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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Who Knew?

From: **Stephen Miles Lewois** <Ufoelf@aol.com>
Date: Sat, 6 Feb 1999 15:30:20 EST
Fwd Date: Sat, 06 Feb 1999 18:59:36 -0500
Subject: Re: Who Knew?

>From: Roger Evans <moviestuff@cyberjunkie.com>
>Date: Sun, 24 Jan 1999 20:03:03 +0000
>Fwd Date: Mon, 25 Jan 1999 11:09:54 -0500
>Subject: Re: Who Knew?

>>From: Greg St. Pierre <StrmNut@aol.com>
>>Date: Sun, 24 Jan 1999 09:00:09 EST
>>Fwd Date: Sun, 24 Jan 1999 09:50:49 -0500
>>Subject: Who Knew?

>Previously, Greg offered:

>>I thought I'd share a little known fact with you movie buffs out
>>there. Before Steven Spielberg began work on E.T., he and a
>>small team of artists were working on a project called "Night
>>Skies", a movie about decidedly unfriendly aliens visiting
>>earth. Effects people had even produced working alien creatures,
>>with realistic aspects such as subdermal muscle movements, skin
>>texture and facial features.

>>Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, the project was suddenly
>>abandoned for the cuter E.T., and the rest is history.

>>The only place I've ever seen reference to this information was
>>in a movie industry magazine called Cineffex. Perhaps some
>>person with connections in the movie business (I won't mention
>>you, Roger) could do a little digging and come up with some more
>>info.

Yes, this is a very interesting case study in the power of a director to change his mind. There is an article within a mag called Cinefantastique (double issue Vol 13 No 2 / Vol 13 No 3 which features many interesting behind the scenes pieces on E.T. and other science fiction movies of the day, Nov-Dec '82.

Amongst the E.T. focus is an article "How E.T. Found His Smile" by Christopher Meeks. Among the many strange "facts" cited are:

-Dark Skies was originally to be a dark sequel to Close Encounters showing not all encounters are so moon-beams and sunshine.

-the original idea for this horror sequel was none other than the Kelly/Hopkinsville, Kentucky family's tale of their reported harrasment by glowing gremlin-like creatures!

-"Spielberg told Baker a bit about the story, a violent tale akin to Sam Peckinpah's Straw Dogs."

-creature effects master Rick Baker says "One of the girls in the Kentucky family drew a picture of what the aliens looked like . . . I didn't want to build it, really. It had a triangular head and body, and weird, hard angles."

Baker created his own design which he was very proud of and when Spielberg saw it he reportedly gave a glowing review as well as the go ahead. Apparently though, Spielberg had a sudden change of heart while in Tunisia filming Raiders of the Lost Ark. The article goes on to quote him from an interview in Film Comment magazine that asked 'why he wanted to do a story on hostile aliens:

"I don't know, I might have taken leave of my senses . . . Throughout Raiders I was in between killing Nazis and blowing up flying wings . . . I was sitting in Tunisia, scratching my head and saying I've got to get back to the tranquility, or at least the spirituality, of CE3K. . . my reaction was to immediately think of a very touching and tender relationship between an extraterrestrial and an 11 year-old child who takes him in."

He told the idea to Melissa Mathison in Tunisia, she wept and became the screenplay writer for the redux.

This news, of course, wrecked Baker and Spielberg's business relationship and even Columbia Pictures had doubts about sinking 10 million dollars into a "Disney- type" film. However, Universal optioned the script and made the picture anyway. Baker would later claim similarities in design between his evil aliens and the cute E.T.

Also in this issue are: see Roger's notes below

-E.T. Phone Lawyer-regarding the allegations of copyright violation. Lisa Litchfield claimed her one-act play 'Lokey from Maldemar' was the basis for E.T.

-The Gospel According to St. Steven - by Joe Thompson this is about the same thing posted previously on this list here:

<http://www.ufomind.com/ufo/updates/1998/dec/m30-005.shtml>

SMiles

<http://www.elfis.net>

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