

What follows is MOST of the EVIL DEAD book, but not all of it; I am still waiting for two more transcripts to arrive here. And I haven't finished the sections on ARMY OF DARKNESS and the very last chapter. Furthermore, this is a very, very rough draft; I haven't even made my OWN corrections yet. As I finish those sections, I'll send them on to you. Important note: even though this isn't quite finished, it is somewhere between 12,000 and 15,000 words *too long*. If you see sections that can be cut, please suggest them.

What I would like for you to do is to make the corrections on these pages; use the backs if necessary. When you're done, mail them back to me pronto; I need to have them no later than June 20th, absolute maximum deadline. The full, finished manuscript has to be in New York on July 1st; this is Dell's deadline, and they mean it.

I'd like to thank everyone for their confidence in me as the writer of this book; it has meant more to me than I can say. I hope you find that that confidence was not misplaced.

Bill Warren

Bill Warren  


BLOOD IN THE AISLES

October 15, 1981, the Redford Theater in Detroit, Michigan, one of the grandest old movie palaces of the Midwest. Searchlights sweep the sky, limousines pull up in front of the theater letting off elegantly-clad people there for the premiere of a new movie. The balcony fills up with giddy teenagers. Outside the theater, three nervous young men in tuxedos are greeting friends, relatives and others.

It's a festive occasion, with excitement running high among everyone -- it's clearly *an event*. The audience is excited, anticipation mounts. From below the stage, a gigantic Wurlitzer organ rises, playing Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D-Flat Minor*.

\*\*\*\*\*DID YOU GUYS MAKE ANNOUNCEMENTS AT THE PREMIERE?

The curtains part, the lights go down, and the projector beam from high in the theater stabs down at the screen. It's the first public showing of *Book of the Dead* -- soon to be retitled *The Evil Dead*.

On screen, a group of college-age youngsters go to a cabin in the woods where they find a tape recording left by a mysteriously-vanished professor of antiquities. Unknown to the five, the recording rouses demons of the forest, who soon attack. One by one, the young people are taken over by the demons, becoming possessed by dark forces and turning against the survivors. The only way out is to dismember the bodies of the possessed. Finally, only one young man is left alive -- and as he leaves the cabin, he, too, is attacked by an invisible demon.

The movie is awash in blood, shaken with violence, graphic, gruesome and gleeful in its mayhem. But it's also made with verve and imagination; there isn't much time devoted to characterization -- but that doesn't matter since the low-budget movie is so impressively cinematic. The camera becomes a player in the film, when it adopts the point of view of the evil force, and the rest of the time, too. It swooshes, it turns upside down, it shatters windows and smashes down doors, it rushes through the woods, and glides over ponds.

The kids in the balcony explode with delight, clutching each other in terror, crying "gross!" at the nastier stuff, and laughing with relief when tension is broken. The elegantly-clad audience below, many of whom have actually invested money in this gorefest, have other reactions...

The night was the culmination of a dream, and the beginning of one, too.

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More moviemakers than you might imagine have begun their careers with an 8mm camera in hand, ordering siblings and friends around in order to make backyard epics. Even Steven Spielberg started this way -- but what makes Sam Raimi, Bruce Campbell and Rob Tapert (and others in their group, like John Cameron, Scott Spiegel, Josh Becker) different from others who started like this is that they are *still together*. Spielberg makes features, sure, but his assistant director and stars aren't people he went to high school with, his producer wasn't a college friend -- but that is true for Sam Raimi.

The amazing thing about the story of *The Evil Dead* is how very American it all is. Renaissance Pictures has its ultimate origins in a bunch of teenagers playing with movie cameras; I don't know of any other movie company, anywhere, that had such an unusual and genuinely good-hearted history, because it's the story of friendships, and a business, that grew out of having *fun*. It's a buddy movie, it's the American entrepreneurial spirit coming directly out of high school hallways, local theater and indulgent parents.

There are three main players in the *Evil Dead* game: director Sam Raimi, producer Rob Tapert and actor (and producer) Bruce Campbell, but there are several others involved as well. The most influential is probably Scott Spiegel, who knew both Campbell and Raimi from high school on, who co-wrote *Evil Dead II* with Sam, and after whom the second male lead in *The Evil Dead* was named, and he was the horror movie fan of the bunch. He's still close friends with both Bruce and Sam, and was a very important source for material for this book. Scotty has done well in Hollywood himself -- with Boaz Yakin he co-wrote Clint Eastwood's movie *The Rookie*, for example -- but he's a movie fan under it all, and is the archivist for all the old amateur movies made by Raimi, Campbell and Spiegel himself. In fact, Scotty made more of those Super-8 wonders than any of the others.

Josh Becker, a director himself now, also turns up in these notes from time to time. He made several Super-8 movies, often starring Bruce Campbell, and worked on *The Evil Dead* as an all-around production assistant. His reminiscences also helped out here. A long student film he directed, and co-wrote with Scott Spiegel, *Stryker's War*, metamorphosed into the feature *Thou Shalt Not Kill, Except...* which starred Sam Raimi as a Charles Manson-like cult leader and murderer. Becker also directed *Lunatics: A Love Story* which Rob Tapert and Sam helped get financed; it costars Ted Raimi and Bruce Campbell. John Cameron appeared in many of the Super-8 movies, worked on *The Evil Dead*, ultimately becoming an assistant director in Hollywood, often working for Sam in that capacity.

We're going to be bouncing around in time here, wandering this way and that as we pick up all the loose yarns that eventually wove into the blood-and-bile-stained fabric of *The Evil Dead* and all that followed.

The original plan for this book was simply to tell the story of how each of the three *Evil Dead* movies was made, but it changed. In

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interviews with the three main players of the Evil Dead game, Raimi, Campbell and Tapert, it was obvious that their fondest memories are about the making of the first film of the trilogy. Their eyes grow bright, they become animated, they're full of colorful anecdotes and delight. Talking about *Evil Dead 2* and *Army of Darkness* isn't the same; they enjoyed making those -- but those were made by seasoned professionals, in seasoned-professional manner. *The Evil Dead* was made by a bunch of kids who'd made Super-8mm movies together in the suburbs of Detroit, and an enthusiastic newcomer they'd come across in college.

Half this book is devoted to the making of that one film, and with good reason: it's more interesting, it's more unusual, and it is instructive.

At the end of the Academy Awards telecast in March, 1993, Whoopi Goldberg addressed the dreamers in the audience: to those who hoped someday to be up on that stage accepting one of those awards, she said, don't ever forget: *you can do it*. She was right.

Sam Raimi, Bruce Campbell and Rob Tapert made a movie -- and made their careers.

Do not let anyone tell you otherwise: *you can do it too*. And here's how....



PART ONE  
YOU MUST TASTE BLOOD TO BE A MAN

I

Sam Raimi was born October 23, 1959, in Royal Oak, Michigan. His parents were both in business, with his mother running a chain of Lulu's Lingerie shops and his father \*\*\*\*. He has an older brother, Ivan, who cowrote *Easy Wheels* and *Army of Darkness* with Sam; Ivan is an emergency-room doctor who moonlights as a screenwriter.

\*\*\*\*\*NEED BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS FOR SAM

Raimi first lived in Detroit, but in 1968, his family moved to the suburbs. "I always liked watching TV as a kid," Raimi says, "but the first memorable movie experience I had was *Fantastic Voyage* [1966], the trip through the human body. Boy, it was a very powerful experience for me, that journey through the human body, just a mind-blowing experience. I saw it with my folks when you could still go into the movie theaters in downtown Detroit dressed in a suit and tie -- we all wore ties -- after eating dinner. It was a big thing to go to a movie, a very serious experience. Theaters were well kept. It was a nicer experience than it seems to be now, but maybe that was just because I was younger. It was like going to live theater almost.

"But what drew me into making movies, I think, were the home movies my father used to make of us kids and show to the family. That was a powerful experience to me, to see his manipulation of space and time on film. The fact that he could capture reality with the movie camera. At that time, in the early 60s, 16mm was the format of choice for most home moviemakers [actually, it was 8mm, but let's let Sam have his memories]. I didn't know it was possible to capture reality that way and then replay it."

Sam was fascinated to see himself on screen (possibly explaining why he happily does cameos in the films of other directors), but also the idea that a moment he thought had gone forever could be brought back was a wonder and a delight to him. He was already interested in magic, and would continue to do magic acts for parties on through high school, so in a sense his dad's movie camera seemed to be an extension of this magic. "He would shoot the birthday parties, for instance, shoot the kids coming in," Sam explains, "then he'd have a shot of the cake being presented, and then I'd blow out the candles, then he'd have a shot of some presents being unwrapped, and then the kids going home after the party.

"But sometimes, when he got the reels back and cut them together, they'd be out of order, so I'd see the birthday cake being blown out, then I'd see a shot of my house and the first kid arriving for the party. And I thought, Oh my God, he's manipulating time! Not only could he capture reality, but he could then manipulate the sequence of

events, the order in which the time flow ran. I realized I had to explore this, it was unbelievable to me. It really felt like I was cheating, knowing about this magic, that it had somehow slipped through some porthole from the future. I truly believed it shouldn't be here now. That technology couldn't exist in 1965! I just thought it was impossible.

"The magical qualities of film, being able to capture time and replay it, in an altered reality -- you can play it faster, or slower, or in an order you choose, you can reassemble time, with the added enhancement of the sound of the moment, years ago, being replayed, I was living in a time warp. I thought that this magic was something I had to be involved with, that I had to consume myself with. It is so fantastic, so boggling, that nothing on Earth is -- anything else on Earth pales in comparison with it. It was just that magic of the filmic process itself that attracted me to it."

*Out West*, Sam's first 8mm movie is a strange, delirious lark of a film featuring neighborhood children of several ages goofing around in what looks like someone's basement rec room. "It was an adorable little thing," says Sam, who's something of an adorable little thing in *Out West* himself. "It was made in Franklin Michigan. I didn't know about editing; I knew my father had cut rolls of film together, but he didn't edit per se."

It is ostensibly a Western, primarily because a couple of the boys are wearing cowboy hats and cap pistols; otherwise, everyone is dressed in street clothes. There's a gunfight of sorts, with everyone making up at the end. Seventh-grade Sam is prominent on screen, often grinning into the camera, sometimes waving; there are a lot of bystanders, but whether they're supposed to be characters in the film, or just happened to be in the basement at the time, it's impossible to say. Titles are written on a blackboard. Everyone is having a great time, and nothing makes any sense. Sam remembers the movie as running two minutes, but it seems much longer, and that's not a comment on the quality -- but on the other hand, no one who sees this is likely to claim to be able to trace in it elements of the startling moviemaking imagination that Raimi displayed later. This could be the work of any bright kid playing with his parents' movie camera, although one quick trick involving a pistol and a shot of redeye (played by a glass of water) is pretty sophisticated for a seventh-grader. He also made *An Average Family* at around the same time, but didn't return to directing on film for several years. Being a year or so younger than Campbell and Spiegel, Sam naturally got started making his own 8mm movies a little later than they did.

\*\*\*\*\*NEED TO SEE OTHERS OF SAM'S OWN FILMS

We might as well deflect from our true path for a moment to mention Sam's younger brother Ted (or Theodore, or even Teddy) who's an actor; as a geeky little kid (sometimes with his cello), he appeared in many of Sam's Super-8 movies, as well as each of his brother's movies so far (as well as movies Sam coproduced, like John

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Woo's *Hard Target*); his best part for Sam is in *Darkman*, in which his head is run over by a car.

But then, Ted was forever being victimized by his older brothers. "They used to do something like the Chinese torture on me," the grinning Ted Raimi says. "They would ask my dad, 'Can we torture Teddy?' Dad would say, 'Yeah, yeah, go on, do whatever you want.' They would grab me, saying Dad told us to do this. They would drag me upstairs, they would tie me to the bed with belts, and put a hot light on my face, and they would drip water on my head (Sam especially loved to do this), until I told the secret. To this day I don't know what that was."

But sometimes Ted got his own back. "There was another name I used to play with my brothers, Sam and Ivan. I had a baseball bat, like a rubber one, and all of Sam's pals, including Bruce Campbell and Scott Spiegel, would come over and I would chase them (I was around ten, and they were around 16); whoever I caught I got to hit, hard. That was a fun one."

Ted caught the acting bug all on his own, however, and worked hard at learning his craft, but still, Sam did help out by using Ted in various capacities in the *Evil Dead* trilogy. "I was 12 when I did the first one," Ted says. "I barely remember it, but I was there -- barely." [Later on, we'll reveal where all Ted Raimi spotters, a sport being recommended for the Olympics, can find him in *The Evil Dead*].

In *Evil Dead II*, I got my Screen Actors Guild card by being Henrietta. I was twenty, I needed the money, I was desperate. I have four different parts in *Army of Darkness*; it used to be five, but Sam cut one out, the dirty rat, I'll get him for that, put sand in my brother's shorts, that's what I'll do, like in the good old days. I played the terrified, cowardly, worthless general. In another scene, I was another general, a brave, one-eyed general. Arrrr! Prince Henry! Arrrr! Then I was the worthless villager: I don't want to die! And then -- hey, it might still be five parts -- I was the brave villager: You can count on my steel! And then I was the S-Mart stock boy right at the end. KNB special effects made me braces, so I was truly, truly disguised."

Ted had bit parts in many major Hollywood films, including *Patriot Games* and *Postcards from the Edge*, supporting roles in cheaper films like *Candyman* and *Skinner*, and a leading role in Josh Becker's even lower-budgeted *Lunatics: A Love Story*. He landed a birth on TV's *seaQuest DSV*, where he plays, he insists, not the series' Uhura, but its Chekhov. But he'll be back in his brother's movies sooner or later. The Raimis may be gleeful teases, but they're a close-knit bunch.

II

"My first brush with Sam was a fleeting memory," says Bruce Campbell. "It was in the hallway of West Maple Junior High School, which Scott Spiegel also attended. Sam was dressed as Sherlock Holmes, playing with dolls in the middle of the hallway, and I just walked around him, and headed on down the hallway." From such bizarre beginnings the future actor-director relationship began. (For his part, Sam says he doesn't recall Bruce that day, and that he was making a video movie with a friend. He still doesn't see all that much odd about being dressed as Sherlock Holmes and playing with dolls in a high school hallway...)

\*\*\*\*need birth data, family data

Bruce Campbell first became interested in acting in 1966. "It extended from the fact that my dad wanted to be an artist." The elder Campbell graduated from the University of Michigan in 1950, but his own father, who had worked for Alcoa Aluminum "for about 150 years," Bruce says, insisted that Charles Campbell, Bruce's father (to be) go into a Real Job. He ended up in advertising, but "it still wasn't enough for him," Bruce adds, "so he got into this community theater group called St. Dunstan's Guild of Cranbrook."

The Guild was headquartered on the grounds of the estate of the man who founded the *Detroit News*, a huge estate surrounded by palatial homes -- the car industry generated a lot of big money for years. Bruce's dad was happy in the theater company (he turns up in "Action and Reaction," a Josh Becker-directed short starring Bruce), and socialized with other earnest if amateur thespians. "All these guys I looked at as actors, not as heads of companies and like that; I learned a lot of acting tricks from these guys," Bruce says fondly. One summer, Dunstan's Guild put on the great musical *The Pajama Game*, staged in one of the two theaters they use. In the winter, the productions are housed in the Pavilion, but in the summer, they do one big production in the giant amphitheater, a recreation of a classic Greek theater, "built with pillars and 180-degree raised seats of concrete, with reflection pools going back layer after layer. It was a mystical place to Bruce Campbell, place, and it's still there.

"The shows were Friday and Saturday nights, and I'd bundle all the kids up, me and my two brothers, and we'd sit on little cushions we brought to watch the play. And I saw my dad in *The Pajama Game*, in these really weird clothes, with makeup on. He was dancing and singing and kissing women that weren't my mother. He looked really happy. Something in my head said, 'OK, if he can get away with that as an adult, if he can still be a kid, that's what I want to do.'" But the opportunity didn't seem likely, because to join the Guild you had to be eighteen.

However, every summer they did use children in various productions, and in 1971, when they held auditions for *The King and I*, the Rodgers & Hammerstein musical which features dozens of children, Bruce auditioned for the important role of the King's eldest son. He

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didn't get the part, but did get a lesser role as one of the hordes of the King's *other* children. But then, in a twist like something out of a 1930s musical, Bruce Campbell got a phone call. *Princes*

"This kid who was going to play the son got sick, and did I want the part? I said, 'Of course,' and I did play the role. I think the show came off very well. I remember being photographed sitting on top of a 1971 Lincoln Continental in my *price's* outfit; local companies advertised in the program. To me, *that was* my first promotion effort."

Being in the play itself was the real thrill, though. "It was a really great experience. The next year they did *South Pacific*" -- another Rodgers and Hammerstein musical -- "and the people in the community theater knew who I was then, so I became a Polynesian servant boy, in dark body makeup, like I wore in *The King and I*."

By 1973, Bruce had become, at least, taller, as well as more versatile. When the community theater staged *Fiorello*, he played three different roles, but "I was Chang the houseboy again, but I was also a World War I soldier and a New York street vendor. By that time, I started to meet a lot of these people. That became the normal thing for me, but I still wasn't old enough to actually join. I don't think I joined officially until about '78.

"One summer, the play was all adults, and I took a Cranbrook summer theater school. I spent all summer doing pretty serious work on plays; it was a labor-intensive experience where we did a different play every week -- you had to learn a lot of lines. We did dramas, comedies, farces. We performed indoors at the Pavilion, which was great because that was on a real stage. We borrowed some of the old sets they'd used during the regular season, and had tons of costumes. Later on, that became the warehouse for our Super-8 films."

### III

Which neatly brings us to those amazing films that Bruce, Sam and Scott Spiegel made for years, along with Josh Becker, Bill Ward, Matt Taylor, Tim Quill, family members and girlfriends. It's unlikely that these movies will ever be shown anywhere publicly, but for the die-hard Evil Dead fan, they're fascinating. You really can see ideas, however primitive, turning up in them that later pop out in not only the *Evil Dead* movies, but *Crimewave* and *Darkman* as well. *VP*

"A buddy of mine and I used to shoot films in regular 8mm," Campbell explains, "because that's the kind of camera his dad had. It used 16mm spools that, after you exposed 25 feet, you pulled out and turned it over to expose the other side. The lab sliced it down the middle, spliced the two ends together, and it became 50 feet of 8mm film. The camera was an old Bell and Howell; it had plastic viewfinders on top, without any reflex viewing, and you had to wind it up to make it go. But it had the capability of single-framing -- it was big on special effects."

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Movie film shoots one frame of action at a time; for silent films, including 8mm, it takes 18 frames for one second of action; for sound films, it's 24 frames per second (fps).

Back around the turn of the century, a magician named Georges Melies was using his new movie camera to shoot a Parisian street scene. At one point, the camera jammed; he cleared the jam and continued to film. When he projected the movie, he was astounded to see what seemed to be a miracle: a carriage changed into a hearse. What had happened was that when the camera jammed, the carriage was there; while Melies was clearing the jam, the carriage moved on and a hearse stopped where it had been. But the camera just started filming again on the next frame after the last shot of the carriage -- and abracadabra, a carriage became a hearse. And when he realized what this meant he could do, George Melies became the movies' first great master of special effects.

So Campbell and his pal could not only do Melies-like effects, stopping the camera and replacing an object or person with something else, they do do primitive stop-motion animation, or even animation of people (pixilation): you stand there, Bruce, and I'll shoot one frame. Now step backwards; another frame; another step, another frame, and on and on for dozens of frames -- and when the movie is projected, Bruce looks like he's sliding around on his feet without moving his legs. "The early thing using the single frame ability," Campbell says, "was making things disappear -- snap! -- or scooting along the ground like in some Gulf Oil commercials that were airing on television at that time."

Campbell and his pal were making very short movies, "just little scenes," as he puts it. "One was called *D-Day* where I was playing Hitler. Violence was a big thing, for some reason; lots of early carnage and mayhem in my movies. But it was just trickery, very primitive and simple; we used dummies a lot, because dummies were cool. You could do a hidden cut and throw a dummy in. It was, as I say, primitive, but it was a good, cool hobby."

When Campbell and Spiegel met in high school, Campbell was excited to discover that Scotty had been doing films on his own -- and the films made by Spiegel and his friends had actual sets that they had built themselves. "I remember watching *Night in the Sanitarium* over at this guy's house; they had built sets! I was so impressed." Furthermore, "Scott had more of a filmmaking machine set up. In his neighborhood, he had three or four friends that worked with him in making the movies pretty industriously. But then I brought a lot of costumes with me, so I was pretty handy."

Scott's enormous enthusiasm, encyclopedic knowledge of movie trivia, willingness to do anything for a joke, and his filmmaking abilities wowed Campbell. They soon began doing movies together, with Three Stooges-like titles such as *Pies and Guys* and *Inspector Klutz Saves the Day*. Campbell became adept -- or at least enthusiastic -- at doing slapstick falls and spills in these strange movies that he made with Spiegel. "Scott was pretty much the Three Stooges-type

mentality, and Sam was very much a fan of the Marx Brothers. I didn't really have any idols to cling to; the Stooges were funny enough for me.

"Scott was a big fan of cutting in stock footage," says Campbell, clearly still impressed after all these years, "and I thought it was the coolest thing. They had made a film in color and cut in black-and-white footage, but the fact that he did it made it seem like high-budget stuff. They had a big climax where the vampire falls off the top of this building; it looked much more expensive."

Not only did Spiegel and his friends have a more elaborate filmmaking technique, but their films were *shown* in a slicker manner, too. "This one guy, Matt Taylor, had actually sealed off a portion of his basement to make a projector booth. And of course," Campbell says, "that was the coolest of all. You could hide behind there, you could barely hear the projector -- and they ran these primitive speakers out to where you sat. They shot silent, but Scott would always come up with a soundtrack on a cassette recorder, and manually sync it up." By 1973, Campbell and Spiegel met Mike Ditz and John Cameron, and all began appearing in each others' movies.

One of the earliest films teaming Spiegel and Campbell was 1973's *Three Smart Saps*, directed by Spiegel and his friend Bill Ward (they directed many together), and starring them, Matt Taylor, Scott Taylor, Mike Coatney and Campbell. "That was the coolest short because Bruce showed up with his own makeup kit and wardrobe," Spiegel says. "We were so impressed by that one because Bruce put on his mustache with spirit gum, and he had a costume with suspenders. Wow, this guy's a real actor. Ordinarily, we'd wear tennis shoes, jeans and a T-shirt, but we'd throw a suit coat over it, and we thought we became instant adults."

Before teaming up with Spiegel, Campbell's films did include more serious stuff, with titles like *Supa' Bad*, *Day of Violence*, even *Son of Hitler*. Of course, in that one, Hitler is too young to drive himself, so his mother chauffeurs him around town in a station wagon. The shorts Bruce directed often featured his brother Don and his friends Scott Tyler and Roger Bic. As early as *Three Smart Saps*, Campbell gave himself wholeheartedly over to Spiegel's Stooge-mad agenda. He didn't turn up in another one of theirs until 1974, but from then on, their movies bore titles like *Booby Bartenders*, *Bogus Monkey Pignuts*, *Three Pests in a Mess* and *Half-Wits' Holiday*. *Three on a Couch* shows a certain Jerry Lewis influence, too, since the title is simply swiped from one of Lewis' lesser vehicles.

Spiegel returned the favor by appearing in the Campbell-directed *Manhunt* in 1974, with a story strongly inspired by Richard Connell's often-imitated story "The Most Dangerous Game." It also featured frequent Spiegel costar Matt Taylor. But it was back to stuff like *No Dough Boys*, *The Singing Nuts*, *I'll Never Heil Again* and similar titles. Sam Raimi had been brought into the fold by this time, but every summer -- when most of these films were made -- he was shipped off to Camp Tamakwa in Ontario.

A quick detour: There are Camp Tamakwa T-shirts visible in both *The Evil Dead* and *Evil Dead II*. At Tamakwa, Sam became friendly with Steve Binder, and later appeared in Binder's semi-autobiographical *Indian Summer* (1993), a warmhearted *Big Chill*-like comedy-drama set at Camp Tamakwa itself. See how it all hangs together?

But back to suburban Detroit.

#### IV

As with Bruce Campbell elsewhere, and before he teamed up with Campbell and Spiegel, Sam Raimi was inspired by those Gulf Oil commercials involving pixilation, and "started moving around chess pieces on a board, one frame at a time." Almost every kid who gets their hands on a movie camera sooner or later tries stop-motion, if they can get away with it.

Around this time, Sam met Jim Rose, whose father had a very early home video camera that ran reel-to-reel like audio tape recorders of the time. Sam, Jim and other friends began experimenting with video at this time; in fact, it was a video that Sam was shooting when Bruce Campbell saw him dressed as Sherlock Holmes in the high school hallway. "We began getting together almost every day after school, or every other day, shooting skits on video. We did this for a long time, or until my thirteenth birthday," Sam says, "when my father bought me a camera." These video shorts are not currently screenable.

Prior to that, Sam had purchased an old silent 8mm camera with his leaf-raking money, but this birthday present was something he never could have afforded himself. It was a Bell & Howell Filmosonic, Super-8 with sound. "It had sound-on-sound recording," Sam says nostalgically, "meaning they had a magnetic track that runs along the Super-8 film. They also have a balance stripe on the other side, balancing the thickness of the film so it doesn't sit heavy on one side of the film and light on the other."

Raimi and Campbell finally met when they took a drama course together, and discovered they were both making Super-8 movies. This was around the same time that Sam and Scott Spiegel took a biology course together, taught by Miss Slaughter, a hip young black woman who impressed -- and appalled -- both Raimi and Spiegel. (They had met in junior high, but didn't become friends until high school; Spiegel thought of Raimi as "one of those drama people," a poseur with pretentious to acting.) Raimi overheard Spiegel telling a joke. "Hey," Scott said, "I'm a great detective." He pointed at the heel of his shoe. "See? I ran that down." Sam recognized the joke: "You stole that from the Stooges." And a friendship was born, forged in the fires of Miss Slaughter's biology class.

As Spiegel says, "We all went to groovy Groves High School, and we were all making movies separately. It all kind of blended somehow that way: you make movies, we make movies -- great! By that time, I think Bruce and I were the most advanced filmmakers, but Sam was the one with the sound Super-8 camera. We just all kind of joined in and started showing the movies at groovy Groves. It was really cool. We

ONE  
TODAY  
"Groovy's"



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all acted and took turns doing whatever." Most of their films were made with the same people: Raimi, Spiegel, Campbell, Cameron, Ditz and Quill, shooting in and around Birmingham, the suburb of Detroit where Wylie E. Groves High School is located.

Raimi agrees, but points out that it was "Bruce and Scotty who had always been big fans of the Three Stooges." Doing the Stooge-like comedies, Sam says, "was due to Scott's influence, although I liked them. But they never entered my film-making world until I met Scott." (However, they *did* enter it; the influence on, say, the later feature films *Crimewave* and *Army of Darkness* is obvious, but even in *The Evil Dead* the Stooges left their mark. The bleeding wall outlets and the lightbulb that films up with blood are gory duplications of similar shots involving water in the Stooges' "A Plumbing We Will Go.")

"It was good doing the Three Stooges ripoffs," says Spiegel, "and by the time Sam came into the fold, we were doing things like *The James Hoffa Story*, shot <sup>ON THE EXACT SPOT</sup> right where he disappeared. Bruce played Jimmy Hoffa, Sam and I were the kidnappers. We put white shoe polish in Bruce's hair; he was great. Then we did a sequel, *The Hoffa Story Part 2*."

Before you reel from visions of sixteen-year-olds doing a starkly serious drama about the famous labor leader, his criminal problems and his mysterious disappearance, we hasten to assure you th that *The James Hoffa Story* and its sequel are silly slapstick comedies, very much in *The Three Stooges* ballpark. Bruce, looking like a teenager with white shoe polish in his hair, comes out of a restaurant (the one from whose parking lot Hoffa really disappeared) and hangs around on the sidewalk, knowing he is due to be kidnapped, and wanting to be cooperative about it all. But when the kidnappers arrive, sent by a James Bond villain-type mastermind, they grab the wrong guy, and there's a lot of slapstick chases and pratfalls for the rest of the film. Finally, Hoffa himself is indeed kidnapped and dumped headfirst into a garbage can. To say it's irreverent is to raise the possibility that it might have been reverent, and that was never a possibility. (The sequel is mostly set on a beach, and has no discernible plot, although we learn that the clever Hoffa has been hiding from his kidnappers by waiting upside down in that garbage can for six months.)

V

The three of them had great fun doing these short films together, but gradually their ambitions increased. With Campbell, his ambitions elsewhere helped out the Super-8 movies, because as an actor at St. Dunston's, he was able to borrow costumes. "We did a film called *I'll Never Heil Again*," Campbell explains, "and we needed military costumes. So I went over to St. Dunstan's and borrowed stuff -- for years, in fact, old suits, old military costumes, never inventoried. It was a great resource for all that stuff."

All of them showed their films for their friends and family, and sometimes at high school as well. Together with Mike Ditz and John

Evil Dead book/rough draft/13

Cameron, Raimi, Spiegel and Campbell formed the Metropolitan Film Group at Groves High School, showing each others' films to surprised audiences; they even had the sheer brass to charge admission to these screenings, but they certainly weren't in it for the money. But the idea that they *could* charge money paid off in other ways later on, with *The Happy Valley Kid*.

Campbell was impressed by Spiegel's daring, if that's the word. "I worked one year with Scott at the supermarket where he had a job for a long while. He would torment customers; he was always pretending to hurt himself with meat trays, making all these horrible noises and putting masks, with real entrails hanging from them, on the meathooks. He did lots of early Super-8 stuff in a *Candid Camera* vein. He would feign these heart attacks, and people would just be terrified. But there was a person in the neighborhood who actually looked like Scott's Tor Johnson mask, so some cops pulled us over and tried to dissuade us from this. But Scott was our resident comedian."

Scott was funny enough that after he, Raimi and Campbell appeared on a local horror movie program, hosted by The Ghoul, Spiegel was asked to return on a regular basis. "Our local horror movie TV show host, The Ghoul, who was Ron Sweed, came to Detroit around 1971 or '72 and was an instant success," Scott says, "and stayed a big hit pretty much all through the 70s, but his popularity started to wane around '76-'77. By that time, we ended up on the show. He saw our short *Six Months to Live* and decided to show it on the air. Not a very scary movie to show on the show, but all of a sudden, Sam and Bruce and I, mostly Bruce and I, ended up guest-starring on his show, with Bruce doing a *Close Encounters* parody dressed as a woman. It was really cool."

West  
Spiegel went to college for a year, but economic necessity required that he get a full-time job. He worked at the market -- the Walnut Lake Market in East Bloomfield, Michigan -- off and on for around twelve years, despite his goofiness and tricks. "From the store," Campbell says, "Scott could get all the boxes we ever needed. He'd get boxes, pies, any kinds of food, stuff they technically couldn't sell any more, but would look good. We could break eggs, mess around with potato salad, anything we needed. Scott was king of the pies, but the boxes were very important too, because cars could go smashing through them for a spectacular look. The heyday of the boxes was probably during *James Bombed* [1976], where cars were smashing through boxes for no reason."

*James Bombed* is exactly the sort of thing you're probably expecting by now: a 007 spoof crossed with the Three Stooges. Campbell is, not surprisingly, cast as the secret agent, and there are indeed a lot of boxes sent flying by cars careening down alleys. But perhaps the most memorable, if that's the word, aspect of the entertaining little movie is Campbell's mustache, which appears on and disappears from his upper lip throughout. He was 18 by this time, and I suspect the mustache was a soon-discarded attempt to look even older.

But then, Campbell was getting older. He had finished high school in 1976, determined to become an actor if he possibly could. He applied to the Cherry County Playhouse up in Travers City in northern Michigan -- for an unpaid job in summer stock. The theater was owned by comic Pat Paulsen and a business partner, and every summer, the theater put on six or seven plays, one of them with Paulsen, the rest with other celebrities, big and small. The summer Campbell interned there, the other performers included Sally Ann Howes, Doug McClure and Tom Smothers.

"I had to pay for my own accommodations, but it was the single biggest binding experience for me," Campbell says now. "That summer was incredibly hard work, and it gave me lots of behind-the-scenes experiences, too. It wasn't really for acting; you were there to service the productions, and they'd rotate you. For example, I was assistant stage manager for a play when Allen Ludden was up there, then I rotated to be Tom Smothers' dresser, then I would be on set-dressing for another one, where we'd have to do all the scene changes in between. They did all kinds of plays, every week it was a different play, so it was a total grind. It was a real nonstop nightmare that summer, but it was the coolest thing I'd ever done."

One of the great treats was working with Tom Smothers, who turned out to be unexpectedly supportive. Campbell enjoyed being Smothers' dresser; "I did his laundry, took him around, picked him up, took him here and there. He was a really nice guy." Scott Spiegel came up to Travers City to visit Campbell, bringing with him some of their Super-8 movies. "One of the defining moments of my life was showing Tom Smothers our Super-8 movies. he laughed hysterically, although he probably smoked a joint before he watched them, which put us in shock."

But Smothers' appreciation was genuine, and later he sent Campbell and Spiegel a check for \$500 to help finance more of their cockamamie projects. "We actually used it toward equipment or films," Campbell assures us; the film that benefited most was *James Bombed*, made after he returned home in the fall.

VI

When the summer was over, Campbell went to college at Western Michigan in Kalamazoo; he had his cousin sign him up for "a bunch of theater classes. I didn't have time to do it, so she did it for me, but when I got there, I was tormented at the remedial nature of it all. I'd gone way beyond that already. It was, 'this is upstage, this is downstage.' I'd just been building sets and showing my movies to Tommy Smothers. I couldn't possibly stay there."

Fortunately, around the same time Bruce's father, who had continued in the advertising business, was an account executive dealing with commercial producers. "He was the type of guy who would look over the shoulders of directors on commercial shoots, saying 'Do you think there's enough light on the product?' He got to be friends with a guy who did a lot of local commercials, Vern Nobles, who wound

NO - IT WAS  
"MYSTERY"  
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up being very influential on our careers."

Although Nobles only made commercials at this time, Campbell and his friends didn't judge him, because they were still 'big, glossy stuff. He'd do big truck commercials, like a truck pulling an ocean liner, and he was pretty well-known in the city of Detroit." Campbell, Raimi and Spiegel would go over to Nobles' house and show him some of the early films. He offered elementary, but valuable, advice. "He'd say, 'You see how the car comes in here left to right? In the shot before you had it going right to left. Keep it all going left to right.' He taught us about screen direction and editing, and actually made us aware of the crudities of what we had been doing. He would sometimes do a commercial on Friday and wouldn't take it back until Monday, so we borrowed his stuff and did a little 16mm short, a kind of prototype. Since Vern had editing equipment, we edited it, too. It was our first taste of professional equipment, where it had double action sound, you had to use a slate, you had to sync it up. It was very complex, and we had to edit it during a certain time period, because he had to get the equipment back. That was *Mystery No Mystery*," a warm-up for the more elaborate *It's Murder*.

Campbell dropped out of school after half a year and went to work as a production <sup>ASSISTANT</sup> for Vern Nobles in January of 1977, and stayed for about a year. "We did 40-50 commercials during that time. The first job I was ever on was a big national Chevy commercial that Vern directed." Campbell kept an accurate diary during this period (but not, dammit, during the shooting of *The Evil Dead* -- in fact, he can find exactly where the production started and where it stopped; the pages in between are blank), which he still considers one of the most valuable things he ever did as a movie professional.

Working with Nobles gave Campbell a taste of "the real stuff. I'd wake him up in the mornings, I'd take him home at night when he was drunk, I'd cover for him when he was hung over, the classic stuff. He often slept overnight in the office, and would have meetings at nine a.m.; I'd be there telling people he wasn't in yet, because I knew he was in the office still asleep. The classic stuff.

"Vern studied under George Stevens, and he worked on *The Diary of Anne Frank* and some other Stevens' movies in that period as his gofer. Vern married a woman who didn't like Hollywood, so he came back to Detroit. He was a guy who was constantly champing at the bit to do more and better; he always had fabulous ideas and was the best salesman I've ever seen. He'd tell you about projects, and you'd be convinced they'd be the greatest things ever. He's out here in California now, but doesn't do much any more. His sons are all millionaires now, because bold, crazy inventiveness runs in the family."

Around this time, Nobles decided to make a feature film on video -- a children's musical called *The Magic Balloon*. "It totally crashed his company," Campbell sighs, "because they put all the money they had into it. It was the story of a kid who has a kind of boring life; he falls asleep in his backyard, and imagines he's in a hot-air balloon.

He goes on this magical trip to the zoo, where his dad and mom are really friendly; they walk around and sing songs about bears and lions."

Campbell was enthusiastic about *The Magic Balloon* because it was the closest thing yet to a real, professional movie, "even though," he admits, "I looked at it later and realized, oh man, is it ever awful. But at the time, it was the coolest thing I'd ever done. I was an assistant director now, and got paid a hundred dollars a day, big, big money. The movie finally got done, and was aired on local TV, but it was n.g. The company kind of fell apart after that, and I left after about a year."

Meanwhile, Spiegel and Raimi -- and Campbell -- continued to make their Super-8 movies, but with the input of Vern Nobles, the money from Tom Smothers, and Campbell's increasing know-how regarding production, the films became slicker and more professional. But then Sam went to Michigan State University, in Lansing, so they also became further apart.

## VII

Sam's older brother Ivan was also at Michigan State, studying medicine; when Sam arrived later on, Ivan's roommate was Robert Tapert, whose major at the time was business. "Sam was Ivan's crazy little brother who made movies. During Sam's first year at school, Sam, Ivan and I decided to make a movie together," Tapert says. Robert Tapert "came from middle-class upbringing, ended up going to Michigan State University, studied first humanities, and then economics. I got involved in economics because, crazy as it seems, I took an Economics 101 class from a guy who supposedly was very difficult and very demanding. But out of 1300 students, I finished number one, and so he sent me a letter that said I should go into economics. Okay, that seemed easy enough, so I did.

"While I was doing that, I always took film classes; I had a couple of film humanities classes that showed us all the different film movements, and I enjoyed that, but I never saw how they were going to fit into my life, because I always liked the outdoors and that kind of stuff, so I was headed toward an outdoors economic bent. Ivan Raimi came to MSU in the spring of 1974; we became buddies and got a house off campus together for five years. I knew Sam as, to swipe a phrase a housemate of mine once used, Ivan's impish brother. He was always a practical joker, a magician.

"The first 20 minutes of time I ever spent with Sam, he showed me this magic trick at their house in Franklin, Michigan. He got me, sucked me in with his magic, and then later came up to school to visit Ivan. I watched some of his earlier movies, and thought they were funny. Finally, when he came up to college, we ended up in a Shakespeare class together. It was my last year; I was in the five-year program --actually, a six-year program -- and almost missed having any classes with Sam. Who, incidentally, was there the same time as Magic Johnson; Magic made a lot more money."

Sam, who can veer off into practical jokes as wildly and unpredictably as this book heads off into new areas, sat behind Tapert in the Shakespeare course. "I had never met anybody who so deliberately attempted to embarrass people in front of a large crowd," Tapert laughs, "to control the situation. Just before the class started, just as Professor Upshaw walked in, in that thirty seconds in which everyone is settling down, Sam would say, way too loudly, 'You know, Rob, I agree with you; for a bald-headed fuck, he's not a bad teacher...'

"Everyone in the class assumed I was crazy, too; guilt by association. And in Sam's freshman year, he suggested we all make a movie together. Ivan kind of got the ball rolling so we could get student funding, to help put on other people's movies. While ours were kind of commercial at the time, there were other people at college making movies that people really wouldn't pay to go see. We ran the Society of Creative Filmmaking at Michigan State; Sam was president. We started putting on a Super-8 festival every spring for two years. When we left, other people kind of picked up the ball. I guess they still have it -- their annual Super-8 film awards."

The movie they made was, in many ways, the most important project any of them had been involved with until then. The movie was *The Happy Valley Kid*.

Sam wrote the script, which was about a pathetic nerd who arrives at college only to be tormented by everyone he meets, including Sam and Ivan Raimi, abandoned by his mother, spurned by his girlfriend. His mind snaps and, dressed as a cowboy, he guns down a few people before being killed himself. It's a comedy, but there are some touches of pathos.

The lead role was originally going to be played by Ivan Raimi, but he felt he didn't have the time, so Sam asked Rob, originally scheduled to play the roommate, if he'd play the lead. He always enjoyed acting, and jumped at the chance to play the role. Sam didn't stop tormenting Rob, though; in the credits, he is billed as "Rip Tapert."

They shot the movie off and on over one wintry school term; the production was not without its highlights. "There was a massive snow storm," Tapert explains, "and they'd shut down the campus. So we hitchhiked to Myer's Thrifty Acres, which is a big discount place, and bought a ton of film. Then Sam got in line at the liquor store, bought a keg and some cases of beer, threw a party in the hall, and filmed it." Aside from the exaggeration of the lead character and what he goes through at the party, it's a surprisingly realistic depiction of a drunken college party, although one suspects at times that the cameraman had been hitting that keg pretty hard.

When *The Happy Valley Kid* was completed, they showed it on campus, and charged admission. "You know what?" Tapert asks. "It got a good reaction, and I had no idea what to expect. None whatsoever."

## Evil Dead book/rough draft/18

The first screening we had, until that point in my life was the most nerve-wracking thing I had ever done. I was so nervous I couldn't be inside -- a typical, classical story -- so I just listened through the doors because there was only one entrance, and if you opened the door to go in, the light went right on the screen.

"We cut another five or six minutes after the first screening, and then started running it four times a week, twice on Friday and twice on Saturday, up at Michigan State, and people started to go see it. We played to half to two-thirds filled houses. I think we did 13 or 14 weekends, then and at the beginning of the next fall, over the life of the movie. We left the following March.

"*Happy Valley Kid* was the first movie that Sam had ever done without Bruce and Scott being actively involved, though they're both in it. It was just different because Sam was up at State, and they came up to do big scenes and post-production only. A lot of the shooting was Sam and Ivan and me, or Sam, me and someone else.

"And we made a lot of money, at least for students. We did get ripped off by the Beal Film Group, run by a guy named Steven Sunshine. That was his real name; I just saw his name on some low-budget piece of crap. He owned and ran the porno concession at Michigan State back when they ran porno movies on campus." After seeing *The Happy Valley Kid*, Sunshine offered Raimi \$2,000 to make a porno movie, but Sam declined. But to the surprise of both Sam and Rob, they did indeed make a profit, and the idea that they could make a film that could be shown in real theaters was planted.

## VIII

That summer, back in Franklin, Sam, Scott and, occasionally, Bruce, got together to make an elaborate Super-8 comedy called *It's Murder*. By this time, Campbell says, they were more organized about making the films, due to the influence of Vern Nobles, and the lessons learned during the making of *The Happy Valley Kid*. "The '77 period began with us getting organized, trying to get people to commit to being in the films though none of them were professionals -- they were still just our friends from school -- but we'd tell them we needed them for a whole day on Saturday, you can't have a dental appointment. During that summer, we did most of the shooting of *It's Murder*, but then everybody had to go back to school that fall. So Scott and I wound up running around grabbing shots on weekends and sending them to Sam so he could cut them in. I wore other guys' outfits all the time, and did a lot of fake Shemping."

Now that's a term that anyone who's watched Sam Raimi movies will be familiar with, if puzzled by. At the end of the cast list of most of his feature films to date, Raimi includes a group of "Fake Shemps." On the features, this really means something like "visible extras/bit players," but it meant something else in the Super-8 movies.

Although Shemp Howard was one of the Three Stooges working with Ted Healy on stage in the late and early 30s, along with his brothers

## Evil Dead book/rough draft/19

Moe and Jerry (Curly), when they entered movies, Shemp set out on his own as a character actor/comic, and did quite well for almost two decades. However, when Curly had a stroke in the mid-1940s, Shemp rejoined the Stooges, Moe and Larry Fine, to continue the series of two-reelers they made for Columbia.

But then Shemp himself died in the early 1950s, presenting a real difficulty. The shorts were not shot individually, but rather in groups, so that there were several shorts for which Shemp had shot some of his scenes, but not all. They hired an actor to pretend to be Shemp in bridging scenes, while keeping his head down; the overdubbed some of Shemp's lines from other shorts to hide the fact that this guy wasn't who he seemed to be. Stooge fans Sam Raimi, Scott Spiegel and Bruce Campbell spotted these fake Shemps immediately.

When they found it necessary to have someone double for another actor in one of their Super-8 movies, they called the doubles "fake Shemps." And a tradition, however obscure and wacky, was born. Bruce Campbell fake-Shemps a hell of a lot in *It's Murder*.

### \*\*\*\*\*PLOT DETAILS ON IT'S MURDER

But there was a very important aspect to *It's Murder*, one that was almost tossed away in the film itself. As Spiegel explains, "Sam and I made a movie called *Six Months to Live*, which was really funny; we liked it, it got great responses, kids laughed it. About that time, I had stumbled upon the 20-minute Super-8 condensation of William Castle's *Strait-Jacket*, and added it to our cache of movies. At parties, we'd sometimes show *Six Months to Live*, which got laughs, and followed it with *Strait-Jacket*, which got screams. It's really well edited."

Scott Spiegel loved horror movies all his life -- he still does; his apartment looks like that of the ultimate fan of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* -- and although Sam Raimi was frightened of horror movies, and so avoided them, Spiegel began getting him interested in them. He kind of liked horror movies like the TV movie *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*, so I got him to watch *House on Haunted Hill*; the scare with the old lady -- he screamed! He loved the shock stuff, which is still in his repertoire. And I turned him on to *The Haunting* and all of these things."

Sam goes a bit further. "At the time, horror films scared me," he admits, "and I didn't like being scared. It was an unpleasant experience for me. But since making my first horror film, I've come to appreciate them, and to appreciate the great artistry of the great classics. "

Since the short version of *Strait-Jacket* had startled their captive audiences, Raimi and Spiegel decided to include a shock sequence in the otherwise comic *It's Murder*. "We had a scare in the back seat that I picked up from *I Saw What You Did*, being a big William Castle fan. It worked so well in the original film that John Carpenter also used it again for *Halloween*: the killer in the back



seat."

\*\*\*\*\*DESCRIBE SEQUENCE IN DETAIL

Although Scott Spiegel is still fond of *It's Murder*, and it does have some funny scenes, the others were dismayed by the response to the film. In fact, Campbell says "It was a bomb, a total, flat-out bomb, a two thousand dollar bomb. Sam tells the story of showing up in this big auditorium that they had to rent. One guy showed up, and halfway through he said, 'Okay, that's enough, you can turn it off now,' and he left. There was Sam just wallowing in his misery after making a killing off *The Happy Valley Kid*." Spiegel counters by pointing out that later on, *It's Murder* did play to satisfied audiences.

IX

Rob Tapert found himself being drawn further and further into Sam Raimi's filmmaking world. "Sam and I had an apartment together up at Michigan State; Sam was working on *It's Murder*, and it was a very odd point in here," Tapert confesses, "because Sam needed help doing the sound, and I blew off a big test I had to help Sam get ready. Somewhere in that time, the idea started formulating in my mind. Well, I know a few guys who have money, maybe I could get the money together. So Sam was actually playing around with an idea for a movie that he'd never been able to film yet, and he had a whole story but only half an idea, for a big action movie. But we decided we couldn't do that."

Around that time, John Carpenter's *Halloween* was released. "Sam and I went to see it alone," Tapert remembers, "and we were about the only people in the theater, on a Tuesday night after it first opened in Lansing. Because we were alone, I didn't have a wild visceral reaction. I thought, 'Oh, this is pretty cool, and it's not the same as Hammer horror.' I had seen a lot of drive-in movies because I liked them. I asked him, 'Sam, can you make a movie this good, maybe better than this?' He said he didn't know, because it was pretty good."

"And then he went to see it with his girlfriend with following weekend, to a packed theater full of young girls, and they shrieked and screamed their way through it. We were now running *It's Murder* on campus, and the only thing in all of *It's Murder* worth waiting for was the shock scene in the car." Even though *It's Murder* was a financial catastrophe, especially after *The Happy Valley Kid*, Rob says, "It basically made us think that we could go out and make a feature-length film. So sometime in October of 1978, the idea began to grow. Let's do some sort of horror film."

"I started doing research, found *Variety* for the first time, went back and got all their rental champs, and started pulling a bunch of stuff together. Eventually, I came up with information that's kind of interesting: some of the biggest low-budget hits had been horror movies. *Night of the Living Dead*, *Last House on the Left*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. And a lot of them had first-time directors."

Campbell was willing to go along with it. "Fine, comedy, horror, it doesn't really matter to me, but horror does lend itself more to

the obvious techniques of filmmaking than comedy does." He began researching horror movies himself, never having seen many of them.

"The horror came from the fact that we were getting raw cash from relatives and investors we really felt obligated to get their money back. We thought, Well, we can't do a slapstick because it's too odd, it's too strange. It's too risky. A failed comedy will make less money than a failed horror movie.

"Even if the horror movie is bad, some kid walking down the aisles of a video store will go, Oh, that's got a good box, and rent it. Because that's what you judge 'em by, the box, the ads, the trailers. So we felt obligated to pick a genre that was more of a sure-fire thing at the time."

They began to haunt drive-ins, paying particular attention to how audiences reacted, how they "turn their lights on during boring parts, flashing them up on the screen, honking their horns at parts they didn't like," Campbell says.

"So after going to a bunch of these movies, we realized that some of the most effective ones were *Texas Chainsaw*, *Night of the Living Dead* and *The Hills Have Eyes* that really got relentless. They never stopped once they started. We started to see a pattern. We did a little chart comparing the plot, situations, and budget restraints of our potential film and other successful low-budget horror movies. The early George Romero works had young cast members, and when you had no money, you get young eager people. In *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, it was isolated people up against what would seem to be an unstoppable force. *The Hills Have Eyes*: stranded people, their car breaks down in the desert, they're entrapped by crazies again, and the actors were completely unknown. George Romero, Wes Craven, Tobe Hooper, all those guys started with this kind of similar formula, although I would hate to say that anybody copied from anybody, that would be unfair, but there seemed to have been good reasons why they did it that way."

With this sense of what people liked and disliked in horror movies, and an idea of an approach, "we determined, whether our movie was good or bad, to go all-out, non-stop; if we were going to make a horror film, we were terribly concerned to make a horror film with a capital H."

Horror films "juice you," as Sam Raimi says. Rob adds, "It's the rollercoaster effect. You go to a thousand films looking for the kind of movie that will really put you on that rollercoaster, and you don't know where you're going; you make the turn at the last second -- or you don't make the turn, and you crash into a wall made of styrofoam. It's the wild ride you're looking for. I know that's why I went to all of them. *The Hills Have Eyes* got me in that way. *Halloween* almost got me that way. Horror is a mass effect, and it's really at its best in that form. If you can get a really good film you have to play it in the theaters. It's been relegated to video, and that's not ultimately the best medium."

## Evil Dead book/rough draft/22

Although all else being equal, Tapert, Raimi and Campbell probably would have turned in the direction of comedy, they were quite aware of the fact that you could make a horror movie that, in some ways, wasn't very good and could still get it released, and turn a profit, while almost any other kind of movie would need to be much better in all those areas, including acting and screenwriting.

Rob was enthusiastic about the idea of making a real movie that would play in real theaters, but Sam and Bruce, who'd half-heartedly discussed the idea earlier, felt it was pretty unlikely. "Poor Rob will learn it's impossible," Sam recalls himself thinking, "but we'll humor him." So after Christmas that year, Sam returned to the apartment with Rob with an idea for a horror movie. His idea was not at all original; it was to place a bunch of young people in isolated danger, then to kill them one by one with maximum impact and suspense. He had taken ideas from *Night of the Living Dead*, *The Hills Have Eyes* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, added some concepts from a course in ancient history, and a few ideas left over from a short story he wrote for a writing class. (Over the course of the creation of the script, the original idea of basing it on the Egyptian Book of the Dead was replaced by references to Sumerian religion.) His one alteration from the pattern of those films was to have the central character be a man rather than a woman; as Campbell says, "Sam felt that could make it even more horrifying; if you could reduce a man to scrambling and screaming and yelling and being tormented, it would be even more horrifying than a woman doing that. We figured in our own borderline chauvinistic way, that would be worse, scarier for the audience."

Since their experience had been almost entirely with Super-8mm film, when they gave serious thought to shooting a feature, they assumed it would be in that format directly, with a blowup to 35mm for theatrical release. (In fact, after *Evil Dead* was finished, Josh Becker and Scott Spiegel did exactly that, a short feature called *Stryker's War*, which starred Bruce Campbell; this led investors giving them enough money to do a feature version, *Thou Shalt Not Kill*, Except... which starred Sam Raimi -- in a different role.)

By April of 1979, Rob had already begun to contact potential feature distributors, including the then-active Levitt-Pickman Film Corporation, about the distribution of what they intended to call *Book of the Dead*. Tapert turned out to be the go-getter, the firebrand of the bunch. "Rob was the first guy who said, 'Okay, let's put some numbers down on paper and see how much it would cost,'" Bruce explains. "Rob was the guy who knew how to form a business entity, before we had either pulled the money out of our own pockets or talked to dad or borrowed this and that."

"But if we were to get serious, we had to get money from somebody else; we didn't have enough money, and neither did our families. Rob contacted Phil Gillis, who was his family lawyer. Rob was a kind of rowdy kid, and this guy had bailed out Rob on several occasions, but had never done anything entertainment-wise. We worked out an in-kind agreement; it was determined to do a limited partnership, a very easy non-corporate entity that doesn't last forever, with individual

partners responsible for paying their own taxes, a very simple structure that we used several times later."

In early 1979, as part of a film course, Raimi made *Clockwork*, a short, extremely effective suspense piece about a woman (Cheryl Guttridge) who begins to suspect that she's not alone in her home. Outside in the snow, in the dark, a shadowy figure (Scott Spiegel) watches. *Clockwork*, so named because it was intended to move like clockwork, is taut, sophisticated and mature, easily the best thing Raimi had made until that point. He'd clearly changed from a kid having fun with a movie camera into someone who was learning just how powerful an audience-manipulating tools a camera and effective editing can be. There are a few falterings in tone, and some elements that don't quite fit, and the ending is bleak and nihilistic (rather like that of *The Evil Dead* in that sense), but it's perfectly paced, and builds smoothly to a disturbing climax. It was the first of two warm-ups to *The Evil Dead*, and the first one made after Raimi and Tapert had decided a horror film was the way to go. It shows clearly that they had the skills in place.

Around the same time, Raimi and Tapert made *The Shakespeare Movie*, with Bruce Campbell and an actress from MSU. It's a few scenes from *Taming of the Shrew*, shot outdoors in the winter. Like *Clockwork*, it was made for one of Raimi's film courses, and like *Clockwork*, it's efficiently done -- but unlike the other film, it's also rather boring. However, for the first time, Raimi experiments boldly with moving camera, and even a bit of gore.

X

In May (or so) of 1979, , to encourage more investors to put money into Renaissance's plans to make *Book of the Dead*, they filmed *Within the Woods*, their first out-and-out horror movie, which was shot at the Tapert family farm in Marshall, in the middle of Michigan. It cost them \$1,600 to film in Super-8, and it took six days. "It was really a halfway point between our Super-8 movies and a professional, low-budget, feature-length movie," says Sam. "We wrote a script from the git-go, we had professional makeup effects Tom Sullivan prepared in advance with molds, and on-the set makeup. And we had professional lighting, in the sense that we rented professional lights for the first time.

"And we experimented with camera speeds, taking it a little further than we had gone before, recording sync-sound at a third slower and a third faster, for a more monstrous effect. For instance, we shot the movie at 18 frames a second, to give Bruce Campbell more mass on screen, and to make him move a little differently than the other characters. And also to distort his soundtrack, to make it much slower and heavier, an inhuman pitch."

In general, they experimented with virtually all of the techniques that they'd use in *Book of the Dead* later that same year, but in Super-8 rather than 16mm. For example, the "Shaky-Cam" makes its first appearance in *Within the Woods*. One of the most striking

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aspects of the first two *Evil Dead*s is the swooping, gliding camera that flies through the woods inches above the ground. There are no camera tracks visible. Ordinarily, that kind of effect would be done through the use of Garrett Brown's "Steadicam," a large, gyroscopically-mounted camera rig that's very heavy, very complex -- and very expensive. Raimi, Campbell and Tapert didn't have the money for a Steadicam, so they invented the Shaky-Cam.

In *Within the Woods*, Sam explains, "I ran with the camera hand-held for the effect of the creature advancing on the house. I could see that a wide lens helped the distortion factor. The closer you could get the object to the edge of the frame in a wide lens, it would warp as it went out of frame in a very dramatic way." But for *Evil Dead* he went two steps further -- steps explained in the next chapter.

Of all the films that Raimi, Campbell, Spiegel and Tapert made up until this point, *Within the Woods* is the most vivid, graphic demonstration of what they might do with this kind of material at feature length. Some aspects of the film are even better to those in *The Evil Dead*, but overall, it still has an air of amateurism, an air that soon blew away. Scott Spiegel feels that "*Within the Woods* is far superior to *The Evil Dead* in many ways."

\*\*\*\*\*MORE ABOUT WITHIN THE WOODS HERE

Spiegel is one of the two leading actors in *Within the Woods*, but didn't go on to *The Evil Dead*. He isn't a partner in Renaissance Pictures, either, because, frankly, he had to earn money. "I just couldn't do it because I was supporting my family," Scott says today with some regret. However, the second male lead in *The Evil Dead* is named Scotty in honor of Spiegel (and because he was originally expected to play the role), he co-wrote *Evil Dead II* with Sam, and he's a Fake Shemp in the first two movies. "I was going to be an associate producer," says Scott, "and one of the partners; I really wanted to be involved, but I couldn't quite make it."

When the film was finished, Rob Tapert arranged to show it at a theater on the east side of Detroit called The Punch and Judy, in August of 1979. It was running *Rocky Horror Picture Show* as a late show on weekends, and the theater managers agreed to show *Within the Woods* before *Rocky Horror* on a few consecutive Saturday nights. "We patched into the sound system," Campbell recalls. "There was our crappy little Super-8 projector taking up about a quarter of the screen, with the sound system hissing and humming. But it worked, and audience members actually reacted. These were paying customers, and they reacted."

Michael McWilliams of *The Detroit News* reviewed *Within the Woods* on August 24, 1979. "It will probably never be advertised alongside the glossy, big-budget horror movies of our time, but you won't easily forget a locally produced little film called *Within the Woods*."

"In just 32 minutes, it provides more chills, thrills and squeamish giggles than such recent professional duds as *Prophecy* and *The Amityville Horror* combined."

McWilliams interviewed Sam and Bruce for the article, providing some of Raimi's earliest, impish quotes. "I like it when [the audience] screams," Sam told an amused McWilliams. "When they jump, it's a surface reaction -- a cheap thrill -- but I like the fact that they jump... I like to know a secret that they don't know. They don't know it's coming, but I do."

Bruce added, "You let them think that they know a secret by a fake scare, and then you hit them with your own secret -- a one-two punch."

McWilliams was knowledgeable enough about horror movies to spot the fruits of the drive-in research Sam, Rob and Bruce had conducted in early 1979. Sam, said McWilliams, "has looked at *Night of the Living Dead* and knows our terror of the grave. He has looked at *Carrie* and knows the effect of a bloody arm out of the blue. He has looked at *Psycho* and knows our fear of knives and cellars. He has looked at *Taxi Driver* and knows the sometimes-psychotic rites of 'manhood.' He has looked at *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and knows our primal fascination with blood.

"With all this background, however, Raimi still has his failings. Above all, he's going to have to learn to limit his point-of-view shots. In the forest sequence, for example, we see things from five separate points of view." As those who know the *Evil Dead* films are aware, Raimi actually *increased* his number of point-of-view shots, but in all three films, the number of *different* points of view are reduced, never numbering more than three in any sequence: that of the evil force, of the human being in the scene, and the omniscient movie-director's viewpoint.

McWilliams concluded, "Raimi displays a wealth of learning in *Within the Woods*. Perhaps he will be able to make a more extended work, a feature film, in which he can clear up some of his technical deficiencies and prove that he has the personal depth to provide a context -- a thematic meaning -- for all his gore.

"Like many budding artists, Raimi is particularly skittish on this point of 'meaning.' He considers it 'silly' to take too seriously what comes to him naturally. When loosened up by a few jokes, however, Raimi can discuss underlying ideas in his work with considerable wit.

"For him, there are three recurrent themes: 'One, the innocent must suffer. Two, the guilty must be punished. And three, you must taste blood to be a man.'" According to Rob Tapert, these are probably original with Sam, but "I actually don't know where they came from. The Coen brothers tried to tack another one on, that *The Dead Must Walk*, but we're not sure if it really stands the test of time. It does come up often, and it is certainly in the footnotes."

XI

Around the time *Within the Woods* was ready to be shown, Phil Gillis and Brian Manoogian completed the partnership papers for Renaissance Pictures, Ltd., and the prospectus for the sale of shares in the company -- or rather, in *Book of the Dead* itself. The contract/memorandum is dated August 10, 1979. The minimum purchase price per unit was \$10,000, with a total of 15 planned. (The movie ended up costing around \$300,000.) The prospectus carefully explains the risk factors: it was a new partnership with no prior operating history, for example; and as usual with such documents, explains that there is no guarantee of a financial return to any investor, and that the Partners (Bruce Campbell, Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert) have previously produced only three full-length Super-8mm motion pictures. These were *It's Murder*, *The Happy Valley Kid* and *Shemp Eats the Moon*. It outlines the fiduciary responsibilities of the general partners, the contributions and compensation for the general partners. Sam's copyright in the screenplay is extended to the Partners. Income, state, local, capital gains taxes, compensation to the partners, depreciation, the film format and how it will be handled -- everything is covered but the kind of food they'll eat on location. The ultimate statement of it is that everyone shares alike, no investor is guaranteed a return, and the Partners control the content and making of the film. It's a very thorough document, 46 pages of High Legalese; if you read it, you'd be bored.

It does include Xeroxes of several articles on the trio, including Michael McWilliams' article on *Within the Woods*, one from *The State News* of MSU, and some from *The Scriptor*, the student newspaper of Wylie E. Groves High School (by Linda Quiroz, who appeared in some of the Super-8 films). There's even a cartoon by Guindon about a little kid pouting because his mommy won't finance his movie.

An additional document concerning the formation of Renaissance Pictures was prepared at the same time. Included in this were a couple of charts showing how other horror films, the main inspirations for *Book of the Dead*, compared with it. They also prepared a listing of receipts of various movies released between 1968 and 1978; most of them are horror films, all are aimed at young audiences, the target Renaissance Pictures was aiming for with their horror movie.

The chart:

(\*\*\*\*HOW DO I INDICATE THIS TO THE PUBLISHER???)

\*\*\*AT THIS POINT, INSERT THE CHART OF COMPARISON OF SELECTED HORROR FILMS

Campbell doesn't claim to have understood all the details of the prospectus and contracts, but he's very respectful of Phil Gillis (who Fake Shemps in some of Raimi's features). "He wound up being pretty much the golden angel of the whole project. He said he wanted to be paid \$20,000 for his work, but he essentially folded it back into the film, and another \$80,000 as well: he wound up putting about a hundred

thousand dollars into it. And the young guy who did the legwork on the limited partnership was Brian Manoogian; his family is Delta faucets, a Fortune 500 company. And he invested, too, as did his brother, a friend of his, and his sister. Between Phil Gillis and Manoogian, we got about two-thirds of our money."

All three of the partners in Renaissance Pictures were convinced that they could shoot *Book of the Dead* in Super-8mm and have a satisfactory blowup to 35mm. They'd worked only in Super-8 until this point, and they had been assured by a film processing company in San Francisco that such a blowup was possible. In fact, in the prospectus, it says "The laboratory the General Partners intend to use, if available, has already enlarged a Philippine film, which has been released, and a Venezuelan film. The General Partners feel that there are a number of other laboratories which if needed could perform this function for the Partnership."

The General Partners were, as it turned out, wrong.

"Michael Hinton, out in San Francisco," says Tapert, "had some sort of process that he believed in that would transfer Super-8 to 35mm. We saw something that he'd shot for Venezuela, and thought it just about gets by; it looked like, say, 12mm."

"We went to a local movie theater where we knew some of the people," Campbell recalls, and asked them to project it. "We asked the projectionist, very cagily, 'so how does that look to you?' He said, 'It looks like a blowup from 16mm.' And we thought, 'Yeah! Got it! It works!' But before we put all the money into that, we thought we'd better do our own test."

They shot a very brief horror film in Super-8 called *Terror at Lulu's*, set in the lingerie shop owned by Raimi's mother; it was about a woman trying on lingerie late at night while being tormented by some guy -- or maybe, Rob Tapert muses, it was about mannequins coming to life and terrorizing a girl who's working late doing inventory. They used the finest Super-8 camera they could get, they used a professional cameramen, the best lenses, the whole nine yards; they included some scenes with high contrast just to test things even more thoroughly. Then they sent it off to Michael Hinton, who continued to assure them that a blowup from Super-8 to 35mm was perfectly feasible. They gathered in the Maple Theater before it opened for the day, where they'd persuaded the manager to allow them to show their footage.

What they saw was, to say the least, a rude shock. "It was the most horrifying experience in my entire life," Tapert recalls. Their film had grain the size of hailstones; it was unwatchable, unreleasable. "We couldn't justify the fact that it would be hailing golf balls throughout the course of the movie, so we had to forgo that technology," Raimi says ruefully. All three of the partners were crushed; there went the dreams they'd now begun to believe in. "We were dumbfounded," Campbell admits. "I was even more bummed-out than the other guys, because I thought, 'Okay, that's it, we can't do it.'" But the indefatigable Tapert wasn't about to say die. "I remember



sitting on the back porch of my parents' house with Bruce, and talking to him about this." Tapert suggested they simply switch over to 16mm; *Night of the Living Dead* had been shot on 16mm, hadn't it? It took some time for him to regenerate their enthusiasm, but he finally did. In fact, Tapert now says, looking back, "It turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to us." (One of the two best things; the other was meeting Irvin Shapiro, but that was later.)

The three partners donned suits, bought briefcases, and played the role of businessmen as they met with potential investors; they showed them the prospectus, sometimes *Within the Woods* as well, and raised \$85,000 out of the \$100,000 they were aiming for. They started with relatives, and even went to the Walnut Lake Market, where they showed *Within the Woods* in the soap aisle. But the market owners declined to invest. Campbell assumes it was because "they wanted something concrete; they didn't understand investing and waiting five years."

They firmed up their intentions for the film itself. "We wanted to make a picture that punished the audience for their sins against us," Sam laughs, "and we wanted to punish them with horror and gore and laughs. We're going to teach them never to come back to another one of our pictures -- if there was to be such a thing. But the truth is, our goals were very limited at the time. We just wanted to make a picture that would be effective enough to play in the theaters. Certainly, we wanted to please the audience, but that was like if we ever got one. The goal was really to make a picture that could play in theaters. Which when we were shooting seemed like a very distant concept." Shooting, though, was now a few months away -- and they hadn't yet raised the full amount they were aiming for. Nonetheless, they wanted to start.

## XII

Their money was in a special escrow account, it was now fall, even later; they sent a letter to the investors asking for permission to open the escrow account short of the full amount, and to start making the movie. The investors agreed, so they began holding auditions for the three roles available; the lead was always to be played by Bruce, and his sister Cheryl, who ends up spending much of the film in makeup peering out of a trap door, was to be played by Ellen Sandweiss, who'd been in *Shemp Eats the Moon* and others of the Super-8 movies.

Teresa Seyferth, who had been a radio personality in Chicago, was cast as Shelly, and Rich Demanicor as Scott. Both were in the Screen Actors Guild, which mandates a minimum pay scale that the Renaissance partners couldn't meet. So the two took different names: Teresa Seyferth became Teresa Tilly, then Sarah York; Demanicor became Hal Delrich since his two roommates at the time were named Hal and Del. The subterfuge didn't work: the two were spotted by the SAG, and fined. Bruce points out that in Detroit, SAG members are "famous for ratting on each other."

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"It was very difficult to cast for a low-budget horror movie," Campbell explains, "because when any girls auditioned, their boyfriends came with them because it sounded more like a porno film. They came over to Sam's house; I think we may have photographed them in Super-8, doing screams and like that. I think we went through maybe ten people to get the five; it wasn't a huge paring-down process." Difficult or not, casting was completed quickly.

Josh Becker returned to town from Hollywood; he'd been the first of them to go over there. "We had no other jobs for him except as a PA [Production Assistant]," Campbell admits. "He took it begrudgingly, but we needed other people who were used to working on movies. Some of our other friends who did Super-8 movies were in college by now, so we lost them. Scott had to work, so it was just Rob, Sam, Josh and I.

"We found a local guy, Tim Philo, who had photographed a couple of 16mm films for Wayne State University. We remembered seeing his films, the photographs seemed good, and he was around our age. Initially, we were going to shoot in Michigan, when we thought we could get the money together like that" -- Bruce snaps his fingers -- "but now it was fall, so we took a scouting trip down to Tennessee."

They chose the mountains of Tennessee because they felt it being further south than Michigan, it would be warmer; also, there were rolling, wooded hills available, and isolated cabins where they could shoot. After choosing their location, they returned to Michigan and assembled their crew. One of the crew, John Mason, had been a teacher of Bruce's at Wayne State University, where he'd briefly gone in 1978. (Mason now works for Kodak.) Campbell knew Mason was eager to actually do something, and despite having a wife and kids, was happy to head for Tennessee with a bunch of first-time filmmakers years younger than him.

"So we went down with a core; it was Rob, me, Sam, Josh, John Mason, Tim Philo. There was no such thing as a gaffer, there was no such thing as assistant cameraman or boom man, the sound guy did everything, he recorded and did it all. David Goodman was the cook/PA of the crew; he'd just graduated and was gung ho to do a film; he became the guy who ran around, did transportation, and everything."

The three partners read a few books on budgeting and scheduling low-budget films, but such books were scarce in 1979. As far as budgeting day-to-day expenses went, apart from housing and food, they decided to pay the actors a hundred dollars a week, production assistants/crew members got \$40 per week (though Becker got \$50 because of his greater experience). The partners themselves took only \$35 a week, primarily as expenses, "but we never took it," Campbell says, "everything just got dumped back into the movie."

Costuming was simple: people wore ordinary street clothes, but Sam Raimi was insistent that, nonetheless, the clothing not be linked to a period time. As Campbell says, "Have you ever seen old *Charlie's Angels* episodes? They're the funniest shows to watch because they

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always have these flared pants and big checks." So Sam dressed Bruce in blue workshirt and brown pants -- unaware he was condemning him to the same costume for *three* movies. At least for the second two, Bruce got to wear sturdier shoes than the "elf boots" (as he calls them) Ash wears in the first one. Ellen Sandweiss' clothes are different from the others to indicate her character's a bit weird. And there was time to include a couple of personal references: a Michigan State University shirt, and one from Camp Tamakwa.

They had real scleral contact lenses made for Ellen Sandweiss, to blank her eyes out for the scenes in which she's possessed.

It seemed pretty obvious that they should shoot all the daytime exterior shots first, then the night exteriors, followed by the daytime interior shots, concluding with the very important night interiors. "We did those crude groupings," Campbell goes on. The original shooting schedule was six weeks -- and that's probably why we lost everybody for a while" -- more about this later -- "because we went twelve weeks. We completely doubled it. We had some days where we got only two shots, and I could show you some in the film that took a whole day to get."

But that lay in the future, in the mountains, in the cabin; now it was time to begin shooting. So with their green crew, their untried cast, a script and \$85,000, they headed for Tennessee.

## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/31

### Part 2 Hot Coffee and Cold Blood

Finally, they were on their way to Tennessee with real movie equipment, real film stock, real actors, and a real script -- although it was only 66 pages long. They didn't know that on the average, movie scripts are figured at about a page a minute.

Most people interested in a particular movie want to read anecdotes about the making of it, and as Rob Tapert says, with *Book of the Dead/The Evil Dead*, "the thing is one long anecdote."

Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert rode down to Tennessee together in a U-Haul truck. "It was kind of a bummer," Sam recalls, "because the truck was governed at 55 mph -- it wouldn't go any faster than that, and going up hills, it would go like 35. It was unbelievable, a journey that lasted forever." On the way, naturally, they talked; Tapert is still impressed by what Sam did on the trip in terms of designing an especially striking scene in the film; he knew Sam was good -- but he wasn't expecting *this*.

"It was fascinating for me, I'll tell you," Tapert recalls. "It was maybe a twelve-hour drive, but there was at least an hour of him explaining how he was going to do it, and I thought it was a great idea."

It's the sequence in which Ash chains Linda's body to a workbench, intending to dismember her with a chain saw. The scene is shot in an unusually aggressive, spare style: there are closeups of objects, chains, hands, light bulbs, etc., with one sharp sound matched to the image. The cutting is very quick, with all extraneous action removed. There's nothing remotely like it in any of the Super-8 movies Raimi made, and very few other scenes like it in any movie prior to *The Evil Dead*.

"I had been studying time cuts," Raimi explains, "a jump forward in time in movies. The most famous, and most extreme, example is the cut in *2001: A Space Odyssey* from the bone the ape tosses to the satellite in orbit around Earth, thousands of years later. I was trying to come up with a stylistic approach to the scene where Bruce feels that he must destroy this demon that resides inside the woman he loves. I really wanted to present it like a juggernaut, he's going to do it, he's going to do it -- and then he can't, because he realizes that he loves her.

"So I thought I'd try the time cut in that sequence, jumping forward in time with each cut, trying to show the next level of commitment he's reached. It might be an interesting way to present the sequence until we return to real time, where he's unable to, because you think it might culminate in the actual act of the destruction of the demon, but we gave the audience the opposite.

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"In the truck, I thought about this, and felt that I'd do it in short little time cuts. I'd do a sequence of cuts which we be one, two or three second cuts, each developing on the previous, leading us to believe that Ash was going to destroy the woman he loves." The sequence is striking, and has the exact effect that Raimi was aiming for: we're pulled through the sequence by the scruff of the neck, our certainty building with each cut that we're about to see a man hack his beloved to bloody chunks with a roaring chain saw -- only to be brought up short, in sympathetic sorrow, when he weeps into his hands instead, unable to go through with it. Raimi uses similar sequences in *Evil Dead II* and *Army of Darkness*, but the intended effect is very different; both of these sequences end with a satisfied Ash staring at a new mechanical hand, and murmuring "Groovy."

Tapert was deeply impressed by Raimi's improvisation in the truck, but even more impressed, if that's the word, to discover that the cabin, located for them by the Tennessee Film Commission, was not available after all. "The owners had got cold feet and pulled out," Campbell says. "So here we were with everybody sitting around, and we had to go on this desperate search. We hooked up with a local guy named Gary Holt; his famous phrase was, 'Now here's the deal I've worked out....'

Holt was very useful to the *Book of the Dead* bunch. "He was a local hustler," Campbell goes on, "a Vietnam veteran with big rings on his fingers, and oh man, was he wired into that town, Morristown, Tennessee. He got into early dwarf-tossing in bars around there, with this black dwarf with a Mohawk named Percy Ray. Holt had been a chauffeur, too; his big boast was that he drove Elvis around a couple of times. He said, 'I ain't queer or nothin', but he had a magnetism.' Gary had produced a record in Nashville, which he played for us." This regional wonder was so useful that he wound up with the credit of "assistant producer" on *The Evil Dead*.

Holt found a huge, rambling old house that was perfect for the entire *Book of the Dead* company to stay in, and after a few days, they found a cabin that they could use as the location for the movie. Of course, the cabin did have a few problems, as Rob explains. "It was completely overgrown, and cows had free run of the place; there was four inches of cow manure on all the floors. It was small, confined, and had low ceilings."

And other potential drawbacks. Unlike the first cabin they'd chosen, the new one was, well, haunted. The Tennessee Film Commission told them the cabin had been built around the time of the Civil War, and as its builder was placing the final brick on his chimney, he was struck by lightning and killed. "Apparently," Raimi recalls, "this cabin is in the center of a valley that is surrounded by mountains of ore. Basically it draws a lot of lightning to this area."

"When we got there," he goes on, "we saw that the top brick was still missing from the chimney, as though it had never been placed there. And then as we started meeting the locals, we learned more about it. After the fellow died, the place was considered haunted,

and no one stayed there for something like 40 years. Around 1925, a family that was very poor didn't care about the haunted house story any more, and three generations of women, a mother, her daughter, and the grandmother, moved in because they had no place else to go.

"The first night they were in this place, the little girl woke up to another lightning storm and ran screaming into her mother's room, and then her grandmother's; by coincidence, both had died of natural causes the same night. So this little girl ran screaming out into the rain; she was found at a nearby farmhouse about half a day later, in a state of shock; she never really recovered from that. The family there raised her. And that was the whole story." Well, almost the whole story.

At the huge old house where they were staying, Sam prepared storyboards. Now, that's a term that might require a bit of explanation. The term originated in animated cartoons which are, after all, entirely drawn. To show the animators the progress of the story, how, for example, the Coyote got the box of dynamite from the road to the pinnacle, quick sketches of the activity were drawn and pinned to a bulletin board. Eventually, the entire cartoon was laid out this way, with all the key poses of the animation shown, sometimes with big floating arrows showing which way the characters were moving, or which way the camera's point of view was heading.

These began to be used for live-action features, primarily for action sequences, when it was very important that everyone working on the film had a clear idea of exactly what the action in a given scene was intended to look like when it reached the screen.

Aware that like his his cast and crew, he was green at this moviemaking stuff himself, at least as far as feature films go, Raimi wanted clarity at all times. He drew stick-figure storyboards himself and mounted them on the refrigerator at their house for all to see. "They were basic illustrations," Raimi says, "starting with a head-to-toe of a figure, then the next picture would be just the two eyeballs. That would indicate a movie-in from head-to-toe on Bruce to just his eyes, but maybe what wouldn't be indicated in the storyboards was that the camera would start on the ground, and move up to eye level as we move in. There are changes like that which would take place from my boards to the actual execution of the shot. They were very exacting, but there was still plenty of room for interpretation when I got there."

On the other hand, Tapert says, "When we got to the set we'd never do what was on the storyboards. But I think he had already developed the style that he stuck with, visually maximizing everything prior to shooting." When everyone else cleared out later on, the storyboards became more important to the five who remained.

In any event, time and winter were pressing upon the plucky little band, and they went with the haunted cabin for want of anything better. But of course, there was all that cow flop on the floor, and a few other minor matters. Sam, Tim Philo and some of the crew went

## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/34

off to shoot the scenes of the car and the truck driving in the Tennessee mountains, while the rest of the *Dead* bunch began shoveling cow poop.

Campbell recalls, "We worked out a deal with the owners that we would leave it no worse than we found it, which even if we destroyed the place would have been no real change. It had a power box but no power, no running water, it was just an abandoned cabin in a beautiful hollow. But it was a really cool area, very convenient.

"We blazed a new road because it was all overgrown, ran power in there, took out all the ceilings in the main room, and tore out the middle wall. (In *Evil Dead II*, when they recreated the cabin, they built it with half the room with slatted wood, half with plaster, just as in the original cabin. The two rooms we made into one had been done differently; the production designer for the sequel picked up on that detail probably without realizing what it meant.)

"We had to tear out the ceilings because we needed to light from above. We hung the lights. After we scraped all the cow manure off, we found beautiful tongue-and-groove flooring. The first week or ten days there we spent just getting the cabin ready. We brought down a guy named Steve Frankel, who could use tools; he could build anything. He built wood furniture for the cabin, he built the swing cut front, he helped us trim off the front of the cabin. We had to build a trap door, and had to dig a cellar of sorts. We knew we could use the Tapert farmhouse in Marshall, Michigan to shoot the scenes set in the cellar, because it had a great dirt floor and rock walls all around."

Sam Raimi adds that the cows had broken down the door of the cabin, so that had to be replaced. The *Book of the Dead* team was involved also in "repainting the walls, getting rid of bats' nests that were in there, etc. Then we brought in furniture from a local furniture place, antique stores and the like."

Whoever had free time devoted it to digging out the hole under the trap door in the floor of the cabin. Eventually, however, the task was done, with the help of those who'd been out shooting the drive-by shots of the car. "We were shooting the ride up to the cabin," Raimi says, "needless shooting and shooting and shooting the ride up to the cabin. We were stuck for like two weeks without a chance to go near the cabin; we had to keep shooting. Well, actually, I don't know why we kept shooting. I should have stopped shooting and worked on the cabin."

But there are, after all, only so many drive-by scenes you can film. And they can lead to unexpected difficulties. "Sam got chased by a bull," Campbell laughs, "because he was trying to get a long shot of the car from out in the middle of a field. The guy had a bull on his property and it just chased his ass off there."

They did some good stuff soon after they arrived. Early in the movie, as the spell that awakes the demons of the forest is read, outside the cabin the ground cracks, smoke seeps out, and red light

glares. This was one of the earliest scenes shot for the movie, and done much more cheaply and quickly than you might expect. First, it was a forced-perspective shot; that is, the cracking earth in the foreground is much nearer to the camera than it appears to be. The cracking was caused by a teeter-totter arrangement, and the red light and smoke were, well, red light and smoke seeping out of dirt and leaves on top of the teeterboard.

Sam was surprising everyone with his creativity, including long-time friend Bruce Campbell. "Sam showed more savvy during the making of *Evil Dead* than I had ever seen before. I didn't know where he was getting all this nonsense, but it was finally his chance to use every trick he had learned to that point, and he just kept laying it on. Everything became a tricky shot, and his cameraman, Tim Philo, was up to it. We all kicked around a bunch of ideas how to shoot some stuff, and that's how we got the idea for the 'shaky-cam.' That's a two-by-four with a guy on either end to stabilize it, the camera in the middle; you could go over bushes and logs, it was an incredible versatile thing."

They had chosen Tennessee over Michigan because it was further south, and therefore likely to be warmer. It turned out to be the coldest winter Tennessee had experienced in decades (and the warmest winter in Michigan). "It was freezing," Campbell recalls with a shudder, "and of course the cast had to pretend it was fall. We were running around without any winter coats on. We didn't get snow, but it was freezing cold." Between takes, the shuddering actors would be draped in blankets, but in front of the cameras, without long johns, they had to smile and pretend it was a balmy fall.

Tom Sullivan came along to do the makeups, having come aboard with *Within the Woods*. "Once we had all the actors, the people that got possessed and stuff," Campbell recalls, "we had to get their legs molded, or their arms, or their heads, and these casts were made directly with plaster. I remember when they took a cast of the face of Betsy Baker, who played Linda, my girlfriend in the movie. They put Vaseline on her face, then poured plaster of Paris over it, which heats up as it hardens. We gave her a piece of paper to write on if necessary. And she kept writing, getting very light-headed as the plaster was heating up. When it came time to pull it off, we couldn't, because her eyelashes were stuck in the plaster. We finally pulled it off, leaving her lashes stuck in the plaster and her face beet red. This was crude, but to us, it was advanced, since we had never done this kind of stuff at all. Tom Sullivan was a very nice guy, very creative."

Sullivan got a little too creative, in one sense. He wanted to make the sacrificial knife (that turns up in both the first two movies) out of real chicken bones. Sullivan had set up shop in the laundry room of the rambling old house, and assembled the prop there. Later on, a horrible smell began wafting out of the room, after Sullivan and the others left; they found a bag of rotting chicken bones left over from his making the knife.



## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/36

Campbell recalls the early production period as "some of the funniest nights. If I wasn't acting, I was a member of the crew. I just put the glasses back on, and put a coat over my bloody outfit, and moved lights around."

"I'd never worked so hard or so long in my life," Raimi remembers. "It got so cold there. After Tim Philo left and I had to operate the camera, be my own first assistant and load the cameras, et cetera, I also had to help blood up Bruce." They were using dyed Karo syrup for blood, and that stuff's very sticky. "My hands would be covered in syrup," Sam goes on, "and I'd realize, I gotta change the film magazine, I gotta change the lenses, so I would have to wash this blood off my hands. It was like 15 degrees in this place, and there was no heat. The only thing we had was the coffee maker, full of coffee, not water. So I had to pour hot coffee over my hands to get the blood off them, and to warm them up enough to be able to load the 16mm cameras. It was a very hard, physically difficult experience. We should have taken days off, we should have rested, but it got to the point where we'd work 18 hour days nonstop for, it seemed like, months."

They were being very experimental in some ways, so when they recalled that in Jack Nicholson's most famous scene in *Easy Rider*, in which he gets stoned for the first time, the actor really *had* smoked enough marijuana to get high, they decided to try this themselves for the scene in which the cast is sitting on the floor in front of the fireplace, listening to the tape recorder for the first time. (See the synopsis of the film for more details.)

But it didn't work out for *Book of the Dead* quite the way it did for *Easy Rider*, and very little of the scene was usable, but there are a few seconds of the cast higher than kites. Campbell had never smoked grass before, and was very disoriented; he wandered out to the porch to pee into the night, and heard Sam and Rob agreeing that the footage wasn't usable at all.

This was still early enough in the production that jokes, and not steady work, were possible, so on the other occasion when Campbell got stoned, after finishing his scenes, Rob and Sam told the confused Bruce that he had to go shoot the wood-chopping scene *right now*. Then, when he swung the axe, they'd impatiently interrupt, telling him he wasn't doing it just right. Eventually they allowed him to chop the wood -- which he did diligently for 45 minutes until he became aware that Sam and Rob were falling down laughing; there was no wood-chopping scene for Ash. Still, Rob says, "We did keep that wood-chopping scene in the movie for the longest time."

Later, "We had a giant firecracker war on New Year's Eve," Tapert recalls. "We decided to whoop it up, and had this firecracker war. When you're in the back woods of Tennessee, you get, well, heh-heh-heh."

## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/37

Yeah, heh-heh-heh. Out there you can run into people like Fats Derringer, someone even more colorful than Gary Holt. "Fats was a moonshine-drinking good old boy," Campbell remembers fondly. "His car, a souped-up Toronado, had bullet holes in it. I don't know how we met him, but during the shooting, it started raining and the road washed out, so we had to carry everything in the quarter mile from the highway; we shot for two nights straight, and we were crazed. But Fats Derringer makes it down the road from the highway, the only one who could make it."

Fats had a six-year-old boy with him, "and the only words the kid knew were 'goddamn sumbitch.' So this little kid would walk around saying 'Goddamn sumbitch' which Fats thought was the funniest thing he'd ever seen.

"He comes bombing down this mud-slick path, drunk out of his mind, demanding to be *in* the movie. 'How're my friends goin' to know that I'd known a picture was here unless I been in it,' he says. Fats was a little scary, and as I said, we were a little crazy, so we said, 'Okay, Fats, let's go.' We got all the equipment back out again, and re-enacted a scene from *The Happy Valley Kid*. Don't ask me why.

"Josh played the Happy Valley Kid in the scene where he brings his story to his professor; Fats played the professor who rejected the story. First we documented Fats standing there with his girlfriend, bobbing back and forth because he was so drunk. The professor is supposed to have a long speech, rejecting the kid's script as comic book trash. But all Fats could say was 'I don't want this damn shit,' and he'd throw it back." And that's what they shot; they slated it, then ran sound, the whole nine yards. Campbell suspects the footage still exists, but it's not surprising it didn't turn up in *The Evil Dead*.

Occasionally during shooting, when Campbell seemed a little lethargic, Rob and Sam would poke at him with sticks to arouse his actor's attention. (When Sam began production of *The Quick and the Dead*, Campbell sent him a telegram asking if he was going to poke Sharon Stone and Gene Hackman with sharp sticks to get *them* to act.) For his part, Campbell sprained his ankle charging down a hill while goofing off with the cast and crew, but had to walk normally in the scenes shot that day. And Josh Becker reveals that Bruce used a "big character builder" for some scenes in *The Evil Dead*. "He would take one of those plastic bottles you use to spray water on house plants, and he'd shove it up his nose and spray like a pint of water up each nostril. This would really get him into character; once he did that, he didn't care what he did."

There were some other mishaps, as when Josh Becker jumped out of the rafters and put a nail through his foot, which kept him out of commission for a while. Also, as Campbell says, "the cabin was slowly being destroyed. Here we were using Karo syrup-based blood, tons of it, and the floor was getting horribly sticky. So we'd take ashes from the fireplace to put on the floor to get rid of the stickiness, so the floor was turning from brown to this sort of gray color."

Then there was the night the power tools disappeared. They were shooting nights and staggering back to the big old house to sleep when the sun came up. Apparently some locals felt this meant the stuff they left behind was fair game. "When we came back one morning," Bruce says, "all the power tools were gone, but they didn't touch a \$20,000 Arriflex camera, a \$5,000 Nagra [sound recording gadget] -- these had no value to these people. We had seen guys up on the hills at night, just squatting, watching us. Once, I was carrying groceries down to the cabin one morning, both arms full, and a guy with this long red beard and a hunter's outfit on, bandoleer of shotgun shells across his chest, was coming from the direction of the cabin. What do you say? I just said, 'Good morning,' and he said 'Mornin',' and kept going. We did get a taste of the South."

Sometimes the taste was pretty colorful, as in learning how to tell good moonshine from bad moonshine, a lesson that has stayed with Campbell to this day. The way you tell the difference is simple: you set the stuff on fire. "You pour a little into the lid of the Mason jar, and light it; if it's a soft blue flame, that's good. If it's an orange flame, it's been distilled in a car radiator, so you better watch out. Also, the size of the bubbles in the stuff was an indicator. If you had tiny bubbles, no troubles. We did get drunk on moonshine a couple of nights, but soon found that was a big mistake, so just before the camera rolled, we'd throw it into the fireplaces. Pa-whoosh! Great blaze, and we'd start shooting." They kept the hooch in Styrofoam cups, which would slowly dissolve...

Becker is very admiring of Campbell's willingness to do just about anything as an actor, particularly for Sam Raimi. "Sam would ask him to climb up on a roof and jump off on his neck. Bruce would take a couple of minutes to get into character, then he'd do it. In character. Bruce has been a terrific buddy of mine for most of my life." He's convinced Campbell will eventually make a good producer. When they did the later Super-8 movie *Stryker's War*, "I'd get over to Bruce's house at six o'clock in the morning when we had a 7:30 call. Bruce had already been up for two hours washing all the uniforms and pressing them. He loves to make lists and break things down, and he's liked to do that from the very beginning."

The cast worked hard, very hard. "We were shooting Ellen Sandweiss being chased through the woods by the force, and she's in that little nightgown, barefoot," Becker recalls. "We had the camera set up on plywood for a couple hundred feet, so we could follow her in the wheelchair with the camera on it -- there was no dolly on that picture. It's one of the coldest nights of the year, about 30 degrees, and we're shooting all night long. She's running and falling, and running and falling for hours. She got completely wound down, and as it was nearing dawn, she said, 'That's it, you don't get any more.' She was tears, and just ran away."

"Rob and I are coiling up cables and pulling all the stuff out of there. And as we're doing this, we see blood all over the plywood; her feet had obviously been ripped to shreds by roots and stuff. And

Rob says, 'I love it when actors give me that much!'"

Reminded of this, Rob's a little embarrassed. "I was kind of joking," he admits. "Taken out of context, it's kind of horrible, but at the moment, it seemed like a funny, appropriate thing." In any event, Ellen Sandweiss did give up acting...

In *Fangoria* #65, Bruce Campbell told journalist Will Murray that, as a movie actor, he was pretty green while shooting *Book of the Dead*. "I didn't really know how to conduct myself 100%, how big or how little to be. . . . If the camera's really close, I had to learn to just use my eyes. If it's a long shot, then I can go crazy. I also had to learn that if we shot the opening scene and the final scene on the first day, I had to try to imagine everything in between. So it's all like a puzzle. For example, if we're shooting something where I'm being chased by this evil entity, I have to remember a scene I shot a week ago and compare it with what I was doing so that it will match."

Despite his work in theater in Detroit, Campbell told Murray, "I don't have any formal training, and I'm sure many people will say it's obvious. You get tons of theory in school. You know: 'Lie on the stage and fry like a piece of bacon.' I learned more from Sam looking through the camera and saying, 'No, cheek one inch up, nose two inches over. Now go back and land in that position.' To me, that's been as good a training as anything."

Not only did making *Book of the Dead* provide Bruce with good experience as an actor, it cemented a relationship. Until they began production, Rob Tapert regarded Bruce Campbell as just a friend of Sam's, "but we spent day after day for weeks together in the summer before we began production, and Bruce and I went to a lot of investor meetings together, doing this stuff."

"Bruce was living in some shabby basement apartment somewhere smoking clove cigarettes" -- Campbell has now given up smoking anything -- "and I remember endless times of him and I looking up *Variety's* lists of rental champs." This period, plus the incredible efforts Bruce went to on *Book of the Dead* firmed up their relationship as friends, and as working partners. When you go through the fires together like this, you usually emerge friends. And that happened to Tapert and Campbell.

While shooting was continuing in the cabin, Rob Tapert and others prepared the bridge. They had been given permission by the Tennessee road department to do whatever they wanted to a nearby abandoned bridge, as long as they paid for the cutting and welding. The idea was to make the bridge's beams curl up like clutching fingers. This is what they did, but the shot doesn't really work. "Normally," Bruce admits, "we could have done it much cheaper with styrofoam beams, because we lit it so dark -- we didn't have the lights to show that there was no bridge. It was actually this epic job that we did; we tore up the girders of the bridge, a hundred feet above the water; it was tremendously, visually stunning, but you would never know it. It looks like it was shot in Sam's back yard."

## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/40

Rob Tapert admits that their cutting up the bridge was insane. "Because we were so low-budget, Tom Sullivan was cutting up the bridge because there wasn't anyone else to do it. We had him kind of set-dress it so it looked more hand-like, so Tom and one local laborer had to climb up on these twisted girders to hang stuff. There's a picture of Tom's bridge giving us the finger."

They ran into problems they didn't expect, difficulties they weren't prepared for, and shooting dragged on. It reached the end of the six weeks they'd planned for, and still they weren't done. October stretched on into November, with December looming ahead. Until this point, despite the cow poop on the floor and the bulls in the field, the production had been pretty much normal, but now things started veering into surrealism.

Maybe it started when there was a lightning storm while they were shooting the picture. "It was very intense," Raimi remembers, "much more intense than any I'd seen before, with very loud booming lightning bolts coming a little too close for my comfort. This pickup drives up this one-mile mud road to the cabin, and the people ask, 'Have you seen Abigail?' We ask, 'Who's that?' They explained that she was the daughter who'd run off years before, the one who had found both her mother and grandmother dead in the cabin the same night. She was somewhere around 60 years old. They told us she got kind of confused during thunderstorms, and would wander off into the woods, returning to the cabin, calling for her mother and grandmother. They didn't find her all the time we were there. After we left, the cabin was struck by lightning and burned to the ground." Whoooooooooooo.

But now, in mid-December, a problem arose that they couldn't gallop enthusiastically over: they were running out of money and time. Josh Becker says that something like "five weeks into the picture, the sound man, who had been a film instructor of Bruce's at Wayne State University, quit, so I took over the sound recording." And in fact, the cast and crew had already stayed some time longer than they expected to; they had lives to return to back in Michigan. Becker recalls the night the big change came. "I was sitting on the steps in the house, and upstairs were Sam, Bruce and Rob. They're discussing how they can take this tiny amount of money they have and somehow spread it out so they can shoot for another couple of weeks.

"Meanwhile, downstairs, it's like the camera tilts down and I can see the cast and crew. They're all going, 'So you're driving the van? Can I ride back with you to Michigan?' "No, no, you go in this car, and you'll go in that car.' And then you tilt back up, where Bruce, Sam and Rob are saying, 'Okay, I think we've got this worked out, we'll just offer them thirty dollars a week, and we can shoot for three more weeks.'

"They come downstairs, passing me on the step, and present their proposition. 'You'll get the rest from profits, because we need to shoot for three more weeks.' Everybody said, 'What? We're leaving tomorrow morning.' And they did. So, suddenly, five of us then shot

## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/41

for the next five weeks." This story is disputed to an extent by Rob Tapert, who says that the cast and crew did hang on for a few more weeks, and then most returned after Christmas for a few more days of shooting. Bruce admits all this was entirely possible, "but it was such a whirlwind, nonstop, twenty-hour-a-day sort of life, it's a big jumble of who exactly said what. At one point, it was very funny, we were all so tired we didn't want to deal with certain issues. Josh was bitching about something, and Sam turned around and said, 'Okay, what's the first bus we can put him on?' He is right about everyone leaving, but in a way, it didn't matter to us. We'd been abandoned [by the cast and others] on *It's Murder* and every Super-8 movie we made, and that's the absolute truth."

Nonetheless, everyone agrees: the cast and crew left, leaving behind only Bruce, Sam, Rob, Josh and David Goodman, the cook and general gofer. "At that point," Becker says, "I took over the lighting as well as keeping the camera clean, and Sam took over shooting. So for the remainder of the shoot, I was doing both sound recording and lighting. This is all first unit; there was no second unit on that picture, so my credit on *The Evil Dead* -- Second unit lighting and sound -- is in fact a misnomer. I was in fact co-lighting and co-sound."

Tim Philo had brought the cameras with him, borrowed from Wayne State University; he had to take the equipment back with him when he left after the money ran out. "And Sam said, 'You can't take the Arri BL; I can't shoot the rest of this movie with the Arri S -- you know, the little one. But Tim said he couldn't leave it behind. Now this is Sam Raimi's logic; I love this. He goes, 'Tell you what, Tim. Leave the Arri BL, we won't use it. But what if the Arri S breaks? Then I don't have a camera; you leave the Arri BL, and we won't use it, because the Arri S isn't going to break, but I need a backup camera. Tim finally agrees, gets in his car and drives away. His car is not out of sight before Sam turns to me and says, 'Okay, load the BL.'"

Sam just kept going and going. "He pretty much tested all of us on just what our limits of stamina were," says Becker. "Every day was 18-20 hours on that film. He just loved to keep going and keep going; Sam has more energy than anyone else. Once, as we were getting near the end of this thing, and he felt like he had to get everything he could down there in Tennessee before we left, which was reasonable, we shot for 62 hours straight."

While they were shooting, Becker says, "we would send all the footage to Du-Art, and would get the footage back twice a week, 3-4,000 feet of film at a time. We'd set up these giant reels of 16mm, and we'd put them on the projector, and we'd turn them on to watch them -- and then everybody would fall asleep. We'd all be woken up by the flap-flap-flap of the tail of the film hitting the projector housing. We never did watch dailies down there because we fell asleep during every one of them."

## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/42

The defection of the cast required Rob and Josh to double occasionally for dead bodies, or Deadites banging at the door, seen from behind. As for Sam Raimi, Bruce says, "I think he pretty much had it instilled in him, okay, if you're going to be a filmmaker, then you better shine, you better do it different than everybody else. And after the others left, he started coming up with entire new sequences. The whole sequence of me alone in the cabin where everything is shot at a 45° angle he just came up with one night." Because he had to.

"A lot got cut from the script when everyone went home," Rob Tapert says, "but there's more tension in Bruce being driven slowly insane from being trapped in the cabin, with the girl in the cellar and the other guy dying on the couch, and him being totally unable to do anything. I bet we cut ten minutes of that story subplot. It was all character shit, of him going crazy, so it was much more. We shot a lot of that, but cut it out."

Becker is convinced that the rewriting forced on Raimi by the absence of any actors other than Bruce "was probably one of the great things that happened to the movie, because Sam had to write that whole sequence in the middle that's just Bruce by himself in the cabin; that didn't exist before. All that section, Bruce going nuts, the camera racing down the hallway toward him, all that kind of stuff, wasn't in the script before."

Josh Becker has a story that, he says, he's proud of, although "anything I say about this movie will get Sam mad, but that's life. There was no ending on the script; when we got down there, nobody knew how the story ended. Rob kept asking Sam how it ended, and Sam would say, 'I don't know, but I do know I need a crane.' So Rob rented a cherry-picker crane, which sat there for weeks. Rob would say, 'I'm paying \$50 or \$75 a day for this thing -- what's the end of the movie?' Sam kept saying he'd figure it out.

"So one day, I'm sitting there, and I'm thinking, and thinking, and I realized I knew what the end of the film should be. The camera starts on a leaf, pans to the back door of the cabin, comes down through the back door, which flies open, goes through the next door, which comes flat down, goes out through the front door, which blows out in pieces, and goes right into Bruce's mouth. I storyboarded it and showed Sam, and he said, 'I don't think so.' Oh. Okay.

"So the cherry picker sits there, and the cherry picker sits there. Finally, we shot everything we can shoot, and Rob insists that we had to shoot some kind of ending as long as we're down there. Sam says he still doesn't have an ending, but Rob says, 'Well, there's that ending Josh came up with.' Sam is very reluctant to use anyone else's ideas, since it's his movie, but Rob forced him: 'We've got to shoot *something*. That doesn't mean you have to use it.'

"So Sam operated camera on it, and I'm up in the rafters kicking that second door down. I'm the one who cut the front door to pieces so it would blow out, so the camera could go through there and hit Bruce. I basically set the whole thing up, because I thought it up,

## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/43

it was my shot, and I really wanted it to work right. It's the end of the movie; they never thought of an ending they liked better."

Bruce says that in some interviews, he and Sam pretended that the camera was mounted on a motorcycle in this sequence, and that at the end, he literally ran into Bruce, breaking his ribs, while Sam claimed to have injured his own knee. Oh, you guys.

As for the idle cherry-picker crane, it was used when Ash carries Linda's body out for burial. "There's one crane up, and one crane down," according to Josh Becker. However, Sam Raimi says that they did use the crane for more shots that didn't end up in the movie. At one point, he was up in the crane to shoot a few scenes of the bridge being altered, and he fell asleep with the camera running. After a while, people began to wonder where the heck Sam was, until someone thought to bring the crane down again.

Just when things couldn't get worse, they did. The *Book of the Dead* bunch was evicted from the house where they had been staying, because the owner was moving in a lot of brass beds: he turned it into a whorehouse. With nowhere else to go, the cast and crew stayed in the cabin where they were shooting. "That was horrible," sighs Tapert. "One night, either I drank a cup of coffee or I was wired and couldn't go to sleep. Everyone else did, and slept for eight hours. I couldn't fall asleep to save my life, I just couldn't. I got up and wandered around.

"When they got up, we had to put a ceiling back in this place; being the math one, I had figured it all out on paper. We need this many sheets of plywood, and this is how they all go in, and here's what we have to do. They were clearing everything out, while I fell asleep standing up in a mud puddle, and just toppled over. Somebody found me and they put me on the couch, where I fell asleep again, and they couldn't wake me up. They kept asking, 'How many sheets of plywood?' Ah, yeah, plywood, I'd think, and tell them something. They got the plywood, but then couldn't get me to stay awake long enough to tell them how it all fit in. But eventually it got figured out.

"Then we did a couple of really crazy things. I was wide awake and refreshed from two hours of sleep, so we went out back and lit the biggest bonfire you've ever seen in your life. We were catching the woods on fire." Bruce remembers the fire, too. "It was really stupid. It was 20 feet around. We had to make dive bombing runs past it to throw stuff on it, because it was so hot we couldn't get close. We were so lame."

Finally, they buried a time capsule in the area they'd dug out beneath the trap door. It contained "messages, notes, little trinkets from the film, stuff like that," Bruce explains. And then, at last, says Rob, "Bruce and I took a shotgun and a hundred shells and blew up every single prop in the house. We went crazy."

But crazy or not, they had finished shooting in Tennessee.



## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/44

They returned to Detroit, tired, battered, but with something between 70% and 90% of the film in the can. All in all, Rob says, "We shot from November '79 to early February '80, then in May for another two weeks, then in July for another two weeks of inserts, shot in Sam's garage and the like, then probably another three or four days of other stuff that fall, including the opening shot moving through the swamp. We had a chance to build a movie and tinker with it."

Campbell says that they'd gotten all the establishing shots and most of the action, though "until we started to cut it together, we didn't know how much we were missing." Which meant getting more money, a "slow and agonizing process," according to the actor. "We had well over \$100,000 in bank loans at a time when the prime rate was around 20%. We had to get investors to put up twice the amount of blue chip stock, but they did give us another round of money, Phil Gillis and the Manoogians, primarily. But there were some new investors, because now that so much of the movie was shot, the risk was less. Principal photography, quote unquote, was completed. Har de har har.

"That \$85,000 was supposed to get us a whole lot farther than it finally did. The final cost no one really knows, but it's probably between \$350,000 and \$400,000, when all is said and done. But in that spring of '80 we did collect more money, and got some of the real actors back."

Becker says that "We did something like a week in Gladwyn, Michigan, up at Bruce's family cabin, and we did a week in Marshall, Michigan, in the basement of Rob Tapert's family's farmhouse. Then there would be four days at Sam's house, then five more days at Sam's house a month later, then three more days there. Everyone was happy to show up for a week or so at a time." And as Campbell says, "We were never going back to Tennessee, for God's sake. We just needed a wooded area." Plus a location for the effects.

Much of this involved the attack on Ellen Sandweiss by the vines. "We shot a major portion of that in Sam's back yard," Becker says. "In Sam's garage, we shot the scene in the cellar where Bruce is walking along and Rich goes 'Boo!' at him. The scene where the spider-webbing of the veins happens on the girl's leg was shot in Sam's garage, too. That was Cheryl Guttridge's leg; she was in some of the Super-8 movies, and in *Thou Shalt Not Kill, Except...* for me. Her leg had to be clamped down for about five hours to do the animation on it; when she was released, she threw up."

"We did a year or so of stop-start, stop-start," says Campbell. "That fall, we did two more days of shooting in Sam's garage. Sometimes we got Tim Philo back, sometimes we couldn't, so it was always a herky-jerky compilation of his work, Sam's work, Josh helping out."

Tom Sullivan had been in Tennessee to apply the makeups, but the special effects remained to be shot when everyone came back to Detroit. Finally, Scott Spiegel was able to be involved. "I had a

chance to work on it a lot in Bart Pierce's basement where most of the effects were done. The whole meltdown scene was shot in Bart's garage. Teddy Raimi stands in for Ellen Sandweiss when the monster hands pop out of her stomach and back. I supplied all the meat parts from the supermarket, and boy did those start to stink after a few hours in the hot lights.

"I also supplied some of my girlfriends to have their heads chopped off and double for other actresses in the picture. My own girlfriend of the time doubled for Betsy Baker in one of the axe scenes. I was a jack of all trades, helping out here, there, and everywhere. Those guys gave me a credit; I thought it was nice of them."

Campbell says "We kept Bart Pierce and Tom Sullivan involved because Tom went on to do the armatures and molding and the stop motion, while Bart Pierce did all the camera and technical supervision.

In *Fangoria* #27 (May, 1983), Bob Martin talked with Pierce and Sullivan about the intensive, and intense, effects that *Book of the Dead* required. Sullivan first met Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert when the two were involved with the Society for Creative Filmmaking at Michigan State; Sullivan read about them in the student paper, and looked them up. "At first I was a little reluctant," Sullivan told Martin, "'cause with a name like Raimi I thought they might be Iranians or something. But we hit it off real well right from the beginning." Although Sullivan had been wanting to make films himself for some time, because of his background in illustration he originally did artwork for the ads for *The Happy Valley Kid*.

As the ambitions of Tapert, Raimi and Campbell grew and they began planning *Within the Woods*, they turned to Sullivan for the makeup on the short. "That was mostly casting," Sullivan told *Fangoria*. "Building an arm, doing some makeup on Bruce -- a lot of scars all over him and popping his eye out." He also created the hand that Bruce gnaws off in the course of the gory action.

Bart Pierce, who was recommended by Tim Philo, had been a psychology student, but went into films. He had worked for five years in a film lab, and so he "gave us advice on how to photograph the film for the blowup," says Campbell. "He told us to expose it a third of a stop brighter than we normally would have, and use only prime lenses, no zoom lenses -- although we did use one later on anyway. The blowup came out pretty well." Like Sullivan, Pierce had ambitions of being a moviemaker himself.

He was asked to go to Tennessee on ten days' notice. "I went out there for about three days," he told Bob Martin, "mostly as a consultant, and to prepare for a few optical effects. I helped on some of the [on-set] special effects, but very minor things. For instance, I helped on the scene where Hal Delrich totally dismembers one of the possessed. That was really the most exiting thing that happened to me on *Evil Dead*. I was holding one of the dummies, and

every few seconds I had an axe swinging down to within a few inches of my head, as I was being drenched in Karo syrup blood."

When shooting began, Sullivan had only had time to make the skull-hilted knife that turns up in the first two movies, as well as a Book of the Dead, but not *the* Book of the Dead. "It was much bigger, kinda Ten Commandments-sized, but that turned out to be too big, so I made a smaller one." Sullivan felt pressured by the need to get the project underway so fast. "There was no time to do casting [of faces and arms]," he told Martin. "I tried a few of the actors' faces, but it was all so incredibly rushed that none of them were usable. The entire job was so rushed that . . . the makeups in *Evil Dead* are not at all what I would have done if I'd had more time." Occasionally, the need for a fast shooting schedule meant that Sam Raimi helped apply some of the makeup. "But actually I can't blame him," Sullivan said, "because his direction makes my work look so darned good it's incredible."

But despite the pencil stabbing into an ankle, an arm chewed off by one of the Evil Dead, and the scene in which another falls into the fireplace and bursts into flames, the most intensive effects work was all in postproduction, as Scott Spiegel mentions above. At the climax of the film, the two remaining Deadites creak, crumble and slimily ooze into twitching piles of goop, with various bugs, tumbling green worms and collapsing eyeballs as filigrees and decorations. Sullivan, Pierce and Philo were in charge of most of this.

Bart Pierce told Bob Martin that for the meltdown sequence, "Tom drew about a dozen storyboards based on that, and those storyboards are pretty much what we filmed. Tom did all of the sculpting, all of the makeup, and the majority of the mechanicals for the sequence."

Raimi unrealistically expected that the meltdown scene could be shot in a couple of hours on location in Tennessee. "It was going to be pretty much suggested," Sullivan said. "Some bile flowing out of a collar, some deflated clothing. That didn't entirely sit right with me. Then, the scheduling got it pushed back to Detroit, and Bart came in."

Sullivan and Pierce didn't at first agree on how the meltdown should be done; Sullivan, being a longtime fan of the special effects movies of stop motion maestro Ray Harryhausen, had a particular point of view. "I felt that if we put stop motion in the film, even if it wasn't the greatest, it would put it into a certain genre, and get people curious about it. Bart felt very strongly in favor of the mechanical and fluid effects. Finally, it was almost like a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup commercial. Hey! Peanut butter and chocolate together! We figured that if we mixed the techniques, they might help to disguise each other." One idea that's only briefly seen in the movie is that the bodies of the Evil Dead are somehow full of big bugs: several hundred cockroaches. (Everyone involved is still awestruck by the huge hissing roaches bought, but not used, for the film.)

When they decided to use both techniques, Pierce told *Fangoria*, "We went back to Sam, who showed us a cut of the rest of *Evil Dead*, and told us what he wanted -- an ending which would be more violent than all the rest of the film: the *tour de force* of the movie." This was a tall order, to say the least, since the rest of the movie is wildly violent -- but Pierce and Sullivan delivered the goods.

"The most important thing we had to do," Pierce told Martin, "was see that the ending matched the rest of the film [in moviemaking style]. It had to have fast, rapid motion, never a still moment in the frame, and we had to shoot it in 16mm, though we could have done it in 35mm much faster. We did the mattes in the camera, using a 16mm Mitchell with a matte box using hand-cut mattes. Because we were using half-frame animation [two superimposed exposures per frame, for more fluid movement] matted with live action, just about every shot went through the camera anywhere from three to seven times."

"In figuring the exposures for each element and so forth," said the admiring Sullivan, "Bart was really the master of the camera. I wouldn't have known where to begin."

Because of the multiple passes (trips through the camera), minor errors often meant footage had to be scrapped and refilmed. "There was one shot of Scott's head...where it's just starting to boil bile, and hair is falling out; there are little patches of stop motion - and we did that five times. Toward the end. . . we were turning out a shot every other day or so."

In all, shooting the optical and mechanical effects for *Book of the Dead* took Pierce, Sullivan and their various assistants -- Bruce Campbell can be seen in the photos accompanying the *Fangoria* article -- three and a half months, during which time Raimi, Tapert and the others were shooting the pickup and additional shots for the rest of the film.

Sullivan is elusive these days, and was, according to Scott Spiegel, shy in those days. "Tom was very soft-spoken and meek; he did the effects on *Within the Woods* and *Evil Dead*. He did some artwork, too, and some of the vortex, storytelling stuff, and the book coming to life, in *Evil Dead II* as well. He's been a bit reclusive, but he's an incredibly talented guy and a guy with a great sense of humor. But I think as an artist or storyteller, he was very unfocused. He wanted to do a movie called *Cry of Cthulhu*, but his sketches and trying to work within the movie confines were, I think, incredibly tortuous for him, very frustrating."

After the reshoots, after Sullivan and Bart Pierce had finished the effects sequences, the Renaissance partners had a good deal of film that had to be cut down to a feature length. "The truth is," Tapert admits, "we had mountains of film. We had seventy thousand, maybe a hundred thousand feet of 16, which was a lot of film at that time, and we had it all printed." With features, it's not necessarily all printed; much remains in negative form, and is never printed.

## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/48

They first turned to Image Express, a company in Michigan that cut commercials. The Renaissance team knew they needed help to sync-log the huge mass of film, and suspected they might need an editor. Image Express suggested they look up Edna Ruth Paul, who was coming out to Michigan in the summer to cut car commercials for them. At the moment, she was editing Frank LaLoggia's first commercial feature, *Fear No Evil*, so she knew the demands of horror movies. "We didn't know who LaLoggia was," Tapert admits, "but she was cutting the film. She had also cut a whole bunch of After School Specials that we really liked. Sam decided she should cut the relationship material in *Book of the Dead*, but he knew how he wanted the action cut himself. So that's how we ended up with Edna Ruth Paul." This was now April, and they managed to get the film logged on their own.

The decision to hire a professional editor gave them leverage in another area. "We knew when we were done shooting," Rob admits, "that it was going to be harder to get more money from our investors to keep going. We thought that in going to a professional editor, and telling the investors we needed a bunch of money to do that, we would be more credible, and get enough money for that as well as other things we needed to do. And people did say that it made sense, so we were able to dig up more money to continue on the post-production process. Little did investors, or we, know that what we thought was going to be eight to ten weeks of editing turned into twenty weeks. It was just a lot of film, and after that, we shot even more and added to it.

Eventually, the film was bundled together and taken to New York, where Edna Ruth Paul began working on it, trying to turn it into a releasable film. She was a New York-based editor working primarily on low-budget movies (the Lenny Bruce pastiche, *Dirtymouth* [1970] was one of hers) and After-School Specials. She did the work back in New York; for the movie, her assistant was Joel Coen, of Joel and Ethan Coen, *Blood Simple*, *Raising Arizona*, *Miller's Crossing* fame. Just how much she really did to, and for, the movie is a matter of disagreement among those associated with *The Evil Dead*.

Josh Becker, for example, has one story. "She kept sending reels as she cut them back to Michigan on 3/4 inch tape. Sam, Bruce, Rob and I are sitting there watching it -- and she doesn't get it at all. I mean, she just doesn't get it. She doesn't understand the layout of the cabin, she doesn't understand any of this. And Sam's going, 'Oh my God, my film's being ruined.' I say, 'What's the big deal here? Sam, let's jump in my car and drive to New York; we'll be there tomorrow, and you can tell her what you want.' I had a postal Jeep at the time, which breaks down five times on the way to New York.

"But he could not get his ideas across to her; she wouldn't listen. She'd say, 'I'm not going to change it, and I'll tell you why: film can be anything, and I think your sticking to these ideas of yours is just small-minded..' But you can't walk in the front door of the cabin and end up in the back bedroom! 'Sure you can; anything can happen on film.'"

They stayed with friends in New York while Edna was cutting the

film, Tapert says. "Sam has a bunch of stories about staying different places, because at first, we crashed on other peoples' floors for a long time. We stayed with John Gallagher, a writer who used to write quite a bit for *Film Comment*, and with David Goodman, who had worked on *Evil Dead*. Finally we got our own apartment.

"It just became a cutting and screening process," Tapert explains, "intended for ourselves, but the editor invited some other people to screenings. I always remember this one screening because one of the people we invited was a psychiatrist, and she was very offended by the idea of the violence, and she was also offended at Sam." But they continued to be practical; "the first the we did when we got back to Michigan was to cut a four-minute trailer to raise money; we used John Cameron to narrate it."

Josh Becker claims, "When she got done cutting, the film was like 147 minutes, and she says she's done. Sam finally took it out of her hands and recut it. See, one of the lesser-known things about Sam is that he's a very good editor; he took that picture, he took what she had, and he cut it down to a very snappy little 82-minute film.

Rob Tapert, however, says that Edna's final cut was closer to 97 minutes, and that Sam cut only another ten minutes out of the film. In any event, Becker does admit that "It was a good thing to do anyway, and then Sam being Sam, like the man of his word that he is, she gets the editing credit."

And she does. And what's more, Sam Raimi gives her full credit for cutting the movie. He admits that he and Joel Coen did tighten it up a little, but he shunts aside any suggestions that it was he, not Edna Ruth Paul, who was principally responsible for the editing of *The Evil Dead*. And do not misunderstand what Becker says there: Sam Raimi is a man of his word indeed.

When he finally saw the finished film projected on the big screen, Josh Becker wasn't happy with the way it looked. "I was very surprised, personally. Having done 45% of the lighting, I thought it was a kind of lousy-looking picture. I had no idea that the blow-up would be so bad. The lighting was kind of crappy to start with, but it had some nice camerawork in it, nicely shot and well-conceived. But it seems like kind of a lousy-looking little picture."

But overall, he thinks "it's excellent. Sam can take a script and make a better movie than you think could be made from that script, because he's such a visual director."

*The Book of the Dead* scheduled a grand premiere for investors, friends, teenagers and others on October 15, 1981, but the fourth reel was out of sync. Would the show go on? It did, just barely: that very morning, a new print of the fourth reel was struck at Technicolor in New York, and Ethan Coen (being out of work otherwise) flew it to Detroit in time for that gala premiere.

## Evil Dead Book/Part 2/50

What showed that night was the picture as you see it now, but with a different title, and another difference, too. Sam had composed the film for a 1:1.66 aspect ratio (that is, the image was 1.66 times as wide as it was high; 1:1.85 is standard), but 16mm occupies the full 1:1.33 "Academy standard" aperture -- the way films were projected up until the early 1950s. The Redford Theater accommodated the old ratio, so that's the way *The Book of the Dead* was projected for the premiere; it was never again shown that way.

The crowd was festive, but no one knew quite what to expect. The investors in particular, Tapert admits, really "had no idea what was coming, or what to expect. This big theater in Detroit, the Redford, has the largest pipe organ in the Midwest. It was a big house, eleven hundred seats, with a lower foyer balcony; we got about a thousand people to show up for it.

"When people arrived, we had searchlights and an ambulance out front, all that stuff. We brought in a bunch of high school kids from middle income families around this theater, probably three or four hundred of them, and packed them into the balcony, and it turned into something like a hockey game -- literally, the reaction was like you get at a hockey game. Before the film started, we said a few words, and then the pipe organ came up playing *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor*. We gave them a the full show going in, and then a party afterwards; it was a lot of fun, a great one night event.

"In terms of premieres, you couldn't ask for anything better. The audience was subdued at the beginning, but the tree rape scene so horrified the people that by the time the pencil went into the ankle, they were close to numb. But then the hockey fans were coming out, and there was that element of the crowd that was really with it. In an industry screening here, you don't get a true reaction, but we did there. It started to come out of the balcony in this hockey-game-like fashion.

"I think it was the first time many of these people had seen a movie of this nature, because afterward they were all charged up, because it was so visceral. The daughter of one of our investors, who was in *Within the Woods* herself, was so shaken by the movie afterwards that she couldn't stop crying; I mean, she was *in Within the Woods*, but she just didn't take it seriously. Her father thought, I'm sure, 'Oh my God, have I invested in something that's gone beyond pornography?' But at the same time inside he went, 'Well, it works, but I can't imagine people going to see it, but it wasn't a total loss.'"

And so, finally, the movie was done. Really done. Shown to the investors, mentioned in the newspapers. It wasn't just an idea cooked up by some ambitious amateur moviemakers --- it was a real movie, as real as *Lawrence of Arabia* or *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. The only thing remaining was to sell it.

PART 3  
Blood on the Screen

\*\*\*\*\*NEED TO KNOW THE STEPS. SHOWED IT, YES. WHO BOUGHT IT FIRST? WHY? IT OPENED OVERSEAS BEFORE THE US. DID THAT HELP OR HURT?

So, armed with a print of their magnum opus, the Renaissance partners began hitting the bricks, making the rounds, knocking on doors, handing their film to bored, disinterested distributors, many of whom undoubtedly didn't even sit through the entire film. In fact, they had begun this process even before the premiere in October, 1981.

But this activity led to some interesting encounters. "When we were all done with *Evil Dead*, and trying to find a distributor," says Rob Tapert, "we came out to Hollywood, our first trip here. It would have been May 1981. We were staying at a motel over on Third or somewhere. We ate at the Copper Penny, then wandered up to Hollywood Boulevard for the first time. Wow, stars, all the glamor." Unlike most who come to Hollywood for the first time, the Renaissance partners really did run into a movie star.

"Now I realize the chances of that happening are one in ten thousand, one in ten million, but a woman walked by us, and with her was Charlton Heston. Walking down Hollywood Boulevard at five o'clock on a Sunday afternoon. Bruce turned around, and said, 'Mr. Heston? Mr. Heston?' Finally Charlton Heston turns around. 'I just wanted to congratulate you on your great career,' Bruce says. 'Oh, thank you,' says Heston. They shook hands, and he left. It was the coolest thing."

Tapert admits that by October, 1981, "we had done nothing to get a distributor, which became a long and arduous process, because nobody wanted it. Out here, it was turned down by everybody." They screened the film for Paramount, for Charles Fries, for Avco Embassy and others in Los Angeles, but concentrated on distributors in New York. They went to distributor after distributor, but almost no one showed any interest, not even World Northal, which had profitably released a wretched horror movie called *The Children*, beside which *The Evil Dead* looks like, say, *Dr. Zhivago*.

The Renaissance partners weren't allowed to stay in the screening room when prospective buyers looked at the film. "They don't want anybody in there," says Rob, "so they can take phone calls, and be late and leave early, and do whatever they like. I'm positive not all of them sat all the way through it. We even had people not show up for screenings we had arranged -- and we had to pay for booking the projection room."

New Line pictures was just moving out of 16mm distribution; "they really needed product at the time," Tapert points out; "they didn't have anything, they were still pretty much doing 16mm rights to old AIP and Corman pictures, plus some art house movies. They had some



Evil Dead book/Rough draft/Part 3/52

John Waters movies, I think they were doing *Xtro* at the time, and Jack Sholder's *Alone in the Dark*."

New Line, whose executives saw *Book of the Dead* around November, 1981, wanted to buy world rights to the picture, but offered no advance money at all; also, at the time, there were rumors that New Line wasn't necessarily prompt, if that's the term, in passing payment along to the moviemakers.

During the time they were trying to sell the movie, Sam, Rob and Bruce had little income. Mostly, as Rob says, they lived with their parents. "I have no sympathy, and Bruce has less, for all these people out here in Hollywood who have development deals and have to work until ten and eleven at night -- because they're getting paid. I graduated from college at 23, started grad school but dropped out to make movies, and didn't see a paycheck until literally I was 29 years old. So I had to sponge off my parents, although they aren't wealthy by any means.

"Between the time we made *Evil Dead* and sold it, we had to take odd jobs as production assistants here and there; all three of us had to work. Bruce drove a cab. We worked a lot for Bill Dear who came to Detroit all the time to shoot commercials, because he's from there. We also worked on commercials for the Maysles brothers, too. We ended up doing a lot of goofy production work to feed ourselves.

"It was a long haul, and it was difficult. I think all of us were fortunate that our parents were pretty much behind us from the beginning; if they weren't behind us, they got aboard anyway, although I don't think it was what any of them would have chosen for us. I know that Sam was planning to go to film school the following year; he had been accepted to NYU -- but we went and made a movie."

And finally they got lucky, very lucky. "The name Irvin Shapiro came up because he had handled Scorsese's and Romero's and other guys' first movies. We got to Irvin at last. He came out of the screening room and said, 'It's your lucky day, boys. It's not *Gone with the Wind* but I think I can make you some money.'" Their initial deal with Shapiro was for foreign release only, but eventually he handled the domestic deals, too. In fact, he went with New Line, who had previously wanted such a killer deal. Thanks to Shapiro, though, New Line got only North American theatrical rights; ancillary rights -- such as television and video release -- were shared with the Renaissance partners. Who, again thanks to Shapiro, collected the checks directly, not having to have any of the ancillary rights filtered through New Line. This was a good thing, too, "because we never saw any of our money from New Line," Tapert points out.

However, with the name change he suggested, from *Book of the Dead* to *The Evil Dead*, the movie finally got released. Overseas, first, but eventually in the United States.

England would prove to be a crucial market for *The Evil Dead*. Stephen Woolley and Nik Powell of Palace Pictures bought the British rights to the movie at the American Film Market in March of 1982, the first sale of the film. "It made them a fortune," Tapert says, on a small investment. "It was the first picture in England to go out day-and-date, meaning that on the day it opened in theaters, it was released on video, too. And in 1983, it was the highest-rented video in all of England."

But that was the next year. In 1982, Irvin Shapiro demanded some production stills -- but they didn't have any. Childhood friend Mike Ditz had come down to Tennessee for a couple of days, but all he shot were behind-the-scenes photos. So about eight "production stills" were shot long after production wrapped; these are the familiar ones of Campbell with a chain saw, the hand from the grave clutching the woman's throat, and so forth. The other photos were taken from the internegative -- the printing negative -- and used to print stills.

One advantage they had with Irvin Shapiro is that the canny old distributor knew and liked horror movies. In an article in the January 14, 1981 *Variety*, Shapiro cited *Dracula*, *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, *Martin*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *Frankenstein* and other thrillers as examples of good product worth promoting. And he recognized the same values in *Book of the Dead/The Evil Dead*.

Shapiro was one of those wonderful behind-the-scenes players in the movie business that those outside the biz rarely hear about -- but who's a legend to those who deal in films. He was born in 1906, and became thrilled with movies when, as a teenager, he wrote film reviews for the *Washington Herald* and later took over management of the Wardman Park Hotel Theater in Washington, D.C. He began his association with independent and foreign films early; the first movie he showed at that theater was *Nanook of the North*, which he promoted to the hilt.

He moved on to New York, hoping to get into the production side of the movie business, but that didn't work out. He eventually wound up in the distribution of foreign films in America, and non-studio American films overseas. He also made deals in America with distributors on behalf of independent filmmakers, as he did with *The Evil Dead*. He was instrumental in getting *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Potemkin* distributed in the U.S., and even wrote a biography of Sergei Eisenstein when the director was only 29.

In 1929, Shapiro began working in the New York publicity office of RKO pictures, but only stayed for about a year. He managed a few theaters in New York, and then in 1932, began the company that, under various titles, he headed until Parkinson's disease forced him to sell out in 1985; he died in 1989. It was originally called World Pictures, later Films Around The World. Among the films he was responsible for bringing to the U.S. were Jean Renoir's *Grand Illusion*, Claude Chabrol's *The Cousins* and Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless*, immensely influential movies. Among the American directors whose product Shapiro was the first to handle were Stanley

Kubrick, George Romero -- and Sam Raimi. In the 1930s, he was one of the founders of the Cannes Film Festival.

Shapiro also dealt in reissues of both American and imported films through his Film Classics company; he acquired the reissue rights to 39 Gaumont British titles, seven from Selznick International, and some each from Samuel Goldwyn and Hal Roach. He was also one of the pioneers in the release of films to television; when he leased the 16mm theatrical rights to some MGM films in the 1940s, the studio threw in the television rights to the same titles, and Shapiro made a mint. He did the same with 20th Century-Fox's Charlie Chan films because Spyros Skouras refused to get into television distribution. And he also obtained the television rights to a series of Zane Gray adaptations that Paramount made in the 1930s and 1940s.

Despite his own financial interests in television, Shapiro never lost his love of movies, especially of the showmanship required to turn them into hits. He deeply admired people like George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, and in a special tribute to him in *The Hollywood Reporter* (May 10, 1983), Shapiro said, "If I were a young man today, I'd rather be producer of *E.T.* than president." (The tribute section featured a big ad thanking Shapiro signed by Robert Tapert, Bruce Campbell and Sam Raimi, all of whom adored Shapiro, and were -- and are -- endlessly amused by him.)

Stephen King also knew Irvin Shapiro, and was also delighted with him. "He was, at the time I met him," King recalls, "approximately 179 years old, shitting into a colostomy bag and having the time of his life. That isn't quite true; he wasn't shitting into a colostomy bag, but he was very, very old. He was a real gentleman of the old school. The stories that he told...! He just bounced them out. You sat there with your mouth open. I would love to be able to say, when I'm 85, that I had a life that spanned half the things that he remembered. But of course, he lived through enough extraordinary events to fill four novels by Herman Wouk.

"One thing I remember him telling me was that he owned six or seven Picassos sketches that Picasso had sold him for, basically, the price of six or seven good drunks, on the town, when Picasso was down in his scuffling days. I have no doubt that story was true, but it was the sort of detail you'd expect to come across in a Judith Krantz fuckin' shop novel. I remember that he had this little tiny office that was papered with one-sheets for exploitation pictures. He was dressed to the nines in an old-fashioned three-piece suit."

Among the other titles handled by Shapiro in one way or another: *Arrowsmith*, *Bang the Drum Slowly*, *Cocaine Cowboys*, *Creepshow*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands*, *Eating Raoul*, *Brides of Fu Manchu*, *Knightriders*, *The Lady Vanishes*, *The Little Girl Who Lives Down the Lane*, *Louisiana Story*, *Man of Aran*, *Mean Streets*, *Pixote*, *Rust Never Sleeps*, *Testament of Orpheus*, and *Tunnelvision*. But, apparently, his name appeared on only two movies: *Crimewave* and *Evil Dead II*. (He's thanked in the end credits on *Army of Darkness* because

he was the first to suggest that Sam, Rob and Bruce make a sequel to *The Evil Dead*, and because he came up with the title *Army of Darkness*.)

At Irvin Shapiro's suggestion, they took *The Evil Dead*, as it was now called, to film festivals in Europe, where it was greeted with some enthusiasm at times. "At Alain Schlockoff's annual horror, fantasy and science fiction film festival at the Rex Theatre in Paris, the audience just went crazy," Tapert says with a smile. "It was the first day of the Beaujolais Nouveau in Paris--" when the year's new wine of that variety is brought to the city "--and everyone had been drinking the new beaujolais, coming into the theater stinking drunk. It's a main floor and three balconies, and the people on top are throwing stuff on the people on the bottom. They got into the film, too. They were chanting 'Sangre! Sangre!' [Blood! Blood!] and cursing. At the end in the meltdown as the guy is gloppified, there's this green worm that tumbles down his face. They started chanting 'Allevais! Allevais!' I don't know what that means, but it had some kind of soccer reference." Soccer and green worms.

It was at Cannes in 1982 that Stephen King first saw the film; what he ultimately had to say about the movie turned out to be as influential as the deals that Irvin Shapiro was making.

"I saw it by chance at the Cannes Film Festival," says Stephen King, "when Richard Rubinstein and I were there on a junket to publicize *Creepshow*. And it blew me away. Totally. Blew me right through the back doors, through the lobby and into the street, figuratively speaking. I was registering with like one peripheral corner of my mind that there was a lot of shit going on in the picture that was so amateurish that you could hardly believe you were seeing it on the big screen. There was a matte of the full moon that looked like a postage stamp on a letter, if you imagine the screen as an envelope. But at the same time, even that they would try to put those shots in there with what they had was amazing.

"Then the larger part of my mind was registering things that I had never seen before in a movie, ever, that were working perfectly. These shots that were like insane Steadicam shots that were going on. Later, Sam told me how they were done, and I thought to myself that it worked because nobody in the organized film establishment would even think about trying it this way."

King was dazzled by the movie, and still talks about it in amazed, admiring terms. "It wouldn't stop. It was over the top, it was like a thunderstorm in a bottle, just relentless. It was really scary, and I think that maybe Sam is the only person who ever realized that you could never go back and repeat that, ever. And so when he did the other movies -- *Evil Dead II* and *Army of Darkness* (which up here in Maine we call *Ahmy of Dahkness*) they're just as good but they're doing different things."

## Evil Dead book/Rough draft/Part 3/56

King met Sam Raimi at the Cannes festival (Rob Tapert got to go the next year) and thought Sam looked like a 15-year-old waiter or busboy (not far removed from the jobs Sam was doing between *The Evil Dead* and *Crimewave*.)

King is still a big supporter of Raimi and his movies. "The thing was it deserved to be released, and if I had a part to play in it, I'm just delighted. And Sam's still doin' it! I mean, when you see him his cameo in *The Stand*, he does exactly the same things. The part he appears in, in *The Stand*, it's as though Mick Garriss stepped out and all at once, Sam Raimi is directing *The Stand*, and then Sam steps out and then Mick's back." (Mick Garriss says, "Hah!")

Sam's cameo in *The Stand*, now that it's been aired, can be revealed: he plays a border guard between the Evil Lands and the Good Lands, but he's an *incompetent* border guard, blowing away his partner as well as their intended target (Ossie Davis), before coming to a horrendous off-screen end at the hands, or maybe the talons, of Randall Flagg (Jamey Sheridan), the source of all evil in the film. (We have a list of Sam's movie appearances in the back of the book.)

So King came back to the United States, still reeling and grinning from the impact of *The Evil Dead* and wrote a review of it for *Twilight Zone* magazine. And that review turned on *Fangoria*, and *Fangoria* turned on the horror movie fans. Not only did interest arouse in *The Evil Dead* but suddenly, Bruce Campbell, Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert were *names*. Raimi had arrived as a director in a way that none of them expected.

\*\*\*\*\*MORE ON THIS -- THE IMPACT OF THE IMPACT

When *The Evil Dead* was submitted for a rating by the Motion Picture Association of America -- the MPAA -- it received the dreaded X rating, only one of the troubles it faced at the time. CARA: Classification and Ratings Administration

\*\*\*\* EXPLAIN RATINGS SYSTEM

Many theaters across the country refused to play X-rated movies

\*\*\*\*\*WHICH CANNES FESTIVAL? WHICH SCHLOCKOFF?

One of the first areas in which *The Evil Dead* was released was Scotland, which was, according to journalist Alex Sutherland, "a traditional home for the guts and gore horror movie." In early February, 1983, the film opened to "uproarious audience reaction and more than £100,000 in box office takings." The movie did so well that the planned London opening was delayed a week in order to crank up interest; when it did open, it was on a "day and date" basis -- a term used in England to refer to simultaneous theatrical and video release. (This is simply not done in the United States.) It was, in fact, only the second theatrical release for Palace Video -- but they soon had their tails in a ringer.

For Scotland Yard declared the violent movie to be *obscenely* bloody, and Nik Powell, head of Palace Group, was arrested for violation of England's "Obscene Publications Act." This didn't occur, however, until early 1985; by that time, the film had played to delighted and squirming audiences for a year. But during that year, "numerous OPA cases" (John Hazelton, *Screen International*, August 3, 1985) had been brought against video dealers in the United Kingdom, even though the film had been given a "BBFC 18" theatrical certificate -- suitable for people over 18.

Trials on these charges began in November, 1984 -- and five of the seven brought acquittals for the dealers. Nonetheless, the crown persisted in its persecution of the movie, and this led to Powell's arrest. However, even before his case could be brought to trial, the judge dismissed it -- in no uncertain terms. According to Hazelton, the judge felt that such frivolous prosecutions "bring the administration into disrepute. In my judgment, these proceedings ought not to have been started." A relieved Powell was set free with an apology.

Sam Raimi didn't even get the apology. As Rob Tapert says, "They flew Sam all the way over there; he flew all day, took a train to like Liverpool, got to court after being awake for 48 hours. He was sitting in court, and the defense says 'We'd like to call Sam Raimi, the director of the film.' The magistrate said 'The intention of the filmmaker is not in question here. We don't need his testimony.'" And a relieved, if very tired, Sam Raimi returned to the United States.

On the other hand, in October, 1984, *The Evil Dead* was seized by the German Department of Public Prosecution, and the film could no longer be shown there -- even though it had been in distribution since February of that year, without any noticeable increase in the dismemberment of demon-possessed girlfriends.

In the United States, the film was distributed by New Line after all, but Irvin Shapiro had gotten the Renaissance team a better deal than they were able to do on their own. The movie finally opened in New York in April of 1983 on the same weekend as the smash hit *Flashdance*, and in Los Angeles in May the same year. At one point, Bruce, Rob and Sam were in Los Angeles (before all three moved there permanently), and went to see *The Evil Dead* on a double bill with the first *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, also a New Line release. "At the end of the movie," a slightly embarrassed, but amused, Tapert admits, "Sam stood up and said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, I want to announce that the star of *The Evil Dead* is with us here today.' And he pointed at Bruce. All these people kind of look at him, and go, 'Oh, yeah, it is that guy,' while Bruce is going, 'Oh man.' It was pretty funny."

There were only two hundred prints of the film available to play off around the country, so the money came in slowly. There was enough to pay off the investors in the picture, and a small profit for them besides.

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Bruce Campbell enjoyed watching audiences react to the film. "It was really fun to watch a couple in a theater had a coat over themselves, a guy and a girl, and they were looking through the sleeve of their jacket, and they were just sort of scanning the screen and if it was too horrible, they'd look at another part, or they'd close it off."

Interviewed some years later for another movie, Sam said about *The Evil Dead*, "I realized that the most important thing after pleasing the audience was to make our investors' money back. We had to go to individuals to raise money to make a picture, and we had to promise that their money would be returned, and hopefully with a profit." This is a true statement: there are very few directors, now or at any time in movie history, who consider that returning a profit to their investors is one of their two paramount goals -- but the Renaissance team did then, and they still do.

"That's where we came from," Rob points out. "It's a different way than most people come into Hollywood, because we sat at those darned kitchen tables with doctors and their wives saying we promised we'll get your money back out of this. We always saw their faces looming up in the background. So there was a definite incentive: people had trusted you."

With good reason: the *Evil Dead* investors finally did earn all their money back, and much more besides. "It took a long time," Tapert admits. "Even with a success, everyone is slow to pay. But it dribbled in over a period of time. When we started to make *Evil Dead II* that prompted a lot of overseas distributors who owed us money to pay us."

But the real payment came in the form of the reviews the movie got. The critical response fell into two extreme categories: those who, like Stephen King, were able to look past the movie's more amateurish aspects to see clearly that whatever *The Evil Dead* was, it was not the same old thing.

Dazed, pleased, and now Real Moviemakers, the Renaissance partners had begun to put *The Evil Dead* behind them. Sam Raimi had hit it off well with assistant editor Joel Cohen and his brother Ethan, and they wrote a script together, first called *Relentless*, then *The XYZ Murders*, and finally, *Crimewave*. And that was Raimi's second film as a director. *Crimewave* is discussed in the chapter on that movie.

But Sam, Bruce and Rob weren't yet done with those demons from Kandar, the Book of the Dead, and poor, tormented Ash...

SYNOPSIS OF THE EVIL DEAD

Ash(ley).....Bruce Campbell  
Cheryl (his sister).....Ellen Sandweiss  
Scotty.....Hal Delrich (Rich Demanicor)  
Linda (Ash's girlfriend).....Betsy Baker  
Shelly (Scotty's girlfriend).....Sarah York (Teresa Seyferth/Tilly)  
Voice on the tape.....Bob Dorian

In all three films, but mostly in the first two, there are many scenes shot from the point of view of the evil force that dwells in the forest; the camera seems to be this force at these times, moving swiftly through the woods, sometimes knocking down, even splitting, trees as it roars along. For these scenes, in the synopses, we will simply say "the Force POV." And "Dutch angle" refers to shots titled to one side or the other.

The comments in italics that occur throughout all the synopses are primarily from Bruce Campbell; as he watched the films on video, he added background notes specifically for this book. It's like a hardcopy version of a laserdisc with a running commentary track.

The movie opens with the sound of a fly on the soundtrack, and closes the same way. The idea, Bruce Campbell says, was that this is the fly on the wall that observes the entire movie. The titles come up silently, no music, nothing on the track.

Renaissance Pictures Presents

THE EVIL DEAD

A loose, almost floating camera prowls over the foggy surface of a lake, zooming over branches, past bubbling fog, heading toward the far shore; we see a wrecked car off to the side. (*This is the 'Sam-o-Cam' shot. Sam Raimi fastened a small Arriflex camera to his hand with gaffer's tape, and got onto a raft. Bruce Campbell, in waders, pushed the raft through the swamp as Sam's camera-hand swooped low over the surface of the water, dodging the branches as you see in the film. This shot was done several times, with a fresh chunk of dry ice tossed into the water to make the fog for each take. When Sam left Los Angeles to shoot *The Quick and the Dead* in Tucson, Arizona, Campbell suggested he strap a Mitchell 35mm camera to his hand...*)

A sedan drives along a mountain road. Shelly, the girl in the front passenger seat is singing; Scotty is driving, though we learn later the car belongs to Ash, who's sitting behind Scott in the back seat with his sister Cheryl and his own girlfriend Linda. The camera picks out Ash. (*Why Ash? Sam Raimi jokes that he named the guy that "because that's all that was going to be left of him in the end," but that's not likely, since initially Ash was scheduled to survive his little outing in the woods. Bruce says he thinks that it was initially short for "Asholt," indicating Sam's opinion of Ash's*



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character, but Cheryl calls him "Ashley" in the film. Maybe the name just drifted in the window.)

The Force POV prowls through the bare woods, over the scattered leaves (the film was shot in November, December and early January). The car's wheels squeal as it rounds a corner; there's ominous music on the track "Hey Ash, where are we?" Scott asks.

"Well," says Ash, consulting a map, "we just crossed the Tennessee border..." (Campbell points out that in these scenes in the car, the first shot for the movie, you can see that he is growing sideburns, but that they aren't in yet. By the end of the film, the sideburns are fully formed. It was, after all, a hair-raising experience.)

Elsewhere on the mountain road, a truck is approaching. (It's worth noting that Raimi understood screen direction here; the car with the young people is almost always seen driving toward the right side of the screen, while the truck is pointed toward the left.)

There's intercutting between the Force POV, the oncoming truck, and Ash and his map. "...Which would put us... Ash says a couple of times, then exclaims "Right here!" His finger stabs at map as the Force POV arrives at bluff above the car, the steering wheel twists in Scott's hands, and they almost meet the truck head on. ("This was actually the first quote-unquote stunt we'd ever done," says Bruce. "Some local shmo was driving the truck; in those days there was no stunt coordinator, there was no stuntman, it was, 'Okay, whenever you feel like turning, turn.' All these were shot on back roads near the cabin.")

One of the girls screams, but Scott manages to dodge the truck, even though he exclaims that the "Steering wheel jerked right out of my hand!" (When the camera is low in front of the seat looking up at the driver, these scenes were shot in a driveway, not out on the road. Watch out the window during these scenes; the car is up in the mountains, among trees, passing through pastureland, without any rhyme or reason.)

A little shaken, Scott honks the horn a couple of times, and two guys (Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert) by the side of the road wave at them. Scott scoffs at them; he's now Scott has a jar of moonshine without any explanation for it. They all discuss the cabin they're heading for, which Scott got really cheap, but which none of them have seen yet. Cheryl is disturbed by the idea that none of them checked it out, but Ash says it might be kind of nice. Linda sneers that it's probably a pit. (The jar of moonshine is left over from a scene that was cut. If you watch closely, you can see Bruce Campbell still reacting to a swig. It was stunt moonshine, of course.)

Ash points out where they should turn off, and the road immediately takes them over a rickety bridge. As they drive over the bridge, a couple of timbers fall away from the roadway, tumbling into the river beneath. "The bridge is solid as a rock," Ash says, just as one of the wheels plunges through the planks of the bridge roadway.

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Ash leans out to see the timbers hit the river below, but the car makes it across safely. *(This was the abandoned bridge they were allowed to destroy later on; the hole was already there. "Generally speaking," a wiser Campbell now admits, "it wasn't a good idea to put that car out on that bridge." The beams you see falling were referred to as the It's Murder beams, because they used them in that Super-8 movie. They were U-shaped styrofoam lengths painted to look like wood. It's one of these beams that Ash unsuccessfully clubs Linda with later on.)*

To ominous music, the car drives along a narrow, woody, dirt road toward the cabin. *(That's not Sarah York you glimpse through the window here; it's Sam Raimi, "fake Shemping" like mad.)* Branches brush by the camera (mounted on a van) following the car from behind and above. A rhythmic, repetitive booming sound can be heard as they near the cabin. We see that it's caused by an old swing slamming into the cabin wall. The car stops some distance off, and all get out. The low angles used here increase the ominous mood. Scott approaches the cabin alone, with the camera very low following him. He glances back at the others a couple of times. *(Steve Frankel made the swing on location, partly out of planks taken from another cabin seen only once in the film, at the beginning of the very last shot in the picture.)*

He steps up onto front porch, looks over at the swing, slamming into the wall. As he grabs for the key over the door, the swing stops dead. With a couple of nervous glances at the swing, he tries a couple of keys in the lock until one works. He opens the cabin door; in a shot from inside, we see him silhouetted in the doorway, with a mounted deer head on the wall in the foreground. He walks through the cabin. The interior walls are painted white. *(In movies made in Hollywood, the slight foggiess you see here is created by either cigarette smoke, or mineral oil fog; for this movie, Sam Raimi tossed a handful of dust into the air just before the camera rolled. Originally, the first interior shot of the cabin ran on uninterrupted until Scott had checked out the interior. Another note: watch how fast it gets dark.)*

Outside, the others happily unload the car.

Inside, Scott moves around the cabin, checking out a room in the back festooned in dangling bones, including a cow skull. He turns on light bulb, examines the chains, turns out the light. It seems to be a workshed. *(The hanging bones, and the gourds we see later, were inspired by similar dangling objects in The Texas Chain Saw Massacre.)*

The sun sets.

Now it's later: the lights are on in the cabin, and we can hear the crickets crick. We see Cheryl in a shot from behind the clock's pendulum. The clock stops at eight minutes until six, with a lot of chiming. *(Campbell admits that they never could get the cadence of the clock right from cut to cut.)* The window curtains beside her blow slightly, and we can hear ghostly voices crying "Join us.... Join us...." *(That's Sam Raimi's voice, altered by sound-editing magic.)* Ominous music. She looks down at her sketch of the clock, and with a

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grimace and apparently against her will, she draws a rectangle, tearing the paper as she does. She clutches the pencil in her fist; there are strange dark lines on the back of her hand. The rectangle has a crudely-sketched face on it. It looks more like a grocery bag with a bad attitude than the Book of the Dead, however.

Across the room, the trapdoor to the cellar jumps a little, making banging sounds. Despite this spooky stuff, however, the next scene is merely a dinner. All five people seem perfectly content as Ash rises to make a toast, saying some kind of nonsense phrase. In the other room, the trap door springs open completely. More eerie music recalling Bernard Herrmann's title theme for *Mysterious Island*.

The camera, in the cellar, looks up at the five, peering apprehensively into the cellar. (*They dug out enough dirt from beneath the floor of the real cabin for only five steps downward into darkness.*) Cheryl says it's probably just an animal. "An animal?" Scott exclaims. "That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard of!" -- but he doesn't offer any alternatives. One of the others says there's something down there. Cheryl decides not to go down, but Scotty says he'll go. He descends the staircase. The others wait, tensely (we hear only the sound of crickets). After a moment or two, Ash leans over. "Hey Scotty, you find anything?" No response.

He decides to go down into basement himself. (*These scenes were shot months later, in the basement of the Tapert's farmhouse.*) He takes a lantern because they have no flashlight. The three girls watch from above. At the bottom of the stairs, Ash pauses, looking around. There's a sound like a motor running in the distance, some jingly sounds on music track, the sound of dripping water. Camera pans 360° as Ash examines the dark, shadowy basement. He calls out for Scotty. Water slowly drips from pipes above (this was really Karo syrup, so the drips would fall slowly enough).

A sudden noise from behind a closed door catches Ash's attention. In closeup, he advances toward the door. (*This is double-printed: each negative frame printed twice, because later Raimi felt Campbell moved too quickly here.*) He reaches out for the knob, turns it with a loud clunk; the it creaks open. As he enters, we can see gourds hanging from the cellar beams behind him. (Why? Who knows, but they up in *Evil Dead II* as well.) He enters the second room slowly, carefully, passes some pipes. (*If you watch carefully, you can spot a hidden cut: after Bruce passes the pipes, he's now in the Raimi family basement; this was done to extend the scene a little, and to add the small scare that follows.*)

BOO! Scott pops up to scare him. As Ash recovers (*and they're back in the Tapert basement*), Scott says, "Look at all this stuff!" There's a tape recorder, a shotgun, a torn poster for *The Hills Have Eyes*, other stuff. And there's also a strange book with what seems to be a face carved into the leather cover. Ash opens it. Demons, skeletal faces, eyeballs., a pile of skulls. (*There's a reason for the poster. "In The Hills Have Eyes," Campbell explains, there's a poster for Jaws ripped in half. Sam took it to mean that however*

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scary *Jaws* was, that was nothing compared to what's going on here. So Sam took the *Hills Have Eyes* poster and tore that in half, to say that as scary as that film is, it's nothing. Then Wes Craven, who directed *Hills Have Eyes*, had a scene from *Evil Dead* playing on TV in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Then in *Evil Dead 2*, Sam included a poster for that movie, torn in half.")

Scott finds a knife with a small distorted skull on its hilt. "This kinda looks like your old girlfriend," he says, and they both laugh. Scott picks up the tape recorder and starts upstairs. Ash finds, rather mysteriously, an illustration within the book OF the book, only here the face looks alive, and somewhat resembles Cheryl's crude drawing.

Outside, the moon rises over the cabin. This is actually an effects shot, one of the few mattes they used in the film. In the original prints, it's pretty crude and obvious, enough so that Stephen King pointed out in his rave review of the movie as evidence of the film's low-budget nature.

Later upstairs, they sit on the floor near the fireplace and play the tape. "It has been a number of years," says voice on the tape, since I began excavating the ruins of Kandar with a group of my colleagues. Now my wife and I have retreated to a small cabin in the solitude of these mountains. Here, I continued my work undisturbed by the myriad distractions of modern civilization and far from the groves of academe. I believe I have made a significant find in the Kandarian ruins. A volume of ancient Sumerian burial practices and funerary incantations. It is entitled NOTURAN DEMONTO (SPELLING), roughly translated The Book of the Dead. The Book is bound in human flesh and inked in human blood. It deals with demons and demon resurrection and those forces which roam the forests and dark bowers of man's domain." (The voice is that of Bob Dorian, more recently the host of *American Movie Classics*; he was a friend of Joe Masefield, the sound editor on the movie.)

Outside, a storm has arisen; as the voice continues, we see closeups of the friends listening, and at least one shot outside of lightning bolts striking.

"The first few pages," the voice on the tape continues, "warn that these enduring creatures may lie dormant, but are never truly dead. They may be recalled to active life with the incantations presented in this Book. It is through recitation of these passages that the demons are given license to possess the living.."

Cheryl turns off the tape recorder at this point, but Scott joshes them into turning it back on, but he fast-forwards it before beginning again. When the recording starts again, we hear the Sumerian chants. The words are hard to discern, but some sound like "Katra amistrobin azonda...."

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As the voice continues, the scene cuts to an exterior; we see the cabin in the background, and in the foreground, earth begins to stir. Smoke rises, red light is seen through the fissures of the cracking earth.

Inside the cabin, the voice goes on: "Samand Robesa dar ees hiker dan zee roadza. Kohnda! Kohnda! Kohnda!" Cheryl suddenly shouts, "Shut it off! Shut it OFFFFFF!" She clutches her head and a branch crashes through the window. (*Breaking real glass, not the candy glass used in mainstream movies. The Renaissance partners simply couldn't afford stunt glass.*) She flees the room, followed by Shelly.

Ash chews out Scott: "I can't believe this! Scott, you knew not to play that! You knew it was upsetting her! You don't know when you're taking something too far." Scott tries to defend himself. "She acts like she's three years old or something."

Ash starts to clean up the room as Linda comes back; he suggests they state up for a while and listen to the storm. Why don't we stay up for a while, Ash says to his girlfriend, and listen to the storm. Linda leaves to see to Cheryl, and he takes out a small box.

When she returns, he's on the couch, eyes closed, box on his knee. She looks at the box, big closeups of her eyes, open, his, shut. She reaches for the box. There's some interesting intercutting here; he occasionally opens his eyes, watching her reach for the box, closing them when she glances in her direction. She finally catches him with his eyes open. They goof around, he shyly gives her the box. Inside is a necklace consisting of a small magnifying glass set in silver, on a chain. He puts it around her neck. (*The reason it is a magnifying glass, a rather unlikely lover's gift, is that at the climax, Ash was supposed to use it to focus the sun's rays on the Book of the Dead. That idea was scrapped by the time the ending was filmed, but they were still stuck with the magnifying glass prop. Which, incidentally, was gold, not silver; if you watch closely, you can see flecks of silver paint on "Linda's" fingers.*)

She's knocked out by the gift. "Oh Ash, it's beautiful; I really love it -- I'll never take it off." (*Campbell points out, "Sam's a total romantic at heart, but he'd just never admit it."*)

But now we're seeing them from the outside, from the POV of the Force. It looks in the window at them kissing, then goes around to side, looks in another window as they finish their clinch, go over to the fireplace. In another room, Shelly takes off her blouse; we get a brief glimpse of her breasts (sexy stuff is very rare in Raimi's movies). Looking through another window, the Force sees Cheryl, who peers out into the night, draws her bathrobe more tightly around her, then leaves the room. She comes out the back door of the cabin. (*This was one of the most involved shots in the entire film; lighting was very difficult, and so was the timing of all the actors.*)

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She looks around, calls out, "Is anybody out there?" A wolf-like howl in the distance is the only answer. *(There's a subtle, interesting use of no sound here: a faint "wubba wubba" sound can be heard, a byproduct of the sound mixing board that Raimi liked. It's almost literally the sound of silence.)* With the shadows of branches passing over her face (made by an off-camera Raimi, waving a branch), she walks along the side of the house. A cloud covers the moon. She unwisely enters the woods, the camera alternately following and preceding her. "I know someone's out there," she says. "I heard you in the cellar." *(The sounds in this sequence are a combination of Raimi, Tapert, Campbell and their sound mixer Joe Masefield moaning "Join us" blended with the sounds of flies and bees.)*

A kind of strangled growl is heard. There are some shots of swirling clouds. The Force POV moves in the woods, knocks down small trees; this is intercut with fog and Cheryl reacting in fear. *(This entire sequence is a combination of footage shot in Tennessee, scenes shot much later in the Michigan woods, and scenes shot in the Raimi back yard.)*

And then vines crawl along the forest floor, raising in the air, then loop themselves around Cheryl's wrist, then her neck, then the other wrist. She screams as the vines tear away her bathrobe and drag it off into the woods. More vines, now around her ankles. They jerk her feet out from under her. More vines, more grabbing, pulling her hands away, exposing her left breast. She's strapped to the ground, then the vines spread her legs and with sudden violence a thick vine stabs into her vagina. She writhes in pain. More vines, but one breaks, she struggles to free herself. *(Not surprisingly, after this movie, Ellen Sandweiss gave up thoughts of being a film star. She was a great sport and a good friend to the Renaissance crew, however, something all of them, and Scott Spiegel, point out repeatedly.)*

The Force POV is still moving through the woods, now it sees her, freeing herself from the last of the vines. Almost naked, she runs headlong through the woods, looks back to see a tree toppling behind her. The Force POV chases her through the woods; we occasionally see her from an objective traveling view, too.

She makes it to the house, the Force POV still following her, knocking down trees. Eerie noises on the soundtrack. She grabs at keys on top of the doorjamb but one of them is stuck momentarily. She gets it free, struggles to unlock the door as the Force POV advances on her from the woods. She drops the keys, and Ash's hand grabs her wrist at the last possible moment. The Force POV, thwarted, withdraws into the woods with a frustrated growl.

"Did something in the woods do this to you?" Ash asks. "No, she sobs, "it's the woods themselves -- they're alive, they're alive. I'm not lying down, I want to get out of here, I want to live this place right now." She demands that Ash immediately drive her into town. He tries to talk her out of it, but then agrees. *(Campbell points out how Ash struggles to get into his jacket; "I couldn't get it on to save my life," he says. When they're outside, the jacket's already*

on.)

They go out into the foggy night, with the only sounds being the innocent chirping of crickets. The others, silhouetted against the light from the open door, watch as Ash and Cheryl get into the car. At first it won't start after several tries, but just as she says "I know it's not going to start. It's not going to let us leave" the car does start just fine. They drive off, and the others go back inside.

Ash and Cheryl drive on without talking. Then he sees something ahead, and stops the car. When he gets out, he is tilted at a weird angle as he walks past the front of the car. Fog drifts by as Cheryl leans out of the car, worried, then she too walks by the front of car, and she's also tilted at a strange angle. *(This, one of the eeriest effects in the movie, was done on location, quite simply. They found a slope next to the road, and mounted the camera on it so the bottom frame line was parallel with the slope: the camera tilted as much as the slope did. When the car drives up, it seems, therefore, to be level -- and when Campbell and Sandweiss walk by, they seem to be tilting, as if gravity isn't working quite right.)*

There are loud woodsy creaking sounds from the forest. A vine drops toward her, but then stops. The creaking sounds get louder as she approaches the bridge -- to find its girders bent upward like the clutching fingers of a skeletal hand. Lots of fog here. *(The bridge is real, and was really cut into the shape of a hand, but the way it's shot, it could have been a backyard miniature.)*

She runs back toward the car, but Ash jumps out of nowhere and scares her. There's an odd rising camera shot of the two of them in the headlights of the car, Ash failing to calm his sister down. *(This is the only time in the three films where he's called "Ashley.")*

We see an upraised axe, but it's just Scott, chopping wood for the fire. Inside, Ash plays the tape further, so we know some time has passed; he is listening with an earphone. (It is with this scene that Ash essentially becomes the hero, since he is taking the menace seriously, and by not playing the tape aloud, he's avoiding upsetting the others.)

"I know now that my wife has become host to a Kandarian demon," says the voice on the tape; we see Ash in an overhead shot. "I fear that the only way to stop those possessed by the spirits of the Book is through the act of" -- pause -- "bodily dismemberment. I would leave now to avoid this horror, but for myself I have seen the dark shadows moving in the woods, and I have no doubt that whatever I have resurrected through this Book is sure to come calling for me."

Despite the ominous mood, Linda and Shelly are fooling around with cards, testing each other's extra-sensory perception, if any. Linda guesses the 7 of Diamonds (which is right), changes it to the 7 of Hearts, but Shelly tells her THAT's right. Delighted, she tells Ash, but he's not interested. Now she guesses 7 of Spades (it is the 8 of Hearts), but the next one -- the Queen of Spades -- Cheryl (who's

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been looking out the window, back to the camera, in the background) gets exactly right.

"Four of Hearts; eight of Spades," -- the others are amazed, and stop looking at the cards, but Cheryl's voice, sounding weird, goes on, naming the cards that haven't even been turned up yet -- "Two of Spades; Jack of Diamonds; Jack of Clubs." With this, she whirls on the others, her face now distorted and demonic, her eyes blank.

At once, she rises from the floor, hanging in the air in front of the window, her head jerking about on her neck. "Why have you disturbed our sleep?" she groans, "Awakened us from our ancient slumber! You will Die! like the others before you. One by one we will take you." Cheryl collapses onto the floor. (*The Exorcist-inspired levitation was easily done: Sandweiss was strapped to an X-shaped frame with a pole going straight out the back of the X and the window behind her. They called this the "Ellievator." Those guys.*)

Scott comes in, startled. "What happened to her?" The others are almost in shock. "Did you see her eyes?" Linda blurts out. There's a close shot of Ash (*with marks on his face that are inflicted later in the film*) reaching out tentatively toward his sister, but Cheryl's now monstrous hand clutches a pencil on the floor. Holding it like a dagger, she abruptly sits up (eyes blank, fixed horrifying grin), and plunges the pointed end of the pencil into Linda's ankle and twists it around. (*That's the sound of an apple being stabbed. It was Rob Tapert's idea to go for the Achilles tendon.*)

She raises it to strike again, but Ash grabs her wrist; Cheryl knocks Linda across the room, then Ash, who slams into a bookcase, which tumbles over on him. Ash apparently has some kind of affinity for bookcases. (*In these pre-stuntman days, Bruce simply flung himself backward into the real bookcase.*)

Grinning demonically, the possessed Cheryl lurches across the floor. Scott tries to stop her, but she throws him aside. Ash is trying to get out from under the bookcase. Scott knocks Cheryl backward, she ends up falling into the trap door. He clouts her head a couple of times, then laces the chain through the fasteners, and locks it. (*There's a brutal shot of her hand being smashed here; that's a leftover It's Murder hand; it's later seen being squashed in the doorway.*)

The trap door jiggles a bit.

As punctuation, there's now an exterior view of the cabin: thick inky clouds cover the full moon.

Inside, very quiet scene: in a bedroom, Ash pulls the covers tenderly Linda, who seems to be asleep; he kisses her softly, then leaves. (*Bruce Campbell makes an interesting point: "One thing I really commend Sam on that isn't done much in movies anymore is that here he allows things to get very quiet for several minutes after major scare scenes. Otherwise, there is no release, there's no stop.*



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*It's interesting to try to make a movie that never stops, but in this case it's more effective, because you mellow down again, then you can get bashed again, where if you keep getting bashed, there's nowhere to go. It becomes a version of pornography, where it's no longer teasing and tantalizing, it's just something that never stops. I think this wound up being very effective here, and I only realized it when I went back in and did the remastering of the sound for the laserdisc release because Sam was busy.")*

Here we see from the POV of the possessed Cheryl down in the cellar; the lid is up a bit, her fingers run across the chain. She sees Ash come in from the other room. Scott says, "Ash, I think we ought to get out of here." It's still a few hours to morning; Shelly says she doesn't think she can last that long. Scott assures her they can. "Why does she keep making those horrible noises? For God's sake, what happened to her eyes?!" Shelly screams. (All this is seen from the POV of the monster Cheryl.) Now we see Cheryl again, distorted, laughing.

Outside, the Force POV advances on the house again. Inside, Scotty tells Shelly that everything is going to be all right, famous last words if we've ever heard them. "Scotty, she says, "I think there's something out there," an understatement matching Scott's misplaced optimism.

Here we see more POV shots of the Force looking into the cabin, following Shelly along the house as she goes into her room. She turns toward the window, sees something outside in the dark, then backs away in horror as the Force POV smashes through the window. She screams. (This, says Rob Tapert, was a Ram-O-Cam shot. The guy behind the camera used a big rake-like device made out of nailed-together boards to punch out the window just as the camera reaches it. If you watch carefully, you'll see that the glass shatters before the lens reaches that point.)

Scott rushes into the room with the smashed window, but there's no sign of Shelly. He looks out the window, first one way, then the other. Nothing. And nothing happens to him, either, though audiences expected him to be decapitated. A noise from the closet catches his attention. He pulls the curtained door opened; nothing in there (but there's a Camp Tamakwa T-shirt on the inside of the closet door.)

He cautiously enters the bathroom, walking gingerly toward the curtained shower, and pulls it aside. Nothing. (But there's yellow paper lining the tub.) As he turns to leave, a hand suddenly grabs his throat while another, with large red fingernails, rakes grooves down the right side of his face. He staggers into the front room with Monster Shelly clutching him. He tosses her off and she lands in the fire; her hair catches fire.

Uncertain, he pulls her out of the fire. But she's still monstrous, and says, "Thank you. I don't know what I would have done if I had remained on those hot coals." they might have harmed her pretty flesh -- and then grabs him again.

Monster Cheryl bangs away at the trap door. Ash tries to help Scott, but he's flung back into yet another bookcase, and has a hard time getting the very thin boards off him. Monster Shelly grabs the skull knife and tries to stab Scott, but he pulls his own hunting knife and slashes at her wrist; there's a lot of blood.

Ash grabs the axe and raises it, but stops in horror as Monster Shelly bites her own hand off at the wrist. Scott stabs her in the back with the skull knife (which still has her dismembered hand clutching the hilt); she screams hollowly -- for quite a while -- and blood dribbles out the mouth of the skull on the hilt of the knife. There's also some smoke. She leans back so far we can see where the makeup ends on her neck. With multiple groans and moans she falls backward onto the knife. White fluid spurts out of her wrist stump and out of her mouth, leaving her face not only monstrous but covered in red, black and white goo. *(This sequence was a mixture of locations; the Shelly monster is played by Sarah York [Teresa Tilly], Rob Tapert, and Rob's sister Dorothy. Some of the shots were filmed much later in Michigan, in Bart Pierce's basement. The white fluid is simply milk.)*

Scott walks toward her recumbent form, quite unwisely, as she grabs him again. *(Ted Raimi, still a child, stood in for Scott's legs in this scene.)* He pulls away; she arises and walks toward him, oozing blood and other stuff. Scott grabs the axe from Ash and whacks her in the head; she falls down; he dismembers her in a series of violent blows. In one shot, blood covers the camera lens, which is looking upward at Scott. *(Hiding out of camera range, people tossed Karo syrup blood upward for the splattering effect. The shots here were done in Tennessee, in the Raimi garage, and in Marshall, Michigan. Campbell says, "Rob and Sam made a conscious decision to make this cutting up scene very graphic, but did a lot of the extra shots back in Michigan. There's a fake floorboard here with the person's hand coming out one side and the prosthetic extension on the other, so the axe could seem to cut off the hand. It's an old magician's trick. The leg you see chopped is a chunk of bologna. If you watch closely, you can see a green garden hose pumping out fake blood.")*

Finally he stops, and we see Shelly's various dismembered body parts scattered about the floor -- legs here, torso there, head over here, twitch and squirm, making gopy goopy sounds. *(This was done just the way it looks: people were hiding under the floorboards sticking arms, legs or their head up through holes cut for this purpose. At this point, they had been shooting for something like 16 hours; Rob Tapert, on his back with his leg sticking through a hole, got a terrible cramp; he darkly suspects that Sam took his time lighting the shot because he knew Rob was one of the body parts. "This is where the cabin became unmanageable," Bruce says, "because we're using Karo syrup and just dumping the stuff on the floor; the syrup got on everything. It got on the fog machines, it got on the cameras, it got inside the cameras, everywhere. Your hands would stick together, your fingers. We took ashes from the fireplace and*

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*dumped them on the floor, so it slowly turned from brown to gray."*)

Ash and Scott are overwhelmed. "What are we going to do?" Ash asks. "Bury her," says Scott tersely. Ash responds, in a daze, "But Shelly's a friend of ours." *This line generally gets laughs at screenings, but that wasn't intended.*

Outside: carrying the body in a bloody sheet they drag between them, Scott and Ash go into the woods, dig a hole, and put the bloody sheet, complete with her body, into the pit. Scott plants a cross. *A cross is planted on a fresh grave in each of the three films. Chunks of wood were in the sheet to give it heft. Just before this was shot, Campbell wrenched his ankle. "Now, Rob and Sam will never admit to this, but they cornered me in a room with sharp sticks, and they started poking at my ankle. These are my good friends. When Sam started The Quick and the Dead, I asked him if he was going to poke Sharon Stone with sharp sticks? Was he going to hit Gene Hackman with a two-by-four?" Raimi admitted he had changed his directorial technique.)*

Later, the Force POV advances on the house again; plenty of fog.

Inside, Scott says he's leaving, but Ash says they can't take Linda out with her wounded foot. *(Now the scratches are on Scott's left cheek.)* "I don't care what happens to her," Scott says selfishly, thereby sealing his doom (the film does follow certain moral codes). "She's your girlfriend -- you take care of her. I'm getting out of here right now." *(It was around here that Campbell started doing something he regrets "to this day. Now my hair is starting to get messed up, so I would just put Karo syrup on it, because it would stay shiny and gooey; in all of Evil Dead 2, I put Karo syrup on my hair. There are certain habits you pick up that you don't realize until years later how stupid it was. On Evil Dead 2, I slept on the set with a flyswatter in my hand because of all the flies buzzing around. I don't put anything on my hair for Brisco County Jr.")*

There's a shot from the POV of the Cheryl monster in the cellar, laughing at Ash's predicament. "Soon you'll be like me," she gloats shrilly, "and they'll lock you up in the cellar."

Ash checks the sleeping Linda, who seems okay. He pulls the cover back to look at her foot where Cheryl stabbed it with the pencil -- and the wound immediately turns black, with a spiderweb of black lines growing across it (in pixilation). *(The leg is that of Cheryl Guttridge, an old friend from the Super-8 days.)* Her eyes blank, with a doll-like grin on her face --- she doesn't look like the other monsters -- Linda sit up abruptly, laughing, moving in a jerky, marionette-like fashion.

Terrified, Ash runs to the front door, steps out, looks back at the forest. He's startled -- and so is the audience -- when Scott falls on him, begging for help; Scott's all banged up, with a big cut on his leg, which we see as he limps by the camera inside the cabin,

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being helped by Ash over to the couch. The possessed Linda sits crosslegged on the floor in the doorway to the hall, giggling at their predicament.

"Scotty, you're going to be okay, you're going to be just fine, you'll see," says Ash, in famous last words of his own. But Scott gasps, "Ash, it's not going to let us leave, Cheryl was right, we're all going to die here, all of us."

"We're not going to die," says Ash without much conviction; "we're going to get out of here. Now listen to me, is there a way around the bridge?"

Scott ignores this, sobbing, "I don't want to die," says Scotty, "you're not going to leave me, are you, Ash?" The possessed Cheryl repeats his words in a taunting tone from under the trap door.

Scott admits that there is a way around the bridge, "there's a trail, but the trees, Ash, they know, don't you see Ash, they're alive!" Apparently it was the trees that tore him up.

The two monster women both laugh fiendishly as blood pours out of Scott's mouth. "Shut up!" yells Ash, rushing over to Linda; he slugs her in the face several times (we see this from behind her). "Kill her," says Scotty, and Ash picks up the shotgun and aims it at the cackling Linda, but he can't bring himself to shoot. (Music builds to a real crescendo here.) Now Linda looks normal again, and whispers, "Oh Ash, help me please. Ash, help me, please. Please don't let them take me away again." (*Did she really regain her own mind for a moment, or was it a trick on the part of the demons? We never know for sure.*) They embrace.

"Ashley, help me, let me out of here." Ash hears Cheryl's voice sounding normal. He looks at the trap door, which is closed. "Unlock this chain and let me out," she says. The soundtrack is now very quiet, an effective touch. (*You'll notice the floor isn't especially bloody in these scenes; they knew they would chop up the possessed Sally when they shot these sequences in Tennessee -- but it wasn't until they filmed the, you should pardon the expression, cutaways back in Michigan that the blood really flowed. So here there are only some blotches.*)

"Cheryl?" Ash says, uneasily. He kneels by the trap door and pulls the keys out of his pocket. He peers into the crack (we see him from under the door) -- and then he's punched by her monstrous hands. She clutches at his hands. "I'm all right now, hahahahaha, it's your sister Cheryl!"

Ash pulls away, screaming "You bastards! Why are you torturing me like this, why?"

Linda, now possessed again, chants, "We're gonna get you, we're gonna get you," she sings in the well-known schoolyard taunting melody, "not another peep, time to go to sleep."

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Ash grabs her by the ankles, drags her to the cabin door and outside. He drags her over the leaf-covered ground; she writhes and screams. *(When this scene was shot, Linda's Evil Dead makeup was monstrous in the same way as the others; the doll-like look came later, but here, if you look closely, you can see the old makeup).* "We'll come for you!" she screams, but mostly we can't make what few words she utters.

There's another shot of the moon to signify some time passing.

Ash comes over to Scott, offering him some water. "The sun will come up in an hour or so," the numbed Ash says, more to himself than to Scotty, "and we can all get out of here together. You, me, Linda, Shelly.... no, not Shelly, she.... We'll all be going home together. Wouldn't you like to be going home? I'll bet you'd like that, wouldn't you?" *(Some of the shots of Campbell in this sequence were taken well after all the other actors had left; "I had these horrible Moe bags under my eyes," he says. In other shots in this same sequence, "I'm all clean, I'm all pretty, no bags under my eyes.")*

But Scott is dead, and Ash lets the glass tumble to the carpet. He goes to the window and looks out. Nothing. He turns just as Linda stabs him in the left arm with the skull knife, then she licks the blood off the blade. *(At the start of this shot, Bruce points out, "My left arm is tucked a little unnaturally into my side, because we tried to do this all in one -- which of course didn't work -- so my arm is pre-bloody. We had to go back later to pick up an insert of the actual stab.")* As for how Linda got back into the house, "don't ask questions.") They struggle, he falls on the couch, knocking Scott's body to the floor. Linda attacks, but he kicks her away. They grapple some more. The Cheryl monster grabs him from the basement. "Join us! Join us!" He manages to turn the knife around to Linda's back (very much as Scott had done earlier with Shelly) and stabs her; she falls backward onto the knife.

Stuff runs out of her mouth and eyes, but she finally falls still. Ash grabs her by the legs and drags her slowly across the carpet. *(Here's where they used what they called the "Vas-O-Cam.")* The Camera was fastened to a wooden block wrapped in duct, or gaffer's, tape; a two-by-four on the floor was also covered in tape, then both sections of tape were greased with Vaseline, enabling the camera to slide along smoothly only inches from the floor. However, it was so cold in the cabin that the petroleum jelly was thicker than usual; you can see a few little hitches in the Vas-O-Cam's gitalong. The Vas-o-Cam was Philo's idea. The can here is Stroh's beer, because they were from Michigan. "These are important things, you know," Bruce asserts without much conviction.)

The woodshed: a rat scampers away; Ash turns on the light. In quick cuts with one distinctive sound emphasizing each one, he chains Linda's body to the table. *(There's a sequence like this in each of the films; there are several of them in Army of Darkness, for example.)* Then he pulls aside a curtain and finds a chainsaw. He

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stars it, standing over Linda's body -- but he loses his nerve when he sees the necklace he gave her still around her throat. (It's visible in closeup, but not in the shot from behind him.)

He leans on her body, crying. (The music here performs what Bruce refers to as an "NBC dip. That's when the music goes way down and you hear a line of dialog, then it comes back up again. That's what Mel Zelniker, our sound editor, called it.")

Next, it's outside. Ash comes by the camera, carrying Linda's body -- he didn't dismember her after all. There's the shovel where they left it after burying the dismembered chunks of Shelly's body. He gently lays her body down, and begins digging. (The wind currents were very favorable to the fog they laid down, giving some of the exterior sequences a definite Hammer Films look, which was deliberate.)

Inside the cabin, Cheryl pounds away again at the trap door -- and now the metal hoop fastening the chain to the floor, and the hinges, begin to give way. This is intercut with close shots of Ash's and Linda's (blank) eyes; in an echo of the sequence earlier when he gave her the magnifying glass-charm, whenever he glances at her, she closes her eyes again. He picks up her body and puts it in the grave.

Now there's a POV shot from inside the grave as Ash tosses a spade of dirt in; by sheer chance, his face is still visible through an area the dirt didn't cover. He finishes the grave, pats down the earth, then reaches for the necklace, fallen beside the grave. Watch here also for some good Shaky-Cam shots as the camera moves right over the open grave and back again. The body was played by a local Tennessee woman named Barbara Cary.)

But as he picks it up, Linda's hand stabs out of the grave earth and grabs his wrist. He pulls back, but she still gets hold of his ankle, lacerating it with one hand while holding on with the other. He screams in pain. Lots of blood here. (The woman rising from the grave is actually Cheryl Guttridge again, in scenes shot in Sam's basement; she's rising "out of fertilizer," Campbell says, "which is essentially cow manure." In some other scenes here, the undead Linda is played by Barbara Cary again. "These are our actors-gone scenes," Campbell explains. Cary was determined to do a good job, and didn't tell anyone until after the take was completed that she had torn her own fingernails badly when she clawed at Bruce's leg. "She's this nice, neat Tennessee girl, and she didn't want to say anything while she was obviously in horrible pain -- she just wanted to do it right," Bruce says with admiration and regret.)

He falls to the ground, but finds a charred timber, which he pounds her with repeatedly. She continues to laugh insanely as he slugs her again and again with the timber. But she picks him up by the timber, and Ash, surprised, is lifted right off the ground, then falls. (Bruce and Sam both clouted Betsy Baker with the It's Murder Timbers, with Sam really nailing her. "She'd get all pissed and throw a hairy fit," Bruce says, "and Sam would apologize, and we'd start

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again -- and he'd do the same thing all over again." She got her revenge, though: she had milk in her mouth she was supposed to spew out, which she did -- all over Sam. And you think you want to be in a Sam Raimi movie....)

She starts toward him; he sees the spade; she leaps into the air; he swings the spade and decapitates her. Close shot on his eyes; the head falls to the ground, plunk, right in front of the camera. In the background, Ash grapples with the headless body; the stump of the neck pumps black fluid onto his screaming face. There's a shot of Linda's head on the ground, laughing. In an obscene parody of sex, the legs of the body straddle Ash's. (On the soundtrack, you can momentarily hear a few female groans lifted from the track of a real hardcore movie.) The head screams. Finally Ash staggers away. (Compare the amount of blood on Bruce in this shot with how much is on him when he gets back into the cabin.)

\*\*\*\*\*IS THIS AN OVERHEAD SHOT? CHECK TAPE

Breathing hard, he comes into the cabin -- to find the trap door standing open, and the possessed Cheryl gone. He hears a creaking sound as the door across the room opens slowly. He picks up the gun, enters the room, looking around. It's the room where Shelly was. The closet is making strange noises (note the Camp Tamawka T-shirt), and as he moves around to get a better shot at it, Cheryl pops up outside the broken window, reaches in and grabs the barrel of the shotgun. He blasts her, but she stands up again, pumping blood. (The effect of shooting something with a shotgun was achieved by shooting something with a shotgun. Also, you can see a green garden hose pumping blood out of Cheryl's shoulder. "That's so lame," Bruce sighs; "it's always bothered me.")

He runs toward the front door, leaping over the camera. (Sam was lying in a space where the floorboards had been torn up, as Bruce recalls. Good shot of the "stupid elf shoes.") Cheryl heads for the front door (that's really Rob Tapert in drag), gets a hand in before he can close it altogether; he smashes her hand bloody, it withdraws. (One of the nastiest shots in the movie, it was done with a fake hand with balloons filled with Karo blood inside, with some broken glass to pop the balloons when the door slammed.)

He frantically runs to the back door, slams it shut, searches for the shotgun ammunition. "Shells. Where do they keep the box of shells?" he sputters. He grabs them.

From inside the cellar, we see the trap door open. Ash comes slowly down the stairs, stumbles on a beer can. There's a pipe wrapped in sheets, dripping blood. Creaking sounds on the track. He looks up at the bleeding pipe, which suddenly drops open, spewing gallons of blood over him. (There's an interesting shot of Bruce from above the pipe; this was done by placing a mirror on the ceiling of the Tapert basement above the wrapped pipe, and shooting Bruce's reflection in the mirror.)

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An electrical outlet on the wall oozes blood; blood pours out between the rocks on the wall; a light bulb begins to fill up with blood. *(An homage to/borrowing from the Three Stooges short, A Plumbing We Will Go, in which all this stuff happens with mere water.)*

Then a windup record player pops open and starts playing a record, 1920s-like jazz. A movie projector bursts into life, catching Ash in its beam as blood drips onto the projector lens. The square of light on the wall and Ash turns red. *(This was a tribute to longtime Detroit film distributor Andy Granger. Sam met with Granger in 1979 when they were raising money for the film, and asked his advice on making a horror movie. "Just keep the blood flowin' down the screen," said Granger. Sam follows the advice in this shot.)*

"We're gonna get you, we're gonna get you," Linda's voice chants. There are also other sounds, including the voice from the tape -- "...bodily dismemberment..." *(These were added, as Bruce recalls, on the advice of sound editor Joe Masefield, who was worried that the audience would forget everything that happened by this point. As if that mattered.)* He grabs for the shotguns shells, loads the gun. The music and projector sounds continue. He rushes in; sparks fly from the projector, it explodes; so does the blood-filled light bulb; the record player runs down. From near the pipe, we see Ash in the distance. *(You can see some dust on the record; this was to allow the record's turning to be visible at all. Also, notice the Band-aid floating in the bloody slop on the floor. This is irony. Much of the floor is covered with wadded-up garbage bags with stuff on them, but, as Bruce says, "you can kind of tell that they're just garbage bags." The shot of him wiping himself may seem out of place, since nowhere else in any of the three movies does Ash show any interest in cleanliness. This was added to match the footage shot much earlier in Tennessee, in which he wasn't as gore-besmeared.)*

Now it is very quiet except for dripping sounds. From under the stairs, we see Ash climb them.

He's now upstairs, looking around with fear. The clock hands whirl madly and we hear Big Ben-like chimes. From behind the pendulum, in an extreme Dutch angle, we see Ash in closeup as the pendulum slams back and forth. More Dutch angles. The sound of a heartbeat. The camera rights itself. *(All this stuff was shot when there were only five people left on the crew. Rob tried unsuccessfully to talk Sam out of using so many titled shots in this sequence, but Sam wanted it all to look weird. Sam was right.)*

From behind Ash, we see him upside down; he passes under camera which tilts to see him right-side up. *("I can't figure out how Sam had his body," says Bruce, marveling at his director's derring-do; "he was in some horrible contorted position, hanging down over the rafters. He had to bend over upside down, then do an inverted situp as I walked back. The camera was attached to his hand here.")*



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From under Ash, we see his feet swivel. ("I'm on my heels on a box here," Bruce explains, "perched pretty precariously. I may have actually been held up from behind, so that all my weight is on my heels.")

There's an extreme Dutch angle from outside looking at Ash in doorway; the Force POV moves closer, he slams the door. The shutters on the house bang wildly. Many tilted shots here, as well as straight down-shots from above the rafters as the camera moves along above them, following Ash. As the rafters pass the camera, there are sounds marking their passage. (Another Vas-o-Cam shot, with the camera elevated just enough to miss the beams, sliding along a board on the rafters.)

The heartbeat on the soundtrack increases in tempo as Ash stares into the oval mirror. He reaches out for his own image, but his hand plunges into the mirror as if it were water. (Which, of course, is exactly what it is. Raimi had read about a similar scene in Jacques Cocteau's classic Orpheus, in which an actor put his hand into a mirror -- which was a vat of mercury, with the actor and camera at angles suggesting the reflecting surface was vertical. Raimi did the same thing here, but couldn't afford mercury, so he used a pool of water with black backing under it. Bruce is lying face-down on a board.)

Ash screams and pulls back, staring at his hand in horror. There's a bright light outside and he fires at the window, rather peculiarly knocking away the window crossbeams but not the window itself. ("One of our few two-camera setups," Bruce says, "because to us it was a big stunt. I had to make sure I shot upward to miss the guys operating the cameras.") He looks around the room; he's very frightened. Howling wind. Creaking sounds. He remembers to reload the shotgun. He mutters something to himself we can't quite make out. Now there's the sound of footsteps on the roof. (Now the dark secret can be told: the sound were made by Sam in high heels.) Now more footsteps, not human. He snaps his head back and forth, up and down, following the sounds. He remembers something, and fishes the necklace out of his pants pocket.

"Linda," he says.

He looks around the cabin (utterly silent now, except for the hissing on the sound track) -- when monstrous hands smash through the door and clutch at him. "Join us!" a coarse voice bellows; it's Cheryl. He falls back onto the floor, fires at Cheryl, whom he can see through the two holes she smashed through the door.

But whoops, now a monster, Scott suddenly sits up. (There's a jump cut here, Bruce points out. "Watch my position at the door change when the monster pops up." This was done to speed up the action.) They battle inside while Cheryl pounds on the door that Ash has barricaded with what looks like an old sewing machine. Scott lifts Ash off the floor by his throat, but Ash plunges his thumbs into Scott's eyes, gorily gouging them out. Scott drops him, screaming. Ash pulls a piece of wood out of Scott's belly; watery-looking blood

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pours forth. (Despite what some have thought, Ash is not pulling Scott's penis off.)

Cheryl pounds on the door; Scott collapses. Now there's lots of smoke issuing from Scott, too. Ash sees the Book of the Dead near the fireplace as Cheryl smashes open the door, overturning the sewing machine. The camera moves in on the Book again. On his knees, Ash starts for the Book, but Scott, smoldering, grabs him. Cheryl is picking up one of the fireplace tools. Ash's hand, being dragged back along with the rest of him by Scott, clutches at Linda's necklace.

Drooling, smoking, Cheryl comes across the room toward him as he uses the necklace to try to snag the Book, still next to the fireplace. Cheryl slams him in the kidneys with a fireplace poker, repeatedly. (The geography here is a little muddled, as is the logic. If Cheryl can go clear across the room to get the fireplace poker, why doesn't she pick up the Book of the Dead? On the other hand, just what the Deadites are after in the first film isn't clear.)

He tries again to snare the Book, she hits him again, Scott starts chewing on Ash's leg. Lots of screams. Still no luck getting the Book, and now he's pulled backward -- but what ho, the Book, burning around the edges, comes with the chain. He throws the Book into the fireplace.

Cheryl freezes, the poker upraised; more smoke drifts from her body. Chunks are missing from her face at this point. She drops the poker, which stabs into the floor next to Ash's face. Cheryl's head lurches with a crunching sound. (There's something bright blue on her lower lip, and now the blown-away part of her face is her lower left cheek, when in the immediately previous shot, it had been her right cheek.)

She blinks, twitches strangely (this looks like pixilation), her hair falls out. Scott's also crumbling away, the flesh writhing away from his bones; the same is happening now to Cheryl. Bubbling, butterscotch-like stuff oozes from Scott's head as something green slowly tumbles down his flayed cheek. Cheryl's tongue stabs out, so does that on the Book of the Dead itself, which is having its own problems. (The face of the Book, and its tongue, are rendered in stop motion animation. At one point during this sequence, the matte shifts, so a sound effect was added to cover the effects error. It's not likely anyone noticed the shift, though. Furthermore, someone, either Bart or Sam, had a clever idea: there's a sheet of transparent plastic between the camera and the action in some of the scenes, slowly moving, so that when flecks of decomposed Deadite stuff spatter, they're smoothly moved out from in front of the lens.)

All is silent.

Scott's body moves slightly. Something like cottage cheese squirts out of his sleeve. Cheryl sort of creaks. Her head turns a bit -- then a giant hand erupts from her chest; two of them stab upward out of Scott's back. There's an amazing shot of Cheryl's body,

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upright, with her own hands flailing, and the hands from inside her reaching out in opposite directions. Her throat erupts, she topples over and her head crumbles a little as she's falling, bursting apart on the floor. *(One of Sam's favorite shots in the film; dog food was used for the head's innards. Also, notice that when the head bursts, stuff falls up. This shot is actually inverted.)*

Bugs crawl out of one of the ruined bodies, which continue to flatten and change color and rot. "Join us, join us, Ash hears again, but the voice is now fading away.

At last, it seems to be over. Slowly, painfully, Ash rises to his feet. He's covered in blood, his friends and his sister are dead, but he's alive. He looks around the room; the clock has startled ticking again, as if there's no problem. He looks at the necklace in his hands.

Outside, the sun is rising. Ash opens the cabin door -- it has those two big holes in it -- and looks at the dawn sky. He carefully closes the door behind him. Limping, he leaves the porch and starts toward the car. We see him in a low angle.

But the camera cuts to a shot of a leaf, very close; we hear a rumbling sound and we are again seeing from the POV of the Force. Low to the ground, dodging trees, the Force roars toward the cabin *(here, we can see another cabin we'd never seen before, and some sort of outbuilding near the main cabin.)*

The Force rushes at the back door of the cabin, which bursts open; it zooms through the cabin, knocking open an interior door then bursting through the front door. Ash can be seen, limping toward the car. He turns and screams as the force rushes up to his screaming mouth.

THE END

To the bouncy, scratchy music we'd heard before on the record player in the basement, the credits roll:

Written and directed by  
Sam Raimi

Produced by  
Robert Tapert

Starring  
Bruce Campbell  
with  
Ellen Sandweiss --- Cheryl  
Hal Delrich --- Scott  
Betsy Baker --- Linda  
Sarah York --- Shelly

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[not listed in the credits:

Voice on the tape recorder --- Bob Dorian  
The guys beside the road -- Sam Raimi & Rob Tapert  
Scott's feet and legs in one scene -- Ted Raimi]

Photography and lighting  
Tim Philo

Special Make Up Effects  
Tom Sullivan

Photographic Special Effects  
Bart Pierce

Music composed and conducted by  
Joe LoDuca

Music Engineered at Audiographics by  
Ed Wolfrum

Film Editor

Edna Ruth Paul

Supervising Sound Editor  
Joe Masefield

Second Unit Lighting & Sound  
Josh Becker

Transportation Captain  
David Goodman

Construction Supervisor  
Steve Frankel

Assistant Producer  
Gary Holt

Production Assistant  
Don Campbell

Still Photographer  
Mike Ditz

Location Sound Recording  
John Mason

Dialogue Re-Recording  
Jerry Frederick

Sound Mixer  
Mel Zelniker

Assistant Film Editor  
Joel Coen

Dialogue Editor  
Lou Kleinman

Assistant Sound Editor  
Dolores Elliott

Fake Shemps

Phil Gillis

Dorothy Tapert

Cheryl Guttridge

Barbara Carey

David Horton

Wendall Thomas

Don Long

Stu Smith

Kurt Rauf

Evil Dead book/Rough Draft/ED Synopsis/80

Ted Raimi  
Ivan Raimi  
Bill Vincent  
Mary Beth Tapert  
Scott Spiegel  
John Cameron  
Joanne Krusegwen Cochanski  
Debbie Jarzewski

[The music fades away, replaced by the sound of the wind]

Post-production Sound  
Sound One Corp.  
Optical Negative  
Dynamic Effects Ltd.  
Negative Matching  
J.G. Films Inc.  
Title Design  
August Films Inc.

Executive Producers  
Robert Tapert  
Bruce Campbell  
Sam Raimi

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO  
SIMON NUCHTERN??, SHEILA ROBERTS, CAROL VALENTI AND OUR LOYAL BACKERS  
THE EVIL DEAD, THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE THE GRUELING HORROR, WAS FILMED  
IN MORRISTOWN, TENNESSEE, AND IN DETROIT, U.S.A.

usual disclaimers

SOUND OF A FLY

Compare this synopsis, taken directly from a viewing of the film, with the original outline that was included in the prospectus Phil Gillis prepared for investors in *Book of the Dead*:

Book of the Dead (brief synopsis)

Something evil is lurking about the wooded mountains of Tennessee. It watches a carload of five youngsters drive across a narrow bridge over a deep mountain chasm, and arrive at an old wood cabin which they are renting for the weekend. That night they explore the cellar and find the ancient "Book of the Dead" which had been left there by a professor of Egyptian mythology who mysteriously disappeared from the cabin six months ago. Once they read passages from the "Book of the Dead" terrifying nightmares, evil sounds in the woods, and glimpses of shadows moving about at the forest's edge plague them.

Evil Dead book/Rough Draft/ED Synopsis/81

Attempting to drive back to town because of the weird events, they are brought to a standstill when they see that the bridge over the chasm has been completely destroyed, isolating them totally in this mountain cabin.

As the evil force grows stronger, one by one the vacationers become possessed by it. Their eyes turn bone white and their bodies are jerked about like marionettes as they are driven to kill their own friends and lovers. The few remaining humans soon realize that the only way to stop this dark force which inhabits their possessed friends, is to dismember them so they can never walk the earth again. Struggle after struggle, battle after battle, the dwindling number of humans continue to destroy the white eyed possessed until only one man remains.

This man, now more than ever, has a driving will to survive and also has finally learned the secret behind the "Book of the Dead." In a final, bloody battle, he manages to destroy this demonic book, sending back to some dark and brooding place, the evil which had possessed and murdered his friends, and almost cost him his own life.

Having used his courage and raw strength to survive the terrifying night, this last man leaves the cabin and walks off into the mists of the early morning hours to safety.

by Samuel M. Raimi

The final film is very close to this synopsis, of course, but you'll notice that there is a "secret" of the Book that enables the lone survivor to destroy it -- and he also gets away alive at the end.

PART 4

BLOOD WILL TELL

Low-budget horror movies by new directors with unknown casts, released by lower-echelon distributors, as New Line was in 1983, aren't reviewed by the likes of *Time* and *Newsweek*. When they are reviewed at all, it's usually by a newspaper's second- or third-string critic, the guy assigned the latest kung fu pictures, gangsta rap comedies and especially obscure foreign imports.

And for the most part, that's just who reviewed *The Evil Dead*. But the reviews were different.

For example, in *The Village Voice* of May 3, 1983, shrewd Elliott Stein not only spotted a lot of the movies -- and other things -- that influenced Sam Raimi, he pinpointed much of the appeal of the film. "The Anthology Film Archives would have been the ideal place for the world premiere of *The Evil Dead*. It cannibalizes *The Exorcist*, *The Night of the Living Dead*, *The Day of the Triffids*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and a Three Stooges classic *A Plumbing We Will Go*." (He's one of the few who recognized the Stoogieness of the movie.)

"The script is balderdash," Stein says; "most sane adults, if they sit it out, will be revolted by the splattery climaxes. Why write of it? For three good reasons -- three new, young, impressive talents: Tom Sullivan... Tim Philo... and 21-year-old director Sam Raimi." He relates the plot, then adds amusingly, "The survivor is played by Bruce Campbell, who is not only star but co-producer, and therefore seems entitled to dismember the rest of the cast."

In an international publication, Alex Sutherland said that "It is violent and shocking, amusing and disgusting. . . but the plot is so implausible and the violence so excessive and fantastic, staged with such stylish camera work and special effects, that no true horror buff could deny its appeal."

David Chute, in the May 27, 1983 *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, compared *The Evil Dead* to *Night of the Living Dead*: "it achieves a similar claustrophobic intensity on a microscopic budget. It's a shoestring tour de force." Chute described Raimi as displaying "a ravenous, precocious talent," which is the simple truth. On the other hand, he found the film to have a certain tongue-in-cheek quality which others have noticed as well, but Raimi, Campbell and Tapert all (rather ruefully) admit that no humor was intended. Campbell says, "We played it absolutely like we felt it should be played. Our young sensibilities just wound up being overly dramatic about everything, and became ridiculous. Everyone says, 'Aw, they've got their tongues firmly planted in their cheeks.' No, I was just an inexperienced actor."

Chute liked the gore effects, noting that "when the zombies crumble and die in this movie, their runny flesh is rainbow colored, like melted ice cream." But he also felt that the movie "can't be

touted as a must-see work of art. In fact, whenever Raimi slows down and zeroes in on the dim characters, you stop shuddering and start giggling." Chute's most telling point is one that others missed: "In horror movies, recklessness is often a virtue. When high-tech directors such as Stanley Kubrick (*The Shining*) or Tony Scott (*The Hunger*) set out to 'redeem' the horror genre by pumping it full of art, they end up killing it. They're too fastidious to deliver the grisly goods." No one will ever accuse Sam Raimi's horror movies of being *fastidious*.

"Lor" in *Variety* admired the film, too, saying it "emerges late in the horror film cycle as the *ne plus ultra* of low-budget gore and shock effects. ... [They have] built a better horror picture [which] should clean up in the fright marketplace." Abbie Bernstein in *Hollywood Drama-Logue* called the film "one of the best-executed graphic gore horror films to come down the pike in quite awhile... [Raimi] knows a lot more about pacing, tension and camera placement than many of his more experienced, studio-backed peers." (and Bernstein, a lifelong horror fan and writer, knows whereof she speaks). Bill Krohn's *Boxoffice* review pointed out the limitations of the film, but also concluded that *The Evil Dead* "is by far the best horror entry of the year."

Vincent Canby's bemused commentary on the film in *The New York Times* (April 24, 1983), not really a review, pointed out one of the major reasons for the success of the film: "It's a great audience participation show... just intriguing enough to grab the audience and then. . . absurd enough to invite the audience to talk back to it." Which they always do, mostly to point out how much of an idiot Ash is being at any given moment. Tapert feels that Canby's piece "really had nothing to do with *The Evil Dead*, but was about how we sold ourselves, and the picture, and everything else."

Gerry Putzer in *The Hollywood Reporter* wasn't as impressed. His review, in fact, is almost vengefully negative, as if he'd overdosed on graphic horror movies, and wanted to get back at once of them. "The only thing distinguishing *The Evil Dead* from the mass of explicit horror films," he said in the March 14, 1983, issue, "is that its writer-director, Samuel M. Raimi, was 22 years old when he made the movie in 1980. The production. . . is nothing more than an amalgam of the most obvious (and popular) aspects of other successful films of the genre. . . . Raimi's film makes these shockers look like paradigms of narrative technique. Initial business, however, should be brisk due to an effective mixture of gore and high camp." He found the plot to be "hackneyed," a charge, it must be admitted, that's hard to disagree with. "The actors are more convincing as disgusting zombies than as honor students," Putzer sneered, adding that Campbell is memorable solely because "his sincere face remains on screen the longest in its natural state. A long boxoffice life for *The Evil Dead* is unthinkable, but it may benefit from sporadic engagements on the weekend midnight-show circuit."

But Putzer completely missed the *good stuff* about *The Evil Dead*, even dismissing the astonishing, imaginative "Shaky-cam" sequences.



Aside from Stephen King's rave in *Twilight Zone*, the most favorable -- and one of the most intelligent -- early reviews of *The Evil Dead* was that by Kevin Thomas, in the May 26, 1983 issue of *The Los Angeles Times*. Thomas has seen just about everything; he's hung on at the newspaper for almost thirty years, while reviewers above and below him came and gone, always giving honest insights on all the films he's assigned. And he's been assigned a lot of horror movies.

He began his review: "*The Evil Dead* arrives on its way to becoming a cult film, having opened last month in New York amidst furor and long lines. Unquestionably it's an instant classic, probably the grisliest well-made movie ever. It's the work of Sam Raimi, a Michigan State University *Wunderkind* (and comic book collector). . . Raimi is one of those film creatures who unerringly knows where to put the camera and at what angle and how to assemble images for absolute maximum effect.

"He gets away with more gore than anybody else because of two crucial reasons: He has a hilarious sense of humor and he knows when to cut away." Thomas, bless his heart, thought that Raimi was aiming for laughs when he was actually being very earnest, but hey, if that's what leads to his declaring the movie a classic, I'm not going to argue with him. He concludes, *The Evil Dead* is wholly a product of the vivid imagination of Samuel M. Raimi, for whom this film is clearly just the beginning."

New Line's decision to release the film unrated created a real notoriety for the modest (but in your face) movie, and it got more notice than it probably would have if it had been released rated R. After the New York engagements, in fact, it was planned to cut the movie enough to get the R, but as Kevin Thomas pointed out, the brassy assurance of this movie made by unknowns had stirred up the jaded New York movie audience, so New Line bit the bullet and went for an unrated release.

This caused problems; some newspapers and TV and radio stations won't advertise unrated films -- but the audience for *The Evil Dead* found it anyway. It was by no means a hit, but it did reasonably well; it opened in New York in 72 theaters and pulled in \$685,000 at the boxoffice, making it the third best-grossing film for the week in the city, but the Los Angeles release -- 15 theaters, \$108,000 -- was disappointing. (It has consistently done well on video the world over, however.) Nonetheless, it established Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert as players in the Hollywood game.

Seeing *The Evil Dead* for the first time today simply cannot have the impact that it did back in 1983. There have been too many rivers of gore to cross, too many mountains of entrails, too many gouged eyes, lopped-off heads, hands and legs for it to bug eyes and gag throats the way it did back then. Yet there's no doubt that the intensity of its violence is what gave the film its initial reputation. It was one of the great dare movies: did you have the nerve to sit through it without squirming? It was a funhouse ride, a

spook tunnel, all the Halloweens of all time wrapped up into one movie. The carefully-calculated shocks worked like the audiences were wired directly into the film: gasps and shrieks erupted on cue in theater after theater.

Seen today, as violent as it is, the movie seems relatively tame in terms of sheer volume of gore, although the Sullivan-and-Pierce meltdown sequence is still impressively revolting, and the sheer persistence of the demons, and their cackling, gloating personalities are still fresh and surprising. You'll notice the uneven acting and the story holes, the biggest of which is this: if it takes a reading from the Book of the Dead to rouse the demons of the forest, what's that unseen force watching the car at the beginning of the film? The characters are not well drawn; Linda and Shelly are interchangeable, attractive female victims; Cheryl's a little spunkier, but we don't even know that she's Ash's sister unless we listen closely. Ash has little personality beyond Bruce Campbell's own; he's a quiet survivor. The characters are clearly there just to be killed off, and we spend very little time getting to know them; the scene with Ash, Linda and the necklace stands out if for no other reason that there's nothing else in any of the three films like that.

The script is simply an efficient way of getting people isolated so that horrible things can happen to them. Raimi does try to extend it a little beyond that, but his intention was to make the movie the ultimate experience in grueling terror. And at that, he very nearly succeeds -- perhaps because horror movies scare *him*. There is, however, more to that; *The Evil Dead* is greater than the sum of its parts.

What will pop your eyes and spin your wheels is the exuberance of Sam Raimi's direction. Kevin Thomas nailed it: Sam is a born director. Despite occasional impressive moments in his Super-8 movies, they're essentially amateurish and unformed. *Clockwork* and *Within the Woods* unexpectedly revealed a new Sam, however, which might have surprised even him. They show a kind of cold-blooded ferocity that certainly has nothing to do with the Sam you'd get if you met him in person. He's a joker, true, but he's unfailingly polite, warm and open, friendly to a fault, honest and good-hearted, an All-American Boy if there ever was one. He's even, god help him, cute.

But like those other All-American Boys Robert Bloch and David Lynch, when he's actually creating his art, Raimi reaches somewhere inside him to pull out, snarling and clawing, a dark and demonic force. And one infused with tremendous energy. It's one that, so far, he seems somewhat uncomfortable with; after all, his only full-fledged, all-out horror movie remains *The Evil Dead*. *Evil Dead* shades toward comedy, though it still has moments of horror; *Army of Darkness* is an adventure comedy with some horror elements. *Darkman* is also more of an adventure than anything else.

Raimi wants to do comedy; it's what he likes best, what he feels most comfortable with -- but his one full-fledged comedy, *Crimewave*, doesn't work. However, like all of his movies, it has an astonishing,

all-stops-out dynamism that's unlike any other director working in America today. People have tried to imitate the content of *The Evil Dead* trilogy, but what they copy are the gore and some of the story elements. And those are, when you get right down to it, not really all that important to *why* these movies work. Only Tsui Hark, in his wonderful *A Chinese Ghost Story*, has successfully copied some stylistic elements of Raimi's approach (though his film is quite different overall). Like Raimi, Tsui goes all out when he sees fit; he has a ghost with a enormous tongue, for example, just as, at one point, *Evil Dead II* was to have featured Ash's hand in giant size, knocking at the door. (Tsui Hark couldn't have heard of that; he just thought along similar lines.)

Raimi's style is bravura, relentless, and yet good-humored; he wants you to have *fun* while he's dragging you pell-mell through the story. His style is aggressive and in your face, but it's not irritating, it's not hostile. He loves movies deeply, and that love goes back to those Super-8 movies, and those summer weekends with Bruce Campbell, Scott Spiegel and the others, flinging pies, tumbling over boxes, and running down alleys in Ferndale, Michigan.

Like all horror classics, *The Evil Dead* succeeds not because of its excesses, not because of its content, but because of the mind of the person behind it. *Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man*, *The Old Dark House* and *Bride of Frankenstein* are the work of James Whale; in the 40s, it was the guiding hand of a producer, rather than a director, that made Val Lewton's series of RKO films classics; it's John Landis' playful, gleeful personality that turned *An American Werewolf in London* into something special; Joe Dante's love of old movies and shrewd knowledge about what makes things scary turned *Gremlins* into an unexpected hit. And it is Sam Raimi, his energy, imagination and sense of humor, that made *The Evil Dead* into something far more than anyone would have expected from a bunch of college students struggling to make a movie in the wintry hills of Tennessee.

PART 5

STRANGE BLOOD

Sam Raimi had become close friends with Joel and Ethan Coen while *The Evil Dead* was playing off, and with them, he wrote the script for a movie first called "Relentless," then "The XYZ Murders," and finally *Crimewave*. Rob Tapert says that Sam "wanted to go for more entertainment for everyone, with action and suspense and this and that, and it had moments of brilliance, though it's not a good movie overall."

When they took *The Evil Dead* to the Sitges (Spain) horror & science fiction film festival, they met director Harvey Cokliss, through whom they met Edward Pressman, a very active producer of medium-budget movies, with occasionally expensive ones thrown in (*Conan the Barbarian*, for example), with a predilection for oddball projects (*Phantom of the Paradise* is one of his). He was impressed by Raimi and Tapert, and so he and Irvin Shapiro began pressing for the production of *Crimewave* in early 1983.

Pressman arranged for financing through Avco-Embassy, and became so involved in *Crimewave* that he actually played a supporting role in the film. One other interesting aspect of the film is that even though Irvin Shapiro was active in the distribution of movies since the early 1930s, *Crimewave* seems to be the first film on which he had an on-screen credit.

There were production problems, though. First, Embassy and Pressman didn't like the idea of Bruce Campbell playing two roles in the film, and insisted on the casting of Reed Birney in the lead, with Campbell relegated to a lesser (and unexplained) role. Rob Tapert considers the recasting of the lead the biggest problem with the film. "The guy who was cast couldn't do comedy, really, and Bruce can do comedy; it was written, in fact, for Bruce's style of comedy. He's handsome and charming at the same time that he's kind of goofy."

There were also difficulties with the actors playing the murderous exterminators; as Tapert says, "Brion James at that time was a pain in the ass to deal with; so was Paul Smith." On the other hand, Scott Spiegel, playing several small roles, found the movie "a lot of fun, but it was a real nightmare shooting in that cold weather in Detroit. I met a real nice girl on the show, and Rob and Sam were very kind to me. I have to thank Bruce for all of that, because Bruce said, 'Look, you want a job, you got a job. You're going to be extras casting, and you get to be in any other part you want to cast.' Sam took advantage of that. 'Scott, you're going to play this role and this role and this role' until finally Embassy Pictures asks, 'Who's this Siegel kid?' To this day, that's a joke with Sam: 'Who's this Siegel kid?' I got to do kind of a Lon Chaney thing, with a beard; I had the makeup guy make me look like Trotsky, with a beard, and I got

feature closeups."

When the Renaissance team turned in their version, Avco-Embassy wasn't happy. As Raimi explains, "Embassy Pictures pulled me aside when they saw the rough cut, and said, 'Sam Raimi, what you've given us is another *Evil Dead* movie, and we don't want that. What we want is a movie that will appeal to the mass audiences of America. So what we're gonna do is cut out everything that is wild and over the top, that general audiences won't want to see. And then we're going to release it as *Crimewave*.' I said, 'But that's what it is, it's a movie about being over the top, and if you cut that out, you'll end up with nothing, a hulk, a shell, neither fish nor fowl.' Nevertheless they butchered it, and what's left is that movie called *Crimewave*, like a bastardized version of what I really wanted to do. It ate four years of my life, and I'm only 30 now. It was really a traumatic, turbulent experience, that I never want to go through again."

Scott Spiegel didn't care for the few days he was involved with *Crimewave*, either.

The film was shot on location in Detroit, with compromises being made all through production, and afterward, too; Pressman and Embassy insisted on a more comic score being used in some sequences, which ended up being written by Arlen Ober, Embassy's choice, rather than Joe LoDuca, whom Renaissance wanted. When the film was completed -- to no one's satisfaction -- Avco-Embassy went out of business, and *Crimewave* was barely distributed. It's even very hard to find on videotape.

Probably the most significant aspect of the movie was the teaming of Raimi with the Coens, inasmuch as they also wrote *The Hudsucker Proxy*; the name "Hudsucker" first turns up in *Crimewave*, and *Proxy* was written during the making of *Crimewave*. In fact, after the film was ordered to be cut, the scenes at the prison, and with the nuns careering across town, were shot, long after the rest of principal photography. When those scenes were written, Sam and the Coens were already writing *The Hudsucker Proxy*. ("Hudsucker" as a name also turns up in the Coens' weird and wonderful *Raising Arizona*.) Additionally, Frances McDormand, who later starred in Raimi's *Darkman*, has a small role here as a nun.

During the production of *Crimewave*, Shapiro began suggesting a sequel to *The Evil Dead*, since the original was doing great business overseas. Hah, said Rob and Sam. "We're never going to do a sequel. We're doing *Crimewave*. It's going to be a huge hit." But Shapiro took out some ads announcing *Evil Dead II: Army of Darkness*.

At the time, Tapert dismissed the idea, but now he realizes how shrewd Irvin Shapiro really was. "We were off doing something -- who knows how that's going to turn out? -- while he was setting up our next deal. So when it became clear that *Crimewave* was never going to come out, and Hollywood was never going to come beating at our door handing us all these projects, there was that ship to jump to. And having had Bruce tossed out of the movie, we wanted to go back and do a movie together. And we decided that while *Evil Dead* was a physically incredibly ridiculous and hard experience, at least we were all kind of having fun doing it."

Evil Dead book/Rough Draft/Part 5/89

*Crimewave* was released only regionally in the United States, and not all that much overseas, either. The work had been hard, and now there were no rewards. And there were other problems, too.

The movie really doesn't work, as Rob Tapert says, partly because it's simply misjudged in so many areas. Gags that probably convulsed the Coen brothers and Sam while writing the script just don't have the right impact on screen. For example, at one point, the hero, Vic, says, "I used to think that the key to happiness was the installation and repair of small electrical appliances." That's typical of the film: it's clever, but it doesn't connect to anything, and is more odd than funny.

At another point, there's a long closeup of Brion James as he waits for an elevator; we're aware that he might be caught by the cops at any moment. But this isn't comic tension, as it was intended to be, because we *want* to see him caught, since he's not remotely sympathetic. And yet again and again throughout *Crimewave*, similar scenes occur: the exterminators are often on the verge of being found out. But every time, we *want* them to be found out; they're not lovable rogues, they're not the Two Stooges -- they're repellent villains whose comeuppances we're longing for from word one. The idea can work in stories such as *Psycho* where we have some sympathy for or identification with the killers, but we definitely *don't* here. They're just stupid, goony, obnoxious twits. And murderers.

Some of the actors, like Reed Birney, are way over the top, but aren't intrinsically likable. There's a lot of Three Stooges-like gags, but they center on the murderous exterminators -- the *villains*. We don't care if they get slammed over the head or poked in the eye: we *want* to see them lose. But at the same time, we don't much care if Vic (Birney) wins, since he's such a shlump that we cannot identify with him. A lot of time is spent on Louise Lasser, then a relatively prominent actress, but this leads nowhere, and she doesn't connect to the rest of the story, and her character doesn't have enough dimension to make her likable. Bruce Campbell's mannered slickster doesn't seem to connect, either; he comes in, woos the heroine, is seen once talking with the men later murdered, then just vanishes from the movie altogether.

People keep being killed we *really* don't want to see killed. A guy falls from window, but somehow survives -- then is killed by Arthur in the exterminator truck. It's not black comedy, because black comedy has a moral dimension on some level, as in *Dr. Strangelove*, *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, even *How to Murder a Rich Uncle*. *Crimewave* has no moral dimension; the killers are evil, not driven by vengeance or patriotism any other justifiable motive, and the hero is a hero because he's a hero. Furthermore, it's not a parody of anything, really; the kind of comedy in the film works only when there's a clear, parodistic goal. And there isn't here. It tries to exist in its own weird world, but though this comes closest to succeeding, the other stuff keeps getting in the way.

It has some bravura sequences (though Sam's camera is less mobile here than usual), with some spectacular stunts and imaginative scenes, particularly the one in which Paul Smith chases Louise Lasser through an infinity of pastel doorways, but basically it's a mistake.

Evil Dead book/Rough Draft/Part 5/90

And this Sam Raimi acknowledges, too. "Sure, I blame myself. To oversimplify, I give it a D overall. I don't give it an F, because it has some moments in it. The picture I delivered was a C. That's the best way I can put it. I had a picture that was a whole letter-grade better. I'm not even saying the picture I gave them was good, but it had four times as many great moments. Now there's maybe one great moment and two good moments, but I had five great moments. The movie was never really good, but it would have been a hell of a lot better if Embassy had left it alone."

Rob Tapert feels it suffers from the same problem as *Last Action Hero*: "it doesn't exactly know what it wants to be. It wants to be entertainment, but is it an action movie? Is it a romantic comedy? It doesn't really fit into any genre, so you don't know how to respond. We always said we were going to make great entertainment, dancing and comedy and scares -- but it fell between all those stools."

However, because the film is the second made by the Renaissance team, here it is, a full synopsis of a movie you might never see.

#### CRIMEWAVE

A car full of nuns careens through darkened city streets as a radio announcer relates the case of Vic Ajax (Reed Birney), who's condemned to die that night in Hudsucker State Prison. In the prison, the nerdy hero is removed from his cell and taken toward the execution chamber; he tries to tell his guards that he's really innocent.

In a flashback, we Donald Odegard (Hamid Dana) and Ernest Trend (Edward R. Pressman), the owners of the security company Vic worked for, who are at odds; Odegard is secretly linked up with Renaldo (Bruce Campbell), a slick customer who blows out a cloud of cigarette smoke that takes on the form of a shapely girl, dancing momentarily.

Trend phones a pair of exterminators -- we don't see them at this point -- and tells them to take care of Odegard. Later, Trend encounters Vic in the hallway outside Trend's apartment, encouraging the younger man to settle down and get married.

Outside the apartment building, Vic Our hero sees a girl (Sheree J. Wilson) knocked down by a van; the ends of his tie fly up. (It was the exterminators who knocked her down. They have a big rat on top of the van.) Crush (Paul Smith), one of the exterminators, threatens him. The other exterminator is Arthur Cofish (Brion James), who talks in a high-pitched, nasal voice.

Vic gets his foot stuck in a bucket, clomps up the building stairs, then tries to saunter over to Nancy, the girl knocked down by the van, with the bucket still on his foot. Her boyfriend is Renaldo, who treats her like dirt. Vic consults a book, *How to Pick Up Girls*,,

Evil Dead book/Rough Draft/Part 5/91

then tries to emulate Renaldo, but fails. (Originally, Bruce Campbell was to have played both Vic and Renaldo).

Over a view of the city streets, a newspaper flies up and sticks to the lens: Storm: City in chaos. (The city is Detroit.) There are some odd scenes of Detroiters reacting to the storm (the budget limited it pretty much to just rain.) Lightning strikes a fireplug, and knocks over a power pole onto a car.

We zoom down an alley to jaunty music on the soundtrack. It's the exterminators. "We Kill All Sizes" says the sign on their van. Crush slams the glove compartment door shut on Arthur's hand in a Stooges-like slapstick injury.

Trend's wife Helene (Louise Lasser) is worried about Odegard, who's working late, and looks out her window at the shop below. "Get away from that window!" Trend screams, knowing what's going on down there.

In the shop, the exterminators set their electrical extermination machine to "Megahurts," and turn the dial from "Rats" to "Men," then advance on screaming Odegard. Arthur snickers.

Renaldo and the girl are in a night club, carrying on. She's insulted and throws a drink in his face, but it hits Vic. "Maybe I'm a guy who hates heels," Vic says. Renaldo responds, "Maybe I'm a guy who hates guys who hates heels." A waiter (Ted Raimi) laughs at this.

Helene is still watching the office from her window with binoculars; she follows her husband over to the security company office. He finds his partner's glasses smoldering. For reasons unexplained, Arthur pops up and kills Trend, too. An odd shot here: the camera moves in on the discarded binoculars, and we see Trend through one lens.

Crush scolds Arthur for killing Trend. "For all we know, this is the guy who hired us." Both laugh a lot.

Back at the nightclub, Nancy is still stuck on Renaldo, who's leaving with a gorgeous blonde. Nancy kisses Vic to arouse Renaldo's jealousy, which doesn't work at all, of course.

Renaldo and the blonde pass by the security office. Crush takes Odegard's body out to the car. He puts the body in another car, apparently viewing this as some kind of funny joke. Helene, out wandering around, sees this; she drops the binoculars. Crush says, "Lady, you ain't seen nothin' -- yet!" Helen flips him the bird, runs across street toward her apartment.

She screams when Crush smashes the security video camera. The movie camera comes in on her screaming mouth, then cuts to the bell of a horn blaring at the night club. Nancy is stuck at the club since she doesn't have the \$36 Renaldo stiffed her for, and Vic doesn't carry that much. But there's a dance contest, for which the prize is just that amount. They don't win, and end up in the kitchen.



Meanwhile, Helene manages to stab Crush in the nose under her apartment door with a fork. He pulls the fork out and it sticks in wall. Why she hasn't called anyone until now is a total mystery, but now she calls the police and tries to explain everything, but Crush bursts in. She throws dishes at him; lots of Three Stooges-like violence humor here, including three bowling balls falling off a tilting shelf onto Crush's head. In a big on-set effects stunt, he thrusts sausage-like fingers into her rug and pulls everything in the apartment toward him. He catches her and strangles her to death -- or so we think now. A guy who tries to help Helene falls from a window, but somehow survives -- then is killed by Arthur in the exterminator truck. Helene, however, is not dead.

Vic takes Nancy home; she lives in the same apartment building as everyone else in the movie except Renaldo and the Exterminators. Arthur, hiding from some cops, comes into her apartment, where she has a poster of Humphrey Bogart. Vic is keeping his eyes closed, presumably to preserve Nancy's modesty. There's a brief bit of Vic, with his eyes closed, mistaking Arthur for Nancy.

The two cops go to Helene's apartment. A kid drags the dead guy who fell from the window out of the elevator. A cop indignantly exclaims, "What kind of paranoid schizo could kill a guy and then jelly up his face with shaving cream?" (The guy who fell out the window was in the process of shaving.) "My dad!" boasts little kid, so they arrest his father.

Nancy talks to Arthur, thinking she's talking to Vic, saying flattering things. He steps out, she sees it's not Vic, and she screams. Elsewhere, Vic tells Helene that a couple of maniacs are loose in the building. (How did he know this?)

"Come on over to my pad," says Renaldo, passing by. "We'll have a scotch and sofa." Helene slaps him, calls him a heel, and storms off. The fire escape stairs whack Renaldo in head as Crush descends, chasing Helene into the security company offices.

This leads to a very strange scene, but probably the best in the film: she pirouettes through a series of demonstration doorways, each painted a different pastel shade, closing them behind her; Crush, in pursuit, smashes through each one. We see this from several picturesque angles. Then she pushes them down like dominoes. He doesn't notice Helene fall into a box bound for Uruguay.

Back in the apartment building, Arthur snickers at a woman trying to protect Nancy. "Who's going to stop me, you old bat? You and those fag dogs?" (He's referring to her pair of miniature schnauzers.) "That's right," she says, and two Dobermans launch themselves from her office and attack him.

Nancy runs screaming into the deserted streets, encounters Crush. She's now being chased by both of the bad guys. She leaps into a car but it's the one with the dead Odegard. Gamely, she tries to get the

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car started, but Crush smashes in window with head of a dummy he's carrying for some reason.

But she drives away anyway; Crush was holding onto the car, but he falls off; Arthur catches up with him in exterminator truck. Vic rushes out, stops a driver, saying "Some maniacs have taken my girl!"

Unexpectedly, the driver asks, "Do you love her, son?" Vic looks upward; camera pans slowly up to sky where a meteor whizzes by. "Yes I do," he says. To tooging-for-bullfight music, Vic announces his resolve.

For a while, we follow Crush and Arthur in their van, with Funny Music. They slam the van against Nancy's car. The corpse falls against her. Arthur, now wearing coveralls, climbs on top of van, sits on the big rat, then leaps onto the top of her car. He smashes through windshield and grabs her face. Crush causes a horrendous car wreck among passers-by, and laughs about it.

Vic roars along to heroic music. He catches up with the van and Nancy, and steers his car between hers and the exterminators'. Vic whacks Arthur, on the hood of Nancy's car, with a baseball bat. Vic ends up on top of Nancy's car; his borrowed station wagon is wrecked. He fights with Arthur on top of Nancy's car and the van.

Arthur uses his electrical zapper (which he calls his shocker), changing the setting from Men to Heroes. Nancy throws Vic the baseball bat. He whacks the electrical zapper. He whacks Arthur for this and that, and for all folks everywhere. Arthur assures Vic he'll be good, so Vic eases up, but Arthur turns on him, and is about to hit him with that big rat when the car goes under a low overpass and he and the big rat are swept off. The van is overturned in a big wreck. Nancy's car is left hanging on the edge of a bridge, teetering. The exterminator van blows up. Vic, flung free, staggers to his feet.

There's more cliffhanging stuff with Nancy teetering, Crush picking up Vic and flinging him, etc. Vic and Crush battle it out with big chunks of metal, with Crush finally falling off the bridge while Vic clings to it by his fingertips. Finally, Nancy's car (apparently with her in it) falls off the bridge and onto Crush, who's in the river below. But Nancy is hanging from Vic's legs, and he is hanging onto the bridge. Lots of screams and shrieks and Hold On Nancys. Oooh aggh, etc. More Stooze stuff. But at last, he falls off the bridge.

We return to the execution chamber, with Vic in the electric chair. (There had been occasional, infrequent cutaways to this throughout the movie, usually accompanied by the car full of hurtling nuns.) He makes one last plea for his life: "If it hadn't been for me, there's no telling how many people those maniacs would have killed."

Outside, the nuns are still heading for Hudsucker State prison; now we recognize Nancy at the wheel. Everything becomes drawn out,

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but Nancy arrives at the literal last second.

There's a moment more of suspense, but finally everything turns out all right. And we still never know why Vic was arrested.

Director: Sam Raimi  
Producer: Rob Tapert;  
Co-producer: Bruce Campbell  
Executive Producers: Edward R. Pressman & Irvin Shapiro  
Screenplay: Ethan Coen, Joel Coen, Sam Raimi;  
Cinematography: Robert \*\*\*\*NAME  
Supervising film editor: Michael Kelly  
Music: Arlon Ober

CAST

Helene Trend....LOUISE LASSER  
Crush....PAUL L. SMITH (as Crush)  
Arthur Cofish.....BRION JAMES  
Nancy.....SHEREE J. WILSON  
Ernest Aloysius Trend.....EDWARD R. PRESSMAN  
Renaldo (The Heel).....BRUCE CAMPBELL  
Vic Ajax....REED BIRNEY  
Officer Brennan.....RICHARD BRIGHT  
Blind man....ANTONIO FARGAS  
Donald Odegard.....HAMID DANA  
Mr. Yarman.....JOHN HARDY  
Colonel Rodgers.....EMIL SITKA  
Hardened convict --- JULIUS HARRIS  
Nuns: BRIDGET HOFFMAN, ANNE GILLIS, FRANCES McDORMAND  
Waiter.....TED RAIMI (also apprentice editor)

A special thanks to Lulu's Lingerie

Scene after end credits in Uruguay: Helene's box squirms, and we hear her voice saying "Hey, is anybody out there?"

PART 6  
BLOOD FLOOD

After *Crimewave*, the partners in Renaissance were looking for something else to do. Soon after the release of *The Evil Dead*, Irvin Shapiro had shrewdly taken out ads for *Evil Dead II: Army of Darkness*, even though at that point no one really had a clear idea of what the story was going to be, or even if there was going to be a new *Evil Dead* movie. But *Crimewave* was a flop, and they had to do something, anything.

Dino De Laurentiis had already approached Sam Raimi to direct a movie version of *Thinner*, the last of the novels Stephen King wrote under his "Richard Bachman" pseudonym. By that time, though, they had pretty much decided to do *Evil Dead II* on a big scale, so Sam turned De Laurentiis down. "We were dealing with Avco Home Entertainment, Andre Blaine and some other guys, trying to get *Evil Dead II* going, but they stalled us for something like four months." Eventually, De Laurentiis phoned again, but by this time, a year had been wasted in trying to get *Evil Dead II* off the ground.

They were interviewing various potential crew members at this time, and one of them went down to North Carolina to do some additional work on Stephen King's *Maximum Overdrive*. "For whatever reason," Bruce Campbell explains, "she ends up having dinner with King, who asks her what she's been up to. She says she had been meeting with Sam Raimi up in Michigan, who is having a hard time getting *Evil Dead II* financed." King had a deal for several films with De Laurentiis, and phone Dino to tell him that he should make *Evil Dead II*.

De Laurentiis was skeptical about a sequel to *The Evil Dead*, but agreed to talk about it. "We were smart," Tapert claims. "We got all the Italian grosses for *Evil Dead*, because I knew it had been a huge hit in Italy, and we took them in with us when we saw Dino." In December, 1985, Sam, Rob and Bruce met with Dino De Laurentiis as he was setting up DEG (De Laurentiis Entertainment Group), his distribution company. Tapert outlines the climax of their meeting: "Dino said, 'You go down to North Carolina, look at my studio' -- he clapped his hands twice -- 'We do it.' Just like that. We wanted four million dollars, but they reduced it to \$3.6 million, and we said Okay."

They'd scaled the sequel way back; it wasn't going to have the medieval setting initially intended for the sequel, because that was simply too expensive; it was going to be set in the cabin again. But one thing was definitely different from *The Evil Dead*: the sequel was going to be largely a comedy. Although Rob Tapert (and Scott Spiegel) are fond of horror movies, Bruce Campbell has never really been a fan, and Sam Raimi is actively scared of them, by his own admission. The Super-8 movies had virtually all been comedies, and Sam and Bruce wanted to head in that direction, if for no other reason than to make a movie that was different from the first one. Also, several reviews

of *The Evil Dead* had noticed a tongue-in-cheek approach (even if it wasn't there), so why not?

Therefore, the unusual, half-comic, half-serious approach was built in from the earliest conceptions. It is not a spoof, though some have regarded it as one; it's not making fun of any conventions of the horror genre. Instead, it treats straight elements for laughs, which is something else, something more novel. It's this comic aspect of the movie that makes it unique.

As for the story, it's so much an extension of the first film that some have described it (not entirely unfairly) as a more elaborate *remake* of *The Evil Dead*. One of the oddest things about all three films is that their stories don't quite match: in *Evil Dead II*, only Ash and Linda come to the cabin; the other characters are ignored. (This was partly because the De Laurentiis company couldn't get rights to use footage from the first movie.) At the end of *Evil Dead II*, Ash, trapped in the 13th century, blows away a winged Deadite and is cheered as a hero by men in armor. At the beginning of *Army of Darkness*, even though this time footage from the previous film is used, there are some differences: it's not the same actress as Linda, and when Ash ends up in the past, there's no winged Deadite, and he's treated as a prisoner rather than hailed as a hero. This blurring of the idea of a sequel is more impish than anything else, and somehow manages to match the style of the movies in a way that a faithful, letter-perfect sequel wouldn't have.

Sam turned to his old friend Scott Spiegel to collaborate on the script of *Evil Dead II*. "Sam was concocting a story which was essentially *Army of Darkness*," Spiegel says, "The Deadites, the castle and the time travel idea, but the problem with it is that it was a high-budget sequel to a low-budget, somewhat successful movie, which did just well enough to warrant a sequel." So about the time that he decided to return to the cabin with Ash, he invited Spiegel along as a collaborator.

Aside from anything else, Scott's sense of humor meshed with Sam's. "He wanted to make it wackier, weirder, because while Rob and Bruce were saying it's got to take place at the cabin, keep them trapped there, that's all we ask, Sam wanted at the same time to take it in a different direction." Spiegel himself wanted to have more sequences set outside, which the Renaissance partners first balked at, but finally saw the wisdom of, as long as there were enough scenes inside the house. ##

At first they began writing it in the house overlooking Silver Lake where Sam lived with Joel and Ethan Coen, Frances McDormand and Holly Hunter (who *almost* got the part of Bobby Joe in *II*), but there were too many distractions, so they finished writing it elsewhere. Wherever they wrote it, Sam "wanted to be the guy at the typewriter," says Spiegel, "which is fine with me; he wanted to write in 'low angle' and to suggest lenses, which is the way he writes scripts -- which was okay since he was going to be directing it. This freed me up to be the pacer and throw tons of ideas at him. He obviously would

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come up with a ton of ideas, too, but he was also trying to formulate it into something."

The script took quite a while to write, because Scott was involved in a film he'd helped produce, *Thou Shalt Not Kill, Except...*, and Sam was still involved with *Crimewave*. But they kept on. One thing Spiegel wanted to bring to it was logic; he felt that it was notably lacking in some parts of *The Evil Dead*. In that movie, he grouses, "somebody can be under a trap door for 40 minutes, and then arbitrarily decide, 'Oh, I can break out of here.' Why didn't you do that 40 minutes ago?"

He also wanted to establish some kind of rules and regulations (a la those for vampires and werewolves) for the possession by the evil forces, one reason that early in the film, Ash becomes temporarily possessed. He's cured by "the cleansing rays of the sun," as Spiegel puts it, but when the sun goes down, he's subject to possession again, if he lowers his guard.

Raimi and Spiegel had a few ideas they ultimately discarded; for example, they gave some thought to having the other people (in addition to Ash and Knowby's daughter) be a bunch of escaped convicts. "In a pre-credit sequence, or something like that," says Spiegel, "we would have seen the convicts escape and bury their loot right near the cabin, and then run away because the sheriff's on their tail. Then Bruce would arrive with his girlfriend and that whole thing happens, ending with him burying her. The convicts would come back, and dig up Linda's bloated, severed head instead of the loot." This didn't seem exactly funny to the collaborators, so the idea was dropped.

Spiegel was very fond of a spectacular sequence that was deemed too expensive. In person, though, he describes it so colorfully, with sound effects and gestures, that there's no way the sequence could have been half as exciting if it had been in the film after all. "Sam really thought it was cool, too," says the enthusiastic Spiegel. The first part of the story, he says, had to be an exact recap of the original film, including the scene where the wheel drops through a hole in the bridge. And the beginning of the scene as Scott wanted it is in *Evil Dead II*, "with Bruce realize, Oh my God, I've been hit by the force, the sun's going down, I've got to get out of here. He starts driving across the bridge, which would be kind of a cheat, because in the first one the bridge was destroyed. He's going across the bridge cautiously. The sun's setting. It's getting dark. Then from the other side of the ravine comes the evil Force, NRRRRRRRRHHHH!, knocking down things. All of a sudden it's heading for the other end of the bridge, and Bruce sees these trees being ripped by this invisible force.

"Then it hits the bridge! The wooden slats of the bridge rip up! PTPPTPTPTTPT!" He makes tight little waves with both hands, showing how the boards are torn up. "Bruce puts the car in reverse, but he gets stuck in the exact same hole we saw earlier. In the meantime the force is barreling down on him, and the bridge is going NEEEEEE!, and the boards are going GHGHGHGHGHH! It's right on top of the car! He

pulls the car out at the last moment and gets to the other side as the whole bridge collapses with the evil force on it. I thought that would have been epic," he says, sinking back in his chair, "but I guess the budget wouldn't allow for that."

Spiegel was also interested in including a quick shot during the Evil Ed sequence where Ash would be raised off the floor by a hand at his throat. You think it's Ed's hand until the camera pulls back to reveal it's Ash's own severed hand, up to more tricks. This one almost made it in, but it slowed down the action at that point, and couldn't be worked in.

Also jettisoned was Spiegel's tentative suggestion that the movie be narrated by Ash. "'I tried with each passing moment to keep my sanity while this unstoppable evil...', you know," Spiegel describes, "but that would have been corny, too. By not doing the voice-over it's probably less annoying, and you have more of a suspicion that Ash might not survive the night." The lack of a narration, of course, does require Bruce Campbell to mutter and yelp to himself a lot, but that's part of Ash's charm.

Before it was decided that Knowby's daughter would have a boyfriend, she was going to head for the cabin by herself, on the train. The spirit of her father, who does turn up in the finished film, was going to manifest itself here, but when she acquired Ed, plans were changed. And Scott on his own came up with an idea for a different ending to the film, one that harkens back to the silent *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*: at the end, we would learn that Ash was really insane all along, and that all of the supernatural stuff was in his imagination.

The sequence in which the room comes to laugh and laughs at, then with, the nearly-demented Ash does indeed look like the ravings of a madman. It grew out of a silly gag Scott would play with a gooseneck lamp while he and Sam were writing the script. The lamp, which had already been in *Thou Shalt Not Kill*, wound up in the finished film. (And the clock from the original film returns, having also done a guest shot in *Thou Shalt Not Kill*.) "I learned," Scott says about the lamp, "do not joke around with Sam or it's going to end up in the movie."

Even though Scott Spiegel was playing a role in *The Dead Next Door*, he managed to visit the set of *Evil Dead II* frequently; he is one of the knights in armor at the end of the film. (So is Josh Becker.) *Evil Dead II*, he says, "was the smoothest-running shoot I think I've ever been on. And everybody was so nice. It was like this little family unit making a film, everybody was so together and so into it."

The finished film is very close to the script as originally written, although the script is much less overtly comic. Initially, an opening scene in the 13th century, with the ground breaking open much as it does in *The Evil Dead*, freeing the evil force, but that was dropped primarily for pacing. The scene of Professor Knowby and his

friends finding the Book of the Dead was placed later in the finished film than originally intended, but that's a minor matter. The opening scenes, with Ash and Linda in the cabin alone, were written by Raimi himself on location, again primarily because of time. As is normal for scripts, some scenes were written that were not filmed, or were filmed but cut from the movie before release, but these are not important: it was mostly stuff like shots of Ash boarding up the windows, or struggling longer to rid himself of the clutching hand.

At one point, Sam suggested that the hand return in giant form, knocking on the front door, but this was too wacky an idea even for the often wacky Spiegel. (Or perhaps it should be called a "whipped" idea. "Whipped" is the adjective that Sam, Bruce and Scott use as a kind of all-purpose replacement for bad, lousy, stupid, foolish, etc.) Spiegel, always fair-minded, points out that he's not complaining about the stranger ideas that Sam proposed, "because when you have ideas and you're collaborating, you can't always articulate them fully, and you hope that the other person might understand what you're saying and run with the ball. Sometimes it happens, and sometimes it doesn't, but that's the chance you take in collaboration." (Spiegel is not fond of the odd-colored blood, if that's what it is, that shoots out of the wall and from under the trap door, but, as he says, he was a co-writer, not the director.)

The bizarre idea of the living, demented hand comes directly from a comedy short Scott Spiegel made -- but it was Sam's idea to adapt it to *Evil Dead II*. In Scott's short, *The Attack of the Helping Hand*, a woman battle with a rambunctious white glove with a happy face and a big red nose, a spoof of a series of commercials (for Hamburger Helper) airing on TV when Spiegel made the short.

Spiegel is very grateful for the chance *Evil Dead II* afforded him. The movie, he says, "helped me very much. Sam was coming to prominence in Hollywood, and since I was looking for an agent, that film really helped out." He's also pleased that Sam is well aware of the influence that Spiegel had on his career, since Scott turned Raimi on to horror movies in the first place.

De Laurentiis had an office in Wilmington, North Carolina, but Sam and the others felt a bit nervous about being that close to the powerful producer, who also wanted to charge the cost of studio rental and equipment, when they knew they could get that stuff cheaper elsewhere. So they went out to Wadesboro, North Carolina, a location Bruce Campbell scouted, some three hours away, where Steven Spielberg had made *The Color Purple*. The big white farmhouse in that movie was used as the production office for *Evil Dead II*.

Harry Huntley owned this property, and he thought at first that this new movie was going to be the financial windfall Spielberg's film had been. Not exactly. Not by a long shot -- but Huntley did all right, because, as Bruce explains, "anything we needed to do from then on had to be through him." Huntley would find out what they needed, what they intended to pay, and they do it for that price, no matter what it might have cost *him*.



Rob Tapert does admit, though, that "Dino was a joy to work with in terms of getting an answer quickly. He was always a little upset that we weren't in Wilmington, though. A week or two before we were going to shoot, he calls. 'Bob, I want you to come see me.' Okay, Dino, do you want Sam? 'No, just you.' Oh. Okay. Well, I got in the car and drove to the studio. He keeps me waiting for half an hour, finally walks in and says, 'So how long does it take you to get here?' That's his first question. I said, Three hours. He says, 'I don't have three hours to come and see you.' Okay, I'm sorry Dino. 'I can't come to see you. Nobody from my company is going to be able to come to see you, too far away. Why you do this?' Well, I said, we really like this location best of all. 'Okay,' he says, and leaves. He dismisses me, and I realize that all this was about him making me know exactly how long it took to get to Wilmington, and that he was never going to make that drive.

"Dino has very bad taste most of the time," Tapert says, "but he's a mogul, and he's got such a passion for the industry, for the business. Really, his passion is for making money, but he's able to disguise it, that pure passion for money, behind everything else. Because with Dino, that's the only thing it's about: money.

"But Dino was great. I think in Sam's and my mind, a little less in Bruce's, since I don't think he has the same perspective, we feel very fortunate to have been able to deal with Irvin Shapiro, and for better or worse, with Dino De Laurentiis. They're great film characters from eras that are gone forever. Both, in their own ways, had very innovative and interesting approaches and ideas about film and film financing and all that. Both those guys taught us a lot of lessons."

Horror and science fiction movie fans tend to regard Dino De Laurentiis as something of a spoiler, a crude ignoramus who destroyed what might have been great movies in the big-budget version of *Flash Gordon* and the remake of *King Kong*. What would the latter have been like, they wonder, if stop-motion animation had been used rather than Rick Baker in an elaborate monkey suit? What if the money had been spent on improving known effects techniques rather than building the colossal Kong robot that was used in only two or three shots? These are legitimate questions -- but they don't have much to do with De Laurentiis' value as a producer.

Sam Raimi certainly agrees. "Dino produced one of my favorite films of all time, *La Strada* by Federico Fellini. I just love that movie, and when I work with De Laurentiis, I get an incredible sense of history from him. I'm honored to work with this guy. I never saw *King Kong Lives*, but I really liked his *King Kong*. I know a lot of purists were upset by it. I love the original *King Kong*, but I really liked the remake, too.

"The positive point about Dino is that he's in control of his own destiny, unlike most people in Hollywood. If he says 'Yes' it means 'yes' -- you can skip the whole corporate substructure, you can skip

all the people in marketing who don't want your picture to be made vs. the people in distribution who do vs. the people in the creative affairs department who think maybe. Dino says 'Yes,' your picture's going; if he says 'no,' it's not going. It saves the filmmaker a lot of headaches. If he says no to a project -- and he says no to a lot of my projects -- I suffer for a night, and I wake up the next morning, thinking 'Okay, what else can I do?'

"But with the studios, sometimes, and I don't mean to pick on any studio as a culprit, but by their very nature, them being a collective group who make decisions, you are caught in the middle many times, and you don't have a definitive decision for months. So as a filmmaker, I really appreciate Dino's decisiveness, and that he's put himself in a position where he has the power to make decisions and carry them through, or not, instantaneously. And I really respect him for his ability to be so concise, and not to have to rely on a body of people to make decisions for him because he's afraid. He's very clear on what he wants to do, and he's been very successful; clearly, he's had a lot of pictures that aren't successful, but only because he's trusted in the filmmakers. For all the right reasons, he's been unsuccessful. He's trusted the filmmaker's vision, and sometimes the filmmaker's vision is flawed, and the filmmaker has let Dino down. But for the most part, Dino is a man who believes in vision, and does everything he can to carry that decision out."

De Laurentiis was born in 1918, and educated at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome. His first significant credit was as the producer of *L'Amore Canta* in 1941. During his years in Italy, he was producer or co-producer (often with Carlo Ponti) of many international successes, from *Bitter Rice* in 1949, on through *The Gold of Naples*, two with Fellini, *La Strada* and *Nights of Cabiria* in the mid-1950s. But De Laurentiis had visions of being a producer not just of prestige films, but colossal, multi-national productions, like De Mille before him and Samuel Bronston in the 1960s. However, most of his huge productions, like *War and Peace* in 1956 and *Barabbas* a few years later didn't achieve the reputation of smaller films, such as Godard's *Pierro le Fou*, and audience-pleasing entertainments like *Danger Diabolik* and *Barbarella*.

He started a huge studio in Rome, modestly called Dinocitta (to rival Cinecitta), but it collapsed under the weight of financial failures like *Monte Carlo or Bust* and *Waterloo*. De Laurentiis relocated to the United States, where he's continued to be very active. For ten years, he produced or executive-produced films of varying quality in the U.S. (while also producing some in Italy); they ranged from *Serpico* (1973), *Three Days of the Condor* (1975), *The Shootist* (1976) and *Ragtime* (1981), to *Drum and Lipstick* (both 1976), *The White Buffalo* and others.

But again he began drifting toward gigantism. *Hurricane* (1980) and *Flash Gordon* were flops, but it didn't stop De Laurentiis from beginning DEG in 1984, intended as a rival to the biggest studios in Hollywood. He built sound stages and an entire production facility in Wilmington, North Carolina, and elaborate offices in Beverly Hills.

But though DEG had some successes, most of its films didn't do well, and DEG folded in 1988. De Laurentiis, however, continues to be an active producer; he's even started a dynasty of sorts, as his daughter Raffaella De Laurentiis is also a producer.

Making *Evil Dead II* wasn't anywhere near the bizarre marathon of madness that making the first film had been; by now, they had two movies under their belts, and they knew how such things were done. "We just went and huddled in Wadesboro," Rob explains, "took a little school [the J.R. Faison Junior High School] and turned it into a studio. It's a very small movie, really; it's all in a cabin." Rental on the school was only \$500 a month.

Of course, there were certain costs in getting a price that low. Bruce met with the school board, and by a miracle of coincidence, it turned out that most of the members of the school board ran companies that were just perfect for doing some contracting for the *Evil Dead II* production team. There were some benefits to being in touch with the local power structure, too. The production company couldn't afford to put up the cast and crew at hotels and motels, so a woman rented them bank-foreclosed homes for the duration of the shoot.

The production went smoothly, without any major catastrophes, no drunken locals demanding roles, no stolen power tools, no whorehouses moving into the cast and crew quarters, no cast and crew defections. Like *Army of Darkness* after it, *Evil Dead II* was, in terms of how it was made, basically Just Another Movie. And one of the ways it was, well, ordinary in this sense was that the press covered the film. Genre journalists were invited down to North Carolina and given a royal treatment by Rob Tapert and the rest of the *Evil Dead II* crew. *Fangoria* fielded two writers at least, Will Murray and David O'Malley.

But of course, there were ways the production of the film was anything but ordinary, and, in fact, radically different from the first movie. That was in the realm of special effects. Tom Sullivan was limited by time and budget constraints on the first movie, and had to use primarily painted-on makeup; not so *Evil Dead II*, which is a riot of state-of-the-art effects.

The location was still rural, but it was a lot more urban than the Tennessee locale of the first movie. The *Evil Dead II* company was integrated into the life of the movie-wise community, it wasn't the dead of winter, and things simply went more smoothly and more professionally. However, it's also worth noting that everyone involved in both films talks about the making of the first one with more enthusiasm and nostalgia (however ironic) than they do about the second -- or about any other movie they've made.

The reconstructed cabin -- at least the exterior -- was just a short drive from the beautiful old farm house featured prominently in *The Color Purple*. In his article in *Fangoria* #62, Will Murray talked about arriving on the set. "In a nearby hollow stands the familiar cabin from *The Evil Dead*. Beside it is the scorched-earth graveyard where the *Evil Dead* themselves lie buried. Not seen in the first film

are two *Wizard of Oz*-like trees, the Mean Tree and the Gnarly Tree, which stand guard in front of the cabin, woodsy faces subliminally visible in their bark." In the finished film, these trees do turn up, but the faces are only rarely visible.

Murray quoted Sam Raimi on the subject of the cabin itself: "We've taken some artistic liberties with it. . . . We've given a little *Dr. Caligari* tilt to the windows and made the doors a little askew. Sometimes we'll be tilting the camera in accordance with the lines of the set, when our characters fall into angles and things start getting real *hairy* in the cabin, to throw the audience off more." Some critics mistakenly thought the interior of the cabin in the first movie was far larger than it could really be -- mistaken because except for the basement, what you see really *was* the interior of the cabin.

In *Evil Dead II*, however, not only were the interior and exterior of the cabin two completely different sets, miles apart, but the interior is much larger than the cabin could really contain, particularly in the sequence in which Ash is pursued by the Force POV from the woods: Ash gallops along *within the walls of the cabin*. Cabins rarely have three-foot gaps between their interior and exterior walls...

David O'Malley visited the interior cabin set for *Fangoria* (#63) in Wadesboro; the gym of the disused J.R. Faison Junior High School was used as a sound stage. "A sprawling, rustic cabin fills the abandoned gym, weathered and authentically detailed, perched on a solid frame of 2 X 10s. Beneath the cabin, an appropriately dank and ominous fruit cellar has been created.

"On this particular day. . . the fruit cellar contains a huge plastic 'blood pool.' Above it, inside the cabin, the crew stands by patiently, trying to ignore the smothering heat. Sheets of transparent plastic are draped over cameras and props and people, giving the impression of an oddly grotesque hillbilly mausoleum."

The set was built on two levels to make filming easier; at one point, it was even planned that the camera would follow the action directly, in one take, from the main floor of the cabin down into the fruit cellar, but this was never done. However, the two-level construction did make many of the effects much easier.

When Will Murray visited the set, Sam told him, "We're going into a little more depth with this story. . . . What really happened with the discovery of the Book of the Dead, how it got here and what its true origins are... We follow it through the ages as different civilizations find it and are *destroyed* by it. The spirits are awakened every century or so, until it comes to this small cabin where the Professor brought it so he could study it undisturbed." This rather grand idea of following the book through the centuries exists in the movie, but it's only implied in dialog.

Some of the ideas that Raimi told Murray were entirely in Raimi's mind, and never on screen at all, such as what the real intent of the Deadites is: "Their goal is not just to wreak chaos but to test the mettle of man, to find out whether he is strong or weak, if he is good or bad, so they will know if it is time to walk and rule the Earth. So, they use Ash as that measuring stick of goodness. How far can they push him until he blows?" In the movie, of course, the goal of the Deadites seems to be to kill as many people as possible, as colorfully as they can.

Murray interviewed Bruce Campbell in *Fango* #65, and Bruce offered some ideas on the changing character of Ash: "Ash is no longer the whimpering moron he was in the first one. He progresses from being sort of 'with it' to being more of a movie hero., 'I'll save you now,' that sort of stuff. It's a whole new character. I tried to lose a little bit of weight and get a little gauntness back that I had when we made part one....

"In the first one, up until about halfway through, it's very difficult for me to watch it in a theater... Audiences are really abusive because Ash is so dumb. You know, saying, 'Cut her up, you stupid idiot!' Ash is being a nice guy, but he's not functioning."

When an actor and director work together often -- Robert De Niro with Martin Scorsese, Richard Dreyfuss with Steven Spielberg -- they often, if not always, develop a kind of shorthand method of communicating, and this is true of Bruce Campbell and Sam Raimi. "Sam would say, 'Bruce, do a Number 29, or whatever, and Bruce would fling himself against the wall,' Rob Tapert explains. "They did a gazillion movies together, and have the routines down."

When they were filming the impressive, not to say alarming, sequence in which Bruce batters himself with dinnerware, Sam was on the set, calling out to him. "'Okay, now bang your head on the floor real hard,'" Rob Tapert reports. "'Take the plate, and smash it on your head, *now*, take another plate -- *now!* Grab the knife, look at your hand...'" Sam says all that while Bruce is doing his schtick." It helps, of course, that Bruce trusts Sam. (Maybe he shouldn't: the imp in Sam leads to such pranks as, in this movie, being the one to whack Bruce in the face with a branch as he's driving away from the Force.)

It varies from film to film, but since the demise of the studio system back in the 1950s, it's rare for the most important person on a movie set to be anyone other than the director. Not only are the visual and performing styles of a movie shaped and guided by the director, but the *mood* of a set stems directly from the director, and how he (or she) deals with the cast and crew. And there are two factors to this: the personality of the director, and whether the cast & crew feel the director knows his business. An obnoxious personality can be offset by sheer professionalism, but no matter how nice a guy the director is, if he looks like a babe in the woods, the cast and crew won't feel any respect.

Sam Raimi is not just a nice guy, he's a wonderful guy -- you'd love him, trust me on that one -- and he comes to the set thoroughly prepared, with full storyboards and a clear idea of what he wants to achieve each day. But he's also flexible enough to change those ideas if necessary, and open enough to listen to good ideas from other people.

On the set of a later movie, *The Quick and the Dead*, Sam explained more about his ideas of what a director really does. "The job of any director is to convey the ideas he has for the picture to all the cast and crew. That's really his only job. It is many times very simple, and many times very difficult. It's very exciting, though, it's a great job.

"The tough part is when other people have ideas, and they're right. That's when you really have to think as you take the plan where the character's going to go, the shots, how you plan to present them, and then spend late-night hours and drawings, and stop what you're doing, and recognize the truth of what they're saying. You really have to go for it; they won't give a good performance unless they believe it. The tough part is not letting them do that, but to figure out how it impacts everything else, both what comes before it, whether you've shot it or not, and the stuff that follows chronologically. This includes stuff that you have already shot and are locked into, and how you'll change the stuff yet to be shot. You have to think about all this."

The *auteur* theory has been wildly misinterpreted, often by directors themselves. The original idea wasn't that the director was the sole author of a film, but that the director was the principal shaping force. Sam feels that's true, "but it is definitely a collaborative art form. I've never seen anything as collaborative. A big movie takes 85 people, everyone has to do their job right, and everybody contributes -- if they're going their job properly. The director's job is really to be the conductor of the symphony orchestra, and know he needs a violin not *there*, but later. And yes, it is a good idea if the cello comes in here, even though it wasn't part of the original score. It will sound good. The director has his sheet music, his plan; he has to stick to the basic sheet music and understand that his job is to make all instruments work in harmony and to make something that is greater than the sum of the parts."

On *Evil Dead II*, Bruce Campbell described Sam in another way, as reported in Will Murray's article. "Sam is like the editor. . . . Rob and I might pull out our red pencils on anything we didn't like or didn't think worked. Sam would do a draft, and we'd submit our notes and try to be as specific and helpful as possible, rather than say 'This scene stinks.'" Campbell had some scenes cut from the early script that featured his character. "There's a long section in this movie where I'm the only one there. Because of our last movie, we're really aware of bog factors. You want to really keep this going all the time. And if it means cutting down the part, even though from an actor's point of view it might be a really neat scene, you still have to forget that. Because if people are coughing or moving around in

the audience, you *know* you're losing them."

In David O'Malley's article in *Fangoria* 63, Kassie Wesley (Bobby Joe), said "Sam knows exactly what he wants and exactly how to get it. . . . It's wonderful to work with someone so creative and helpful. . . . Sam is real patient and protective. He makes you feel comfortable. . . . Some directors, when you get emotional, don't know how to handle it or they can't deal with you in a gentle way. He's very good about that."

Danny Hicks, who played Jake (and who also appears in *Darkman*), told O'Malley that Sam was "like a little kid, enjoying himself too much. . . . He's so funny. He keeps everything light. I'm having a hell of a good time... Sam is wonderful with actors. He's one of those great directors. It's never wrong, but it can always be better. He gets good work out of you through encouragement rather than intimidation."

Vern Hyde, who in charge of mechanical effects on *Evil Dead II*, was amazed by the variety of camera rigs required, and told O'Malley, "We've built some real strange things... He comes up with the weirdest contraptions. We've had the Sam-O-Cam, the Splash-O-Cam, Camel-head/Samel-head, Ram-O-Cam, Torso-Cam, and so far they've all worked."

Makeup maestro Howard Berger told Will Murray (*Fangoria* 67), "Sam Raimi kept adding more things that we weren't prepared for, but we still dealt with it. We were looking forward to getting home after six months. It was a hard film to make, like being in a war... Sam really gets into it. It was neat. This was one of the first experiences I've had where the director knew *exactly* what he wanted, like with my test makeup on Bruce. Usually, they say, 'Make it scarier.' What does that mean?"

Mark Shostrom, the makeup supervisor on *Evil Dead II*, told Murray that Sam "talks in percentages to tell you what he wants. He'll say, make this element 20% less and punch up this other element 50%. He's so enthusiastic sometimes that you have to be careful about suggesting an idea to him. If you suggest an idea as a joke, he can take seriously -- which has happened a couple of times."

Because *The Evil Dead* had problems because of being released unrated, everyone connected with *Evil Dead II* was concerned that however gory it might be, it had to get an R rating. (This is one reason there's even more emphasis on bizarrely-colored bodily fluids in the second film than there was in the first: the stuff doesn't look as, well, bloody, when it's not red.)

Sam told Will Murray (*Fango* #62), "We had to cut our blood flow from 500 gallons to five gallons. I'm positive we'll get an R rating." As it happened, *Evil Dead II* was also released unrated, but more on that later.

Bruce Campbell told Murray, "You don't see as much spouting from its origin, but it's there, like when the walls of the cabin bleed."

The bile and all that stuff is there, although you don't see it oozing from people. There are many reaction shots when you splatter it. You see someone get sliced and you cut away real quick. One of the main creatures spews all over Ash.... My headless girl fiend bites my hand and won't let go. So there's a whole sequence of me trying to get her head off my hand. To save himself, Ash valiantly cuts his own hand off so it doesn't get the rest of him. Just call me 'Stumpy.'

"The violence in *Evil Dead II* is treated as being very unpleasant. The only people who are enjoying it are the monsters. The whole idea is that they're punishing these people for awakening them from an ancient slumber. They're groggy, like bears from hibernation. They like hurting people. And they're going to have fun while they're doing it."

Tom Sullivan, returning for a second *Dead* outing, told Murray, "It's a much more accessible film. The first film just dwells on goop coming out of eyeballs and being pulled out of bellies; I find that stuff humorous myself. I don't think the intensity is going to be different. We've distilled various things out of the first film and amplified them, and that's going to overshadow the lack of blood and violent stuff. This is much more of a horror monster film than a horror splatter film. It's a worthy sequel. When the audience comes out of this film, like the first one, they're going to feel they got more than their money's worth. They're going to want a third *Evil Dead*."

Makeup and makeup effects cover a broad range, or at least they did when *Evil Dead II* was made: straight greasepaint makeup, appliance makeup (using foam rubber applied to the face to change the features), full body suits, articulate dummies, and many other techniques. All of these were used in the film. Mark Shostrom was in general charge, but there was a huge crew working under and with him. The experience was so gratifying to three of those involved, Robert Kurtzman, Greg Nicotero and Howard Berger, that they formed their own company, KNB, ever since one of the busiest and best makeup effects companies in the business.

Will Murray explained that no fewer "than three effects groups were brought together to make *Evil Dead II* work. The main crew belonged to Mark Shostrom. . . and included makeup artists Robert Kurtzman and Howard Berger, sculptors Mike Tricic, Shannon Shea and Aaron Sims, and special assistants Greg Nicotero and Bryant Tausek. Tony Gardner conducted foam fabrication, while Dave Kindlon supplied the mechanicals."

Greg Nicotero told Murray, "Preproduction of *Evil Dead II* was a blast. We had the best fun because we had 10 weeks of preproduction. By the time we left for North Carolina, we had everything done... Each crew person was in charge of a certain character, just so each character's style would remain consistent throughout the entire film. Mike Tricic, Shannon Shea, Howard Berger and Mark Shostrom each handled a character. It was my job to coordinate everything and make sure things ran smoothly."



Mark Shostrom was in overall charge of special makeup effects. He told Murray, "Sam and I sat down and discussed each character's possession, and the thing Sam came up with was that whenever a character is possessed, the evil force can do anything it wants. So we took a little artistic liberty in designing a different look for each character. We had four or five major characters that get possessed, and different things happen to them. They get weird, get their heads chopped, their hands cut off. Evil Ed has a big mouth and razor teeth, whereas when Linda gets possessed, she has doll-like qualities. They have to keep going through changes, so we have to keep changing the looks as we go along."

Tom Sullivan did several kinds of effects for *Evil Dead II*, primarily in the area of stop-motion animation rather than makeup. In *Fango* #62, Sullivan told Will Murray, "I'm doing a range of things. We have a vortex that's in the film's beginning. It's like looking down a tornado. Some ghosts that I created appear through it. They'll be stop-motion. Bruce goes through what we call 'random extractions of horror.' Those are lapse paintings and backgrounds he'll be moving into."

"There's the winged Deadite, kind of a Harryhausen-ish critter -- which is always fun to do. It's a reworking of a classical harpy except for some changes so they don't look like the ones from *Jason and the Argonauts*. Originally, it had legs, but I came up with an interesting idea for a tail. I'm going for some facial expressions, laughter and whatever. They're foam puppets over a ball-and-socket armature. Some of the armatures are made out of wood instead of having someone machine them; we found a way to mass-produce them. They'll be human-sized, scary and bizarre. Then, there's the clay animation changing heads. It's a different approach than cutting from several mechanical effect heads." Sullivan's work is some of the most imaginative in the film; he animated the winged Deadite. The superb stop-motion of Linda's dancing, emaciated body was the work of the talented Doug Beswick.

Henrietta Knowby, the professor's now-possessed wife, was one of the most elaborate, complicated effects creations for the movie. The sculpted, polyurethane and foam-rubber suit was filled with lentils to give weight and mass to the body. The suit was worn by Ted Raimi, who suffered a lot while wearing the heavy outfit; in one shot in the film, you can see about a cup of sweat pour out of "Henrietta's" ear.

"Henrietta's bloated body gave Shostrom and his crew the most difficulty," Murray said in his article. "The final suit consisted of a 30-element polyurethane suit and a 14-piece prosthetic head that included dentures, scleral lenses, and tongue appliances. After each six-hour makeup application, only Ted Raimi's fingertips remained unencased."

"Concern for the actor in the heavy suit forced much of the Henrietta footage to be shot at night, when it was cooler. Even so, problems arose. 'One day, a bunch of grips lifted Ted out of the trap

door with this big winch,' recalls Nicotero. 'One guy tipped it and Ted fell. He tore the suit all the way across the middle. Mark and I -- the only effects people left at that stage -- frantically repaired the thing.'" Lentils went from hell to breakfast.

In other effects sequences, Henrietta transforms from her regular, Deadite head to what was called the "Pee-wee head" (because of the transformation of Large Marge in *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*, done via clay animation). Mike Tricic said told Murray, "Raimi wanted a total on-screen transformation from one character to a totally different one... Given the time and money, the only way I could see that being done was with replacement heads. I sculpted a bust of Henrietta down to the middle of her chest. I did the first two heads, but had to leave. . . Rick Catizone finished up the stop-motion on it."

Mark Shostrom on Henrietta's transformation: "The neck grows longer via stop-motion animation. We have our character in the suit rigged with a very long neck and a cable-controlled head with large teeth and evil Dead eyes." When Ash blows away Henrietta's decapitated noggin, the gelatin heads were filled with a mixture of bananas, stewed tomatoes, rotten peaches, green Ultraslime and black methacryl.

Another spectacular sequence features Ash being *shoved* through the forest, way off the ground, by the Force POV. Screaming and hollering, Ash rotates occasionally like he's fastened to a propeller -- which, essentially, he was. Campbell was fastened to a big wooden X, mounted on a rig that allowed it to be rotated slowly. The camera was undercranked; that is, it shot fewer frames than normal per second, so that the action, when projected at 24 fps, is greatly speeded up. Bruce's boots were bolted to the crosspiece, and the arms of the X went into his oversized sleeves and pants legs. He couldn't go anywhere, except slowly down a three-quarter mile stretch of road chosen for its overhanging trees. It took about twenty minutes to do a complete take, and they did several.

Ash's possessed hand presented a makeup problem. As Will Murray says, "Campbell's dismembered evil hand was designed by Shostrom and Berger. Several versions were created, including a stunt hand, a radio-controlled version and a stop-motion hand engineered by Rick Catizone, as well as an inflatable smooth-on glove version for the scene where the hand first goes possessed."

Sam told Murray, "We mixed and matched to keep the audience guessing... We combined radio-controlled puppets, black-bagged wrists and even some bluescreen wrist appliances. Part of it was animated to get some wild movements."

After Ash chops the top off of Evil Ed's head, Murray reveals, "The scalp (and stuff), complete with moving eyeball, skitters around the floor by itself. That scene, as well as Evil Ed's subsequent dismemberment, wound up cut from the final print." Rob Tapert said the scene included Ed's body in the background flopping around. "It

was too wacko of a shot," he confesses. Robert Kurtzman was in charge of Evil Ed.

When the trees attack the house, some of them are done via miniatures, hand and rod puppets created by Bob Dyke and manipulated by Gary Jones, but some were full-size rod-and-foam puppets. One was the "Baaaaah Tree," 13 feet long operated by three people in the trunk. The huge head in the doorway at the climax of the movie was done full-sized, but it never worked quite right, which is one reason why you never get a good look at it: Raimi used anamorphic ('scope) lenses to distort the image, and in general cut around the huge, peeled-looking head.

One of the most astonishing, bravura aspects of *Evil Dead II* is Bruce Campbell's energetic (to say the least) performance. He resembles Robert Taylor, and acts like a silent movie comedian caught up in a horrifying nightmare. His reactions are big, and his stunts awe-inspiring; if you don't blink, at the climax you can see him being swept sideways through the forest. He was dangling from a Peter Pan-type flying rig that moved on tracks. His stunts range from lying face down in a puddle of water longer than you'd think possible to grabbing himself by the scruff of the neck and flipping himself over onto his back. He goes through more violent suffering than anyone else in the history of horror movies -- and he does it all at top speed, while doing his best to maintain a characterization, too.

As Campbell told Murray, "You have to take a lot of abuse... I think it's great, I really do, because you never have to do all this stuff continuously. You just might have a hard day every so often, where you have to do five things over and over and over. To me, I'd much rather have that than sitting around waiting for one shot during the course of a day. That's the stuff that drives me crazy. Any actor just wants to work. I'd almost rather be injured than be idle." He's certainly never idle in the film.

Unlike the first movie, Campbell did have a stunt double, but, as he told Murray, he wanted to do his own as often as possible. As things turned out, "I did as much as Sam would let me. There weren't many times when the stunt coordinator/stuntman would say, 'Oh, let the actor do it.' They'd say, 'Let me do the stunt.' And I was off in the corner, saying, 'I can do that.' So I got a few. I did do all my harness shots; I was more than happy to do them. I think audiences feel more for the character if they see the guy knocked around. I'd like to see Jack Nicholson knocked on his butt a couple of times."

Howard Berger was very impressed by Campbell's energy, as he explained to Murray. "Bruce got really, really into it.... He eats this stuff up. He bit through the denture for his possession makeup. He went 'Rrrrrh!' and the denture broke in half, and those things don't break.... When his hand got possessed, he really put it through hell. We shot for 12 hours. By the end of the night, it was completely destroyed, with pieces of latex hanging off."

The shooting went smoothly and professionally, but there was a problem. Eugene Schlugleit had been hired as cinematographer, and brought his own crew and equipment (at a fair rental price) along with him. However, as Bruce says, Schlugleit's "crew were starting to hassle us about moving the camera so much, and moving the lights and setups, and became picky about when they wanted to move them and where. Finally, we told them that while we had no problem with their equipment -- we'll continue to rent it -- we just don't want you. So over a weekend, we pretty much had the night of the long knives, and got a whole new camera and electric crew." The replacement cinematographer was Peter Deming, who ended up being credited as "director of photography;" Schlugleit is listed as "director of night exterior photography."

Finally, the shooting wrapped in South Carolina, and the company was dispersed. But there were problems with the finished version; some new scenes needed to be shot, and these were done back in Michigan. If you watch the film carefully, you can usually spot these, as the lighting on the sets is much bluer than in Wadesboro; details of makeup and costume vary, too, but the sets themselves are an excellent match.

"We fixed some sequences up," Rob Tapert says, "that weren't working. We reshot the 'Blood Flood' where the room gets flooded with gore something like three times, maybe more, down in South Carolina. One time it didn't work, once it looked lame, and so we shot it a third time. It was a nightmare to do, because we had something like 50 55-gallon drums full of colored water in this school gymnasium. The different colored blood was jet-pumped through this piping out into the room. We had a thousand gallons of colored water on the floor, running down a sandbag trench. But finally, at the end of it, we still didn't have all the shots we needed."

In Michigan, they tried a new technique for really battering Bruce Campbell with the "Blood Flood." The camera was turned sideways, he lay on an invisible plank a few feet above the floor, and the bottom of a huge garbage can full of phony blood was ruptured right above his face. "Bruce was blowing red and black snot for months," says an admiring Rob Tapert. "Bruce has suffered more for his art than most actors."

Most of what was shot in Michigan is in the early moments of the film, as Tapert says. "The girl driving up in the car, and some weird things we needed in order to shorten the front setup. Originally, we were going to have voiceover, just join him at the cabin, but then we realized we needed to set up the girl, and the bodies, and all that -- the 'Recap of the Decap' in order to set up the body that will later attack him with the chainsaw. We never got that figured out quite right," Rob admits.

The film did turn out violent enough, however, that it was obvious it would get an X rating if it was submitted to the MPAA, so the film went out unreleased. It was originally scheduled to be released by De Laurentiis' DEG distribution company, but as the major

studios sometimes did (and still do), instead a one-film subsidiary, Rosebud Releasing Corporation, was created to handle *Evil Dead II*; even the publicity for the film was handled by an outside firm. An attractive logo of a rose blooming in time-lapse photography (shot by Sam Raimi himself) was created and added to the film.

The business of the rating and Rosebud Releasing was curious enough that it prompted an article by Jack Mathews in the March 13, 1987 *Los Angeles Times*. He noted that the film had originally been scheduled for release by DEG, which had access to hundreds of theaters nationwide, but was instead released unrated by the new (and, in fact, one time only) Rosebud Releasing Corp. Small, independent companies can't usually release movies in 340 theaters nationwide.

Mathews asked Alex De Benedetti, the executive producer of *Evil Dead II* and titular head of Rosebud, just what happened. De Benedetti, said Mathews, told him that "DEG sold the American rights to the film to him when DEG executives and Sam Raimi could not agree on cuts that would be necessary to get an R rating. The movie was never submitted to the movie rating board, but everyone involved in the making of the film and in the marketing of it agree that there was no question that it would have gotten an X in its current form."

De Benedetti told Mathews that Rosebud managed to place the film in so many theaters because "DEG's distribution people booked the theaters before the movie was sold to Rosebud, and that the advertising material had already been prepared by DEG's marketing department." Mathews tried to dig deeper, to find out if Rosebud was really just an arm of DEG, but was unsuccessful. Well, in fact, it was. Other studios did the same thing with X-rated or unrated movies; there was nothing new -- or, for that matter, illegal -- about this practice. It was a way the big distributors have of, more or less, covering their corporate asses in case the movies drew a lot of complaints.

So the film was released without a rating. This did present some problems for De Laurentiis later on, when the movie was included as part of a package of DEG films scheduled for showing on one of the pay-TV movie channels with which the mogul had a deal. Rob Tapert explains, "To make that sale, *Evil Dead II* had to get an R rating. But when they finally cut it to fulfill that contract, they realized the result just wasn't worth releasing. The cut version did get an R, but the movie was undone, and no one ever did anything with that cut. What's weird is that *The Evil Dead* played uncut on USA, and is now going onto The Sci-Fi Channel."

Sam Raimi has firm views on the topic of censorship, which *Evil Dead II* ran into, not just in the US, but in several countries around the world. "I believe that it's more dangerous for citizens to let the government decide what they can or can't experience or see than it is to have a movie like *Evil Dead II* available for distribution in a particular country. I would rather live with whatever dangers a movie like *Evil Dead II* may stimulate than the dangers of a government that determines for me what is too much for me. I think I'm an adult and I

can decide. I'm certainly against censorship in any form.

"I think you can make a movie that could present violence and terror in a way that the viewer would want to emulate the actions; that's certainly possible. But the whole nature of a horror movie, or certainly the kind of horror movie I make, is that the violence or the monsters or the spirits or the ghosts are frightening to the audience, the source of fear. And you laugh at them. It's not something that makes the audience wants to go out and become monsters or become demons, or attack demons. It's hard to relate to anyway, the fact that the government would ban a movie with ghosts and spirits and creatures of the woods, and flying time warps -- it's frightening to me. It's frightening that the people of the country allowed this to happen. That's the real horror to me."

As David J. Schow, award-winning writer of horror short stories and screenplays points out, "Peter Kurten who hacked up all those people in Germany around the turn of the century worked himself up into a frenzy by listening to the Catholic High Mass."

In any event, the film was done, and finally opened in American theaters in March of 1987. As he did with *The Evil Dead*, Bruce Campbell enjoyed checking out audience reactions for the sequel. "With *Evil Dead II* I was promoting the film in the South, in New Orleans. In the scene in which the possessed Henrietta's head is slammed in a trap door, eye pops out and a goes into a girl's mouth. At this screening, two guys got up, they screamed, they ran out of the theater. I thought, Is it that scary? But out in the lobby they were laughing so hard they were hitting each other on the back. It just goes to show you whatever you can say about horror -- it doesn't get a lot of respect, it's like a rung above porno on the respect scale -- there aren't many films that can do that, that can make people go nuts.

"At another screening, was a family who couldn't decide whether to stay or go. So they stood at the exit door, and when a horrible scene would happen, they'd go, Aaaaah! and run out to the lobby. After I'd seen the movie a hundred times I didn't even need to see the movie anymore, I just watched the exploits of the audience. So in this case, I watched for this family; you'd see the exit door open a little bit, and the dad pokes his head in the door and says it's okay now, it's all clear, and the family would come in and sit in the back row, and then the next, Aaaaah! Someone else would get decapitated and they would just run out, but they were too fascinated, and kept coming back, which I thought was amazing. There was still something in the movie that kept them coming back, determined for more. I think it's a kick."

Scott Spiegel is proud of his involvement in the movie, but adds "I'm surprised at how many people dig the movie; what's really cool from my point of view is how many more people may have seen it than *Evil Dead*, or who like it better than *Evil Dead*. And now the verdict's coming out that they pretty much like it more than *Army of Darkness*, too; it may be the popular favorite of the trio."

The reviews started coming in, and if anything, they were even more favorable than for *The Evil Dead*. For instance, Steve Swires in *Hollywood Reporter* said,

The unwritten law that sequels must invariably be inferior to the originals that spawned them is decisively broken in *Evil Dead II*. Superior in every way to the lively but tacky *The Evil Dead*, *Dead II* is guaranteed to gross out even the most jaded lovers of gratuitous gore.... [Sam Raimi] exults in joyously demonstrating the mastery of his craft. Deftly combining shocks and yuks, he punctuates the more gruesome moments with an outlandish sense of humor straight out of the Three Stooges' brand of broad slapstick.... Raimi seems poised on the verge of a major genre career.

Production values are first-rate in all departments. Peter Deming's photography is properly atmospheric, maintaining visual interest in what is basically a one-set piece. The remarkably fluid, prowling camera work of night-exterior cinematographer Eugene Shlugleit contributes a powerful sense of ominous dislocation... [And on and on, praising every aspect of the production]

John Powers, in the *L.A. Weekly*, said, "No movie this year has made me laugh half as much as Sam Raimi's whirligig sequel to his cult classic, *The Evil Dead*." Jimmy Summers, in *Boxoffice*, said, "*Evil Dead II* -- a cheerfully demented horror spoof -- comes off as an extremely funny movie." Summers compared *Evil Dead II* to Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part 2*, by pointing out that Hooper's film had very realistic violence, "and the whole affair was grim and disturbing." Summers added that horror spoofs rarely do very good business -- and, sadly, that was also true of *Evil Dead II*. It only made \$800,000 during its opening weekend. Thanks to overseas grosses (so to speak) and video sales, though, *Evil Dead II* was ultimately profitable for De Laurentiis.

The review in *Variety* by "Jagr" made an interesting point that proved completely true: "It's as if every scene tries to outdo the one that went before it, with Raimi winking at the audience all the while. The result is the kind of camp fest that an audience can shout back at." And shout back they did.

Caryn James, in *The New York Times*, made some good points. "Tales of demonic possession are common, but the clever creators of [*Evil Dead II*] seem possessed by the ghosts of Moe, Larry and Curley... [It] is one of the goofiest, goriest movies this side of the grave." James added that the movie "doesn't sustain its crackpot wit. The effects that produce spectacular slimy-faced demons can become jarring set pieces. . . . Near the end, the film abandons comedy

altogether." She concluded that it is "genuine, if bizarre, proof of Sam Raimi's talent and developing skill."

Kevin Thomas, one of the strongest champions of the first film, liked the second one, too, as he said in his *Los Angeles Times* review. The film, he says, is "at times a kind of ballet of dismemberment.... There are images of satanic grace that actually recall Bosch, thanks to the darkly mischievous power of Raimi's bizarre imagination... But just when things start getting too grisly, Raimi rushes in with a hilarious, sendup joke to remind us that all this blood and guts is meant in spooky Grand Guignol fun... As a film maker, Raimi is a dynamo who knows how to make a movie as cinematic as possible. [*Evil Dead II*] is a terrific trip, though admittedly not one that everybody would enjoy taking."

And not everyone did. The fact that the picture is largely a comedy totally eluded Deborah J. Kunk, whose review appeared in the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*. "Some of the gross-out stunts are amazing, occasionally even funny... The result is a relentless, non-stop nightmare of primordial dread that boasts an elegant, albeit disgusting, single-mindedness."

Kirk Honeycutt, then the film critic for the *Los Angeles Daily News*, was almost completely turned off by the film. He admitted that "Raimi has a distinctive flair for pirouetting camera movements and outrageous special effects. But story, character and acting fly out the window along with the eyeball. Nothing holds your interest other than the comical gore. Even then, Raimi's humor is fleeting: it springs out of a momentary absurdity or incongruous line. It is never organic to the picture." The sound of a man who just *does not get it* and never will: "By mocking his characters' plight -- the chief source of his laugh getting -- [Raimi] undercuts the terror." Yes. Of course. That is the *point*, Mr. Honeycutt.

In 1993, *Spin* magazine did a list of the "Top 100 Films of the SPIN Years" -- that is, the 100 best movies released during the years of publication of the magazine, 1985-1993. Those years, said the magazine, "have seen massive social upheaval, unimaginable technological advances, and horrifying environmental catastrophes. Recession and unrest have left their marks on us. They have been uncertain years. When your neighborhood, your block, your very home is no longer refuge from the turbulence around you, where do you go, where do you turn for fantasy and escape? Where you always turn: to the Big Screen. And, of course, to the following films."

And the top, A-number one movie on their list? *Evil Dead II*. Their description: "Ah, the beauty of a disembodied eyeball springing loose from its socket and shooting into the open mouth of a surprised bystander. Sam Raimi has never been smarter, Bruce Campbell has never been stupider. Endlessly inventive and utterly idiotic, this moronic, malevolent movie is a triumph on every conceivable level." (The list and notes seem to be the work of Jonathan Bernstein.)



The next few films on their list (in order): *RoboCop*, *GoodFellas*, *Heathers*, *Blue Velvet*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, *Dazed and Confused*, *Die Hard*, *Midnight Run*, *The Sure Thing*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Say Anything*, *Pretty in Pink*, *Beetlejuice*, *Bullet in the Head*, *King of New York*, *Aliens*, *Re-Animator*, *Internal Affairs* and *Near Dark*. Which is a pretty cool list, as it happens. Lower on the list you'll find movies with greater critical reputations, like *Unforgiven*, *JFK*, *The Crying Game*, *Hannah and Her Sisters*, *The Silence of the Lambs*, *The Grifters* and *Cape Fear*. As well as other disreputable but worthy titles like *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey*, *Gremlins 2*, *Hellraiser*, *Tango and Cash*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, and *Hell Comes to Frogtown*. Included is Tsui Hark's *A Chinese Ghost Story*, which has several sequences clearly inspired by the *Evil Dead* movies, but exists splendidly in its own context.

But though the favorable reviews far outnumbered the negative, the picture didn't do well at the U.S. boxoffice. Rob Tapert admitted, "*Evil Dead II* was not a success here in America. Theatrically it died, videowise it did fairly well. But *Evil Dead II* was a huge, huge, huge hit in Italy and Japan. Our pictures have never done that well for us here."

Something new was on the horizon for the Renaissance partners; Sam Raimi had sold a story idea to Universal, who also entered into a production deal with Sam and Rob. The result was Raimi's most successful movie so far: *Darkman*.

## EVIL DEAD II

Note: the title on screen is *Evil Dead II*. It was called *Evil Dead 2: Dead by Dawn* only in publicity. At the end, the movie describes itself as "the sequel to the ultimate experience in grueling terror."

Rosebud Releasing Corporation (*The shot of the blooming rose was supervised by Sam.*)

We see a sea of clouds; the Book rushes toward us with a creaking sound; the rough face on the front of the book changes, becomes more monstrous, it swallows the camera. Then we see a foggy spiral. Ghostly, skeletal shapes rush by us, the two most striking being a spider with a human skull for a body, and a bat-winged skull. The narrator speaks:

"Legend has it that it was written by the Dark Ones -- Necronomicon Ex Mortis, roughly translated, Book of the Dead. The book served as a passageway to the Evil Worlds beyond. It was written long ago, when the seas ran red with blood --" We see a red sea, the waves crashing. "It was this blood that was used to ink the book." Drawings appear in the book in animation, then lines of printing in an ancient, indecipherable text. More drawings, more lettering, faster and faster. "In the year 1300 AD, the book disappeared." The Book slams shut, flies away.

This is followed by the titles, just the name of the production company and the film's name, with smoke and music recalling "Night on Bald Mountain."

We're inside a tunnel, zooming out into the daylight, behind a yellow car; inside we find a young man, Ash, and his girlfriend Linda. "So what's this place like?" she asks. (*This is a tunnel along the Blue Ridge Highway.*)

"Well, it's a little rundown," he replies. He assures her that it's deserted -- "I think." In a miniature shot, the car crosses a very high, precarious-looking bridge with three spans; there's a faint creaking sound. Then we see the cabin, at this point also a model shot, the windows and door of which sketch a face. Inside, Ash plays a piano while Linda dances in a letterman's shirt from Michigan state and her panties. ("Typical Rob Tapert influence," Bruce grins. "The woman doing the costume said, 'okay, she can wear a regular T-shirt, or she can wear this like vacuum-packed T-shirt.' Rob says, 'Well, there's no question about it.' So it's this ridiculously tapered, sexy T-shirt.")

They start to kiss at a window, but she's poked by a necklace (like the one in the first film: a small magnifying glass set in silver); clearly, he's just given it to her, and she tells him she loves it. Again, they almost kiss, but she draws away; "I feel funny about being here. What if the people who own this place come home?" (*Some of the scenes with Denise Brixler were shot on the duplicate set built in a warehouse in Dearborn, Michigan. They had always hoped to be able to use footage from The Evil Dead at the beginning; when that proved impossible, new footage had to be shot.*)

He tries to reassure her. "Hey, whaddaya say we have some champagne, huh baby? After all, I'm a man and you're a woman, at least the last time I checked." He laughs lightly at his own bum joke. Humming, he wanders into next room where he finds a tape recorder. In the front room, she pulls off the shirt (but we don't see anything), and suggests he play the tape recorder, which he does. *(It's the same tape recorder used in the first film.)*

We hear the voice of Dr. Raymond Knowby, Department of Ancient History. "Log Entry Number 2. I believe I have made a significant find in the castle of Kantar, having journeyed there with my wife Henrietta, my daughter Annie and associate professor Ed Getley. It was in the rear chamber of the castle that we stumbled upon something remarkable. \*\*\*\* (Can't make out word here; check script) -- the Book of the Dead." As the narration continues, we see a jeep-like wagon approach some bleak spires of rock, then the four people identified on the tape in an underground chamber. *(The exteriors were shot at a kaolin mine \*\*\*SPELLING\*\*\*. "When we scouted," Bruce says, "they had a display in their offices of what kaolin is used for. It's used in paper so ink adheres to it, it's used in tires, pencil erasers -- and Kaopectate." The castle here is not a matte painting; it's a very large miniature.)*

"My wife and I brought the book to this cabin where I could study it undisturbed. It was here that I began the translations." We see him at his table examining the book, talking on tape recorder; his wife Henrietta is in the background in a rocking chair, knitting. "The book speaks of a spiritual presence, a thing of evil that roams the forests and dark bowers of man's domain. It is through the recitation of the book's passages that this dark spirit is given license to possess the living."

We now see Ash looking at the book: on one page is a distorted, monstrous face, like those of the later Evil Deaths we see, plus a couple of eyeballs on the opposite page. Included here, the tape recorder says, are the phonetic translations of those passages. **\*\*\*GET SPELLING FROM SCRIPT**

Now our first Shaky-cam shot from the Force POV rushing through the woods. The voice on the tape recorder continues at the force gets closer to the cabin, then we're back inside the cabin. The force sees Linda through the window, then smashes it open and rushes at her. Ash, in the other room, reacts, then enters, still carrying the bottle of wine, which he drops.

He goes outside; wisps of fog drift by. He walks over dead leaves in the slightly foggy woods. He's wandering along, looking around him, when Linda pops up, screaming and cackling maniacally. Her face is somewhat distorted, her teeth long and reddish, her eyes blank like Little Orphan Annie's. She holds her hands out, moving something like a marionette.

The terrified Ash falls backward, catches sight of a spade lying nearby. She leaps into the air, passing over the camera; he swings at her with the spade and neatly chops her head off. *(Why? All she's done has been to scare him and act weird. He couldn't have known at this point that she was a real menace. Ash is impulsive sometimes.)* The lopped-off head flies toward the camera, then rolls along the ground.

It's now a few minutes later. Ash begins to dig a grave for Linda. He places her headless body in the grave. "Linda," he says, clutching the magnifying glass charm. He makes a big cross and plunges it into the ground.

We see the moon, then the Force POV barreling through the woods again the next morning, very much like the last shot of *The Evil Dead*. It rushes into the cabin's back door, through the building and out the front, smashing doors before it. It flies up to Ash's screaming face -- and where the earlier film ended, this continues.

As he screams, he's picked up bodily by the Force and carried through the woods ahead of it, as if it's a giant flying demon holding him in its invisible arms. He's moving very fast. (*In both the first two films, people are clearly seeing something when the Force POV rushes at them, but what? At the end of Evil Dead II, the Force does manifest itself as a giant, skinned head, but that's not likely to have been what people were seeing earlier. So just what was it?*)

Screaming, Ash is carried through the air, occasionally revolving as if tied to a slow-moving propeller, occasionally smashing through leaves. (*"This was an all-day shoot, the only sequence shot in South Carolina. We needed a long, straight, flat road with trees on either side, and we found it in South Carolina. There are probably three or four hidden cuts throughout this sequence to get the best pieces," Bruce says, recalling one of the less pleasant moments of making an Evil Dead movie. "I'm on the arm of a crane that's going very slowly down a road, and the crane is going up and down. I'm mounted on a big X on the end of the crane, spinning around; Sam could turn me either way. Sam had people down below running along with branches that they would slap into me."*)

He fetches up against a tree, and collapses, falling face-forward into a big mudpuddle. He lies there quietly for a moment, expelling bubbles as if he's drowning, while some fog drifts over him. This goes on long enough you might think he's drowned. (*The bubbles were generated by the effects crew -- not by iron-lunged Bruce.*)

Suddenly, with a horrendous gasp, he rears up, his face now distorted as if the bones are growing through it, his eyes blank, now one of the Evil Dead. (*"Of course," Bruce points out, "the tricky thing was having the white contact lenses underwater; we had to have clean mud, clean water, but I couldn't always tell whether my eyes were open."*)

But the sun is rising, and he groans and screams from the power of its rays. Elsewhere, the fog pulls back into the forest, past the cross on Linda's grave, finally being sucked into a tree and into the ground. Dead Ash is still screaming and groaning. There's a closeup of his blank eye as the blankness is replaced by Ash's normal eye, iris, pupil and all. (*Bruce explains, "We felt there was some need to see that he is saved by the morning sun, so that's why we show the eyes returning to normal." What was used here was an oversized replica of Bruce's eye; in reverse action, liquid was pumped in that blanked out the iris and pupil of the big eye.*)

Back to normal, more or less, Ash's eyes cross, he goes "Argh," and falls over. We see more fog being sucked into the ground. He lies there for a while in the woods, his position changing slightly, signifying a passage of time. A fly can be faintly heard. Then his eyes pop open and the camera rushes upward away from him. Stunned,

shocked, apprehensive, he looks around him at the woods, which seem harmless and quiet now. Faint insect-like sounds on the track. There's the cabin, there's the car. 360 degree shot, returning to Ash. "It's gone," he says. "The sun's driven it away." For now. He's muddy and banged up. ("Sam loves these three-sixties," says Bruce. He points out that the trees weren't large enough, "so we built a couple of fakes, foam-injected bases of trees." However, he has no explanation as to why Linda's gravesite has coal all around it.)

There are strange wailing sounds on the track, and he sees demonic eyes superimposed over the cabin's windows; a thick, garbled voice intones "Join us." (Despite the Force's frequent, even plaintive attempts to get volunteers, no one ever joins up willingly. What would have happened if they had? That's Sam's voice, incidentally) He gets up, runs toward the cabin, which now looks normal again. Then he glances at the car. (At Sam's direction, Bruce was to rub his face while a drunk looking for a bottle. This is the same car used in the first movie. It also appeared in Crime Wave and later in Darkman.)

There's a shock cut to the car roaring through the forest. Inside, Ash frantically wipes his face, then abruptly slams on the brakes.

The girders of the bridge have been bent up like clutching fingers. Ash is horrified. He pounds the car in frustration. "Oh no, no! Aaaaarrgh!" he screams. Then he tries to pull himself together. "I gotta get a grip on myself here," he says. Then he hears something strange -- and sees the sun plunging down, faster than it possibly could, disappearing into clouds beyond the car.

The Force POV rises up from the crevasse the bridge had spanned (this is a combination of miniature and location shooting); it rushes along the plank roadbed right at the car, but Ash madly backs away from it, whirls the car around, takes off again. He appears to be outrunning the force, but it stays on his trail. Raimi intercuts between the Force POV, closeups of Ash, and his point of view, without any confusion at all, despite the very fast pace. (Again, people were stationed beside the road to whap the car with branches as it roared by; the branch that smacks Bruce in the face was held by Sam. Of course.)

The car slams into a stump, and Ash, groaning, is tossed out through the window and toward a tree, but he hits the ground first. (Yes, that is a dummy, not Campbell, smashing through the window. Although with this bunch, you never can be sure.) The Force POV, once left behind, now catches up with the car, and without a cut, it smashes through the back window of the car then out the front. (This Ram-O-Cam shot was particularly difficult, Bruce says. "We tried to get this three times or so." They used a "forty-five foot metal arm with an attachment for this little Eyemo camera; we all had to run with it, and when we got to the back of the car, we all had to feed the arm through the car window. The rod was attached to a cart, but we had to lift it up to feed it through the window. Once we hit the trunk, and another time ran into the rear-view mirror. Sam wanted it to lift up; he didn't want it to go straight in.")

Ash flees through the forest, pursued by the Force; there's more fast intercutting here. When we are seeing him from its POV, we hear a rising, rushing drone of sound. He flees into the cabin; it follows. (*"We never finished the interior of the location cabin," Bruce says; "the interior was all on sets over at the school, but for this shot we had to do a fake version of the front room because we had to start the evil entity going into the house. We had to do a cut here; watch when the second door opens; there's a cut to the studio."*)

Ash rushes into the hallway and slams the door. It keeps after him, smashing through doors he slams, following him even when he smashes through a door, on through the cabin in an S-shaped path, into the bathroom, then into the walls of the cabin (surprisingly thick walls of an amazingly large cabin). Ash ducks to one side, but the force doesn't see where he went. The Force POV looks around the front room of the cabin, then sort of shrugs and leaves, flying off into the forest. (*During the scene within the walls, watch for a moment where the camera jerks spasmodically; that's where Sam, who was operating the camera, ran into a wall. "The hard thing with using the wide-angle lens for the Force POVs," Bruce says, "is where to hid all the lights and all the crew, because this lens is the next best thing to a fish eye, and you can see the entire world."*)

Back inside the cabin, two shutters bang. We hear the sounds of wind as the camera pans over the cabin, looking for Ash. The trap door we hadn't seen until now raises. (*Many exterior shots of the cabin are of the miniature, so the switch to all-miniature shooting during the attack by the trees wouldn't be too jarring.*)

Unexpectedly, we cut to a shot of a small airplane landing. (A very large number of people get out of it.) Annie, the daughter of Dr. Knowby, gets off the plane and is greeted by Ed Getley, both of whom we saw briefly in the flashback accompanying the tale of the tape recorder. (*In the background, watch as airport workers try to open the doors of the plane; the guy on the right -- Rob Tapert, as it happens -- can't get the door open. "This," says an amused Bruce, "still torments Sam horribly." After a cut, both doors stand wide.*)

She bears with her more pages of the Book of the Dead. He's impressed. They plan to begin the translations at the cabin; Getley says he hasn't heard from the doctor in a week, as there are no phones at the cabin. They load her stuff into Ed's car, to drive to the mountain cabin. "Annie," Ed asks, "you hinted in your telegram that your father was onto something with the first part of his translations. What has he found in the Book of the Dead?" (*"Ed was supposed to be the young stud; the idea was that the audiences would assume he'd win the day," Bruce explains. The problems with that, of course, are that we've already become attached to poor bedeviled Ash, and that Ed just isn't vivid enough. Looks like monster fodder to me.*)

"Probably nothing," she replies, shutting the trunk firmly, "but just possibly the doorway to another world."

At the cabin, Ash, troubled, dozes. Something makes him look quickly at the mounted deer's head. He leans forward into a big closeup, apparently hearing something we don't hear. There's a wind sound on the track, but it's not clear if he is really hearing it, or if it's an effect. He gets painfully out of the chair, then limps to a closed door, opening it with trepidation and his right hand. He

enters the room, still limping. It's dark in there. Did he hear something, or was it his imagination? Wind sounds. He's back at the piano -- which starts playing itself. (We can now see Ash has a scratch on his face. "This was some of the first stuff we shot," Bruce explains, "so there was a whole long list of what I had gone through, but we didn't know exactly how beat-up I should look. Continuity-wise, it keeps changing all over the place, mainly because of that.")

He takes out the necklace and stares at it, reacting in grief, as the camera moves around him. A sound from behind makes him turn around; part of the boards he nailed over the broken window (an activity we didn't see) of the room where Linda was attacked fall off; he rushes to the window and stares out. (Notice that the windows are now boarded up. Scenes showing Ash nailing boards everywhere were scripted, but never shot.)

The cross on Linda's grave topples over and her hand thrusts up from the earth. Her shriveled, headless body climbs out of the grave, and begins to dance. (This is in good stop-motion animation by Doug Beswick.)

After a moment, it indicates with gestures that it misses its head. It bends over and the head tumbles along the ground and reattaches to the body. (This is in reverse motion. "I am actually not interested in this movie," Bruce admits, "until from this point on; for me, it really gets going here, it really kicks in.")

Ash, even after all he's been through, can't believe his eyes, as the body dances, playing with the head, which comes off the shoulders and returns to them. The body pirouettes rapidly while the head stays in one spot, laughing at Ash. With a happy cry, the body runs off into the woods. Ash peers out after it -- and she (now the actress) appears in front of him, reaching through the window at him with long bony fingers. She bangs his head repeatedly against the boards of the window, then the head falls off again.

Screaming, writhing, Ash finds himself in the chair. Has it all been a dream? (He jerks spasmodically here; it's not that he can't get out of the chair, it's that "I can't scream. Sam told me I was so scared I can't scream.")

Just as he decides it was all a dream, Linda's decapitated head falls into his lap. "Hello, lover," she hisses (which isn't easy), then chomps down onto his thumb. (Originally, some of this was in reverse action: the head thrust a four-foot tongue down Ash's throat. But when he watched the dailies, an exasperated Sam exclaimed, "That's the worst reverse-motion acting I've ever seen!" Bruce says, "You'd only hear that from Sam; he's the only guy who shoots so much reverse-acting that he would create a class of acting." This scene, which looks simple, was a "total and utter nightmare rig," Bruce explains. "I'm in a ridiculously uncomfortable position; her real body is between my legs, propped up by eight sandbags. I had fake legs coming out around her head, and then we had two free-standing chair arms, because we wanted her face to be alive, with a neck appliance.")

Ash leaps up, yelling, runs around the cabin banging the attached head against the mantel, against the bookcase, against the wall; he grabs a book from the shelf and pounds it against the head which makes small noises of complaint, and occasionally cackles. He flings himself around the room desperately as the head laughs. (We see a big

fire in the fireplace) "Woodshed!" he exclaims. (Bruce reveals that several times, *Evil Dead II* fans have asked him to autograph a still, adding the word "woodshed." The line is looped, but clearly in the wrong place. "At conventions," Bruce sighs, "they love hassling me about that.")

He rushes out the door, grunting. He trips over an oil barrel, slams the head against a tree, then against the camera! He comes into the shed. There's a vise, which the camera rushes toward. He puts the head in the vise and clamps it shut. The head releases its death-bite. "Even now, it shrieks, "we have your darling Linda's soul! She suffers in torment!"

"You're going down!" Ash tells the gloating head. "Chainsaw!" he says to himself, pulling aside a curtain but there's no chainsaw, just the chalked outline on the wall.

The door bursts open, and Linda's headless body, carrying the roaring chainsaw, rushes in. Ash counters its move, and the chainsaw flips over, slicing down into the stump of the neck, spewing blood or black bile all over the place, and all over Ash. (Sure, the walking, headless body is clumsy, but give it a break. Just be impressed it's walking around at all. It's a big marionette on a pole, with the guys operating it on a mechanics' dolly below.)

The sawblade remains stuck in the neck, so the body slams against Ash, but this is ineffectual. He pulls the chainsaw free, but one of the arms comes along with it. With a cry of distaste, he flings it aside, then jerks the saw into life. He starts for the head, but now it looks like Linda, normal. "Please Ash, please don't hurt me. You swore we would always be together. I love you. Arrrggh." Now she looks monstrous again. "Your love was a lie," she says, "and now she burns in hell." He applies the chainsaw to the head -- we see this in silhouette -- and cuts it up. Blood covers the light bulb, and we see dangling bones in red light.

Fade to black.

It's later. Ash comes out of the woodshed covered in goo, carrying the chainsaw. He staggers back into the cabin and closes the door behind him. It's all over, he's clearly thinking. But just in case, he takes a shotgun off the wall, finds some cartridges, and begins to load it. To eerie sounds, the rocking chair moves. It's the one we'd seen Henrietta in the earlier flashback. It rocks with a rattling sound, rocks slowly. Ash, frightened, slowly, cautiously reaches out, but just before he can touch the chair, it stops. (That's Sam's voice making the sound of the chair; "we also played around with the rocking chair squeaks," Bruce says, "and sort of blended them, so it's got a little more edge to it than a regular rocking chair." *Evil Dead II*: home of the emphatic rocking chair.)

This is a strain on old ash. He lurches around the cabin, over to the oval mirror we saw in the first film. "I'm fine, I'm fine," he tells himself. Then his reflection leans out of the mirror, grabs him by the shoulders, and says "I don't think so. We just cut up our girlfriend with a chainsaw; does that sound fine?" The chuckling reflection clutches at Ash's neck, then after a cut the camera pulls back to find he's alone and still choking himself. The mirror is back to normal, which he discovers by touching it. He makes a little jump at it, as if trying to catch it off guard. (We first saw the mirror in an over-the-shoulder shot from behind the real Bruce Campbell,



looking at his reflection. Then there is a cut to a closeup of him, then to a double for Bruce in the foreground, seen over the shoulder, looking at the real Bruce in the hole in the wall that's masquerading as the mirror. This is all cut very quickly, and the lunge forward by the reflection takes most audiences by surprise. The other guy in the scene, doubling for the extra Ash, was a local college student. "Sam kept threatening me that if I wasn't any good he'd get the other guy. Shut up and get him. Leave me alone.")

The mirror is okay, but now his right hand suddenly develops black veins, and makes a high pitched gibbering noise all by itself. The hand flops back and forth, as if trying out its new-found independence, then clutches Ash in the face. After a moment, he pulls painfully free, but the hand continues to gibber and clutch at him. (Campbell's miming is excellent throughout this sequence; even without sound, the illusion that the hand has a mind of its own is almost unshakable.)

"You bastards! You dirty bastards!" he yells to the unseen forces. He drops to his knees and, holding his right wrist with his left hand, bangs the rebellious hand against the floor. "Give me back my hand," he sobs, then screams. There's a Force POV from outside the cabin, light stabbing out of the boarded up windows

Elsewhere: Jake, a guy from the road department, puts up a blinking barricade. Annie and Ed arrive in their car, and ask him if that's the road to the Knowby cabin. ("We had a whole scene with a water cooler at a fish-and-bait gas station," Scott Spiegel says, "but it wasn't filmed.")

"Yes," he says, "but you ain't goin there."

"And why not?" Annie frostily demands. He turns on his headlights: there's the clutching-hand girders of the destroyed bridge. Apparently there's a hand at *both* ends of the bridge, though we didn't see that earlier.

Annie says there must be another way up there. A new voice, a woman somewhat younger than Annie, says there isn't, and what the hell does she want to go up there for anyway? "None of your business," Annie bitchily replies.

Jake, who sees that the two women are on the verge of scratching each other's eyes out, suddenly remembers that there's a trail. "You could follow Bobby Joe and me," he says. "But it'll cost ya." He first starts to demand \$45 until Bobby Joe nudges him. "A hundred buck," he says, singularly. (Sam originally wanted Holly Hunter for the role of Bobby Joe.)

"Tell you what," says Annie, take my bags and you've got a deal. He looks into Ed's car and sees only a briefcase, and so he agrees.

Meanwhile, back at the cabin, Ash is still having problems with his hand, which is now wrinkled, with longer nails. There's a window from the front room into the kitchen, which leads him in there. As he plunges his hand into the sink, we see this action from somewhere down in the drain, looking up at Ash through the water in the sink.

At first, he seems relieved, but he doesn't notice the hand grabbing some nearby dirty dishes, which it begins breaking over his head. It grabs him by the hair and pounds his head on the counter, then by the back of the neck, and flips him clear over onto his back. More flinging around, more broken crockery. It finally knocks him out, still making squeaking noises which now sound almost like words.

It's still awake while Ash is unconscious. It drops a bowl it was about to brain him with, then catches sight (!) of a cleaver nearby, and begins slowly, with great difficulty, to drag Ash's unconscious body across the floor of the kitchen. It makes little self-affirmation noises as it gets nearer and nearer the cleaver -- which we see from the point of view of the crawling hand. Well, why not?

But just as it gets to the cleaver, in a sudden move, Ash stabs it with a knife. Even though this hurts him as much as it doesn't seem to hurt the hand, he laughs, saying "That's right. Who's laughing now?" Leaving his rebellious hand pinned to the floor, he grabs the conveniently-nearby chainsaw, starts it by pulling the cord with his teeth. He bellow, "Who's laughing now?!" -- and saws his hand off. *(We're spared this sight, but his face is covered in spattering blood.)*

Dark clouds pull away from the moon as the flashlights of the four people on foot near the cabin. The last of the group is Jame, angrily lugging Annie's big trunk. A deal, however, is a deal.

In the cabin, the now-disembodied hand struggles and twitches as Ash puts a bucket upside down on top of it (this time we can make out the hand's words: "No no no!") saying, "Here's your new home." He weighs it down with some books, the top one of which is Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. *(This funny, if obvious, joke was pointed out by most reviewers, possibly grateful for the opportunity to laugh, in this context, at a joke they would have groaned at in an out-and-out comedy.)*

He wraps the stump of his hand in cloth and duct tape. Good use of sound here. Behind him, the hand mutters and shrieks. Ash doesn't notice the bucket suddenly zip away across the floor, but he sees where it has overturned. No hand.

He grabs the shotgun and looks around the cabin, then sees the hand scampering for a mouse hole. It gets into the wall. He tries to spot it by sound -- it's still muttering and gibbering -- and blows a hole in the wall to no effect. We see the hand framed in the mouse hole, drumming its fingers, kind of going "La la la la la." Then it gets caught in a rat trap, but flings it aside and flips Ash the finger before scuttling back into the wall. Boom boom, he shoots a couple of holes in the wall. Aaaaooooohhhhh, he hears, as if the hand was killed. A little blood trickles out of one of the shotgun holes. "Got, you, didn't I, you little sucker!" he exults, but it's not over yet, of course.

Then there's a bit more blood than you'd expect from a hand, and more -- and then a torrent of blood hits Ash square in the face, like from a firehose of blood. *(This was done by laying Bruce on his back with a garbage can full of fake blood above him. The camera was placed on its side beside him, and the stuff poured straight down over his face. Because of the camera being on its side, it looks like it's shooting at him horizontally.)*

A longer shot of the room shows several blood fountains gushing into the front room. Now the blood changes to black bile -- and then reverses, sucking everything back into the wall. Covered in blood, black bile and other gunk, Ash sits down in the chair triumphantly, but it collapses under him. Take that, Mr. Hero Man.

He hears a weird sound and looks up: the deer head mounted on the

wall has developed Deadite blank eyes and swivels toward him to laugh maniacally. There's an interesting shot beginning over the head of the deer, between the antlers, moves in on Ash, crouched on the floor.

The gooseneck lamp laughs too, moving up and down on its flexible neck. The books on the shelves, the doors of the shelves, all laugh giddily at him. And he finally laughs too, his eyes bugged out, his jaw stretched wide. It's all just too much. He lurches around the room, where he matches movements with the gooseneck light, which amuses both of them. He stands in the room, howling with laughter, having a great time.

Suddenly, wham! wham! Something pounds on the door. Everything stops laughing and he lets fly with both barrels, blowing holes in the door.

Ash cautiously opens the door. No one there. He backs away from the open door, not sure if he's about to be hit with some new horror or not. Suddenly Jake leaps in the door at him. They grapple, Ash punching him with his good hand, but the hick slugs him again.

Seeing the carnage in the living room, the newcomers assume that Ash killed the father and mother, and they throw him into the cellar. Ash hits the stairs, tumbles down with a lot of vocalization. The others look down at him, and spit. You'd think he'd gone through enough already.

A bit later, Bobby Joe's shotgun wound is being bound by Jake, and Ed tells Annie there's no sign of her folks. She starts playing the tape. It says, "It's only been a few hours since I've translated and spoken aloud the first of the demon resurrection passages from the Book of the Dead -- and now I fear that my wife has become host to a Kandarian demon. May God forgive me for what I have unleashed onto this Earth. Last night Henrietta tried to kill me." Dr. Knowby says he buried Henrietta in the earthen floor of the fruit cellar.

Ash, down below, is hearing all this too -- and the moment he realizes the implications, the floor of the cellar erupts and Henrietta's head, crawling with worms (*stop motion*) bursts through the floor. Ash screams. (*Henrietta is played by Ted Raimi in an extremely elaborate special effects makeup costume.*)

"What's in my fruit cellar?" the monster's cackling voice gloats. "Something with a fresh soul!" Henrietta advances on the terrified Ash, who's pounding at the chained door. "I'll swallow your soul!" she screams, and her head mutates into something even worse.

The others above let Ash out, but Henrietta's distorted head pops into the opening and chomps down on Ash's foot. But he pulls free. Henrietta grabs Jake's face. Ed slugs her, but she hits back and he sails across the room, smashing into a picture. He falls.

Ash comes around behind the upraised fruit cellar trap door and smashes it down onto Henrietta's head. One of her eyes pops out and whizzes across the room, landing in Annie's mouth. (Mother, daughter) There's even a shot from the disembodied eye's point of view as it

zips toward Annie's screaming mouth. She spits it out. (*This is probably the supreme gross-out moment in any of Raimi's films, amateur or professional, and audiences fall apart with eeeeeewwwwws! and laughter every time.*)

\*\*\*\*\*OR IS IT BOBBI JO?

Jake kicks Henrietta in the head and Ash leaps upon the door, forcing the monster down. He and Jake pile onto the door, which is bouncing upward with the force of Henrietta's blows, but she quiets down after a moments.

Outside, the Force POV again heads for the cabin.

It's later. Inside, Ash puts a log on the fire and tells the others that there is something out there in the woods, in the dark, and that the witch in the cellar is only part of it. In a pretty good "bus," Bobby Joe jumps in, screaming. (*The term "bus" is often used to describe a certain kind of sudden-shock scene in movies; there are several of this nature in Jaws, for example, and almost every thriller director eventually gets around to trying one. The term originated in the original The Cat People (1942). In that, a frightened character, running from what she thinks -- rightly -- is a panther, is startled when a bus drives up with a screech of brakes; so is the audience, and how. The bus is actually on screen before we hear the brakes; having the visual intrusion a few frames ahead of the aural intrusion is the secret of a good "bus," and a secret Sam Raimi obviously knows.*)

Then from the cellar trapdoor, they hear someone singing "Hush little baby, don't say a word." It's Henrietta, now looking normal. "Unlock the chains," Annie says, moved by the sight of her mother, but Ash stops her. Henrietta, seeing their indecisiveness, continues on talking about the day that Annie was born. "It was snowing, so strange that it would be snowing in September..."

Suddenly Ed, now a Deadite, leaps up from the floor, his face hideously distorted. He hangs in the air, twitching unnaturally (*pixilation*), saying, "We are the things that were and shall be again." Still hanging, still twisting, he says, "Dead by dawn," and is joined by Henrietta (now in corpse mode) from the cellar; both chant, "Dead by dawn, dead by dawn," over and over, cackling. (*Because some of the ads called the movie Evil Dead 2: Dead by Dawn, you'll occasionally find it called that in books and magazines, but the title on screen is Evil Dead II, so that's the correct title.*)

Dead Ed crosses the room, tears out some of Annie's hair with his teeth. He goes the other way, and Jake grabs him from behind -- but Ed's head swivels completely around on its shoulders to glare at Jake, followed by the body a moment later. He flings Jake upward; his head breaks the light bulb.

Ash runs out of the room, so Annie calls him a "filthy coward" (*well, he's undeniably filthy by this point*). But he returns in an instant with an axe. He chops Ed's head in two; Ed bleeds green. He chops and chops (we don't see the impacts), with green bile

splattering everywhere, all over the walls, on the deer head, and finally over the camera lens. A voice -- Henrietta's? -- says We live, we live still.

The four shocked survivors stand in the middle of the room, panting.

Shot of the cabin from outside. Some time has passed, because Ash is somewhat cleaned up. Looking out the window, Jake muses, "That's funny, that trail we came in on -- it just ain't there any more, like the woods swallowed 'er up."

The clock stops (it looks like 20 till ten but the hour hand is in the wrong place.)

It's so quiet.

Annie and Ash, then Bobby Joe and Jake, react to swooshing sounds, jerking their heads around as if following something moving very fast that keeps coming to abrupt halts. (*Distorting lenses are used here, like anamorphic with no correction, turned 90 degrees to the plane of the film.*) Galloping hoofbeats are heard. Snuffling sounds at the door, like a giant dog. (*This is a momentary homage to The Haunting, in which this memorably occurs.*) Maybe it's something trying to force its way into our world. Giant booming sounds. The door to other room opens partway; more booming sounds, flashing lights.

Ash suggests they all go in together, but Jake exclaims, "Hell no, you're the curious one." So he and Bobby Joe stay behind as, carrying a lantern, Annie joins Ash and they enter the bedroom from which the flashes came. Another Camp Tamakwa T-shirt is on the closet door.

With a wailing sound, the ghost of Annie's father appears, writhing, semi-transparent, face and hands only. A dark spirit is the menace, he tells them, and their salvation lies in the pages of the Book of the Dead that Annie brought with her. "Recite the passages, dispel the evil. Save my soul, save your own lives," he screams as he vanishes.

\*\*\*DID THE SAME ACTOR PLAY THE GHOST AS PLAYED THE FATHER?

Some of the sound effects above and other elements were inspired by similar stuff in *The Haunting*; so is this scene: Bobby Joe tells Jake he's holding her hand too tight. "But I ain't holding your hand," he says. She looks down to see she's clutching what must be Ash's lopped-off hand, though there's a lot more wrist here.

Everyone screams. The lantern is dropped and the lights go out (*why? there wasn't any problem with the power*). When the lights come back on a moment later, Jake asks, "Where's Bobby Joe?"

She's outside running through the forest. Then a tree with a malignant face laughs at her, and as in the first film, she's grabbed by vines; one thrusts into her mouth. More and more grab her; she's hauled screaming through the woods. Into mud puddles with big splashes, pulled faster and faster, roaring, until she's rocketing toward a tree.

Shock cut to Ash in the cabin dropping the glass-enclosed new pages of the book; it shatters.

Outside the trees distort as fog comes closer and Jake worries about Bobby Joe. "If she went out in those woods," says Ash coldly, "you can forget about her." Ash reacts to something, "like someone just walked over my grave." (*Unless it's the illustration we now seen, just what Ash is reacting to here is never explained.*)

Some pictures in the book show a man in a blue shirt. "In 1300 AD," Annie explains, "he was called the hero from the sky, prophesied to destroy the evil." They find the relevant passages in the loose pages. The first passage will cause "the dark spirit to manifest itself in the flesh;" the second passage will create a rift in time and space, and the physical manifestation will be forced into the rift.

But Jake has the gun and tries to force the other two to help him find Bobby Joe out there in the woods. He grabs the pages from them -- and throws them into the cellar. "They don't mean squat," he says. "Now you ain't got no choice. Now move."

They leave the cabin and walk cautiously into the woods (*miniature shot of the trees acting strangely, the limbs and roots moving on their own.*) "No trail," says Ash; "where to now?" Jake has power but doesn't know what to do with it. "Bobby Joe?" he screams.

The Force POV moves toward them, Jake slugs Ash with the shotgun butt. "Bobby Joe!" he screams. "Bobbi--" sharp cut to the Force POV "--Jo. Bobby Joe, where are you girl?"

Then Ash, a Deadite once again, leaps up, grabs Jake and flings him headfirst into a tree. Annie flees into the cabin. Deadite Ash, backed by red lights, screams at her; "You're next!" but she slams the door.

Inside the cabin, she sees the knife across the room, grabs it. There's a noise from another room. She opens the door -- it's the hallway. She walks down the hall, knife upraised. Nothing in the bathroom. Another knob turns. A door lurches. She waits, knife at the ready. The door bursts open and she stabs -- Jake, sinking the blade into his belly. She staggers back in shock; suddenly, Deadite Ash leaps up at the window, roaring, clutching at her. She tries to shut the door, but Jake's in the way. She moves him, and he groans, but not far enough; she slams the door again, he groans again. Deadite Ash pounds at the door. There are some good shots here of Bruce lunging at the camera, fists upraised; the camera recoils.

Annie pulls the knife out of Jake, slams the door against the onslaught of Bruce, then drags the still groaning Jake down the hallway, screaming "Shut up!" at him when he makes too much noise to suit her jangled nerves. (*This sequence gets a lot of nervous laughter when the film is shown in theaters.*) She enters the room (overhead shot of her dragging Jake), spots an axe, drags him over near it, then picks up the axe and looks around. However, Henrietta flings the trap door open and drags Jake headfirst into the basement. A gigantic flood of pink blood, far too much for a person, erupts from below Jake and over Annie. The legs disappear into the trap door.

Annie staggers into the middle of the room, and Deadite Ash suddenly lurches into frame, clutching at her. He picks her up, raising her over his head with both arms, and slams her into a nearby wall, breaking the plaster. She falls onto the couch, then the floor.

There's a closeup of Deadite Ash, looking worse than ever, first roaring like a lion, then laughing with horrifying glee, advancing on Annie's recumbent form. But there on the floor near her is the silver magnifying glass charm. He looks puzzled, confused, blank eyes and all, then looks at it again with something like a dawning of understanding. He looks tormented, then as camera backs away from his kneeling form, he sobs aloud in horror. When we see his face again, he's normal -- and just barely manages to dodge Annie's axe blow.

"No, wait, I'm all right now!" Not surprisingly, she's not convinced. They grapple, things seem okay, and he slumps against the wall. Wham! The axe strikes the wall beside him, but this time he gets her calmed down. "I'm all right" he repeats.

"Maybe you are," she replies, "but for how long?" She reminds him that to beat the thing, they need those missing pages. Ash looks grimly determined, as only he can (and as only he has so many reasons to). "So let's head down into the cellar and carve ourselves a witch," he growls.

Here's this movie's series of quick cuts, a sequence that got a lot of critical comment, and which audiences invariably respond to very strongly.

Ash takes the chain off the woodshed. From inside the shed, we see the door bang open, with Ash and Annie in the doorway, Annie holding the chainsaw. CLICK: Ash turns on the hanging light bulb. A rat crawls away. A space is cleared; two metal rings clank down; Annie holds the chainsaw while Ash drills into its housing; we see momentary glimpses of work on the chainsaw rig, each accompanied by a specific, unique, sound, heard once only; clanks, ratchetings, strapping sounds, the thoonk of Ash thrusting the stump of his arm into the slot they've made for it on the chainsaw. They've even set up a prong on his chest to catch the wooden handle of the saw's starter cord. It works: the saw comes to life, he revvs it up, lops two feet off the barrel of the shotgun, which he twirls like the Rifleman, thrusts the gun into a holster mounted on his back. As the music

rises, the camera comes in close on Ash whose eyes light with a new fire, and he says "Groovy."

Outside, the roots of a tree with a demonic face writhe like the legs of an octopus, and it begins to pull itself out of the ground.

Inside, Ash uses his saw arm to cut a slot down the middle of the trap door. Wham. He kicks it open. Those pages are down there somewhere. He descends into the basement, this time not the cellar of Rob Tapert's family's farmhouse. The saw purrs quietly as he walks across the cellar, reaching for the door to another room. He turns the knob (a shot we see past a lot of hanging gourds, as in *The Evil Dead*).

He advances slowly, finds a couple of the pages stuck to the wall. The cellar seems vast, larger than the house above. A curtain hangs before him, the lightbulb visible beyond it. He pulls the curtain aside: pipes, hissing with steam. Abruptly, a bloody skeleton -- Jake's, from the clothes -- topples against him. Under the skeleton and a couple of rats, more pages. Maybe this is all of them? He backs away, out into the basement proper, past the gourds.

He tosses the pages up to Annie. She immediately pulls up a chair and starts to sort them out. As Ash backs up the stairs, Henrietta grabs his ankles from under the stairs and yanks. He topples forward -- the camera stays on his face, toppling with him. He is pulled back through the stairs in what looks like a reverse action shot that's also undercranked.

Upstairs, Annie begins the chant, reacts to something, apparently the sounds of Ash being tossed around in the basement. Henrietta levitates out of the hole, laughing fiendishly, and grabs Annie by the hair, rotating above her like a ceiling fan. Back to the hole: Ash, with his left arm now bare, climbs out of the hole, and whistles at Henrietta. "Let's go," he says with a challenge in his voice.

She flies across the room at him (her POV) as he revvs up the chainsaw. They trade blows with Ash getting the best of it, so Henrietta elongates her neck, changes her face into the distorted horror we saw earlier, as her human-like screams turn into bird-like screeches. She chants something here, maybe "I'll swallow your soul!"

There's a reverse angle of a stop-motion Henrietta puppet threatening Ash. The head lunges at him, he bats it back (with the camera staying with the head), they slug at each other again and again, Ash using his fists, Henrietta her head. We see the stop motion doll a couple more times. Ash and Henrietta stare at each other in closeup --- when Annie starts singing "Hush little baby, don't say a word..."

This catches the monster's attention long enough for Ash to stab it in the back with the chainsaw. Whack! One arm flies across the room. Whap! There goes another. Swack! The head is cut off, falling to the floor by Ash's feet. The torso stands a moment, then topples over. "I'll swallow your soul! I'll swallow your soul!" the



head cries.

"Swallow this!" says Ash, pointing the shotgun straight at the head (and at us, the POV camera). Kablooey. The head is blown to bloody chunks. With sparks. Ash blows the barrel clean, twirls the shotgun, then slams it back into the holster on his shoulders.

He tries to comfort the sobbing Annie. They hold each other, the only people in a world of horror.

And then, KAWHAM, a horrendous blow strikes the wall of the kitchen, knocking the shelves off. Outside, we see that several trees have walked up to the cabin on their roots and are bludgeoning it with their limbs. More approach.

The mirror shatters as the limbs smash into the house, coming through the walls in some places. There are several exterior shots here as the house is attacked. Annie and Ash lurch back and forth. The door is broken, there's a demon-faced tree outside. "I only completed the first of the passages," Annie cries, "and that was to make the evil a thing of the flesh." Ooops.

Outside, another POV shot of the force rushing toward the house. Annie tells Ash that the second passage has to be read, to open the rift and send the evil back.

The evil force POV rushes toward the house and the door smashes open, and now we see it -- at least the way it looks now: like the skinless head of a demon the size of Kong. It has big teeth, big eyes, big everything, but how big can it be overall? It's not standing in a hole, after all. (*When the force rushes at the door, we cannot see the big trees outside pounding on the house.*)

Somewhere in here, the hair on Ash's temples turns white, but it gets dark again in *Army of Darkness*.

Annie keeps reading the passages, but she's interrupted when the crawling hand stabs her in the back with that chicken bone knife. She falls to the floor. Ash screams "NOOO!" A huge hand made of wood, limbs, bark, whatnot, plunges through the doorway and grabs him, pulling him toward the huge head, which has red eyes. Annie doggedly keeps reading. Outside, beyond the car, a white spiral opens in the sky. The car is drawn slightly toward it. Ash is held in the wooden grip; the pages blow out of Annie's grasp; on some part of the demon, faces appear -- Ash's own, those of the other victims of the force. "We've won!" they exult. "Victory is ours!" (*It's hard to tell where this is on the big head in long shots; these little heads may not be there at all.*)

Ash fires up the chainsaw and stabs the big head in its right eye; black bile gushes forth. Dying, Annie manages to sigh out the last few words remaining in the spell. We see the car and a tree plunge into the spiraling rift in space.

The big head, followed by smoke, shoots out of the house, the door slams shut. The wooden hand relinquishes its grasp on Ash. He crawls over to Annie. "You did it kid," he says, but he doesn't have time to savor their victory, because behind him, the cabin door is torn away, plunging into the vortex.

The stove wheels past him and out the door. Other objects plummet out of the house. He tries to hold on to something, but shelves pull away, and finally he's lifted off the floor. He hangs onto a plank from a shelf, but it breaks at the door. "For god's sake, how do you stop it?" And then, screaming, Ash sails toward the vortex as the board breaks. (*One odd shot: Ash plunging sideways through the forest.*)

Then he falls into the spiral, flashes, lightning, colored sparks. He comes down toward the camera as the vortex closes behind him in a burst of light. He strikes a dusty ground at the same instant as the car.

He opens his eyes to find himself surrounded by a horde of men in armor. "Slay the beast!" one of them (a wizard type) cries. Several raise their swords and shout, "Slay the Deadite!"

But they halt when they hear a shriek from the sky. A winged monster comes down at them. "Back to the castle!" Ash stands up, resolutely aims the shotgun, and blows the head off the winged Deadite, then seems surprised by what he's done.

The armored men react with joy; one of the knights raises his helm and we can see his face. He (*Sam Raimi*) leads the cheers. "Hail he who has come from the skies to deliver us from the terrors of the Deadites! Hail! Hail!"

"No No No No No!" screams Ash as more fall to their knees around him and cheer "Hail!" The camera swiftly draws back, and we can see a castle in the background, walls on either side. It looks like the drawing we saw earlier. Ash is trapped in the past. (*Among the knights in armor are Josh Becker and Scott Spiegel, who reports that it was something like 110 degrees the day they shot the scene.*)

THE END

Sound of a fly .....

PART 7  
DARK BLOOD

\*\*\*HOW DID RENAISSANCE GET THE DEAL WITH UNIVERSAL? WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE DEAL?

\*\*\*WHY *Darkman*? WHAT OTHER PROJECTS DID YOU CONSIDER?

\*\*\* WHY NEESON?

Once again, the Renaissance team, now primarily Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert, with a small, permanent staff (which includes some people, such as Sue Binder, they knew back in Michigan), had completed an *Evil Dead* movie, and sought to head on into new territory. For one thing, gory movies were being targeted more and more by the ratings board of the MPAA. As Rob Tapert says, "Every single picture going through the ratings board that is a horror film is having a really difficult time. Gore is basically being killed by the rating system."

Sam had come up with the idea of a man who can change his face; he pitched the idea to Universal, and Renaissance entered into a production deal with Universal, but the company didn't really want an overt horror film. Universal was hoping to launch a franchise character in the Batman/Phantom of the Opera vein, and so *Darkman* was born. The similarities were acknowledged by the Renaissance partners. Sam Raimi said, "It has a lot of elements of a lot of pictures and stories that have gone before, that's for sure. *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Elephant Man*, *Batman*, *The Shadow*. And standard American revenge pictures, too. The idea actually didn't come from those, though, although the story does have elements similar to all of those and more. The movie came from the idea of a man who can change his face to become other people. It was originally a short story I wrote, and I presented it, and it was accepted with encouragement by friends. It segued into a longer story, then a 40-page treatment, and then it became a story of a man who'd lost his face and *had* to take on other faces. Then it became a story of a man who battled criminals using this power. And then because he lost his face, the idea of what would happen if he'd had a relationship before became important. It became a more tragic story, so it became more and more similar to *HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*." (Others have pointed out similarities to *Dr. X* and *The Walking Dead*.)

"As he became a crimefighter it became more and more like *Batman*," Sam went on, "a non-superpowered man who, here, is a hideous thing who fights crime. And as he became a pitiable creature it became more like *Hunchback of Notre Dame*... As he became a hideous, hideous, hideous thing, it became more like *Phantom of the Opera*, the creature who wanted the girl but who was too much of a beast to have her. It just kept taking on elements of other pictures, as it progressed on its own natural road. Now, like most stories, while it's similar to many other stories, I think it's unique."

Rob Tapert agrees. "It does have a lot of similarities to other movies," Rob Tapert admits, "and I think that's a part of what Sam as a writer and director brings -- a similarity, but he always finds a way of presenting it in a new or interesting way. There is only a certain amount of basic plotlines, and you can put different dressing on them. There are certain conventions based on the genre, the story, that are in it about a man who's disfigured and comes back, in this tragic love story between him and the woman he loves that he can't get back to."

Tapert points out that the project was developed by the studio, "which meant the hardest period for him and Sam was that was that "period between turning in the scripts and trying to get the green light. The whole nonsense that goes into trying to get a movie made. Once they said make this movie, that was a joyride, that's what you live for, that period of time when you're actually making a movie and doing something creative. The two years in development, the waiting, you turn in a script, they love it, come on in, come on back, we love it, we're going to go with it right now -- but we want these changes from word one, those are hard to deal with."

One result of the big-studio delays was that *Army of Darkness* was scheduled. "Hollywood's a funny place," says Rob Tapert, master of understatement. "After *Evil Dead II*, we had this tough time getting *Darkman* going. Sam had offers to do this and that, and Dino offered *Army of Darkness*, here's the money, here's the money, here's the money. We actually had the script and the whole thing ready to go, while Universal wouldn't give us the green light on *Darkman*. We finally drew the line in the sand, and told Universal we were going to make this other picture. That was what we needed to spark it, to get it to go."

By the time of *Darkman*, Rob Tapert had had time to reflect on just what he could do as a producer for Sam Raimi that others couldn't. "I think Sam and I work well together, because besides creatively in helping Sam work out his ideas, I think that I give Sam the support and help that he needs to make the best movie he can make. He's a pleasure to work with, so I think by doing everything to help Sam make the best movie he can, and providing additional support personnel, is probably the best support I can give him."

"I have my own theory on producing as regarding directors, which is if you're hiring a director to do a job, you should give him as much support as you can to do the job properly, as long as everyone's in agreement going in on the project what the goal is. Then, once you're on the set, in order to make the machine run smoothly, you have to give the director control and the authority to back it. It's very important, just in management terms, to make the director the head of the shooting crew, and to not do anything to erode his authority."

"Pre-production is really the most important time you spend on a film. The script is really the most important thing, then pre-production determines how you'll spend your production time. Sam and I are both great believers in the idea that there's really no such

thing as too much pre-production time. If you use it constructively, I think you should have a week of pre-production for every week of shooting, and on a low-budget picture, you probably should have two or three weeks of pre-production for every week. If you have to shoot the film in two or three weeks, the only way you can save yourself is a lot of pre-production and rehearsal, to know what you're doing."

The major difference between *Darkman* and the earlier Renaissance films, in terms of production, was the increased budget (around \$16 million). This meant more time available, and more effects possible. As Rob said, "This picture has an incredible amount of miniatures and effects, a tremendous amount. A lot of things we were doing weren't safe to do full size -- blowing guys through a roof, blowing up factories, helicopters that come crashing down into moving traffic. Some of these things they just won't let you do any more. [laughter] So we hired the best miniature guys in the business, the Skotak brothers. Their work is absolutely incredible. We tried to give Bob Skotak enough money to build the miniatures on such a scale that they're believable. Keeping them between a fourth and a sixth scale has enabled Bob -- by giving him enough money to have the resources to do that -- really make believable."

In the Hollywood that has existed since the collapse of the old studio system, this is the best stance for a producer to take: the facilitator of the director. Some producers eventually hunger to direct, but Rob Tapert is still content to be a producer only. "Directing's really hard work. You can't say, well, I'll call them back tomorrow. When you're the producer, and you're not feeling well, you can call them back tomorrow. But when you're the director, you have to have done your homework every morning when you come to the set."

During the post-production period on *Darkman*, Sam talked about the kind of director he is. "I don't shout. I see the script in a particular way, and I envision the movie from the script, and it's really just a matter of talking to people. 'No, no, he doesn't exit at that point, he exits at this point. The wall's gotta be blue, not green. The explosion takes place here, and it's a much smaller explosion, and it's all sparks, no fire, because of the nature of the electrical quality he's involved in.' It's really just a question of explaining to people on the set what it is that has to take place here. It's a question of losing as little as possible the vision you have of the picture. It's a question of recreating in three dimensions, what you have envisioned the movie to be. To me, it's really a communications process. I try to explain to the whole crew and cast before we start what the movie is; on a moment to moment basis, it's creating those beats in the movie that have to take place in order to tell the story, as I see it."

Raimi is a particularly interesting person to interview, take it from someone who's interviewed him many times. He's utterly candid, even painfully honest at times, because it just doesn't occur to him to be any other way at all. For example, when asked if he is a strong believer in structure, he paused for a long while before replying. "I

wish I could say that I was, but I'm not a good enough writer. I know that story is very important, and I'm trying to learn about story and characters, that's what I'm going to learn in the 90s."

Another of his goals for the 90s was to learn how to deal more effectively with actors, one of the reasons he played his largest role as an actor so far in (?) Binder's *Indian Summer* (and for which he got highly favorable personal reviews). In *Darkman*, Frances McDormand played the female lead; she was someone Sam had known for years, ever since he shared a house with her, Holly Hunter, and Joel and Ethan Coen. He thought that working with her would be a smooth process -- but it wasn't.

"I knew she was a woman with a lot of soul," Sam said, "and I counted on her bringing a lot of that soul to the picture. And she did, she really did. But it was very difficult to direct her. I thought it would be like working with Bruce Campbell, whom I've known since high school, but apparently I didn't know Fran as well as I thought I did. We're still friends, but we learned a lot about each other in the course of the production. The reason it was difficult was that our conception of the best movie to make differed. It wasn't as extreme as her wanting to make a comedy with me wanting to make a drama, it was just arguing in trying to make the best picture possible. Interpretation of the character, what the character would do in a situation.

"It was a learning experience for me. I had usually dealt with actors like they were pawns, putting them where they had to be to get the maximum horror effect, but in this case, it was all about the characters, so I had to open myself up to what the actors portraying those characters believed their characters would do, or how they might react in a situation. Many times I went into a scene thinking the character would act *this* way, and I let the actor convince me they *wouldn't*. I went with their gut reaction, hoping it would turn out for the best.

For *Darkman*, believe it or not, Sam Raimi tried to tone down his style. Yes, it's hard to believe from watching the movie itself, which is full of bravura camera effects and movements, but Sam was really trying to reign himself in. As he said at the time, "The style is very different in this picture. My main goal in this film is to create real characters in something of a fantastic situation. I'm trying to keep the camera movement to a more realistic level, as opposed to a wild level, where I take on the point of view of spirits, or unnatural, or supernatural things. I'm trying to make this take place in the real world. So I'm not trying to throw the audience out of it, to have them say, 'Hey, that's a neat shot.' I'd rather they were sucked into the story and not pulled away from it by something that's too wild, too unusual visually, that wasn't called for. So I'm really trying to restrain myself, which is not easy, and let the characters tell the story. It's certainly working so far for me, but it's nothing I've ever done before, though. I've never experimented like this; it's about the time I should."

The result was his most audience-pleasing movie to date, which pleased Raimi despite the problems with Universal. As he said at the time, "I've never been able to make a hit picture -- but that's never been my goal. It has always been to make the best movie possible, to entertain the audience. I thought they were synonymous -- and maybe they are."

*Darkman* succeeds (and gets better on repeated viewings) despite story holes (so what if the synthetic skin works in the darkness? it is never required to) and an uncomfortable number of coincidences (Strack leaves the Bellisarius Document out in the open on his desk), thanks to the intensity of Raimi's style, the astonishing stunts, and the outstanding performances of all four leads, *Darkman* wowed audiences -- even while many of them thought there was something missing. For the first time, though, a Sam Raimi movie did turn up on some best-of-the-year lists. Rob Tapert says that Universal felt that *Darkman* was their best-reviewed film of the year.

This was something the Renaissance team (Bruce Campbell does appear briefly in *Darkman*) wasn't expecting. There were two factions in the Black Tower (the executive offices) at Universal, those who supported *Darkman* and those who didn't like it; the negative comments were strong enough that the huge number of favorable reviews the film got surprised Rob Tapert, "because we were expecting the worst. There were a few people in the structure at Universal who were behind the project from the start, and even when it was testing very poorly, and people didn't understand what it was all about, there were some people in marketing, and our executive, who stood by the picture. Only once they screened it for national press three weeks before it opened, and they got good reviews, did the studio feel they had a good picture."

The Renaissance team simply wasn't expecting the odd structure at movie studios today, where almost everyone with a title feels impelled to make changes in the script, where it takes forever to get any kind of response, favorable or unfavorable. As many have said, the amazing thing about movies today isn't that they turn out good or bad, but that they ever get made at all.

Rob Tapert admitted, "The experience on *Darkman* was very difficult for Sam and I; it isn't the picture we thought it should be, based on the footage we shot and all that. The studio got nervous about some kind of wild things in it, and made us take it out, which was unfortunate. We fought until the very last minute to sneak some of it back in. And a lot of it is what the audience really liked."

Nonetheless, they kept their offices at Universal (they're not far from those of Spielberg's Amblin Productions, but much less grand), and continued to work with the studio on more projects, including the five made-for-TV *Hercules* movies, while still being able to make deals off the lot.

And one of those deals was *Army of Darkness*. Though the film was released by Universal, it was essentially an outside production, made with Dino De Laurentiis.

Though this isn't the *Darkman Companion*, the synopsis of the film is worth including here, as with *Crimewave*.

## DARKMAN

A Renaissance Pictures Production

Down at the docks un an unidentified city, two groups of gangsters, one group arriving in cars, the other waiting in a warehouse, face off; there is a deal going down. The bad guys in cars, still guarded, are marched into the warehouse by the huge number of other bad guys -- more of whom appear on a balcony, on boxes, and so forth. The head guy at the warehouse, Eddie Black, notices that one of the newcomers limps; "bum leg?" he asks. The other guy knocks on his shin, with a wooden rap. "No leg," he replies.

The leader of the newcomers, Durant (Larry Drake), looks around him. Eddie snarls, "Nobody muscles Eddie Black, especially a bunch of dinks." On a nod from Durant, one of his men kneels, pulls the wooden leg off the limping man, and fires it: it's a gun. (There's Raimi-esque shot from the viewpoint of the gun itself, and we see the one-legged man hopping in place to keep from falling down.) On Eddie's cry of "Take 'em down!" cars erupt out of packing crates. Lots of gunfire, car wrecks, people being shot, more car wrecks and so forth. (Rick, one of Durant's men -- and apparent lover -- is Ted Raimi)

Durant pulls out a cigar and a heavy duty cigar trimmer, clips the end off the cigar. Then as he outlines his points ("One: I try not to let my anger get the best of me" -- SNICK -- "Two. I don't always succeed." -- SNICK -- "Three: I've got seven more points."), he uses his cigar trimmer to cut off Eddie's fingers one by one.

Here, the credits roll.

In a laboratory, Peyton Westlake (Liam Neeson) and his assistant use a computer, imaging systems and artificial flesh to create a duplicate of a nose, which, after 99 minutes, dissolves into goo. "Fragmentation in 99 minutes. Why why why why?" Peyton muses. "Why won't the liquid skin last?"

Peyton is sure he can come up with the answer. He and his girlfriend, lawyer Julie Hastings (Frances McDormand), look at slides together, including some of each of them as children. They're obviously very relaxed and comfortable together. In the morning, Julie talks business on the phone as Peyton puts a coffee cup down on some important papers, leaving a ring. She suspects someone has been paying off the zoning commission, but wants to talk to Strack, the businessman paying her. As she leaves for work, he says he wants, finally, to get married. She's in too much of a hurry at the moment, however, to discuss it.



Julie meets with Strack (Colin Friels), and mentions the suspicious memo from his office to Claude Bellisarius. He admits they were bribes, and that she wasn't supposed to know about it. He gloats over his Lucite model of a huge new center, reclaimed from the waterfront, and justifies his bribes by claiming this building was worth it. He mentions the name of Robert Durant, a gangster she knows of by reputation, and says that Durant, too, is after that property, and would do anything to get proof that Strack bent the law.

Back Peyton's lab, on the waterfront, he and his assistant are still working on the synthetic skin. They're checking a new batch as the overloaded circuit breaker kills the lights -- but the synthetic skin has now lasted over 100 minutes. They realize the cells are photo-sensitive, and last longer in the dark. *(This idea gives the film its title -- but it really turns out to have nothing to do with the story.)*

Durant and his gang break in, demanding the Bellisarius memorandum; they rough up Peyton and his assistant, smashing the scientist's head into a cabinet (we see this from inside the glass cabinet). They kill his assistant in front of him in an effort to force the documents out of him, but Peyton can't help them, since he knows nothing about it. When they do find the documents (with the coffee ring) on his desk), they assume he was lying all along.

He's tortured by having his hand zapped by big electrical gizmos, he's shoved face first into boiling pink liquid. Meanwhile, Durant opens the valve on a tank of gas, and places a cigarette lighter under the beak of a Dippy Bird, and they leave.

Julie, mulling over Peyton's proposal, arrives at his modest lab. Inside, he crawls with his burned hands toward the Dippy Bird, getting there just as its beak (with a little creak) swings down to the cigarette lighter. It ignites; we see a closeup of Peyton's eye contracting as the explosion erupts. From high in the air, we look down at the lab as Peyton, in flames and groaning, sails by the camera, upward into the sky. He plunges into the bay. Julie, stunned, stares at the ruins of the lab.

She stands there aghast; everything around her -- including her own clothes -- dissolve from the scene on the street to a cemetery. She's standing at Peyton's grave.

She doesn't know that Peyton is in an intensive care ward in a hospital. A heartless doctor (Jenny Agutter) briskly tells some interns (one of whom is John Landis) that he was found without any identification in an area where there are a lot of homeless and indigents. He's got burns over 40% of his body, with the face and hands being the most severe; "we sever the nerves... which transmit impulses of pain and vibratory sense to the brain." She says that when this is done, sudden rages are not uncommon; emotions run wild; surges of adrenalin create augmented strength, which is why he's restrained.

After they leave, Peyton awakes as rage overwhelms him, just like the doctor ordered. He breaks free. When the callous doctor and others rush in, Peyton is gone into the rainy night.

He struggles down a rainy alley, donning a ragged coat he finds there. He emerges to see Julie briskly walking down the street with a red umbrella, in the first of the movie's several coincidences. He catches up, but she doesn't understand his inarticulate grunts. He returns to his burned out, exploded lab, tries to piece together some equipment. It is hopeless. He cuts away his bandages, sees his face (offscreen), cries "Oh m, god, no" as the camera finds a photo of him and Julie at his feet -- with his face torn and damaged.

Later, in the daylight, he he finds some sort of vast old warehouse, dusty, ruined, but possibly livable. "Home," he mutters ironically. Somehow he gets power going, puts together a semblance of his old lab out of his burned equipment. He uses and the damaged photo of him and Julie his equipment to create an image of himself in the holographic imaging chamber, and employs the computer to fill in the ruined places.

In a dynamic montage, he tries to perfect his synthetic flesh. But he cannot get past the 99-hour limitation. "They took my hands!"

Meanwhile, at a Strack Industries ball, the suave Strack romances Julie, unaware that Peyton watches them from above. He catches sight of Rick, there with Durant, and there's a brief montage of his anger and recollection.

Soon thereafter, Peyton grabs Rick in an alley; in the sewers, he forces Rick to reveal that Durant ordered the killing of the assistant and the destruction of Peyton's lab. He sticks Rick up through the manhole cover into a busy street; cars rush by the screaming Rick until one runs over his head.

Later Peyton photographs Paulie, the heavy-set bald henchman, and others, too, as they meet him. Peyton uses his equipment to make a mask of Paulie's face and hands, in Paulie's apartment, Peyton drugs him, plants some airline tickets in his closet, then strips away his bandages to reveal -- Paulie.

Nervously pretending to be Paulie, he meets with Durant's henchman and takes the usual bag of money. Shortly thereafter, the henchmen and Durant burst into Paulie's apartment, find evidence Peyton left pinning the theft on Paulie. Next shot: Paulie thrown through a window, plunging ten stories to the street below, where he slams into the top of a car. So much for Rick, so much for Paulie. (Peyton, still masked as Paulie, sits on a bench nearby, shocking a passerby; his face gives up the ghost at this moment.)

Despite moral misgivings, Peyton continues with his plans, occasionally having fits of remorse and self-pity. He finally makes a duplicate of his own, pre-accident face, and meets an initially disbelieving Julie at his own grave. (McDormand is good, Neeson is great.) He warns her that he's not the same person he was before, and that he needs time to sort things out.

Later, at Durant's house, the gangster pets a stuffed rabbit, putters around with his collection of fingers. The missing money is causing them serious problems; they have to deal with Hung Fat. He makes arrangements to be picked up -- unaware that Peyton has tapped his line and is recording his voice, so he can duplicate it. He is making a mask of Durant's face.

Still wearing the mask, Peyton holds up a convenience store, taking pains to be sure the surveillance camera sees him. The real Durant is arrested, while disguised Peyton goes to Chinatown with the two remaining henchmen.

Hung Fat and Durant square off, with Hung trying to stall, but Peyton gains confidence and finally threatens the Chinese gang lord. Meanwhile, the real Durant, furious, boils out of jail and heads for Chinatown. (Drake is also excellent.)

He charges into the restaurant, is caught in a revolving door with Peyton, the two staring at each other in shock (very well done). Even we cannot tell which of them is the real Durant as they slug it out. But then the victor, with the case of money, is given away as his face starts to smoke and bubble. (Drake is also very good.) Pursued by Durant and his henchmen, Peyton flees into the Chinatown crowds, ultimately abandoning his fake face. The real Durant is mystified.

At a carnival, Peyton unwillingly reveals his brand-new terrible temper to Julie in a furiously angry (and slightly comic) altercation over a stuffed pink elephant. *(Some bravura Raimi stuff here, such as following the thrown ball in flight, and rushing headlong into Peyton's right eye, finding the rage there, and fleeing out of the left. Universal tried to get Rob & Sam to eliminate this stuff, but they got it in anyway.)*

As the shameful Peyton flees, Julie follows him, all the way to his laboratory, where she finds his laboratory all set up and muttering way to itself, including a full mask of Peyton's face. As she holds it, it melts over his fingers. "Why didn't you tell me, Peyton?" she calls into the shadows, where Peyton now lurks. This is the first time we get a good look at his ruined face. Though she pleads for him to come out, Peyton remains in the shadows.

Back at Strack's headquarters, she tells him that Peyton is alive, and has come back, and that she wants to cut off her relationship with Stark. As he takes a phone call, and she glances at some papers on his desk, recognizing one of them (the film is full of coincidences) as the one on which Peyton left his coffee cup. Yes, says Strack, the Bellisarius memorandum.

He says he has an employee who does things for him, unofficially, off the books. He points out the extremely expensive police department will be of no help to her. He opens big windows to show his big project under construction. He still tries to put the make on her. "If you're not going to kill me," she says shakily, "I have things to do." *(Friels is very good here, suggesting a deranged monomania without acting conventionally crazy.)*

Strack orders Durant to kill Julie and Peyton.

Julie returns to Peyton's lab just as two carloads of fresh henchmen drive up and open fire. One car stays behind; guys from the other grab Julie and take off. They invade the old factory, blasting away. Peyton, in full Darkman garb, rushes about, trying to catch up

with the car carrying Julie, but he's confronted by Durant in a helicopter, firing some kind of superduper gun with explosive shells. Lots of big fiery explosions here as Peyton flees down the rooftops of the factory district with the helicopter overhead.

Peyton uses his mastery at disguise and inability to feel pain to overcome the bad guys in the warehouse, then jumps at Durant's helicopter. The warehouse below explodes (set off by a dippy bird again) as the copter zooms away, with Darkman dangling from a cable below. *(I've never seen anything else quite like the aerial stunts in this movie -- they're it's extensive, astonishing, daring.)*

After a lot of this sort of thing, with Durant trying to smash Darkman into buildings or to drop him into oncoming traffic, Darkman manages to hook the copter to a truck, smashing the chopper into a traffic tunnel.

Later. A scarred, burned Durant trims his cigar as Strack arrives at the big center under construction. Durant tells Strack that Westlake scragged the copter. Strack tells Durant he's going to have to kill the attorney with him: the bound, gagged Julie. All four (including a spare henchman) ascend in the construction elevator, as Strack cheerfully tells Julie how he killed his wife for her deeds.

But Strack, who may be nuts but is no fool, has realized that Durant is really Peyton in disguise. There's a lot of cliffhanging action, shot in Raimi's bravura, intense style, on the naked girders of the building under construction. Julie ends up dangling from some construction bars by the ropes on her wrist, while Peyton has it out with Strack (the henchman is an early casualty).

Strack taunts him: "I've gotten to know Julie quite intimately in your absence, and her tastes are varied, but I can tell you this: she doesn't date freaks." Zoom, the camera goes into Peyton's mouth and out his eye as he and pounds Strack. Julie slips and almost falls, but Peyton swings by on a cable and saves her, then swings back after Strack, kicks him off a girder, then catches him by the ankle. Upside down, Strack tells Peyton that if he lets him die, "You'll become as bad as me -- worse! You can't! I know you too well. Dropping me is not really an option for you -- it's not something you can live with." Peyton thinks about this, then drops Strack. "I'm learning to live with a lot of things," he says.

Peyton and Julie ride down in the elevator. Don't look at me, he says. She insists he show her, which he does. He tells her he thought that she could love him again if he wore a mask -- could love the man inside. But he tells her, "As I worked in the mask, I found the man inside was changing. He became wrong -- a monster. I can live with it now, but I don't think anyone else can."

On the ground, he walks away; she calls after him. "Peyton!" she says. He turns back, caught in a shaft of light. "Peyton is gone," he says, then turns away. He quickly puts on a new mask. She flees after him, calling his name, turning people around as she comes to them. "I'm everyone and no one," Peyton's voice says on the soundtrack as we see his new face (Bruce Campbell); "I'm everywhere and nowhere. Call me -- Darkman."

Evil Dead Book/rough draft/part 7/144

GET CREDITS FROM SOMEWHERE. NEED ALL CREDITS AT END OF BOOK.

Among those in the cast in small roles: William Dear, Julius Harris, Phil Gillis, Danny Hicks, John Landis, John Cameron, William Lustig, Stuart Cornfeld, Scott Spiegel. Bruce is billed as First Shemp.

The credits roll here, with Liam Neeson's name coming first, then Frances McDormand, then DARKMAN. Colin Friels, Larry Drake, Music by Danny Elfman, Makeup effects by Tony Gardner & Larry Hamlin; Costume Designer, Grania Preston; SFE Bud Smith & Scott Smith; PRD Randy Ser; CIN Bill Pope; LINE PRO Daryl Kass; STY Sam Raimi; SCR Chuck Pfarrer and Sam Raimi & Ivan Raimi and Daniel Goldin & Joshua Goldin; PRO Robert Tapert; DIR Sam Raimi." Excellent music; scenes are shots of Darkman's bandaged face.

PART 8  
ANCIENT BLOOD

After the moderate success of *Darkman*, Universal was interested in pursuing other projects with Renaissance, but the stop-and-start process of getting that movie off the ground had been irksome to Sam Raimi and Rob Tapert, and they weren't necessarily anxious to leap into another similar arrangement. Meanwhile, they felt that they owed a project to Dino De Laurentiis, who had been very accommodating to them on *Evil Dead II*, and who had given them the go-ahead for *Army of Darkness* while Universal was dragging its corporate heels in getting *Darkman* going.

In an interview conducted for *Fangoria* (with, ahem, me), Rob Tapert explained why they went back to Dino, "Because we made a deal with Dino a long time ago to do it, and we had to honor. Plus, Sam and I love them. We did *Evil Dead II*, and Dino left us alone. We delivered Dino an X-rated picture when we had to deliver an R, he said he liked it as it is. He released an X-rated [actually, unrated] movie and took a beating at the US boxoffice. Dino's been very good to us on this picture, too.

"He says, 'That's all the money you have,' and you can go back and ask for more until you're blue in the face, and he won't give you any more, but he leaves us alone, he's supportive in every other way. And you don't have the studio interference on a day to day basis, making your crew jittery. It's a very different experience, Sam and I have enjoyed it very much, working for Dino."

Sam agreed, "This movie was a lot of fun to make," he said, "mainly because of the involvement with Rob and Bruce, and because we were allowed a very free hand creatively, like on the first two *Evil Deaths*, so that made it a very, very good experience for us. That was due to Dino De Laurentiis, and the fact that he trusted our creative vision."

*Army of Darkness* had a much lower budget than *Darkman*, but Tapert and Raimi viewed it as a tradeoff: less money but more control. "A step back toward more independent filmmaking, away from the studio structure," Tapert agreed, "You don't have ten different execs with ten different opinions watching your dailies and deciding what's wrong with your movie based on what they see in the dailies."

Because their script for *Evil Dead II* had turned out so well, Sam first invited Scott Spiegel to return to co-write *Army of Darkness*. However, Spiegel was involved in rewrites on the Clint Eastwood movie, *The Rookie*, he cowrote with his friend Boaz Yakin, as well as with *The Nutty Nut*, a movie he wrote and was scheduled to direct. Spiegel was flattered, but his other jobs were pulling him away, "and I felt I had already done one of those films. It was kind of neat to be brought on board again, but I could do it only if we did it quickly, which I knew couldn't happen. I love working with Sam, though, and I'd like to do

more of it." Not only was Spiegel involved in his own projects, but Raimi was still finishing *Darkman*, and Renaissance Pictures had other projects starting up as well.

Around this same time, Sam had collaborated with his brother Ivan on a script finally called *Easy Wheels*. That work had gone well, too, so Sam brought in Ivan to co-write *Army of Darkness*. As explained earlier, the idea of hauling Ash back to Medieval Times went back as far as Irvin Shapiro. As Bruce Campbell explains, "*Evil Dead II* was originally designed to go back into the past in 1300, but we couldn't muster the money at the time, so we decided to make an interim version, not ever knowing if the 1300 story would ever get made."

However, Dino De Laurentiis was pleased with the world-wide grosses for *Evil Dead II*, and commissioned Sam to write a third film -- with the medieval setting. This script was mostly written in 1988, but *Darkman* intervened; De Laurentiis was willing to wait. Sam hauled out the 1988 draft, and he and Ivan worked on it for some time, bringing in new ideas and scaling it to the budget that they were being given.

There are more ways *Army of Darkness* is different from the first two *Evil Dead*s than there are similarities. As Sam himself said. "This picture is not so much a horror film as it is an adventure film -- there's no gore in *Evil Dead 3*. I mean in *Army of Darkness*, the old policy was the Gore The Merrier, but now we're trying to make it in a different vein. While there are still horrific effects, it's now played more for comedy and adventure than to elicit a horrific reaction from the audience. The effects are slanted toward skeleton animation, and the magic and terror created by the Book of the Dead, versus the effects slanted toward the dissection of the human form. It's more fantasy oriented rather than horror oriented.

"We've told more of an old-fashioned kind of story with this film, versus the first two *Evil Dead*s, which are modernistic types of films, minimalistic stories, all effects. This one actually does have a story and more expanded characters, I think in this picture Bruce Campbell's character Ash is more fully-expanded upon than it was in the previous two *Evil Dead*s, which is not a tough thing."

Bruce Campbell added more on the differences, and on how he, Rob and Sam work together. "How we usually do it is, we decided whether we wanted to stay in 1300 or whether we wanted to go back to the cabin. We all decided, Get him out of the cabin. There were earlier drafts where part 3 took place in the cabin. We thought, Well, we all know that cabin, it's time to move on. The three of us decided to keep it in 1300, it's more interesting. I think when you get into sequels, you better make sure that you are entertaining yourself as well as the audience, because otherwise you get kind of in a rut. Hopefully we'll never get in a situation where you can cut any of the sequels together and it doesn't matter. This gave us a chance to have a very distinct sequel. It's a complete departure from any of the other ones.

"This one is a chance to really get out and have it become more a fun adventure story than a hardcore in-your-face horror film. What Rob and I generally do is read drafts and compile extensive notes, turn 'em in to Sam, and he acts as the editor. He says, That's a good idea, let's do this, or, No, I think we need to do this. We always defer to Sam, but he's pretty good about taking our notes."

But the initial budget of \$8 million was clearly too small. As Campbell says, "It became drastically real during the course of preproduction that there was no way in hell we were going to make that script for \$8 million, based on how Sam likes to make movies: he likes a long time to shoot. So we went back to Dino and said we needed more money."

De Laurentiis had a multi-picture deal with Universal at the time, so *Army of Darkness* became one of the films in the deal, with De Laurentiis putting up half the money and Universal the other half. "We figured we needed \$11 million," Campbell goes on, "but the finished budget was around 13; we needed another couple million in there for enhancements and changes. Once they opened the movie back up and made cuts, there was more technical expense incurred, as well as paying us a back salary. We knew that in dealing with studios, a back-end deal doesn't mean you'll ever get your net points, so we had an arrangement with Dino De Laurentiis where we would retain England as a territory, because we knew from the first two *Evil Dead* movies what it was worth." Raimi, Tapert and Campbell knew they could always sell rights to that territory back to Dino if they needed the money.

The hard-core *Evil Dead* fans, as it turned out, were somewhat disappointed by the comedy/adventure slant of the script of *Army of Darkness*, but both Raimi and Campbell wanted to go in new directions. As Sam said, "Bruce really wanted to do something very different while still continuing the *Evil Dead* saga, so we felt that the best way to continue the saga, but make it different, was to change the tone and the intended effect the film would have on an audience. So we chose to make them laugh and, hopefully, gasp with fun vs, gasp in horror."

Others were confused, or even irritated, by Bruce's character: this time out, Ash is such a jerk he's somewhat hard to root for. On the one hand, this weakens the movie in terms of audience identification with the leading character, but on the other, it was courageous (if not altogether wise) of the Raimi brothers to fly in the face of conventional Hollywood wisdom and the pressures put upon them to make a more likable hero.

As Bruce Campbell said, the changes in the story and the character of Ash, "go back to the point of us trying to stimulate ourselves as well. Do we just want to go from one slice and dice movie to the next, or do we want to get into other realms?"

"Ash is definitely a loser in this one, I'll tell you. Actually, part of the beauty of the films is that everyone sitting in the audience is at least as smart as he is. If he did everything right, he never would have been in there in the first place. The first *Evil*



*Dead* would have ended after about ten minutes. They'd get to this cabin and go, Okay, it's time to go home now. It's getting scary, we're leaving. Let's go back and rent a video."

Although *The Evil Dead* did set up a romance for Ash, nothing paid off; the romantic interludes in *Evil Dead II* can be numbered in seconds of running time. In *Army of Darkness*, he gets to be seductive ("Gimme some sugar, baby") as well as a hero, and a lover. Campbell enjoyed the change. "It's actually a treat. Ash gets the chance at a little bit of tenderness. He doesn't handle that particularly well, either. But it's neat to keep it a mixed bag, so it's not just looking serious, it's not just looking afraid, it's not just screaming and yelling, you also get to have a semi-adult sort of conversation. But that's also handled in a stylized way. You won't see a scene with Ash and a woman that is straight from "thirtysomething." It ain't going to happen."

In *Army of Darkness*, the plot not only provided Campbell the opportunity for a little romance, but to play more than one role. First he (rather inexplicably) multiplies into many little, six-inch Ashes, played by Bruce and some doubles. He actually manages to act tiny here, with giant leaps and exaggerated expressions; Sam also keeps the camera high and at a distance, emphasizing the miniature aspect of the rotten little Ashes. Then, one dives into Ash's mouth, and soon Ash splits into two Ashes, as if one wasn't enough. And this being the kind of film it is, one is Good Ash, the other is Bad Ash.

But just because one of them is evil (with, soon enough, a horrendously ruined face, courtesy of Alterian Studios), "I think they're both in a way comparable losers," Bruce says. Evil Ash might be a bit more competent in some areas, "but that doesn't necessarily make him a more qualified individual. So we've got some stuff [in which] he has some difficulties commanding his guys, and it's not like in a Dick Van Dyke sort of way, it's because he's frustrated, he's got a lot of confidence, so most of his men are fueled by overconfidence." As it happened, unfortunately, most of Evil Ash's blunders didn't turn up in the final cut, although his lower jaw, held on by rope, does have the tendency to drop off from time to time.

"Regular Ash," Bruce continues, is "basically an idiot about 70 percent of the time, but then when it comes to fighting, he knows what to do. Ash doesn't make many mistakes when it actually comes to battling the evil dead. He's a good quick-thinker and a bad slow-thinker. If he's got to sit and reason something, he's going to have trouble."

The picture came together smoothly enough, within the budget restrictions -- which would have allowed for Julia Roberts to play the role of Sheila. She tested for the role, and was almost signed (this was just before *Pretty Woman*), but it was felt she didn't have a medieval enough look. South African actress Embeth Davidtz, making her first American film, *did* have that kind of look; Ivan Raimi said you might find her on the cover of *Modern Jousting*. Dino de Laurentiis objected to her at first, because her, um, chest wasn't

prominent enough, but he was satisfied with her performance in dailies. (So was Steven Spielberg -- who cast her as Amon Goethe's maid in *Schindler's List*.) Shooting began in mid-1991, and continued for around 100 days.

There is much more exterior work in *Army of Darkness* than in either of the previous two films in the series, with a huge castle set -- or most of it, anyway -- being built on a hill near Acton, California, in the hilly fringes of the Mojave Desert, not far from Palmdale. The rest of the castle set was provided through the Introvision process, heavily used on *Army of Darkness*.

I visited the *Army of Darkness* location one afternoon, on into the evening, on behalf of *Fangoria* magazine, giving me the opportunity to step on stage personally, if briefly, so I can give you a first-person description of what it was like to visit that set.

Acton is about 50 miles from Los Angeles, a very isolated location; the castle set was way up on the side of one of those barren-looking but beautiful California hills, which lie in smooth, tan folds, almost like mountains of warm flesh. Not far from here is Soledad Canyon, where Spielberg directed *Duel* years ago; down in the valley below the castle set is Shamballa, the wild animal ranch run by Tippi Hedren and her husband. It's essentially a retirement home for lions and tigers, whose roars spooked horses imported for the big charge of the Deadites at the climax of *Army of Darkness*. The production also used local horses, used to the big cats' night cries, for a total of 47 horses in all.

Most of the crew, and all of the extras, were shuttled up to the castle in vans; only the most important members of the team got to drive their own cars up to the top. There were trailers and tents everywhere, and the night I visited -- one of those devoted to filming the big assault on the castle -- was one of the busiest, with well over a hundred people milling about.

I arrived when it was daylight; shooting hadn't begun. The castle courtyard had some medieval items here and there, but also a big Snorkelift camera crane, fitted with a gigantic light. From a distance, the walls of the castle appeared to be made of stone, but up close, closer than the camera ever gets, they were obviously painted plastic over plywood.

A big portcullis -- the barred gate of a castle -- was hanging above the entrance to the castle, and the drawbridge across the (now dry) moat had been lowered. People wandered about in the growing dusk, mostly extras getting garbed to play Deadites or defenders of the castle. There were several degrees of Deadite-ness: those who stayed in the far distance wore simple tights with skeletons painted on them; those who were closer to the camera had more elaborate outfits -- black, form-fitting garments with fake bones fasted to them, and detailed masks. The Deadites closest of all to the camera were played by articulated skeleton puppets, operated from below by operators from the KNB FX Group.

And some of the skeletons were rendered in Ray Harryhausen-like stop motion (all of the *Evil Dead* films feature some stop motion, *Army* by far the most), directed by Pete Kleinow. One of the most interesting stop-motion effects, however, was cut from the film for running time: when Evil Ash begins to emerge from Good Ash, for a short while they have four arms and four legs -- and a spidery puppet was built of this that scuttled through the forest on its back. But it's gone from the film.

There's nothing else quite like a movie location at night; it has aspects of a trail camp, with both cars and horses, definitely a temporary feeling to it, with false fronts impersonating permanent buildings, and all those trailers. Just before the shoot, Sam Raimi was closeted in his trailer with Rob Tapert, his brother Ivan and his assistant director. Elsewhere, Bruce Campbell was being fitted into his complicated Evil Ash makeup by workers from Tony Gardner's Alterian Studios.

One of the Deadites -- the Deadite Captain, in fact -- was played by Bill Moseley, who was very impressive as "Choptop" in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part 2*. His role, fairly large in the rough cut of *Army of Darkness*, was reduced to just a few lines in the final cut, but

was glad to work on the picture anyway. "Four or five years ago," Moseley said, "I took my then-pregnant girlfriend to see *Evil Dead II*.

had never anything about it. I had never heard of *Evil Dead* or Sam Raimi or Bruce Campbell, and I went to see it during its very brief run at Mann's Chinese Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard. I completely freaked out. Within the first ten minutes, I knew I wanted to work with Sam Raimi, I wanted to be in *Evil Dead 3*, and here I am."

Slowly, everything came together; Bruce's makeup was finished, Moseley and the other Deadites were costumed, and everyone gathered in the sloping field in front of the castle. Smoke pots were ignited, field "artillery" (catapults, mostly) is in place, the Deadite army, on foot and on horseback, is in position.

Sam stood in the middle of the field, an electric megaphone in his hand, as he exhorted his army of the dead on to do really nasty stuff. He called them "evil rotting hulks, creatures of the night, decaying monsters," and suggested that they should be "eyeing the castle, thinking about the plunder inside." When they're worked up to the proper fever pitch, the Deadite Captain and another skeletal horseman -- so skeletal there's no actor, just a torso mounted on a saddle -- gallop up to Evil Ash and the transformed Sheila to announce that the army is ready to charge. Moseley does his work fine, but the skeletal torso never works quite right, in take after take.

The army of skeletons regroups -- in movie terms, it's back to one (the position everyone starts from) -- and the whole elaborate take is done again. And again. On into the night. The crew has to stay, but visiting journalists can go home and to bed.

Although most of the exterior filming for *Army of Darkness* took place in and around the castle set near Acton, other locations were used, too, such as the very familiar Vasquez Rocks, where the path to the cemetery begins, the open woods through which Ash is chased by the good old Force POV, and, in a scene cut from the American release

print of the film, Bronson Caverns, in Griffith Park.

Vasquez Rocks and Bronson Caverns are very probably the most heavily-used movie locations anywhere in the world. Hundreds, perhaps *thousands*, of movies and episodes of TV shows have been filmed in both locations. And both are open to the public, since they're on park lands. Vasquez Rocks lie between Palmdale and Los Angeles, to the north of the freeway; clearly-marked signs will lead you to these highly recognizable slanting rocks that have served as the backdrop for Western after Western, science fiction movie after science fiction movie. Just recently, they were right behind Fred and Wilma Flintstone's house in the movie of *The Flintstones*.

Bronson Caverns are in a part of Griffith Park, the mammoth city park within the boundaries of Los Angeles, that most people overlook, but you can find them. Drive up to the end of either Bronson or Canyon Avenues, above Franklin; just keep going until the road is no longer paved. Park and walk up the dirt road on the east side of Bronson Canyon, and you'll come to the caves. They were part of a quarry back in the 1910s, and have been used for movies ever since then. No movie is too big to have scenes shot at the Caverns -- parts of the Marlon Brando *Julius Caesar* and the climax of *The Searchers*. And certainly no movie is too *small*; virtually all of *Robot Monster* was shot in the canyon and the caverns. The biggest, single entrance was used for the exterior of the Batcave in the *Batman* TV series; inside the caverns is where Kevin McCarthy and Dana Wynter hid in the *First Invasion of the Body Snatchers*; behind, where there are three entrances, Roger Corman shot several films, including most of *Teenage Caveman* and the climax of *It Conquered the World*.

For *Army of Darkness*, Raimi filmed a brief scene of Campbell riding up to the cave; it's where he sleeps away the centuries in order to get back to his own time -- or, in the original cut, on some foreign laserdiscs, and in the comic book, to a time in the distant future when Deadites have finally taken over.

Bruce Campbell has taken direction from Sam Raimi more than anyone else ever has -- or is likely to -- so he's in a position to discuss Sam as a director. "Over the years I've actually seen him become a little more open to input. He doesn't feel threatened, because he knows that, he's comfortable with it. He knows lenses, he knows technique. Now the cameraman may say, We can really juice this if we blah blah blah, and Sam will go, Oh, great, that's good. Then he'll announce to the crew, Oh, I just had a good idea. He'll tease, he'll toy with them like that. I've seen him become much more confident behind the camera. He always was, in a weird way, which is great, but now he's able to turn to actors, and they're not as much chess pieces as they were."

On the other hand, as Sam himself has admitted, he is not yet entirely comfortable directing actors. Bruce noticed this. "You get actors who come in and they're used to preparing a certain way that Sam doesn't know. He'll keep the camera rolling and he'll say, Go right back to one, and I think it threw some of the other actors." That means to return to the positions you were in at the beginning of the take, and it applies to both actors and crew; Sam is very unusual in that he keeps the camera running during this.

Bruce Campbell is, of course, the star of all three of the *Evil Dead* movies; Sam Raimi can be seen at the end of *Evil Dead II*, but

apart from playing various Deadites seen from the rear and dismembered, twitching body parts, Rob Tapert hadn't really been seen on screen. So Sam gave him a small role in *Army of Darkness* -- but don't look for him in it.

As Rob says, "The editing room is cruel." His scene was cut. But while filming it, "I was in this whole medieval costume with a white contact in my eye, scars on my face, looking like an absolute idiot" when a problem came up with a complaint by a local woman about the picture, so in full makeup and costume, Rob had to deal with the police and the annoyed woman. "That was an amusing anecdote for a producer," he added, while Sam interjected, "Funny how it's amusing to you now."

After shooting the exteriors, the *Army of Darkness* company moved over to the Introvision stages in Hollywood, where the stop-motion animation for the film was done by Pete Kleinow, and where the Introvision process added a lot of value to the film in general. Introvision was used for almost all the effects were in most films, other forms of matting would have been used.

Introvision is one of those technologically-intensive processes that's very difficult to describe in words, but easy to understand when you see it demonstrated. What it amounts to is the ability to do matte work at the same time that you're shooting your actors. It involves frontscreen projection of art or previously-photographed miniatures onto Scotchlite-coated screens that bounce back virtually all of the light they receive.

The images are projected through the camera lens, so the light bounces straight back at the lens itself. Standing on an Introvision set, you'd see actors and a few props, then large silver objects of no definite shape. But if you look through the camera's viewfinder, you see just what will be seen in the theater later on: the actors moving among the projected sets. The light isn't bright enough to register on the actor's clothing, and their bodies block their shadows on the screen.

An early form of this process (not, legally speaking, Introvision itself) was used in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which front-projected the African landscapes behind the actors in ape suits in the opening sequence. What Introvision added was the idea of placing *smaller* front-screen elements around the stage, so the actors could move behind them as well as in front of them.

The advantage was clear. As Bruce Campbell explains, "Usually when you're doing a matte shot or other optical, you have to wait a couple of weeks to make sure the matte works; if it doesn't, you have to go back and reshoot. But with Introvision, you see your shot the next day at dailies. What you see through that lens while you're shooting -- that's it. It was great for us, because we didn't have time to screw around with that many effects involved. This movie wasn't about a series of effects, it was almost like everything was an effect."

On Introvision's Hollywood stages, while *Army* was shooting, you could have found an elaborate miniature of the castle, elaborate not just in terms of detail, which was very finely done, but in terms of the castle itself. It had six towers, one of which was square, one of which (a keep) stood free in the middle of the courtyard, with a spiral staircase up the outside. There was a separate miniature of

the side of the castle where the portcullis is. Not all of this detail was ultimately used in the movie.

Here was also the ruined city of the future where Ash was originally intended to wind up. "Sam clung to a fairly fatalistic version of the script," says Rob Tapert; "at the end, Ash had slept a hundred years too long, waking up in a blasted, destroyed future. Everyone -- except Sam -- decided that was very unsatisfying, Universal put up the money to shoot a new ending, and that was the supermarket ending."

The movie also has some scenes at the beginning set in the supermarket -- or "S-mart," both parodying "K-Mart" and allowing a pun ("Be smart, shop S-mart") -- but those scenes were always included in the film, and were not shot when the supermarket climax was. "We originally had a much bigger scene at the beginning," says Rob, "with Charles Napier as Ash's mean boss who was hollering at him all the time, but he got cut out completely."

Sam adds, "We had a whole scene there talking about his banal life, and how the boss was really mean to him, and how the stock boy was someone Bruce was mean to. But it took too long, and we want the kids to get to the goods, so there's now only a passing flash of him in his former element."

Elsewhere at Introvision, you could have found the flooded pit where Ash battles first the back-flipping, highly limber Deadite, then the old Pit Hag (a Deadite? a freak of nature? an evil spirit?). The walls were mounted with movable spikes, the floor was permanently flooded, and the whole place had a satisfactorily oozy, dismal aspect.

And you could have seen Bruce Campbell dangling from a Peter Pan-like flying rig, with the pivots at his hips. He hung in front of an illuminated blue screen (for matting in other images); he was supposed to do a flip. Many people stood around watching this, including Sam who was wearing waders. It looked simple, but it wasn't, because he had to swivel completely on these things hooked to his hips. In the second and third take Bruce started flipping before they moved the trolley he's hanging from forward, so he spun through the air as he approached the camera. Bruce's hair and skin both need to be powdered, which meant two different women had to climb up a ladder on which he rested between takes, and do that to him.

Many of the skeleton effects were handled by KNB FX, the company run by Bob Kurtzman, Greg Nicotero and Howard Berger that grew directly out of their working together on *Evil Dead II*. They also built the pit-hag suit, which was worn by Bill Barnes, who played the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man in *Ghostbusters*. They built ten puppets for *Army of Darkness*, Bob Kurtzman explained. "Eight of them are rod puppet with mechanical hands which people control from underneath; two of them are the full upper-body, cable-controlled ones with radio-controlled heads. They're on dolly tracks." Some were sculpted by Andy Cummings, and others by Brent Armstrong. And some, heh heh, "were cast from real skeletons. We took molds off them and made fiberglass versions. This project is a major group effort," Kurtzman said, "and our guys on the show, when they weren't doing makeups or sculptures, were putting armor together. All armor for the puppets was modified from vacuformed armor we got from the team who did the armor for the live actors."

"It's pretty hectic," Kurtzman admitted, on the castle set for

the film, "but it's great. We're having a lot of fun with this."

And Rob Tapert was, despite setbacks, happy with the experience of making *Army of Darkness*. "The set was out in the middle of the desert, and a great place to shoot the movie, because you're off on your own in the wide-open spaces. It was an enjoyable experience, because we got to make the movie we intended to."

Sam Raimi also enjoyed shooting the movie. "I find it a very exciting and fun experience to shoot a picture. The most entertaining thing was being able to play with soldiers on a big scale. Have fifteen horses come down through here! The catapults are launched, flinging flame through the air over here!" But it wasn't always toy soldiers.

*Army* had some of the usual problems any movie faces. For example, Rob Tapert said, "We reshot a whole scene because the camera operator made a mistake and shot it all at the wrong frame rate." But many of the problems stemmed from the kind of movie this was. The sheer number of effects was an obstacle that everyone had to overcome, Sam said. "It's the most effects-heavy picture we've made became time-consuming. In general, I could spend less time supervising each effect than I could if there were fewer effects, as in the past."

Another problem was that the film was being shot in the summer, when the nights were short. "Most of the picture takes place at night," Sam points out, "and we were shooting at the equinox point, when the days were the longest and the nights were shortest. Our director of photography, Bill Pope, would light an area, and that could take an hour and a half to set up if he had a big area. So we'd only have about six hours left to shoot, and those six hours involved horses, makeup and other time-consuming elements."

Also, they had no experience at all in dealing with horses, Sam adds. "There are some big horse attacks in this picture, with explosions, horses and a lot of animated effects, all in the same frame, many times. Horses don't care what the director wants; they're going to do what *they* want to do."

They ended up using some movie horses and "backyard horses" from around Acton, which were accustomed to the roars of Tippi Hedren's big pets. "The wranglers will tell you the difference between backyard horses and movie horses," Rob Tapert said. "Movie horses are much better trained, but my feeling is that they're all dumb animals. The backyard horses and the movie horses misbehaved equally. In fact, people take better care of the backyard horses; they're not all nags, not all old glue factories; they look better on film."

But overall, the biggest problem was one that almost all medium-budget movies face: money. As Tapert said, "It had about half the budget of *Darkman*, but we had a lot of the same crew people working for a lot less money (but doing a better job, I think.) And it took more time than we wanted."

Sam adds, "We didn't really have enough money to make the picture the way we wanted to, because it has a much bigger scope than any we've made. As it turned out, Rob, Bruce and I had to put a lot of our own money into the picture."

No, they didn't have to deplete their bank accounts, but they took less money in payment than they were originally contracted to be paid -- something like a million dollars less, among the three of them

-- and plowed it back into the film. "That money was almost gone within a month of shooting," Campbell points out, "just on paper, it was gone. When you get into the bowels of making a film, you don't always think rationally, you just think I gotta have it, I gotta have it. We renegotiated some portion of a settlement, and that took some time."

The extra money was partly to cover a scene that the Renaissance team thought was crucial, but which De Laurentiis and Universal decided was superfluous. "It is the scene inside the castle where the old lady turns into a Deadite and goes crazy," Tapert explains. "The Yo, She-Bitch scene. If you look carefully, you'll see the sets are so cheesy, they're ridiculous. But it moves very fast, with good reason." And of course, the changed ending involved more money as well.

Now that their own money was involved directly, Campbell admits "we got into this quandary of do we want to put 20 horses up on the hill, or do we want to put 40 horses up on the hill."

They persevered through short nights and long days, and finally completed the film, delivering it to Universal in late May. Everyone had hoped it would be released in the summer when schools were out and the target audience -- primarily teenagers -- would be able to go back to a slam-bang action-fest like *Army of Darkness* over and over.

There was immediately a problem with the rating. The MPAA's Classification and Ratings Authority gave *Army of Darkness* an R, while Universal desperately wanted a PG-13. The Renaissance team plucked scenes here and there trying to bring it down to that rating, but again it received an R. Universal even turned the film over to an outside editor, who still wasn't able to get it trimmed to PG-13 status. There are some indications that this was a kind of retaliation: the first two *Evil Dead*s had been released without any rating at all, so CARA was being more strict with the third than they might have if it was a stand-alone original. Rob Tapert believes this. "*Evil Dead* went out unrated," he says, "even though it was given an X. *Evil Dead II* went out unrated, flaunted in their face, even though they had given it an X. They were very aware about *Army of Darkness*. Having been to these appeals boards, it's a joke." (On the other hand, the people on the ratings board -- anonymous, ordinary daddies and mommies -- change every few years.)

Universal finally bit the bullet, and decided to release the film with an R rating.

But then they hit a snag no one at all was prepared for, and it's all Thomas Harris' fault.

Harris wrote a novel called *Red Dragon*. This was turned into a film titled *Manhunter*, which was produced by Dino De Laurentiis who, as is common, retained certain rights to characters in the novel, and to possible sequels -- at least as far as films went.

This, of course, didn't stop Thomas Harris from writing something of a sequel to *Red Dragon*, *Silence of the Lambs*, which featured the same brilliant serial killer, Hannibal Lecter. When *Silence of the Lambs* was filmed by Jonathan Demme and stars Anthony Hopkins and Jodie Foster (all of whom won Oscars), it was released by Orion, with Dino leasing them his rights in the character of Hannibal Lecter.

But then Harris began writing a third novel about Lecter, to which Universal quickly bought the movie rights. De Laurentiis was



producing several films for release through Universal, and so the head of the studio, Tom Pollock, wanted him to release the rights to *Lecter* to Universal. De Laurentiis refused, or so he claimed. Pollock claimed there had been a handshake deal for the rights. And so they were deadlocked.

Universal, however, did have a bargaining chip: *Army of Darkness*. Suddenly it vanished from the studio's release schedule, while lawyers for De Laurentiis and Universal wrangled over the rights to Hannibal Lecter. (Ironically, Harris' new novel about Hannibal the Cannibal has yet to see print.) There was nothing personal in all of this, nothing aimed at the Renaissance team; if *Puffs* had been the next De Laurentiis film scheduled for release through Universal, it would have sat on the shelf instead. But it wasn't; *Army of Darkness* was.

"We finished it in the spring of '92," Bruce Campbell says, "and then it sat on ice for six months while they battled it out and finally came to terms, and our film was done. We had to deliver it because Universal was trying to force us to deliver it early. Dino said we should finish the movie so we can say that we held up our end of the obligations -- and we delivered the movie."

While Pollack and De Laurentiis struggled like giants far above meek little Renaissance Films, Universal continued to fuss over the rating for *Army of Darkness* -- as well as over the ending. The bleak-future ending didn't test well with focus groups that Universal was screening the movie for. Campbell is only one of many who don't like the test screening method of arriving at a final cut of a movie.

"When you get four or five or a dozen kids complaining out of a huge audience, they actually stop and listen to those kids. They start asking, What scenes didn't you like the most? Which ones did you like the best? Tell us. It got to be very frustrating. We thought this was our third, and we should be able to do this one just how we wanted, and it really wasn't so. We had more freedom in our \$350,000 movie."

As for the bleak, Ash-in-a-ruined-future ending, both Sam and Bruce liked it fine. "It's very much the *Planet of the Apes* kind of cosmically-screwed sort of ending, which we thought was very appropriate for the series, because Ash is always doing really stupid things," Bruce says. "But that was apparently not a desirable ending from a studio investment point of view."

The unusual aspect of these screenings was that what was being shown was virtually a complete film, running 96 minutes: the effects and music were all in, the color timing was completed, etc. Ordinarily, test screening prints are incomplete, without titles, the final music, etc. When Universal demanded that the movie be shorter, and have a different ending, "we had to go back in, open it back up again, get into all the film elements again, and drastically reduce it in length," Campbell sighs. "It went from our 96-minute version to 81 minutes in its present state. I think overall the cutting made some sort of sense; it was more drastic, though, than our cutting would have been -- we'd have taken out maybe 5 or 6 minutes. After screening it in Europe at a couple of festivals in '92, I got a sense that the movie kind of beat up on the audience -- and then this big battle started at the end. It was sensory overload. But we wouldn't have cut it so drastically, and we would have kept the original

ending."

As a matter of fact, overseas, where the film is known as *Army of Darkness: The Medieval Dead* (at least in English-speaking countries), the original, blasted-future ending remains on the film. And it is included in the comic book version, scripted by Sam Raimi. There was some discussion of including that ending as supplementary material in the laserdisc version of the movie, but it was released on disc in the standard US theatrical print. (Laserdisc fans should look for the Japanese disc: it does have the original ending.)

The advertising campaign was, for those who had followed the series, surprising and amusing: the central image was a triumphant Bruce with a beautiful woman climbing his leg, his chainsaw at the ready, and a buffed-out body. He was called in by Universal "because we want to take a couple of reference head shots," they told him. "I had no idea what they were doing. I went into a studio, and they said, 'we need a kind of sly look on your face.' So I gave a whole series of stupid shots. Next thing you know, they show me a rough of this Frank Frazetta-like painting. 'We've got to approve it in a day,' they said, 'and if you don't approve it, we don't have an ad campaign.'

"So what were they telling me? Why did they submit it to me at all? It was frustrating because the lines of communication were not clearly drawn, and things got lost in the shuffle like crazy. They would bring us in and show us the 30-second [TV] spots, and the 10-second spots, but it's not like they would sit down with us and go through it frame by frame. Once you get into the studios, they adopt much more the attitude of, 'Thanks, kid. You did a nice movie. We'll take it from here.' This is not to take away completely from Universal, I don't want to paint that picture. They were fairly solicitous, but it's the system. This is the part of the company that makes the movies, that is the part of the company that promotes the movies. But this was the most removed we'd been from hands-on filmmaking. Dino deserves credit, though; he stayed involved to the very end. He's the easiest executive we've ever had to deal with, because you go right to him. In studios, there's a whole flotilla of junior executives who are terrified to make any hard decisions, and if these two kids in Pasadena don't like the scene, it's in jeopardy."

Eventually, though *Army of Darkness* was indeed released at last, at 86 minutes, in a cut that neither Universal nor Renaissance were completely satisfied with. But it was out there, playing in theaters across the country. Unfortunately, the theaters tended to be on the empty side.

ARMY OF DARKNESS  
SYNOPSIS

We see the hooves of a horse, followed by those of men in chains and stocks. The camera pans up to a familiar face. "My name is Ash," we hear, "and I am a slave." Yep, it's Ash all right, with the gashes on his face we remember from EVIL DEAD II. "Close as I can figure it, the year is 1300 AD, and I am being dragged to my death. It wasn't always like this; I had a real life, once -- a job."

There's a dissolve to a rotating blue light, the camera pans right to a closeup of a blandly smiling Ash. "Shop smart," he says, "Shop S-Mart." *(Bruce points out that this light was part of the original script, so that when Universal requested -- demanded -- a different ending, it was easy to return to S-Mart. However, "when we did it, we had to dig out all the old costumes again and shoot it in a different place, because the original location was no longer available to us.")* His narration continues: "I had a wonderful girlfriend, Linda," and we see her smiling at him; this time Linda is played by Bridget Fonda in a dialogue-less cameo. "Together we drove to a small cabin in the mountains." *(You'll note she is wearing the requisite Michigan State University T-shirt, and that the car is the same one as in the other Evil Dead movies. Fonda is in the picture because she asked to be, as she's a fan of the first two movies.)*

We see all this as his narration continues, filling us in about the archaeologist and Necronomicon Ex Mortis -- the Book of the Dead. (The Book has a different cover this time around, and it's larger, too. But the drawings inside are similar. TRIVIA) He sums up the narration about the Book from the first two Evil Deaths, concluding "It was never meant for the world of the living." The Book awoke something dark in the woods; it took Linda. We see her scream as the Force POV slams in through the window. *(The cabin is, needless to say, a third one; the first was destroyed, the second was just a set. "We just built portions of it on a stage," Bruce says.)*

"And then it came for me; it got into my hand" -- closeup of Ash's hand developing black veins -- "and it went bad, so I lopped it off." *Until this point, the footage is original to Army of Darkness, but now footage from Evil Dead II is spliced in.)* We see the vortex, Ash dangling from counter, caught in door, then falling backward into the vortex.

In letters made of smoke, the titles appear:

BRUCE CAMPBELL  
VS.  
ARMY OF DARKNESS

Boom, here come Bruce and the car falling out of the sky, in the last of the footage being repeated from *Evil Dead II*. He gets to his feet as mounted medieval soldiers surround him. "Where in the hell....?" he says. *(The shot upward at the car plummeting down is a new one; the shot of it hitting the ground is repeated footage from II. Since they weren't sure they could get that footage again, they did shoot new footage of Bruce and the car hitting the ground, but "they loaded it with his Fuller's earth stuff, and there was just too much of a cloud of moosh when it landed.")*

He tries to calm down the leader of the knights, but the leader -- whom we soon learn is named Arthur (is he *that* Arthur? there's no way to decide) summons Wiseman, a wise man with a long white beard, mounted on horseback. He says that he thinks Ash is the one prophesied (though he actually says "prophesised") "to fall from the heavens and deliver us from the terrors of the Deadites."

But unlike the end of the previous film, here the leader expresses serious doubts, and says the newcomer must be one of Henry's men, and "I say to the pit with him." *("Originally," says Bruce, "the king pulls out his sword, comes racing by, and slices Ash across the chest. Later, you'll see a cut on my chest that I never had before." The fact that Ash bleeds is why, originally, the king doubted he was the prophesied savior.)*

Ash is taken prisoner, dropping his chainsaw. The Wiseman picks it up, curious. Sunlight glinting off the blade fills the screen in a matching dissolve to the blazing sun in the sky -- and we're back to where the movie began.

A big castle lies ahead as Ash -- and others in chains -- are marched toward it under the lash. *(Bruce says that the castle, or rather the lower parts -- the upper parts were Introvisioned in -- was still on that hill outside Acton until just before he shot an episode of The Adventures of Brisco County Jr. on the same location. "When we I went back to the ranch, they had just torn the castle down. I had this big chase scene where I had to ride right across where that castle was, and it kind of gives you the chills. You're riding across your grave.")*

They enter the castle courtyard, Ash still being jerked along, a captive. *(You can't take Ash's word for things in this outing; he's clearly not a slave.)* One young woman, Sheila, emerges from the crowd; she asks Arthur where her brother is. Arthur says, "he fought valiantly, but fell in battle with Henry's men. I'm sorry, Sheila."

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The children beat Ash and poke him with sticks and other denizens of the castle pummel him with cabbages and other rotten stuff. ("Sam would always be the guy who would aim at my head, just whale at me, because he knew the extras wouldn't. They never want to hit the star of the movie, or piss him off, for fear of being fired. Well, Sam's known me since high school, so he doesn't give a rat's ass.")

Sheila tugs at him, spits at him, and declares her brother's death shall be avenged. It's still all a mystery to Ash. (This sequence features a good example of a Raimi shot: begins with a closeup of Bruce's feet, ends as a high crane shot looking down as they halt near the Pit, a hole in the courtyard floor surrounded by a metal ring and covered with a metal door.)

Henry the Red, Duke of Shael, Lord of the Northlands, asks Ash who he might be. Henry is another prisoner, the balding, redheaded bruiser who was just behind Ash all the way in from where the car fell.

"Well, hello Mr. Fancy Pants," says Ash insolently; "you ain't leading but two things right now, Jack and shit, and Jack left town."

It's worth pointing out at this point that in *Army of Darkness*, Ash's personality is somewhat different than in the other two movies; in the first, he was very quiet and romantic, just this side of a nerd; in the second, we didn't get to know him well, since he spent almost all his on-screen time being terrorized. Here he's rude, rather stupid, and not very likable. This no doubt amused Sam and Ivan Raimi, who wrote the script, but it apparently didn't sit too well with audiences.)

Arthur advances, stands beside the metal-roofed pit. "There is an evil awakened in this land," he declares, "and well my people fight for their very souls against it." He gestures at Henry, who charges over to him, and claims that Arthur started it -- and that his people are suffering from the evil as well. The shots of Henry are from low angles; those of Arthur are at eye level.

"Your people are no better than the foul corruption that lies in the bowels of that pit," Arthur sneers. The pit is cranked open. Low angle from inside the pit looking up at Ash and Henry, poised on the brink of a platform that extends slightly out over the pit. "Into the pit with those bloodthirsty sons of whores," says an old lady, who then takes a big bite out of a loaf of bread.

One of Henry's men, screaming in protest, is shoved into the pit. Silence from within; everyone comes a little closer (including three archers on the parapet; in the crowd we can see a big bald blacksmith with a moustache). Then a scream followed by a gigantic fountain of blood erupts from the pit, and everyone rushes back from the edge. To signify this just before it happens, Ash's face is lit from beneath by a red light.

In the confusion, one of the prisoners tries to flee. Arthur coolly takes a crossbow from one of his men, aims and lets fly. The camera first follows the bolt from slightly ahead and to one side, then the camera seems to be mounted on the bolt's feathers; it strikes the fleeing man squarely in the back. *(The line that occurs here, "Your people are no better than the foul corruption which lies in the bowels of that pit," came from a reading given by an actor auditioning for the role of Henry the Red, says Bruce. "We always encourage actors to bring a little speech with them, because when you're auditioning and the part being auditioned for has only a line here and there, it's hard to get a sense of whether the guy is right for the role, so you tell them to bring in a representational piece.")*

The inhabitants of the castle turn one by one, as the camera passes them, to look back toward the Pit; Ash turns too, and then realizes, when someone nearby draws a sword, it's *him* they're looking at. "You gotta understand, man, I never even saw these assholes before," he declares passionately. *(According to Bruce, "Sam's very irreverent about how you handle the main character. Here, the main character is a coward and makes horrible mistakes; if he had done his job right in the graveyard, he wouldn't have had to help defend the castle. I think it's funny especially because of the fact that a studio released this movie in which the lead character is not even likable. If this had been written for a studio, I can guarantee you a lot of this would have been reduced.")*

Ash tries to get Henry to say he's not one of Henry's men, but Henry says "I dinna think he'll listen, lad." Sheila flings a rock at Ash, which catches him on the temple; he staggers right up the little ramp, teeters on the edge, and then someone pushes him in. Whooah!

Splash! Ash lands in water covered in a thin layer of fog. A skeleton is manacled to the wall in the background. Unseen by ash, a pale hand with long nails rises from the water behind him, dropping out of sight when he looks in that direction. Kasploosh! A being, maybe a Deadite, rises from the water and advances on him, grabbing him by the back of his neck and pounding him in the face. It looks sort of like a Deadite. The onlookers cheer from above. One calls out, "Isn't he wonderful?" but he's probably talking about Ash's opponent. *(And just what are these creatures in the pit? Why is the pit there at all? What kind of bargain have Arthur and his followers made with the creatures of the pit? What makes the cleft in Bruce Campbell's chin? All these are unanswerable questions.)*

Sam shots: The thing in the pit pulling back and slugging the camera right in the lens, cut to Bruce recoiling from the blow; wide angle lenses used here, making the fist grow to enormous proportions as it strikes the camera. There's an overhead shot, too, from the vantage point of those clustered around the edge of the Pit. (We don't get a very good look at the opponent, but it's mostly human with somewhat Deadite-ish features.) One blow sends Bruce flying back into the water; the thing tumbles toward him like an acrobat. "Why, you!" says Ash, grabs the thing with his feet, flings it to one side. Henry, above, cheers him.

Arthur mutters, "Spikes," and two of his men start turning a wheel, and large spiked frameworks on either side of the Pit start closing in on Ash. He slams his opponent against the spikes, but it pulls free. Above, the Wiseman calls out, "Strange one!" then throws the chainsaw into the pit. Ash leaps upward, plunging the stump of his hand into the housing he built for it on the chainsaw. *Thoonk!* He jerks the chainsaw into life and swings at his opponent. Parts fall. (Very little blood though) "Damn you!" cries Sheila from above.

Then the camera is mounted on the spiked wall: we see four spikes around the lens, moving toward Ash. He's in trouble, runs this way and that, when an even worse-looking monster, vaguely female, the Pit hag, erupts out of the wall of the pit and runs at him. He swings the chainsaw and the thing's dismembered hand flies upward out of the Pit, and ends up clutching a bystander across the mouth. The others laugh.

Below, Ash is still fighting the Pit Hag, but now he undoes his belt, wraps it around the ascending chain, and begins to be drawn out of the pit -- but the Pit Hag grabs him. The walls get closer and closer -- but though he almost loses his grip on his belt, he lifts his legs up as the walls slam together. They have neatly-fitted steel teeth across the top, too.

Chainsaw first, he clammers out of the Pit.

He walks up to Arthur. "You know your shoelace is untied," he says. Puzzled, Arthur looks down and Ash decks him. "All right," says Ash, furious. "Who wants some? Who's next? Who wants to have a little? You!" He points at a balding knight standing nearby. Ash walks up to him, pulls his sword away, slams the guy in the shoulder. Big closeups of Bruce in through here. The threatened knight shoves someone else aside.

He says to Henry, "Now get on those horses and get out of here. Let 'em go," Ash orders Arthur's men. Henry -- who has very long hair -- laughs about this, slugs Ash in the arm companionably, and rides free.

Arthur yells something like "Dog boy!", draws a sword from a flunky, and cries, "For that arrogance, I will see you dead!" He raises the sword and *Bang!* His sword blows in two. Ash blows smoke from the barrel of his gun, which seems to be a rifle-shotgun combo now. (And just when did Ash get his shotgun back? "There was an establishing shot earlier that got cut out," Bruce admits, "of the Wiseman with Ash's chainsaw and shotgun. Some of that wonderful condensation where the logic goes out the window.")

"Awright you primitive screwheads," he says, "listen up! See this?" He hosts the gun overhead, turning about so all can see it. "This is my boom stick! It's a twelve-gauge double-barreled Remington, S-mart's top of the line. You can find this in the sorting goods department. That's right, this sweet baby was made in Grand

Rapids, Michigan. It retails for about a hundred nine ninety five. It's got a walnut stock, cobalt blue barrel, and a hair trigger. That's right, shop Smart -- shop S-mart."

"The locals have no idea what he's saying, but he's speaking in authoritative tones, and he impresses the hell out of them. "Now I swear, the next one of you primates even touches me -- Yahhh!" he yells and lowers the gun -- to blow away the Pit Hag, which has also climbed up via the chain. (Of course, it doesn't seem likely it would have survived the spikes.) It takes two shots, but the Pit Hag is flipped over into the pit at last.

Everyone is even more impressed. Ash twirls the gun in the light of the setting sun, holsters it on his back, and says, "Now let's talk about how I get back home." ("One advantage of sequels," Bruce points out, "is you get to figure out how to do stuff. In Evil Dead II, we had a scene where I'm supposed to stick my sawed-off shotgun into my shoulder. I tried it once with a real shotgun; didn't work at all. I jammed it into my arm and cut myself. We finally replaced the regular barrel that was left with a plastic barrel, but the regular trigger caused problems. I tried to stuff it in the scabbard on my back in one shot, but it took some time to get it right. Here we had almost a totally balsa-wood version of the gun with fishing weights at either end and a ring for the trigger guard; I could hold that thing out and twirl it for half an hour without stopping. After I walked into position, a prop person snuck up behind me, and I just made the motion of sticking it back there, while this guy pressed it to my back. We put in the sound effect later.")

Later, he's being fed grapes and a big chunk of roast meat by several beautiful young women. He belches a couple of times. Sheila approaches, begs his forgiveness, saying she thought he was one of Henry's men. "First you want to kill me," he says with curled lip, "then you want to kiss me. Blow."

Only the Necronomicon can send him back to his time, Wiseman tells Ash. There are incantations that can return him to his time. "But only the Promised One can quest for the Necronomicon?" Ash asks. He demands to be sent back to his own time -- when suddenly soup pours over his feet. The camera follows the soup back to where it came from, a turned-over kettle. A woman with long hair has her back to the camera. Whirls: she's a Deadite.

"You shall die!" the monster screams. It floats off the ground, levitating as in both other films, jerking like a marionette with damaged strings. "We shall feast upon your soul!" It drops heavily to the floor.

Arthur approaches it cautiously, but (as we can see in closeup but he can't) the eyes pop open. He's about to touch the body but Ash stops him, warning him that it's a trick, and telling him to get an axe. But with a scream the Deadite sits up, knocks Ash and Arthur to one side, rushes at Sheila, but Ash slugs it with the butt of his gun. Camera moves a lot here, tilting from side to side at times. No



music. The Deadite throws hot fluid into the eyes of a knight who rushes at her (we hear him screaming "Oh God I'm blind!" over the next couple of shots) The blacksmith we saw earlier rushes at her, and she's about to douse him with boiling stuff too when Ash shoots the container out of the Deadite's upraised hands...

"Yo. She-bitch," he says. *(As if there's any such thing as a he-bitch.)* In a lot of fast cutting action, again with moving camera and rapid intercutting, they battle; when he hits her, she twirls away, first spinning one direction, then the other. Finally over his shoulder, he shoots the monster while facing the other direction.

"If the Necronomicon fell into the hands of the Deadites, all mankind will be consumed by this evil," says the Wiseman. "Now wilt thou quest for the book?" Ash looks like he has no choice. *(This entire sequence was a reshoot done six or seven months after principal photography wrapped.)*

He looks down at the stump of his hand and sighs. Big doors slam open. A suit of armor. "That one," Ash says, pointing. Then in the same kind of swift intercutting showing only the key moments of action, accompanied by one loud distinctive sound, as we saw in the NON-dismemberment of Linda in I and the creation of the chainsaw hand in II, Ash and the blacksmith create a functioning artificial hand. This time, each of the shots is also punctuated with a zcom in on the relevant image. But in the course of it we see the hand created, tested, mounted on Ash's arm, and put into operation: it easily crushes a metal goblet. He concludes with "Groovy" again. This whole thing takes only 31 seconds.

Night. Sheila comes in, finds Ash tinkering with his new hand. "Raised in a barn?" he sneers. "Close the door. Probably was raised in a barn," he mutters, "with the other primitives."

"It's said that you will lead our people against the Evil," she says, but he says the only reason he's getting the book is to go home. She picks up something, but he snatches it away. "Don't touch that please," he snaps coldly. "Your primitive intellect wouldn't understand alloys and compositions and things with molecular structures..." He breaks off, apparently beyond his own expertise. *("How Ash treats the girl in this film is fairly chauvinistic and reprehensible," Bruce admits. "We hoped the audience would stick with this guy because they realize they're stuck with him, not because he's necessarily a nice guy -- or they'll sympathize that he's completely out of his element.")*

She persists. "All of my hopes and prayers go with you, and I made this for thee." She holds out a robe, smiling. "Good, he snarls, "I could use a horse blanket." She slaps him and heads for the door, but he catches up in the doorway. He pulls away her hair ribbon. "Gimme some sugar, baby," he says, and they embrace as flames lick up in the foreground. *(Bruce was really slapped in this scene; since the slap happened in the master shot, it had to be done repeatedly for closeups. Bruce darkly suspects Sam, always prone to*

torment Bruce, did it that way on purpose. Also, "As we're getting read to shoot," Bruce admits, "I hear Sam giggling to himself over in the corner. He comes over, still sort of half giggling, and goes, 'Okay, I want you to say, "Give me some sugar, baby," just before you kiss her. And it's one of those times where you go, Sam, are you out of your mind? But it's one of the most-requested lines I get whenever women come up for autographs.')

To heroic music, Ash and others charge out of the castle in the morning; the rising sun sparkles on the dust their horses' hooves kick up. (Bruce says that Sam has always wanted to do a scene where you've got horses blazing across the countryside and everyone's yelling Heeyah! One of the voices you hear yelling "Heeyah!" in this scene is Sam's.)

They pause at a striking, familiar rock formation. (Vasquez Rocks, used in many movies and TV shows.) This is clearly as far as everyone except Ash is going. The Wiseman says, "This path will lead you to an unholy place, a cemetery. There the Necronomicon awaits."

The Wiseman tells Ash that when he retrieves the book from its cradle, he must recite the words "Klaatu birata niktoo." (This is the famous phrase from Day the Earth Stood Still that Patricia Neal tells Gort, the giant robot. However, either accidentally or by design, no one in Army of Darkness, certainly not Ash, gets the phrase quite right. Bruce points out that in this scene, you can tell how long his hair is supposed to be in all of Army of Darkness.)

Ash recites the words back, but he says "Klaatu varata nicto," but refuses to say it again. He insists that they send him back once he gets the book, then rides off down the path between the rocks. (This path was created for **Army of Darkness**.)

Soon he's among pine trees, with fog blowing about him. He hears voices like distant singing, wails, weird sounds among the trees. Then the Good Old POV Force comes rocketing toward him through the sunny, foggy woods. Faster and faster it comes. He gallops on his horse. Then comes the Force, this time splitting trees as it gains on him. A branch sweeps him off and he plunges headfirst into a muddy pool. He leaps out, runs further, tumbles down a hill, still followed by the Force. (One of the ways Bruce landed the role in The Adventures of Brisco County Jr. was to show the producers a reel of all his horse and stunt action from Army. In fact, he adds, "the nice thing about these movies I've done with Sam is that they're the hardest shoots I've ever worked on; other things pale in comparison, so that they seem much easier. It's been handy to get other work because I can tell producers, 'Yes, I've done that. And I've done that, too.'")

He runs up to a windmill, dashes inside and the door. (The windmill is a hanging miniature: it was mounted on an arm between the camera and the background.) It's a Dutch-type windmill, not really appropriate for the 13th century, but who's counting? The Force slams against the door over and over, Ash leans against the door on the

inside, screaming with effort and fear. After a moment, he realizes he's been screaming for a while without any further banging on the door.

Now it's night. Ash throws a log on the fire, then catches sight of what might be his double elsewhere in the windmill; he runs forward and smashes into a mirror, shattering it into fragments. He picks up a piece of mirror and gazes at his own face reflected in the shard. He tosses it down, seeing himself reflected many times in the fragments on the floor. *(Bruce says, "The scene inside the windmill is one of the most severely truncated scenes in the film. I think it worked in its entirety, but it was a little slow, in that if Ash is on a journey to get this all-important book, why would he stop and spend the night? It makes more sense that it be truncated.")*

He walks off; we see, but he doesn't, that the reflections remain behind -- then look at each other and climb out of the mirror shards. *(This is a very nice effect, and may be unique to this movie: hollows were built into an oversize section of floor, then lined with glass, so the illusion that they really are fragments of mirror reflecting Bruce Campbell is damned near perfect. We can even see the rafters overhead "reflected" behind the tiny Ashes.)*

The little Ashes are evil, or at least impish. Three of them (it's hard to tell how many there are) grab a big fork; the one in the lead yells "Ramming speed!" and they charge at Bruce's butt. There's a shot right over the tines of the moving fork heading for Ash's rear. "Yaahhhh!" He screams, leaping up and hitting his head on a beam (or something) overhead. Other little hims fire a gun from him, and bounce into the air from recoil. Sometimes the little Ashes talk in high-pitched voices, other times in Bruce Campbell's usual voice.

The full-size Ash throws the fork at one of the Little Ashes who flees; the camera follows flying fork until it impales this particular little Ash (who says something just before it hits). Others trip him with a broom; falling, he bangs his head on a stovepipe, then falls onto the stove, landing on his left cheek. Stuck to the hot surface, He can't pull himself away, grabs a small shovel (or something like that) and pries his face away like you pry meat off a sticky griddle.

He catches sight of a little Ash on the floor, then stomps along after him, singing "London Bridge is falling down, falling down..." This is shot in an extreme up-angle shot of Bruce advancing, from the POV of Little Ash. This little Ash grabs a convenient nail, raises it just as Big Ash's foot comes down. He reacts in pain and surprise as the nail stabs into his foot, screaming, bugging out his eyes. Four little Ashes -- two riding piggyback on two others -- conclude "My fair lady!" in falsetto. *(There was originally a sequence of him banging his head on the stovepipe until he finally smashes it," Bruce points out, "and all the soot comes out a la the Three Stooges. When you cut a sequence, you've got to figure ways to condense it so there won't be big continuity shifts. It was all handled properly when we shot, but now there's a big jump, because my face is covered with soot without any explanation.")*

Ash slips, flies into the air, crashes to the floor on his back. The little Ashes gibber and react as he slams into the floor, knocking himself out. Blurry dissolve.

Ash comes to later (in a big closeup of his eyes); we hear him say "what a horrible nightmare" -- then as he realizes what's up, "Oh God! I can't move!" He's tied down a-la Gulliver. Rising overhead shot looking down at him. Above him, some little Ashes drop another; two below are holding his mouth open. The Little Ash plunges into big Ash's mouth; he inadvertently swallows. *(Unfortunately, the Introvision shot here just doesn't work; you can't tell that that's what they're doing most of the time.)*

He frees himself, but his belly roils in pain. He looks around the room desperately, spots a kettle steaming on the stove. He grabs it. "Okay little fella, how about some hot chocolate!" he laughs, and pours the boiling water into his mouth. He's momentarily satisfied, if scalded, as he hears a little scream within.

But almost immediately his right shoulder starts itching. He reacts in silent movie fashion, doing big takes, then pulls the shirt open to find an eye peering out of his shoulder. The eye blinks and protrudes a little. *(It's hard to imagine that this scene is an homage to the peculiar movie **The Manster**, but that's the only other movie featuring a guy with an eyeball on his shoulder.)*

There's high angle shot of Ash running out of the windmill screaming, "Oh dear god it's growing bigger!" Another angle, further from the mill, a full moon in background. Ash runs up into closeup, and he now has two heads. He howls at the moon. In closeup we see Our Ash is the left head, Evil Ash is the right head. Our Ash pokes other head in the eyes in Stogie fashion. "I'm blind, I'm blind," wails Evil Ash, then snickers, opening undamaged eyes. The two-headed Ash staggers back into a tree. Momentarily it's a creature with four legs, four arms and two heads, scuttling on his (or their) back through the forest, but then it pulls apart into two Ashes: Our Ash and Evil Ash. *(An elaborate stop-motion shot was filmed for this sequence, with a little puppet Double Ash running through the forest, but it was cut -- more for reasons of timing than because the animation didn't work.)*

"I'm Bad Ash," says Evil Ash, "and you're Good Ash," with weird facial expressions and finger flips. "You're goody little two shoes, you're goody little two shoes," Evil Ash warbles, dancing in place. In the dance, he punches and kicks Good Ash -- but then Good Ash he pokes the shotgun in the other's face -- who reacts -- and pulls the trigger. Kablooeey! Evil Ash flips through the air, hits a tree. "Good, Bad," says Ash, "I'm the guy with the gun."

Evil Ash's face is now, not surprisingly, in ruins. Ash drags the body back into the mill; there's low angle looking up at the blades as they whoosh by the lens. The sound of the swooping blades is used to divide the shots of Good Ash strapping Evil Ash down for

dismemberment. This is very similar to the equivalent scene in *The Evil Dead*. He raises the chainsaw; there's lots of emphasis on the blade, but not a drop of blood is seen.

Later, under the full moon, Ash digs a grave, throws the remains of Evil Ash in a gunny sack into the grave; the head pops out and tells Good Ash that he'll die in the graveyard before he gets the Necronomicon. "Hey," asks Ash, "what's that you've got on your face?" "Huh?" grunts Evil Ash as a shovelful of dirt hits him. Stab: another grave marker. He gallops off into the night. (*"We had a wireless mike on me during a lot of this stuff to get reference tracks," Bruce says, "and on the production track, in this scene you hear me going, 'Whoooooa, boy, whoooo, easy boy,' begging the horse not to take off on a blind run. During looping, I could be brave again."*)

At last, he arrives at the graveyard, which is on a hill. Weird monuments abound. (*The set is extravagant, theatrical, not in the realistic mode of the rest of the movie, but it works very well.*) The soundtrack music features church bells and a choir. On the ground as Ash passes, he sees a skull; its jaws slowly open. Camera tilts back and forth as he advances on the Necronomicon -- but there are THREE of them.

He's surprised. "Wait a minute, hold it. Nobody said anything about three books!" He doesn't know which or how many he should take. Oh well, he decides, and opens the nearest book. Thwip! There's a whistling, sucking hole in there and it immediately pulls his hand in; the hand gets longer and longer -- there's even a shot from *inside* the book, a circular hole with red sparks spinning around it, and Ash in the center trying to pull free.

In a reverse motion shot, smoke is sucked into the hole as Ash tries to pull free, his arms getting longer and longer. Finally he's pulled into the book altogether and it slams shut. There's silence for a beat or two, a long shot of the altar with the books. Then the book's cover flips a little and Ash climbs out -- but his face is very long, ending at the middle of his chest. He shakes his head a little -- closer to normal -- shakes it again -- closer yet -- again, and back to normal. Wrong book, he concludes.

Now he's not sure what to do. Reaches for one, pauses, reaches for the other. Hah, he thinks, almost fooled me -- but the book he reaches for opens the mouth on its cover and bites him. He tries to throw it away but it flaps its leaves like wings and flies back, but after some shouting and fluttering, things finally calm down. "Well, he concludes, "seems fairly obvious." Then he tries to recall the words.

He gets the first two right, but he can't remember the third. "Necktie! Nectar! Nickel!" he tries desperately. "New Line... definitely an N word." But he can't come up with it, so he unwisely tries to outsmart the evil forces. "Klaatu Barada" he says firmly, then coughs, making a vague N sound. He looks around. Nothing's happened, nothing's changed. "Okay then, that's it," he announces aloud.

He picks up the book but then at once there's thunder and lightning followed by exploding tombstones.

Meanwhile, back at the castle, more thunder and lightning. "Something's amiss!" the Wiseman declares ominously. Sheila looks worried.

In the graveyard, tombstones continue to launch like little rockets. As Ash flees, skeletal hands erupt from the ground and trip him. Others hold him to the ground while yet others do Stooges-like mayhem to his face, stretching his mouth, poking into his nostrils, slapping him, pinching his nose, and then a whole bunch of bony fists hit him at once. He holds his hand up in time to ward off two fingers heading for his eye, then sticks out his tongue in defiance. Bad idea: a skeletal hand pinches his tongue. When he holds up his hand to ward off the fingers again, two hands poke his eyes from either side with little *plink-plink* sounds. A hand pokes into his mouth, but finally he gets up, evades the other hands, grabs the book, and runs to the horse. The graveyard is still aboil with activity as he rides away, declaring he's through being their garbage boy.

Lightning smashes into Evil Ash's grave and he erupts from the ground and reassembles, announcing through his ruined face, "I live -- again."

Ash returns to the castle. He douses his head with water, gives the Necronomicon to Wiseman, but has to admit that he didn't say the words exactly right. Wiseman is furious, because failing to speak the words correctly has awakened the army of the dead. "Now whoa right there, spinach chin," Ash exclaims. What about getting home? The Book can still send Ash home, Wiseman admits reluctantly, but right now it is useless to them because the Evil has a terrible hunger for the Necronomicon. The Evil Dead will come here to get it, Ash is told. *(This idea is new to Army of Darkness; in the first two films, the Evil Dead were awakened by the Book, which had a lot of power, but they didn't seem to want it.)*

But Ash insists on holding Wiseman to his deal; Arthur agrees because they are men of honor. Everyone looks disappointed in Ash and walks away; Ash is embarrassed. "Wretched excuse for a man!" says Wiseman, and walks off. Everyone -- except Sheila -- mutters that Ash can't be trusted. Ash and Sheila are left alone in the courtyard. "I didn't have what it took," he says, and starts to walk away. "But what of all the sweet words you spoke in private?" she asks. "Well, that's just what we call pillow talk, baby, that's all," he responds, looking miserable. \*\*\*WAS A LOVE SCENE FILMED?

"I still have faith in thee," Sheila says. But he looks helplessly untrustworthy, and doesn't say anything to gain her confidence. "Coward!" she sneers, and walks off.

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A flying monster (*much like the one we saw at the end of Evil Dead II, but which hadn't appeared here yet*) appears above the castle and swoops down toward Sheila. "Ash! Help me!" she screams. But it grabs her, flies off. (*The optical compositing isn't very good in this shot.*)

Arthur stops the archers from firing. Ash runs up the stairs to the castle wall with a sword but he's too late.

Elsewhere, the camera ooms in on gargoyle statues, then an optically-distorted shot of Evil Ash, complete with skeletal helmet. He's commanding the skeletal army to resurrect others. "I shall command every worm infested son of a bitch that ever died in battle!" he declares. There's a mixture of stop motion and live action here, and it's pretty effective, the best optical work in the film so far, other than the Introvision castle scenes. Skeletons help other skeletons out of graves; they all sound like Robert Newton as Long John Silver. One coughs dustily as he sits up. (*This sequence was one that bothered the ratings administration of the MPAA. "I just have to laugh every time I see the sequence of talking skeletons," Bruce says. "How seriously can you take that?"*)

Sheila is dumped before Evil Ash, who snarls "Gimme some sugar, baby." She reacts to his horrifying face, and he's amused. "Well, ain't you the sweet little thing?" He kisses her. Other skeletal warriors lead other women by in the foreground, declaring they have plans for them. At the Necronomicon's shrine, Evil Ash embraces a struggling Sheila, as a field of skeletal warriors (stop motion) stirs behind them.

Meanwhile, back at the castle, trumpets sound as scouts ride in to warn THAT the Army of the Dead, two days ride away, gathers in the woods. Some suggest they leave the Castle. They argue -- until kaboom! Ash fires his gun atop the castle. "Run home and cry to mama," he yells, having found his courage, "but me, I'm through runnin' I say we stay here and fight it out."

"Follow men from the future, loudmouthed braggarts?" Arthur sneers. "Nope baby, just me, says Ash. Arthur points out that only sixty of his men remain, the others have fled. Ash says they can get Henry and his men to join them. "Who's with me?" The blacksmith is the first to declare himself. "You can count on my steel" exclaims a bewigged and bearded Ted Raimi.

The Army of the Dead gathers. "Say hello to the boys," says Evil Ash. Sheila, somehow corrupted by evil, unveils herself. "There's a sight for sore bones," says an offscreen warrior. "I may be bad," she sneers, "but I feel goooood." To the castle!

Meanwhile, back at the castle, Ash's car is dragged into the courtyard. In the trunk, he finds a coil of rope, a textbook -- Chemistry 101 -- a lamp, shotgun shells, an issue of *Fangoria*, a bottle of Coke. He and the blacksmith go through the stages of repairing the car. The chemistry book has the formula for gunpowder.

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He mixes some, gives it out in small leather bags, cautioning Wiseman from holding one too close to a candle flame. He trains pikemen. *(This does raise the question of how come he knows about pikes, but never mind.)*

The moon, still full (and with big blue areas!) rises over the castle as the Army approaches two days later. There's a lot of horsemen out there. The Necronomicon is locked up. Maybe, just maybe, my boys can stop them from getting the Book. Yeah, and maybe I'm a Chinese jet pilot.

The Army on the march: flutes, bagpipers, drummers (using skulls as drums). Foreground puppets, people in costumes in the back. Great music by Danny Elfman underscores the scene.

Inside, Ash rallies the others as the drawbridge is pulled up.

The Army of Darkness halts outside the castle, waiting.... The camera pans across the skeletal ranks, some in helmets, moves through their battle flags and drawn swords to where Evil Ash and Transformed Sheila wait atop a hill. "Bring forth the Scout!" Evil Ash orders. A skeletal warrior and a fleshier one ride up; the skeletal warrior says the book is most likely being kept beyond the wall in "the parapet" (but he points at the castle keep, not the parapets). "Bring me forth into that castle!" Evil Ash cries. "Death to the mortals!" cry the warriors, and charge the castle.

On the parapets, Ash has his warriors ready their explosive arrows. Horsemen ride; arrows, at the ready, hiss in their bows. Ash waits. The army approaches, those in the foreground pushing wheeled shields. "Steady," says Ash. "Fire!" says Arthur. Bang: the explosive arrows blow up the shield as well as skeletons, one by one and in groups. Evil Ash, atop his horse, reacts to this setback.

A blazing skeleton continues to advance, though it's falling apart. Here comes some more skeletal warriors, this time wheeling a battering ram. "Ready the catapults!" The catapults fling blazing balls over the walls. Bigger explosions this time. More catapults -- this time in a Raimi shot, with the blazing ball fastened to the camera.

Evil Ash is annoyed with his own men. "Oh, you miserable bags of bones!" he cries. "Pick yourselves up and sally for-- awk, Sally for -- awk." His jaw keeps threatening to drop off. Stop motion skeletons prepare a temporary bridge to the castle, others advance with the battering ram. Inside the defenders brace the drawbridge. The battering ram strikes, to excellent stop motion and excellent music. The defenders drop rocks onto the skeletons, some of which shatter.

The Army of Darkness fires arrows at the defenders, some of whom fall. Live action and stop motion skeletons charge across the temporary bridge into the castle through the destroyed drawbridge. In the various battle scenes inside the walls that follow, it's clear



that things are not going well for the defenders of the castle.

But then a door smashes down and Ash, in his car, all fixed up with stuff, charges in with a roar. "Say hello to the 21st century," he says, lowering goggles. The now steam-powered car has whirling blades mounted in front, which whack the skeletons into loose bones and calcium. He also shoots some of the skeletons, slugs others, runs over still others. Wham, whack, he chops his way through the Army of Darkness. Some of these shots are in slow motion; one finds Sheila standing in front of him, her gown blowing in the breeze, her arms outspread. He can't stop; tries to turn aside, leaps from car, which goes out of control and crashes to the ground directly in front of her.

Now she's evil. There are some Ram-o-cam shots of her spear almost impaling Ash. He kicks her back into the pit. Skeletal warriors attack him, he fights them off, breaking one over his knee. Arthur is wounded, continues fighting. Things look very dark for the good guys. *(The actor playing Arthur had a hard time of it here, Bruce reveals. "It's inside, it's hot, he had armor on, it was the end of the day. And he couldn't see what he's supposed to be reacting to, because it's all front screen work. He had to match all his actions to previously-shot footage while standing in front of what was to him a blank silver screen., All the blows were numbered; there's a guy going 35! 36! 37! And you know at 37 you have to do this, at 42 you have to do that. I remember hearing they had to do this I don't know how many times. When they finally got it, the assistant director pushed a button, and over the walkie talkie you could hear the whole crew cheering.")*

But now, atop the hill, here comes Duke Henry and his men, Henry himself at the lead, swinging a mace; smashing warriors of evil, they charge into the castle. Evil Ash himself brings down Arthur (but doesn't kill him). "The book is mine," Evil Ash says to Ash, chortling. "I'll cut your gizzard out," mutters one skeletal warrior, crawling toward Ash, but it misses, then is crushed by a falling net full of boxes.

Outside the chamber of the Book, Ash and Evil Ash face each other, but Sheila leaps on Ash. There's a good shot of the battlefield behind them. She charges him, he impales her on a pike and flings her over the wall. Evil Ash almost gets the book, but Ash throws a spear through him. Evil Ash breaks it off, fore and aft, and they fight. *(At one point, Ash is fighting several opponents with spears, a scene that goes on for a while without any cuts -- in the film, that is. "Sam's theory was that anyone could do it with enough cuts in the film," Bruce says. "Whenever you show a kung fu scene, there are thousands of cuts, so he wanted to have some of these sequences in the battle where you just see it happen. He does undercrank a little, rolling at probably 21 frames per second.")*

They keep fighting, up the stairs, Ash using two swords Evil Ash one. Ash in fact fights a warrior in front and in back. Now they both have two swords, and are duking it out on the parapet. Ash flips

over Evil Ash, stabs him under his arm. More fight. Whack, whack, etc. Ash sets Evil Ash afire from a torch, calls out "Tally Ho!" and kicks him over the battlement. ("In the sequence where Ash is fighting Evil Ash on the steps of the castle, I had to flip a stuntman, but a piece of armor got jammed into my face and gashed it," Bruce says. "It was deep enough it had to be stitched, so we stopped shooting for a bit, and I went rushing to the nearest emergency room. I came walking in with scars all over my face, mostly makeup, and we grabbed a plastic surgeon. He looked at me, and goes, "which-- which one?" As soon as he was stitched shut, Bruce went back to the set and kept filming; they realized no one would notice one more scar.")

But he's not done yet. Now a skeleton himself (but with living eyes, like the poster for Evil Dead II), he comes back over the wall, sometimes stop motion, sometimes puppet, Evil Ash fights with Ash. ("When Evil Ash climbs back over the parapet, we switched over to Sam's voice," Bruce explains, "because we wanted it to sound raspier than the regular Evil Ash voice, which was mine. So now we switched it over to Sam the Ham.")

Below, Ash sees that the fuse to a catapult bomb has been lit. He slugs Evil Ash, whose head spins around; when it stops, the eyes keep going. But it still fights. Evil Ash knocks Ash off the wall next to the catapult bomb. (At times, Bruce is battling an elaborate, life-size puppet of Evil Ash in skeleton form. "It was affectionately called Skeletor on the set," he sways, "but sometimes these very expensive rigs don't always work out right, so we also called it Drunkator and Stokator. It was one of these rigs that rolled around, a series of cables and pulleys, and I was supposed to have a swordfight with it. The articulated head was good, the eyes move, the jaws move well enough so you could dub in lines later, but I never knew where that sword was going to go, because the cables weren't working right. It was worse than fighting a stuntman. Not much of that footage wound up in the finished film.")

Now Evil Ash, a skeleton has the book, and lands atop the catapult, gloating. Buckle up bonehead, says Ash, picking up a sword, because you're going for a ride. He chops off the right hand -- which shouldn't be there anyway -- of Evil Ash; the hand and book go flying. Then Ash slashes through the rope of the catapult. KaFling, Evil Ash and catapult bomb sail into the air and explode. The skeletal army retreats.

Sheila has returned to normal in a shot apparently intended to have an effect over it. She's okay. Arthur's men and Henry's men square off now in the courtyard, and draw their swords in a lot of schwings. Arthur and Henry advance on one another and embrace mightily. Everyone cheers.

Wiseman gives Ash a phial (in a scene obviously redubbed later) and tells him to drink the liquid, uttering the words Klaatu farata nikto, and he will awaken in his own time. He takes the bottle. "Remember, you must recite the words exactly," Wiseman says.

Ash bids farewell to Sheila on the drawbridge in the morning light. He mounts his horse and rides off. (Originally, he rode into the mountains, to a cave -- Bronson Caverns in Griffith Park -- which he entered. He was supposed to take six drops of the fluid to enable him to sleep until his own time. But he took one extra drop, being Ash, and overslept. He woke up in the future -- still in England -- to find it virtually destroyed. That's where the alternate version ends.)

We see the rotating blue light again, and we're back at S-mart. Ash is saying that he thought about staying; "they offered me the chance to lead them, to teach them." (The cuts on his face are almost healed.) Stock clerk Ted Raimi is listening, looking rather bored. "But my place is here," Ash concludes, "so I swallowed the juice, said the words, and here I am. Maybe I didn't say every tiny little syllable, no, but basically I said 'em yeah. Basically."

Later. He's putting price tags on boxes. A pretty girl says the story was kinda cute. He's starting to get interested when the lights flicker, the Force POV moves down an S-mart aisle and up to a hapless shopper who whirls around, a Deadite.

Wham! She knocks Ash into a pile of boxes, picks up a fax machine and is about to brain the girl. Ash recovers near a display of guns, smashes one open with his metal hand (which we had not glimpsed until now), leaps atop a counter and tells her she has to leave the store. "Who the hell are you?" growls the Deadite.

"Ash," he says, twirling the gun. "Housewares."

Ash flings the gun into the air, leaps on a cart, catches the gun while rolling ahead, and pow pow pow, rapidly cocking and firing, he blasts the Deadite. She turns a huge backflip, lands on her feet, screams, "I'll swallow your soul!" and charges him. More fighting, more gun firing; she lands on a trampoline at one point, but at last he puts her down.

Ash sweeps the girl into his arms; we hear a return of the voiceover that opened the movie. "Sure, I could have stayed in the past, could have even been king. But in my own way, I am king." Then he says aloud, "Hail to the king, baby!" and kisses her.