

FAMOUS MONSTERS[®] OF FILMLAND



FAMOUS
MONSTER
#258
NOV/DEC 2011

**MONSTER
MASTERCLASS:
ZOMBIE MAKEUP WITH
OSCAR WINNER
DAVE ELSEY**

**DON POST STUDIOS:
PAST & PRESENT**

**THE ORIGINS OF
VAMPIRELLA**



ISSN 1522-0499

BROOMSTICKS AND BOOMSTICKS • WITCHES AND THE EVIL DEAD

FAMOUS MONSTERS[®] OF FILMLAND

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011
NUMBER 258



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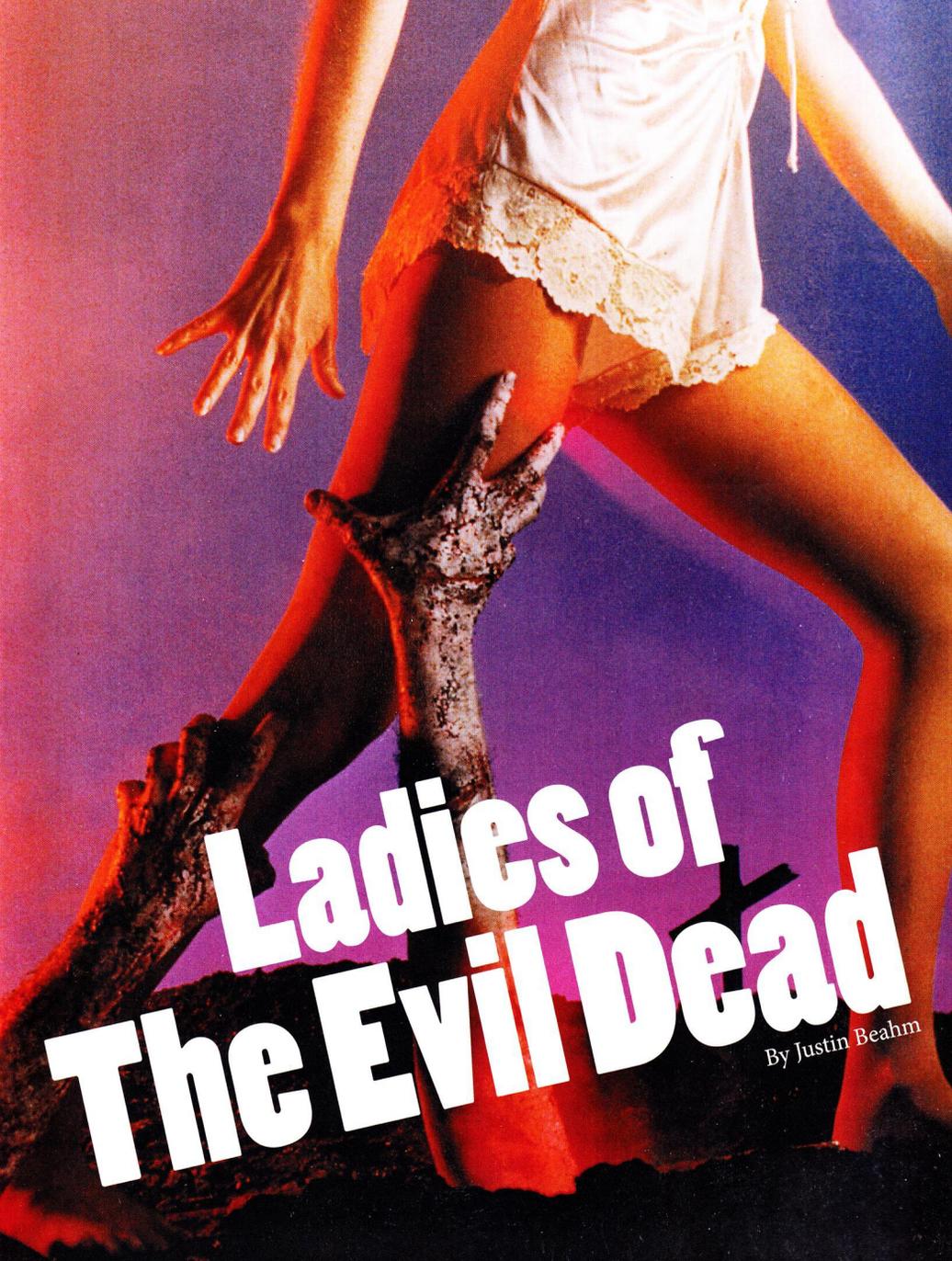
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Ladies of The Evil Dead

By Justin Beahm



The ladies in Bruce Campbell's life. They look so harmless, don't they? Turn the page

IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE EVIL DEAD TRILOGY ISN'T JUST ABOUT BRUCE CAMPBELL'S ASH, BUT ABOUT THE WOMEN AROUND HIM. BY NOW, ASH IS THE STUFF OF CULT CINEMA LEGEND: AVERAGE GUY FACES THE IMPOSSIBLE, BATTLING POSSESSED FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES, OFTEN ONLY GETTING OUT ALIVE VIA SELF-ABUSE AND RIVERS OF GRUE. THE CHARACTER MORPHED FROM BUMBLING BOOB IN THE INITIAL ENTRY TO HILARIOUSLY SMARMY, ONE-LINER SNAPPING ACTION HERO BY THE THIRD, AND THROUGHOUT, HIS GREATEST CHALLENGES ALWAYS CAME IN THE WOMEN HE FACED. BUT IT DIDN'T START OUT THAT WAY.

In 1978, fresh out of Michigan State University, Sam Raimi took a small group of pals to partner Robert Tapert's farm outside of Detroit to shoot a 30-minute short called *WITHIN THE WOODS*. Armed with \$1,600, a Super-8 camera, several buckets of blood, and special effects tradesman Tom Sullivan, the story of four

friends in a secluded house battling an ancient spirit unfolded over the course of a weekend. Unlike the three films to follow, this time around Campbell's character ("Bruce" here) was the one possessed, ending in a pulpy pile by the time credits roll, the product of his girlfriend Ellen's (Ellen Sandweiss) efforts to survive his incessant murderous onslaught. The

direction, effects, and cinematography belied the meager budget, and the result was a morbid mini-masterpiece. Investors were impressed, and funding was secured for a feature-length follow-up to shoot a year later.

Fearing the Michigan winter that lay before them, Raimi and crew headed for the warmer climate in Tennessee for the shoot.





Auditions were held in cinematically-barren Detroit. Three actresses—Betsy Baker, Theresa Tilly (then billed as Sarah York), and Ellen Sandweiss (again)—would join Campbell, actor Richard DeManicor (then billed as Hal Delrich), Raimi, and Sullivan for the trip.

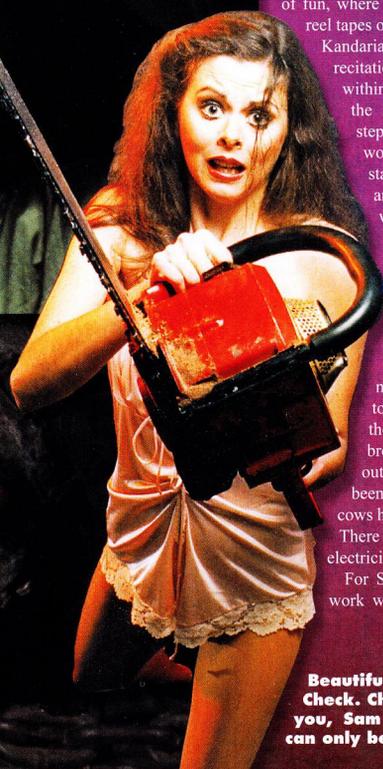
As Baker recalls, details on the production were thin from the start. “All we knew was that we were going to be shooting in a small cabin in a small town in Tennessee and we’d all be living in one house...crew and all,” the theatre-trained actress shares.

Tilly, who stepped into the role of Ash’s sister “Shelly,” also recalls the ambiguity of what lay before them as they made their way to the volunteer state. “We knew the script was maybe 30 pages, and we were going to make \$100 a week, but that was about it.”

The story concerns Ash and some friends heading to a remote cabin for a weekend of fun, where they stumble upon reel-to-reel tapes of someone reading from the Kandarian Book of the Dead. The recitation awakens something from within the woods, which possesses the group one by one. Side-stepping genre convention, the women in the film take center stage, tearing into one another and Ash, who fumbles his way through gallons of blood and severed limbs to emerge at the end.

Once the cadre arrived on location, everyone pitched in to dress the set. Recalls Baker, “The dirt road we drove down in the movie was the actual road to the location. When we got there, we spent two days with brooms and shovels cleaning out this cabin, because it had been used by wild animals, and cows had been roaming through it. There was no running water. No electricity. It was very rustic.”

For Sullivan, the opportunity to work with a bigger budget was a



Beautiful girl in lingerie? Check. Chainsaw? Check. Bless you, Sam Raimi. Bless you. It can only be THE EVIL DEAD

Top: Ellen Sandweiss, Betsy Baker and Theresa Tilly (then billed as Sarah York) arriving on EVIL DEAD set. Bottom: Theresa on set of EVIL DEAD

thrill, and he went all out, although much of what ended up being used was improvised while shooting. Remembers Baker, "Tom would come up with things as we were shooting. We'd be eating chicken dinner for a crew meal one night and the bones from that dinner would be simmering on the stove the next day for use in the movie."

The make-up was intense, and certainly not comfortable. In addition to the prosthetics and facial appliances worn by the leading ladies, they also had to sport specially designed contact lenses that came with a warning, Shares Tilly, "They brought in an optometrist, and he was very specific about how long we were to wear them and how important cleanliness was to avoid eye infections. There wasn't even running water, and we had no way to monitor how long we had them in."

The effects weren't the only thing improvised on the set. Tilly again remembers the shock when she was approached about a very intimate moment that was not in the script. "I had no idea I was going to have to take off my shirt. That was another thing they just came at me and said. 'We need you to whip off your t-shirt.' I thought they meant down to my bra and they said, 'No, no bra.'"

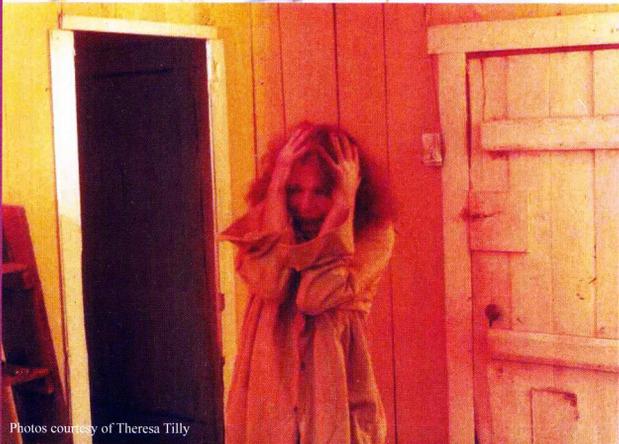
Despite occasional concerns, it was clear from the start that Raimi was serious about making *EVIL DEAD* an intricate, daring, and ambitious film. "The atmosphere was very friendly, fun, and creative," relates Tilly. "Even though Sam had us doing these crazy things, we were all on board with his vision. We saw the dailies and it was clear there was something real and unique happening."

Additional shooting continued into the new year and beyond. The film eventually premiered in January of 1983 in a modest 128 theatres, but slowly became something of an underground hit. It was enough of a success to spawn a sequel, which started production two years later.

Dwarfing *EVIL DEAD*'s \$375,000 budget, *EVIL DEAD II* was awarded a \$3.6 million purse to pull from, and every dollar ended up on-screen. Essentially a re-telling of the story from the first film,



Photos courtesy of Theresa Tilly



Photos courtesy of Theresa Tilly

DESPITE OCCASIONAL CONCERNS, IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE START THAT RAIMI WAS SERIOUS ABOUT MAKING EVIL DEAD AN INTRICATE, DARING, AND AMBITIOUS FILM

EVIL DEAD II out-did its predecessor in just about every category imaginable, with special attention paid to effects. In addition to returning Campbell and Raimi, the make-up department was beefed up with a veritable who's who in the genre at the time: Robert Kurtzman, Greg Nicotero,

Mark Shostrom, and Tom Sullivan all teamed up for a tour-de-force in practical effects wizardry.

Much farther-reaching than the original, *EVIL DEAD II* broke boundaries and set the bar at the time for fantasy horror. While considered a sequel, there is no



The casts were for Raimi's *EVIL DEAD II* follow up, *ARMY OF DARKNESS*, a film so broad in scope, even horror fans had to do double takes when seeing coverage during production. The molds made would outfit an entire army of what were referred to as deadites, and they were almost all made from Tallman's form.

Raimi was able to secure a hefty \$13 million budget, and once again he set out to one-up his previous efforts. Unlike the start of the second film in the series, *ARMY OF DARKNESS* essentially picks up right where *EVIL DEAD II* leaves off, seeing Ash fall through a time vortex,

continuance of the story from the first entry, instead providing something of a remake. Ash is once again forced to reckon with his inhuman sister and other nasty products of the forest, but this round sees him fighting off his own hand after it becomes infected and is lopped off with a chainsaw, among other things.

With added emphasis on humor and quotable one-liners, Campbell turns everything up to ten in his re-visitation of Ash. Suddenly much more world-wise and instinctive, the character is amped up to match his surroundings, and the dramatic, surprise adventure set in motion for Ash at the end demanded a sequel. The film landed in theatres in March of 1987 in the midst of a boom in horror. Splatter fare was getting magazine cover treatment, and special effects artists were becoming as well known and oft-discussed as directors and actors. The climate was perfect, and despite opening in just 310 theatres, the film managed to take in over \$800,000 on opening weekend.

Stunt actor Pat Tallman was having something of a downturn in her budding career in 1991. She had slipped into a professional rut since playing a much less-defenseless Barbara in Ton Savini's *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* remake in 1990, so she approached her friend Greg Nicotero for some work. "I went over to their shop and said, 'What can I do for you?' They said, 'We have to build this army and we need bodies.' So I got a SAG day rate for casting my body."

Let's be honest, if it wasn't for the long string of women always trying to kill him, the world wouldn't have the collection of Ash's one-liners that it does





An axe? Wait till he chops off his hand, puts a chainsaw on it, and grabs a shotgun. Then the undead are really in for it

landing in 1300 AD where he reluctantly sets out on a mission to retrieve the Necronomicon from a far away cemetery in effort to save a village.

The script was even more effects-heavy than the previous film, and many stunt actors were needed to flesh out all the memorable characters. One such character was a winged, bat-like deadite that swoops down and nabs Sheila, the object of Ash's affection. 22-year old dancer Nadine Hoss (then Grycan) suited up for her first stunt role, having no idea what she was in for.

"I didn't know the extent of what I was getting involved with," she remembers. "I was just told I would be suspended on wires wearing a suit, but I didn't have any idea about the magnitude of it all." The heavy suit took four people to operate and move, but despite the challenge of the extra weight and new surroundings, Hoss relished the experience. "I was young and game for anything."

In addition to being tapped for a role as the "Possessed Witch," Patricia Tallman was elected as one of the deadite army primaries in front of the sea of skeletons and creatures. She recalls some interesting nights shooting in unusual surroundings. "We were out in the desert at night, in an area called Acton, which is near where Tippi Hedrin had a wild cat rescue. Lions and tigers. At night, because we had horses, the lions could smell the horses and the lions would roar. Of course this made the horses freak, and I'm a foot soldier in the army in front of the horses saying, 'Ok you guys, I hope you've got control over this because I don't want to get smashed.'"

The result was a period piece comedy-horror epic that surprised

WITH ADDED EMPHASIS ON HUMOR AND QUOTABLE ONE-LINERS, CAMPBELL TURNS EVERYTHING UP TO TEN IN HIS RE-VISITATION OF ASH.

and delighted fans. In addition to swooping bat creatures and an army of deadites, Ash has to contend with some "tiny Ashes" and "Evil Ash," and once again he has his girlfriend turn on him in the final battle.

The box office tally for ARMY was monumental for a film of its origin, raking in over \$4 million on opening weekend alone. The success of the third film was only the beginning for the EVIL DEAD series, as home video had given all the films a second life.

Theresa Tilly, who now makes appearances with Betsy Baker and Ellen Sandweiss as "The Ladies of Evil Dead," admits, "We had no idea until our kids started getting older and they heard about it. I'd see it at Blockbuster, but I thought it was one of those movies nobody picks up. It wasn't until 2001 when Betsy contacted us about this screening of EVIL DEAD where they wanted the cast to make an appearance. We just had no idea."

In the twenty years since the last EVIL DEAD film was released, there have been video games, action figures, t-shirts, costumes, and comic books paying homage to the series. A rumor is circulating about the possibility of an EVIL DEAD 4, and after the success of this unlikely trio of films, who would blame Sam for giving it another whirl? 

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THE EVIL DEAD LIVES ON

BY RICHARD J. SCHELLBACH

AS I DROVE TO MIAMI TO MEET BRUCE CAMPBELL FOR THE FIRST TIME, I MUST ADMIT TO BEING JUST A TAD NERVOUS—BUT NOT FOR THE OBVIOUS REASONS. I HAD LONG AGO STOPPED GETTING TRIPPED UP OVER MEETING ACTORS, DIRECTORS, AND WRITERS THAT I ADMIRER. NO, THIS WAS MORE A FEAR THAT BRUCE CAMPBELL WASN'T A GREAT ACTOR.

Now, before you all accuse me of blasphemy, hear me out. There are very few actors on the planet who have played more jerks than Bruce Campbell. Tons of actors play good guys. Tons play bad. But save for his appearance on *THE X-FILES* and possibly a few other minor roles throughout his career, Bruce excels at playing full-of-themselves anti-heroes and cads. Sure, you'd want his characters on your team when the spit hits the Spam, but you'd probably end up wanting to kill him when the fracas is over.

My fear, as I drove the twenty minutes to the convention center where Bruce was appearing, was that Bruce Campbell would, in fact, be a jerk, a cad, and possibly even a bouncer. (Okay, so I didn't really think he'd be a bouncer, but I dare any writer worth his or her salt not to use that word in a monster magazine if given half the chance.) That Bruce Campbell hadn't been acting in all of those movies... he was just being himself.

Before I walked over to him, I stayed in the background for a minute or two and watched as he talked with fans. Both Bruce and his fans laughed, joked, and smiled. That's when I realized that Bruce Campbell was possibly... (wait for it...) The Greatest Actor Who Ever Lived!

When I finally approached him, I introduced myself and said, "Bruce, I have good news and bad news. The good news is that my wife thinks you're an extremely attractive man." (She does.) He smiled and asked for the bad news. "The bad news," I responded, "is that she thinks I'm an

extremely attractive man, too." Bruce cracked up, and we started talking about our marriages and other things I never thought I'd be talking about with one of my favorite genre stars. And standing there talking to Bruce transported me back to the first time I saw him.

One night in 1981, Al and Bob (then and now, two of my closest friends) and I had headed off to the movies. If memory serves, we didn't know what was playing at the Hamden CineMart—only that we were jonesing for a sci-fi or horror flick. I knew we were in the right place when I got to the theater and saw the one-sheet for *THE EVIL DEAD*. To this day, it's still one of my favorite posters—simple, yet says it all. And it didn't hurt that emblazoned across the top half of the poster was a quote from Stephen King: "... The most ferociously original horror film of the year..." I had read everything that King had written up to that point and had just that week finished reading *THE STAND*. Let me tell you, at that particular time, if Stephen King had told me I should go and see *CHU CHU AND THE PHILLY FLASH*, I would have. (He didn't. I didn't.)

Now, if you've never seen *EVIL DEAD*, shame on you! Stop reading this column immediately, go to the store, buy the movie on either DVD or Blu-ray, watch it in one sitting, use the bathroom—you know you have to, pick up this magazine, and continue reading this column. And don't expect the 40 million of us who have already seen it a dozen or so times to wait for you!

Anyway, where was I?
Oh yeah...

Al, Bob, and I entered the theater and took our usual seats—seventh row, center. Getting the vibe, early on, that this was going to be a movie to watch with college kids (much like a *MONTY PYTHON* flick or *ROCKY HORROR*), I didn't mind when people started chuckling at some of the doofy things those five kids in the Oldsmobile Delta 88 were saying. My friend Bob even joined in: when the bench swing was rhythmically knocking against the cabin, he started singing "The Little Drummer Boy." I cracked up, and right then and there the three of us invented the famed MST3K formula. (Okay, I might be exaggerating a wee bit.)

Now, I had seen *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, *THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE*, *FRIDAY THE 13th* and *HALLOWEEN* in the theater—all deadly serious horror movies that, in one way or another, changed the genre. The last thing I expected during the first twenty minutes of *EVIL DEAD* was to be sitting in on another game-changer. But I was. Starting at roughly the half hour mark, *THE EVIL DEAD* became something way more than ordinary. The directing, make-up, music, effects, and performances all combined to give me something with a familiar feel that, at the same time, felt brand new. And I loved it! I left the theater feeling completely entertained—something that didn't happen again for quite a few years.

Now, I also have mad love for *EVIL DEAD 2* and *ARMY OF DARKNESS*. I love how Ash has gone from a squirrely tag-along to a cocky blowhard and true horror movie legend, and how an all out marbles-to-the-wall horror flick morphed into the perfect horror/comedy franchise.



Ash and Annie Knowby (Sarah Berry) stop to reflect on the little things in life—like escaping a cabin possessed by an ancient demonic spirit

But with all due respect to the sequels, neither has come close to giving me that “I’ve never seen this before” feeling I had with the original.

In subsequent years, I’ve had the distinct pleasure of meeting Bruce Campbell, Hal Delrich, Ellen Sandweiss, Sarah York, and Betsy Baker—the five actors in the Delta 88, whose lines I chuckled at three long decades ago.

I’ve worked with Ted Raimi on ALF, and each time we’ve met since then, we’ve said the

same things to each other: he mentions to whomever is listening that ALF was his first real sitcom gig, and I tell him that no one on the set could tell. He was a true professional. Tom Sullivan—brilliant artist, sculptor, makeup man, and just about everything else needed to make a low budget horror movie work—a virtual one-man band—is a great guy, too, and a wealth of information about the production of THE EVIL DEAD.

truly enjoy giving the juicy details?

Speaking of juicy details, because THE EVIL DEAD was so huge early on in the home video market, it’s been out in every format possible. (Between Beta, VHS, LaserDisc, DVD and Blu-ray, I’ve plunked down enough bucks to get me a Producer’s credit on the next one.) But the plus to that many video releases is the fact there are at least three and possibly four different audio commentaries, with Bruce Campbell,

THAT’S WHEN I REALIZED THAT BRUCE CAMPBELL WAS POSSIBLY... (WAIT FOR IT...) THE GREATEST ACTOR WHO EVER LIVED!



All of these people are a blast to talk with, super fan-friendly, and eager to dish on what it was like making a low-budget miracle. And that, I think, is the true magic of THE EVIL DEAD. It’s a modern classic—a genre-bender. All of the principal actors are fun people to deal with, love their fans, and make frequent convention visits. That means many of the fans who either saw THE EVIL DEAD in the theater or, more likely, on home video, can get a feel for what it was like to be there just by talking with the artists who made the film. How many other 30 year old classics have so many actors and behind-the-lens people who are still with us and

Robert G. Tapert, and Sam Raimi, together or in some combination. Add to that the books about THE EVIL DEAD and you have a nearly tuition-free college course in the good, bad, and ugly of guerilla movie making and a film that should be studied on all levels for decades to come.

THE EVIL DEAD is far from a perfect film. Listening to those many audio commentaries, the principals themselves say the word “cheesy” more often than it’s used at a Sargento’s Board meeting. But 30 years ago, that movie was exactly what I needed. Although a bit rough around the edges, it still packs a punch... and a pencil in the ankle. 