

"The Green Hornet" Marathon

The word marathon says it all, but not in terms of arduous distance-running or the 1970s nut-based chocolate bar but in that this is a test for me as a fan of Bruce Lee; *The Green Hornet* – the 1960s TV serial that made Lee's name – albeit some years and thousands of miles later – is my last truly untapped source of unviewed Lee footage. As odd as it may seem to just about any Bruce Lee aficionado, my contact with the show can be measured in terms of clips, outtakes and a dalliance with the 1994 UK VHS three-episode release of the show that remained unwatched from the point of purchase until I parted with it more than a decade later. I simply didn't like what I saw and what I saw was actually very little.

One has to question the quality of a show that doesn't even see small-scale reissue when a modern big-screen adaptation has a budget of some \$120 million dollars. Does this mean *The Green Hornet* is awful all these decades on, or is it mired in legal problems that I can't even be bothered to Google?

Even Bruce Lee himself was critical of his performance in the show, when interviewed by Pierre Berton in 1971 he remarked as an aside "by the way, I did a really terrible job in that I have to say", while Berton responds with a swift "I didn't see it", perhaps indirectly validating the comment in trying to spare Lee's feelings. Whether this was Lee's sweeping statement about the show generally or the *Batman* crossover episodes remains hazy, to me at least.

As uttered in previous text, I must have first encountered Bruce Lee as Kato in the *Batman* TV show crossover episodes when they aired

on British television in the 1970s, and not once did I marry the smartly-suited chauffeur to the battle-scarred, bloodied *Dragon* warrior that appeared in comic book advertisements in what passed for my childhood reading matter. Further, I only recently visited one of the 1970s *Green Hornet* movies, made up of mashed-up episodes, for this publication – an experience I wasn't keen to repeat... but needs must in terms of fresh meat, and this is long overdue. And who knows, I may well register a connection with the show, so I'm hoping it's not quite the misfire it's usually touted as. Let's press on.

My marathon begins at the end! A double-bill: *Invasion from Outer Space* Parts I & II, episodes 25 and 26 from Season One (of one) – the final *Hornet* episodes, which aired in March 1967 before cancellation strangled the remaining breath from the show. The plot-strands concern ambitious criminals hijacking a military convoy transporting a nuclear weapon and associated equipment, under the dubious, transparent guise of aliens from another world.

Director Darrell Hallenbeck, before he curiously prefixed his name with the letter E, had also directed other prominent genre shows of the era, including *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*



and also had a production role on *The Twilight Zone*, including 1961's *The Invaders* and *Will the Real Martian Please Stand Up?* episodes, which may have proved influential here as perhaps did Orson Welles' radio drama *War of the Worlds* (1938). The nuclear threat resonates once more in the 21st century as it once did in the 1960s and 1980s but the 1950s sci-fi shtick feels dated, as film and TV began to warm to the potential of immeasurably more intelligent, futuristic offerings that dominated the latter part and close of the 1960s (see *Star Trek, 2001: A Space Odyssey, Planet of the Apes* et al).

The episodes have a worn yet familiar and forgivable feel, especially with the lovely Linda Gaye Scott as a gold-clad, electricity emitting space siren, evoking a punch-line and curvaceous hand-gestures from the *Hornet* himself at the end of the tale. The other players move the plotline along, for what it's worth. Larry D. Mann stands out in his unemotional and ruthless turn as Dr. Eric Mabouse, in spite of the ridiculous premise and costume he and the other villainous cast endure.

If there's one real complaint in all this it's the contrast on the day-for-night shot exteriors, leaving Bruce Lee in the dark while silver-wrapped assailants are assaulted by a shadow. A proper re-mastering and release is required, something *BLR* in its many guises has been pushing for for a very long time and this is something that will no doubt be repeated as the marathon jogs on.



"That's a tough shot Mr Roper"

Of *Enter the Dragon's* attempts at characterisation, John Saxon's Roper is arguably the most striking of *Enter's*... flashback sequences, maybe even the lynchpin of the movie. His background clearly defines him as an affable chancer, refusing to correct his own self-destructive flight-path; his cavalier attitude to personal well-being marks a journey with self-

inflicted self-preservation. Gambling to the last, the final straw is a game of golf that goes from bad to worse when Roper slices his ball into the rough, only to be confronted by three tough-guys looking to collect what is due, with interest. This scene sets out Saxon's stall as a lovable rogue with nowhere left to run but Hong Kong. *BLR* tracked down some of the players involved in this sequence to see what they recall of that day:



Please tell us a little of your martial arts prowess...

Darnell Garcia: My background in Karate is with Chuck Norris. I was awarded a black belt in 1971 by him; Norris has a numbered system of his black belts.

Mike Bissell: I was an original member of LAKPA (Los Angeles Karate Players Association). Mike Stone coached us. It was one of the first full-contact Karate organizations in the US. I was on the Championship team (that Darnell captained) of the USA team championships that LAKPA sponsored. I also took first place as Brown Belt Heavyweight at [the] 1972 Internationals and third place at [the] 1973 Las Vegas national championships as a Black Belt in the Heavyweight Division; [I] earned my first degree Black Belt in June of 1973 and my second degree in June of 1975.

...and how did that lead to your appearance in Enter the Dragon?

Darnell Garcia: One of Norris' other black belts Bob Wall, I was on his board of promotion to black belt, called me and asked if I wanted to be in the movie. I had won a series of large tournaments in the USA and the scene was to be filmed in Los Angeles near Warner Brothers Studios

Mike Bissell: Bob Wall got us the job because they didn't want to pay stuntmen union wages. Darnell, Pat (Johnson) and myself were instructing for Chuck Norris at the time and we were chosen to take the stuntmen's place.

Was the golf course scene a Second Unit shoot or was Robert Clouse on hand to direct?

Darnell Garcia: The golf course scene was with a small film crew and I believe Clouse, a fairly curt fellow, was there.

Mike Bissell: The director was great he kind of turned things over to the martial artists for the fight scene.

Was it shot after the Hong Kong stuff was in the can?

Darnell Garcia: I don't think the scene was filmed after the Hong Kong stuff, I seemed to remember it was before. Some days before the filming I met with Fred Weintraub at his office for

a meet and greet, the same again before the filming of *Black Belt Jones*.

When I interviewed John Saxon, he said the golf course fight was shot twice, the first time at a lower frame rate which didn't work. What are your recollections of that scene and how it was put together?

Darnell Garcia: I remember a short script was provided and Pat Johnson and I both had pre-read the speaking role of which he got, due to I believe his height, him being much shorter than myself and Mike Bissell. I agreed – all three golf course actor/stuntmen were Norris black belts – and we filmed it just has Saxon has remembered it to you [1]

Mike Bissell: The scene was choreographed on the spot. We probably filmed the scene thirty times in about three hours from what I can remember. Over and over again and again. Insofar as John Saxon's Karate teacher on the set, I can't remember that, but I do remember Bob Wall being there and pretty much outlined the entire action scene (Bob can and will confirm this) as Bruce did not favour film that had been done and rejected. I never had the privilege of meeting Mr Lee.

REFERENCES: [1] John Saxon: "James Wing Woo, my Tai Chi instructor at that time choreographed the Griffith Park fight scene. I'd taken Jimmy Woo with me to Fred Weintraub's office at Warner Bros. studios on the day before the scene was to be shot because I had no idea how Robert Clouse intended to do that fight scene. I found Robert Clouse had no idea how to do it. So, then and there Jimmy Woo and I brainstormed on ways of doing the scene, which I demonstrated in action to the bemused Clouse... until in the process I tore a hamstring muscle on my right leg. Nevertheless the scene was shot the next day, and at twenty or twenty-two frames per second because the assumption was I would need to be speeded up, the result was the scene looked like one in a silent movie! So it was re-shot when I returned to Los Angeles, repeating basically the same moves that James Wing Woo and I had worked out and with the same very likeable Pat Johnson, but perhaps different stuntmen". p.58-59 *Bruce Lee Review – The Book*, Woowums Books. 2009.

The Wrecking Crew REVIEW Crew

A surprisingly, once-again-contemporary global economic disaster theme provides Superspy Matt Helm (Dean Martin) with raison d'être and a licence to ponce about in 'Denmark' to foil Nigel Green's pompous (and frankly, a bit of a git) Count Contini who has stolen a billion dollars in gold.

The draw here for Bruce Lee fans is his involvement as 'Karate Advisor' and his use of students and contemporaries in the action; expect fun to be had spotting the likes of Joe Lewis, Chuck Norris, Mike Stone and Ed Parker as they go through their paces. Watched beyond the cartoonish boundaries of the movie, the choreography feels dated, slow and limp in places but in context is good fun and Nancy Kwan and Sharon Tate certainly enter the spirit of things. Seasoned fans will no doubt spot key 'tells' that would pepper Bruce Lee's later, more accomplished work and one can see how he was developing his tools as a filmmaker and fight coordinator.

The film's musical theme centres on DeVol's 'House of Seven Joys', a grating, up-tempo pop ditty that dips in and out of ill-considered, 'well-placed' Dean Martin velvet-voiced standards. This annoyance aside, there's



much on offer: Elke Sommer's beauty is entrancing, while Sharon Tate and Martin's playful chemistry is clear, and Nancy Kwan does well to bend the bonds of Asian stereotyping of the period. The movie saunters along at a comfortable pace, much like "The King of Cool" himself, Dean Martin's lovable faux-inebriate, comedic-style makes Matt Helm every inch the stereotypical 1960s fashion photographer International Spy as mercilessly pastiched by Mike Myers decades later. Martin was in his 50s when this production rolled around and is surprisingly spry where he has to take cover from some decent-looking explosions and flying rubble or in fight scenes where he's not doubled. Harmless old-fashioned fun, the tone of which is best realised by listening to Martin's sardonic voiceovers for other movies in the Matt Helm series. ★★1/2



Missing a Search through the Years Bruce Lee Footage

It was 1980s R&B pop sensation Alexander O'Neal who said it best when he sang the immortal phrase "Let's try and find out what's missing". **LEON BERKHOUT** attempts just that and reflects on what may still be yet to come...

Every time the subject Bruce Lee comes up I always think on lost footage. There is so much more rare footage of Bruce Lee but where is it? It's probably in the Golden Harvest vaults; Raymond Chow (allegedly) sits on a golden mountain and won't let go. But why? He can ask millions for it but why should he? He's already a rich man. Let's go over the years of 1963-1973 to search for some rare long lost Bruce Lee footage...

1963 Bruce Lee vs Wong Jack Man

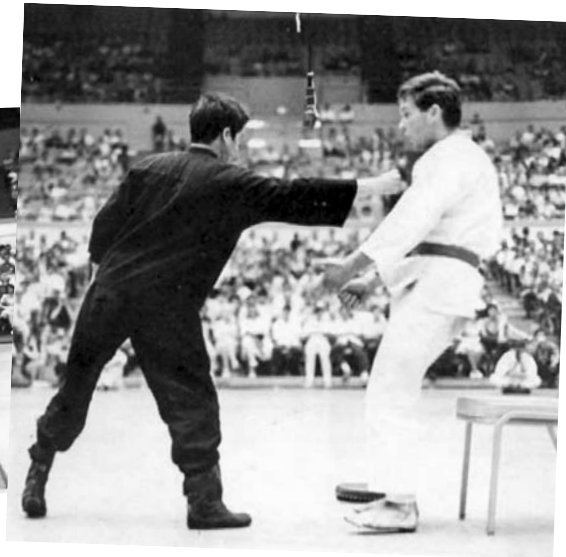
Bruce Lee in combat with Wong Jack Man. Rumours are it was filmed but thrown



away by Linda Lee accidentally or it wasn't filmed at all. We will never know, many witnesses have passed away, now we will never know the length of the fight; was it seconds or minutes?

1967-1971 Longbeach appearances

Between 1967 and 1971 Bruce Lee made appearances at Jhoon Rhee's Longbeach tournaments some are lost and some not-so. Where are the lost ones? Probably used in some projects but never to return again, lying in a closet under 2mm of dust or sold on to the highest bidder, we will never know.



1971 *The Big Boss*

The famous saw-in-the-head scene, was it ever filmed? Does it exist? Who has the uncut version? We have only seen pictures of this scene; it was cut because of the violence, just like the prostitute scene, with only pictures and a snippet of footage on a trailer, nothing more but if this scene was filmed, maybe Raymond Chow sits on it...



1971 Lost *Fist of Fury* trailer

When *The Big Boss* was showing in the cinemas the public saw a short promo of *The Intercepting Fists* aka *Fist of Fury*. The promo begins like this: Bob Baker enters the Ching Wu school beating up students, then we see Bruce coming down from the stairs watching Bob the whole time, then Bob sees him and starts towards him and then – clashing shoulder-to-shoulder – with the title flashing on. This trailer does exist, Hong Kong Legends were going to use it for the *Fist of Fury* Platinum Edition DVD but they never did. Why? Maybe the owner wanted more bucks.



1972 *Way of the Dragon*, behind-the-scenes footage

There are strong rumours about behind-the-scenes footage of Bruce in *WotD*. The latest rumours are an Italian has it and he isn't even a Bruce Lee fan! Chaplin Chang also made around twenty minutes behind-the-scenes stuff; Bruce dancing with nunchaku etc. Someone borrowed it but never returned it! Fortune Star claimed it also has reels



of *WotD* footage; outtakes, alternate scenes etc. but is doing nothing with it...

the art of "Enter the Dragon"

Iconic is a word bandied about all too often for things that aren't necessarily so but one only has to witness *Enter the Dragon's* poster art to know that beyond its sketchy style and questionable likenesses there is something special on offer. Who then is responsible for this work? With no signature in evidence on the image itself my initial leanings were toward poster art legend Bill Gold but the poster also has a flavour of the equally legendary Drew Struzan in terms of composition, use of colour and characterisation, as opposed to straight portraits of the actors depicted.

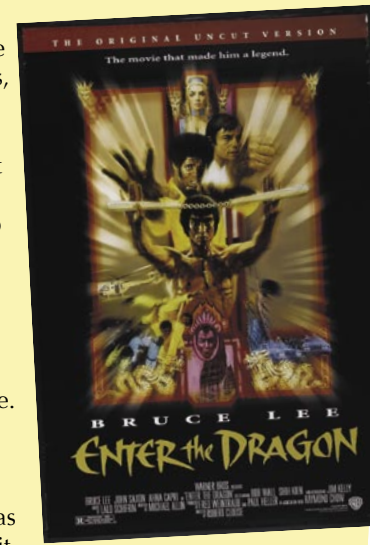
A quick check with Leith Adams of Warner Brothers Archives reveals that it was in fact created by one Bob Abbott under the direction of Bill Gold Studios, this information coming courtesy of Tony Nourmand co-founder of Reel Art Press Publications and editor of *Bill Gold: PosterWorks*, a fabulous volume of Gold's incredible output spanning six decades. With Bill Gold in the Winter of his years and unable to remember little of the artist, Tony Nourmand's only real record of Bob Abbott's involvement in its creation is a 1973 article from *The Hollywood Reporter*, where *Enter the Dragon* was a nominee in their Third Key Art Awards, alongside other big movies of the time including *The Sting*, *The Exorcist* and *Magnum Force* among others.



Could Bob Abbott also be a loose pseudonym for the artist Robert K. Abbott, who provided covers for, among others, the Edgar Rice Burroughs *Tarzan* books, whose style is remarkably similar to that of *Enter the*

Dragon's artwork? Not so, says Sara Koller, Vice President of Wild Wings, a leading publisher of wildlife, sporting and nostalgic art that Robert K. Abbott specialised in later in his career: "Bob did not paint under a pseudonym during his illustrative work years. The only time he did was in the late 1940's for a religious magazine. 'Our' Bob Abbott no longer can see well enough to be able to make a determination as to whether he thought it was his art. I asked his wife to determine if she felt it looked familiar to her. She felt it was a more complicated piece of work with too many images involved in the painting to have been his work. She felt it wasn't like Bob to do that much imagery in things he painted. To me, the body of the main character (Bruce Lee?) looks like the manner in which Bob painted, but I agree with Bob's wife that the rest of it does not look like Bob's work. She felt bad that she could not get me a definitive answer, so I am afraid the mystery remains."

So, who else is there? A quick Google search of *Enter the Dragon's* artwork reveals Bob Peak as the man behind the art, cited



as "The Father of the Modern Hollywood Poster". Once again, a resounding negative from Tony Nourmand, "I spoke to Tom Peak [Bob Peak's son] when doing the book and the art is 100% not by his Dad."

Also interesting is the fact that neither Warner Brothers Archives or Bill Gold Studios no longer possess any of the original artwork or preparatory art for *Enter the Dragon*. Perhaps, like some Bruce Lee artefacts of note, it has been spirited away for private enjoyment or is simply misplaced. A follow-

up with *The Hollywood Reporter* regarding coverage of their 1973 ceremony has not yet garnered a response that would reveal more about Mr. Abbott but for now we can enjoy his work and hope that more information comes to light and we can provide the proper recognition.

In Print...

Enter the Dragon: A Photographer's Journey

Until fairly recently I was really rather ignorant or perhaps indifferent to the barbed cynicism and sensationalism protruding from the pages of Robert Clouse's 1987 book **The Making of Enter the Dragon**, one of my first acquisitions as a Bruce Lee fan. I have long rated it highly but carried a nagging need to reevaluate it and all too aware of the benefits a long-overdue digital rendering would bring, given the low-quality versions of images within. Unfortunately, with Mr. Clouse no longer on this mortal coil this doesn't seem likely to happen any time soon and with the written content held in greater disregard year upon year, it was time for a fresh look from a different perspective on the production of this classic movie.

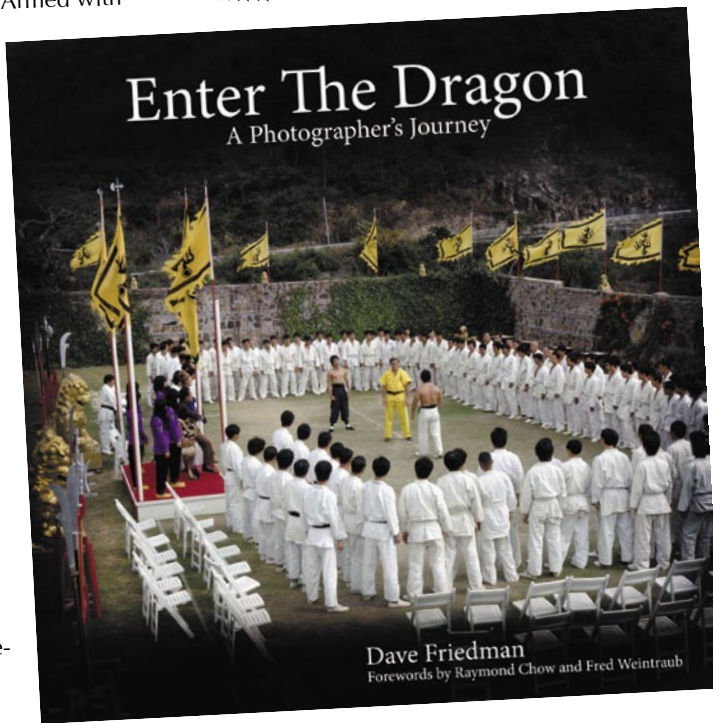
Dave Friedman's book is such a thing, supplying total, voyeuristic immersion into *Enter the Dragon's* production. Armed with personal choices of his surviving photographic work from Warner Brothers archives he reclaims his imagery, long scattered over decades of books and publications and posters in varying contexts, sometimes lacking the respect evident in this portal into on-set antics circa 1973.

Make no bones about it, this book is expensive, perhaps rightly so with a product of this significance and quality, especially with International shipping on top. It's worth mentioning that I dedicated a significant portion of this issue's production budget to purchasing Dave Friedman's signed, limited edition, matte-

finished coffee-table breaker, just so that I could cover its release – at the expense of owning and reviewing Jon Benn's revised, reissued book (sorry Jon!).

This work is every inch the beautiful bridesmaid to Clouse's book's warts-and-all bride and with that analogy comes the realisation that this is no replacement for *The Making of Enter the Dragon* in terms of text at least, largely letting the photo's do the talking. However, we can now view proceedings with dazzling, albeit imperfect clarity, which is as it should be as the odd flaw adds to the essence of snooping into the past. There are a couple of nit-picking concerns: the aspect ratio on one Bruce Lee portrait is stretched and a caption of an image from the golf course sequence is speculative and incorrect. A surprising positive point is Golden Harvest Studios founder and movie producer Raymond Chow's sentry-like foreword, perhaps warning of the dangers of 'peeping behind the curtain' instead of allowing the film to stand on its own merits. Something to keep in mind ahead of purchase... or when flicking through the sumptuous pages.

★★★★



Thirty Seconds with... Dave Friedman

How did the Enter... gig come about...

I had worked with Bruce on *The Green Hornet* in 1966 so when the call came from Warner Brothers in January 1973, it was easy to say yes.

Which episodes of the Hornet did you work on and how did Bruce's skills and temperament compare between your experiences with him in 1966 and 1973? How about a book on that?

I worked on all of *The Green Hornet* episodes and the show was a piece of shit, [It] barely lasted one season and a book on that would be a waste. No one would buy it.

If you could go back and swipe a keepsake from the Enter set, what would it be?

If I could have kept something? Probably one of Bruce's weapons. I have several keepsakes, my original script, a signed photo by Bruce and some opium weights but most of all great memories.

Had you been to or worked in Hong Kong prior to that time?

I had been to Hong Kong many times starting in 1958 while serving in the US Navy. I loved it there and had reconnected with Bruce there.

Of all the images you captured, do you have a particular favourite?

One of the portraits of Bruce was my favourite and showed him in full character.

Is there a certain image you feel transcended your expectations, in terms of how it was shot/composition, how it was captured?

I favoured several shots of the fight in the dungeon as favourite action shots.

What kind of equipment were you using and how does it measure up against what's available today?

I used the best equipment available at the time, Nikon F and F2 but it doesn't compare to the equipment available today.

Were you around after shooting had wrapped in Hong Kong and Bruce Lee was filming test scenes in Han's trophy room?

We left after wrap and were not there when Bruce did some pickup shots in the mirrored room.

Were you on hand to shoot the Griffith Park golf course scene?

Yes I was at the golf course and a couple of those shots are in the book.

Having sat in the Warner Brothers archive and revisited all your work, would it be insurmountable for a like-minded individual to do the same for footage? Some of which has been leaked/seen over the years?

There is NO film footage in the archive. Many of my best images were lost to theft over the years so I had to work with what was available. I was able to find much there. There are things there that no one has seen and some of that will be in the book.



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Nick Mancuso Interview
Gene LeBell Interview
Showdown in Little Tokyo
Kung Fu: The Next Generation
David Darlow Interview
Kung Fu The Movie
Mike Vendrell Interview
Six of the Best (Brandon Lee Interviews)
Brandon Lee Books



ISSUE #4

Fred Weintraub and David Fields Interview
John Little In Pursuit of the Dragon interview
DIY Jeet Kune Do
UK Bruce Lee
Convention Fever 1979-81
Fighter or Fanboy?
Building the Ultimate Big Boss
Bruce Lee's Legacy in Film



ISSUE #3

Tao of Jeet Kune Do Expanded Edition
Game of Death Revisited – full features and interviews
Action star Gary Daniels interview
The Legend of Bruce Lee
Old-school Computer Games of Death
JKD's Unsung Hero
James Yimm Lee
The Big Boss soundtracks



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Bruce Lee in Longstreet Interview with director Jeannot Szwarc
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Aarif Lee interview
Bruce Lee in Four Colours – comic books
Way of the Drive-In
The 'Missing' Big Boss - Part Two



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Bruce Lee Senior Student
Taky Kimura interviewed
The Forgotten Student Phil Bardelli Interviewed
The 'Missing' Big Boss Part 1
The Green Hornet
Short Interview with director Aurelien Poitrimout
The Other Cultural Revolution – Dr. Paul Bowman