

A  
**WARREN**  
MAGAZINE

FAMOUS  
MONSTERS  
#102



FAMOUS

# MONSTERS

OF FILMLAND

PDC \$1.00

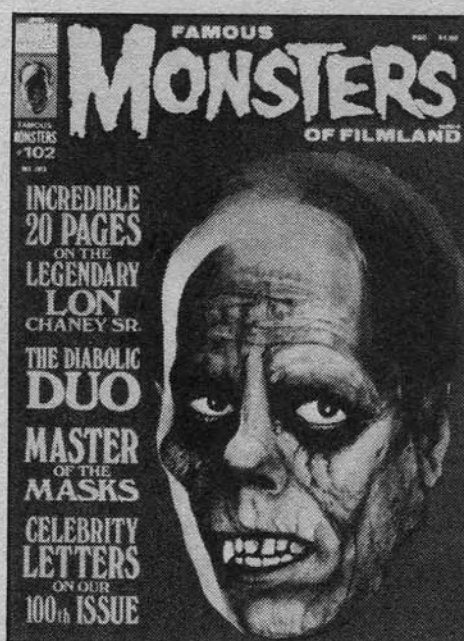
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OCT. 1973

INCREDIBLE  
20 PAGES  
ON THE  
LEGENDARY  
LON  
CHANEY SR.  
PLUS  
THE DIABOLIC  
DUO  
PLUS  
MASTER  
OF THE  
MASKS  
AND  
CELEBRITY  
LETTERS  
ON OUR  
100<sup>th</sup> ISSUE







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FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND, Number 102. Published nine times a year, in January, March, April, May, July, August, September, October and December by Warren Publishing Co. Editorial, Business & Subscription offices at 145 E. 32nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10016. Second-Class mail privileges authorized at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

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Subscriptions in the U.S.: 9 issues (includes special Summer issue and special Christmas issue): \$9.00. Canada and Elsewhere: \$11.00. Editorial contributions are invited, provided that return postage and envelope are enclosed; however, no responsibility can be accepted for unsolicited material or photographs.

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# MASTER OF THE MASKS

monster faces are putty in the hands of Verne Langdon

## langdon after midnight

**I**t was one of those rare evenings in Hollywood; probably a full moon was glowing but the thick ghostly fog revealed only strange shadowy phantom-forms as I drove up the twisted little side-street of lonely Laurel Canyon. It was after midnight, because that was the time the man I was going to meet receives guests. As I pulled into the private drive I spotted the little cottage looking very much like a Disney-designed dwelling. Making my way up the front walk, strains of "Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho" (as sung by the original Seven Dwarfs) greeted my ears; then Verne Langdon himself opened the heavy hand-carved door and I was inside.

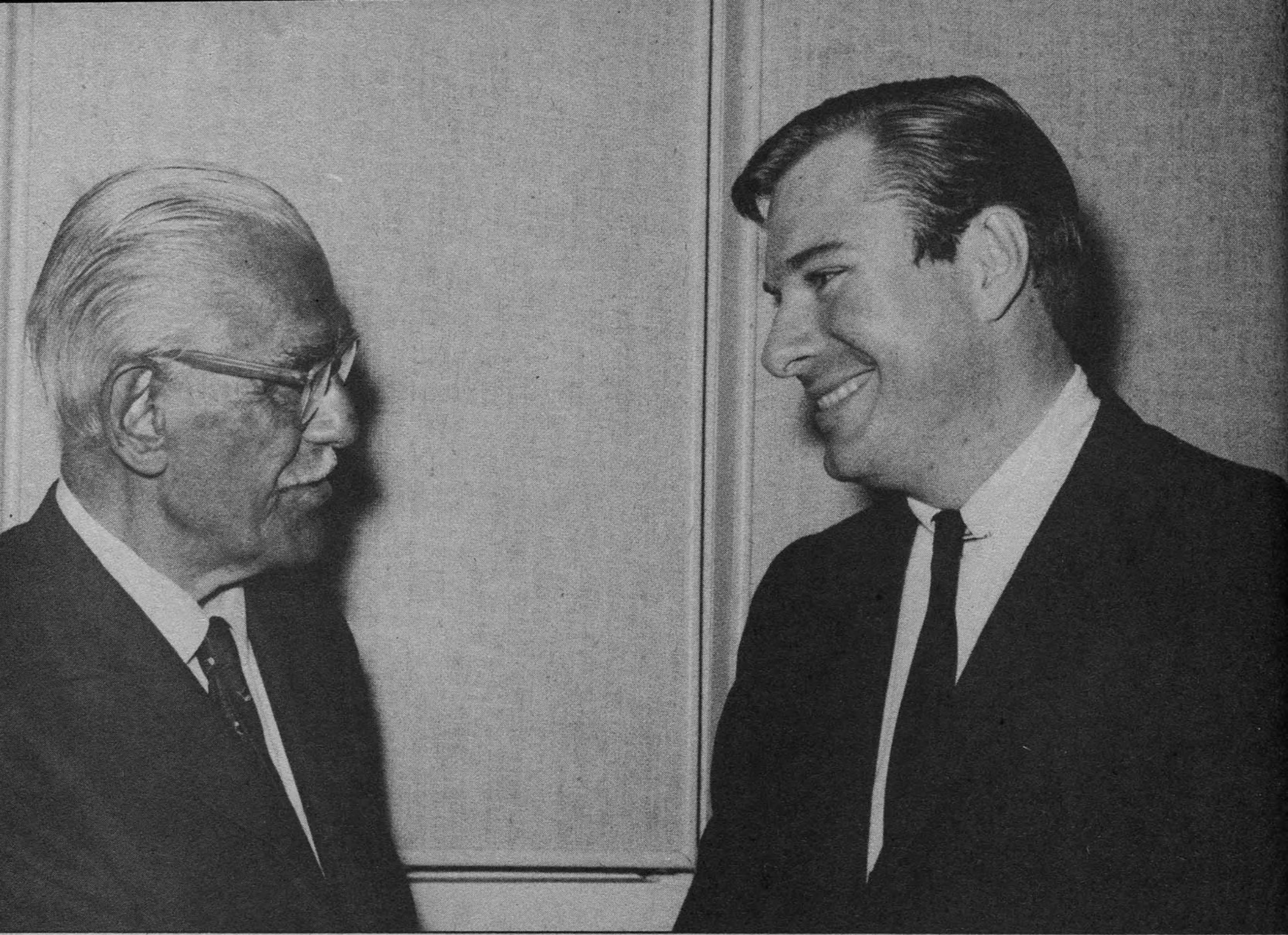
by Bud Philips





Asked what he feeds his pet gorilla, Verne Langdon (right) replied: "Anything that *suits* him." Langdon's simian tuxedo has been seen on LAUGH-IN & THE FLIP WILSON SHOW.





**BORIS KARLOFF, The King, the Day He Did His Thing on Decca Records for Verne Langdon, who had the foresight to capture his narration for posterity.**

"We've done the house in *Early Dwarf*," Langdon explained, and I later learned that Disney actually commissioned the residence for his artists to copy when he did *SNOW WHITE & THE SEVEN DWARFS*! Fantastic puppets & marionettes peer out at a visitor, including several remarkable puppet likenesses of Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, *Frankenstein's Monster* & *The Wolf Man*. "I whipped them up for a night club act once, then decided I didn't like night clubs," Langdon remarked. "But the puppets do add a certain something to the house and I've never had the heart to sell them," he added. "Certain something" hardly describes it. It is done in "Early Dwarf," and the place is hardly what you might expect monster make-up artist Verne Langdon to be living in. But then Langdon is by nobody's standards "ordinary."

## from props to apes

Coming to Hollywood in 1963, he guided a prop & special effects factory to fame creating monster masks of the Universal Film favorites, only to sell back his half of the business to his partner 5 years later to become a make-up artist when John Chambers asked Langdon to join his

staff for the unprecedented *PLANET OF THE APES*. "That was really the beginning for me," related Verne, "and for the first time I was able to concentrate on *quality* instead of *quantity*." (Langdon is, in fact, a demanding perfectionist, a quality which reflects in everything he does.)

Following *PLANET* he stayed on at 20th Century-Ape long enough to work on some masks for various *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* segments, then created clown make-ups for *HELLO, DOLLY!* before taking a staff job at CBS Television City in Hollywood, there to dream up fantasy characters for the likes of *The Red Skelton Show*, *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, *The Jim Nabors Show*, *CBS Playhouse* and various specials.

## instant werewolf!

"I even managed a monster or two along the way," confided Langdon, "like a midget *Frankenstein Monster* on Skelton and transforming Pat Paulsen into *The Wolf Man*. Paulsen's make-up differed a little from Lon Chaney's however, as the entire job had to be completed within 5 minutes while the director stopped tape in front of a live audience!"



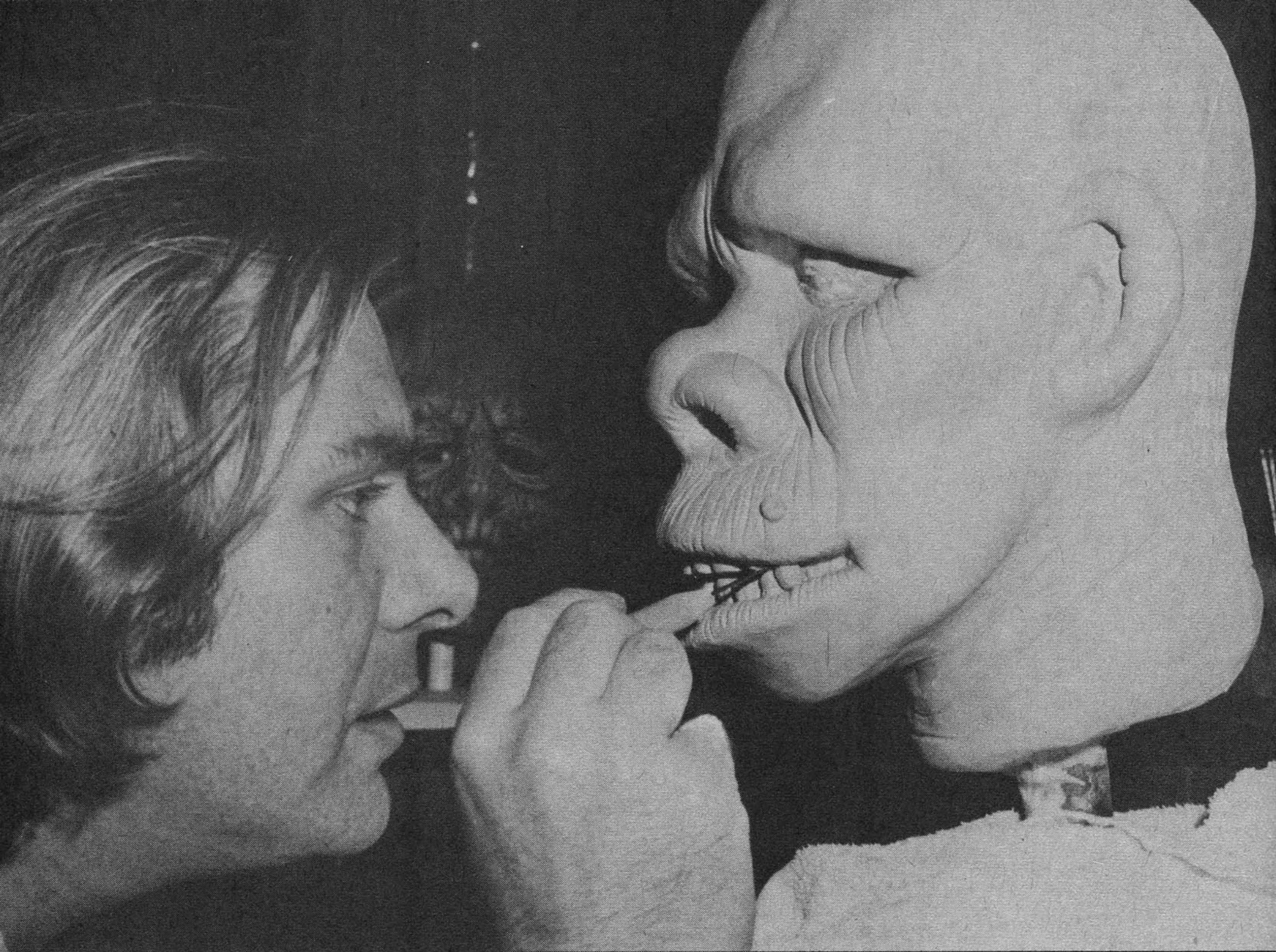
# THE HAIR-WOLF OF LANGDON!



Verne takes a turn at turning an actor (Pat Paulsen) into a Lycanthrope. End result: a wolfman to give Henry Hull, Lon Chaney Jr. & Oliver Reed nightmares!







**The Old Maestro creates a New Mask: the Neanderthal Man!**

After two years at CBS, Langdon began to tire of the "hurry up" pace of TV. "It was the time element more than anything—not enough time for the quality." Then Stan Freberg (the cutting satirist/advertising mogul who created, among other things, that fantastic soup commercial which starred Ann Miller) came to CBS and Verne was assigned to work on the commercial. The two became fast friends and soon after Freberg offered Langdon a position as Production Coordinator with his company Freberg, Ltd. "It was a great opportunity and I grabbed it," Langdon told me. So far he hasn't created any monsters for Freberg's zany commercials but he has done just about everything else from operate the world-famous "Dancing Waters" on that soup commercial to painting a sponsor's name on the bald pate of an actor! "Working for Freberg is a whole new thing for me," explained Langdon, "but my life has always been full of new things."

## the clown at midnight

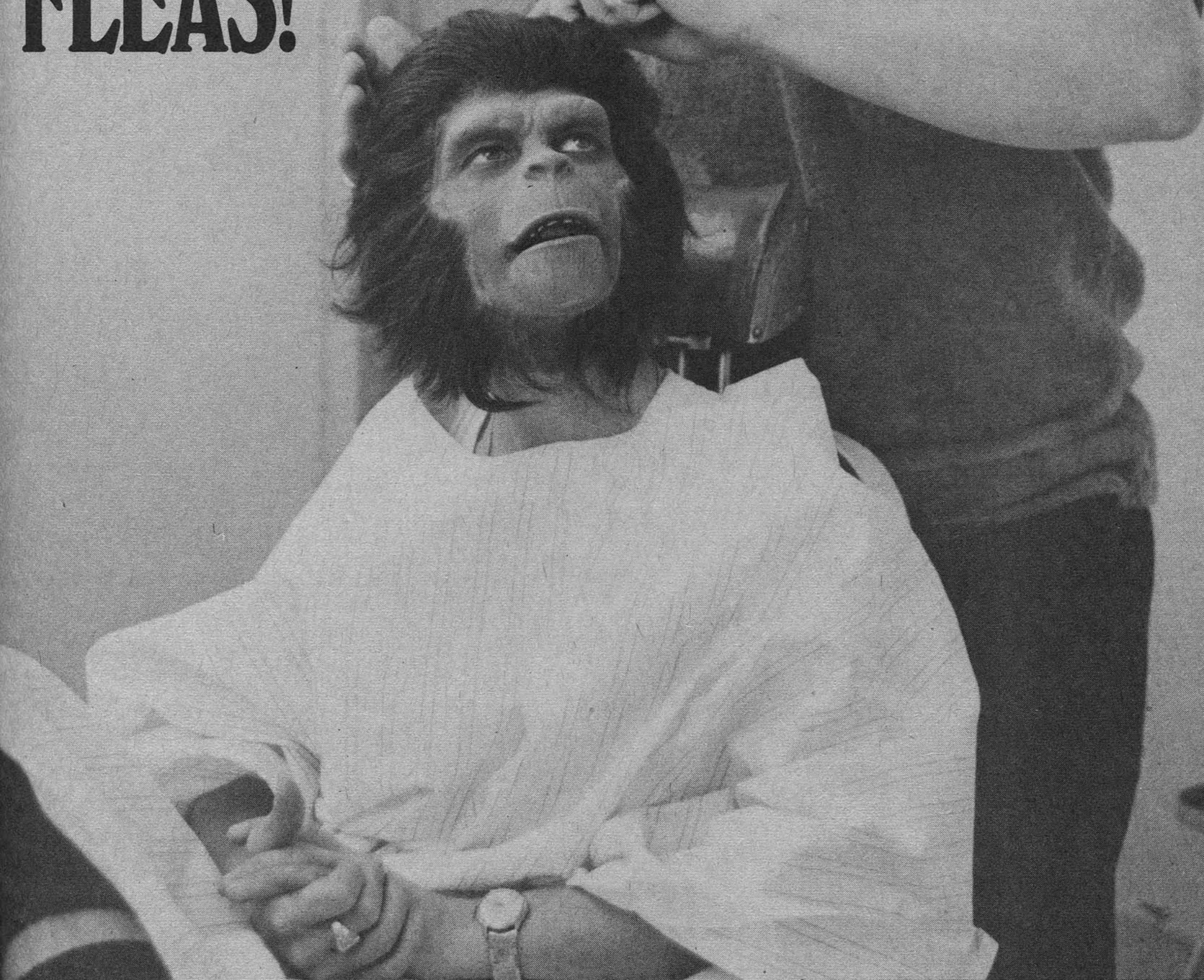
He can say that again! Who else has designed and created all the monsters for Hollywood's

famous MAGIC CASTLE, produced an album for Decca Records ("An Evening With Boris Karloff & His Friends"), written the script & designed all the make-up for a soon-to-be-produced feature monster movie SLUMBER OF '42, and traveled to Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Winter Quarters to teach clown make-up at the famous CLOWN COLLEGE! Langdon proudly told me, "At the Clown College we developed a technique for taking life masks of the famous Ringling clowns preserving their *actual clown make-up* as part of the life mask—if only someone had thought about it while Lon Chaney was still alive!"

But with his many projects continually at hand, the very talented Mr. Langdon continues to create the things he loves most—masks. A preview of some of his "New Faces" is evidence of the master's macabre touch. As he told me, "I'm really able to spend more time creating things for myself instead of for other people—labors of love, things I really want to do." Like that gruesome ZOMBIE recently featured on the cover of CREEPY magazine (see the ZOMBIE MASK in full color on the back cover of this issue) and his recently-completed "NEANDERTHAL MAN" which is in reality more of a make-

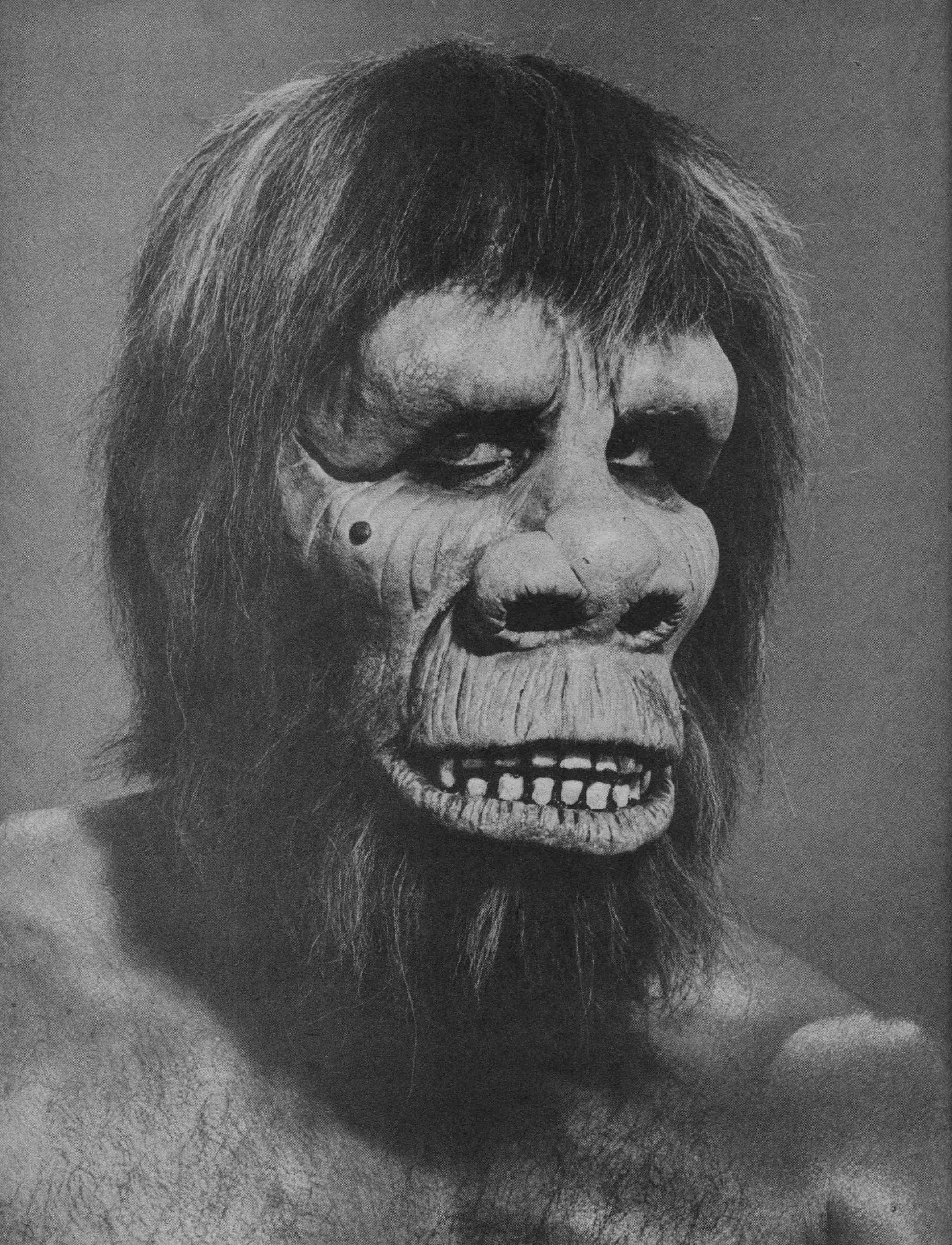


**PLEASE  
DON'T  
SQUEEZE  
MY  
FLEAS!**



Obviously, if Ape Pix ever go out of style, Langdon can always hack it as a hippy barber! (One of many appliances worn by simian stars Roddy McDowall & Others in the PLANET OF THE APES series.)





**The completed product: The Neanderthal Doll. You wind him up and he invites you to his club.  
(You should see the size of his club!)**



up than merely a mask. Each creation varies with Verne's moods & feelings at the time and he works alone, hand-finishing, making up and laying hair on each mask. "That's the only way I know the mask will turn out the way I want it to. I don't need a factory with 12 people to mess something up for me."

Everything is done at Langdon's home-studio, usually in the early hours of the morning. "That's when I do my best work," related Langdon, "when it's quiet, the phone isn't ringing and Dawn (his beautiful wife) is watching the all-night movies. Sometimes she'll sit with me when I sculpt but usually she likes to wait to see the final finished mask."

And his finished masks are spectacular. Made of heavy specially-formulated make-up rubber, each is truly a work of art and reflects the studio craftsmanship quality for which Verne Langdon has become known.

## friend of "the fiends"

Langdon has long been a devotee of filmland frightsters, as his many scrapbooks confirm. He has made up most of Hollywood's top stars, including Vincent Price "and the late, wonderful Boris Karloff." As Langdon told me, "I love working with Vincent; he is fun to be around. And of course there will never be another gentleman like Karloff—I made him up a number of times and of course we did the album—and it was always a great pleasure for me to watch him work. The man was a dedicated artist."

But of all the make-ups he ever did, Verne is proudest of his new masks: "These combine the efforts of many years and are perhaps the best representation of my work."

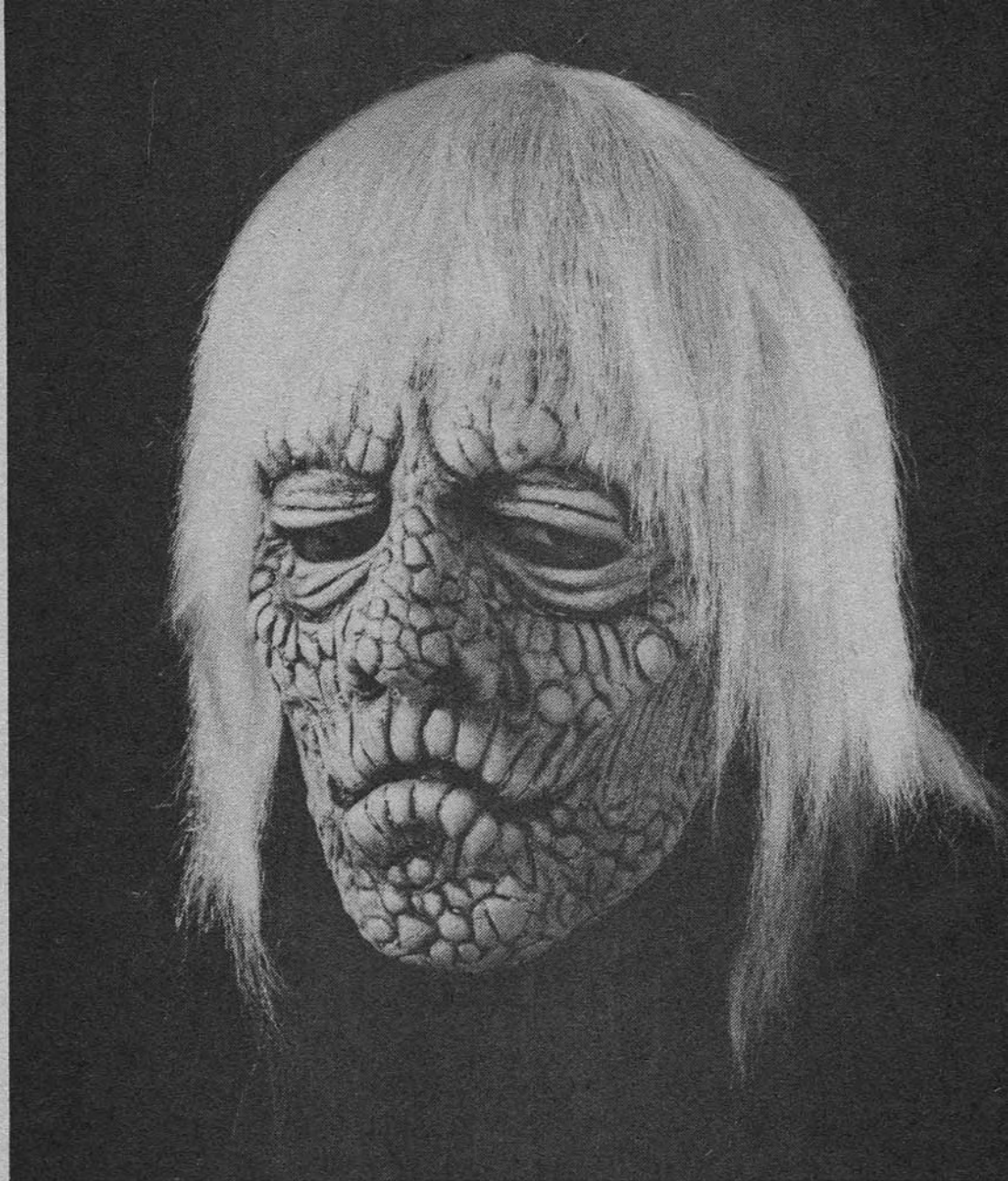
And even as he continues to create new masks, there are many other projects in the planning stages which Langdon hesitates to discuss.

## dracupuncture

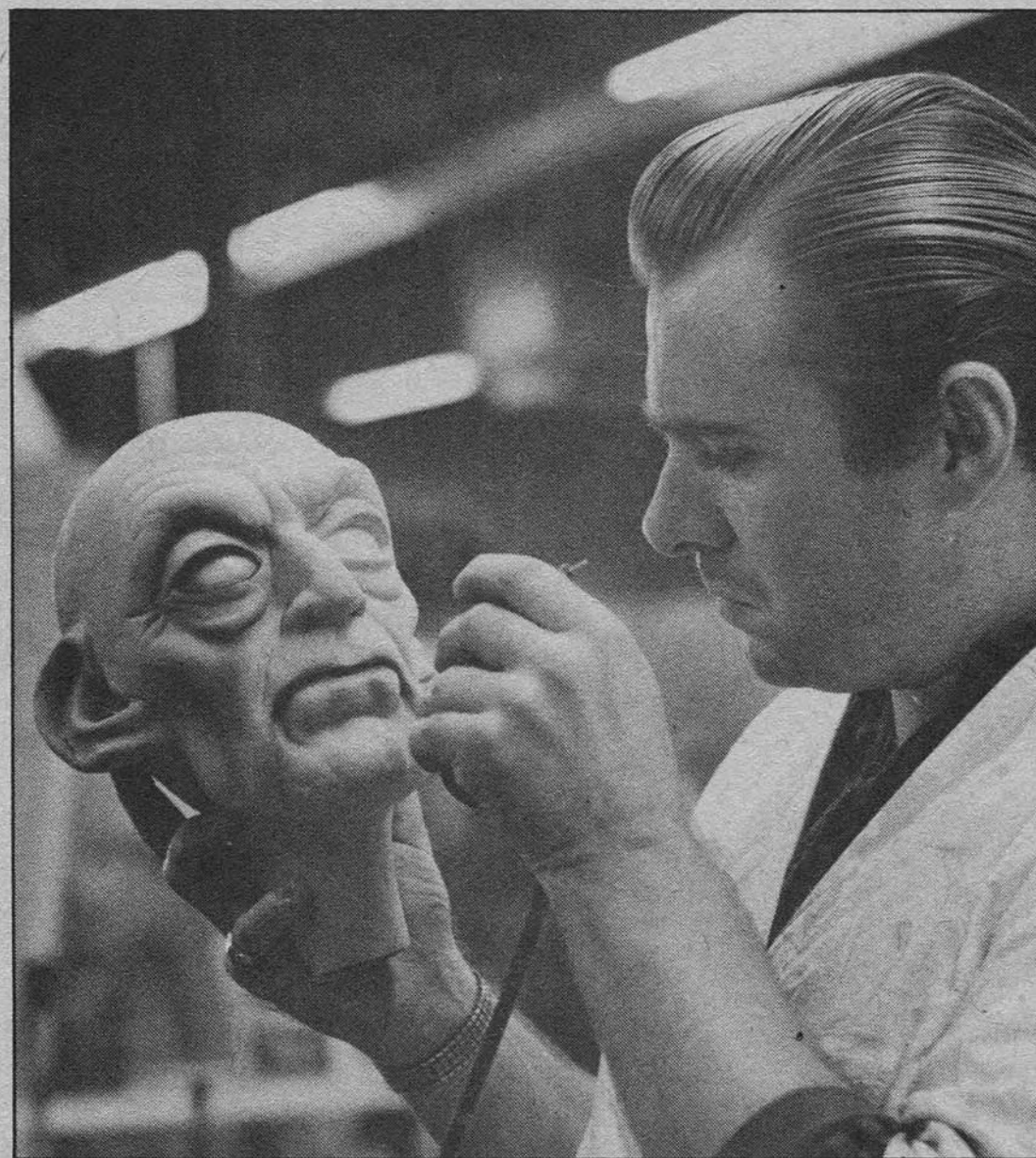
As my interview with Verne Langdon came to a close and the clock ominously struck 3 (a.m.!), I felt a little foolish that I had worried over a midnight meeting with a monster maker. After all, there was absolutely nothing sinister about Verne Langdon. As I got up to take leave, my host cordially offered me another glass of wine. It was only then that I noticed he hadn't touched his own glass. I asked him if he might join me in a toast but he declined, offering a strangely familiar explanation, "I never drink ... wine."

It was still pretty damp & foggy as I drove away & down the deserted canyon, which probably accounts for the sore throat I am still nursing. But if these little puncture marks on my neck don't clear up pretty soon I'll have to tell my doctor about my evening with VERNE LANGDON, MASTER OF THE MASKS!!!

END



Meet Verne's Model, Creepy Suzette, otherwise known as THE ZOMBIE. This mask was featured on the cover of CREEPY, and is available exclusively to readers of FAMOUS MONSTERS from Verne Langdon. See back cover of this issue.



Preparing a puppet likeness of the wonderful man who left us in 1969, the late Master Monster Boris Karloff.



TEN MILLION FANS ASKED FOR IT!

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