

A candid conversation with Big Bird— but will 10,000 DTHs paper his cage?

The other day I was needing to paper my birdcage, so I ran out and stole 10,000 Daily Tar Heels.

It's a really big bird.

In fact, it's Big Bird himself. As many of you may know, the Sesame Street Live! show is performing at the Smith Center this week, so my old buddy called me up and asked if he could crash with me.

"Big Bird, buddy, can't you stay with the rest of the gang at a hotel or something?"

"You kiddin'?" he exclaimed. "They booked us into the Holiday Inn off 15-501, which is basically a dump, and I said, 'Hey, no way! I'm Big Bird, dammit. I need comfort, class, a fourteen-foot bed.' And they basically told me to go sleep somewhere else for all they cared."

"So you immediately thought of me."

JOHN BLAND

Less Filling

"Of course! Hey, I'd rather crash at your shack than room with some of those nuts. Like Grover. You know how much Grover gets on my damn nerves?"

"I can imagine. He used to get on mine, too."

"And that big red nose of his. Keeps me awake all night! It's like a big nightlight strapped to a fuzball. I can't stand it."

"Why don't you shack up with someone else?"

"Like who?"

"I don't know. Bert and Ernie, maybe."

"Hey, I don't even want to start

with them. They came out of the closet last year, you know."

"I think I read it in *People* or something."

"The only one I really get along with now is Kermit, but he and Piggy shackled up together now so he's whipped. And Oscar used to be a serious party guy. He and Belushi used to hang out at the punk clubs together, getting trashed. Course, he's clean now, so he's no fun anymore. He only wants to sit in his room and watch reruns of *New Zoo Revue*. I think he's got the hots for Emmy Sue or something."

"Big Bird, buddy, I really don't think I've got the space."

"Come on, man! This is a party town! I'm a party guy! This is like Vegas! You know we played Vegas last year?"

"No, I didn't know."

"Yeah. Vegas, man, I love that

town! Played Caesar's, opened for Bobby Vinton."

"That right?"

"Yeah. Ran into Wayne over at the Palomino, and we sat down and talked careers and how he's kind of in a slump and how nobody really respects my work as a performer and all. Then we got really bent."

"How much you lose at the tables?"

"Only 20 k this time. Not a whole lot. I'm negotiating a new contract right now, so my signing bonus oughta cover it. That blackjack table at Caesar's about rocked me, though. I was in there with the Count, but they ran us off 'cause he kept shouting out, 'One card! Two cards! Three cards! Ha-ha-ha-ha!', which is not a good thing to do in a casino."

"How about those showgirls, huh?"

"Prime cut, baby. Prime. Went over to a gig at Buddy Hackett's shack with three, count 'em three, dancers

from Liza's show. It was a very good night. We gotta do that here, man, me and you, got to go to that place...what's the name of that place by the post office?"

"Four Corners?"

"Yeah. We gotta go there and hit on loose sorority girls. They don't call me Big Bird for nothing, ya know!"

"So you want to crash at my place, huh?"

"If it's not too much trouble."

"Oh, no. We'll just knock out a wall so you can stretch your legs out."

"You're beautiful, baby. Oh, by the way, I hope you don't mind if I bring a buddy of mine along."

"Big Bird, uh-uh. No way. No way!"

"Aw, come on, man. He won't take up too much room!"

"Who is it?"

"Mr. Snuffalupagus."

A trip down the memory lane of horror movies

The eighties were real scary to me. Every decade since the drive-in started going away has been scarier and scarier.

Like in the fifties, when the drive-in was king, you go to a scary movie, you know what's gonna happen. Something's coming from outer space, and it's gonna eat you. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. I understand that. Or maybe something's got zapped by atomic radiation. *The Killer Shrews*. *Giant Gila Monster*. *Godzilla*. Isn't that what happened to Godzilla? Ate some nuclear stuff and crawled up out of the ocean? *Creature from the Black Lagoon*. So it either comes from outer space, or it comes up out of the ocean, and eats you.

Then in the sixties, things get a little bit more scary. Something's gonna eat you, but it doesn't live in outer space. It lives right next door! There are mean people out there. There are bikers that are gonna beat you up for no reason, like in *The Wild Angels*. And rednecks that are gonna hassle you like in *Cool Hand Luke*. And some crazy people, like Fuad Ramses, the maniac Egyptian caterer in *Blood Feast*. We've even got zombies, dead people that have fungus growing off their face, like in *Night of the Living Dead* and *Two Thousand Maniacs*. But you can still kill the goldurn things. Those *Night of the Living Dead* zombies will die if you shoot 'em through the brain. They're just mean people, nothing a double-barreled shotgun can't take care of.

But then in the 1970s, starting with *Dirty Harry*, you've got people that are not just mean, they're not just gonna eat you if you don't kill

JOE BOB BRIGGS

At The Drive-In

em first. They're *deranged* people. Dirty Harry can kill 'em, he can eventually blow their brains into the San Francisco Bay, but he's the *only one*. You and me, we can't kill 'em. And there's people in your *own* family that are gonna eat you. Like in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, or *Halloween* — Michael Myers was related to Jamie Lee Curtis in that movie. *I Spit on Your Grave* — those guys were so mean that, by the end of the movie, we still wanna keep killing 'em, and they're already all dead. In fact, the seventies were the Cannibal Years. The seventies kinda made cannibalism what it is today in this country. Remember *The Hills Have Eyes*? They're cannibals, and they're mutated atomic-radiation baby killers.

And then finally we get to the eighties, and I'll be dogged if they didn't come up with something even sicker. In the eighties, it doesn't come from outer space and it doesn't ride into town on a Harley, and it's not Crazy Lonnie your cousin who turns out to be a cannibal. In the eighties, something *inside* your own body is gonna get nastier and nastier and then come *out* of your body and eat you. Probably the first great transformation scene, where your body starts getting the heebie jeebies and then you grow claws and your skull turns into a ravioli dinner, was *An American Werewolf in London* in 1981. But then we had *The Beast Within*, where the guy turns into a giant

katydid, and *The Evil Dead*, where the zombies hide inside you and there's only one way to kill 'em — total dismemberment: arms, legs, head, everything. And then we had *Forbidden World*, where they have a little accident in the genetic-DNA lab and pretty soon everybody's face is covered in slime glopola, and it grows into this enormous thing that looks like Hamburger Helper with teeth, and that's really the first great genetic-DNA mutant intestine monster.

But the best one of all came right smack dab in the middle of the eighties. You know what I'm talking about. *The Fly*. A little mixup in Jeff Goldblum's body, he gets fused with a fly, and suddenly he's got stiff hairs growing out of his back and a Pizza Face and his ear falls off. Remember that? And then it gets *worse*. He gets this sort of Cream-of-Wheat Cancer Face, and when things get really bad, he's got Vomit Jubilee Face. And pretty soon Jeff looks so bad we feel *sorry* for the fly that got fused with him. His body eats him alive. And that's what the eighties were all about. Vomit. That's what it all comes down to when you sum it up. The eighties were about vomit. That's my opinion. That kinda sums it all up. Okay, we can go forward now.

Speaking of stuff left over from the eighties, *Punk Vacation* is an outstanding flick about what would happen if some bored punks from El Lay decided to go up to the Bakersfield area and start wasting desert rats. Who would win? People with orange hair or people with red necks? Whichever way, it's gonna be darned fun finding out, isn't it?

It starts out with a highway cafe owner's biggest nightmare — a punk biker loses 40 cents in the Coke machine and starts kicking the mother in. Only one solution for that: double-barreled shotgun to the throat, until the guy Harleys his hiney out of there. Unfortunately, he comes back with a few *friends* who think it would be a neat idea to stiletto the old geezer in the stomach while his impressionable young daughter watches, and then rip the little girl's blouse off. By the time the local Deputy Dawgs show up, all they manage to get is one lowly biker, splattering him across the hood of a car and putting him in intensive care. And, by then, the Head Mama Punker has set up a Charlie Manson rock-and-roll party at an abandoned ranch out by Tehachape. All they need now is for the dead old geezer's blonde daughter to come out there seeking revenge with her Deputy Dawg boyfriend, and before you know it — wham! — they've got the little porkchop sturpped down to her bra, tied to some railroad ties, and forced to listen to *real loud music* while everybody else gets to dance. Unfortunately, not all the gals from Canoga Park who came along on the punk vacation are having a good time. "Maybe we should have gone to stewardess school," one of 'em says.

The rednecks are coming! The rednecks are coming! Fishin hats, deer rifles, beer guts and all. We're talking *Shaka Zulu in the Mojave*. Excellent movie.

No breasts. (*White bras!* Can you believe it?) Seven dead bodies. Violent windshield bashing. Explod-

ing rat. Surgical scissor attack. Pet rats. Punk funeral, with fire. Hand rolls. Gratuitous songs from *Evita*. Gratuitous exploding Pepsi cans. Drive-In Academy Award nominations for Roxanne Rogers, as the head punker, for saying "You're kinda cute for a parasite of humanity — maybe we'll rape you before we cut your throat;" Raymond Fucci, the shotgun-wielding geezer, for saying "That girl hasn't been the same ever since she joined that Chamber of Commerce;" Sandra Bogan, as Lisa, the revenge-minded pistol-packing redneck daughter, for looking *great* when she's tied to a tree in her underwear; Louis Waldon, as Sheriff Virgil, for saying "Did Patton call in the state troopers when he took Iwo Jima?" Patrick Reynolds, as Deputy Duane, for saying "No, that was McArthur;" Billy Palmieri, as the sensitive punk, for saying "Didn't we learn anything from the sixties?"; Don Martin, as the black deputy, for saying, at the most dangerous moment in the film, "I've seen a million movies, and when the white guy makes the plan, the black dude always does the dirty work;" Stephen Falchi, for answering "Don, I don't think this is the time to discuss racial stereotypes in the media;" and Lance Smith and Harvey Richelson, the screenwriters, for the following exchange:

First Deputy: "Sometimes I don't think you're really cut out for this work, Carl."

Second Deputy: "Well, I failed motel management."

First Deputy: "You should try horticulture."

Three and a half stars. Joe Bob says check it out.