

LaSalle Bank presents

Cinema Obscura

ATOMIC CINEMA

**January – June
2003**

The year 2003 will take us in an obscure direction. Gone are the same old "classic" titles. This is what a film society should be about: exploring new material while uncovering old, half-forgotten or overlooked treasures. Unless you have cable or know a video pirate, you're not going to see these films anywhere else. I've spent more than half my life collecting the rarest movies from Old Hollywood, and I've had the wonderful opportunity to play actual prints of them here for you. This time I went through the rental catalogs and pulled some of the more outré titles. With one exception, all are unavailable on home video... Over the course of three years (and 168 films) you've told me how certain titles have made an impact in your own lives, and how some even connect with current events around us. This is the reward. These old films can be relevant in our age. So to give you the best screenings possible, we'll be relying on prints from outside the normal channels.



In April the theatre will be operating at a different frequency as we explore films about (or inspired by) the atomic bomb. Though the Cold War is over, the global threat remains. The Doomsday Clock continues to tick closer to twelve o'clock. The theme may be radioactive, but don't go running off to the bomb shelter just yet. We'll be screening elite films with tremendous star power which range from drama to film noir to black comedy, and of course—to science fiction. All guaranteed to make you glow in the dark. On May 3rd we're dropping the big one—a double feature that includes an original 16mm print of *Them!* There are also two films back-to-back starring the comedic genius of the last fifty years, Peter Sellers (in six roles, no less.) And on June 14th, Charlton Heston stars in the great original *Planet of the Apes*. (Admittedly, *Beneath* would've been more thematically apropos.) But before I wander off into the Forbidden Zone, there's one more masterpiece lined up. On June 28th it's George Miller's *The Road Warrior*, my final booking. Though it's not about nuclear war per se, no one will complain that I went out this way.

Unfortunately, I couldn't find Ray Milland's *Panic in Year Zero*, but those that we do have will not disappoint. There's something horrifyingly majestic about the mushroom cloud. This atomic journey of ours will examine the madness behind that image. It will be a frightening journey because of the implication of things to come. As Professor Medford once said, "When man entered the atomic age he opened the door to a new world. What we'll eventually find in that new world nobody can predict."

Matthew C. Hoffman

REMEMBER LAST NIGHT? (1935)

James Whale

Universal /81 min.

Cartoon: "Felix Woos Whoopee" (1927), Otto Messmer



"For the art deco Huling mansion at Syosset, Long Island, Danny Hall designed some of the cleverest sets of his career. The party room, where the most boisterous scenes of celebration take place, is dominated by a bar resembling a Greco-Roman slave ship with the words S.S. HANGOVER painted on its bow and stuffed birds circling overhead. Breaking glass punctuates the catty dialogue, and Arthur Treacher morosely jiggles a cocktail shaker as he regards the partiers with disapproval and endures their abuse." -- James Curtis

It's a murder mystery much like *The Thin Man*. It's also part screwball romance with zany, comedic surrealism predating *Hellzapoppin'*. This brilliant film is so upside down it opens with the typical Hollywood closeout - a kiss which lasts a half-minute. Robert Young and Constance Cummings are husband and wife, celebrating their six-month wedding anniversary with a Jubilee Binge. With a bunch of other crazy drunks they get "beautifully bingoed." The next morning one of the carefree revelers turns up dead, and there's a long list of suspects. Edward Arnold is the detective called in to solve the case, threatening everyone with the hot seat. Edward Brophy plays his dimwit assistant looking for a "moider" to solve. The topnotch assemblage of character actors includes Arthur Treacher as the butler Phelps (with his tired refrain of "Yeecs, sir."), Robert Armstrong, Reginald Denny, Sally Eilers, Gustav von Seyffertitz (Prof. Jones, the hypnotist), and E.E. Clive as the 'artiste' photographer from the coroner's office. **NOTE:** We'll be screening a beautiful mint original print.

WINNERS OF THE WILDERNESS (1927)

W.S. Van Dyke

MGM/70 min.

Serial: **SPY SMASHER (1942)**

Chapter 1: "America Beware"



"Of the handful of McCoy Westerns from this series that do survive, the most impressive is probably *Winners of the Wilderness*, technically an 'Eastern' in that it deals with the Indian alliance with the French. One of the Van Dyke/de Vinna entries, it was, at seven reels, longer than most and even boasted some Technicolor scenes. Although historical figures such as George Washington were brought into the narrative, and some of the Indian torture scenes were quite grim, it was essentially a larger-than-life swashbuckling adventure...." --William K. Everson

Timothy John Fitzgerald McCoy, the heroic Man of Destiny, was a former army officer whose military bearing never left him in life. Colonel Tim had been an Indian agent, and he knew more about the West and Native Americans than anyone in Hollywood. Years before starring in Monogram's "Rough Rider" series (pictured), McCoy had been the star of prestigious MGM productions about our frontier history, films such as *War Paint*; he was the studio's lone Western star. *Winners*, though, is set in pre-Revolutionary colonial America in the days when the Canadian French threatened the Ohio River. McCoy plays Col. O'Hara, an Irish officer in the British army who is eventually taken prisoner by the French. For the rest of you, there's Joan Crawford in an early role as the French commandant's daughter (and McCoy's love interest). General Braddock's attack on the enemy fort - - and the ensuing defeat of his British army - - is one of the best sequences. With villainous Roy D'Arcy, Louise Lorraine, and Edward Hearn.

JANUARY 18

STAR WITNESS (1931)

William Wellman
Warner/68 min.
Chapter 2: "Human Targets"

"Much of the film is brilliantly shot and directed, not least the final shootout, viewed through banister railings as an almost expressionist flurry of drifting smoke and hurrying feet." -- Phil Hardy

First-rate gangster melodrama (with a pro-vigilante theme) from the director of *The Public Enemy*. Story is centered around the Leeds, an all-American family with Frances Starr as Ma Leeds and Grant Mitchell as Pa Leeds. During dinner they witness a shootout outside their home and come face-to-face with the man in the yellow raincoat. The thugs pass through but are later apprehended. It's revealed that a cop and an informer had been slain on the way to the D.A., and



Maxey Campo (Ralph Ince) gets pegged as the killer. The Leeds put the finger on him but back off when Campo's mob turns up the heat -- kidnapping little Donny Leeds (George Ernest). Walter Huston, who excelled as a tough authority figure, plays district attorney Whitlock, determined to make sure Campo goes to the chair. But it's Charles 'Chic' Sale, the vaudeville monologist, who swipes the film as Private Summerill, the grandfather out on furlough from the soldiers home. This Civil War veteran is an anomaly who does more than provide comedy relief. He shows what it means to be an American with his wonderfully xenophobic delivery: "A danged furniner can crowd an American jest so far..." With the humorously intimidating Nat Pendleton (swinging Pa by the ankles through a wall), Sally Blane, Edward Nugent, Russell Hopton, and Dickie Moore as Ned Leeds. "Some more beans, please." Written by Lucien Hubbard. Remade as *The Man Who Dared* (1939).

COLLEGE COACH (1933)

William Wellman
Warner/75 min.

"Dealing with the cynical big-business technique of a high-priced football coach, the film describes, with sly and impertinent humor how he puts Calvert on the football map. It is effective and frequently hilarious when it is contrasting Coach Gore's callous attitude toward collegiate ideals with his indignant defense of those same ideals in his radio talks and syndicated newspaper articles." -- New York Times



Seven years before coaching Ronald Reagan at Notre Dame, Pat O'Brien was leading the boys of Calvert to victory. In *Coach Gore* we see a cynical, ruthless man who is a far cry from the inspirational Knute Rockne. The film depicts the environment these types of coaches operate in. This semi-satire, written by Niven Busch and Manny Seff, starts out strongly with real kick but fumbles away its objective before crossing the goal line. However, thanks to "Wild Bill" Wellman's directorial playbook, this is a tidy, fast-moving programmer with an MVP performance by O'Brien. Starring Dick Powell (miscast as Phil Sargent, the apple-cheeked star football player with interests in chemistry), Arthur Byron, Hugh Herbert, Arthur Hohl, Lyle Talbot, Nat Pendleton, and Guinn "Big Boy" Williams. John Wayne has a bit part. Songs include "Lonely Lane," "Men of Calvert," "Just One More Chance," "Meet Me in the Gloaming," and "What Will I Do Without You."

IT'S TOUGH TO BE FAMOUS (1932)

Alfred E. Green
Warner/79 min.
Chapter 3: "Iron Coffin"



"There followed a movie based on an excellent bestseller by Mary McCall (wife of the noted sculptor Dwight Franklin), a thinly disguised spin-off of the story of Charles Lindbergh and the drama attendant on his celebrity. It was at first aptly called The Goldfish Bowl. Despite the presence of delicious Mary Brian -- so delectably grown up since her 'Wendy' in Peter Pan -- the picture was not good enough. Today it seems slow moving and the on-again/off-again love story doesn't make much sense. Though it didn't lose money, it certainly didn't make much. The project wasn't helped by downgrading the title to the corny, mundane, Warner-style It's Tough to Be Famous!" -- Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

There are literally scores of forgotten gems like this one which are in the Warner vaults but are unavailable on video. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., a real-life hero, turns in a fine performance as Scott McClenahan, a naval officer who risks his life in order to save the crew of a damaged submarine. The undersea rescue is quite dramatic. He becomes a hero to millions of Americans but suffers the consequences of fame. His private life is turned upside down by all the fanfare and the Broadway ticker tape parades. The hero publicity ironically turns "Scotty Boy" into a domestic bad boy. How he copes with his Charles Lindbergh-like celebrity is the basic crux of this fairly entertaining and well-written story. Leonard Maltin wrote that this comedy/drama was "still surprisingly timely." (Film was pulled from circulation because it was released at the time of the unfortunate Lindbergh kidnapping.) With Mary Brian, Walter Catlett, and J. Carroll Naish as Lieutenant Blake.

FEBRUARY 1

FREAKS (1932)

Tod Browning
MGM/64 min.
Chapter 4: "Stratosphere Invaders"



"A decision was made to radically cut Freaks from its running time of nearly an hour and a half to just over an hour. The truncated version jettisoned the horrifying details of the mud-dripping freaks swarming over the tree-pinned Olga Baclanova and pouring into a circus wagon to castrate her lover. Several comic scenes were eliminated, including one of the turtle girl being amorously pursued by a seal. A rambling epilogue set in a second-story London dime museum called Tetrallini's Freaks and Music Hall...was completely discarded, save for the final shot of Cleopatra quacking..." -- David J. Skal

You didn't ask for it...but I did. MGM wished it had never been made. Though it did not end Tod Browning's career -- he'd recycle ideas and do variations of earlier work in the years to follow -- *Freaks* would be his personal masterpiece, the penultimate film of his sound career. Based on the advertising it would appear that this is an exploitation film with the real-life 'freaks' being used for the purposes of horror -- only in the climax is that realized. However, Browning does not distance us from them. Instead, these oddities are treated as human beings; it's the normal people, such as Cleopatra (fading silent star Olga Baclanova), who are the real monsters. The story is centered around sideshow life at a traveling circus. One of the performers, the midget (Harry Earles), falls in love with a normal-sized trapeze artist named Cleopatra. She learns he has an inherited fortune, so, with her strongman lover (Henry Victor), she plots to poison Hans. (Her contempt no doubt in line with some of MGM's glamorous stars who looked down on these people and abhorred outsider Browning's project.) But Cleo learns the hard way that when you offend one, *you offend them all*. The retribution scene with the "twisted things" crawling through the mud at night is one of the most macabre images from the golden age of horror. With Wallace Ford, who comes across as genuinely compassionate, and Leila Hyams. Based on the short story "Spurs" by *The Unholy Three* author Tod Robbins.

FEBRUARY 8

THE AFFAIRS OF CELLINI (1934)

Gregory La Cava

Twentieth Century/80 min.

Chapter 5: "Descending Doom"

"Granted its fragilities, *The Affairs of Cellini* must have represented a welcome relief for March from the kind of films he had been doing. His aficionados still recall the film with pleasure, but it is distinctly lightweight material."

-- Lawrence J. Quirk

Fredric March, with curled hair and goatee, plays Benvenuto Cellini, a 16th century cross between Casanova and Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. Cellini is a womanizing Renaissance artist who finds himself in one precarious situation after another. He takes a fancy to his model, Angela (lovely Fay Wray), but in no time he arouses the passions within the Duchess of Florence (Constance Bennett). Her henpecked husband, Duke Alessandro (Frank Morgan), in turn becomes infatuated with Angela! It's a period bedroom farce from a director who knew how to handle it. Some of the adulterous material was cut by censors, though. It's also a film about florid costumes and romantic entrances. Morgan, as the bumbling Duke, shines in this Oscar-nominated role (which he had first played on the stage). With Vincent Barnett, Louis Calhern, and a young Lucille Ball. Charles Rosher's photography and Richard Day's art direction were also nominated. Based on Edwin Justus Mayer's play *The Firebrand*.

FEBRUARY 15

MANDALAY (1934)

Michael Curtiz

Warner/65 min.

Chapter 6: "Invisible Witness"

"Its statuesque star distracts her audience from her unpronounceable r's with an array of glamorous white frocks (and one knockout silver sheath). 'If you touch my garter, I'll scweam,' she warns a lustful gentleman early on. Sympathetic screenwriters usually helped Kay avoid these verbal pitfalls, but *Mandalay* scenarists Austin Parker and Charles Kenyon must have had a grudge against her; near the film's

climax, they have her address costar Lyle Talbot with 'Gwegow, we awwive in Mandalay tomowow. We ah two wecked people.'" -- Jerry Vermilye

In the seven years Kay Francis was under contract at Warner Bros., she made few films which could be considered classics. *One Way Passage* and *Jewel Robbery* are the exceptions. (It helps when you star opposite William Powell.) Kay Francis may be a forgotten name from old Hollywood, but there are those of us who still love her. *Mandalay* is a film whose location evokes the exotica of Josef von Sternberg at Paramount but whose direction and quick pace are all Warners. Kay plays Tanya Borisoff, a woman abandoned in a Rangoon dive by her munitions smuggler boyfriend, Tony (Ricardo Cortez). Independent, she starts life over, becoming "Spot White," the star attraction at Nick's establishment (run by Warner Oland). She takes men for everything they're worth only to escape to Mandalay by boat. Onboard she meets and falls in love with a boozing doctor running from his past (played by an unsteady Lyle Talbot). Matters are complicated when Tony shows up pursued by the authorities. Steamy pre-Code stuff. With Ruth Donnelly, Reginald Owen, and David Torrence.

THE SCOUNDREL (1935)

Ben Hecht, Charles MacArthur

Paramount/78 min.

Chapter 7: "Secret Weapon"

"Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur followed their dazzling *Crime Without Passion* with another *Astoria*, New York, production which elicited even warmer enthusiasm among the smart set and left the fan-in-the-street even colder. *The Scoundrel* was Noel Coward's film debut, if you don't count a juvenile bit in D.W. Griffith's 1918 *Hearts Of The World*."

-- John Douglas Eames

Variety summed it up best: "Good Hotel Algonquin literati stuff, but not for the Automat trade." Written and directed by Ben Hecht (*Notorious*) and Charles MacArthur (*The Front Page*), this is a highbrow comedy/drama with doses of cynicism and mysticism. Art cinema -- of the Algonquin Round Table variety. Noel Coward plays Anthony Maliare, an egotistical New York publisher hated by his authors. He's an empty and superficial man who manipulates the lives of others. When he dies in a plane crash his ghost comes back to earth to find someone who will mourn him. Noted critic Alexander Woollcott (parodied in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*) is Vanderveer Veyden. Helen Hayes and Edna Ferber have cameo appearances, as do the authors who turn up as bums in a flophouse. Hecht and MacArthur had total independence on the production but were helped considerably by Lee Garmes' photography. David Thomson would call it their best directorial effort. With Julie Haydon (as Cora Moore), Stanley Ridges, Martha Sleeper, and Eduardo Ciannelli. Oscar winner for Best Original Story. Originally entitled *Miracle in Forty-ninth Street*.



MARCH 1

THE PRISONER OF SHARK ISLAND (1936)

John Ford

Twentieth Century Fox/95 min.

Chapter 8: "Sea Raiders"

"Employing a visual style fully as virtuosic as that of *The Informer*, Ford and cameraman Bert Glennon depict Dr. Mudd's nightmarish ordeal in military court and prison with starkly expressionistic camera angles, subtly distorting wide-angle lenses, and heavily shadowed compositions. But this film's Goya-esque vision of torture and suffering is conveyed with greater emotional urgency and less abstraction than was displayed in Ford's more-lauded exercise in expressionism. *Shark Island* does not dwell on pictorial effects for their own sake, but maintains the relentless narrative drive so characteristic of Zanuck's filmmaking philosophy." -- Joseph McBride

One could easily do a retrospective of all of Ford's films from the 1930's, but for now we've spotlighted just one. This is the true story of Samuel Mudd (Warner Baxter), the Maryland doctor who treated John Wilkes Booth's broken leg and was subsequently put on trial as an accomplice to Lincoln's assassination. With the rules of evidence thrown out the window, he is sent to Fort Jefferson, an island prison off the Florida coast -- a wonderful set of nightmarish stylization with chiaroscuro lighting. John Carradine was never more sadistic than in his portrayal of Sgt. Rankin. "Dr. Mudd, I've been waitin' for you." Harry Carey is the commandant who eventually allows Mudd to take command of the situation during an outbreak of yellow fever. With the exception of the revered Lincoln seen at the outset and the fair-minded Carey, the North is depicted as being uncouth, unjust, childlike (the wide-eyed 'soldiers' who barricade themselves within the prison), or evil. Not since his mentor Griffith has a director been so sympathetic towards Southerners. Written by Nunnally Johnson. With Gloria Stuart, Claude Gillingwater, Ernest Whitman (as loyal "Buck"), O.P. Heggie, Arthur Byron, Francis Ford, and Frank Shannon (of *Flash Gordon* fame).



MARCH 8



PROFESSOR BEWARE (1938)

Elliott Nugent
Paramount/87 min.
Chapter 9: "Highway Racketeers"

"He loved making films and he wanted Professor Beware to be the very best it could be. He was a perfectionist. He was very

patient with me. I was a Broadway actress and knew nothing about the making of films...I would try and sometimes I would become frustrated and be in tears. I would get so terrified. And Harold was very patient and helpful. He would say, 'I think that will be all for now. How about if we go bowling?' And he would take us bowling and we would come back and continue with the film. That helped to put me at ease somewhat. He ran the show and he could do that." -- Phyllis Welch

The Cat's Paw (1934) was the one I wanted, but so many of Harold Lloyd's films remain elusive on 16mm. *Professor Beware* may have uninspired direction and a weak story, but it does contain fun reworkings of earlier gag routines from his shorter films like "Now or Never" and "Get Out and Get Under," as well as a series of wild chases that gain momentum. As a master comedian, Harold Lloyd was second only to Buster Keaton, and though this slapped together concoction was not one of his best, I admire him too much not to play anything. Harold is Dean Lambert, a professor of archaeology who tracks down an Egyptian tablet and reads a partial story about the doomed Neferus who loved Anebi, the Pharaoh's daughter. Lambert believes he's the reincarnated Neferus, but will history repeat itself when he meets his modern day Anebi (Phyllis Welch)? The highlight involves his 3,000-mile cross-country chase from Los Angeles to New York in order to join an expedition. Numerous writers contributed, including Francis and Marion Cockrell, Crampton Harris, Clyde Bruckman, Delmer Daves, and Jack Cunningham. With William Frawley (as the intoxicated Snoop), Etienne Girardot, Ward Bond, Guinn Williams, and Raymond Walburn and Lionel Stander as a couple hobos atop the freight train.



THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY (1934)

William Beaudine
Paramount/74 min.

"The Old Fashioned Way is Fields' greatest tribute to the lost theatrical world of his youth...Evolving out of Poppy, Sally of the Sawdust and Two Flaming Youths, The Old Fashioned Way's portrayal of the wandering life, the fear of poverty and abandonment, the grotesque inns on the road, the melodramatic acting and burlesque skits, all are vintage Heritage Fields." -- Simon Louvish

He had a way with words and a way with children. W.C. Fields is The Great McGonigle, a play actor leading his theatre troupe through turn-of-the-century America. Pursued by local sheriffs, McGonigle and his pretty daughter Betty (Judith Allen) stop in small-town Bellefontaine. Here Fields is subjected to the seashell song performed by widow Cleopatra Pepperday (Jan Duggan), his "Rocky Mountain canary." Knowing she's a rich widow he agrees to stick her in their upcoming temperance play -- "The Drunkard," in which Fields plays Squire Cribbs. There's an incidental love story involving McGonigle's daughter and Wally Livingston (Joe Morrison), but the added attraction of Fields' juggling compensates for the romantic distractions. With Baby LeRoy as Little Albert, the brat who tosses McGonigle's watch into the molasses. Written by Garnett Weston, Jack Cunningham (who wrote *Professor Beware*), and Charles Bogle (Fields).

CLUNY BROWN (1946)

Ernst Lubitsch
Chapter 10: "2700° Fahrenheit"



"Yet Cluny Brown is clearly the work of a serene, centered man. In its lack of a driving narrative engine, in its quiet charm, it's the most European, Renoiresque, of Lubitsch's American movies. Charles Boyer offers the polish and charm that never failed him, while Jennifer Jones' undertones of neurotic sexuality lend the character a needed subtext." -- Scott Eyman

Ernst Lubitsch's return to direction resulted in this highly praised romantic comedy about protocol and British mores. Charles Boyer plays Czech author Adam Belinski, a thriftless professor living in pre-war England. He becomes a guest at the manor of Sir Henry Carmel (Reginald Owen). Jennifer Jones is the title character, a plumber's niece now working as a maid at Sir Henry's. Cluny and Adam are both social castaways whose attitudes sweetly disrupt the estate. She, though, is soon drawn to the security offered by the self-important pharmacist, Mr. Wilson (Richard Haydn). Again, the triangle, but this time the Lubitsch Touch becomes a simplified style rooted in the characterizations. There's no way writers Samuel Hoffenstein and Elizabeth Reinhardt could've created an authentic English world -- it was Mr. James Hilton who had done the original treatments before they were discarded by Lubitsch -- but the dialogue and the character acting put this production at the top of the cinematic bell curve. With Una O'Connor, Sara Allgood, Helen Walker, Peter Lawford, Reginald Gardiner, and British stalwart C. Aubrey Smith, who later apologized for being in it. Based on the novel by Margery Sharp, who insisted that Jennifer Jones be cast

MARCH 22

THE WOMAN IN WHITE (1948)

Peter Godfrey
Warner/109 min.
Chapter 11: "Hero's Death"



"Greenstreet and others move through the murky passages of the story like visitors in some massive Gothic museum, and they move, on the whole, with stately discretion, and do not scribble on the objects or show anything but the greatest veneration for them." -- C.A. Lejeune

"Born in shame- living in mystery-- what is her sinister secret?" Stately Victorian thriller from the pen of Wilkie Collins. England, 1851: Drawing master Walter Hartright (Gig Young) arrives at Limmeridge and is met by a woman in the darkness (beautiful Eleanor Parker). She's the woman in white, a haunted wraith who has escaped from an asylum, but she disappears back into the night. At the manor Walter meets Marian (Alexis Smith), a cousin within the Fairlie estate. John Abbott plays Frederick Fairlie, the neurotic head of the house who can't tolerate loud noises. Laura Fairlie (Parker again) is the girl whom Walter will tutor, the girl who will get caught up in an evil conspiracy orchestrated by Count Fosco (Sydney Greenstreet) and Sir Percival Glyde (John Emery), two villains out of old-fashioned melodrama. They plan to collect the family fortune through psychological poison, hoping Laura will have a mental collapse. It's atmospheric, but not as gothic as you might think with its open spaces of bright gardens and gazebos. Film contains three outstanding performances by Greenstreet, the eccentric Abbott, and Parker (as Laura and her doppelganger, Ann Catherick). With Agnes Moorehead as Countess Fosco. Powerful musical score by Max Steiner. Screenplay by Stephen Morehouse Avery.



COLORADO TERRITORY (1949)

Raoul Walsh
Warner/94 min.
Chapter 12: "V...."

"I'd do stuff for him that I wouldn't have done for any other director. He was a gutty little bastard. And funny. In the opening scene where I was escaping from prison, I had to run through a swamp with dogs after me. There were logs and rocks in it, and I fell down several times

and damn near broke my leg, but I kept going because he was yelling 'Keep running, kid, keep running.' When I came out the other end, muddy, wet, cold and out of breath, I looked for Walsh, expecting him to tell me how great I'd been and if it had been any other actor he would have used a double. But he wasn't there. The assistant director said Walsh left halfway through the run, telling him it looked good and use it. That's the way he'd do things. What a character!" -- Joel McCrea

Raoul Walsh's Western remake of *High Sierra*. Though it's nowhere near as good as the Bogart film, this is still one of Joel McCrea's best Westerns. (Warners originally wanted John Wayne for the part.) As before, there is the outsider who wants to go straight but is doomed by fate. McCrea is Wes McQueen, an outlaw who escapes Missouri and winds up in Colorado. On the stagecoach he is befriended by Winslow (*High Sierra* alumnus Henry Hull) and his daughter Julie Ann (Dorothy Malone). They're unaware of his other life. Wes has one more heist planned, but his two partners are out to double-cross him. John Archer is Reno and James Mitchell, who came off well in intelligent roles, is Duke Harris. Virginia Mayo plays the half-breed sexpot, Colorado Carson. (Never much of an actress, but she wasn't cast for her talent.) Film is at its best when it strays from the familiar W.R. Burnett story and uses the West for original embellishments. The train robbery sequence is one of the best staged in all of Westerns. And the ending is so tragically beautiful with Wes holed up in the cliff dwelling, dwarfed by Nature with Indian chants filling the night. Shot by Sid Hickox in New Mexico.



THE BEGINNING OR THE END (1947)

Norman Taurog
MGM/112 min.

Shorts: "I Can Hardly Wait" (1943), Jules White (Three Stooges)
"U.S. Reveals H-Bomb" (1952) Pathe News

"Despite the film's numerous distortions and failings, there are some highly credible moments. Cinematically, the initial blasts at Alamogordo and the Hiroshima explosion, as created by A. Arnold Gillespie, are visually stunning...Gillespie's effects captured the essence of the atomic weapon's eerie splendor." -- Jack G. Shaheen and Richard Taylor



The film opens on a bizarre note. Newsreel footage shows us the records of atomic progress being enclosed in a time capsule in Redwood National Park--along with a print of this MGM film. (Alas, not all the prints were buried.) The amateurish direction, awkward dialogue, wooden acting, and the fictive elements including Matt, the hero scientist (Tom Drake), undermine the film's intentions. An actual documentary (as opposed to this sentimental pseudo-documentary) would've been more interesting. That said, the film, which is never boring, does have moments of genuine drama enhanced by solid special effects and an unobtrusive musical score. *Beginning or the End* chronicles the development of atomic power--the energy of the universe locked up since time began--from Enrico Fermi's experiment in Chicago to Los Alamos, New Mexico, to the *Enola Gay*'s mission over Hiroshima. With Brian Donlevy, Robert Walker, Hume Cronyn (impersonating Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer), Beverly Tyler, Joseph Calleia (Dr. Enrico Fermi), and Godfrey Tearle (the film's keynote performance) as this country's greatest President. It was the first movie about the bomb--produced a year after Hiroshima--so perhaps it was too soon for the accurate cinematic document it had hoped to be. (Director Taurog later made 1954's *Living It Up*, but a radioactive Jerry Lewis would've guaranteed audience fallout for this series.)

April 12

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (1951)

Robert Wise
Twentieth Century Fox/92 min.
Cartoon: "Rocket Squad" (1956), Chuck Jones



"It's a very good movie, briskly paced, entertaining, a great deal of fun. In it, Robert Wise showed himself at his peak of ability. Scenes have vitality and movement. The cutting is extremely sharp. Except for Marlowe's, the performances are subtle and detailed. The point of each scene is admirably transmitted. The structure of the film is clean and uncluttered, and is eminently satisfactory for a thriller. (The movie was modeled on heroic-spy stories.) In its visual style, it lies between the mock documentaries and the films noir of its period." -- Bill Warren, *Keep Watching the Skies!*

"From out of space...a warning and an ultimatum!" With our own world on the brink of nuclear holocaust, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* is as timely as ever. Michael Rennie is Klaatu, an emissary from 'an organization of planets' who comes to Washington, D.C. with a mission of global peace. Our world is filled with ignorance, fear, and destructive beings. Klaatu has become impatient with human stupidity. But during his stay in a boarding house as "Mr. Carpenter," he learns more about humanity through his attachment to a small boy and his single mother (Patricia Neal). Her jerk boyfriend is played one-dimensionally by Hugh Marlowe. (Where's Richard Carlson when you need him?) Sam Jaffe is Prof. Barnhardt, the open-minded, wild-haired scientist whom Klaatu seeks out. Film also benefits from a superb musical score by Bernard Herrmann, which incorporates the distinct theremin sound. Based on the novelette *Farewell to the Master* by Harry Bates. Edmund H. North, who wrote the screenplay with more emphasis on the allegorical than on hard science, shaped it into a profound work. Admittedly, the film's solution of putting peace in the hands of a robot police force like nine foot tall "Gort" has been called fascistic, but as Klaatu says, "We do not pretend to have achieved perfection, but we do have a system, and it works."



ABOVE AND BEYOND (1952)

Melvin Frank, Norman Panama
 MGM/122 min.
 Cartoon: "Falling Hare" (1943), Bob Clampett

"Look, let's clear up one little piece of morality right now - it's not bombs that are horrible. It's war, not just weapons...to lose this war to the gang we're fighting would be the most immoral thing we could do to those kids in there. And don't you forget it." - Robert Taylor as Colonel Paul Tibbetts

"The love story behind the billion dollar secret!" The studio publicity played up the romance, hoping it would appeal to women, but that tagline doesn't do the film justice. *Above and Beyond* is one of the best films on flight and war that we've shown. The story, written with authority by Beime Lay, Jr., is centered around Col. Paul W. Tibbetts, Jr. (Robert Taylor), the man who dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. From his days testing the B-29 death trap to the months spent in secrecy with Operation Silverplate, the film presents an intimate depiction of a genuine American hero. Taylor brings a Gary Cooper-like stoicism to the role, but his humanity is never lost during the epic undertaking. One of the more poignant moments comes in the early morning of August 6, 1945, when he's alone, writing to his mother. But the woman who is always with him is Lucey (Eleanor Parker), always waiting and watching. (She narrates the film, ironically, considering Tibbetts is warned about "woman talk" by Maj. Uanna, played by James Whitmore.) The romance hints at the post-war dream to come, but the love angle doesn't interfere with the big picture. It would be easy for critics to mock *Above and Beyond* in this day and age, but the film has integrity, which helps it soar above revisionist flak. With Larry Keating and Jim Backus (as Gen. Curtis LeMay). Music by Hugo Friedhofer.



KISS ME DEADLY (1955)

Robert Aldrich
 United Artists/105 min.
 Cartoon: "Kiss Me Cat" (1953), Chuck Jones
 Trailer: *Them!* (1954)

"Adapted by writer A.I. Bezzerides (Thieves' Highway, On Dangerous Ground) and director Robert Aldrich, the film simultaneously exploited and lampooned Spillane's casual sadism and breakneck momentum. As Hammer, Ralph Meeker shattered the fictional detective's code of honor as cavalierly as he snaps apart one informant's cherished recording of Caruso's Pagliacci. This Hammer is the most arrogant, vain, lazy dick ever." - Eddie Muller

"All I saw was the dame standing there in the glare of the headlights waving her arms like a huge puppet and the curse I spit out filled the car and my own ears..." And so begins Mickey Spillane's hard-boiled novel, but film noir students remember Cloris Leachman running barefoot down the dark highway wearing only a trench coat. The film is an odd blend of pulp and art, with Aldrich's aesthetics making this nuclear noir one of the most dynamic films of its era. After escaping from the nuthouse, Christina (Cloris Leachman) gets picked up by private investigator Mike Hammer (Ralph Meeker). She's recaptured by the Nameless Ones and is tortured and killed. Hammer survives only to get mixed up in something big. Every interview takes him closer to the MacGuffin, the great whatsit. With the cops on his back, he drops the hammer on the Mafia- and every other hoodlum in his way. Not to be missed. With Maxine Cooper, Gaby Rodgers, Albert Dekker, Paul Stewart, Wesley Addy, Jack Lambert, and Nick Dennis as Mike's mechanic and only friend. "Va-Va-Voom!" Photographed by Ernest Laszlo.

(With 10 Minute Intermission)

THE MAGNETIC MONSTER (1953)

Curt Siodmak
 United Artists (Ivan Tors)/75 min.
 Trailer: *It Came From Beneath The Sea* (1955)



"This luridly-titled film is one of the best low-budget science fiction movies of its period. Curt Siodmak directed and co-wrote it with producer Ivan Tors, and the result is one of the best films by either man. The Magnetic Monster seems thoroughly authentic in terms of its science (although it isn't), and the characters are plausible enough for the picture's purposes. It was intended as the first in a series of films and possibly a TV series about the 'Office of Scientific Investigation,' invented by Siodmak and Tors, but only Gog followed as a film." - Bill Warren

I first saw this movie on TV's *Svengoolie* and was struck by how far removed it was from '50s schlock sci-fi. In fact, this is one of the more intelligent low-budget films of the period- even if the science is bunk. It's a 'scientific Dagnet' in which Richard Carlson plays Jeff Stewart, an investigator for the Office of Scientific Investigation. With partner Dan Forbes (King Donovan), the two OSI operatives investigate an abnormal magnetic field in Los Angeles. With Stewart narrating, they track the origins of the disturbances to a scientist (Leonard Mudie). He has created a radioactive element called "serranium" which converts energy into matter. Unless controlled, the isotope will grow, but this wouldn't be a monster movie unless all hell broke loose. The element devours energy like a magnetic blob. The only chance is to bombard it with more power than it can assimilate- like 900 million volts. The footage involving the generator at the Canadian power installation was craftily reused from the 1934 German film *Gold*. A first-rate script by Ivan Tors and Siodmak, who excelled in science fiction. With Jean Byron and Byron Foulger.

THEM! (1954)

Gordon Douglas
 Warner/94 min.

"Following the lead of 1953's Beast From 20,000 Fathoms, Them! exploited widespread fear of the atomic bomb, albeit metaphorically as a maker of monsters. The dire nature of the threat is subtly yet ably conveyed by the film's increasingly claustrophobic feel. We begin with a dazed child found wandering the bright, open plains of a vast desert. We end in the sewer tunnels beneath Los Angeles, as an army of men wages war with an army of gigantic mutated ants. Going Beast one better, and making the atomic metaphor more blunt, Mankind's very survival is now at stake."

- - Ken Begg, www.jabootu.com



One of the most beloved sci-fi films of all time. Jack Warner hated it and slashed the budget. Plans to shoot it in Warnercolor and in 3-D were abandoned, but his sabotage failed and the film became the studio's top box office draw of 1954. Just look at the scenes that don't involve special effects and you'll see how well made it is--easily the most inspired film from a journeyman director. After the opening title (in red and blue on some prints), *Them!* begins as a mystery with a little girl in shock wandering the New Mexico desert. Sgt. Ben Peterson (James Whitmore) picks her up and finds more signs of recent destruction, including a dead proprietor pumped full of formic acid. Entomologist Dr. Medford (Edmund Gwenn) and his daughter (Joan Weldon) are called in, as well as FBI field agent Robert Graham (James Arness). They learn that ants have been mutated from atomic testing, which leads to a search and destroy mission. The decent into the egg chambers and the raid on the L.A. storm drains are the film's best set pieces (though the original treatment had them infesting the New York subway system). *Them!* would spawn many derivatives in the '50s and would become a major influence on Jim Cameron's *Aliens* (1986). With Onslow Stevens, Chris Drake, Olin Howlin, Fess Parker (discovered by Disney soon afterward) and William Schallert as the ambulance attendant. Film was nominated for Best Special Effects. Evocative musical score by Bronislau Kaper. Photographed by Sid Hickox.

**DR. STRANGELOVE: OR; HOW I
LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND
LOVE THE BOMB (1964)**

Stanley Kubrick
Columbia/93 min.

Cartoon: "The Daffy Doc" (1938), Robert Clampett



"Dr. Strangelove is still frighteningly funny because, as wild as the characters and events are, there is nothing in the picture that is beyond the realm of possibility. Perhaps we are laughing at ourselves for living in a world whose fate is in the hands of incompetents and buffoons. And perhaps the laughter is therapeutic for those of us who know we'll never be able to stop worrying about the Bomb." --Danny Peary

Not the first film to make us laugh about nuclear war--check out the unintentionally hilarious *Invasion, U.S.A.* (1952)--but certainly the best. It's a masterpiece of satire--or "nightmare comedy," as Kubrick put it. Written by Kubrick with Peter George and Terry Southern, *Strangelove* has lost none of its edge. The man of a thousand voices, Peter Sellers, plays three roles: Captain Mandrake, President Merkin Muffley, and Dr. Strangelove. Like some evil genius out of Fritz Lang's underworld, Strangelove is the Nazi scientist who confirms the existence of the "Doomsday Machine." George C. Scott is the over-the-top Gen. Turgidson, urging the President to capitalize on the nuclear attack. Sterling Hayden came out of retirement to play Gen. Jack D. Ripper. Obsessed with the Commie plot of "fluoridation," it is he who orders the bomber squadron to attack Russia, with Mandrake trying to get the recall code in time. And Slim Pickens is Maj. T.J. "King" Kong, the Texan pilot who rides atop the warhead in one of cinema's most memorable images. (Sellers almost played this role as well.) The set designs were by Ken Adam who, under Kubrick's instruction, created a war room that had the look of twenty-six characters involved in a poker game for the fate of the world. (Hard to imagine the film almost ended in a cream pie fight!) With Keenan Wynn, Peter Bull, and James Earl Jones. Inspired by Peter George's novel *Red Alert*. Nominated for four Academy Awards: Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor and Best Screenplay Adaptation.

FAIL-SAFE (1964)

Sidney Lumet
Columbia/111 min.

Short: "New York Takes Cover" (1951), Pathe News



"Strangelove isn't really about the nuclear situation as it actually was in 1964...but about the inevitable failings of the soldiers, politicians and scientists we put in charge of our survival...By contrast, Sidney Lumet's Fail Safe (1964), from the 1962 novel by Eugene Burdick and Harvey Wheeler, exonerates the noble man in public office and blames its Strangelove-style crisis on simple mechanical malfunctions." --Kim Newman

Though it will always remain in the shadow of *Dr. Strangelove*, *Fail-Safe* is an unforgettable film in its own right. It failed at the box office through no fault of its own. (Columbia, which was distributing Kubrick's film, acquired *Fail-Safe* to keep it out of the market.) After a disorderly opening involving dreams and war theory, all the elements come together when the nature of the threat is revealed: through computer error, a bomber group has been ordered to attack Moscow. The four main sets in the film include: the Omaha war room, the Pentagon, the president's bunker, and the plane cockpit, and here the story is conveyed by way of superb acting. Walter Matthau is Groetschele, the political scientist who'd rather have an American culture survive than a Russian one, ultimately pushing for a first strike against the Marxist fanatics. Matthau was never nastier, as when he slaps Nancy Berg across the face. "I'm not your kind," he tells her. Dan O'Herlihy is Gen. Black, the military dove who has the wisdom to realize man has lost the power to control technology. And holding the framework all together is the one actor who should've been a president, Henry Fonda. This is no puppet surrounded by advisors, but a man who stands alone, a man of integrity, conviction, and common sense. He has only his interpreter, Buck (well-played by Larry Hagman). Frank Overton, Ed Binns, and Fritz Weaver also star. Photographed by Gerald Hirschfeld. Remade as a teleplay in 2000.

ON THE BEACH (1959)

Stanley Kramer
United Artists/133 min.
Cartoon: "It's An Ill Wind" (1939), Ben Hardaway and Cal Dalton (Porky Pig)

"The film is perhaps the first and foremost example of mainstream apocalyptic cinema. It is a film made even more intense by the low-key delivery of most of the cast. There are few histrionics in this cerebral approach. The story portrays no mass rioting, no reverting to the law of the jungle as civilization fades away. There is little genuine action in the picture as most of the drama is internal, and it proceeds towards doom with a leisurely but inevitable rhythm that is mesmerizing. Compared to most other apocalyptic films, On the Beach has an emphasis on human dignity which is truly unique and timeless." -- Charles P. Mitchell

I never thought I'd live to see the day when I'd book a Stanley Kramer film, but this program would be incomplete without *On the Beach*, easily his most accomplished production. Gregory Peck leads a stellar cast in this bleak prophecy about the end of the world. Peck plays Dwight Towers, a submarine captain who takes his crew to the last place on earth not yet affected by a global radiation cloud: Australia. There he meets naval lieutenant Peter Holmes (Anthony Perkins), the liaison officer who shows him around. (With all the horses and bicycles on the streets, maybe a shortage of petrol isn't such a bad thing.) Towers is then introduced to Aussie socialite Moira (Ava Gardner), his date during his stay, but the romantic interludes are cut short when they set sail again to investigate mysterious radio signals emanating from San Diego. Fred Astaire, in his first dramatic role, plays the atomic scientist with the best explanation for the insanity. Though it's not without flaws--e.g., its depiction of universal defeatism--this is still a terrific film enhanced by Giuseppe Rotunno's black and white photography and Ernest Gold's musical score. With Donna Anderson (Holmes' wife who can't accept the inevitable). Written by John Paxton from a novel by Nevil Shute.

THE MOUSE THAT ROARED (1959)

Jack Arnold
Columbia/83 min.
Cartoon: "By Word of Mouse" (1954), I. Freleng

"I didn't have any studio pressures. The only thing I did do was I didn't tell Columbia I was going to fool around with their logo...I didn't ask them for permission, I just shot it. The picture opens

with the logo, the Statue of Liberty, the old Columbia symbol, and suddenly she lifts her skirt and screams and runs off with the electric bulb hanging and a little mouse on the pedestal. I did that without asking permission because I knew if I asked them they wouldn't let me do it...It's sacred, you don't fool around with their logo. But they laughed so hard at the theatre, before the picture even began, when they previewed the film." -- Jack Arnold

American-made satire with strong British influences--not least of which is Peter Sellers, who takes on three roles. The duchy of Grand Fenwick, the smallest country (somewhere) in Europe, is going bankrupt. The prime minister (Sellers) has come up with a plan inspired by the European Recovery Program: they'll declare war on the United States, surrender, and then collect the post-war aid. With the blessing of the Duchess (Sellers), they send abroad Grand Marshal Tully (Sellers again) as part of an invasion force. Garbed as 15th century Europeans in chain mail, they enter New York City during an air raid alert and manage to capture the scientist responsible for the Q-Bomb. (A football-shaped contraption which will make the H-Bomb look like a firecracker.) With the inventor and his daughter (Jean Seberg), Tully returns home in victory only to find out he has created new complications. Jack Arnold's good-natured comedy is often hilarious; this was, in fact, his favorite film. The raid on a deserted New York City is one of the highlights. With David Kossoff and William Hartnell. Based on the novel by Leonard Wibberley. Followed by a sequel, *The Mouse on the Moon* (1963).





THE BEDFORD INCIDENT (1965)

James B. Harris

Columbia/102 min.

Short: "Commotion on the Ocean" (1956), Jules White
(Three Stooges)

"Different from most nuclear war films, however, it does not aim to depict the full reality of nuclear war such as the documentary, Hiroshima-Nagasaki- -August, 1945- - a reality that has already become almost obsolete in view of the thirty more years of scientific progress. Nor does it claim membership in the science-fiction club, which offered The Day the Earth Caught Fire, or in the simulated cinema verite style represented by The War Game. For better or for worse, The Bedford Incident is simply entertainment. Its story, weak or not, does not concentrate on the bomb, its potential or its effect, but on human relations, on human profiles, and on the not-so-classical environment of nuclear warships in the nuclear age. Therein lies its unique quality and relevance." - -Kamil Winter

One of our finest living actors, Richard Widmark, stars in this superb, no-nonsense thriller- -one of several military dramas made in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis. Widmark plays Captain Finlander, an old-fashioned patriot- -and a tough S.O.B. "It's a lot of work being a mean bastard." He's leading his destroyer, the *Bedford*, on a cat-and-mouse mission, obsessively tracking a Russian sub which has violated Greenland's waters. Also onboard is Sidney Poitier as the intrusive journalist and Martin Balsam as the joke medical officer. A brilliant bit of casting has Eric Portman as Commodore Wolfgang Schrepke of the Deutsche Marine, the former German U-boat commander who now advises Finlander during the chase. (Portman had given the performance of his career in Michael Powell's *49th Parallel*, playing a U-boat officer.) *Bedford Incident* was the first film directed by James B. Harris (producer of Stanley Kubrick's early films). With James MacArthur, Wally Cox, and Donald Sutherland in an early role as a hospital man. Based on a novel by Mark Rascovich.



PLANET OF THE APES (1968)

Franklin J. Schaffner

Twentieth Century Fox/112 min.

Cartoon: "Gorilla My Dreams" (1948), Robert McKimson

"What interested me particularly about it was the dichotomy of Taylor's character. He was a harsh, embittered man who would become so disenchanted with his civilization that he literally leaves the Earth...And then he finds himself in an alien planet populated by apes and he is alone required to defend humankind." - -Charlton Heston

One of two landmark sci-fi films from 1968. (The other, Kubrick's *2001*.) The iconic Charlton Heston plays George Taylor, a cynical astronaut who crash lands on a desolate-looking planet. Landon (Robert Gunner) and Dodge (Jeff Burton) make up the surviving crew. During the expedition they find the planet inhabited by primitive Homo sapiens. But these mute humans are not the dominant beings. Rather, belligerent gorillas are in control. Taylor is soon captured in the film's first great foot chase sequence and shortly after witnesses the horrors of ape rule. This is an upside down world where he is the minority. Roddy McDowall stars opposite Kim Hunter as two chimpanzees who are compassionate towards "Brighteyes." Maurice Evans (replacing Edward G. Robinson) is Dr. Zaius, the orangutan politician who prefers to have the past remain buried. A classic in every way, directed with vision and enthusiasm. Screenplay by Rod Serling (who invented the shock ending) and Michael Wilson, from Pierre Boulle's novel *La Planete des singes*. Ingenious makeup by John Chambers. Atmospheric and very avant-garde musical score by Jerry Goldsmith. Followed by four quality sequels and a pointless and forgettable remake- -or "reinterpretation"- -by Tim Burton in 2001.

COLOSSUS: THE FORBIN PROJECT (1970)

Joseph Sargent

Universal/100 min.

Short: "Learning About Nuclear Energy" (1975)



"This is the great irony of CFP. Colossus never turns on its creators; rather it obeys their orders too well. No matter how noble the object of their enterprise, its creators lacked the foresight to realize that humanity must save itself from itself, that if it wants peace and freedom, it must be willing to assume full responsibility for them. In this, Colossus resembles the 'perfect' robots described more than twenty years earlier in Jack Williamson's 'With Folded Hands...'" - -Kenneth Von Gunden and Stuart H. Stock

Colossus computer collaborates with Commies! Though it has no stars and was quickly vaporized at the box office, *Colossus* is actually a very literate and fast-moving film (based on a science fiction novel by D.F. Jones). Eric Braeden is Dr. Charles Forbin, a scientist who has created a supercomputer designed to protect the United States. The machine is self-contained and processes information to a point where its intelligence and power increase. Colossus, as it's named, sets up a communications link with its Russian counterpart- -"Guardian"- -and uses its own language, one humans can't decipher. The world is at its mercy until the machine articulates its mission to "restrain man" from his idiocy. Issues of human responsibility are at the heart of this modern day Frankenstein story. We lose our humanity when we allow cold technology to rule our lives. A far more complex and intelligent film than you might think. Director Sargent and writer James Bridges had worked primarily in television, but despite that background, they managed to make a decent and well-executed film. The core idea of machines in charge of our weapons later turned up in the contemporary classic *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. With Susan Clark as Dr. Cleo Markham, Gordon Pinsent as the President, and William Schallert as Grauber, the CIA chief.

THE ROAD WARRIOR (1981)

George Miller

Warner (Byron Kennedy)/94 min.

Cartoon: "Porky's Road Race" (1937), Frank Tashlin



"Above all, two things excited us about (Joseph) Campbell's insights. First, we weren't just filmmakers. We realized that we were 20th-century storytellers, and while the technology at our disposal was more sophisticated than in any other age, the aim was still the same: to weave stories which would satisfy those longings within other people and at the same time confirm certain values that we all hold dear. Second, we were convinced that in the character of Max- -almost by accident- - we had the makings of a real hero, yet another one of Campbell's 1,000 faces." - -George Miller

When it's every man for himself...and there's no place left to run...When all that's left is one last chance...Pray that he's still out there...somewhere. One of my most vivid memories from my moviegoing childhood was seeing *The Road Warrior* at age 6. It was a film that restored the heroes of old via a contemporary myth. Mel Gibson is Max, a burned-out loner in search of a tank of gas. All he has left is his dog and his V-8 Interceptor. Out in the wasteland he finds a fuel-pumping derrick operated by the detritus of humanity. They're in need of a hero. Their compound is attacked daily by the scavengers of the road, including the "Humungus." Only Max can open up the road leading to their promised land. Miller impressively used the Australian landscape to create this post-apocalyptic setting. Though it's a world of violence, we never become desensitized by it. This *Mad Max* sequel is a high-octane action film with tremendous depth made by a true visionary. (And with all the crazies on the road these days, who's to say this lawless future won't become our own?) With Bruce Spence as the Gyro Captain, Vernon Wells, Mike Preston, and Emil Minty. Followed by the somewhat philosophical *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*.

AMERICA BEWARE



The first four notes of Mort Glickman's title music- -a reworking of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony- -is one of those musical passages, like Liszt's *Les Preludes*, which has special meaning for those of us who are keepers of the flame. It is the theme to one of the most exciting serials ever made. I conclude my hero trilogy with *Spy Smasher* (1942), a top-of-the-line production from Republic's golden age. This 12-chapter serial was directed by William Witney, who had just completed *Dick Tracy Vs. Crime, Inc.* with longtime partner Jack English.

From a technical standpoint, *Spy Smasher* is as close to being flawless as a serial can get, enhanced by the superior model work of Howard and Theodore Lydecker.

From out of the pages of Whiz Comics comes Spy Smasher, Defender of Democracy. Donned in an aviator's uniform with goggles and a cape, this Axis fighter is a character you can't help but love. Alan Armstrong (with the help of twin brother Jack) is a freelance agent battling Nazis. With more fun, energy, and imagination than anything today's movie mavericks could think up, *Spy Smasher* rips apart a spy ring in America. The script was completed a week before Pearl Harbor, and this was the war he was created to fight. The villain is The Mask, who attacks our front with one nefarious scheme after another. The kinetic pace and well-choreographed action is unlike anything found in other chapterplays- -this one with some great cliffhangers involving a submarine, a motorcycle chase, and that wonderful "Bat Plane." For a laugh, check out the billboard in Chapter 9, but the rest is no-nonsense, one of the few serials to end on a bittersweet note.



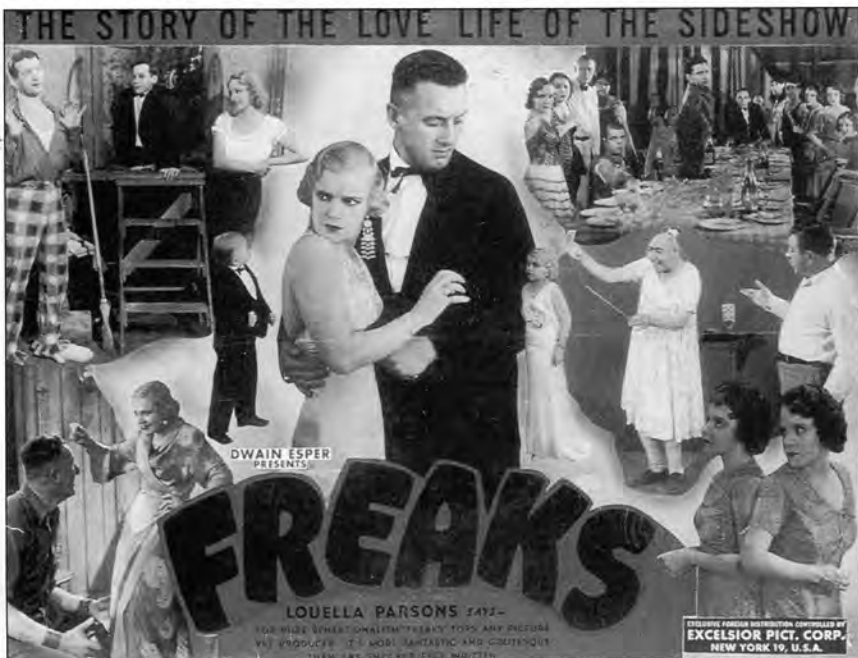
Kane Richmond essayed the dual role of Spy Smasher. Born December 23, 1906, as Fred W. Bowditch, he died on March 22, 1973, thirty years ago this March. A Minneapolis native, he excelled in sports such as swimming, narrowly

beaten by Johnny Weissmuller in a 1923 Northwest meet. He was a dedicated husband and father, and in all the years he was alive no one ever had a bad word to say about him. In Hollywood he would star in eight serials, including *The Lost City* and *Haunted Harbor*, but it is in the role of Alan/Jack Armstrong that he is best remembered. Kane Richmond was one of the smoothest actors in the serial genre and had the most talent of any...Marguerite Chapman, a Howard Hughes discovery and a descendant of "Appleseed Johnny" Chapman (a movie press legend), plays Eve, daughter of Admiral Corby (Sam Flint), the Commissioner of Naval Intelligence. Hans Schumm plays The Mask with as much subtlety as you'd find in a Three Stooges short. And Tristram Coffin is Drake, a tool of The Mask.

I've been trying to put this serial together for some time. We will be screening a hybrid print. Chapters 2, 5, 10, 11 and 12 come from an original 16mm source. The rest of the chapters have been pieced together from a dupe, but it still beats video projection! This presentation will be dedicated to the late Bill Witney, who passed away last March.



The "V" will shine again.



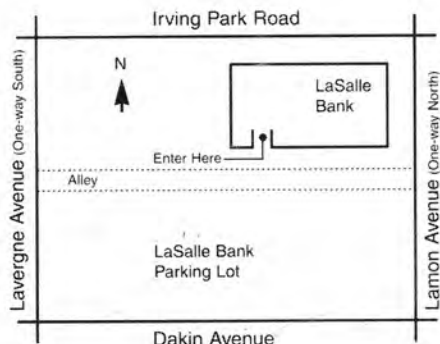
LaSalle Bank Classic Film Series

Cinema Obscura / Atomic Cinema

FILMS START AT 8:00 P.M.

GENERAL ADMISSION \$5

SENIOR CITIZENS AND
UNDER TEN YEARS \$3



LaSalle Theatre
4901 West Irving Park Road
Chicago, Illinois 60641

For updates and more information
call (312) 904-9442



Member of the ABN AMRO Group