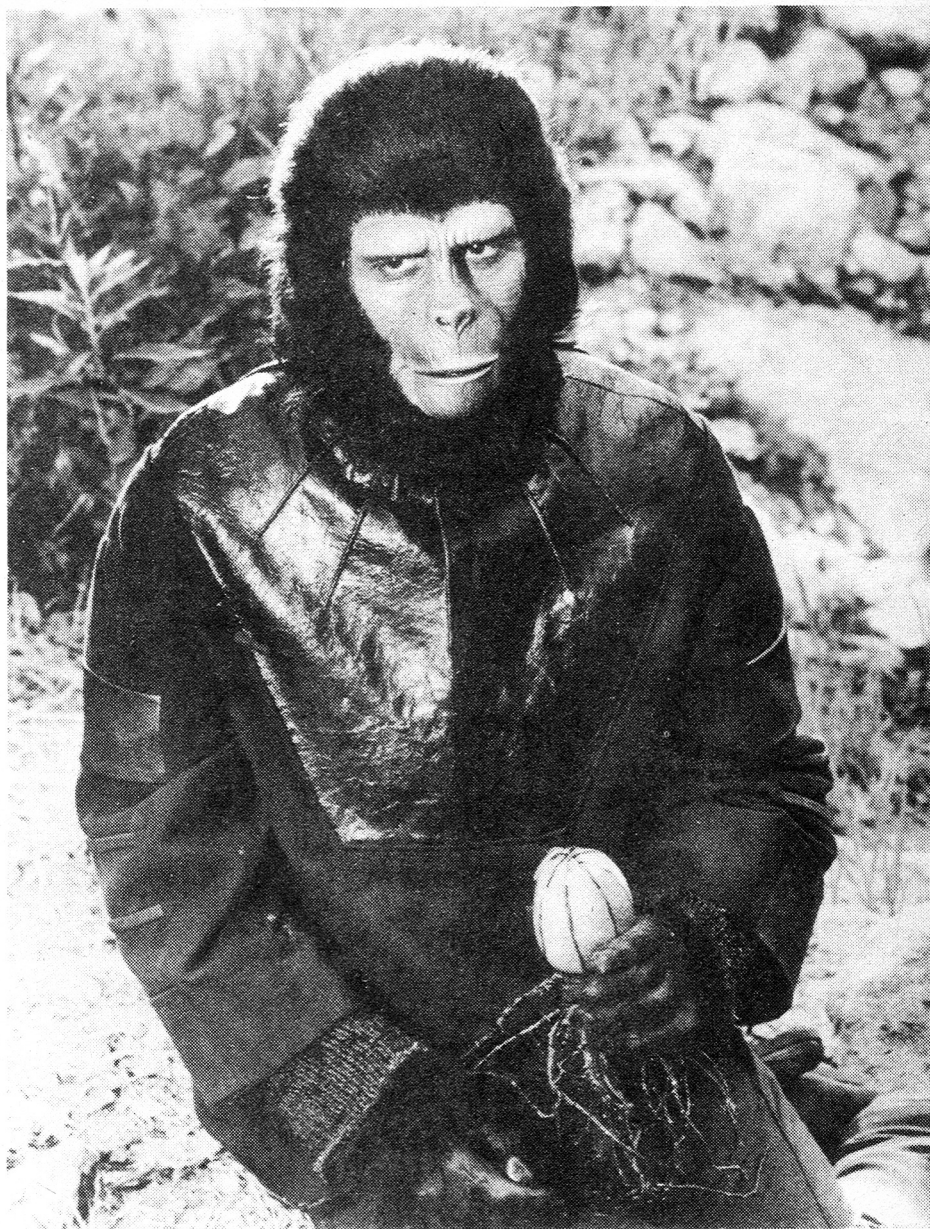


There names are Alan Virdon and Peter Burke and they are astronauts trapped in a nightmare, exiles on a world where Apes rule Man and where Virdon and Burke are fugitives running for their lives.

watching the film to accept the illusion that those really are Apes they are watching up there on the silver screen, and not actors in sophisticated appliances. Lose that illusion—say to yourself that those are just people in funny masks—and there's really no reason to keep on watching the film; it's no fun anymore.

The first day I was on the lot, the *Apes* crew was finishing work on their fourth episode—though not necessarily the fourth to be shown once the show reaches the air—a suspenseful piece entitled, *The Trap*. I threaded my way through the *DOLLY* set, stepping through the door of an 1890 bar, then through a second—far more massive and functional—door onto the soundstage proper. Stages 9 & 10—where *Apes* was being shot—are about average size but to a relative novice like myself, used to the cramped rehearsal halls and only slightly larger theatres of Off-Off Broadway back in New York, it was like stepping into a vast, seemingly empty box.

The first man I met was a gentleman named Emmet,



*The two astronauts have one friend among the Ape community, Galen (Roddy McDowall, reprising—with variations—a role he began in 1968 with the original film, **Planet of the Apes**).*

who is in charge of looking after the coffee/tea/fresh water wagon, and of taking care of incoming phone/written messages for actors and crew during shooting hours, and of checking guests in and out, making sure that the people who wander in are cleared for wandering with the front office. He's not a guard—and yet, in a way, he is, being the stage's first line of defence against outsiders—but there is no way he could, or should, be considered any kind of flunky. He is a really nice guy.

Anyway, once past Emmet and the coffee wagon, I just stood still a moment and looked around the stage. At the far end, in the opposite corner from the door I'd entered through, the crew was working on today's scenes—sequences involving Virton, Burke, Galen, a human family, Urko, a gorilla assistant and the aftershock of a fairly serious earthquake (though not necessarily in that order)—the rest of the stage was dark. To imagine what it was like, picture in your own minds a box that is a hundred/hundred-and-fifty feet square by thirty to forty

feet high, with catwalks and lighting pipes criss-crossing the space above you like some huge, wooden spider's web. There's a curious feeling of impermanence to the interior of the stage, everything looking like it had just been jury-rigged into position an hour or so ago, slammed together so that it would hold for a day or so and give the carpenters no trouble at all when they arrive to rip it all apart to set up somewhere else. And that feeling isn't all illusion; because the floor of the stage is littered with the shells of sets: a large barn interior, the Ape council chamber, various parts of various interiors of various human dwellings—which all seem to be barely a step or two above hovel in design and appearance—more Ape City interiors, more human village interiors, the whole kit-and-kaboodle tagged and shoved neatly out of the way until it's needed, either later on in this episode or in some other.

Which is not to imply that the soundstage is any kind of big, hollow, empty, sacrosanct temple sort of place; in reality, it isn't even all that neat. There are just too many



Alan Viridon (Ron Harper). Astronaut. A proud, tough, determined man who has found himself exiled two thousand years distant from the wife and son he loves dearly. He cannot accept the fact that they have been dust for aeons, that he is alone, that he must begin again on the Planet of the Apes if he is to survive.

people running around trying to do too much in too short a time, all of them wondering how the hell they got on this damn' treadmill in the first place. There are actors, actors' family/friends, child actors' parents, child actors' tutor, technicians, more technicians, and lots and lots of extraneous on-lookers. Such as myself.

So I stood—as far out of the way as possible—and I watched. And I learned.

For the actors, the biggest part of a working day in film is waiting. Waiting for the camera set-up to be completed so they can shoot the scene; waiting for the film to be reloaded; waiting for the director to finish a hurried confab with his Director of Photography—in this case, the Director of Photography being *Gerald Perry Finnerman*, of *Star Trek* and *Kojak* fame, an excellent craftsman who well-deserves his reputation (and a man probably only a few steps removed from Godhood for the work he did behind the camera on *Star Trek*; that is, if one is a true *star Trek* freak; if not, you don't know what you missed and you might as well go back to *Planet of the Apes*.)

The waiting isn't so bad if one is a principal character and/or one is in the scene being—or about to be—shot;

one can always study one's script or talk with the other actors about how one is going to play the scene. One can do an impromptu rehearsal—which indicates, to me, one of the crippling faults of the television series as shot in the United States—all too often, the only time actors have to rehearse and work with each other and the director on their scenes is during the camera set-ups. Which leaves the quality of the work done by the actor up to the actor and to the Director of Photography. If the Cinematographer is a real klutz and it takes all day to get the lights and camera set, then the actor has just that much more time to work on his scene; but if he's a pro—and Gerry Finnerman is a pro—the actor can often be up the proverbial creek minus the proverbial paddle, because the only way anyone can rehearse then is by having the crew sit around and wait. And that can be expensive.

Which means, simply, that the actors have to be very good.

I watched the crew run through the earthquake scene before they all broke for lunch. They'd been shooting it all morning, evidently, and things hadn't been going well and they were starting to run behind schedule. The problem, simply, was that whenever you see earthquakes or starships getting blown around subspace—things like that—bodies shaking or falling or getting thrown about on screen, nine times out of ten it's the bodies themselves—or the camera(s)—that are doing all the shaking. The set stays nice and level on good old dependable terra firma (yet, true to form, a couple of days after they shot this scene, the Los Angeles basin was shaken by a pretty respectable aftershock of the Sylmar 'quake of two years ago; which means, I suppose, that in the final analysis: if it's shot in LA and the scene shakes, it could be anything, including reality).

So, there are Ron Harper (Viridon), Jim Naughton (Burke), Roddy McDowall (Galen) and this episode's guest artists, shaking and jiggling around a crude wooden table, trying to knock a bottle onto the floor without even hinting that they are the true culprits—it was the earthquake done it. Except that nothing happened. The bottle either stayed where it was or fell at the wrong time. And they had to do it again. And again. And again.

Eventually, the bottle got it right and everyone broke for lunch, humans heading for the commissary, Apes for the fruit/soft drink stand, Roddy McDowall for his private Winnebago trailer/bus-cum-dressing room-cum-office. Private because, after all, he is the star of the show, but also because wearing as complex and painful an appliance as he wears five days a week, often twelve hours a day, can be agony in and of itself. Add to that, the constant hubbub and oooh's-and-ahhhh's from the 'peanut gallery' of guests on the set, and their constant attempts to get a few words—or a *lot* of words—or an autograph out of him, and the choice soon becomes very basic: either one gets some privacy or one goes—if you'll pardon the pun—bananas.

Later on that day, when his scenes were done, McDowall stripped off his appliance and one was treated to a rare view of the human face of Roddy McDowall; and the damndest thing about watching him take the appliance off was that, when he was done, he somehow didn't look... *right*. Having gotten so used to seeing him in his simian incarnation, it was a little mind-blowing to realize, after all, that it was only an application, and that there was indeed a man underneath.

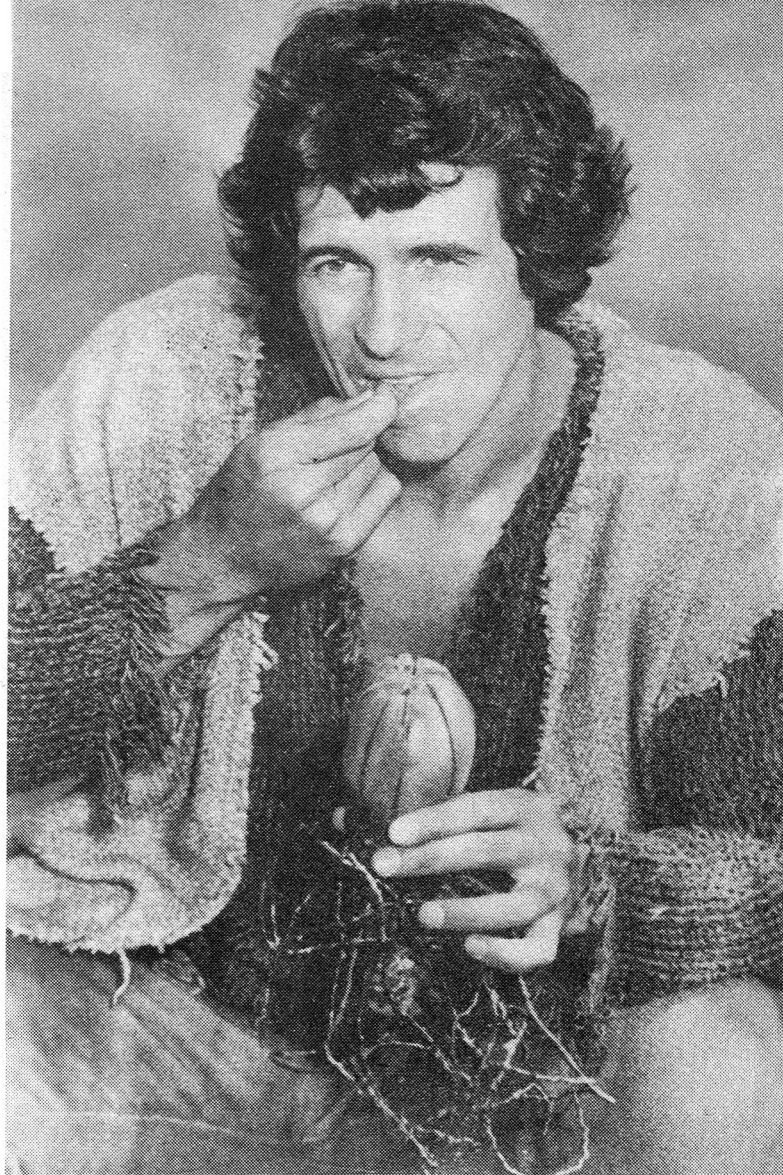
A couple of days later—out at the Fox Ranch when the crew was shooting the fifth episode, *The Cure*—I spoke to Fred Blau, one of make-up chief's Dan Striepeke's team of make-up artists assigned to handle this most critical, delicate and essential facet of *Planet of the Apes*. I met four of them while I was out there—Fred Blau, Sonny Burman (who worked along with his brother on David Wolper's acclaimed *Primal Man* series; in fact, only the merest quirk of fate caused them to miss flying back to LA with the rest of the crew on the doomed airliner that crashed some months back en route back from location shooting for one of the series' episodes, wiping out almost the entire production team, including designer Janos Prohaska), Ed Butterworth and Frank Westmore (of the legendary Westmore brothers, whose names can be found next to the make-up credit of more Hollywood productions than seems decent)—but there were more, one make-up man assigned to each actor who had to wear a full application, with a general crew to handle the mask-wearing Apes (the extras) and the human actors.

The most notorious element of John Chamber's brilliant Ape applications is, of course, the time needed to put them on. The average figure seems to be about three hours, depending on the skill of the make-up artist involved—but, because this is a weekly series and because these men have to apply the make-up day in and day out, sheer familiarity with both the process and the face it's being applied to enable the make-up artists to streamline their operation slightly, thereby making it easier on themselves and the actor. Even so, the general time still rounds out at close to three hours.

It begins with the upper face being laid down over the actor's cheeks and forehead, the latex appliance being 'cemented' down with spirit gum or glue or some other adhesive—what adhesive gets used usually depends on whether or not the actor has any sort of allergic reaction to spirit gum, glue, etc. This takes about a half-hour or so—the make-up call for simian principals being three hours before the camera call; as the average day begins at eight AM, this makes the time roughly 5:30 in the morning. The upper face now firmly in place, make-up crew and actor(s) break for breakfast—the actors eating hearty, as this is the last solid food they will eat *all day*—and then, fifteen minutes later, it's back to the salt mines.

Like any other make-up job, it isn't really the gluing down of the appliance that takes the time: there's a head piece and there's a chin piece and only so much time is needed to insure that they're both firmly in place. What eats up the final 2½ hours of the make-up session is the painstaking task of *finishing* the appliance. Of fitting the wig and chin hairs, of combing and smoothing and gluing and combing again, so that—when all is said and done, etc—the application looks like real hair and real features on a real face, and not some two-bit, slapped-together amateur-night job where anyone with decent eyes can see the lace core of the hair piece. Also, a sloppy job will only create worse problems later on during the day's shooting.

Once the application's on, the make-up team reverts to a sort of maintenance mode, hanging around throughout the rest of the day's shoot in case something goes wrong with one of the applications. And things do go wrong; through nobody's fault but just through an average day's wear and tear. Someone's chin piece might work loose during a scene—the glue might melt, stretch—and so a



Pete Burke (James Naughton). Astronaut. As tough and determined a man as his companion. A man who accepts reality for what it is and wastes no time thinking of what he left behind two thousand years ago. The past is dead and buried—leave it that way.

triangular chunk is cut out of the back of the chin piece, the entire piece is re-glued back into place; or, if that won't work, the whole thing has to be ripped out and replaced, another two hour job that everyone—actors, directors and make-up men—would like to avoid at all costs. Things can get especially hairy out at the Fox Ranch, where—on a good day in mid-summer—the temperature can head up towards three figures and when that basic heat is combined with the heat generated by the giant arc lamps the crew uses to light the exterior sets... suffice it to say it can get very hot. And life can occasionally get quite uncomfortable for a man wearing a full face simian application acting under those lights. A weight loss of ten pounds on a day like that is not considered unusual.

And you thought acting was a *fun* profession, did you?

The make-up team usually ends up creating about 120 applications a week, and running through them almost as quickly, fitting the principals' applications over life masks moulded from those actor's faces. Guest stars, on the other hand, must make do with applications moulded off a series of general life masks; so, for them, the fitting is not always exact, and, occasionally, that can lead to



A set-up from one of the early episodes, shot on location out at the Fox Ranch. The humans in the picture (reading left to right) are Jim Naughton, Ron Harper, that episode's director, and Director of Photography, Gerry Finnerman.

some on-the-spot realignment and adjustment. Which is no fun in an air-conditioned dressing room, but when it's done in hundred-degree heat...ouch!

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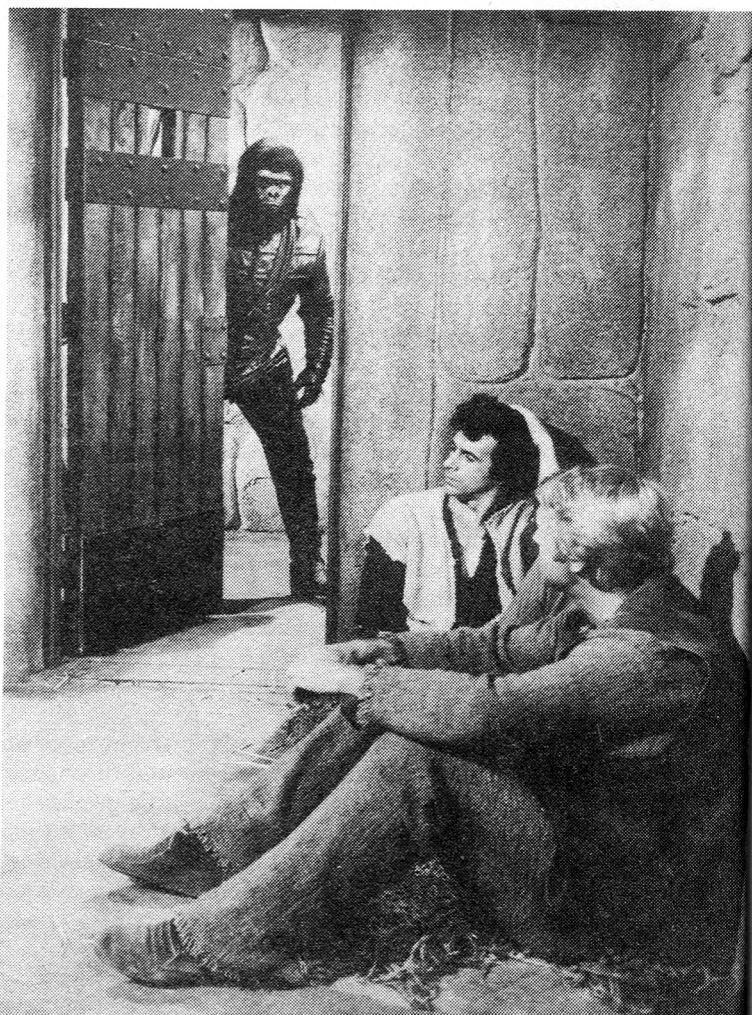
From make-up, it seems only natural to return to the chimp who started it all: Galen a.k.a. Caesar a.k.a. Cornelius a.k.a. Roddy McDowall, who has been involved with the simian side of the *Apes* phenomenon for so long that—as I said earlier—one finds oneself hard pressed to think of him as anything *but* a chimp.

For the record, though, Roddy McDowall has been in the Business—that is, involved in all phases of theatre, movies and television—for quite some time, beginning, as a child actor and working his way through over 80 films. He's done live theatre on and off-Broadway. He's guest starred on so many TV shows, it's l ome ridiculous to count. He's an expert still photographer, and a photo-journal of his entitled "Double Exposure" went through two printings some years back.

Ron Harper, on the other hand, was *not* a child actor. He was almost a lawyer, but he decided that acting was closer to where his head was at and moved off to New York to study with Lee Strasberg after working two seasons with the Princeton University Players. He's worked Broadway—and Off-Broadway—and done stock and soap operas. And, for those of you whose memories go back that far, he starred as Lt. Craig Garrison in the late, lamented World War II action series, *Garrison's Gorillas*. Before that—which is going back a fair piece, even for this reporter—he was a regular on *87th Precinct* and *Wendy and Me*.

Jim Naughton started off his professional career with what might be termed—in polite company—a *bang!* He played the role of Edmund Tyrone in the recent off-Broadway revival of Eugene O'Neill's classic play, *A Long Day's Journey Into Night*, the production capped

Portrait in nightmare: two men, astronauts, trapped thousands of years distant from their own time, trapped on a planet where Apes rule men, trapped on Earth.





On location, the temperature can easily break 100 degrees under the lights, and a make-up artist finds that his work is rarely—if ever—done.

by the late *Robert Ryan*'s brilliant performance as James Tyrone, along with strong support from *Geraldine Fitzgerald* as Mary Tyrone and *Stacy Keach* as James Tyrone, Jr. Since then, he's done both film and television work.

The trekkies among you will know Mark Lenard instantaneously as Sarek of Vulcan, Spock's father; those with more esoteric trekkie memories will remember him also as the Romulan Commander from the 1967-68 season's classic episode, *Balance of Terror* (we are, of course, talking about *Star Trek*). Lenard seems to be a man blessed—or cursed—with a career that involves him with physical appliances: first, the Vulcan ears; and now, the full simian/gorilla application of Urko, chief law officer of the Ape Council. The bad guy.

Which brings us—last but not least—to Dr. Zaius. Otherwise known as Booth Colman, an actor who has done excellent work on Broadway—beginning with that long ago production of *Hamlet*, starring Maurice Evans—in films (*JULIUS CAESAR*, *AUNTIE MAME*, *ROMANOFF AND JULIET* and *THE GREAT WHITE HOPE*, to name a few), and on television, guest-starring on such diverse shows as *McCloud*, *Kung Fu* and *Police Story*. And now, swathed in orangutan orange, he takes over the role created by his old boss. Everything changes, everything stays the same.

*

I went wandering that first afternoon, out of Stage 10 and into Stage 9, to see what the crews were busy working

on for tomorrow's schedule. It wasn't much, just a full-size mock up of a San Francisco subway station, complete with full-size subway train and lots and lots of rubble, courtesy of a gentleman referred to cryptically as 'The Cowboy Man.'

The Cowboy Man has been around a long time and he tells some pretty hairy stories—but I've digressed too much as it is and this really isn't the place to talk about how *Cecil B. DeMille* smashed a real-live telephone pole through the side of a train car what looked to be mere inches from where *James Stewart* was standing in DeMille's epic, *THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH*; it was a real fun story, though, heh, heh. But today the Cowboy Man was working, dressing the subway set so that it would look appropriately ancient for tomorrow's scenes—after all, it is two thousand-odd years old and there have been a few earthquakes in the interim, 'quakes that shattered the tunnel roof and sealed the station, 'quakes that soon serve to trap a desperate, hunted Pete Burke (the Jim Naughton character) and his chief hunter, Urko. And therein you have the reason for the episode's title, *The Trap*: Urko and Burke stuck in this very old, very decrepit BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) station, facing certain death unless they can work together to get out. Nice plot, huh?

Anyway, the Cowboy Man had sprayed some cobwebs all over the corners and nooks and crannies of the set, and was now busy sorting through a tractor-scoop full of concrete chunks and bricks—very high-class rubble this;



Another shot of the location set, this showing a simian military barracks, home of the police detachment that guards and monitors this particular human settlement.

only the best for *Planet of the Apes*—searching for just the right-sized pieces of just the right consistency.

Suffice to say, when I saw the set the next day—during a scene in which Urko was busy throttling Burke in front of an information console, Burke yelling desperately that both of them were trapped and that if they didn't work together they'd both die, Urko grunting a lot but eventually accepting the reality of the mess the script-writer had just dumped him in... ahhhh, the things a SAG card will get one into—anyway, while they were shooting this dramatic scene, I looked around the BART set and I had to admit, the Cowboy Man had done one fine job. The place was a real mess.

What with all the guests standing around watching the near-murder taking place on camera, the place looked and felt a lot like a Times Square subway station at rush hour. I guess there are just some things you can't escape from.

*

A few days later, I was out at the Fox Ranch, up in Malibu Canyon watching the *Apes* crew go to work on their next episode—*The Cure*—under the direction of Bernard McEveety. Now, right off the bat, I would like to say that Los Angeles and its environs are very strange. I mean, this is a city of a few million inhabitants, sprawled out over Lord knows how many square miles; and you're in the city, calmly driving down a freeway, and then—boom!—all of a sudden, you're *not*! You're in the country and, as far as you can tell from the land, there isn't a city within miles. It's a very abrupt change for one used to the never-ending urban splutch' of the BoNYWash megalopolis, and—if I may say so—it's kind of weird. End of digression.

The ranch itself is about five miles deep, reaching back into the hills of the Las Vergines/Malibu Canyon road. The first thing I saw as I drove in is a *huge* concrete tank, where—I found after asking around a bit—Irwin Allen had capsized his seven metre long model of the *Queen Mary* (a.k.a. SS *Poseidon*, in the movie of the similar name) some years back. Now, the Fox crews are using it for another Allen disaster flick, *THE TOWERING INFERNO*. There's a tall, slim forty-odd foot tall, hundred-and-thirty story, fire-scarred building standing

in the tank and the word is they're getting it ready to fire off again in a week or two—having just done so with spectacular results a few days before. I cursed my lousy timing and headed for the *Apes* compound.

Apes is tucked way back in the ranch, past the ruined temple from *SAND PEBBLES* that Warner Bros. uses occasionally for *Kung Fu*, and, finally, in the shadow of the knoll that *M*A*S*H*'s helicopters swing around in the opening credits—the *M*A*S*H* set itself was a bit further up the road—I found the village of Trion. And I was back on the *Planet of the Apes*.

To set the scene, *The Cure* involves our heroes, a gorgeous young love interest type named Amy, Urko, Zaius, malaria, some rather pig-headed medical chimpanzees and some rather belligerent gorillas. And the bark of the cinchona tree. No earthquakes, though.

This is a big-budget episode, a lot of exteriors necessitating a fair amount of background villagers—men, women, children and appropriate farm animals of all ages and degrees of health, (after all, many of the people *were* supposed to be dying of malaria) and a fair amount of extraneous apes, backing up the regular apes, and this week's guest star, *David Sheiner*.

They'd been shooting all morning by the time I got there, Bernie McEveety discussing the shots he wanted with Gerry Finnerman, Finnerman—wearing a screaming orange yachting windbreaker and a curious Rivera/Panama hat to keep the sun away (and sun there was—it wasn't a very warm day for LA, that time of year, but the sky was shaded a brilliant azure blue and there didn't seem to be a cloud anywhere, nor any smog)—moving from the lights to the big, boom-mounted Mitchell camera, checking to see that everything was just about right before the scene began. As for everyone else: they mostly sat in the shade—principals working on their lines, simian principals getting their applications checked over, extras just sitting and talking, crew (those that weren't working) doing likewise—and waited for a call from First Assistant Director Gil Mandelik—or his two assistants, Ed Letting and Cheryl Downey—to galvanize the whole melange of talents and personalities into the action.

Images pop out of those two days out at the ranch,

people moving across the dusty main 'square' of Trion, yelling orders and ducking out of sight behind the houses as the camera operator yelled that they were in the shot (actually, he told the A.D. and the A.D. yelled; after all, he had a megaphone so yelling was no great hassle); a couple of authentic looking wrangler types trying to track down a trio of hardened, escaped chickens who were understandably reluctant to return to their wire coop after being set free as background for a couple of scenes (chickens may well be among the dumbest animals God ever created, but they can be excruciatingly, exasperatingly brilliant pains-in-the-butt when they've a mind to be; and these chickens had a panic squawk that would scare a Lovecraft demon out of a year's growth). Or strolling idly around the compound, taking notes and watching the action only to suddenly find oneself face-to-face with an orangutan sitting in a director's chair in pants and torn undershirt, wearing the latest in Foster Grant's 1974 shades. Or bumping into Roddy McDowall as he dashed from his Winnebago to the set, blue terry-cloth robe around his body, cigarette stuck into a cigarette holder poking out of his mouth, sunglasses looking oddly right on his simian features, suddenly shrugging off the robe and shifting into his chimpanzee tunic, slipping out of the whole, irritatingly hot mess as soon as the scene was done and McEveety gave him the OK.

And then there were the goats.

Picture this: A village, its people weary and listless, worn down by what they view as a helpless battle against something in the air that is striking them down without mercy. Killing them. Enter Alan Virdon, Pete Burke and Galen. Virdon has a plan; the disease seems to resemble malaria. If it is malaria, he and the villagers can fight it. Amy won't die (having left a wife and son back in the good old days, before the time warp caught his starship, Virdon is torn between desire for Amy and desire for the woman he loved and left behind; very guilt-ridden, very typical, very American. So what else is new these days?). Virdon calls all the villagers down and starts to give them The Word.

Except that there are these goats, see, brought in for general background and tethered way out beyond the village perimeter in what was hoped to be a classic case of out of sight, out of mind. No such luck.

Virdon begins his speech. Gather round, he calls. *Baaa!*

He starts telling the villagers what they have to do. *Baaaaa!*

He keeps going. *Baaaaaa!*

Not for nothing is Ron Harper a star; undaunted by the off-camera opposition, he ploughs ahead, oblivious to those members of the far off-camera crew already convulsing on the ground. He is reaching the climax of his speech. Unfortunately, so are the goats.

The whole... whatever... of goats are in on it now, one *Baa!* triggering off an answering chorus. No way is the sound mike gonna pass that noise by.

Finally...

Harper: "And we've got to... *get rid of those God-damned goats!*" Or words to that effect. And, as he says this, collapsing towards the ground in an aborted gesture of penultimate frustration—I mean, being heckled by a goat, for cryin' out loud—as the entire crew goes into brief, but trenchant, hysterics.

The goats are struck.

The scene is done again.

And, from the far meadow, wafting in on the wind,

eager, questing ears pick up one final, defiant, never-say-die: *Baaaa!* Luckily for the wee beastie, he was nowhere near either star or director at the time or he might have found himself somewhat precipitously shuffled off this mortal coil of ours. Because as far as this crew was concerned, that goat had had it in Hollywood.

*

That's pretty much it. I took as long returning from the Planet of the Apes as I took going, and the trip was about as much fun.

People ask me, what did I think of it, of the series? Good, bad, indifferent? What? And I've thought about it—realizing that by the time you read this, the show will have been on almost a month and you'll have all made up your own minds—but this is September and the show is still in the can and an unknown quantity and I figure I owe an answer, so here goes. For better or for worse.

I honestly do not know. I've seen good people doing good work—people like Assistant Director *Bill Derwin* and Costumer *Paula Katz* and Wardrobe Assistant *Pete Dawson*, and all the other people I've mentioned throughout this article—and I've seen one of the best crews I've ever seen work like a fine-tuned Swiss watch putting this show together, and I've seen actors practicing their craft and doing a damn' good job of it.

But all I've seen to date are pieces—a scene here, a scene there, all of it done live under conditions that are nowhere near ideal—and because the pieces won't make sense until they're all threaded together and edited and spliced in with a soundtrack and all the rest of the cinema/TV post-production work, it's almost impossible to make any kind of valid judgement about the material one has seen. What I've seen I've liked, and I think I'll like the finished product equally well.

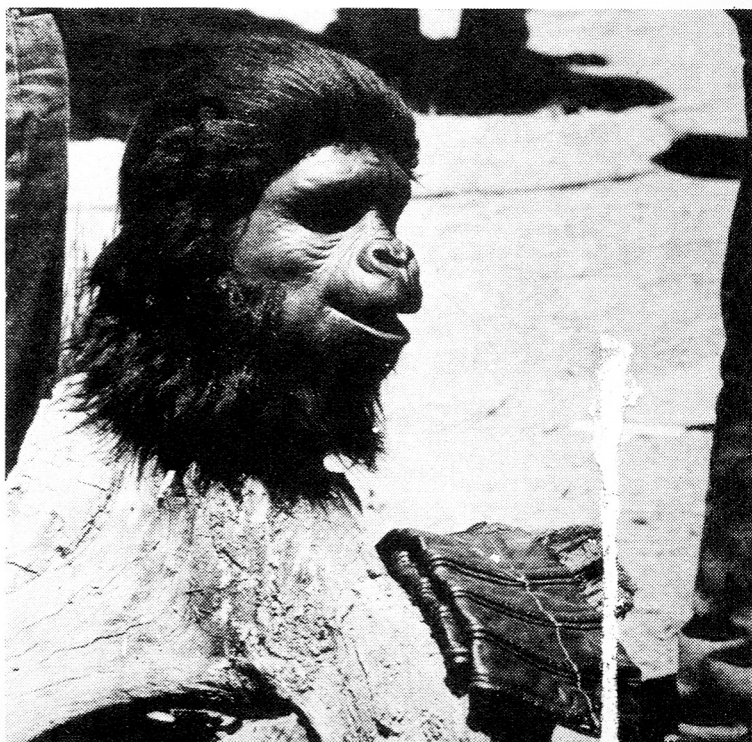
So there. My feelings, take 'em or leave 'em. I like what I've seen and I think the show will work well. And I hope it runs five years, *mimum!* Hell, I hope it catches *Guns* smoke.

'Cause I've been to the *Planet of the Apes*, ladies and gents, and I want to go back. Because I like it there, and I hope it's going to be there to find for a long, long time.

But that, as all of us know, is up to you.



You might say this is a case of some gorilla losing his head. . .but then again, you might not. . .but then again. . .



apes forum

To Marvel:

I, a middle-class ape, having read one of your "Planet of the Apes" comics, am quite astounded by your ability to foresee the future. Apes are only now beginning to study astrology, but to think that humans have actually succeeded in prophesying may mean that perhaps not all Homo Sapiens are morons.

Being Humans, you are no doubt wonder how I came to possess one of your examples of contemporary literature. It was brought by two human astronauts, or so I am told. It's probably just a fable. Humans have not even understood the rudiments of the wheel yet.

The drawings in your mag are really very good, but I must strongly point out to you that we don't keep even humans in cages. We prefer to have them learn how fully to serve their masters, doing work beneath the dignity of the more intelligent apes.

I do not know why I bothered to write this chronicle. Humans were never as smart as they are portrayed in your magazines. Even if this were so, I doubt if a letter can traverse time as did you astronauts, in spite of the very efficient postal service.

Your Imperial Superior, Nathaniel Nobblenoze,
Section 3-G, New Apetown, N. Aperica.

Well, now, praise from an ape is praise indeed! We don't aspire to equalling a monkey when it comes to a turn of phrase but we try. We try! And only the other day such a compliment was paid us. Yeah—someone called us a bunch of chimpanzees! How's about that!

Dear Sir,

I think that your dramatization of Planet of The Apes is very good, but I can't say that I was pleased with the other two stories you introduced. When you finally finish the story of the film I think you should start publishing the TV series with Galen, Virdon and Burke. When 20th Century Fox stop making the series (all good things come to an end!) you must start writing your own.

Tim Haws,

Orchard House, Marklye Lane, Heathfield, Sussex.

You must have been reading our minds, Tim, because when we've finished running the story of the film our present plans are to feature the apes in stories akin to the TV series. Now how do you like our latest second feature stories?

Dear Stan,

Here I am again with my sixth letter about the Planet of The Apes. I hope you got the other letters about the other 5 issues (and other letters about The Avengers and so on). My favourite ape is Galen, and I think your pin-ups are great, really great, and I hope you have one of Galen. I always say, keep them on the cover. And now I am going to tell you where I work. I work at Debenhams, Birmingham. I have a lot of pictures (pin-ups) of the apes and I think the artwork is great (on your mags, I mean), so good luck with your work. From an ape fan.

Andrew Taylor,

220 Crankhall Lane, Wednesbury, Staffs.

Even if you'd omitted that final sentence we'd have somehow figured you as an ape fan. Must be our natural perceptiveness. Yeah—all your other letters safely dropped onto our mat, and each and every one of them has been read, appreciated and noted. And just you reserve a bit more wall-space for more pin-ups to be printed in this mag!

Dear Stan,

I would like to congratulate you on your Marvellous, Immaculate, Brilliant, etc., etc., Planet of the Apes comic. I first found out about the apes when I went to the pictures to see "Battle of the Planet of the Apes". I found it truly fascinating as I had always loved science fiction films. Then came the films "Planet of the Apes" and "Escape From the Planet of the Apes". Unfortunately I was not able to see this last one, so naturally I was delighted when "Planet of the Apes" was brought to Television. I was even more pleased when Marvel produced a comic about it. Now my brother and I have made up a club. It's called A.P.A.—The Association of the Planet of the Apes.

Tyrone Busto,

86 Croft St., Ipswich, Suffolk.

No-one we've discussed the subject with can be one-hundred-per-cent about just what it is that gives the "Apes" sagas their irresistible fascination. But fascination they undoubtedly have—because you and your brother are just two of the tens of thousands who have fallen under the Planet of the Apes spell. But why should we analyse it? You've got the right idea—just relax and enjoy it.

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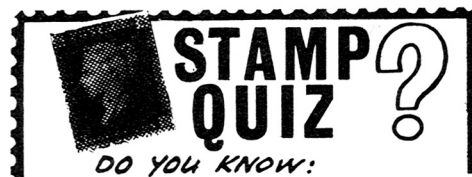
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