

Joe Bob

Beware the terrifying cultural zone of geeks

By JOE BOB BRIGGS

Last week I was in New York City again, doing research on geek liberals, and I went down to 42nd Street and Times Square to check for slime and found out there's a full-scale Communist Assault going on, with THREE of the finest exploitation movie-houses in America about to be condemned, closed up, rebuilt by guys that wear goat beards and wire-rim glasses, and given to gay symphony organizations to make 300 bad PBS Specials a year. The lead Communist is Tony Randall, who came up with this plan where the city of New York is TAKING AWAY THE THEATERS FROM THEIR RIGHTFUL OWNERS, including the one that's been showin' "Three Giant Kung Fu Hits" for the last 10 years. The city says they're CONDEMNED, but they don't tear 'em down. They give 'em to lesbian ballet companies to put on shows called "Asphalt: A Retrospective."

This kinda thing couldn't have happened in the golden days of The Deuce. On the day that "Make Them Die Slowly" premiered, they had to bring in mounted police to control the line that went around the block. If you'd walked up to those people and said, "Hey, Mayor Koch says you shouldn't be watchin' this stuff. You need to be attending plays about Vietnam veterans that yell at their mothers all the time and then commit suicide" — if you'd told those people that, I'll TELL you what would of happened. You would have had some Bernhard Goetz Treatment on every wheelchair-basketball theater company in New York.

But they have been having these hearings for several months now about the "cultural zone" he's gonna create where the great 42nd Street theaters used to be, and where Mary Tyler Moore comes and talks about how she just LOVES Times Square and how she'd like to go on taking people's money forever for the Broadway shows she puts on about middle-aged women whining at one another, and usually the New York subscribers to the Joe Bob Briggs newsletter show up and sit on the back row and try to get the chairman of the committee to listen to their statistical comparisons of (A) how many people go to those theaters to see "Slave Girl From Beyond Infinity," and (B) how many people WOULD go

to those theaters to see an Italian acrobatic troupe perform the love theme from "Das Boot." You see, the numbers are on our side.

Anyhow, the owners of all the great theaters on The Deuce have found a way to fox Tony and his tutti-frutti friends. Since all the old Times Square theaters were built by George M. Cohen and Flo Ziegfeld, the owners have been applying for "historic building" status. This means that, from now on, the city can't mess with 'em. Koch did get three of 'em already, though, which means we're gonna have the "cultural zone" side-by-side right next to the drive-in zone and so we'll have a chance to see just exactly which form of entertainment the American public really wants. We got the movies waitin'. Bring on your best North Korean hand-puppet street mime midget music. We'll win.

Speaking of zombies on Broadway, "Return of the Living Dead Part II" came out a few days back and had James Karen and Thom Matthews robbing a cemetery in one of the first scenes — even though they ALREADY got turned into brain-eating zombies in Part One. You know, it's this kind of stuff that makes you not trust the movies anymore, like they hired the guys and then said, "Whoops! You know what? The story didn't make SENSE!" but then decided, "Oh, well, nobody'll notice." We NOTICED. These guys can't get zombified. They already GOT zombified. It's like casting John Wayne and Liberace in a 1988 movie. It wouldn't be a pretty sight, would it?

Anyhow, what happened is that evidently three or four cans of the secret zombie serum were dumped in One, and now some Bozo Army truck drivers bounce a can of it into a suburb where some little kids open it up and watch it seep into the cemetery, where the zombies claw their way up through the dirt and start demanding brain salads. The only people that can stop the world from being taken over are a 12-year-old, his aerobic-leotard sister, and, of course, a cable TV installer. Their plan — lure the zombies to an electric power plant by leaving a trail of cow brains, then hose 'em down, hit the juice, and barbecue 'em from the gizzards out.

The question you got to ask yourself in any good zombie movie, though, is, "What kills the zombies?"



Ken Wiederhorn, the director of "Return of the Living Dead," is on the left

In "Night of the Living Dead," the got to have total dismemberment — arms, legs, head, everything. And I only got one thing to say about these latest zombies — total dismemberment doesn't work. You ever try to kill a snake with a hatchet? That's what it's like.

Zombierama. No breasts. (New disturbing trend in horror flicks.) 16 dead bodies. 27 undead bodies. 143 living dead bodies. Head-hacking. Heads roll. Hands roll. Fingers roll. Zombie aerobics. Multiple brain eating. Spike through zombie heart. Shotgun to the zombie face. First recorded instance of someone's face being punched out — literally. Gratuitous aerobics. Gratuitous pet-

eating. Screwdriver through the ear. Drive-in Academy Award nomination for Suzane Snyder, for excellent whining, right up until the moment her brains are chewed up by her boyfriend, and for saying, "Joey, I'm NOT into dead guys"; Philip Bruns, as Doc Mandel, for diagnosing two zombies as having "chronic intractable rigor mortis"; Thor Van Lingen, as Billy the child zombie, for saying "You told, you told, now you die like me"; and Marsha Dietlein, as the Jamie Lee Curtis survivor, for saying, "They're ugly and they're dirty and they're dumb and I don't even care if they ARE dead, they're not touching ME."

Three stars. Joe Bob says check it out.

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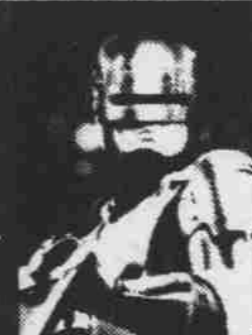
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Chinatown



SAT., FEB. 6