

**BATTLE
BEYOND
THE STARS** (pg. 34)

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
HARRISON (HAN SOLO) FORD

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**SFX: The Wizard
of Time & Speed**

**STAR TREK's
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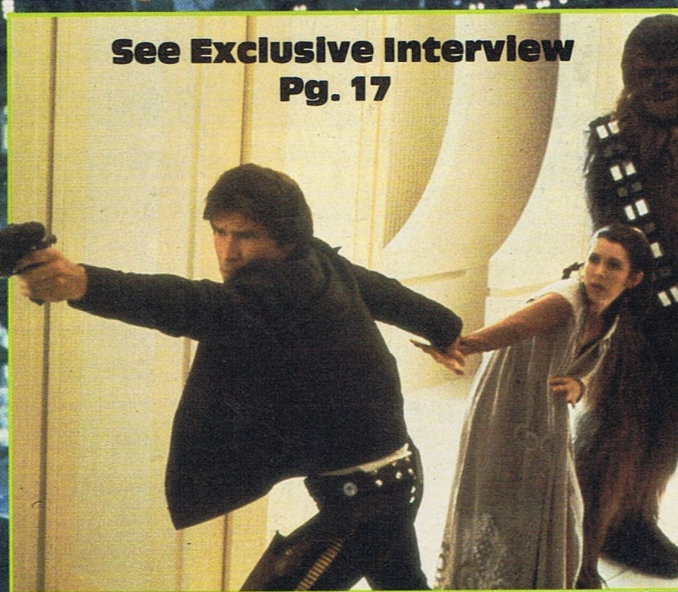
The Writing of DR. WHO

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From the Interviewer's Notebook

It hasn't been all fun and games for one of STARLOG's ace interviewers over the years, although in retrospect, he wouldn't have missed out on any of it—even those "most embarrassing" moments. Here are a few anecdotes that Maronie has collected in his pursuit of the stars.

By SAMUEL J. MARONIE



PHOTO: 20TH CENTURY-FOX

In my role as feature interviewer for STARLOG, I have found it quite exciting to meet the actors and actresses who star in science-fiction films.

It may sound glamorous, but a normal movie press conference usually involves just sitting down with the celebrity and asking him or her a few questions. No wild parties. No Sardi's lunches...but often these routine assignments contain humorous sidelights that seldom find their way into the final story or—if they do—into print.

One of my earliest dips into the pool of SF

Writer Maronie poses with Roddy McDowall on set between takes of an *Apes* movie.

journalism took place before there ever was a STARLOG—January 1973 to be exact—when I visited the set of *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*, at 20th Century-Fox in Los Angeles.

There, off to one side of the idle camera, sat actor Roddy McDowall, resplendent in full ape-regalia. I approached the talented thespian cautiously, for a press agent had warned me of his irritability while under the stifling makeup.

McDowall proceeded to chat amiably, and I began to think there was little need for caution. We came to a lull in the conversation and I asked—for no other reason than to fill the silence—"Mr. McDowall, does it really bother you when visitors point and shout while you're in makeup?"

Even through his heavy appliances, the urbane Mr. McD shot me a withering stare and replied icily, "It *always* disturbs me when people behave foolishly." The egg had scarcely begun to run down my face when he turned and abruptly walked away.

Later that day one of the crew escorted his son—a youngster not more than seven or eight—to the set where he could watch the apes make a movie. The boy stood a respectful distance from the resting McDowall.

The crewman approached Roddy and whispered something into his artificial simian ear. The actor looked over to the boy and then to his father. Catching the high-sign the boy ran up to a startled McDowall and squeezed him in a hug that more resembled a stranglehold, while the still-photographer recorded the moment for posterity.

McDowall, startled, looked into the boy's eyes—and both started laughing.

Perhaps the most embarrassing event in my life took place at the Universal Studios commissary, while I was interviewing *Buck Rogers* co-star Tim (Dr. Huer) O'Connor.

My pen was flying rapidly across the pages of my steno book as I recorded the actor's comments on his SF tele-series. Shortly, the waitress appeared with our drinks and, as she leaned over to set a cup of coffee at my place, the tray tilted enough for a pot of hot tea to spill on the table, on me—and thoroughly soak my notes.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" wailed the waitress. "You've been here writing for almost an hour and I've ruined everything!" (*How perceptive!—Ed.*)

When I finally regained the use of my voice I managed a forced smile and tried to calm the woman's nerves. I looked up and met O'Connor's look of startled surprise and then sheepishly turned away. I vaguely recall actor Wayne Rogers looking over from another table and shaking his head disgustedly at me.

Everyone pitched in to clean up the mess while I managed to salvage most of my papers. O'Connor sighed and remarked dryly, "Well, if I'm misquoted, at least I know there's a good reason for it!"

(*Look for the O'Connor interview in an upcoming issue—Ed.*)

Gossip magazines love to report how stars enjoy battling with the press—trading vicious insults, smashing cameras, etc. What the scandal sheets fail to tell is that often these journalists have it coming.



Tim O'Connor looks on in horror as waitress pours hot tea all over Maronie's notes.

I fell in love with actress Yvette Mimieux when I saw her in her first screen appearance, *The Time Machine*. Meeting her was a real thrill, but the occasion soured—thanks to one cloddish fourth-estater.

Several reporters were quizzing Mimieux about her then-current *Black Hole* opus, and generally having fun with the lovely performer.

Suddenly, one person opens his briefcase and extracts a sleazy skin magazine featuring movie-frame blowups of actresses in the buff. He flipped to a page depicting (a clothed) Mimieux struggling against a male attacker.

He gave her the book and bluntly asked: "How did it feel to get raped on film?"

I wanted to sink into my chair cushions,

but Mimieux paged through the magazine and matter-of-factly explained to the "gentleman" that she had never done a nude scene, refuses to do a nude scene and that the make-believe rape was just that—make believe.

She appeared totally unruffled by the experience: I would have punched the bouncer right on the nose. At least, I thought, she might have tactfully pointed out his rude behavior.

Soon after the interview finished we all rose to leave. Mimieux picked up the book with two fingers, holding it gingerly at arms length as if it were a dead fish. She walked up to her "fan," dropped the magazine in front of him and cooed: "You and whoever publishes this trash can go straight to hell!"

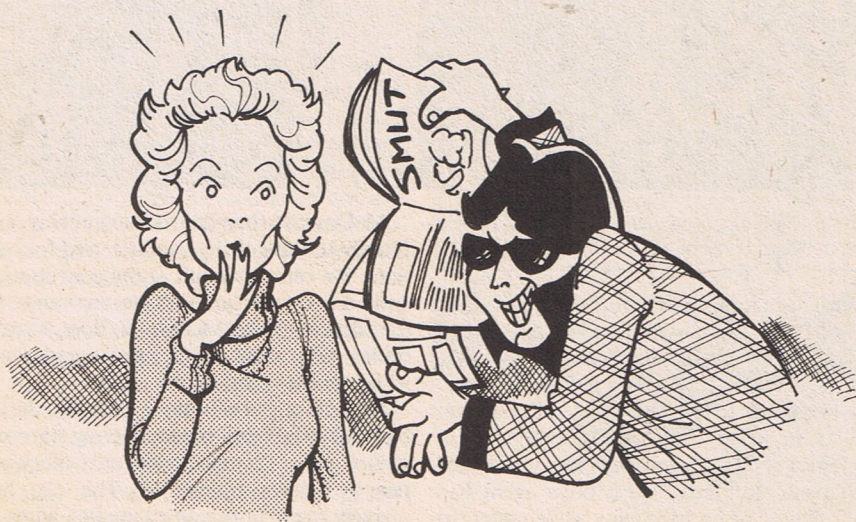
By far the biggest obstacle to interviewing SF film folk are those very people whose job it is to help them meet the press: the public-relations people. There are some excellent ones who will do anything to help you, but many do not understand the SF genre and often hinder instead of help.

The Incredible Hulk—namely Lou Ferrigno—was making a personal appearance at a local amusement park one day when I caught up with him. I explained to the publicity woman on the spot that I was from STARLOG and that we wanted to do a feature on Ferrigno.

The PR lady accepted an issue of the magazine, leafed through it with amused disdain and then laughed outright several times for no apparent reason.

"Well... I don't know..." She was trying to put me off and I wasn't going to let her.

"Let's ask him," I suggested, glancing toward the immense actor. Before long we



Yvette Mimieux is confronted at press conference by gossip monger.

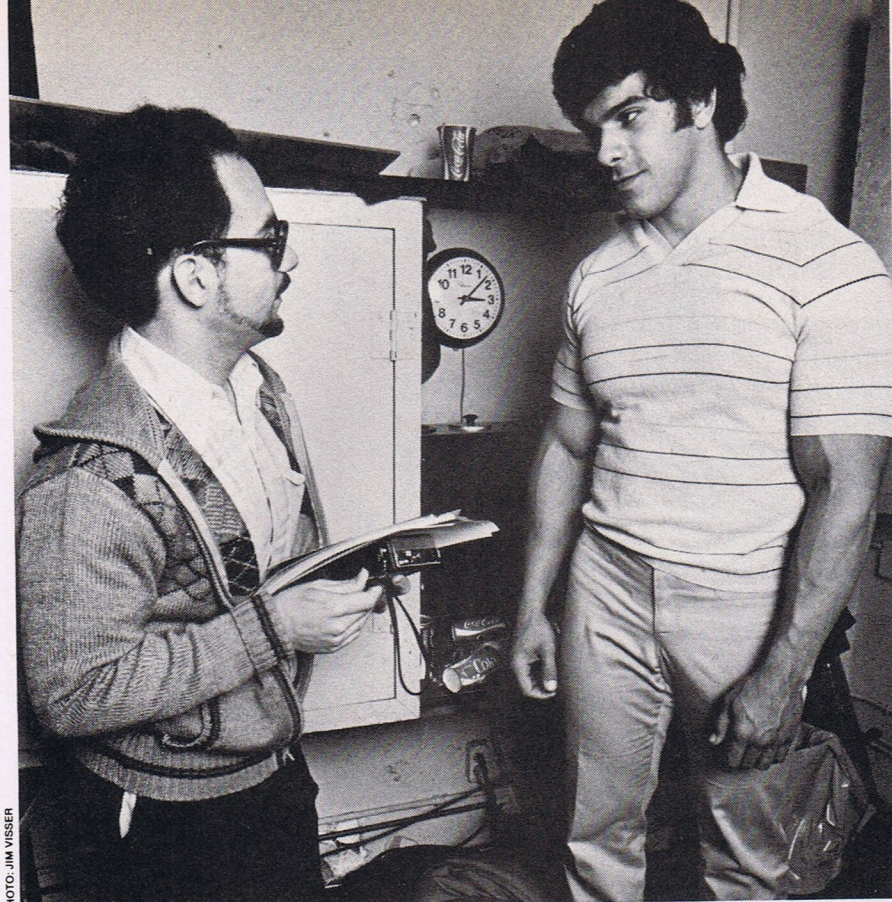


PHOTO: JIM VISSER

Hulking strong man Lou Ferrigno gives Maronie interview for his favorite mag: STARLOG.

were ushered into the presence of the imposing Ferrigno. She handed him the copy of STARLOG and began to apologize: "Lou, I know you don't want to—"

The actor's eyes widened in recognition.

"STARLOG!" he grinned.

"I'd like to interview you," I blurted.

The young woman was stunned as Ferrigno nodded affirmatively. "You... you mean you *want* to?" she stuttered.



Maronie interviews Max Schell—after waking him up.

"Oh, I know STARLOG," he replied. "I read it all the time!"

I felt an irresistible urge to stick my tongue out at her.

But for all the people I've met in the SF world (including the "mundane" actors) no one has ever come close to matching my very first subject: Charlton Heston.

The distinguished actor had just completed a string of successful SF films when I discovered he was to attend a celebrity tennis match. "Maybe," I said to myself, "I could interview him and have it published in a science-fiction magazine!"

Fueled by youthful enthusiasm, I journeyed to the tennis club in hopes of finding Heston at the pre-game reception.

Nervous with the thought of meeting my first Big Hollywood Star, I stopped off at the men's room to wash my hands. It would get things off to a bad start to shake hands with sweaty palms; I didn't want to be another screaming fan.

When I whirled around to leave I hit smack into the man exiting a nearby stall.

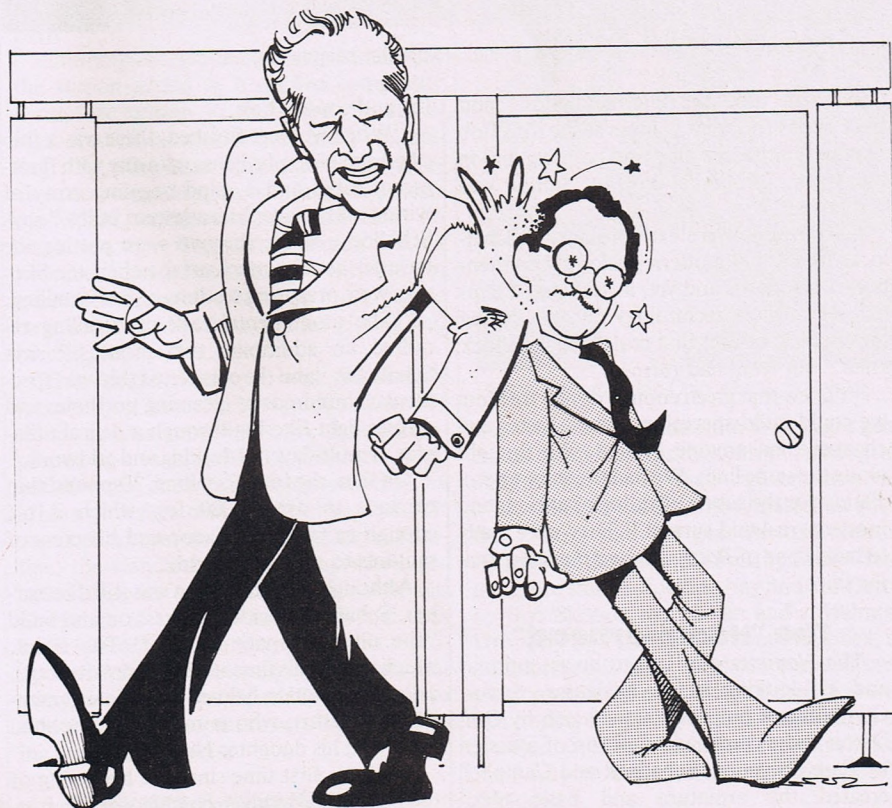
Yes, you guessed it.

We both laughed and I introduced myself; before I knew it, we'd begun the interview right there.

Heston was so charming and put me so at ease that I credit him with giving me the courage to keep on interviewing and writing articles. I wonder sometimes what would have happened if he'd been difficult? Would I have been scared to try again and abandoned journalism altogether?

In my years as a grizzled SF reporter I've had plenty of other strange experiences: I had to wake up *Black Hole* star Maximilian Schell when he overslept for an interview; shook "claws" with Twiki (Felix Silla) on the set of *Buck Rogers* and once even penetrated the Klingon-like security of a big *Star Trek* convention.

But that, dear friends and readers, is another story. ★



Charlton Heston bumps into Maronie in men's room, making big impression on the young writer.