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Edited by Eric Miller, HELL COMES TO HOLLYWOOD (out now from Big Time Books) is an anthology of short horror fiction stories revolving around the common theme of being set in Tinseltown. Many of the tales parody the infamous side of LA: the questionable morals, obsession with youth, what Paul J. Salamoff describes as “hedonism run amuck” in his story “Bad Fix,” and as Charles Austin Muir calls it in “Alone and Palely Loitering,” the “world of blonde, vacuous heiresses and their abdominal-obsessed male counterparts.” The book unapologetically satirizes Old Hollywood, New Hollywood and everything in between.

HELL COMES TO HOLLYWOOD is all-encompassing, featuring stories that span from wonderfully gratuitous, over-the-top gorefests (one of the many delightful descriptions is as follows from Alan Bernhoft’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollywood”: “Warm, dark liquid gushes from the transient’s severed head, steaming in the cool night air as a fountain of blood sprays from the neck”) to tales that are genuinely haunting and linger in your mind long afterward (Travis Baker’s “Pyre” in particular is especially terrifying).

In addition to this, the book packs in much homage to the classic horror films and directors; in “Cattle Call,” Elizabeth Musgrave describes the “blackened blood and brain matter splattered against the wall, George A. Romero style.” William Pacquet’s “Trash Day” features a deli serving sandwiches named La Bava, La Lenzi, La Argento and La Fulci, topped with “several olives pierced with toothpicks to the outer crust of the roll, in homage to the master’s penchant for eye trauma.”

HELL COMES TO HOLLYWOOD is a unique and refreshing read for any genre fan, and genuinely impossible to not enjoy. We talked to the book’s editor, as well as screenwriter, director, producer and all-around Renaissance man Miller for further details.

FANGORIA: How was the idea for HELL COMES TO HOLLYWOOD conceived?

ERIC MILLER: I've always been in love with books and the written word and had wanted to do a story collection for a long time. When I started to sense a lot of frustration among my screenwriter friends with the seemingly endless cycle of writing and rewriting scripts and doing the Hollywood pitch meeting routine over and over, I decided to try something new creatively. Since I am friends with lots of horror people and have been making movies for over 20 years, a horror anthology about Hollywood just made sense. After years of research and study into publishing, I founded Big Time Books and put out the call for stories. I got a lot of advice and inspiration from friends, such as Frank Forte at Asylum press; comic book writer, artist and "Man of Action" Duncan Rouleau; and screenwriter Shane Bitterling, who was my daily sounding board (and kick in the ass). Shane also wrote "They Go in Threes" for the book, and it is a pretty sick look into the old celebrity death myth.

FANG: Can you talk about your involvement in the genre and your inspiration to compile the book?

MILLER: I grew up as a horror nut in the Midwest, watching horror films I was way too young for and devouring all the genre books and magazines I could find: FANGORIA, FAMOUS MONSTERS and so on. When I made my way to Hollywood, I fell in with a crazy group of Corman and Empire vets that were pumping out low budget genre movies and I was hooked. I cut my cinematic teeth with David DeCoteau and John Schouweiler (who did a story in the book called "Dog Eat Dog") and their Cinema Home Video label, and later at Full Moon Entertainment and other companies, where I found that genre film sets (especially horror) were the best place to learn the business and the most fun to work on.

In between production jobs, I worked as a script reader, did development work and eventually wrote my own screenplays. I've had five screenplays produced so far, all horror in one way or another: SHADOW MEN, NIGHT SKIES, ICE SPIDERS, MASK MAKER and SWAMP SHARK. I've also had some genre scripts optioned and did a few uncredited rewrites through the years. I love making films, but writing is my real passion.

My horror career took a big leap when I was hired as head of production at the start-up horror boutique Raw Nerve. I had known Scott Spiegel socially for years, but never had the chance to work with him, and I met Eli Roth and Boaz Yakin through Raw Nerve; for a while, I literally had the horror world knocking on my door. I met a ton of great people there and had the chance to co-produce 2001 MANIACS, as well as see the genesis of the HOSTEL series. It was great to be at the center of all things horror. I made many friends for life at Raw Nerve, including my ex-assistant Jed Strahm who is now a director in his own right. I helped produce his film KNIFEPOINT and let him order me around for a change. Brett and Drew Pierce from DEADHEADS zombie film fame were interns there – Drew is also an awesome artist and did the cover for the book. After I left Raw Nerve, I stayed involved in horror every way I could, writing my own scripts and producing films.

All of my years of movie work went into making the book. There are just so many experiences the writers and I have had, so many places we've been, people we've met, things we've seen, that moviemaking has worked its way into our blood; I wanted to share some of the behind-the-scenes world with readers. The stories are obviously fictional, but they are all drawn from those real experiences and are pretty close to reality until the axes start swinging. And after, in some cases…

FANG: How did you assemble the writers?

MILLER: I asked for stories just from friends at first, especially the ones I knew were good writers or had very smart story senses as directors or producers. I stuck with people with genre credits for the most part, though if someone could write, it didn't really matter to me what genre they worked in – some of the best horror works of all time come from creators outside the genre box, from the original HAUNTING to 28 DAYS LATER. A few of the more experienced writers had never actually written in the short story format before, but they aced the stories anyway – a good writer is a good writer.

Many people came on board right away. Joe Dougherty (screenwriter of CAST A DEADLY SPELL and writer/producer of TV's PRETTY LITTLE LIARS) hit me with his sublime story "Town Car" in a couple of weeks. I got a lot of commitments and stories, but other friends were just too busy to help, so I expanded the search a bit to friends of friends and met some great people, got some wonderful stories that way. In the end, it's about 60 percent people I have known for years and 40 percent new writers. I actually forgot to ask a few friends to contribute – I hope they don't feel left out. They can rest assured; I will be hitting them up for the next book.

TO BE CONTINUED