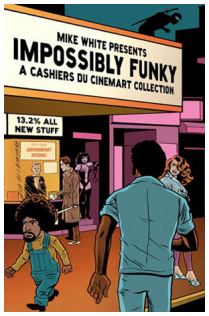
Kids, come and take Fango’s hand as we step back in time and remember days dark with the absence of computer screens’ perma-glow. Today we enjoy a democratized publishing landscape thanks to almost total Internet saturation, but with the limited access of 20 years ago, constructing an outlet for one’s voice was a little more labor-intensive than simply registering a username with Wordpress.com.

Determined fanboys armed with both opinions and photocopiers were able to publish homemade periodicals known as ’zines. These may have been primitive, but they were free of the editorial, advertiser or corporate agendas that restricted honesty at more professional media outlets. Usually concerned with movies, music or comic books and sold at alternative venues for a pittance, ’zines were heartfelt, break-even endeavors that fed off their creators’ passion and the do-it-yourself ethos of punk rock.



In 1994, former Detroit theater employee Mike White (pictured above, and not to be confused with the weedy actor/writer/director of SCHOOL OF ROCK and CHUCK & BUCK fame) began stapling together his own movie ’zine called *Cashiers du Cinemart*, the name a self-deprecating wink at the highbrow French film journal
Cahiers du Cinema
. The book IMPOSSIBLY FUNKY (now out from Bear Manor Media) is a compendium that collects the best
Cashiers
articles, most written by White himself.

The orbits of general film geekery and horror fandom often intersect, so more than a few Fango readers out there will need to avoid eye contact in shame for at one time sprinkling agitated

spittle over the following topics: obscure blaxploitation films, obscure samurai/kung fu films, Quentin Tarantino’s habitual artistic theft, ironic scholarly appreciation of idiotic action movies, the heartbreaking awfulness of STAR WARS: THE PHANTOM MENACE. If the mention of any of the above elicits a nostalgic sigh, IMPOSSIBLY FUNKY may be of interest, as these subjects are all given ample coverage here. Otherwise, it will all feel like an exercise in retro, these issues that so enthralled movie buffs in the 1990s but no longer hold quite the same cultural relevance in 2010.

A large chunk of IMPOSSIBLY FUNKY is devoted to summarizing screenplays that were discarded on the road to updating beloved but troubled film franchises. It’s no secret that certain ALIEN, SUPERMAN and INDIANA JONES sequels all had scripts at their disposal that were superior to the compromised product with which moviegoers were eventually presented. White wades through the details and isn’t shy to name the names of whom he felt steered the trains off the rails. Still, reading the actual material beats summaries every time. While the ability to lay hands on unused drafts was a rare privilege in the pre-Internet days when *Cashiers* was first published, today the drafts can be easily dug up by the curious with just some simple search-engine archaeology.

So is there anything in IMPOSSIBLY FUNKY of interest to fright fans? We get a professorial foreword written by H.G. Lewis, who no doubt identifies with the outsider ingenuity of ’zine publishing. White reprints his extremely brief chat with fellow Michigan man Bruce Campbell, a Q & A with horror host Svengoolie and an excellent, thorough interview with Keith Gordon—today a respected director of art-house cinema but who will be forever known to Fango fans as the ill-fated Arnie in John Carpenter’s CHRISTINE. Other than that, there’s little else horror-specific, so unless you’re also intrigued by the idea of lengthy explorations into cult crime writers’ screen adaptations or care to breeze through 35 enthusiastic pages dedicated to the forgotten ’70s stud-hairdresser flick BLACK SHAMPOO, Fangorians may want to leave this CASHIERS at the register.

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