

FANGORIA is heartbroken to report that former Fango/GOREZONE contributor Charlie (Chas.) Balun died on Friday, December 18, after a prolonged and courageous battle with cancer.

He was 61. Beginning with his first self-published book, 1983's *THE CONNOISSEUR'S GUIDE TO THE CONTEMPORARY HORROR FILM*, Balun was instrumental in popularizing splatter films (especially Italian gore flicks) and independent horror cinema to millions of budding horror fans during the 1980s and '90s. He became a FANGORIA writer in 1987 with issue #62 ("Jason: The Sultan of Slaughter") and was one of GOREZONE's original columnists, penning *Piece o' Mind* from 1988 to 1991.



"Balun was a distinctive and unique voice in talking about horror," says Fango editor Tony Timpone, who first hired Balun to write for the magazine. "He was no-holds-barred, funny and caustic. He called attention to countless films that would have gone largely ignored if not for his critiques. He also championed the little-guy filmmakers out there and railed against the MPAAs' unfair practices back then. He blasted the mediocrity of mainstream movies. Chas. and his everyman (everyfan?) writing style—inventing wacky terms like 'chunk blower'—inspired countless horror maniacs, as well as emerging filmmakers and writers. You can't look at any horror website or blog today and not see Chas.' bloody influence on almost every page. He was a true trailblazer."

A hippie in the '60s, Balun worked as an underground cartoonist, graphic artist and T-shirt designer (many for Rotten Cotton, including several for FANGORIA over the years). Movie-wise, he contributed creature designs to Fred Olen Ray's *EVIL TOONS* in 1992 and showed up in several documentaries, including 2001's *IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST*. His many nonfiction books included *THE GORE SCORE*, *MORE GORE SCORE*, *HORROR HOLOCAUST*, *BEYOND HORROR HOLOCAUST* and several others, most published by the now defunct FantaCo, the Albany, New York company that also put out Balun's *DEEP RED* fanzine and his debut novel, *NINTH AND HELL STREET*. He also penned the liner notes for Grindhouse Releasing's DVDs of *CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST*, *THE BEYOND* and *PIECES*. Balun's cinematic passions ranged from Lucio Fulci to Jim VanBebber. In the pre-DVD age, he loved turning friends and buffs onto obscure, cult and especially gory movies on VHS.

RIP Chas. Balun 1948-2009

Written by FANGORIA Staff
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“I know Chas. most valued his many years of association with FANGORIA,” Balun’s widow, Pat Petric, tells us. “As you and others who knew Chas. are aware, he was bigger than life, with a passion, wit and intellect that were truly awe-inspiring. His passing has left a hole in my heart and life that will never be filled. I’m hopeful that his spirit will live on in the fond memories we all share of him.”

Chas.’ spirit and words *will* live on in the hearts of gorehounds everywhere. Rest in peace, big guy.