

# Dinosaur gas, murderous cameras and steak knife Fu

By JOE BOB BRIGGS

Many of you have questions about radon. Please allow me to explain.

Billions of years ago a dinosaur died under your house. The title company didn't tell you this. Now the dinosaur looks real icky. He's got fumes coming out of his nose and slithering up underneath the swing set in the backyard. These fumes have the same stuff in 'em we used to blow up Hiroshima. If you breathe this stuff every day while you're watching "Family Feud," your lung will eventually look like a kickball that's been mashed flat under a Demster Dumpster. You'll know this when people come in your house and say, "Hey, sounds like you got 30, 40 cobras under that sofa. Oh, sorry, it's just Sal breathing again."

Fortunately, we have a government agency called the EPA that gives us all the information on this stuff. Here's the information they gave us:

- Where is it? Everywhere.
- Whose house is it in? We don't know.
- Can we get rid of it? No.
- Can we keep it out of the house? Maybe.
- What is going to happen to us? You will die.
- Is that all? No, smokers will die faster.

So then they send out this pamphlet in the mail, how they surveyed 11,000 homes and about 3,500 of 'em had four picocuries of radon per liter of air, and all the people in North Dakota will be dead by next year. Except for the people in North Dakota, who just said "Shoot, we ain't even gonna try," everybody else in the country started asking how soon they were gonna die and whether they should fumigate, and if they don't fumigate, whether they'll have babies born with 12 hands.

And then the EPA said you send off 20 bucks for this little radon roach motel that collects the stuff, and then you send it off to Fotomat or somewhere, and they

write you a letter that says, "Yes, you are going to die," or, "Nope — you just put 20 bucks down the toilet." And then if you get the letter saying you're going to die, they give you instructions on how to hire some guy named Jake who drives a Nissan pickup with tools in the back and comes to your house wearing a gas mask and carrying a blowtorch. Jake will only charge you a couple thou to run a pipeline up out of your basement to the roof and stick in a fan that blows gunk into the atmosphere where it belongs. And then, before he leaves, he'll say, "Hope we got her. Gimme a call if the baby don't grow some feet pretty soon."

Oh yeah, one more thing. It's invisible. It's odorless. The little roach motel might work and it might not. And Jake got his degree in air conditioner repair from Southeast Oklahoma State Teachers College.

Free consumer tip from Joe Bob. Just thought you should know.

Speaking of home repairs, "Twice Dead" is about a mansion in El Lay that's haunted by a movie camera. Just when you think you're safe in bed, this terrifying camera bobs and weaves down the hall, so you can't see exactly where you're going, and then — wham! — it races to a close-up of some helpless TV actor trapped in a movie about sleazeball gangs that want to kill an entire family for HUMILIATING them with special effects.

Actually, this is one of the best flicks of '88, the drive-in version of "Sunset Boulevard." It starts with a creepoid film star dancing around his mansion with a female department store dummy, stabbing her with a steak knife, and then hanging himself from the rafters 'cause they're about to take his house away. Fifty years later, the Ozzie-and-Harriet family from Boulder shows up, runs off a Cro-Magnon biker gang with a shotgun, wipes away some cobwebs and starts moving in. The only thing is, nobody's changed

any of the furniture for 50 years. The dead film star is still ghostin' around up there, coasting down the halls disguised as a camera, wrapping ropes around junior's ankles while he's sleeping, peeking in at the daughter and, in the big final scene, Jason-ing to death four or five gang goonies for mashing up his dummy with a motorcycle. You don't know whether he's a good ghost or a bad ghost, or why he carries a 35-mm camera with him everywhere he goes, but that's what makes it GREAT.

Six breasts. Twelve dead bodies. Three motor vehicle chases, one with hearse. Two hangings. One dead cat, with bloody doormail. Dumbwaiter skull-crushing. Steak-knife neck-plunging. Heads roll twice. Great "Alien" stomach-monster rip-off effect. Ghost on a motorcycle. Mirror Fu. Moose Fu. Coffin Fu. Basketball-in-the-face Fu. Drive-In Academy Award nominations for Sam Melville, as Dad, for screaming at the son who doesn't like shotguns, "What the hell kind of kid did I raise?" and, at the end, "Well, it's a good thing they're all dead — saves me the trouble"; Christopher Burgard, as Silk the gang leader, for running over a kid in the street, standing over the body, and saying, "You should choose your friends more carefully"; Jill Whitlow, the foxy daughter, for saying, "Please — don't hurt him — I'll do anything you want"; Travis McKenna, as Melvin the obnoxious fat-boy gang member on a motorcycle, for getting repeatedly beat up, humiliated and attacked by his own vehicle; and Bert Dragin, the director, who also made the four-star flick "Summer Camp Nightmare," and who made this ghost story, which is pretty dumb, into a decent flick.

Four stars. Joe Bob says check it out.

### Joe Bob's Mailbag

Dear Joe Bob:

You might be interested to know that my college English professor read one of your articles



Retarded actor attempts to hang himself in "Twice Dead"

to the class as an example of contemporary American journalism! What a guy!

Valerie Saurer  
Tallahassee, Fla.

Dear Val:

That's nothing new. I've been on the curriculum at West Tallahassee State Teachers A & M College since I sent in my 30 bucks in 1983.

Hey Joe Bob,

Here are some planks for your campaign platform:

1. Promise to pass legislation

permitting the use of small caliber handguns to make any TV remote control.

2. Promise to repeal as unconstitutional all local ordinances restricting tipping in topless bars to garter belts if you know what I mean and I think you do.

Big Frank Gaughan  
Westland, O.

Dear Big Frank:

I've heard about you sickies in Cleveland that go to bars to watch garter belts dance.

## WXYC TOP 20

1. Fishbone
2. Feelies
3. Jane's Addiction
4. Let's Active
5. John Hiatt
6. Tom Waits
7. Billy Bragg
8. Red Lorry, Yellow Lorry
9. Cocteau Twins
10. Lloyd Cole and the Commotions
11. Siouxsie and the Banshees
12. Dream Syndicate
13. Jad Fair and Kramer
14. Folkways
15. ARKane
16. Rose of Avalanche
17. Various Artists
18. Screaming Tribesman
19. Toots Hibbert
20. Ladysmith Black Mambazo

- Truth and Soul
- Only Life
- Nothing's Shocking
- Every Dog Has His Day
- Slow Turning
- Big Time
- Workers' Playtime
- Nothing's Wrong
- Blue Bell Knoll
- Mainstream
- Peep Show
- Ghost Stories
- Roll out the Barrel
- A Vision Shared
- 69
- In Rock
- 'Til Things Are Brighter
- Bones and Flowers
- Toots in Memphis
- Journey of Dreams

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