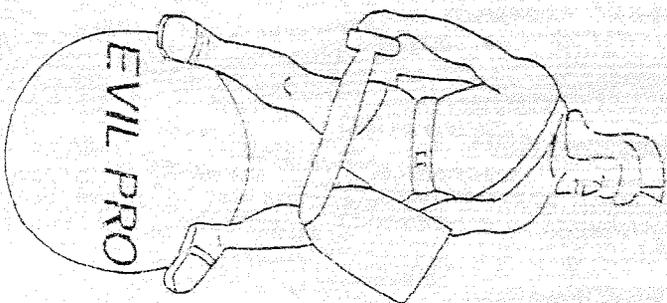


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EPRODUCTIONS

1948 - 2001



The Story of Evil Productions

A Thumbnail History

In the fall of 1948, several fifteen- to seventeen-year old Piedmont High School kids with a common interest in the macabre and outrageous created what became Evil Productions (EP). The earliest influence was that of the *Grand Guignol* of France—those horrific, brutal and gory stage productions. Live-action mayhem appealed to these high-schoolers, busily steeping themselves in Poe, Lovecraft and the like and sharing at lunchtime meetings their home-crafted cartoon strips—all which were in bad taste.

The notion of a motion picture blossomed as the perfect visual expression of horror and the grotesque: gory Guignol on film. With a camera borrowed from the Boy Scout Council, the project's momentum grew swiftly. A "screenplay" was developed (amidst much hilarity) and those most seriously interested pooled financial resources to meet the expenses. Gilt-edged share certificates were prepared and sold to subscribers of Evil Productions. It was capitalized at about fifty dollars, sufficient to purchase film stock, make-up, props and supplies. Costumes came from various home closets.

EP numbered about eight at this time: Bill Brown, Bob Collins, Tom Foster, Louis Hough, Ron Hughes, Bert Leaver, Tom Lowry, and Don Poulton. Bill Murray and his girl friend, Iris Thompson, were Berkeley High School kids engaged for *The Borganoff Terror*. Other

zanies joined the fun as EP's activities weirded forward: George Towner, Jim Philips, Jack Hawley and Tom Smith. Some younger siblings and nephews fleshed out the cast of characters or were engaged as set builders and roustabouts.

Particularly welcome were ingenuity and creativity, as well as useful materials, props, and energy. Louis Hough's basement became a laboratory. Bill and Herb Brown built laboratory equipment, Don Poulton prepared many disguises and make-up as well as a life-like puppet (to represent evil Doctor Prætorius, who dies rolling down a cliff). Models and props were prepared and assembled, and Hough's basement became a hive of activity. Seeing the costumed characters for *The Borganoff Terror* get ready for a location shoot, the next-door neighbor remarked that it was like Halloween every weekend.

As the cavalcade of cars moved out to the cemetery, or whatever location was on the shot list, a round-up of additional "talent" took place (those extras to be chased, "maimed" and "killed" that day). Unsuspecting parents had their tykes and teenagers whisked off to participate in dubious activities. But all returned safely, some eager for yet another weird adventure. EP provided a fine alternative for adolescent energy, wherein exuberant mischief was channeled into somewhat healthy endeavors. Moreover, EP photographed all its transgressions.

Stealth was called for, since permission to use chosen locations was seldom obtained. It was "hit and run." Outside one San Francisco hotel, the crew arrived, set up quickly with no rehearsal, the action was recorded, and swiftly and merrily the company sped away in broad daylight. When pushing a burning car off a cliff into the Pacific Ocean, furtive cunning to avoid detection reached a pinnacle of accomplishment.

The first roll of film was exposed during the week after Christmas, 1948. Five months later *The Borganoff Terror* was premiered, enlivening the end of the school

year of 1949. Additional sequences were shot in the fall, and the augmented version was presented to parents late that year. At this screening it was announced that the next movie would feature a car going off a cliff. The elders scoffed at such a presumptuous notion, but they saw it happen in *The Big Bomb* when it premiered in June, 1950. The crazy creators then packed themselves off to college and EP film production lapsed for nearly two years.

Production of the third, more ambitious movie began in 1952. The creative hive had now moved to Telegraph Avenue in Oakland, Jack Hawley's home and workshop. EP had now obtained its own 16mm Bolex camera and some members were eager for more movie mayhem. A few current events, stories and themes of the early 1950s caught their collective fancy (aside from hydrogen bombs and general angst). Gangster movies, hard-boiled detectives, a pornography-obsessed King of Egypt, some ribald sex and child abuse. All fun stuff to twist into a tawdry tale. Of course, the primary motive for the movie was to immolate an automobile in the grandest and most dramatic fashion imaginable. *The Inspector's Revenge* was completed in late fall, 1953.

Costs for *The Borganoff Terror* ran about \$225, while *The Big Bomb* barely cost \$125 including ATYS, the 1931 Chrysler sedan. Lost is any cost accounting for *The Inspector's Revenge*.

Though obviously influenced by Hollywood horror movies and by the antics of the Keystone Kops and the Marx Brothers, Evil Productions created its own absurd style: a goofy mid-century Mad Comics-like zaniness. It was off-the-cuff "weirding." When shooting a scene, the film director merely told the actors to be "weird," the equivalent of telling them that anything goes. The cameraman was busy trying to keep in the frame whatever was happening.

The music scores lean heavily on ballet and programmatic (descriptive) music—that which is either dramatic

or has fast-paced movement. The Russians composed the bulk of the scores, all lending a hand either to keep things rolling along or just noisily resonating. Most action in EP movies is that of a chase, so music was chosen to propel the action. Again, “weird” was the keynote.

After the dust settled, where did the EP characters go? Into the U.S. Foreign Service, nuclear physics, psychiatry, orthodontics, cosmetics marketing, art teaching, labor relations, film production, and engineering.

Unearthing the Unearthly

For decades it was troublesome to present the EP movies, and the task required both disc-jockey skills and a high tolerance for frustration. The sound and narration were laboriously assembled onto magnetic tape or LP recordings, playing separately beside the projector. Since sound and picture ran on different machines, they were never in sync. Either the projector or the record player had to be stopped to let the other catch up.

No projection prints were made until the 1960s. Until then, the original camera film ground as faithfully as it could, cement splices holding or not, through a variety of projectors, dubbed “film crunchers.” Scratches, digs and tears are easily noticeable (particularly in the first ten minutes of *The Borganoﬀ Terror*), while edge fog and splotches of reversal film development imparted still more elements of antiquity.

But today, half a century after they were made, Evil Productions’ movies have embraced the technology of the 21st century. Thanks to digital wizardry and computers of gargantuan capacity, we can again enjoy these nearly-forgotten gems of yesteryear. The pictures are presented with action at the original silent speed (natural movement rather than speeded up), and

the sound reproduction is far more dynamic than that of wire and tape recorders in the early 1950s.

These restorations employ all the original music scores, although the performances are recent. In *The Inspector’s Revenge*, Connell Pease is credited with the music; purely fictional, his name is just a bad joke—“music on LPs.” The narration and most of the characters’ voices were redone by the original director of the EP films, Louis Hough.

Technical Notes

The EP movies were shot on 16mm Kodak reversal film at 16 frames per second. In 1987, when the original film stock showed signs of imminent disintegration, it was cleaned and the images were carefully transferred to 3/4-inch broadcast-quality videotapes. Jack Hawley generously provided a grant to have this work done by a film laboratory in San Francisco.

These matters rested until the spring of 2001, when technology advanced to the point where it became possible to edit the movies on a desktop computer. With financial help from the six surviving EP “principals,” the videotapes were digitized to miniDV format. The resulting 19 billion bytes were then loaded onto the 60 GB hard disk of a Macintosh G4 computer at George Towner’s home in Sunnyvale.

The music selections that had previously been taken from LP records were now plucked from CDs (most of them borrowed from the Sunnyvale Public Library), and new voices were recorded using a high-quality microphone. Sound effects were either created anew or downloaded from CDs and the Internet.

All these resources were combined on the Macintosh using Final Cut Pro, a professional-level video editing program. The project was completed by George Towner and Louis Hough in a series of marathon editing sessions at the end of July, 2001. A Canon ZR25

camcorder, acting as an I/O "dongle," converted the Mac's FireWire output to composite video, from which final videocassettes were recorded on a Sony VCR.

The Borganoff Terror

<i>Igor</i>	Bert Leaver
<i>Dr. Hogarth Prætorius</i>	Louis Hough
<i>Chemist</i>	Don Poulton
<i>Old professor</i>	Bill Brown
<i>Village drunk</i>	Bob Collins
<i>Officer Ratzlaff</i>	Tom Lowry
<i>Wallowing thing</i>	Tom Lowry
<i>Korg the wizard</i>	Bill Murray
<i>Evisheda, a vampire</i>	Iris Thompson
<i>The Monster</i>	Bert Leaver, Don Poulton
<i>Grave digger</i>	Bob Collins
<i>Violinist</i>	Bill Brown
<i>Cripple</i>	Ron Hughes
<i>Judge</i>	Don Poulton
<i>Fortune teller</i>	Bill Murray
<i>Heinsar, an assassin</i>	Don Poulton
<i>Blind guy</i>	Don Poulton
<i>Twin brother</i>	Tom Lowry
<i>Waif in castle</i>	Rich Lowry
<i>Villagers</i>	All of the above plus Herb Brown, Tom Foster, Jim Philips, Dick Leaver, Larry Poulton, and a dozen more still in the witness protection program

Doctor Hogarth Prætorius, a brilliant scientist, has been imprisoned for 20 years on the false testimony of Officer Ratzlaff of the Transylvanian police. Slowly going mad in his cell, Prætorius conceives a plan of revenge. Using body parts unearthed from graves, he will create a living Monster to destroy Ratzlaff and the others who caused him to suffer.

Upon his release, Prætorius summons his old assistant, Igor, and sets up a laboratory at Castle Borganoff in the Carpathian mountains. He hires a chemist and kidnaps his old college professor, from whom he starves necessary information. But as the Monster nears completion, the starving professor manages to grab and eat its brain. This forces the doctor and Igor to seek a new brain, which they obtain in a nearby village by sawing open the head of the village drunk.

To ensure that the Monster carries out its evil mission, Prætorius and Igor now seek out Korg, a wizard, and Evisheda, his vampire daughter. These two prepare and install a special gland, designed to force the Monster to obey Prætorius's commands.

Through the application of bubbling fluids and electric sparks, the Monster is finally brought to life and sent forth to find Ratzlaff. But on its way, the Monster enters a graveyard. Suddenly overcome with homesickness, it flies into a homicidal rage and bludgeons a grave digger to death. It also finds and kills the judge who sentenced Prætorius to prison.

News of these killings reaches Officer Ratzlaff, who goes to a fortune teller for more information. In her crystal ball, she shows him a vision of his being strangled by a man-like beast. Meanwhile, Prætorius has sent his deformed son, Heinsar, to liquidate the fortune teller. Arriving just after Ratzlaff has left, he stabs her and laps up the blood.

The aroused officer now calls upon the men of the village to help him find and destroy the Monster. They form a mob, inadvertently setting their village on fire as they leave. As they scale the heights to the castle, the Monster rolls rocks down upon them, causing much agony and loss of life.

Eventually, however, the Monster becomes stricken with remorse and decides to bring violent retribution to those who brought him to life. As the mob storms the castle, the Monster forces its way in and destroys



Tom Lowry



Bob Collins



Don Poulton



Ron Hughes



Bill Brown



Louis Hough



Jack Hawley



Bert Leaver

The Cast



Bill Murray



Lynn Goree



George Towner



Tom Foster



Bill Hieb



Bobby Towner



Jim Philips



Herb Brown

the inhabitants one by one, including Officer Ratzlaff. In the laboratory where it was created, the Monster finally pulls a demolition lever, bringing the saga of the Borganoff Terror to an explosive and fiery end.

The Big Bomb

<i>Kommandant Toadlieb</i>	Jim Philips
<i>Max, a saboteur</i>	Bob Collins (plus numerous stand-ins)
<i>Beanos, a saboteur</i>	Bill Brown
<i>Taxi driver</i>	Bee Philips
<i>Train conductor</i>	Ron Hughes
<i>Doctor Nemo</i>	Dr. Christian Niemann
<i>Hayseed farmer</i>	Ron Hughes
<i>The Kops</i>	Bill Brown, Bob Collins, Tom Foster, Louis Hough, Bert Leaver, Tom Lowry, Don Poulton, Dick Scammell, George Towner
<i>Officer at Chancellery</i>	Louis Hough
<i>Nazi celebrants</i>	Most of the above plus three dozen others whose names have been regrettably lost

The story opens in Berlin, 1934. Nazi kommandant Toadlieb has ordered two saboteurs to destroy a railroad bridge in upstate New York. The two sinister figures, Beanos and Max, hail a taxi and shortly arrive at New York City, where they board a train.

Their first stop is the laboratory of Doctor Nemo, who supplies them with a satchel full of explosives. After a brief altercation with a local farmer, the two make their way to the bridge and set their bomb.

On the first press of the plunger, the bomb fails to go off. The saboteurs investigate, discovering a broken wire. When the wire is connected, a violent blast buries them under the rubble of the bridge. The two extricate themselves just as the Kops arrive.

A disordered chase ensues, by car, scooter, horseback, skis, cable car, and bicycle. Possession of the police car changes back and forth between the Kops and the saboteurs. Eventually the Kops drive the car over a cliff. They brandish their fists in vain as the triumphant saboteurs row back to Germany in a small boat.

Arriving in Berlin, Beanos and Max are given a hero's welcome. At a banquet in the Nazi Chancellery, the two are toasted and asked to recount their magnificent deed. Placing another satchel of explosives on the table, they press the plunger—again without result. But they quickly find and repair the broken wire, blowing up the Chancellery building in a lurid finale of explosions and falling masonry.

The Inspector's Revenge

<i>Sam Spayed</i>	Tom Lowry
<i>Spayed as a child</i>	Bobby Towner
<i>Old Auntie</i>	Louis Hough
<i>Three-Fingered Cascara</i>	Jack Hawley
<i>Masked mobsters</i>	Tom Foster, Bill Brown
<i>Orphanage staff</i>	Bill Brown, Louis Hough, Tom Lowry
<i>Police officers</i>	Jack Hawley, Louis Hough, Ron Hughes
<i>Police Commissioner</i>	Tom Foster
<i>Lady in phone booth</i>	Mrs. Helen J. Hough
<i>Bank tellers</i>	Louis Hough, Ron Hughes, Don Poulton
<i>Witnesses/victims</i>	Louis Hough, Bill Hieb
<i>Hormonia, sister of Cascara</i>	Lynn Goree
<i>Piano player</i>	Herb Brown
<i>Waiter in the Club Foote</i>	Jim Philips
<i>Strolling violinist</i>	George Towner
<i>Spayed's secretary</i>	Martha Hamilton
<i>Guy under secretary's desk</i>	Don Poulton

<i>King Fourak</i>	Bob Collins
<i>Gas station attendant</i>	Bill Brown
<i>Headquarters cops</i>	Bill Brown, George Towner
<i>Princess Farina</i>	Louis Hough, Bob Collins
<i>Masked mobsters in car</i>	Bill Brown, Louis Hough, George Towner
<i>Princess Farina's eunuchs</i>	Tom Lowry and others
<i>Roadblock cops</i>	Tad Cody, Gary Crosby, Louis Hough, Joe Reagan
<i>Police, Royal Dragoons, and mobsters on the beach</i>	Many of the above plus Tom Smith and some Stanford fraternity brothers

On a darkened street corner, Sam Spayed recounts the story of his tortured life. An orphan, Spayed lived with his dear old Auntie, who was robbed and murdered one night by the villainous Three-Fingered Cascara and his gang. Fresh from the trauma of watching the killing, young Spayed was sent to St. Herod's, a dismal orphanage, where he was beaten daily by the sadistic staff.

Growing to manhood, Spayed escaped from the orphanage and joined the police force, resolving to bring Cascara to justice. For many years he pounded a beat, until at last he became an Inspector in plain clothes.

One day, Spayed encounters Cascara and his gang red-handed, robbing a bank. Although they escape, Spayed is now hot on the trail. He questions a series of witnesses, all of whom are rubbed out just as they are about to reveal Cascara's whereabouts.

One lead remains—the seductive *Hormonia*, Cascara's sister. Spayed takes her to a night club, where he plies her with champagne. But here, too, he is frustrated, for her drink is mysteriously poisoned and she disintegrates horribly before his eyes.

Spayed now goes into war mode. Armed with an oversized pistol, he scours the city by car. On his way, he observes the arrival of King Fourak and his

entourage at a local hotel, searching for the lost Princess Farina of Egypt.

Finally, Spayed spots Cascara's car and gives chase. He radioes the police, who mobilize their forces. The robbers successfully elude Spayed but their car gives out. By chance, Princess Farina drives by and they commandeer her limousine, leaving her and her eunuchs to be rescued by Spayed. The pursuit is closing in again when Farina insists on stopping for midday prayers. Cascara escapes once more.

While the Egyptians are praying, Spayed discovers Cascara and his gang nearby, enjoying a picnic lunch. Spayed closes in with grim determination, only to jam his foot in a bucket and become disabled. The robbers flee in alarm just as the police arrive.

Immediately behind the police come King Fourak and the Royal Egyptian Dragoons. They join forces with the police in a massive battle on nearby sand dunes, in which Cascara's men are eliminated one by one. But Cascara himself escapes in Farina's car, as Fourak and the princess celebrate a joyous reunion.

Spayed finally extricates his foot from the bucket and pursues Cascara into the mountains. As he catches up, he shoots out a tire. Cascara swerves off a cliff, his car undergoing fiery disintegration before disappearing in the ocean. Spayed watches with satisfaction.

But Cascara is not finished. He emerges from the water and begins scaling the heights that leads to his hideout. Spayed follows. Cascara wings Spayed with a bullet, but the determined Inspector fashions a tourniquet from a scrap of cloth and carries on. At last Spayed confronts the evil Cascara, who is fleeing his hideout with a satchel of Auntie's money, and shoots him full of holes. Having successfully concluded his quest, Spayed throws the money to the wind.

The scene now returns to the darkened street corner. Spayed opens his trenchcoat, revealing that he has become a priest. He strolls into a nearby cathedral as

the Hallelujah Chorus proclaims the glorious achievement of the Inspector's revenge.

Special Acknowledgments To...

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And finally, our thanks to many patient parents who gave us leeway to do our darndest.

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