

MOVIE

REVIEW

OCTOBER 1972

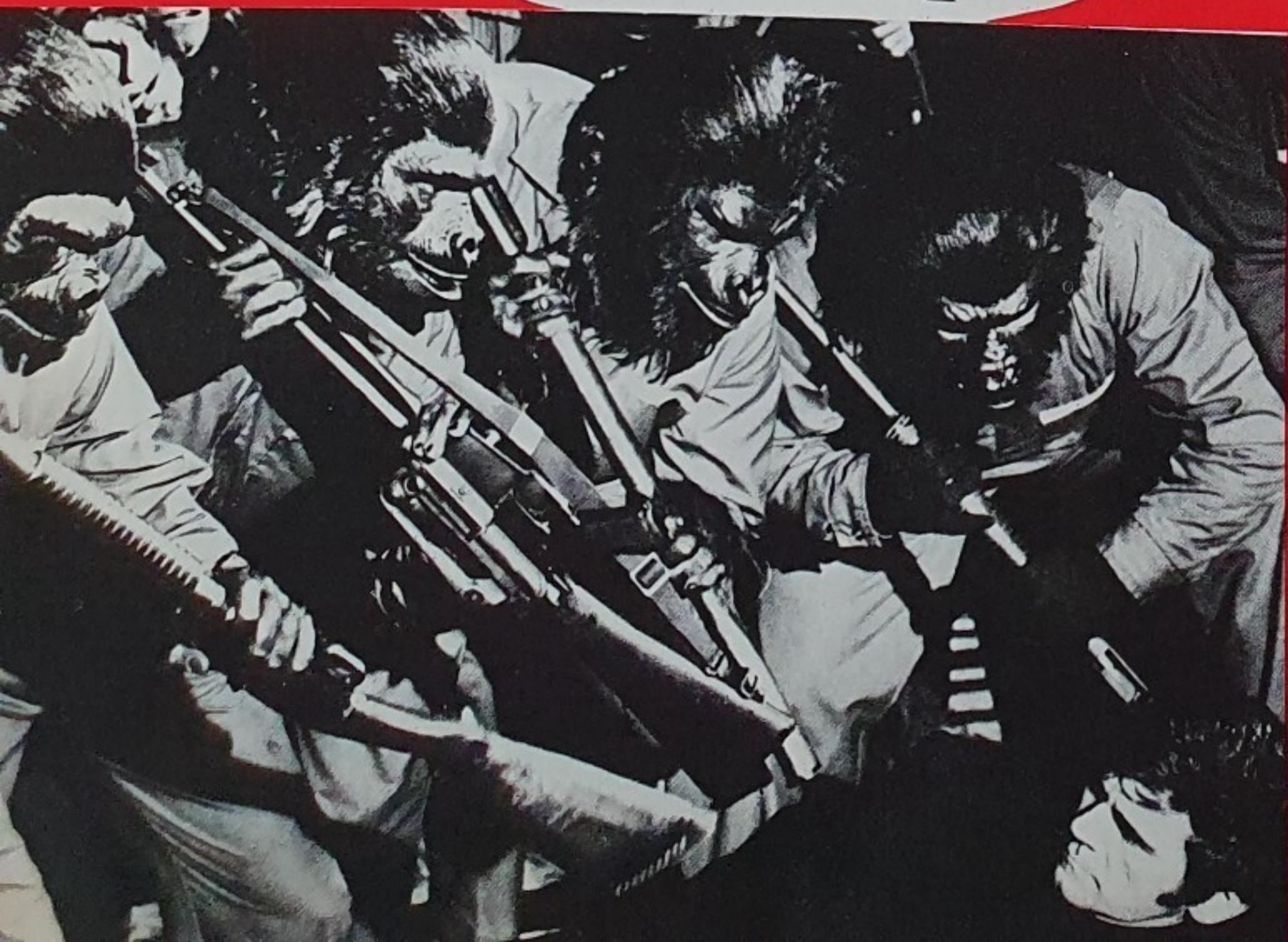
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CLINT EASTWOOD
star of the
Universal film
'JOE KIDD'
distributed by RFD

THIS MONTH'S
FILM FEAST

Conquest of Planet of the Apes
The Garnett Saga
The Godfather
Joe Kidd
Junior Bonner
Possession of Joel Delaney
Prime Cut
Pulp
Shaft's Big Score
Young Winston

CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES



'Ah,' we said as the previous *Planet Of The Apes* film (*Escape From*) came to an end, 'it looks like they've made provision for a sequel'. And, sure enough, here it is.

We came away from *Apes 3*, as it's known in the industry, having seen a circus owner hide among his animals a baby chimp that was the offspring of two articulate, intelligent chimps put to death by authorities fearing that they might take over the world.

Apes 4, its sequel and the film under review, takes up the saga twenty years later (1990). The chimp that was a baby is now fully grown. Called Caesar, he's played by Roddy McDowall who played the chimp's father in the preceding film. Caesar has spent all his life hidden in the circus by its owner

Armando (Ricardo Montalban) who has educated him.

The film opens when Armando takes Caesar on his first visit to a big city, and the chimp is horrified to see how appalling conditions are outside the circus world he knows. Life is largely controlled by sadistic police and computers. What distresses him most is the fact that chimps imported from Africa act as slaves to the humans.

When he sees a gorilla being set upon by two security police, Caesar forgets himself and curses them aloud. While the police stand momentarily stunned, he flees and hides. Armando tries to convince the police it was he who spoke, but he's disbelieved and taken into custody. Caesar, believing the safest place for him is among his own species, mingles with a new shipment of apes from Africa.

The existence of a talking chimp is great news for the Governor of the state (Don Murray), for the authorities always did suspect that the offspring of the two articulate chimps was never killed with them.

Armando is tricked by inquisitors into admitting this, and dies in attempting to escape from them. Hearing of the death of his beloved master, Caesar is galvanised into plotting revenge.

As the film comes to an end, you'll remark: 'Ah, it looks like they've made provision for a sequel.'

Indeed, they have — as you can read in the following interview with scriptwriter Paul Dehn.

Left: Rebel apes capture the Governor (Don Murray) in a surprising...

Generals and *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold*. I couldn't help asking him whether he takes the *Apes* films as seriously as these other films.

'Not all my other films have been serious,' he reminded me. 'In lighter vein I've co-scripted *Goldfinger* and scripted *The Taming Of The Shrew* (with a little help from Shakespeare!). But to answer your question, I do take the *Apes* films seriously. They all have serious messages. The second was a dire warning about nuclear warfare and mutants. The third, although the most light-hearted, was about man's inhumanity, and was also concerned with the nature of time. This, incidentally, wasn't quite as popular as the others, the reason being that there were only three apes in the film. Fans of the series like a lot of apes for their money, so in the latest we've given them what looks like a cast of thousands. And reverting to messages, the one in the latest is of an anti-violence, anti-war nature.'

'An interesting fact about the latest is we shot a sequence showing the apes turning murderous in their uprising. When we previewed the film in Phoenix, Arizona, people reacted by saying the apes wouldn't be that nasty. So the cast and crew were recalled to re-shoot the sequence, stopping just short of murder. This is indicative of the tremendous popularity of the apes. Audiences seem to prefer them to the humans.'

'Regarding young audiences, it's interesting that the *Apes* films get a GR certificate in America - General Rating, which means any child can go unaccompanied. Over here, the latest has got an AA Certificate, which presents restrictions - a child under 14 has to be accompanied by an adult. I think that the American rating is the more sensible. Admittedly there are one or two unpleasant events in the film, but it's all fantasy. I don't think children are frightened by fantasy; when we're young we read the most terrifying things in fairy stories and revel in it. What I think frightens children is horror that has a basis of reality in it.'

'I imagine you're inventing your own ape lore as you go along,' said. 'I notice different species of ape are dressed in distinctive colours.'

'Yes. We dress the gorillas in black, chimps in green and orangutans in orange.'

'And do you do research into ape behaviour?' I asked.

'A fair amount,' said Mr Dehn. 'It's all part of taking the business seriously, which I mentioned earlier. I have to bear in mind, for instance, the fact that apes are vegetarians. And by nature they are not very aggressive. Gorillas, despite what we've seen in those jungle romps, are quite amiable; the breast-beating is just a form of communication. Research has just revealed to me that there is an endemic disease among chimps in which the brain can keep growing until it's pressing against the cranium, thus causing suffering and brain damage. In zoos chimps who suffer this affliction are put down. Don't be surprised if this fact emerges in a future *Apes* film.'

'If the Fox computers keep the *Apes* saga going for some time, suppose you'll eventually catch up with the future period in which the original film was set,' I suggested.

'That is a possibility,' Mr Dehn agreed. 'But I might pull out after *Apes Five*. I'm not tired of the concept - it holds exciting possibilities. I just don't want to get rusty in the creation. Perhaps I should hand over to an ape with a younger brain.'

Personally, I should hate this to happen. Paul Dehn has brought an ingenuity and humour to the series that is largely responsible for making it one of the most phenomenal in cinema history.

PETER S. HALL

Conquest Of The Planet Of The Apes opens with Armando (Ricardo Montalban) and his intelligent chimp (Roddy McDowall) visiting the big city to pass out handbills for their circus, and being appalled at the maltreatment of apes by humans.



THE REVOLT OF THE APES!

20th Century-Fox presents
an ARTHUR P. JACOBS Production

"CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES"

starring RODDY McDOWALL and DON MURRAY
and RICARDO MONTALBAN as Armando

Produced by APJAC Productions. Directed by J. LEE THOMPSON.
Written by PAUL DEHN. Based on Characters Created by PIERRE BOULLE
TODD-AO 35* COLOUR BY DE LUXE*



The most exciting of the *Planet of the Apes* saga
-Daily Mail

ON RELEASE at **ODEON** AND OTHER
LEADING CINEMAS

NORTH LONDON from **SEPT. 24.**
SOUTH LONDON from **OCT. 1.**