



WORLD WATCH ONE ☯ IN THIS ISSUE

Introduction from the Editor	Dianne “Hollywood” Wickes, <i>Pine Island, FL</i>	Page 1
In Memoriam	Scott “Camelot” Tate, <i>Alamosa, CO</i>	Page 2
Buckaroo Crushes Cult Competition	Tim “Tim Boo Ba” Monro, <i>Renton, WA</i>	Page 3
Representing Team Banzai	Charley “Mrs. Trooper” Todd, <i>Evansville, IN</i>	Pages 4-5
Pimping Your Ride, Jet Car Style	Chris “Cobalt” Dunham, <i>Monrovia, IN</i>	Page 6
From Worf to Whorfin	Scott Tate	Pages 7-9
Buckaroo Banzai Fandom on the Internet: Unseen Interviews from the Archives	Dan “Big Shoulders” Berger, <i>Libertyville, IL</i> and Sean “Figment” Murphy, <i>Burke, VA</i>	Pages 10-15
Buckaroo Banzai Art from the Internet	World Watch One Staff	Pages 16-18
Hanoi Xan’s Rock ‘N’ Roll Stranglehold!	Jeffrey “Machine Rock” Morgan	Page 19
INTERVIEW: Radford Polinsky	Steve “Rainbow Kitty” Mattsson, <i>Portland, OR</i>	Pages 20-24
Celebrating 35 Years	Charley Todd	Pages 25-26
Blue Blaze Irregulars Remember	Edited by Dan Berger	Pages 27-42
Remembering the Promotional Material	Charley Todd	Page 43
Banzai Trivia	Scott Tate	Page 44
INTERVIEW: Earl Mac Rauch	Steve Mattsson	Page 45
From the Files of Earl Mac Rauch	Earl Mac Rauch	Page 46
Sekret Origins	Tim Monro	Page 47
The Buckaroo Banzai Production Binders		
Introduction and Overview	Sean Murphy	Page 48
Production Illustrations	Dan Berger	Pages 49-55
Storyboards	Sean Murphy	Pages 56-59
Script Comparison	Steve Mattsson	Pages 60-61
The Essential Buckaroo	Dewayne “Buckaroo Trooper” Todd, <i>Evansville, IN</i>	Pages 62-66
Mystery Solved!	World Watch One Staff	Page 66
Team Banzai Events Calendar	Scott Tate	Page 67
15 Years of World Watch One	Dan Berger	Pages 68-70

Acknowledgements

This installment of *World Watch One* clocked in at seventy pages, just a little over twice our usual page length. The difference? We saw a huge boost from the Blue Blaze Irregular network this time around. Now it's time to give credit where credit is due.

In the line of fire: As always, special thanks go to all of our interviewees: Angela, Ernie Cline, Bev Beej Larkin, Sean Murphy, Chris Wike, Radford Polinsky, Anthony Taylor, Earl Mac Rauch, and W. D. Richter. Thanks also to Denise and Mike Okuda at the Banzai Institute Facebook page for their generous assistance; not only in getting the word out about *World Watch One*, but to Banzai fandom in general. We extend our appreciation to Dan Berger, Matt Haley, and Mike Okuda for creating the graphic elements that appear in this issue. Thanks also go out to Chris "ArcLight" Wike for hosting the newsletter's presence on the interwebs at the [World Watch OnLine library](#) and Sean Murphy for doing the same at the [Buckaroo Banzai FAQ](#).

A cast of thousands: So many people lent us a hand this issue that it became a full time job keeping track of who was who. Time to pull on our thank you pants and get started.

Many thanks to our regular contributors: Dan Berger, Steve Mattsson, Sean Murphy, Scott Tate, and DeWayne Todd, for once again rising to the occasion. A very warm welcome and many thanks to our newest staff writer, Charley Todd, and to Steven H. Silver for his expert assistance in the editorial realm on this issue. To both of you—outstanding work, people.

This issue would have been impossible to publish without the talents and dedication of the Blue Blaze Irregulars and friends of Dr. B. Banzai: Chris "Cobalt" Dunham, Jeffrey "Machine Rock" Morgan, Alan "Dragon" Smith, Nancy "Abacus" Smith, Matt "Avalanche" Haley, Max "Red Phoenix" Baker, Joel "Scooter" Spivak, Dr. Damon D. Hines, Rich "Swing Kid" Drees, Jason "Willy" Willenberg, Kurt "Lefty" Busiek, Matt "Wacny" Kitler, Paul "Chickenman" Henry, Joe "Nucleus" Mannino, Jim Ferguson, Mojo, Karen "Farmgirl" Malcor-Chapman, Sheldon S. "Mando Baxter" Sturges, Stephen Walker, Steve "Clyde Von Drake" Lee, Terry J. "Silver Fox" Erdmann, Margaret "Ruby Tuesday" Weis, David "Dogberry" Jackson, Bill "Wiisty" Wiist, Ted "Jay Clay" Haycraft, and David McDonnell. All of you went above and beyond the call of duty and hereby join the Banzai Institute Roll of Honor forevermore. Tim "Tim Boo Ba" Monroe, we will take your application under advisement.

Finally, all thanks to Dianne "Hollywood" Wickes, the very first BBI Director. This one's for you, Hollywood.

Not to be forgotten: For fifteen years, three people in particular have had the unenviable task of weathering the eruptions of Banzai fandom that periodically rumble through the Chicago Bureau Offices; my wife Terry Berger, and my sons Ryan and Alec Berger. Thank you for your love, support, and, above all, forbearance. I'm not sure how I got in this deep either.

Get in the game: *World Watch One* does not write or illustrate itself. All are invited to contribute to the next issue. Don't worry about making it perfect. We'd just love to hear from you. See below for contact information and further encouragement.

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Submissions to *World Watch One* are strongly encouraged. Really. I am dead serious. People, we know you're out there! All are welcome. Please contact us at dan.berger.2@gmail.com for details.



Front Cover: We celebrate TABB's 35th anniversary this issue with an artist's challenge. In May of 2018, staffer Steve Mattsson sent editor-in-chief Dan Berger a stack of vintage *Buckaroo Banzai* newspaper clippings via an email that said, "I was kinda hopin' that Dan would work his magic and make a couple of pages of cool collages for the newsletter..."

Dan responded with this visual time capsule using various image manipulation programs to assemble a collage and then convert a portion of it into a negative image of the number thirty-five. According to Dan, "Trying to incorporate the newsletter's date without losing it in the mass of text was ugly. Collage ain't my usual jam, but I think I pulled it off."

Questions? Comments? Still don't know why the watermelon is there? Contact us at dan.berger.2@gmail.com.

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From the Beginning

Editor's Note: Thirty-five years ago, *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* brought us all together as fellow fans. Thirty-four years ago, Dianne Wickes made sure we all stayed together by creating the original *World Watch One*. This is her story, in her words. —DB

In early March of 1984, I settled into my new desk on the first day of my new job in the Feature Publicity department of 20th Century Fox as the new secretary to the feature publicity manager. The first thing I was handed to work on was a thick bundle of typewritten pages, scribbled notes in the margins, for cleanup. I picked up the first page, titled "Some Hard Facts and Persistent Rumors about Buckaroo Banzai"...and was immediately enthralled.

The film's marketing campaign was unique, and by the time I ran the first press screening that June, I knew that some people just wouldn't get it (I still have my "I don't care what Harlan Ellison says, I love Buckaroo Banzai" button). But I also was sure that many others *would* get it, and love it. And I was right.

Unfortunately, studio and business politics proved fatal for Team Banzai, and Buckaroo's film was essentially shelved soon after its release. But the fan mail kept coming in, from all kinds of folks, little kids to a 90-year-old retired circus elephant trainer. They loved the film and wanted to know more about Buckaroo and his friends. I knew that we had boxes and boxes of promotional materials stowed in a corner of the publicity building basement; headbands, buttons, stickers, press kits, screening cards, and other things. I asked permission to send the unused materials out to letter writers, and received it.

After that, my Sunday mornings were spent at the studio making copies, stuffing packages, typing labels, and carrying piles of envelopes to the mail room. It was hard work, but also a labor of love. After months of doing it alone, my good friend Steve Lee joined me, and then others came to pitch in. The most fun thing was putting together the Banzai Institute newsletter. This was well before the days of personal computers, and my editing tools were Institute stationary, blank copy paper, cut-up paper squares with stories and drawings, and a glue stick. Rick Richter and Dan Lupovitz were generous with their notes, drawings, and stories. I did cartoons and wrote little blurbs, as did Rick and Dan and our group of volunteers. We got some great things from fans as well. Fox (not fully grasping what was going on) benignly allowed our little branch of the Institute to print the newsletter and redistribute the film swag, and those Sundays continued for almost three years. Eventually, we began to run out of material and Fox ran out of patience. Finally, the film rights reverted back to the original production company and our little Institute was shut down. I left Fox the following year.

But I have few regrets. I knew people loved the film, I knew the materials were there, and I knew they belonged together. And I received some rewards too; a lifelong and steadfast friend in Steve Lee, for one. The head of Feature Publicity, Tom Sherak, had the original art framed and given to me. And I got to know a few of the Cavaliers; Clancy Brown, John Lithgow, and Billy Vera were particularly kind.

I choose to believe that the Institute is really out there, somewhere, being efficiently run by Mrs. Johnson, with Reno Nevada as operations manager. Rawhide was restored to life after a stretch in cryogenic suspension once Buckaroo and New Jersey discovered an antidote to the Red Lectroid poison, and as always, remains Buckaroo's loyal wingman. Perfect Tommy is a well-known music producer, working with Pinky Carruthers on outside projects when Buckaroo doesn't have a new CD coming out. Dr. Hikita keeps the lab running, John Parker works as a liaison between earthlings and Black Lectroids, and BBIs all over the world remain on call in the event of any calls for assistance from the Institute.

And Buckaroo and Penny are living happily ever after, together. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Dianne "Hollywood" Wickes



WORLD WATCH ONE

NEWSLETTER OF TEAM BANZAI

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In Memoriam

The Banzai Institute and World Watch One honor the following individuals associated with *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the Eighth Dimension!* who are no longer among us. We respectfully regret anyone we may have overlooked.:

Orson Welles, originator of the *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast, 1915-1985.

William Traylor, actor (General Catbird), 1930-1989.

Ronald Lacey, actor (President Widmark), 1935-1991.

R.J. Robertson, animator, 1946-1994.

David Begelman, Sherwood Productions, 1921-1995.

Rosalind Cash, actress (John Emdall), 1938-1995.

Jordan Cronenweth, uncredited photography, 1935-1996.

Tom Cranham, production illustrator, 1938-1997.

Sherman Labby, production illustrator, 1929-1998.

Keith Shartle, production coordinator, 1952-2000.

Terry Liebling, casting, 1942-2001.

H. Bud Otto, script supervisor, 1926-2001.

Judi Rosner, production coordinator, 1943-2004.

Vincent Schiavelli, actor (John O'Connor), 1948-2005.

Tommy J. Huff, actor and stunt performer (Sam the mechanic), 1943-2006.

Leonard Gaines, actor (Artie Duncan), 1922-2007.

John Alvin, poster artist, 1948-2008.

Sidney Beckerman, producer, 1920-2008.

George Stokes, construction coordinator, 1940-2010.

J. Michael Riva, production designer, 1948-2012.

George Bowers, film editor, 1944-2012.

Robert Gray, actor (one of the Radar Blazers), 1945-2013.

Ken Magee, actor (Duck hunter Burt), 1946-2015.

Bill Henderson, actor (Casper Lindley), 1926-2016.

Marvin Walowitz, uncredited sound editing, 1937-2016.

Selma Brown, production accountant, 1927-2016.

Fred J. Koenekamp, cinematographer, 1922-2017.

Eddie Kalish, marketing executive, 1939-2018.

Richard Marks, film editor, 1943-2018.

Gregg C. Rudloff, re-recording mixer, 1955-2019.

Jessie Lawrence Ferguson, actor (Black Lectroid Commander), 1942-2019.

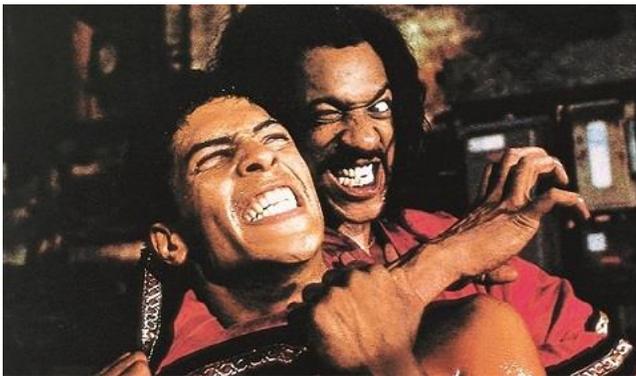
“It is the awareness of death that makes life precious, and that which heightens the awareness of death enhances the quality of life. Only a few hairbreadths mark the difference between life and death at any moment; when this is understood, life can only be the sweeter.” — Reno

Buckaroo Banzai Crushes Cult Competition

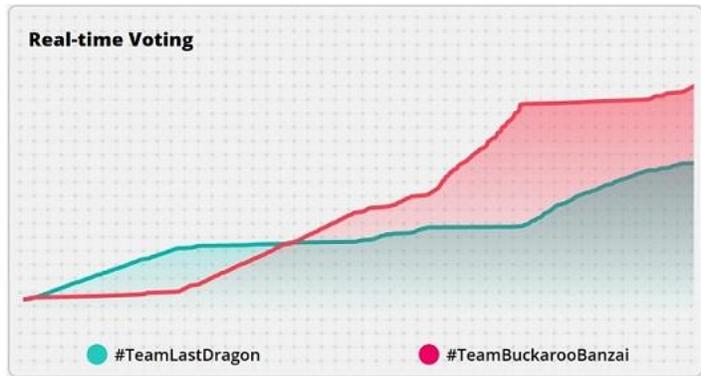
By Tim Monro

[The Tylt](#) is a survey website that says it wants to, “...take the pulse of the internet...” by asking burning questions like: “Are too many dang Democrats running for president?” and “Who will win the Champions League final, Liverpool or Tottenham?”

And by holding a tournament-style competition to determine the internet’s “Favorite ‘80s Cult Classic.” I could quibble with a few of survey writer Jason Henninger’s choices for the tournament field, but he did real good by including [The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai](#).



Source: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment



Source: The Tylt

Round 1: The Last Dragon

Buckaroo fought through his fiercest challenge in round one, beating [The Last Dragon](#) 60.4% to 39.6%. But the final numbers don’t tell the whole story. It actually looked like Buckaroo might lose at first. He pulled ahead only after a link to the survey was posted on several Buckaroo Banzai Facebook pages. Once the Blue Blaze Irregulars got involved, Buckaroo shot ahead! Doubt the power of fangeeks united? *Buckaroo Banzai* was the only movie to come from behind to win a contest in the tournament.

Round 2: Big Trouble in Little China

Round two brought big trouble for Buckaroo: *Buckaroo Banzai* vs. [Big Trouble in Little China](#)! I wouldn’t whine about anyone voting for either of these fabulous flicks. They’re both awesome! It sucked that Henninger didn’t put these two titans on opposite sides of the bracket so they could’ve faced off in the finals, but whatever. It must not have been easy for some fans to pick Buckaroo over Jack Burton, but most did. *Buckaroo* battered *Big Trouble* 84.9% to 15.1%.



Source: Twentieth Century Fox



Source: The Jim Henson Company

Round 3: Labyrinth

There were no split loyalties for the final contest of *Buckaroo Banzai* vs. [Labyrinth](#). [Buckaroo crushed the Jim Henson fantasy 96.4% to 3.6%](#) to seize the coveted cult classics crown.

So what? Big deal?! I think it’s totally badass that even after 35 years, the pulse of *Buckaroo Banzai* beats bravely on the internet. #TeamBanzai forever! 🐎

Representing Team Banzai

By Charley "Mrs. Trooper" Todd

For many fans cosplaying, or the act of dressing up as a fictional character, is one of the best ways to share his or her love for a certain movie, book, or game. There are many groups of cosplayers, such as the [501st](#) or [Rebel Legion](#), but there are also many fans who aren't a part of a group that love to cosplay. Many groups and individuals choose to showcase their fandoms at conventions.

[DragonCon](#), a fan run convention held in Atlanta over Labor Day weekend, is one of the biggest conventions in the world. It was ranked number 16 out of 20 largest conventions by attendance for the year 2015, according to writer Alex Matsuo from *The Richest*. Official attendance that year was 57,000. In the year 2018, the official attendance was 80,000, showing that the number of people who attend this event continues to grow.

Since DragonCon is so large, and cosplaying has become a hobby that is very common, it is easy to realize that Team Banzai would be represented during this event. During the 2018 DragonCon, I had the pleasure to meet a fellow BB cosplayer named Angela.

Angela, a 27-year-old woman from New Jersey, has a variety of interests, including re-enacting the Revolutionary War. During DragonCon though, she wore a breather vest meant to reveal Lectroids despite their human disguises. After a few email exchanges, I have the privilege of sharing her story with you.

Charley: Can you tell us some things about yourself?

Angela: I am from FaBULous New Jersey! When my great-grandparents came to New Jersey they laid down their roots in Grover's Mill, New Jersey. My dad always jokes around with me and says that my great-grandparents were either sleeping or holding a gun out on the porch when Mr. Orson Welles began his *The War of the Worlds* broadcast that dreadful day back on Oct. 30,1938.

Charley: How did you become interested in Buckaroo Banzai?

Angela: When I was in college I would get my friends together for an event to watch crappy movies that were so bad that by the end of the movie you would have been a participant in at least 3 different conversations during the viewing; maybe seeing about 10 minutes of the film in question (all the while wondering why am I watching this); and eating pizza. However, *Buckaroo Banzai: Across the 8th Dimension* was not one of those crappy films. It held our interest, for the most part. I also found it to be another one of those films that made me proud to be from New Jersey, but my college buddies of course did not quite see it that way. But, hey they were not from New Jersey, so they could not understand being proud of the film in this New Jerseyan way.



Charley (L) and Angela (R) at DragonCon 2018. Photo courtesy of Charley Todd

C: What is the personal appeal of the movie for you?

A: I will be the first to say, if someone else has not already said it, that the Hong Kong Cavaliers are composed of some very hot-looking men who can come to my rescue any day of the week! Do I need to say any more?

But really, I love the Blue Blaze Irregulars. They are Banzai's groupies. Banzai is the man who has the time to do all of these cool things, and the Blue Blaze Irregulars can just hop into helping out when they are off from school or work. They can be anyone, have any specialty, or none!

I feel like the sky is the limit for a person of any gender who wants to be a Blue Blaze Irregular, or to become a new Hong Kong Cavalier member.

C: At DragonCon, you were cosplaying as a member of Team Banzai. Tell us a little bit about your costume.

A: It did not take me that long to make my Buckaroo Banzai costume. Anyone really can just buy a headband or a Blue Blaze Irregular patch that they can sew onto a hat. Cosplaying or

showing a love for a thing does not have to be that involved or expensive. I started out with wearing a baseball cap with a Blue Blaze Irregular patch while I looked around for the right motocross vest/chest protector. It took me about 2 months to find one on Craigslist. Next I spray painted it with yellow paint from Home Depot. Then I drilled 2 holes into the vest for where I screwed the snorkel into place, and a hole to fit a piece of PVC pipe into which the plastic tube goes. Last I touched up the paint.

Trying to be a Rug Sucker or an original Hong Kong Cavalier member requires acquiring or making some very specific clothing. I wish lots of luck to anyone attempting those cosplays.

C: Why do you think Buckaroo Banzai continues to grow a cult following?

A: I am going to quote Mrs. Kensington from *Austin Powers* to answer this question. “You have to understand...he’s very charming. Very debonair. He’s handsome. Witty. Has a knowledge of fine wine. Women want him, and men want to be him; every bit an international man of mystery.” Buckaroo and his gang are very much the everyday modern fanboy’s version of James Bond, and that is why this fan base will never stop growing.

C: Can you share some of your DragonCon experiences.

A: New Jersey is really one of those places that “wherever you go, there you are.” This led into my meeting DeWayne Todd

(who was interviewed in the March 2019 issue of *World Watch One*), and you, his wife Charley. The odds of us meeting were pretty formidable. I had on my vest that allows you to see Lectroids and my cheesy Blue Blaze Irregular cap when we ran into each other! It was pretty mind blowing! I have been going to a multitude of conventions for longer than I can remember, and I had never run into another Buckaroo Banzai fan before. Let alone 2 such fans! There in front of me was a Lectroid and a Hong Kong Cavalier! Insert the thinking—I want to jump up and down, because you are that stoked at that moment in time. We hit it off pretty fast since DragonCon is a bustling place that knows no sleep, and the next thing that I knew was that we were talking about getting a group of Banzai fans together for a parade this year at DragonCon....!!

C: Can you tell us more about the parade, or any aspects you are working on adding to your Team Banzai Cosplay?

A: DragonCon holds a parade that allows a group of fans for a show, movie, comic, or whatever is your common association or interest to be able to get out there on the street in downtown Atlanta to flaunt their fandom. Even the Atlanta locals come out to watch it. The Facebook group page is Buckaroo Banzai Parade Group 2019. You do need to purchase a DragonCon pass to be able to participate in the parade. Please feel free to join us. We do need a heads up if you plan on coming out to participate in the parade. Shout Out to New Jersey’s own Kevin Smith and any of the original Buckaroo Banzai cast or crew members—if you are reading this edition please come out to the parade!

I am currently on a quest to find a cheap or borrowed fake watermelon prop to add to my appearance for the parade this year!! At the moment it is looking like I am going to have to settle for using a real watermelon.

C: How has Buckaroo influenced your life, daily activities, or relationships?

A: The music from the aqueduct scene is my phone’s alarm sound. So, if you are with me you are stuck with Buckaroo Banzai!

C: Thank you for your time!

It was quite a pleasure to talk to Angela and discover some of her thoughts about Buckaroo. Angela will be joining a group of cosplayers for the 2019 DragonCon parade and photo shoot. If you are interested in joining the group, you can join the Facebook group for this event or contact *World Watch One* for information on reaching the organizers! Be sure to check in the next issue for the report on the DragonCon Parade! 🐾

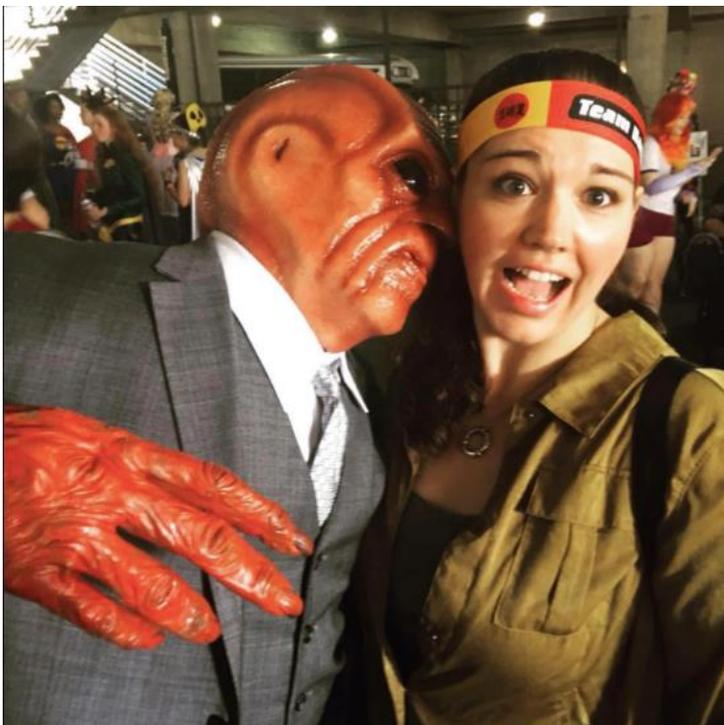


Photo courtesy of Charley Todd

Pimping Your Ride, Jet Car Style

By Chris “Cobalt” Dunham

I was doing some spring vehicular maintenance at the Indiana BBI Outpost #27 when I noticed that my old 2009 Chevy Silverado could look a little more Institute-ready. Nothing on eBay, Etsy or Google, looked like anything that would really make one go, “Wow!” We need to up the Banzai promotional swag out there. That pretty much left me with one option.

DIY is more than just the title to a snappy Peter Gabriel tune. Sometimes, when people don’t make or sell the things you want, you have to do it yourself. That was the case here. I always loved the “88” logos on the doors and hood of the Jet Car. How cool would it be to have them on my old pickup truck?

Now the only problem was how best to get the job done. Stickers? Maybe. But I didn’t know if I would want to have them on my truck permanently. Then it dawned on me—magnetic stickers. Time to hit the internet.

The [BBI Facebook group](#) is pretty active, so I decided to check there to see what the other BBIs thought about “88” magnets. I was pleased, but not surprised, to be met with enthusiasm and encouragement. Banzai people are a good ilk.

A few clicks later and there they were; magnets custom made in whatever size I wanted. But the old GIF I had on file was pretty low-res; definitely not up to snuff for what was needed. I figured there had to be a fellow BBI out there who had already done the heavy lifting with the graphics; somebody who had re-done the “88” logo.

Keith Lutz was that somebody. He had redrawn the “88” graphic as well as others in Corel Draw to make stickers and other stuff. I get it. With the right sticker in the right place, you can really jazz-up that clipboard, water cooler or Trapper



BBI Cobalt’s 2009 Chevy Silverado, decked out in full Jet Car regalia. **Photo by Chris Dunham**

Keeper. Keith told me he would dig them up for me. I thought this might take a while. From personal experience, I can understand the perils of looking for computer files. In which computer, hard drive, thumb drive, underground EMP-protected bunker did I see them last? But Keith got on the ball and sent me the files. I was off to the races. I decided 14” magnets were big enough without being too big, but how many to order?



88 ways to make your garage door look like a million bucks. **Photo by Chris Dunham**

Well, for me personally, I would want one for each door and one for the hood of my truck. So, I figured three per person times ten people. Maybe nine other people would want them. Yep, why not? So I ordered 30 to get a good discount!

Thirty stickers cost me \$230.21. I still have 16 left. I am selling them at cost for \$7.68 each plus shipping. Contact me at ccdunham@gmail.com if you’re interested.

This was a group effort. The people who got us through the mountain on the last phase of this project were carstickers.com. They did a really nice job on these. 🐾



Photo by Chris Dunham

From Worf to Whorfin:

Banzai Connections in Star Trek

By Scott Tate

No matter where you go, there they are: References to Buckaroo Banzai quietly permeate the world of *Star Trek*.

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai didn't hit screens until 1984, so Buckaroo wasn't around during the run of the original *Star Trek* (1966-69), or for the semi-canonical *Star Trek: The Animated Series* (1973-74), or when Trek transitioned to the big screen with *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979). But by the time *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-1994) brought Trek back to TV and broadened its scope beyond the original characters and era, *Buckaroo Banzai* had established a small but devoted appreciation which continued to grow.

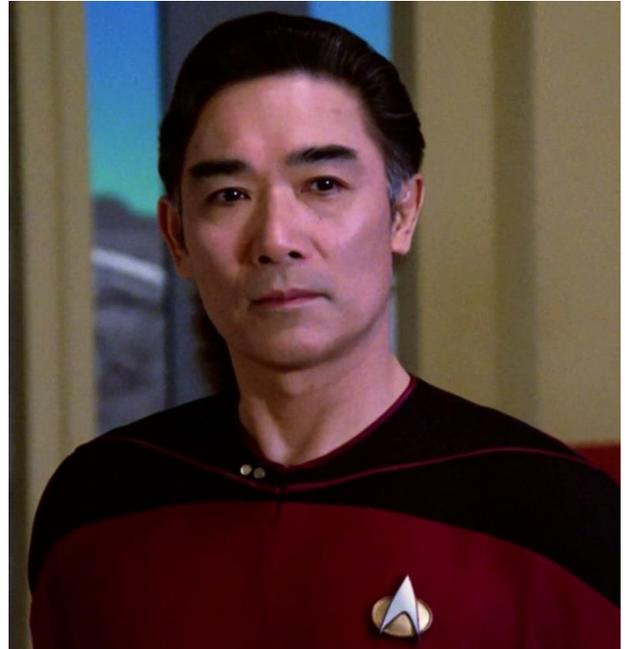
That growth includes connections to be found in various aspects of *Star Trek*. Some are as simple, and as coincidental, as actors from one project finding work in another. Others are more deliberate, and sometimes more subtle, like hidden references in the shows' onscreen computer displays ("Okudagrams") and other visual flourishes created for several of Trek's incarnations by Denise and Mike Okuda. Denise served an instrumental function in the early days of Banzai fandom in the 1980s, handling fan mail sent in to the film's theatrical distributor, Twentieth Century Fox.

Some examples need to be freeze-framed in order to spot. Others aren't recognizable even then and are known only because of disclosure in making-of books, behind-the-scenes clips, and other such supplemental material. But they lurk there nonetheless, paying tribute to one of our favorite films.

One actor kicked off the *TABB*/Trek cross-pollination before *TABB* even came out. Prior to *Buckaroo Banzai*, Kevin Sullivan, who would go on to play John Gant, had a small role in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (1982) as March, one of the scientists assigned to the Genesis Project.

During the same summer that *Buckaroo Banzai* was in theaters, Christopher Lloyd did double duty as both a Lectoroid and a Klingon. He's the antagonist Kruge in *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* (1984).

Several Banzai actors turned up during the television run of *The Next Generation*. Jessie Lawrence Ferguson, the unnamed Black Lectoroid commander who gets the final line, "So what? Big deal," in *Buckaroo Banzai* is featured in the episode "Code of Honor" (1987) as Lutan, the sultan-like leader of the planet Ligon II. "Haven" (1987) has Raye Birk, one of the reporters at Buckaroo's press conference, as Wrenn, the commander of a plague-ridden vessel. Robert Ito (Professor Hikita) plays



Mentoring the next generation: Four short years after his turn as Professor Hikita, **Robert Ito** appeared as the proctor of Wesley Crusher's first Starfleet Academy entrance exam on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. **Source: CBS Paramount Studios**

Tactical Officer Chang in "Coming of Age" (1988). In "The Arsenal of Freedom" (1988) Vincent Schiavelli (John O'Connor) portrays a Minosian arms dealer.

The next Trek spin-off was *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (1993-1999). In "Battle Lines" (1993), Lizardo's hospital orderly Jonathan Banks can be seen as Golin Shel-la, leader of the Ennis faction.

Partially overlapping with *DS9*'s run came *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001). James Saito (Masado Banzai) appeared in "The 37s" (1995) as Nogami, a pre-World War II Japanese military officer abducted by aliens and cryogenically preserved on the other side of the galaxy. The name "Nogami" was never spoken onscreen, but was specified in the script. John Walter Davis, who played the surgeon Buckaroo assisted, is a merchant in "False Profits" (1996). Robert Ito, thirteen years after appearing on *TNG*, returns for another role as Harry Kim's father in "Author, Author" (2001).

Ito wasn't the first *TABB* alum to have two Star Trek roles, though. He'd been beaten to it a few years earlier by Raye Birk, who followed up his *TNG* appearance with a film role in *Star Trek: Insurrection* (1998), this time playing a doctor of the Son'a race.

The next TV incarnation was the prequel series *Enterprise* (2001-2005, formally retitled *Star Trek: Enterprise* later in its run). Clancy Brown guest-stars in "Desert Crossing" (2002) as Zobral, an outgoing, likeable individual whose distress signal

draws the attention of the *Enterprise* crew...only to subsequently spark heated ethical questions about taking sides in a socio-political dispute. Zobra is presented as an ambiguous and nuanced character, leaving it to the audience to decide if he's a hero, villain, or both.

In contrast, Peter Weller does a memorable turn near the end of the series as John Frederick Paxton, a demagogue pushing an anti-alien movement as seen in the two-part story "Demons" and "Terra Prime" (2005). The role was created specifically with Weller in mind by writer and executive producer Manny Coto, who had previously worked with him on the short-lived series *Odyssey 5* (2002). Weller's performance as Paxton is downright chilling at times, the very antithesis of Buckaroo and his philosophy.

The logo for Terra Prime, Paxton's "humans first" movement, is a blue triangle with a globe at its center...visually not unlike Yoyodyne's corporate logo. Incidentally, both Paxton and Weller share Frederick as a middle name.



Shady Characters: On *Star Trek: Enterprise*, Peter Weller appears as the xenophobic John Paxton (L) while Clancy Brown takes a turn as the likeable, but morally ambiguous Zobra. Source: CBS Paramount Studios

Weller went on to join Birk and Ito in the multiple-character club when he took the role of Admiral Alexander Marcus in the film *Star Trek Into Darkness* (2013).

In *TNG*'s "The Vengeance Factor" (1989) Dr. Crusher accesses a database listing deceased individuals from the planet Acamar III. Among the names briefly visible onscreen are Oh Kohnr, Bhighbout Aen, Emi Linzordo, and Wor Feighn, conspicuously reminiscent of *TABB*'s O'Connor, Bigboote, Emilio Lizardo, and Worfin.

DS9's central character Benjamin Sisko is a fan of the near-obsolete Earth sport baseball, causing the hobby to occasionally figure into episodes. One of Sisko's favorite players is Buck Bokai, a name seemingly modified from Buckaroo Banzai. Bokai is first seen in "The Storyteller" (1993) as depicted on a trading card. Posing as Bokai in the card's photo is Greg Jein,

an artist of models and miniatures who worked on *Buckaroo Banzai* and on multiple Treks including *DS9*. Bokai makes a more substantial appearance soon thereafter in an episode where fantasies are brought to life, "If Wishes Were Horses" (1993), in which he appears in person as played by Keone Young.

Star Trek III introduced a new top-of-the-line ship, the *U.S.S. Excelsior*. The ship's motto as displayed on its dedication plaque is an unattributed quotation: "No matter where you go, there you are."

The plaques of several other Starfleet vessels reveal them to have been constructed by Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems or Yoyodyne Division: *U.S.S. Hathaway* (*TNG* "Peak Performance," 1989), *U.S.S. Phoenix* (*TNG* "The Wounded," 1991), *U.S.S. Brattain* (*TNG* "Night Terrors," 1991), and *U.S.S. Sutherland* (*TNG* "Redemption II," 1991).

TNG's "Up the Long Ladder" (1989) discusses some early Earth starship designs. Prior to *Star Trek*'s familiar warp drives becoming commonplace, some engines operated by means of a process called Yoyodyne pulse fusion. This included one type of starship of a design category called BBI-993. Even a Blue Blaze Irregular might be forgiven for not assuming those letters are more than a coincidence. An Okudagram in that episode goes into more detail, specifying that one such ship was the *S.S. Buckaroo Banzai*, launched from Earth on a mission to "Planet 10 (DIM-8)" under the command of John Whorfin!

Buckaroo isn't the only one to have a ship named after him: The *U.S.S. Whorfin* is listed on a chart of ship assignments seen in *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991).

Besides the individual ship of that name, there's apparently a whole line of Whorfin-class ships. Two of them, El-Aurian transport vessels, meet a rough fate in *Star Trek: Generations* (1994). In the real world, they have the distinction of being the first *Star Trek* ships to have been filmed entirely as computer-generated images with no corresponding physical models.

We previously mentioned the *Sutherland* from *TNG*'s "Redemption II" for its Yoyodyne connection. In that same episode, the character Data is temporarily in command of the *Sutherland*, and is brushing up on tactics for detecting cloaked Romulan ships. The article he consults is from the *Journal of Banzai Institute for Advanced Studies*.

A frequent backdrop throughout *DS9*'s run is the station's Promenade, a centrally located multi-tiered public area with access to shops, services, temples, restaurants, and more. The Promenade included a directory board much like you'd see in a mall, listing the various destinations in a variety of printed

languages. If you could peer at it closely enough, you'd see that both the Banzai Institute and Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems maintain offices there. According to its listing, the Institute is located in section 01-088. Banzai fandom isn't the only one represented here; other in-jokes on the board allude to *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *Red Dwarf*, *Colossus: The Forbin Project*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, *The Jetsons*, *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, and several others. Whenever a *DS9* episode has a scene located in a cargo bay, it's worth scrutinizing the background. Sometimes, as in "A Simple Investigation" (1997), it's possible to spot labels on the freight containers specifying that transit is being handled by a company called Planet 10 Shipping.

DS9's "Far Beyond the Stars" (1998), with its unusual story set among a group of sci-fi pulp writers in the 1950s, sneaks in a *Buckaroo Banzai* reference in the form of a novel entitled *Lectroid Attack!* It's advertised on the back cover of an issue of *Astounding Science Fiction* as glimpsed in the episode.

Onboard *Voyager*, Tom Paris made a habit for a while of acting out the holodeck adventures of a Flash Gordon/Buck Rogers type of character called Captain Proton. In "Body and Soul" (2000), it's mentioned in dialog that one involves rescuing slave girls from Planet 10.

In the *Enterprise* episode "Congenitor" (2003), a computer interface lists several motion pictures that are available as part of the ship's library. One title stands out to fans familiar with Banzai history: *The Strange Case of Mr. Cigars*. Onboard the *Enterprise* it's categorized as a horror film.

The most frequently recurring Banzai homage throughout multiple Treks is repeated use of the oscillation overthruster as a prop, with repainted copies of it having made their way into Trek's repertoire by way of Greg Jein.

On one occasion the device is referred to by name, but without a corresponding prop being seen: In *TNG*'s "The Measure of a Man" (1989), it's listed on some technical schematics as a component located within the torso of the series' resident android, Data.

Overthrusters can be spotted several times in *TNG*: as an isolinear chip reader used by Wesley Crusher in "11001001" (1988), in the geosciences lab as Ensign Davies' spectral analyzer in "Pen Pals" (1989), as a Borg surgical instrument in "The Best of Both Worlds" (1990), and more. On *DS9*, it's a scanner used by Dr. Bashir in "A Man Alone" (1993), gadgetry inside an access panel on a Klingon ship in "Apocalypse Rising" (1996), and more gadgetry inside a cell wall during Garak's escape attempt in "By Inferno's Light" (1997). In *Star Trek:*



You are here: Buried in the background of Deep Space Nine's Promenade Directory are several unlikely businesses, including **Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems**. Source: NBC Paramount Studios.

First Contact (1996), it's an unspecified piece of equipment on board Zefram Cochrane's prototype rocket *Phoenix* (not to be confused with the *U.S.S. Phoenix* mentioned earlier). When the cockpit set of Cochrane's *Phoenix* was modified and recycled into serving as the inspection pod occasionally seen in various episodes of *Enterprise* (such as "Broken Bow," 2001), the overthruster continued to tag along. And remember Peter Weller as John Frederick Paxton on that *Enterprise* two-parter? Fittingly, an overthruster can be spotted on Paxton's desk, with others serving as additional set dressing in the control room of his mining company.

When Christie's auctioned a large collection of Star Trek items in October of 2006, Lot 540 was a pair of overthrusters. According to the catalog, these were made for use on *DS9* and later re-used on *Enterprise* in Weller's "Demons." The pre-sale estimate placed their value between \$400-600. They ended up going for \$2,160, owing perhaps to the Weller connection.

Star Trek continues to expand the final frontier with *Star Trek: Discovery* since 2017 and multiple additional series reportedly in varying stages of development. Will Banzai connections continue to slip in? The future always remains open. 🦋

Buckaroo Banzai Fandom on the Internet: Unseen Interviews from the Archives

by Dan Berger and Sean Murphy

Imagine, if you will, a group of Buckaroo Banzai fans sitting around a table discussing the old days. This isn't how it actually happened, since it was all done over email, but we can pretend. This discussion happened back in June, 2009 with the intention of being published in the 25th anniversary issue of the *World Watch One* newsletter. Somehow these interviews were lost in the Institute archives. Until now.

The Panelists

Dan Berger (aka Big Shoulders): [World Watch One](#) Editor

Ernie Cline (aka Rafterman): Wrote a [Buckaroo Banzai Sequel script](#), several novels ([Ready Player One](#) and [Armada](#)), and had movies produced ([Fanboys](#), [Ready Player One](#)).

Bev Beej Larkin (aka Komish/John Mr. Pibb): Fanzine author ([Penny Paradox](#))

Sean Murphy (aka Figment): Maintainer of the [Buckaroo Banzai FAQ](#)

Chris Wike (aka Arclight): Maintainer of the [World Watch Online](#) website



Dan: When did you realize that you were hooked on BB?"

Chris: Not sure that I ever hit that stage. Starting the [World Watch Online Unofficial Buckaroo Banzai mailing list](#) was more of a "well...no one else seems to be doing it" thing.

Ernie: I'm not sure. After many, many viewings, BB just gradually became one of my favorite movies. And the fact that it was a cult film that most people hadn't even seen made me love it even more, like a great underground band that you love, but that no one else has even heard of. When I started collecting everything I could find that was related to the movie, it was obvious I was hooked. That usually happens when I become temporarily obsessed with a movie, band, author, etc. I tend to go overboard.

Bev: I was hooked from the trailer, the music, the fun, the ironies, and one-liners: "Was that yes on one or no on two?" We sought out the novel, the comics, the little magazine Marvel made from the comics, immersing ourselves in the world of Buckaroo Banzai. The novelization was incredibly rich and fleshed out even more what we wanted to know about Buckaroo Banzai.

Buckaroo Banzai
frequently asked questions

World Watch OnLine
Choose Your Entry

Instead we resorted to what we knew back then—making phone calls! I was pretty good at what we now call social engineering (phone hacking). Hollywood studios were still pretty dense about fandom then, so it was relatively easy to ask for people at large studios and be connected to them. Once upon a time I actually got George Lucas's office...at Lucasfilm!

I knew another BBI named April Anderson (Famous for making "Lectroid Chow" out of Everclear and Twinkies) and she knew Denise and Dianne at Twentieth Century Fox. The funniest thing I remember is one of them telling me they were charging the fan club expenses to some big horror movie's account in the Promotion Department! (I think enough time has passed that we can let that secret out. Plus, now you don't have to wonder why movies never make a profit!)

Sean: I was hooked immediately. I knew there had to be other people out there that were as fascinated by this film as I was. I had already created the [LegendFAQ](#) at this point. Walking out of the theater after watching BB, I knew that I was going to have a second FAQ on my plate. There was so much to learn! The movie just dropped you into the middle of this incredibly dense world and I loved the fact that the film didn't spoon feed the story to the audience. It hit the ground running and expected you to keep up with everything that was happening.

Dan: What prompted you to create your own website?

Chris: A lack of anything else on the web at the time. At least anything approaching an organized group. When I first got online, I poked around BBSs and CompuServe and settled on AOL. I found the random picture and, of course, people using "the quote" (No matter where you go, there you are), but that was about it. I remember Rafterman being brought up as a name associated with Buckaroo Banzai on the net in the early days but not sure if everything sort of started at about the same time or evolved over a period of months/years. You know what? As I think about it, Rafterman came later. The best that I remember, the first full-fledged Buckaroo Banzai site I knew about was Relayer's [Blue Blaze Station #23](#) site.

AOL had a message board with a few people posting on a pretty regular basis and I think the idea of reviving the newsletter in some form started there. They were thinking of doing a newsletter on paper but eventually talk of actually doing anything kinda died down. I got onto another mailing list and realized how easy (ha!) it would be to just throw something together every once in a while and send it out. So, I created the World Watch Online [Unofficial Buckaroo Banzai mailing list](#). Off-hand, I can't remember how it branched out past AOL. Probably started with a few newsgroup messages.

Ernie: I was working as a website designer at the time (mid-90s), and thought it a huge injustice that there was no official website for the film. So, I decided to build one myself. Mostly just to share all of the BB crap I had collected with other fans.

I gave it the obvious name: The Banzai Institute, and designed it as if it were the official Institute website. Eventually I lost interest in maintaining it, and then when Michael Okuda launched the bad ass official site that's up now, there no longer seemed to be a need for mine. **[Note: Sadly, the official website is no longer on-line but there is an archived version of the [Banzai Institute](#) on the BB FAQ. –Sean]**

Bev: If we'd had the web like these young whippersnappers, we would have done websites right off the bat! It was a little different for me, since I was a recipient, not really a full participant of the paper newsletter. Silver Fox, Hollywood and Catnip were the main people I spoke to and corresponded with **[Note: The original *World Watch One* newsletter directors. –Sean]**. I honestly only caught the other BBI's names in passing since I was in Texas and they were in Hollywood proper. However, I was involved with the [Penny Paradox](#) fanzine.

Sean: [Blue Blaze Station #23](#) was the first site I ever found. It got me started on the information that was available about the film at the time. I remember Relayer announcing that he was taking his site down and he packaged it up so that it could be downloaded by anyone who wanted it. I don't recall his reasons for doing this. Maybe he was just tired of maintaining the site like Ernie was? The entire [Blue Blaze Station #23](#) is hosted on the BB FAQ website for your retro viewing pleasure.

I remember LOVING Ernie's (aka Rafterman's) site and being very sad when it disappeared from the web. His site was more along the lines of what I wanted to know about the BB world, i.e. what factual information was out there.

I joined a Banzai message board on AOL (which had an archive of messages from the previous version of the message board) and there I met my future FAQ co-creator Chris Wike (aka ArcLight). We both started Banzai FAQs independently of each

The first Buckaroo Banzai site on the web?

Resurrecting Relayer's [BBS #23 website](#) on the BB FAQ has brought to light the fact that his site was, most likely, the first Buckaroo Banzai site on the web. Relayer shared the formation of the original *World Watch One* and the history of the founding directors as found in the [Dec. 1985 supplement](#). You can learn more about the [original newsletter](#) on the BB FAQ.

Relayer then added this information on his [BBS #23 bunkhouse page](#):

“The baton passed [from the original *World Watch One* team] to Team Denver [which consisted of Steve and KathE Walker, Alan “Dragon” Smith, and Nancy “Abacus” Smith] in 1987, and the last date on the material I can find is late 1988.

In June, 1995 Blue Blaze Station #23 materialized in cyberspace, inspired by my simple worship of the film, the book, and the Principles, and because I could find no information web-wise on the great Dr. Banzai. Soon BBIs surfing the net, including ArcLight, Fantom and Rafterman, started contacting me...and the Station took a great leap forward when the Archive Angel, Rob Chatlin, presented me with some issues of the original *World Watch One* fanzines.

I am eternally grateful to Rob, the BBIs, and to the Founding Directors; that original group who, from the same place of adoration, did so much work for the fun of so many, and portions of whose material I have shamelessly incorporated into these pages—a cup of karakoumiss to them! Thanks to ArcLight for proposing a mailing list and letting me convince him to take it on and special thanks to Rafterman for early enthusiasm and encouragement.”

Relayer also shared Buckaroo Banzai's Principles on his Bunkhouse page, as found in the novelization. “The principles by which B. Banzai lives are known as the Five Stresses, the Four Beauties and the Three Loves. Things to be stressed are decorum, courtesy, public health, discipline, and morals. The Four Beauties are the beauties of mind, language, behavior and environment. The Three Loves are love of others, love of justice and love of freedom.” –SM

other. My desire to create an FAQ originally grew out of the need to find a copy of the (at the time) out of print novel, the bootleg soundtrack CD, the bootleg workprint videotape, the various versions of the script, and to finally discover what the watermelon was all about. Chris's FAQ focused on the world of the good doctor, the Banzai Institute, and the Lectroids. Since we were addressing the same information from two different

angles, we decided to join forces and create one complete FAQ. The combined BB FAQ made its debut around June, 1996 on the newsgroups. It later moved to the [web](#).

Dan: What are some of your general impressions of BB fandom's evolution, specifically on the net?

Chris: It seems that over the years, as the fans found each other, more websites popped up as people realized two things: not only was there actually a potential audience for the information, but that maybe certain aspect of Banzai fandom that particularly resonated with them hadn't been fully explored yet. Unfortunately, most of those sites have since died out, either due to loss of interest on the part of their creators or, more likely, loss of a host as many of the free website providers shut down. Fortunately, many of the people involved have managed to make it over to Facebook, which I think has swallowed the audience for a lot of fan sites and mailing lists and message boards (at least, most of the ones I hung out at). It's almost like a de-evolution back to the days when everything was largely contained to some AOL and CompuServe message boards before venturing out onto the web.

Ernie: "Impressions of BB fandom's evolution?" Damn, man. What do you think I am, a sociologist?

Dan: Hey, you were working the sociological angle with the whole "[Dance Monkeys, Dance](#)" spoken word thing. Just sayin'.

Ernie: Actually, I think Banzai internet fandom is exemplary of most branches of sci-fi fandom. It has grown along with the Internet, resulting in dozens of websites, fan fiction, faqs, webzines, and so on. That's the beauty of the web. No matter what obscure cult film or band you happen to be into, the Internet allows you to instantly find other people all over the globe who are into the same thing.

Bev: The face of the fandom has changed, at least for me. Many of my compatriots have moved on. I feel like I'm one of the few BBIs left in the county, but with the internet we can still keep the flame going and enjoy the shared experience of one of the most amazing films ever. I would love to see an "official" BBI reunion somewhere. Sadly, I don't foresee it.

Sean: Unlike *Legend*, which had a limited number of website possibilities (mostly picture/audio file sites), there were a lot of totally different BB sites—Strike force sites, make your own badge sites, fan fiction sites, etc. Since the movie and background information found in the novelization is so jam-packed, there is a lot of wiggle room for creating a unique BB website without having to repeat what others had already done. As Chris said, however, many of those sites have fallen by the wayside over the years.

Dan: What are some of the memories that stick with you most from your fandom experiences over the last 10 years? (**Note:** *These interviews were originally conducted in June of 2009. Some entries were updated with more recent information. —Sean*).

Chris: The first time I managed to see Buckaroo in a real theater was a blast. Firstly, my boss at the time was dating someone who worked at the theater. Walking straight up to the box office—in my Team Banzai Adventure Jacket, of course—and saying "I'm on the guest list" was a huge thrill. Then, actually watching it with a theater full of fans, quoting the lines and answering back to the characters almost like a Rocky Horror screening...that's something I highly recommend. Being part of an online fandom is cool, especially for people-averse people, like myself. There's definitely something about being in a group of like-minded folks taking joy in something you've enjoyed, basically on your own, for so long.

Ernie: I'd have to say one of my favorite memories is of the night *Buckaroo Banzai* was screened here in Austin at the famous Alamo Drafthouse. The theater was packed with BB fans, all quoting along with the movie. It was a thing of beauty. I brought my bootleg VHS tapes of the video press kit and the original deleted opening, which they showed before the film. This was a few years before the DVD came out, so most fans hadn't seen that stuff yet. That was also the first time I had to chance to see it on the big screen. Epic night.

Bev: I love finding those who've not seen the film get into it. I was ultra proud to represent Team Banzai at the 1985 Worldcon in Austin with my bulked-up vest emblazoned with the huge Team Banzai patch, wearing my head band and my tabbies. Carried a fake Uzi and sword to truly be a Blue Blaze Irregular...and so many were like "Whoa, nice costume."

I was thrilled when Denise Okuda and the folks at *World Watch One* were able to mail fans "The Top Secret Envelope." I have it in a place of honor in my collection, along with my headband! I cannot explain how excited I was to receive them—it was like being part of a secret society! Of all of the things I received, this was the most fun piece. It had tons of background information, especially about the world of *TABB* and Hanoi Xan, and it tied things up even more between the film and the novel.

The excitement for me was in the details. The *World Watch One* newsletter was made so lovingly by all involved, both the original incarnation and the more modern version.

Sean: One of my best memories involves being at work and getting a phone call. I'd gotten in touch with Rick Richter's agent to ask about setting up an interview for the Buckaroo Banzai article I was writing for Video Watchdog. I expected to

get a response from the agent and, if I was lucky, we'd set up a time to do the interview with Rick. Instead, out of the blue, my work phone rang and it was Rick calling me to talk. I was blown away that he was calling me, and not the other way around, and that he was up for the interview. I was overjoyed to find that he was an incredibly generous and nice guy to talk to and that he was still really excited about BB and the world that he and Earl Mac Rauch created.

Extended Remix: The Singles

Editor's Note: When I was originally formulating the "panel" interview above, I also decided to send each interviewee some questions tailored more specifically to their individual undertakings. The opportunity to dive a little deeper was too tempting to resist. The result was the three shorter "interviews within the interview" that follow. We hope that you enjoy these extended remixes. —DB

Ernie Cline

Dan: What made you decide to write the [Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League](#) fan script?

Ernie: I was teaching myself to write screenplays at the time, and I thought it would be a fun writing exercise. I didn't think that the promised sequel would ever get made and, like most Banzai fans, I desperately wanted to see the next chapter in the story. So I decided to write it myself.

Dan: How did you approach the material?

Ernie: I wanted to write a pure sequel—the one promised at the end of the first film. The movie that would have been made if the first film had become a huge hit, instead of a cult film.

Dan: What sources did you draw from while writing the script?

Ernie: I actually threw myself into the project and did a ton of research. I read and re-read the novelization, which is filled with details about Hanoi Xan and his minions, as well as tiny little asides and hints about future Team Banzai adventures.

I was also able to locate three different drafts of the original film's script, and I scoured those for details to include in the sequel. I also read all of the old *World Watch One* fanzines, the press kit, the Marvel Comics adaptation...I totally geeked out on the Buckaroo Banzai universe and left no stone unturned.

Dan: What became of the script after you wrote it?

Ernie: I posted it on the Internet. A lot of fans read it and loved it, and emailed me to tell me that they loved it. The response was great, and it was more than I'd hoped for. A few years later, a small production company read the script and optioned it from me. But the sequel rights were a mess at that point, and nothing ever came of it.



Source: Ernest Cline

Dan: What made you decide to pull the script off of the internet and ask others to do so?

Ernie: Well, when it got optioned and started getting some press, I foolishly thought there was a slim chance it might actually get made someday. I also kept seeing copies of the script for sale on eBay. And at comic book shops and sci-fi conventions. Not cool. So I took it offline. [Note: Ernie eventually reposted his [Buckaroo Banzai Sequel script](#).—Sean]

And by then, W.D. Richter and Earl Mac Rauch were trying to get their BB TV show off the ground [[Buckaroo Banzai: Ancient Secrets and New Mysteries](#)], so it looked like we might finally get a real sequel after all.

Dan: Did the *Against the World Crime League* script create any opportunities for you in the film industry?

Ernie: No, it didn't really create any opportunities for me. It was really just glorified fan fiction, after all. But it did get me a very cool write-up in *Sci-Fi World* magazine. They called it one of the "ten best movies you'll never see." Sort of a dubious honor.

Dan: If you were to write *Against the World Crime League* today, what would you do differently?

Ernie: I'd probably wait until someone actually hired me to write it. I also think I'd do a much better job if I wrote it now, since I have so much more screenwriting (and life) experience to draw upon.

Dan: As someone who is both a fanboy and a screenwriter, how have your perceptions about fandom and/or working in Hollywood changed after having done both?

Ernie: In my experience, being a fan of movies is a great starting point if you want to make movies yourself someday. Fans love what they love with a passion, and they understand why they love it. So, if a sequel or an adaptation is entrusted to a fan, I think they're less likely to screw it up. Peter Jackson proved that with the *Lord of the Rings* films. That's why if there ever is another Buckaroo Banzai movie or TV show, I hope a true Blue Blaze Irregular has creative control. Otherwise, Dr. Banzai probably won't be very happy with the final product.

Bev Beej Larkin

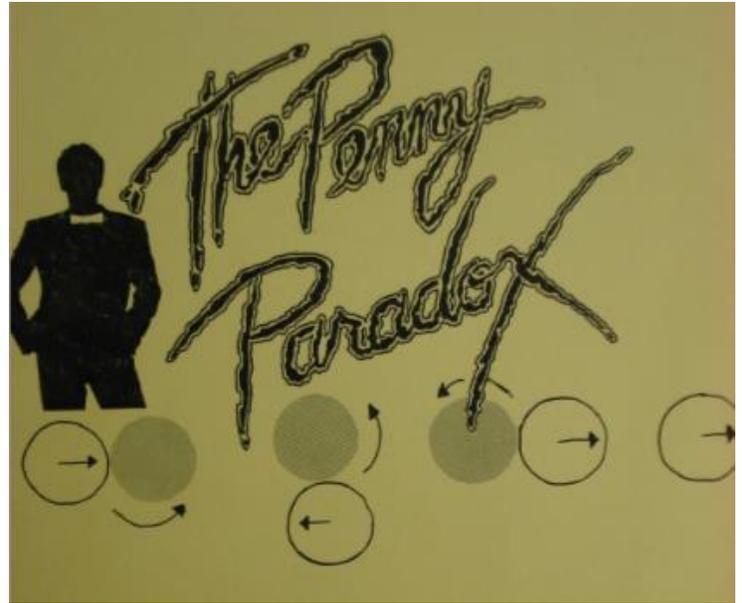
Dan: Tell me a little about [The Penny Paradox](#) fanzine.

Bev: Well, the *Penny Paradox* started because many of us in the local SF group were already readers of fanzines of other shows and movies of the time. And, of course, wannabe writers and artists. Leni Sommer and I started talking one night at her house and the story developed into a lengthier tale, which gave me a chance to draw and play. Our tale was about Hanoi Xan switching Penny and Peggy by covering Peggy's death, from poisoned flowers in the Bridal Suite on her wedding day to Buckaroo, as well as a chapter I wrote that had Buckaroo throwing his simple gold wedding band on top of Peggy's casket. All of this was from Rawhide's perspective. I will immodestly say that I am very proud of my contribution since even Leni, the 'zine editor, said that sequence made her weep.

Dan: What was your involvement in the original newsletter?

Bev: Well, remember that I wasn't directly involved. I was excited when mentioned in the pages of *World Watch One*, and when our fanzine got a mention as well. But mostly the gang in California were having fun throwing together some fun and cute newsletters for us to enjoy and comment on. In retrospect, we fans were so fortunate to have had fans in the mix, otherwise we'd be reading about the destruction of the very goodies they sent out—the "secret" promo envelope, the headbands and, of course, *World Watch One*. We owe them a great debt. Even though many of us handmade a lot of our things from our own locations, the "official" stuff that was able to get out of Twentieth Century Fox to the fans of *Buckaroo Banzai* is an amazing feat.

And Starland stepping up to make the BBI merchandise was a wonder in itself. I had actually gotten some patches silk screened on my own, but Starland's stuff was excellent and kept the fandom alive. As for other items, I rabidly searched for the Viewmaster slide packet and found it at a local store. As we continued to watch the film we made bubble-wrap glasses and April even made a "Snott" for me! I still have it!



Dan: Did contribute to any other BB fanzines at the time?

Bev: Since we weren't able to venture as far out from Corpus Christi, and BBSs were still in their infancy, there was little communication between other zines. I do have in my wee collection of fun stuff several of Denise Tathwell's tales that are all about her fave, Rawhide (back then Clancy Brown did her answering machine—LUCKY!) These stories included "Keep a Candle Burning," "A Rose By Any Other Name," "What Are Friend's For?" and "Rawhide Rides Again." I think I see a common thread there. Good thing Michael Okuda snagged her!

My friend April Anderson didn't make a zine per se, but since she was "John Nevermore" for her Lectroid minions, she did put out a few *World Watch One* type newsletters for the Lectroid Lodge called *Voltage*. They were a hoot. I think she only did 4 or 5 issues though.

Dan: What were some of the things that brought the zine era to a close?

Bev: Honestly, there were not a lot of orders for our zine. It simply wasn't the huge profit maker Leni as the editor and coproducer was expecting. She was new to fandom. I knew it would be a niche of folks interested. Later that year, Leni moved away...and some of us were starting to get into computers and BBSs. That's back when things were 300 baud for the whippersnappers out there—look it up—slow as molasses back then. "Zines were expensive to produce whether you mimeographed it or photocopied it, and many of us were learning to use word processors and make files we could send on disk to each other rather than print them.

I miss the 'zine experience across the board since I am also a fan of other popular media, but it's so funny to see my daughter

(who is a closet BBI) read fanzines online now. We even compared “Mary Sue” stories one time. She is a geek in her own right and has her own fandom enjoyment.

Sean Murphy

Dan: What is the story behind publishing your first article about *Buckaroo Banzai*?

Sean: I had previously written three articles, published by [Video Watchdog magazine](#), about the different versions of *Legend*, *Dune*, and *Highlander II*. I was able to convince Video Watchdog Editor/Publisher Tim Lucas to allow me to write a *Buckaroo Banzai* article on spec, about the differences between the theatrical cut and the bootleg workprint, in the hopes of spurring interest in a special edition release of the film.

The article gave me the opportunity to interview director W.D. “Rick” Richter. He’s a joy to talk to and very into the world of *Buckaroo Banzai*. I talked to Richter about the idea of a special edition laserdisc (this gives you an idea of how long ago this was) that would have a letterboxed version of the film. He was interested in what extras could be put on the laserdisc to expand on the Banzai information already out there.

Tim, however, was not totally convinced about the popularity of *Buckaroo Banzai* itself. I wrote the article and Tim held onto it for several years, waiting for a release of the film on DVD to publish the article. This defeated my intent behind writing the article, which was as a way to raise awareness about the film and, hopefully, help bring about a DVD release.

Richter continued to track the rights to the film, still in limbo at Crédit Lyonnais, and the years passed. My article, like the film, sat in limbo. Then the film rights were purchased by MGM. One day, out of the blue, I got an e-mail from a Banzai fan who was a sound engineer working on the sound mix for the first video release of *Buckaroo Banzai* in 15 years. He just wanted to let me know that the video was already in the pipeline and that he was trying to get the same job for the DVD that was going to be released.

I quickly got the sound engineer in touch with Richter and this led to Richter speaking directly with MGM, which led to his involvement with the DVD. Although I was not involved in the making of the DVD itself, I feel like I was one fan in a chain of fans at the right place at the right time to make a difference. There was a quickly organized letter writing campaign on the BB FAQ to let MGM know how special we thought the film was and how we thought it deserved a special edition release.

Then an amazing thing happened. MGM actually listened to the fans. The people who worked on the DVD release with Richter



were Banzai fans and it clearly shows in the quality and quantity of the extras. Those same fans helped me with my article by getting me access to a videotape of the extra footage found on the DVD, before the DVD was released, so I could add that information to the article.

Ironically, when Tim watched the special edition of BB on DVD, he actually appreciated the film more and asked me to tweak the article to add more of the “BB is real” flavor which I was happy to do.

The article, called [Buckaroo Banzai : The Resurrection of an American Hero](#), was published in *Video Watchdog* magazine, issue #82, which hit the newsstands in April, 2002. Although the article came out after the DVD, I like to think it helped to spur the process along the way.



Editor’s Note: For more information about the early days of *World Watch One*, see our discussion with the founding directors of the newsletter in the [Fall 2004 issue](#), as well as other memorials and remembrances from some of those directors sprinkled throughout this issue. –DB

Buckaroo Banzai Art from the Internet

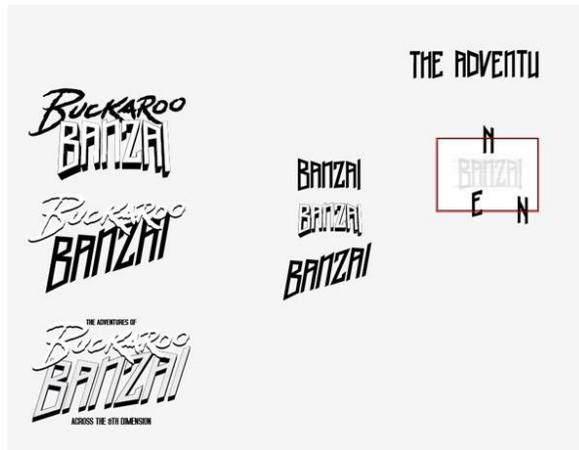
World Watch One Staff

In our [March 2019 issue](#), we explored a variety of Buckaroo Banzai art created specifically by comic book artists or appearing in actual comic books for a feature we called the Comics Bullpen. In assembling that article, it soon became clear that the scope and variety of Banzai related art corralled on the internet far exceeds the provenance of comic books and their creators. Poster designs, either for special screenings of

Buckaroo or imaginary sequels to the docudrama, proved to be particularly bountiful on the net.

Once again, we have collected a variety of Banzai art from varied sources. Not all of them are poster designs. We have done our best to provide background by rifling the internet further for existing commentary and biographical information. We hope you enjoy.

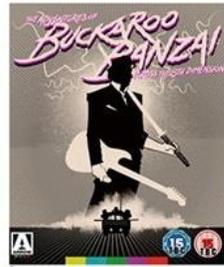
Matt Griffith



Matt Griffith is an illustrator and designer based in Ennis, County Clare, Ireland. He did the cover art for [Arrow Video's Blu-Ray release of *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*](#). Check out some of his preliminary art for his Buckaroo piece.



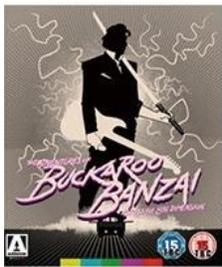
1.



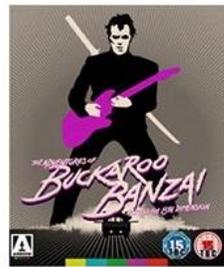
2.



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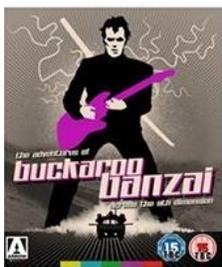
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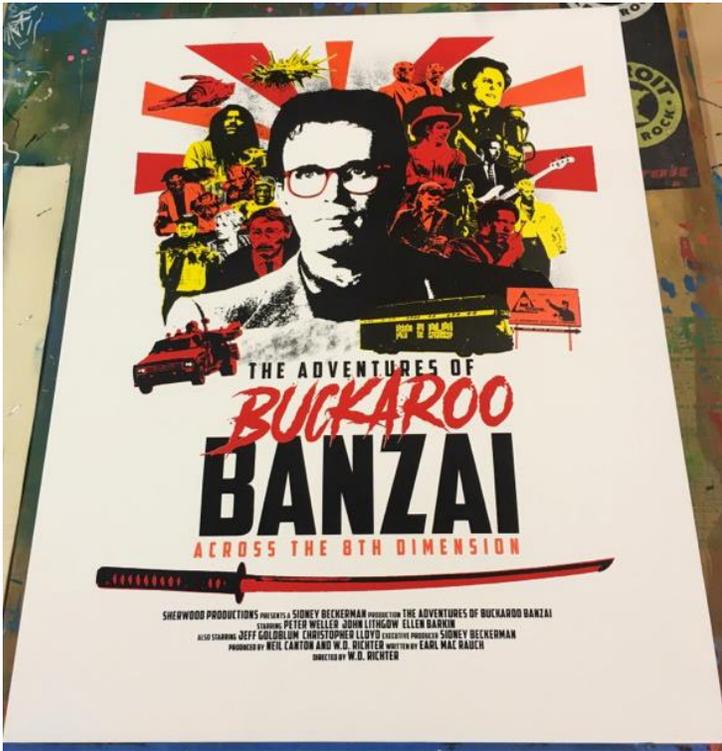
8.



9.



Tim Holly



[Tim Holly makes monsters](#) and designs posters as 'Tim Monsters' Designs! in Saint Paul, Minnesota. You can buy his [Buckaroo Banzai poster](#) and his [Hong Kong Cavaliers T-Shirt](#) for \$20.00 each.

Laurent Melki



[Laurent Melki](#) is a French artist known for his horror and pin-up art. He also created the poster for *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai's* release in France. World Watch One staff member, Rainbow Kitty has long been fascinated with Melki's Buckaroo poster, but even he didn't know that, in addition to the standard poster, there are also wide (L) and door-size (R) versions. He also had no idea that [Melki was also a musician](#).

Robert Sammelin



Artist [Robert Sammelin](#) had already done one movie poster for the iam8bit show “Sequel”—about the greatest movies never made. Then he received an invitation to do another. This is what he had to say about it on the internet:

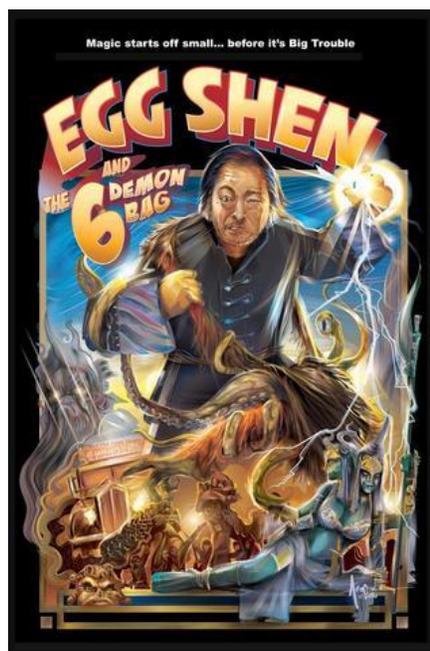
“I’m still to this day amazed and in awe of the wonderful madness that is *Buckaroo Banzai*, and have fantasized before on what the sequel they announce at the end would be like. I did this poster kind of last minute (I have two posters on the show—the first being a life-long dream) when the show got pushed a bit and Jon casually suggested I’d do another. I didn’t really have time, but asked if anyone had done *BB2* yet. It turned out no one had, so it became my duty to do it—no two ways about it. In my mind the movie’s about the re-emerging of the Banzai family’s old arch nemesis Hanoi Xan (played by a masked Yul Brynner) from his dimensional hiding, assembling the world’s greatest villains to mind-drain and destroy Buckaroo in order to take over the world and extended dimensions. The league consists of a cyborg Soviet, a mad scientist vampire, an interstellar burning Buddha, a Haitian death goddess, a Turkish bear hunter, a French mechanical man, (and likely a lot more wonderful outlandish characters I can’t possibly dream up...) that BB, Penny, Hong Kong Cavaliers and Blue Blazers have to fight using science, firepower, swords and rock’n’roll.”

For reference, Robert used the [Hanoi Xan mask](#) that BBI intern Waldo Coffey found beneath Perfect Tommy’s abandoned “secret fort.” (See the 3/30/10 entry in the link provided above.) 🐾

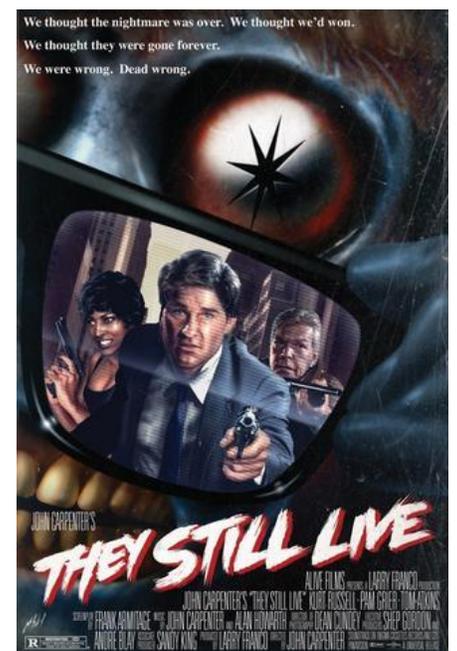
Other posters from the iam8bit show “Sequel” which may be of interest to the readers of this newsletter:



Being Jeff Goldblum—Austin James



Egg Shen—Orlando Arocena



They Still Live—Matt Haley

Hanoi Xan's Rock 'N' Roll Stranglehold!

by Jeffrey "Machine Rock" Morgan

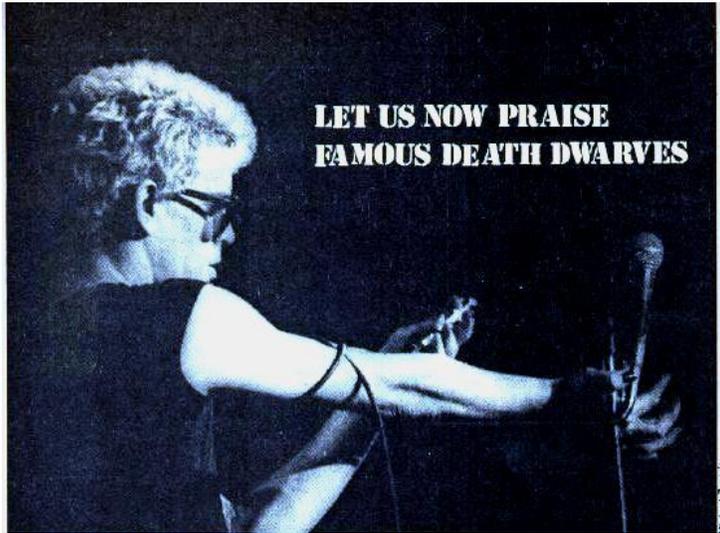


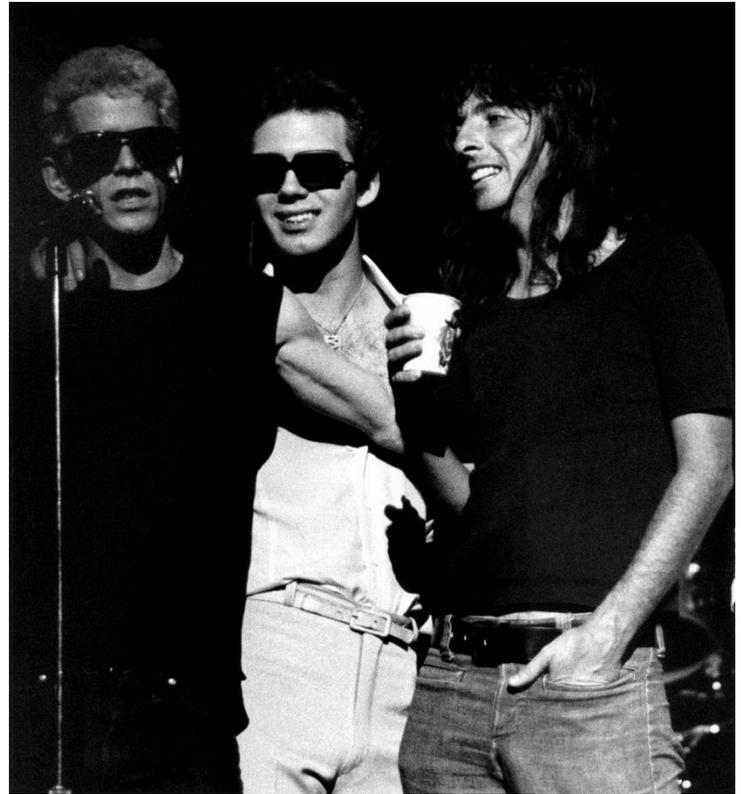
Photo by Michael Zagaris

Although my main claim to fame these days is as the authorized biographer of both Alice Cooper and Iggy Pop & The Stooges, prior to that I spent twenty years as the longest-serving writer at *CREEM*: America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine. However, my first appearance wasn't as a rock critic but as a rock photographer, when a photo I'd taken of Alice Cooper and Lou Reed together on stage was used by *CREEM* editor Lester Bangs to illustrate his infamous March 1975 cover story "Let Us Now Praise Famous Death Dwarves."

Which has always begged the obvious question: what was the connection between the mysterious "death dwarves" that Bangs referred to and Hanoi Xan's "radio-controlled experiments," as Perfect Tommy once described them to Reno? Was Bangs trying to secretly warn us of some unknown insidious plot? No doubt there are some tight energy emitters who will say "So what?" and "Big deal!" But now the truth can finally be told that, operating from his stronghold in Sabah, Xan himself was the actual silent partner publisher of *CREEM*—an intimidating role which ensured that no record reviews of the Hong Kong Cavaliers' albums would ever see print in what was, at that time, one of the three largest rock magazines in North America.

This explains why my own [Rockarama](#) reviews of *Progress Over Protocol* and *Your Place Or Mayan?* never saw print in *CREEM*, and why my later review of *Live At Artie's Artery* appeared instead in Detroit's *Metro Times*, where I was a newspaper columnist for five years.

How far Xan's editorial tentacles spread to other rock magazines is something we may never know. However, it's a credit to Buckaroo Banzai's band that such vile tactics by both



Above: (L to R) Lou Reed and his associate Ernie Thormalen with Alice Cooper. Photo by Jeffrey Morgan. Below: Robert Crumb's "Boy howdy!" *CREEM* icon.



the malevolent genius Xan and his cat's-paw, the Pasha of Three Tails, didn't stop the Hong Kong Cavaliers' syncopated songs from being best-sellers across all eight dimensions! 🐾

Jeffrey Morgan, BBI Machine Rock, is listed in the original BBI directory. Besides his work as a rock critic and photographer, Morgan wrote volume two of the Vortex Comics series [Mister X](#). You can [find him on Facebook](#).

INTERVIEW: Radford Polinsky Talent On and Off Screen

By Steve Mattsson

Radford Polinsky has worked in the costume and wardrobe departments of Hollywood productions for more than 35 years. He dressed the Hong Kong Cavaliers and appeared on-screen in *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*. His answers are based on his experience as a union costumer working in film and television productions in Los Angeles. In other places, or in the non-union world, the job definitions may break down differently.

Steve Mattsson: Please explain the difference between a costume designer and a costumer.

Radford Polinsky: Designers and costumers are in two different Locals of the IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees). A costume designer designs the clothes, but does not manufacture or handle the clothing on the set. The designer does research, has conferences with the director, writer, producer, production designer; the creative minds on a production, to imagine and create the look for the costumes that supports the needs of the production. The costumers are the skilled craftspeople who take the designers vision and turn it into clothing to be worn by actors on the set; as well as the people who handle the clothing on the set on a day to day basis.

Example: Aggie Rogers was the costume designer who created the various “looks” for Peter Weller in BB. Some of his costume pieces were purchased; the shirt, the bowtie, the shoes. Aggie had an idea how she wanted Buckaroo Banzai to look different and unique—not off-the-rack. Some of his pieces needed to be custom made. The costume supervisor led the costume crew; a shopper found shirts and shoes and ties according to notes given by Aggie, they found fabric swatches for his unique suit, they mixed and matched swatches and shirts and ties until they came up with a color palette they liked. The tailor measured Peter and made a suit including the single pointed lapel as Dr. Banzai’s unique feature. The costume supervisor (working closely with the designer) broke down the script to determine who needed to change costumes, and how many multiples they might need. The Costume supervisor also manages the costume budget, and the overwhelming amount of paperwork that goes into clothing a production, purchases, rentals, custom made items, as well as managing the staff of costumers it takes to accomplish all that needs to be done. So—restated briefly—costume designers design the costumes and are the driving force behind the creative aspects of costuming a



Polinski struggles across the MGM lot with his set kit, costumer's script, and a few of the Hong Kong Cavaliers' hats during the making of *Buckaroo Banzai*. **Source: Radford Polinsky**

production, costumers are the people who make the designer’s vision a reality.

Steve: You have credits as a costumer, set costumer, key costumer, and costume supervisor--how are those jobs different from each other?

Radford: Costume supervisors are in charge of a costume crew; they work with the designer to make it all happen. Key costumer is a level down from supervisor; they do a lot of shopping, rentals, and running around, they are often an intermediary between the designer and the set costumers; transmitting notes and instructions from the designer to the set costumers as needed. The key costumer also has the key responsibility of making sure the set costumers have the clothes they need when they need them! A set costumer is the person who handles the clothing on a day to day basis on the set. We receive the clothes from the key, check our costume plot (generated by the costume supervisor) to determine which clothing we should set for an actor to wear in which scene. We frequently shoot out of order, and it may be that an actor will have to change clothes several times a day for story reasons. It is our job to see that the actor is wearing the right clothes, the right way, at the right time. “Costumer” is... well, we are *all* costumers! But sometimes we are just hired as extra help. That can be help around the office, or when there are a lot of people to dress for a scene. My most extreme example of that was when I worked a couple of days on *Memoirs of a Geisha*. I was one of 54 additional costumers! We dressed the crowd for the sumo wrestling scenes. Lots of people!

Steve: What are the different challenges when costuming a movie vs. a TV series?

Radford: Time and budget. On a TV show you rarely have enough of either. Ann Foley (the designer for *S.H.I.E.L.D.*) said that every week on a TV show was like the last two weeks before a feature starts. On a TV show you do what you need to get the clothes on camera. Sometimes you need to cut corners. If you remember the Graviton outfit that Adrain Pasdar wore in the 5th season of *S.H.I.E.L.D.*, that costume was *eight days* from concept to camera. It was an amazing effort to pull together. On a feature you can have months to get things ready, When Lady Sif came by to work with us she wore one of her costumes from the *Thor* movies. It was an exquisite piece of work. I was amazed at the workmanship and detail put into it. You can do that on a feature when you have the time and the budget.

Steve: You won an Emmy for your work on the 1988 TV movie *Shakedown on Sunset Strip*. What was it about your work on that project that caught the attention of the Television Academy voters?

Radford: I showed up. I'm not being flip here—I did the same job I always do; handle the clothes on the set. It was a late 40's

period piece, so there were some fun costumes in it. Costumers don't usually get Emmys, but there is a category for shows which do not have a costume designer. It *is* allowable for a show to be costumed entirely by costumers, with no designer present. There are strict rules for what a costumer can and cannot do in these cases; costumers *cannot* design clothing. We can make a duplicate of an extant garment. We can change the color or fabric *but* if we change so much as a pocket flap that is designing and we are out of our rice bowl. *Shakedown* was mostly rentals—I forget if we needed to make anything for it, but if we did it was a straight copy of a period dress or suit. I did not get an Emmy! I do not have an Emmy statuette. The costume supervisors do. My name was submitted when they put *Shakedown* up for an Emmy, but the Emmy nomination committee decided that my contribution was not creative enough to be worth an Emmy, so I ended up with an Emmy certificate (suitable for framing) which acknowledges that I worked on the show.

Steve: You've dressed stars like Angela Lansbury, Bruce Campbell, George Clooney, Jeff Goldblum, John Lithgow, and Patrick Swayze—who had the most input in how they wanted their character to dress and how they wore their clothes?

Radford: Angela—no. I did not dress her. She had her own personal costumer. She had an enormous amount of input into her clothing. Because. She. Was. The. Star.

Bruce is a better example. He was interested and involved in the process, and he put a lot of effort into “inhabiting” the character of Brisco County, Jr. He was keen about getting the ropin', ridin', and shootin' right, and as far as I can tell he had a blast doing it.

George understood the needs of the character, but sometimes he would override the designer's preference for his own comfort. He pretty much came up with the scrub top and slacks look. George is a world class practical joker, he loves a good laugh. He was working on *Batman & Robin* during hiatus from *ER*. On his first day back on *ER*, I borrowed a Superman suit from *Lois and Clark* and set it in his dressing room. He thought that was funny.

I had worked with Jeff Goldblum before, on a TV show called *The Devlin Connection*. Jeff was another amazing actor to work with. He was a really good sport about some of the crazy stuff we put him in, but I don't recall him having any input on his costumes.

John Lithgow was another amazing actor to work with. He was completely into Dr. Lizardo, and did a terrific job with the character. I'm sorry I had to torture him with that heavy



Source: CBS Entertainment Production

greatcoat on those hot shooting locations, but he bore it with good spirits. I don't remember what comments or input he had on his costumes.

By the time I got on the project with Patrick Swayze his costumes were already established, so I don't have any insight into how much input he may have had. I was working on the second unit when he had his accident that broke both his legs. They took him away to the hospital in his costume. When I got the clothes back, I was gratified to see that the paramedics had roughly cut his clothes off - just like I cut clothes off accident victims on *ER*!

Steve: You've worked on some legendary shows among genre fans like *The Adventures of Brisco County Jr.*, *Buckaroo Banzai*, and *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* Do you have any particular affinity for genre?

Radford: I should be so lucky! My career has not ever reached the point where I have the opportunity to pick and choose among projects. Every one of these shows just came up as an opportunity when I was available. *S.H.I.E.L.D.* was already in production when I got a phone call at my moonlighting job asking if I was available. If I were said to have an affinity for a genre, you might claim that I was ideally suited to do period military projects - which for some reason I rarely work on. You have to consider that I have spent 22 years of my career on contemporary shows - 7 years on *Murder, She Wrote*, and 15 years on *ER*.

Steve: Do you have any funny Bruce Campbell stories?

Radford: Nothing stands out in my memory, because the entire single season of *Brisco* was one of the most hard working, hot, dusty, dirty, long hours WONDERFUL work experiences of my career. Bruce, Julius, and Christian had a magical chemistry; it was zany, creative, and an absolute blast. The funniest single moment on *Brisco* was when Gary Hudson, as the Elvis-esque Sheriff Aaron Viva was getting ready to mount up and ride with Brisco and the gang. In rehearsal, Gary did a stylish mount - up on the saddle backwards, then spin around to the front. When we shot it, Gary went up in the saddle, spun around - and fell off the other side of the horse. He got up - he was OK. We nearly died laughing, and they left that take in the episode!

Steve: *Buckaroo Banzai* had an amazing variety of costumes. You had combination cowboy and Japanese looks, aliens' idea of Earth fashions, Perfect Tommy's large wardrobe, Reno's two belts, etc. Tell us about what it takes to pull something like that together.

Radford: I look at BB now and I am struck by how 80s it looks, yet when we were shooting it, it was just clothes. OK,

our heroes' outfits were striking and special, yet that speaks to how Aggie worked with Rick Richter and Michael Riva to sculpt a look that became iconic. I went over the process a bit in the first question—it was a matter of Aggie and Eddie Marks and Linda Henrickson coming up with stuff, and mixing it and stirring it until amazing costumes popped out. It was very liberating in a sense—there were no rules—we could do ANYTHING!

Steve: Were there actors in *Buckaroo Banzai* you worked more consistently with? Any details to a character's look that you'd like to take specific credit for?

Radford: I took care of pretty much every male actor you see on screen. BB was shot back in the days when set costumer responsibilities were mostly divided up along gender lines. Things are much more fluid now which is why, to my delight, I get to take care of Chloe on *S.H.I.E.L.D.* When Aggie was looking for ideas for Buckaroo's Jet Car outfit, I got a USAF partial pressure suit to show her. She loved the detailing of the pressure hoses, but she dyed them black and put them on Buckaroo's coveralls.

Steve: Jeff Goldblum's Tom Mix costume, what's up with that?

Radford: What else would you wear to audition for a guy called Buckaroo? That outfit was made by the late, lamented Nudies classic Hollywood rodeo tailors.

Steve: Talk to us about the challenges of costuming characters in heavy make-up. For example, it is probably easier to dress Carl Lumbly in his shiny suit when he was wearing his dreads vs. when he was in his full black Lectroid look.

Radford: Lectroids needed bigger shirts to wear to button around their necks than their human counterparts. They had a lot of trouble eating and drinking with their masks on, and their eyes would fog over. Prosthetic pieces like Lectroid heads are not really so messy with costumes, the makeup is painted on and is fairly stable. On the other hand, blue skinned Kree in *S.H.I.E.L.D.* are a mess to deal with. The blue makeup gets all over collars, and in a fight scene blue gets everywhere. We used 99% alcohol to clean off blue makeup.

Steve: Tell us about how you went from working in the wardrobe department to appearing on-screen in *Buckaroo Banzai*.

Radford: So, one day I wore a WWII USAAF officer's shirt and trousers to work, I forget why—I think someone dared me to do it. Rick looked at me and said "I think we have our Marine Lieutenant!". I discounted it but as things progressed I did end up getting fitted and dressed to be the Marine LT with the President's football. It had been planned as a speaking part,



Source: MGM Home Video

but by the time the shooting script came out the part had no lines, and was downgraded to an extra. I confess I was disappointed, but I followed though. Instead of the dressing room I had been looking forward to, I dressed in the back of the wardrobe trailer. I went to the set and silently sat in my assigned spot, wrist chained to the Football, silently minding my own business as Mrs. Johnson came through with the pink box. A moment later General Catburd comes out with a request for the launch codes inside the Football. In a carefully choreographed “inspiration” Rick Richter claimed that the scene was “just not working” and insisted that I had to respond to General Catburd. As part of the conspiracy, the hair and makeup artists rushed over to me and fussed over me, while an assistant director handed me an actor’s contract to sign. The scene played as follows:

GEN CATBURD

What are you waiting for?

MARINE LT

NOTHING SIR!

GEN CATBURD

Get in there!

MARINE LT

YES SIR!

Or something like that. It was all given to us in the moment (not in the script). Rick was surprised with the energy and vigor I delivered my two lines. This scene made it through early screen testing. I have a bootleg VHS copy of an early test (no visual effects yet) which still has my scene in it but, alas, in the theatrical release you can only see me looking puzzled in the scene where the holograph of John Emdall plays for the President.

Steve: Did you check your own gig line as the Marine Lieutenant or did you have another costumer do it for you?

Radford: I did it myself! I even got some polish and shined the EGA belt plate.

Steve: *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* also has a wide variety of wardrobe--standard suits, tactical gear, to super hero costumes. Tell us about the challenges of each.

Radford: Modern clothes are the easiest, although we must always consider the fate of the wearer. People who come to an unfortunate end usually show the effects of it on their clothing; whether it be bullet holes, knife slashes, alien ray guns, or collapsing buildings. Many times I and my set partners do on the fly aging and distressing of clothing as needed (I got to burn the shoulder of off one of Hive’s shirts once.), but for multiple matching sets of detailed, aged clothing such as SARGE wears we have a professional ager come in and distress the clothes. It is the costume supervisor's job to plan and budget for how many multiples we may need of an outfit to accommodate bullet hits or stunt doubles. Sometimes we get surprised when an actor is established in an outfit and we discover that the actor needs multiples. It can be a scramble to go find more of something you bought weeks or months ago. Tactical gear can be fun; shopping for new, cool looking camouflage. We can rent a lot of it, and only buy what we plan to destroy. The webbing harnesses and tactical gear come from the property department, but the designer coordinates closely with the prop master on this. The season two HYDRA tactical gear had custom laser engraved HYDRA logos! The superhero stuff requires the most skill to manage. We make a surprising amount



If you wear a uniform, drill sergeants and costumers will be on your case to have a perfect gig line. **Photo Source: Radford Polinsky**



(Left to Right) **Chloe Bennet** as Quake, executive producer **Jed Whedon**, **Adrian Pasdar** as Graviton, stunt coordinator **Nick Brett**, costumer **Radford Polinsky**, and Pasdar's stunt double prepare for a scene where Graviton floats off into outer space. **Photo by Rebecca Graves.**

of it ourselves. When I say “we” I mean the amazing and talented custom made workroom people we have. Lynda Arnold made some of the Agent May flight clothing, the Mockingbird and o.g. Quake outfits. Henry Po made the Patriot and new Quake outfits. Some parts get sourced to specialty manufacturers—we do not have the tools to make the Quake gauntlets or the Patriot cuirass. Actors usually need help getting into their superhero clothes. It takes two buckles, three snaps, seven zippers, eight buttons, and eleven hooks and eyes to get Chloe into the new Quake outfit!

Steve: Any hints about what we can expect from the upcoming season of *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*?

Radford: There’s not much I’m allowed to tell you. For us Season 6 is well in the past already. We are on episode 9 of Season 7 as I write this standing at a navigation station in the *Zephyr*.

Steve: Any thoughts or observations on the 35th anniversary of *Buckaroo Banzai*?

Radford: It was one of the most fun and amazing projects I have ever had the pleasure of working on. I saw it again a few months ago, and I was delighted how it holds up.

Steve: Do you happen to have any old continuity Polaroids from *Buckaroo Banzai*?

Radford: I have ALL of the costume continuity Polaroids from BB! I have the book, and with it my numbered shooting script. Unique in my career, I asked to have the costume continuity book when the picture was done—and they let me have it! (BTW this Simply Isn’t Done) I was too inexperienced to know that you can’t ask for stuff like this, and they were so surprised that they didn’t reflexively say no. Months after we were done shooting, I called the production office to ask if the picture was locked. It was, so I went by and picked up the costume book. There was a note on it saying I could have it. The production secretary who handed it to me had a faintly surprised look on her face.

Steve: Anything else you’d like to talk about that I didn’t touch on?

Radford: “No matter where you go, there you are” IS NOT IN THE SCRIPT! The one line everyone can quote from BB was extemporized on the day. I don’t remember if Earl Mac Rauch wrote it on the set, or Peter Weller came up with it on his own, but it is not in my copy of the shooting script!



Jason O'Mara as The Patriot (Left), being helped into his cuirass by costumer **Radford Polinsky** (Right). **Photo by Rebecca Graves**

Celebrating 35 Years

By Charley Todd

Thirty-five years ago, the movie about Buckaroo Banzai played in theaters. While it was never much of a success by today's standards, the film has left quite an impression on people from all walks of life. One of the wonderful things about the movie is that it joins so many people together.

My husband, DeWayne, first introduced me to *Buckaroo Banzai* when we started dating. He asked me if I had ever heard of the movie before and when I confirmed I had not, he immediately gave me a copy and asked me to watch it. I hesitated because *Buckaroo Banzai* is from the decade I hate the most...the 80's. I could tell it was highly important to him though, so one night when I had nothing better to do, I slipped the movie into my DVD player, and started to watch it. I expected to be disappointed. However, it would quickly become one of my favorites. He shared a copy of the book with me, and I quickly devoured it. Even without him knowing I continued to view the movie at least once a year. He didn't discover that fact until after we had married.

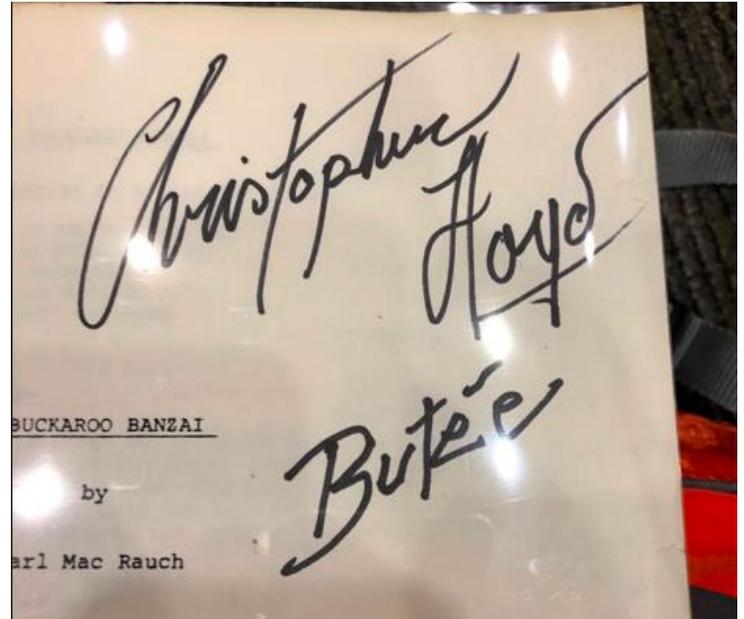
I never realized how much *Buckaroo Banzai* would impact my life, or how much I would enjoy it. When we found out that Christopher Lloyd was going to be at a convention near us, DeWayne wasn't sure if we would go. I almost begged him to go so that I could finally meet Christopher Lloyd and have my picture taken with him in my Team Banzai gear. It also happened to be an excellent opportunity to ask Mr. Lloyd how he felt about *Buckaroo Banzai* 35 years ago, and how he feels about it now. DeWayne indulged my wishes, and bought a photo op and agreed to an autograph with him. I was going to have my fan moment and I was filled with excitement, and worry that I would say something stupid or fall on my face.



DeWayne and Charley Todd with Christopher Lloyd.

Having our photo taken with him was entertaining and memorable. Photo ops with celebrities are always very rushed,

and no one has any time to talk. I was excited to be in my cosplay, and DeWayne said something to him. I didn't catch what, although I could guess because Lloyd responded back with, "BigbooTAY. It's BigbooTAY!" The photographer snapped our photo and off we went to get his autograph.



Mr. Lloyd's autograph on the script. Photo courtesy of Charley Todd.

We stood in the autograph line, and I felt anticipation building up. I was hoping this would be more personable and less rushed than the photo. DeWayne had brought the original script he owns to be autographed. Finally the moment came, and we stood before his assistant. We paid the money and asked if we could have a quote, or if we could have it personalized. The handler told us no. We were disappointed, but I was still thrilled that Christopher Lloyd was going to be standing in front of me, signing the movie script.

As we slid along the edge of the table, approaching Mr. Lloyd, I ran through what I was going to say to him silently in my head. He was enjoying a big Reese's Peanut Butter Cup. His eyes beamed when he picked up the script, almost as if he wanted to say, "Something besides Doc Brown!" With a hearty chuckle, he exclaimed, "Buckaroo Banzai!" He looked up, with a wonderful grin on his face.

Quickly, I asked him, "It's been 35 years since the movie was released, so I have to know, how do you feel about Buckaroo Banzai now?"

"I loved that movie! What was not to love?" I waited for more, and was happy he continued, "Great people! Great script! Great characters! A lot of fun! Bigbootee. Wasn't that my name?"

We confirmed that it was, and he asked if we wanted him to write his character's name under his signature. We said that would be wonderful, and he couldn't remember how to spell it, so he sounded it out phonetically. It was perfect the way it was, and no one was going to correct him.

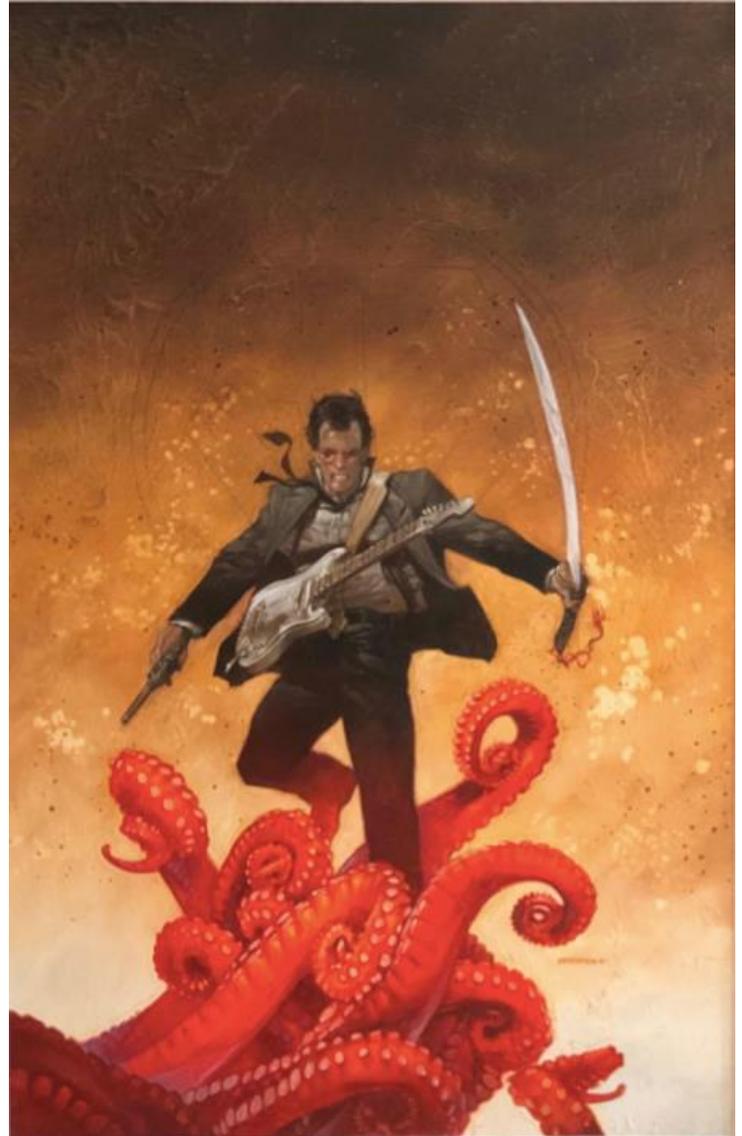
Christopher Lloyd was wonderfully charming, engaged, and excited to talk about Buckaroo, and I cherish every moment of the conversations.

Meeting Christopher Lloyd was a really big deal for me, but there are so many other wonderful people and artists involved in Buckaroo Banzai in one-way or another. One of those people is the artist Dave Dorman.



Pictured: Dave Dorman

While not directly involved with the movie, Dave Dorman did draw a limited edition cover for *Return of the Screw* (Part 2) of Moonstone's Buckaroo Banzai 3 part comic set. Earl Mac Rauch wrote the comics, and fans have different opinions on them. We found Dave at Star Wars Celebration in Chicago. We shared that we loved his artwork, and that we particularly liked his cover to the Buckaroo comic. He seemed glad to talk to someone about it, and we took the opportunity to ask him how he felt about Banzai, how he became involved with doing the cover art, and what he felt was important to include in the artwork of Buckaroo.



Buckaroo Banzai Art by Dave Dorman

He was more than happy to speak with us about the topic. He sat back in his chair, smiled, and then told us,

“I was always a fan. I saw it in Atlanta for the first time, and got the headband. I knew the owner of Moonstone. I read the story, and I didn't like it. But I was given permission to do something visually creative. And they liked the red eyeglasses. Those are as much part of Buckaroo as Superman's costume is for him.”

We agreed with him about the red eyeglasses and shared that his original painting for the cover was hanging in our hallway. He was delighted and surprised to meet the person who owned it. We were delighted and surprised to find out that he was a fan of the movie, and not just an artist who was hired to do the cover. 🐎

Strike Teams, Assemble!

Blue Blaze Irregulars Remember

Edited by Dan Berger

A lot can happen in three and a half decades. Over the last thirty-five years dozens of countries have changed names—often more than once, declared or won their independence, seceded and reunified. The world has changed, and it keeps changing.

One thing that hasn't changed is Blue Blaze Irregulars' love for *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension!* For many, the docudrama remains a source of inspiration, camaraderie, and good times. Line up enough years in a row filled with inspiration, camaraderie, and good times and you are bound to have a few memories to share in the bargain.

Those memories are exactly what we invited Blue Blaze Irregulars from all walks of life and corners of the globe to share with us in celebrating the 35th anniversary of *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*. The BBIs did not disappoint.

Alan Smith

"I first discovered *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* at the first convention I went to. I believe it was at a movie preview screening. Terry Erdmann (BBI Silver Fox) was doing movie promotions. They handed out headbands. We watched the film a couple more times before it finally struck us how great the movie was and why we'd been told it was a must-see. The quirky characters and subtle humor are what drew my wife Nancy to love the film. After I'd seen the movie a couple of times and got the story memorized, I could relax and notice the intelligent low-keyed sense of funniness and absurdities. The humor was smart, not potty or sexual, and I believe that's one of the best qualities of *TABB*. I also appreciated what I saw as a central theme to the story and Team Banzai which I believe is best stated by Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Alan and Nancy Smith, BBIs Dragon and Abacus respectively, live in Portland, OR and were early torchbearers for *World Watch One*. Alan is an author of historical science fiction and advocate for dogs.

Jim Alexander

I don't recall if it was TV advertising, comic book ads or what—but I know I wanted to see *Banzai* since before it even came out. It looked odd, it looked quirky—and even though I couldn't quite figure out the approach from what I was seeing from the pre-release advertisements, I knew I HAD to see it. I was a movie critic at the time, and I recall that the studio's publicity department was very aggressive in mailing newsletters

and publications to critics like myself. I was not disappointed in the movie. I enjoyed it as much as I hoped to. It had a very special "hip" blend of science-fiction, tongue-in-cheek humor, great performances and wonderful effects. It was knowing, smart and quite well-written and produced. It had humor, a little bit of pathos (what with Penny Priddy and Buckaroo's deceased wife) and some new-and-different science fictions elements ("good and bad" Lectroids? What a concept). I loved the idea of a kind-of supergroup of non-super-powered individuals, each with capabilities they brought to the team. I loved the idea that there, in the context of the film, was merchandising—like comic books...and the fact that The Hong Kong Cavaliers were renowned the world over.

Jim Alexander is the Morning News Producer for the local television station in Evansville, IN; an original fan of Buckaroo Banzai; and a former professional movie critic.

DeWayne Todd

When I think of *Buckaroo Banzai*, I am always amazed by the many ways this film has influenced my life. I have wonderful friends who I only know through this fandom! I remember *Buckaroo Banzai* teaching me that it is okay to live my life (as I was destined to live it) going in many directions at once. This led me to study engineering, archaeology, music, business, art, and military history, all at the same time! And the phrase, "No matter where you go, there you are..." has been a lifetime mantra. You can't hide from yourself. You can't escape your demons! So be genuine and true to yourself. Always strive to bring people to be their very best. No matter where you are.

DeWayne "BuckarooTrooper" Todd is an engineer, writer, photographer, energy policy advisor and power marketing director by day, and Buckaroo Banzai archivist by night.

Matt Haley

My dad is a movie nut and he showed me a newspaper ad for *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* when it first came out. He was really excited about it, so we went to see it together. I was instantly hooked.

There's an ineffable quality to the docudrama, I can't really explain why it continues to make me happy so many years after its release. Partially because of the way it dramatizes Dr. Banzai's character, how quick he is to give credit to others, how lacking in ego he seems to be, how much he cares for his fellow man. That, and he literally saved the entire planet!

Matt Haley, BBI Avalanche, did character designs and covers for Moonstone's Banzai comics. He is also the creator of the viral hit [Blackstar Warrior](#). He is the artist for the [Superman and Wonder Woman campaign](#) for French fashion designer Jean-Paul Gaultier and Warner Bros. Matt has illustrated Marvel and DC Comics characters for years, ranging from The X-Men to Superman. See more of his work at <http://www.matthaley.com>

Max Baker

At the Bagdad Theater in Portland in September 2012, in celebration of my 40th birthday, the theater screened the Buckaroo Banzai docudrama. I had recently met up with a middle school friend at a baby shower. We lost track of each other during college. When I saw her again, she was beaming with joy—much different than the more private, reserved woman I remembered. When I asked what had happened to her, she was all smiles when she told me she'd been diagnosed with ALS (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis AKA Lou Gehrig's disease). I was taken aback—I knew ALS was a fatal, often fast-acting disease. How could she be happy about it? She explained that after watching her mother die from the disease, and then being diagnosed herself, she had come to realize what was truly important in life. She was able to let go of all the unimportant things and just enjoy what time she had, however long it might be.

I felt I had to do something. Her zest for life reminded me of Dr. Banzai, and I wanted to do something big for my birthday, so I combined my love for Buckaroo Banzai with my desire to help my friend and all others with ALS. I found a theater that would play the movie and donate all the ticket sales, and local businesses and friends donated items for a silent auction. We raised thousands of dollars that day to help find a cure—a purpose worthy of Dr. Banzai's approval (thanks for sending a card, Dr. B!)

As we come upon the 35th anniversary of the movie, I've been pondering why the film made such a big impact on me that I've continued to watch it, think about it, and share it with so many people throughout my life. The teaser at the end of the film hinting at a sequel made me drool. When I found the Banzai Institute online, I absorbed everything I could and became a Blue Blaze Irregular. When the chance came to help fund the development of a Buckaroo Banzai role playing game, I invested (sigh). In 2016, when they talked about a remake, I was both excited and appalled (*Robocop*, *Total Recall*—I'll say no more).

Max's Birthday!
The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai
The ALS Association Fundraiser

Celebrate Max's 40th birthday, learn a little about The ALS Association, watch 'The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the Eighth Dimension' and buy some raffle tickets to support research to defeat ALS. Oh, and have some free cake, too!

McMenamins
Bagdad Theater & Pub
Saturday, September 1, 2012
Noon – 4:00
\$10 per person
3702 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd. Portland, OR

www.facebook.com/events/4442223945689983/
Online donations: www.alsa.org/goto/sgj

Steph (who has ALS) & Max

Community Partner
An Event To Benefit
The ALS Association

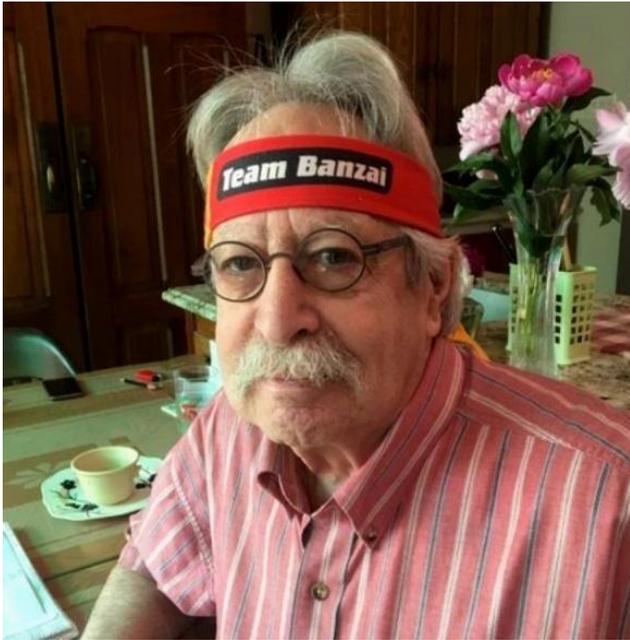
Mostly, I remember being a young girl watching *Across the 8th Dimension* with wide eyes, enthralled with the idealistic images: Dr. Banzai, living up to his true potential—following all the passions of his life and making the world a better place by embracing martial arts, science and music. Dr. Banzai, creating the Institute and surrounding himself with like-minded people, all working toward the common goals of justice and freedom for all. And let's not forget—inventing cool stuff. Fighting dastardly aliens and saving the planet was icing on the cake.

I became a better person while trying to live up to the values portrayed by Dr. Banzai, and for that I give him my sincere thanks.

Maj Britt (Max) Baker, BBI Red Phoenix, lives in Portland, Oregon. You can find more about Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis and how to help at the ALS website. <http://www.alsa.org/about-als/what-is-als.html> You can [find Max on Facebook](#).

Editor's Note: Blue Blaze Irregulars and other concerned citizens can join the battle to defeat Lou Gehrig's disease by donating their time and financial resources to The ALS Association. Go to <http://www.alsa.org/fight-als/> to find ways that you can help in your community.

Joel Spivak



Hello. I love this movie and can hear the soundtrack in my mind.

Joel Spivak, BBI Scooter, is listed in the original BBI directory. He is the creator of “The Traveling Raygun Museum” and owner of science fiction collectible store “Rocketships & Accessories” in Philadelphia. Find out more at his website. www.joelspivak.com

Dr. Damon Hines

I had the blessing of working on *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* as a young boy. The most enduring memory I have from my work on this film is the amazing cast that was assembled. The actors in this film went on to make major contributions to the world of cinema, and continue their brilliant work still. On set, I was treated as a professional, and never made to feel that my age rendered me less of an actor than my adult cast members.

The impact of *Buckaroo Banzai* on cinema persists. Perhaps the most explicit example is the references made in *Ready Player One*. In fact, the impact of *Buckaroo Banzai* plays out daily in the lives of the many fans around the world who continue to support this film, which was years ahead of its time.

Thank you to all the many fans who’ve not only supported *Buckaroo Banzai*, but my career in the wonderful world of film.

Sincerely, Dr. Damon D. Hines

Dr. Damon Hines played Junior Blue Blaze Irregular 41 and a 1/2 Scooter Lindley and Nick Murtaugh in the *Lethal Weapon* series of movies. Damon received his Ed.D. from the University of Southern California. He is currently a Professor of Communication Studies.

Rich Drees: “You never forget your first time...”

I first saw *Buckaroo Banzai* during its incredibly short theatrical release in the fall of 1984, on my first date ever. Sheri went the way of most high school romances and the mall cineplex we saw it at in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania is now a Chinese restaurant, but my love affair with the movie continues.

As a high school sophomore with no idea of what he wanted to do with his future, it was a revelation to see Peter Weller’s personification of a character who didn’t choose one path in life, but walked many – musician, scientist, surgeon, adventurer. Definitely a reassuring message to a kid bombarded by all sorts of college and career aptitude tests and being told repeatedly by various adults that every choice you make now dictates a narrow path you will walk *for the rest of your life!*

Buckaroo Banzai is also one of the first movies that inspired me to pick up a pen and try my hand at writing. I wound up getting a couple of Buckaroo fan fiction stories published, one of which netted me a letter from Peter Weller himself! These days, I run a small film news and review site with adjacent podcast which has afforded me a number of unusual and amazing opportunities that I would have never had had otherwise, including a long phone chat with a certain W. D. Richter. It is a place I probably would not have found myself in if it weren’t for this movie giving me a certain push.

So, thanks to Buckaroo’s creator and guardians; Earl Mac Rauch and W. D. Richter, and those who brought him and the Hong Kong Cavaliers to life; Peter Weller, Clancy Brown, Pepe Serna, Lewis Smith, Ellen Barkin, Robert Ito, Billy Vera and Jeff Goldblum.

Here’s to the next 35 years!

Rich Drees, BBI Swing Kid, is listed in the original BBI directory. He is an avid Lindy Hopper, blogs about film at FilmBuffOnline, co-hosts The Big Picture Podcast, and recently began producing short films.

Jason Willenberg

Since I joined Team Banzai in air-conditioned darkness 35 years ago; wherever I went, there I was. I embraced the was; from the cold of a Michigan winter to the heat of an aircraft carrier flight deck in summer. I learned that there is much to be gained by simply walking through life with a group of friends who are essentially family. I must go now. I have a watermelon to attend to.

So what? Big deal.

Jason “Willy” Willenberg is a former Naval Flight Officer, and recently retired U.S. Navy Commander. Jason and his family reside in the smallest state in the Union, where he currently teaches as an Associate Professor at a local college.

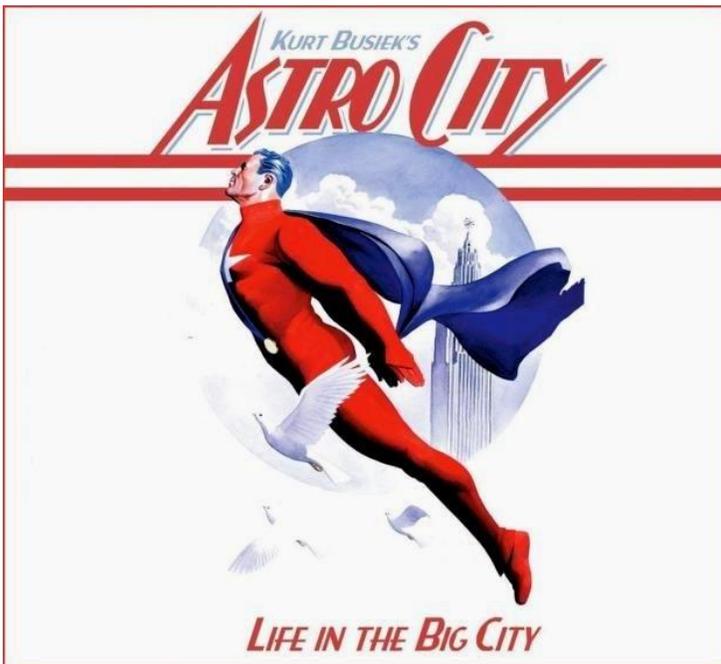
Kurt Busiek

I do not remember when I first heard of *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension*. I do not remember when I became a Blue Blaze Irregular. But I did. And I am. Perhaps there is a story behind this.

Because there's a story behind everything else, isn't there?

That was one of the things I loved about the movie—while Earl Mac Rauch and W.D. Richter may have been inspired by 1970s kung fu movies, it felt to me like I'd wandered into a series of pulp novels, somewhere in the middle, when lots of stuff had already been established, lots of stories and characters explored, and here, nested in all of this unstated context, was the latest. The movie isn't a beginning, it's a continuation—there's a world around it, and a history, delightful and irreverent, and that was fascinating to me.

It was an influence, too—when I wrote *Astro City*, that sense of there being a sweeping and complex history that the reader is coming in to the middle of, that was influenced, among other things, by *Buckaroo Banzai*. I wanted people to feel like every side reference, every connection between characters, implied a past full of adventure and incident. That I, too, could establish that there was a watermelon there, and people would understand that it meant something, and we might even tell you later.



Buckaroo Banzai and the Big City: Busiek's *Astro City* echoes the same penchant for complex backstory that is frequently referenced but only occasionally explained seen in *Buckaroo Banzai*. Source: WildStorm



Superman Lifts Thor's Hammer Written by Kurt Busiek with art George Pérez art from the cover of *JLA/Avengers #4*, fifteen years before *Avengers: Endgame*. Source: DC Comics/Marvel Comics

It was news to me, but not exactly a surprise, when I found out that much of this complex web of backstory and history and implied continuity happened because Earl Mac Rauch had written multiple fragments of Buckaroo screenplays, and then drew on them all for backstories, as if they were history and not unfinished projects, for the final screenplay.

And perhaps they were history. Perhaps all of it is. I don't remember it, but I don't remember everything. We've established that.

Perhaps there's a story behind all that, too.

All I can tell you is this: I am Kurt Busiek, Blue Blaze Irregular. I have attended symposia at the Banzai Institute, undergone rugged physical training at the desert survival school in Nevada, the mountaineering school in Alaska and others around the globe; I have made the educational advancements required of me. Or at least, I assume I have.

And I am “on call” twenty-four hours a day to help Buckaroo Banzai in a pinch, or my neighbors in a natural disaster.

This call has never come. Or if it has, I don't remember it. But perhaps there's a story behind that.

In any case, I still stand ready.

Bring on the World Crime League.

Kurt Busiek, BBI Lefty, is listed in the original BBI directory. He wrote the *JLA/Avengers* cross-over for DC & Marvel and he is the creator of the multiple-award-winning series *Astro City*. Find out more at his website: <https://www.busiek.com/>

Matt Kitler

I've only been a fan of *Buckaroo Banzai* for about fifteen years, but there are many things that makes it special to me. For one thing, I love the quirky nature of the film. Nothing quite like it has been made before or since, although *Big Trouble in Little China* comes close.

Many years ago I reconnected with an old friend and met his girlfriend (later wife), and one of the first things she and I talked about was our shared appreciation of this film. Since then, they've divorced because the guy turned out to be a monster, but she has become one of my closest and most dear friends. More recently I've learned of the concept of "toxic fandoms," which is a truly unfortunate concept. While there are some fandoms which have some truly toxic and awful people, I have yet to encounter a serious Buckaroo fan who fell under this description. Everyone I've interacted with has generally been really kind and friendly. Perhaps we've all taken to heart Dr. Banzai's words about not being mean. The fates are cruel enough, after all.

Matt Kitler, BBI Wacny, is a young man but a nerd of the old school. He resides on the outskirts of Northern Virginia with his cat Stig, posing as a call center employee while he pursues inroads into the film industry. He is also a fan of Buck's spiritual cousin, Doc Savage.

Paul Henry

What can I say that a thousand other Blazers haven't said already? I first got to know Buckaroo when I was 13 years old, and a girl I had a crush on invited me to see the Cavs perform at Artie's in 1984. Little did I know how big of an impact that concert would have on me for the next 36 years! I came in too late to help out against the Red Lectroids, but I will forever be proud of what little help this pimple-faced teenager was able to offer against the World Crime League the following year. (I still don't know exactly what transpired during that fateful episode, but I believe Buckaroo when he says that, even today, sharing the full details would be tantamount to handing Max von Seven a victory, so I choose not to delve further.)

I have great love for the 1984 film, which provided me with an opportunity to link up with some really great like-minded folks at a time and in a place when kids who deviated from the interests considered appropriate for Midwestern white-trash teenagers were mocked at best and bullied at worst. For that I will ever be thankful to Dr. Banzai and the team, and I will always remember that, no matter where you go, there you are.

Paul Henry, BBI Chickenman, lives somewhere near Seattle. He first answered the call in 1985 as a lonely teenage nerd in backwoods Indiana. Today he is deeply embedded as a technical writer specializing in computer security. He remains on guard for threats that may require Dr. Banzai to activate him once again...

Joseph S. Mannino

Trying to summarize the impact *Buckaroo Banzai* had on me in only one paragraph is very much like driving a rocket car through a mountain. On the surface it seems an insurmountable and fool-hearted endeavor but by applying a little Banzai discipline and style, it turns out not to be impossible.

Buckaroo Banzai perfectly embodies the spirit of adventure that preoccupied my adolescent addled brain, rolled up in one clever rock star-scientist package. The film's respect for serious science while balancing the absurd places it among the most well executed science fiction of the era. The visceral and often asymmetrical set design challenged my expectations of what a sci-fi universe should look like and set the movie apart from the glossy slick plastic worlds I had come to expect from Hollywood. The story is equal measures comic book self-indulgence and Eastern philosophy. If "no matter where you go, there you are" isn't directly from the *Tao Te Ching* then it is certainly paraphrased. The score is a work of art unto itself, seamlessly distilling and blending the myriad of 1980's sonic signatures into an aural feast for the listener, with the closing credit sequence standing alone at the top of the unfathomably cool. When the day comes that I should pass into the 8th Dimension, it will be with the Buckaroo Banzai End Credits playing loudly!

Joe Mannino, BBI Nucleus, currently resides in Tampa, Florida with his wife and three children. In his free time he bikes, hikes, rock climbs and has taken up mud running to fulfill his BBI fitness requirements.

Jim Ferguson

Buckaroo was one of those films that had no reason to be made in the first place—it was not a sequel or based on some comic book hero. It was unique and because of that, the studio had no idea how to promote or publicize it; therefore, we had free reign to come up with a plan unlike any other before or since. Totally hands off. The reaction from the fans was more than we could have hoped for and I still look back at all the good will and feeling it generated with something approaching awe. Yes, there were issues with the final cut and while it might not have been something Spielberg would have handed in, it didn't deserve a banishment to August during the Olympics when the entire country was distracted. It had potential to be so much more and even 35 years later, sayings have cropped up in other films, television shows and novels. I am proud to have had a chance to work with such an exceptional bunch of filmmakers and view it as one of the high points of my life.

Jim Ferguson served as one of the original film promoters and has an extensive career as a cinematic writer.

Steven H Silver

I first saw the documentary in the theatres when it ran briefly in that long ago summer of 1984. In fact, I remember little of that first viewing, not where it was, nor with whom I went. But I do know that within days of seeing it, I bought the novelization by Earl Mac Rauch and read it. And was disappointed. Not because it wasn't a great book that expanded on the film, but because it had footnotes. I love footnotes in books. They are wonderful. But I had previously read the series of *M*A*S*H* novels written by Richard Hooker and William E. Butterworth (the first a pseudonym for Hiester Richard Hornberger, Jr., the latter to gain greater literary fame with the pseudonym W.E.B. Griffin). Like the novelization of *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*, the *M*A*S*H* books were filled with footnotes referencing other adventures of the characters. Unlike the novelization of *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*, I was able to read about those adventures in further books, a treat I was deprived of with Buckaroo. I did write a fan letter to Earl Mac Rauch and received a signed postcard in response. Had I

written to him c/o Fox instead of Pocket Books, perhaps I would have appeared in the original BBI directory.

Steven H Silver, BBI Green Town, lives in the treacherous wilds of the Chicago suburbs, where he writes, reads, tries to introduce others to the docudrama (he finds it usually takes at least two viewings) and hopes that when BB calls, it will be to make use of the talents he has.

Tim Monro

Remember when that dumbass tech said, "Buckaroo, The White House wants to know: 'Is everything okay with the alien spacecraft from Planet Ten or should we just go ahead and destroy Russia?'" and Buckaroo said, "Tell him 'Yes' on 1 and 'No' on 2?" Then the dumbass says, "Which one was 'Yes?' 'Go ahead and destroy Russia'...or Number 2?"

I think Buckaroo should fire that dumbass.

Tim Monro, BBI Tim Boo Ba, missed *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* in the theater, but was able to catch it on Betamax. His favorite comic book writer is Akira Yoshida. His favorite penciller is Steve Apollo and his favorite inker is Mickey Demeo. He can't be found on Facebook.



Steve Mattsson

I continue to be inspired by *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*.

(Top Left) Banzai Institute t-shirt—Juneau Icefield, Alaska 2006 (Bottom Left) Banzai wristband—Swimming with whale sharks, off Isla Contoy, Mexico 2007 (Bottom Center) Banzai headband—Summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania 2011 (Bottom Right) Banzai Institute patch—Antarctic Peninsula 2018

Steve Mattsson, BBI Rainbow Kitty, is listed in the original BBI directory. He has written for Marvel and DC Comics. He auditions during the day as a SAG eligible actor and at night he's a paramedic who works in the ER of a large hospital. You can find him on [Facebook](#).



Mojo: “Remembering Buckaroo Banzai”

It’s hard to pin down exactly when I first saw *Buckaroo Banzai*. Very few BBIs saw it during the initial release, since it didn’t last more than two weeks in most theaters. Fortunately, soon after it was playing at midnight screenings and revival houses and, since I lived in NYC, it was easy to find.

I was aware of the film; I’d seen the headbands at conventions and heard rumblings that it was a quirky, cult-like movie that had to be seen to be believed, but, of course, nothing can properly prepare you for the Banzai experience.

It felt like being dropped into the middle of something; like I was watching the third or fourth film in a series. The characters were so vibrant and fleshed out and the Banzai universe was so dense and fascinating that it was hard to believe it was all invented for just one movie!

Being pre-internet, learning more about Doctor Banzai and his world wasn’t easy. *Starlog* magazine was a great resource and, somehow, I learned about the fan club and eagerly anticipated each new fanzine. I honestly think my favorite thing about the movie was the novelization—the book had so much more meat to it and was written from such a unique perspective you’d swear it had been written first (it’s easily the best novelization of all time and if you haven’t read it you are *really* missing out).

A few years (or more) later I ended up in Hollywood working on *Babylon 5* and met Mike and Denise Okuda at a party. Naturally it was exciting to meet two legends of *Star Trek*, but once I found out that Denise was the infamous “Catnip” from the BB fan club newsletter, I *really* got excited!

Nothing is more fun than discussing Banzai with the Okudas. I daresay their passion and enthusiasm for that universe surpasses *Trek*, and I can recall many a night at their home getting a chance to look through old fan club material and behind the scenes stuff from the movie that just knocked my socks off.

A few more years down the line, the Okudas put me in touch with W. D. Richter as he shopped *Ancient Secrets and New Mysteries* around town. I offered to make a short trailer for the series featuring the Jet Car. We did it all at Foundation Imaging, the company that provided the CGI for *Babylon 5* and *Star Trek: Voyager*, where a handful of die-hard BBIs worked nights and weekends to get the trailer done. It was a total labor of love. We wanted to see BB come back as much as any fan. If we could help make it happen, even better.

Sadly, the World Crime League did everything in their power to shut the new series down, and it was a terrible instance of Hanoi Xan being the victor. However, when it came time for



Buckaroo Banzai deftly maneuvers the Jet Car into position beneath a damaged Space Shuttle *Atlantis* in the trailer for the proposed *Buckaroo Banzai: Ancient Secrets & New Mysteries* TV series. Source: MGM Home Video

Banzai’s DVD release, the erstwhile Richter asked if they could put the trailer on the disc. I was only too happy to comply. When I delivered it to DVD producer Mike Arick, who knew nothing of the exploits of *World Watch One*, I explained the rich history of the film and fan club, and that there was a huge archive of Banzai material just dying to reach the fans via a special edition DVD.

But Xan nearly foiled us again. MGM had somehow been “convinced” to produce a Banzai DVD on the cheap, with no special features. “That would truly be a crime,” I told him, and offered my services to dig through the archives and put together a plethora of special features for the disc.

“There’s no money for that,” Arick explained.

“No matter,” I replied. “This is a thing that must be done and I’m sure Doctor Banzai would agree that a worthwhile pursuit for the greater good is its own reward.”

With the help of the Banzai dream team (the Okudas, Doug Drexler, and Terry “Silver Fox” Erdmann) the extras on the DVD turned into a bounty of ancient secrets (and possibly a few solved mysteries) for fans to dig through and enjoy.

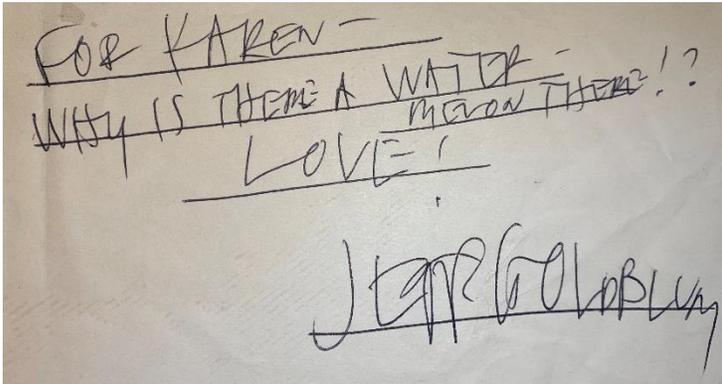
Like any Banzai fan, I still eagerly await its return. Despite the false starts and murky promises, I truly believe the strength and depth of Rick and Mac’s universe will prevail and, one day, a new generation will don headbands and T-shirts proudly proclaiming “no matter where you go, there you are.”

And all of us can say we were, indeed, there. At the beginning!

Mojo is a Visual Effects Supervisor and Artist. His credits include two *Star Trek* series, *Babylon 5*, and *Battlestar Galactica*. He produced and created the special features for the *Buckaroo Banzai* DVD and looks forward to assisting Doctor Banzai on upcoming projects, retreats and paramilitary operations.

Karen Malcor-Chapman

Here's my fave *Buckaroo Banzai* memento. I made everyone I could wrangle come with me to see *Buckaroo Banzai* in theaters when it was first out so that I could see it over and over. A friend was working on Jeff's makeup for *The Fly* and told him how much I liked BB. Jeff said "Oh, she's the one!" and gave him this to give to me.



Karen Malcor-Chapman, BBI Farmgirl, lives with her husband Michael in Southern California. A Trekkie since the early '70's, she attended many, many conventions before taking a long break to raise Arabian and Miniature horses with Michael on their small farm.

Sheldon S. Sturgis

I recall reading about *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* in *Variety*, *Starlog*, *Fantastic Films* and *Cinefantastique*, well before I actually saw the movie. I was pretty excited when I read that the release date in Toronto, Canada would be Friday, August 10, 1984. I saw the film at the splendid Imperial Six, a hallowed movie house in the city that is now, sadly, long gone.

I was tickled by the oddness of *Buckaroo Banzai*, and had a great time watching it. I started quoting from it the same day to confused friends and family. I looked up the address of the production company and sent off a fan letter, not expecting a response. I was thrilled when a few weeks later, I received a nice thick envelope from 20th Century Fox containing *World Watch One*, the (paper) newsletter! As I recall, I also received a Team Banzai headband, and Team Banzai stickers.

Sheldon S. Sturges, BBI Mando Baxter, is listed in the original BBI directory. He is a 60 year old Canadian, retired, and living precariously in the US of eh. Still a citizen of Canada, he hopes to be going home. When? Real soon.

Stephen Walker

I believe we met Terry Erdman during the Summer of 1983, when he was going to various sci-fi conventions around the country to promote *Buckaroo Banzai*. We were attending those same conventions selling fanzines, art prints, and t-shirts. The conventions were Saturday and Sunday affairs and some of us

dealers would go out to dinner on Saturday nights together to share stories and socialize. After seeing Terry at a few of the conventions, he began to join us for dinner. As we were interested in expanding our t-shirt inventory, we asked Terry about the possibility of getting a license to sell *Buckaroo Banzai* t-shirts. We noticed that fans seemed very excited about getting the headbands that Terry was handing out and figured that t-shirts could be something fans would want to purchase as well. We arranged a Denver fan premiere of the movie at the Tamerac theater and promoted it using our Starcon Denver convention list to fans. Because of our summer with Terry Erdmann, we felt like *Buckaroo Banzai* was going to be a real hit with science fiction fans and it was our sincere desire to share the movie with everyone we knew.

Stephen Walker, Blazer.

Steve Lee

August 10th, 1984. A movie opened that had a pretty big influence on my career. It's hard to believe it's been 35 years since the opening of *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*.

Sadly, the film didn't do too terribly well...but fan letters poured into the publicity offices at 20th Century Fox. One of them was mine.

The mail was answered by Dianne Wickes, who worked in the Fox offices. She was soon joined by a fan—Denise Tathwell (later to become Denise Okuda, who would go on to have a great association with *Star Trek* as a graphic artist and an "ambassador" to the franchise). With the studio's permission, Dianne, Denise, and a few others took it upon themselves to form a real "Banzai Institute"—an informal fan club with its own newsletter. After some correspondence, I was graciously invited to join them.

At the time I wasn't a total newcomer to working in Hollywood—but the opportunity to be at Fox on a regular basis was great. I learned a great deal, and made many industry contacts that have helped me in my ongoing career. It was also a lot of fun hanging out on a studio lot with other movie fans. We had a blast. And I'm thrilled to say that both Dianne and Denise are still dear friends of mine to this day.

I'm forever thankful and grateful for the opportunity I was given at the Banzai Institute and will always have very fond memories of those days at Fox.

Steve Lee, BBI Clyde Von Drake, is listed in the original BBI directory and was an intern turned BBI Director with the original *World Watch One* newsletter. He continues to build his empire of sound at [The Hollywood Radiophonic Laboratory](#) and as Founder and CEO of [The Hollywood Sound Museum](#).

Terry J. Erdmann: The Adventures of Buckaroo Headbands: Beyond the Pin-backed Button



Source: Terry J. Erdmann

1983. I was a secretary, answering phones in the 20th Century Fox publicity department. One day the studio acquired an already-produced movie titled *Buckaroo Banzai*. The publicity staff gathered for a screening. It was a disaster. People didn't understand it. Were parts missing? Why was it so... odd? Several of us saw it as quirky but fascinating. The department heads saw it as a responsibility they'd have to pitch to the public.

Having just accomplished a successful campaign for *Return of the Jedi*, the staff decided to follow that same pattern—including a twist Lucasfilm's publicity independently used—promoting at “science fiction conventions.”

Somebody found a couple of fans that apparently knew the convention circuit. The pair offered suggestions: produce a 16-millimeter film clip, and create “give-away” items. “But don't,”

they said, “make a pin-backed button.” Instead, they suggested, make copies of the headband that the film's hero wears.

Pin-backed buttons, of course, cost only twenty-five cents each. Regardless, publicist Rosemary LaSalandra contacted a specialty company that could manufacture headbands. They tested materials, dyes, sewing techniques. Finally they stated that each item would cost \$2.00. Or: with an order of 35,000, \$1.45.

Rosemary heroically sold the department on the cost. (Sadly, she passed away in the 1990's. We miss her.) And thus, 35,000 headbands arrived. Strangely, the couple hired to promote the film at conventions didn't. They took a few headbands, a copy of the 16-mm reel—and mysteriously disappeared, never to be heard from again. Gone. Vanished.

At a later meeting among the big bosses, “Buckaroo Banzai” came up. The department head had but one dictum: Change the name to “The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Beyond the 8th Dimension.” Perhaps, he said, that will “help to explain what a buckaroo is.” Beyond that, no one had many thoughts. Except: The clip reel and the headbands existed. And that's when Ellen Pasternack, bless her heart, publicist extraordinaire and still a friend, said, “Terry likes to travel. He'd probably love to fly to conventions.” Which is how I was offered the chance to spend weekends in hotel ballrooms across America.

I said, “Yes,” of course.

I hit the road. Miami. San Jose. Lansing. Atlanta. New York. Forty conventions over the next year. I showed the reel, answered Q&A, and said, “This afternoon I'll be in the hallway handing out these”—and I'd hold up a colorful bundle. The crowds, happily, cheered. When I appeared later in a hallway, I pulled headbands from the bundle, one by one, and released them into a blur of hands coming from all sides. I felt like the stem on a bouquet of daisies as the petals were plucked individually away—thirty-five thousand times.

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai was a box-office bomb. But as the studio tracked ticket sales, the cities I'd visited, my “headband distribution points,” rated the highest, and some of those cities' theaters held the film longer than the original booking. Then, as years passed, the oddest thing happened. BB became an enduring favorite. Because of you, Dear Fans, that odd, quirky movie is remembered even as it reaches its 35th anniversary. Thank you! (Bet'cha it'll be around for another 35.)

As for the headbands: I still have one.

Terry J. Erdmann, BBI Silver Fox, worked as a publicist for the Banzai Institute and 20th Century Fox. He and his wife Paula M. Block are spending their retirement writing books like [Labyrinth: The Ultimate Visual History](#).

Dan Berger



The photo above features a plaque made by Kerry Hansknecht, a fellow Blue Blaze Irregular I met through BBI ArcLight's [World Watch On-Line](#) site and email list. One day he sent this to me, out of the blue, with a metal name plate of the same design, along with a kind note. Sometime later, he happened to pass through my town during his travels. We met at a local craft beer bar to discuss the matters of the day and our shared love of the band Rush over drinks. It was a wonderful experience that would have never happened without *Buckaroo Banzai*.

I met up with Lynnea Stadleman and her daughter Liana at DragonCon in 2007. Lynnea had run a *Buckaroo Banzai* fan table at the convention the year before and kept writing about how much fun I would have at the con. I decided to travel to Atlanta and see what all the fuss was about. I came back impressed by the convention, but even more impressed with Lynnea's kindness and good spirit.

Steve Mattsson appeared on my radar while creating the 2004 issue *World Watch One* with Alan "Dragon" Smith, but it wasn't until 2008 that I met him in person at Farmercon 90 in Peoria, IL. We spent much of that day in author Philip José Farmer's basement with a select group of Farmer fans, celebrating the author's life and enjoying each other's enthusiasm for his work.

Then New York city in 2011 and the New York Film Festival [docudrama screening](#) hosted by Kevin Smith. You can read more about that episode in the [October 2016 issue](#). That's where I first crossed paths with Sean Murphy and the enigmatic BBI ArcLight. It was an epic weekend.

I spent a tremendous amount of time in lines with Scott Tate at Denver Comic Con in 2013, mostly because registration was overwhelmed by an unanticipated influx of new attendees in the

convention's second year. It was wonderful to finally put a face to the person I had messaged with so many times about pulp favorites like Robert E. Howard and H. P. Lovecraft and, of course *Buckaroo Banzai*.

People are the heart of any enterprise worth a damn. They are the soul of this newsletter, the film it celebrates, and the journey we all share on this goofy chunk of rock chasing its tail in circles through the void. I can think of no better legacy for a film than the people it brings together. In that respect, *Buckaroo Banzai* may well be the greatest film of all time.

Dan Berger, BBI Big Shoulders, is currently serving his 15th year as an editor of the *World Watch One* newsletter. Sometimes he wonders about the wisdom in this. He divides his time between his wife and two boys, the newsletter, cycling, the newsletter, and working in the craft brewing industry in Chicago's northern suburbs.

Margaret Weis: "What's in the Big Pink Box?"

"The future begins tomorrow."

I was working at TSR, Inc. in 1984 when *Buckaroo Banzai* came out. Reviewers were raving about this movie and I was excited to see it. I went to the theater with a group of TSR people.

Given the glowing reviews, we were surprised to note there were few people there.

The movie started with that amazing music and we were hooked. We loved it. We were laughing uproariously.

"Lithium is no longer available on credit."

I glanced around at the rest of the people in the theater and realized we were the only ones laughing. Everyone else was staring at the screen, baffled.

"It's your hand, Buckaroo."

Never mind. We enjoyed it and we told our friends. That year at Gen Con we were quoting the lines. "What's in the big pink box?" "What's that watermelon doing there?"

Not long after, the movie vanished from the theaters. It tanked.

"Don't be mean. We don't have to be mean."

But *Buckaroo Banzai* refused to die and now it has become a cult classic. It is still one of my all-time favorite movies. Just writing this article makes me want to get out the DVD and watch it again.

Remember, no matter where you go, there you are.

Margaret Weis, BBI Ruby Tuesday, is listed in the original BBI directory. She is the co-creator of the Dragonlance Chronicles and a New York Times bestselling author. Find out more at her website: <https://margaretweis.com/>

David Jackson

Mistakes were made: The proprietor of our town’s sole hardware store—perhaps undeserving of his notoriety—was, however, a foreigner with a name I thought short for Janet. Bryce was my friend and early grades classmate. After school we’d enact pretend battles with an invisible army mysteriously captained by the supposedly cranky shopkeeper.

Bryce was better informed than any first-grader should be; his parents were doctors. Or so they were named. To my observation his dad was an academic. Or diplomat. Or both. Bryce’s mom was called Doctor too, even though really an astronomer. Or physicist. Or both. And while the idea of his “energy” profession bored me, the enormous telescope at her observatory meant she must surely be a surgeon to interplanetary travelers! (Aren’t physicist and physician the same but for a few letters?)

One week a scholastic magazine contained an enigmatic article that Bryce was especially excited by, but to me was ultimately confounding; particularly because he read it shrieking our (confusing but unchallenged) playtime battle-cry: “Annoy Jan! Annoy Jan!”

In calmer days after, Bryce asked my help picking his codename for a youth club he was keen to join.

Jump cut.

During a chance meeting in 1983, B.B.I. Rainbow Kitty mentioned a forthcoming cinematic reimagining of select events in the life of some presumably celebrated polymath. Such signs that had slipped away unrecognized would nevertheless soon overtake me; first subtly then as a torrent.

I remained oblivious even several minutes into the Portland premiere of “TAoBBAtED” (which I happened to catch only by accident due to a ticketing error). “Oh, yeah,” I thought, as the jet car veered across the desert, “this must be that thing that guy was telling me about.” In flashback a manned sledge catapults toward a wall. “That’s odd. Have I seen this before?”

I hadn’t anticipated what would unfold that next hour, as a lifetime of vague puzzles—inklings at hinted mysteries—unexpectedly collapsed into place: There were the biomedical and the astronomical connections; the diplomatical and infraterrestrial. The Welles contra-hoax. The unmistakable Mrs. Johnson! There was Professor Hikita from the tattered snippet in Bryce’s room! (So rapt was I during the culminating escape sequence, an excited “Annoy Jan!” may or may not have erupted once or twice.)

It had all been true; my unfounded prejudice notwithstanding.



Source: David Jackson

Today I am certain my boyhood pal is alive, well, and secretly fighting the WCL from somewhere within the Institute’s auxiliaries. He may even be reading this.

Thanks, “Bryce.”

Nice melon.

—Dogberry

David Jackson, BBI Dogberry, saw *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* in an undisclosed location. In a past life he lettered for Marvel, Eternity, and Dark Horse Comics. If you need your dogs tired, [he can help](#).

Ernie Cline

I missed *Buckaroo Banzai* when it was in theaters. It never came to my small hometown. I first discovered it on video. The old out-of-print pan-and-scan Vestron Video edition. I remember reading the plot synopsis on the back of the box and being blown away. A flick about a brain surgeon/scientist/test pilot/rock star/crime fighter? Sign me up.

I fell in love with it on the first viewing. It just drops you into the middle of this incredible story, with no background at all, and you just have to keep up. And dialogue was so smart and funny, delivered by the most incredible cast ever assembled. And every time I would rewatch it, I would pick up on some new detail or inside joke.

Ernie Cline, BBI Rafterman, is the original keeper of the first, unofficial Banzai Institute site on the web. It is believed that he still resides in the Austin, Texas area, where he can be found writing more novels and screenplays to keep *Ready Player One*, *Fanboys*, and *Armada* company on the Amazon queue. His quotation above was acquired in the 2009 email interview sourced for the “Internet Fandom” article in this issue, because we use every part of the bison here at *World Watch One*.

Bill Wiist and Ted Haycraft

Ted Haycraft: Hey Bill, what were you doing you in 1984?

Bill Wiist: I was a junior in high school, spending my free time either working at our favorite comic book store, The Book Broker or watching movies. And you were...?

Ted Haycraft: I started working part-time at the NBC affiliate here in Evansville, IN and augmenting hours at The Book Broker, where I assume we first met. At some point we all heard about *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* coming out and it was supposed to be a summer blockbuster. Do you recall any of the build-up before its release?

Bill: The first time I heard of *Buckaroo Banzai* was in a film class I took at Harrison High School. Terry Hughes was the teacher and he gave the class a list of movies coming out in the next year. I believe he culled this list from *Variety* magazine. Our homework was to write an essay on which movie we thought would be a box office winner or loser. It was on that list that I first saw the name “Buckaroo Banzai”—and I LOVED it.

Ted: I just saw Terry Hughes a few weeks ago. He was heading up a walking tour of all of the movie theaters in downtown Evansville. Do you recall the film you picked for your essay?

Bill: That’s fascinating about Terry. I’d like to go on that tour! The movie I picked was *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. I picked it to bomb at the box office. I forget my reasoning in the essay, but the truth was, I picked it to tank because everyone else thought it would be to be the biggest film of the year.

Ted: Anyway, BB being mentioned in *Variety* makes sense because there were high hopes it was going to be a summer blockbuster and spawn a franchise! Working at the TV station I recall seeing 30 second TV commercials for it during the Summer Olympics and like you I loved the title! Do you remember that my best friend, Jim Alexander, and I traveled up to Terre Haute to see the film because we were worried it might not play in Evansville? I believe your close friend at the time, DeWayne Todd, (who has become one of the biggest BB collectors in the country*) remembers Jim and me talking about how cool the film was.

Bill: I don’t remember seeing any TV spots for *Banzai*, but I didn’t watch much TV at the time. I probably saw ads in the comics. In any case, we were stoked for it when it finally came to the North Park Cinema. I don’t remember your trip to Terre Haute, but I’m sure I was jealous of it.

*See the article “Banzai Collector Extraordinaire” by Sean Murphy in the [September 2018 issue](#) of *World Watch One*.



Bill Wiist (Left) and Ted Haycraft (Right) hover over a familiar figure and his Jet Car in this Bill Wiist illustration. Source: Bill Wiist

Ted: HA! Even back then you were Mr. Contrarian, about *Temple of Doom*! Anyway, I was excited that the film eventually showed up here in Evansville and you and your gang of friends got to experience it. I went back and took my girlfriend at the time to see it (I nicknamed her “Penny Priddy”). What baffles me is how, in the heck before the internet that Jim and I found out it was playing in Terre Haute, which was around three hours away! What made that road trip even better was finding BB View-Master Reels at the Kmart across from the theater! Eventually the film did show up for one week in December. My theory is that it barely played in Evansville because there just happened to be an empty screen at the North Park Cinemas before the big Christmas films all locked into place. So they booked it just to fill that open screen instead of really wanting to bring it in. I know you went to see it with three of your close buddies. Do you have any memories at all of your reactions?

Bill: I remember you finding that Buckaroo View-Master. Man, what a find! You guys were certainly plugged into the entertainment scene. My question is, how was I not included on that road trip? DeWayne Todd, Larry Robertson, Darren Ziliak and I all saw it together. I recall mixed reactions and much discussion in the parking lot. My memory is DeWayne

immediately loved it. Larry may have been skeptical. Darren disliked it and I was still weighing it in my mind. It wasn't exactly what I'd imagined it would be, but my expectations were sky high. I grew to love it. I am wondering now how many times I've seen it in the theater. I feel like I saw it twice that week.

Ted: Well, we were certainly enamored enough to be sure we got listed in the original BBI Directory—LOL! Anyway, lets jump way forward and talk about the BB artwork you did that Moonstone Comics published. If I recall correctly you submitted one (or maybe two covers) to them but it appeared they weren't going to be used. Then out of nowhere one showed up in a trade collection. Didn't I spot it first and tell you of its surprise appearance? So, what was the lowdown on the art?

Bill: You did spot that! When I originally heard Moonstone had acquired the rights to publish a Buckaroo Banzai comic, I immediately threw together several paintings to submit as samples. I was hoping I could land a job as a cover artist for the book. That didn't happen, but I was pleasantly surprised when they did wind up being used elsewhere. It's funny how hazy my memory is on all of this.

Ted: "Hazy" is the key word here. I wish I had kept up on my "journaling" over the years, so I could pinpoint all my interactions with the BB world. For instance, where and when did I get my official BB headband? I'm thinking it was at a Chicago Con prior to the film's release. And how soon did I get my hands on a VHS bootleg that contained the B&W prologue? And when did I obtain a 16mm scope copy of the film? And how many showings did I see back in the day?

Bill: What is the origin of your BBI Directory nickname "Jay Clay"?

Ted: There was a series of short films by Tim Hittle that featured a stop-motion clay figure called Jay Clay. <http://www.jayclay.net/> I used it as a nickname at the station.

Bill: Another mystery solved!

Ted: Let's wrap this up by sharing with us your current feelings for the film. I'll end with two scenes that I believe need to be listed among all the great scenes in cinema: Buckaroo's first encounter with Penny in the bar and the end titles march of the cast of characters—like Tommy, so perfect!

Bill: Yes, sir! Both of those are truly iconic, terrific scenes. Looking back on it, it is amazing to me how my friends and I had every line of dialogue from Banzai memorized. While I have forgotten a ton over the years, the movie itself is still emblazoned in my mind. When people used to ask me what

kind of movie it was, "Science Fiction? Thriller?" I would say, "It's a documentary." And I've seen others state that as well. And it's not by accident. As crazy and as inspired by the old pulp novels as it is, it also feels very real. The novelization and the newsletters also helped cement the "realism" of the movie by treating the characters and events as if they were real. I just totally dig that. I love imagining that the Hong Kong Cavaliers and the Blue Blaze Irregulars are out there even today, creating great music, battling secret societies, and doing research that will lead to the betterment of mankind.

Bill Wiist and [Ted Haycraft](#), BBI Wiisty and BBI Jay Clay respectively, are listed in the original BBI Directory. Bill did the artwork for the [Buckaroo Banzai Aurora Fantasy Model Box](#). Find out more about Bill's art [on his blog](#). Ted is the Master Control Supervisor and film critic at station WFIE in Evansville. Find out more on his ["Cinema Chat with Ted Haycraft" page](#).

Bev Beej Larkin



I was twenty-two back in 1984 when I saw the promo for *Buckaroo* during *Ghostbusters*. I was like "Wow, we have got to go and see this!" I'm one of those movie fans who stay until the end of the credits anyway; so we stayed and watched the trailer again.

Then when it came time for us to see the movie, about three of us went for the opening weekend. As that summer continued, every time we bumped in another one of our friends, we'd ask:

“Have you seen *Buckaroo Banzai*? No? Let’s go!” We just made any excuse to go and see it again. I think that summer I went at least twelve times just with friends so we could all watch it again and look for more nuances—like catching “SINED SEALED DELIVERED” on our second viewing, and to strut the Banzai strut out of the theatre. Our groups of watchers kept getting larger and larger.

It was truly the existential and fun event of our lives. We had so many wonderful films to keep us going: *Ghostbusters*, *Twice Upon a Time*, *Rocky Horror* on the weekends, and now *Buckaroo Banzai*. Being diehard SF fans anyway, we picked out BBI names and Lectroid identities and just had fun with the whole thing.

Bev Beej Larkin, BBI Komish and John Mr. Pibb, currently works in tech for the state of Texas. She lives in the Austin area where she is very active in fandom events, playing in community brass bands, driving a Nissan LEAF (with Yoyodyne emblem naturally!) and renovating “Casa Chaos”, her geek HQ.

Dianne Wickes

Editor’s Note: After poaching Dianne’s Buckaroo remembrance to serve as the editorial introduction to this issue, I asked her if she could help a fellow editor out with a little extra for the actual memoir section. She did not disappoint. —DB



Buttons: (Top Left) The top button was given to department staff when they got the assignment to promote Buckaroo. (Top Right) Harlan didn’t like Buckaroo Banzai. Some fans declared that they did not care. (Bottom Right) Another favorite fan button. **Source: Dianne Wickes**



This is a pencil concept draft of a poster for the film, also a gift from the studio. **Source: Dianne Wickes**



This is the original art for Banzai. I found it in the basement of the publicity building at Fox, and asked if I could buy it with time payments; the head of feature publicity said no, had it framed, and gave it to me. **Source: Dianne Wickes**

Dianne Wickes, BBI Hollywood, basically wrote the original BBI directory along with the other BBI Directors. She currently enjoys Jimmy Buffet fandom on the beaches of Pine Island, Florida.

David McDonnell:

“Publishers? Why did it have to be Publishers?”

My favorite hero ever is Doc Savage, who originated in a self-titled monthly pulp magazine in February 1933 just around the time that *King Kong* crawled to the top of the Empire State Building and, as a B&W cinema classic, into theaters. Decades later, Doc gained traction with my generation thanks to Bantam Books reprinting his 182 pulp exploits in paperback beginning in 1964 through the early ‘90s.

Clark (“Doc”) Savage, Jr. is a heroic polymath (physician, scientist, inventor, etc.), a muscular superman-type known as “The Man of Bronze.” He’s aided in his never-ending battle against evil by a band of six devoted, action-addicted, nicknamed associates. Headquartered in NYC’s tallest skyscraper (the Empire State Building), he also keeps a remote Fortress of Solitude in the Arctic for meditation and solo lab work. Savage uses lotsa specially-made gadgets and weaponry in fighting crime and can even disable an opponent with a simple hand pinch to the neck. He’s often unemotional and uneasy around women. Any of that sound familiar?

In other words, Doc Savage influenced the creation (and various characteristics) of such subsequent heroes as Superman, Batman, James Bond, Challengers of the Unknown, Fantastic Four, Mr. Spock, Tom Strong and—yes, you’ve guessed it!—Buckaroo Banzai & the Hong Kong Cavaliers.

The Savage connection is what initially intrigued me when I first read Earl Mac Rauch’s screenplay for *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension* in late 1983 or early ‘84. One of the perks of my *Starlog* job was getting pre-release access to the scripts for upcoming movies—either legally—because the studio sent over a copy (as with *Star Trek III*, *Aliens* and *Explorers*)—or not so much actually—because some “friend” provided us a “bootleg” copy that apparently “fell off the back of a truck” or a photocopier (as with *Terminator*, *Starman* and *Buckaroo Banzai*).

Wow! I loved the script, and could see great possibilities for Buckaroo and his buds. I was then *Starlog*’s Managing Editor (having joined staff, after a stint at Jim Steranko’s *Mediascene Prevue Magazine*, in October 1982 with *Starlog* #66), so this was early on in my 27-year+ *Starlog* tenure. Nonetheless, I became the #1 advocate for *Buckaroo Banzai* at the magazine. As Managing Editor, I served as liaison with all our freelancer writers—a task I just continued to do when I became Editor with issue #97—so it was up to me to suggest to then-Editor Howard Zimmerman a Los Angeles-based *Starlog* freelancer for the BB assignment. I chose Lee Goldberg.



Source: Starlog

Then a UCLA undergraduate, Lee had made his very first professional sale to ME—with an on-spec manuscript I found on my desk my very first day at *Starlog*. (It was “The Man who Killed Spock,” an interview with *Trek III* screenwriter Jack Sowards that we quickly bought and published in issue #67.) So, Lee was one of my protégés. He would later—in partnership with William Rabkin, another *Starlog* contributor—become a TV writer-producer (*Spenser: For Hire*, *Murphy’s Law*, *Hunter*, *Sequest 2032*, *Martial Law*, *Monk* and, most importantly, *Diagnosis Murder*).

Eventually, on his own, Lee began writing a flight of original authorized paperback novels with the *Diagnosis Murder* characters and later a much-loved, 15-odd series of *Monk* books (which even continued the heroes’ exploits beyond the TV series’ end). That led to several hit collaborations with mega-top selling mystery writer Janet Evanovich, all starring Fox & O’Hare.

These days, Lee is writing bestselling escapist thrillers solo starring Ian Ludlow (a pseudonym he used years ago, repurposed as his new hero’s name—like *True Fiction* (now out in

paperback) and its sequel *Killer Thriller* (a recent hardcover). At his publisher's insistence, Lee's writing a second mystery series starring a female detective, Eve Ronin. The first volume, *Lost Hills*, will be published January 1.

Starlog and ***Buckaroo Banzai*** were, of course, early in Lee Goldberg's writing career. He visited ***Buckaroo Banzai*** while it was lensing in California and did an on-set report (quoting whomever he quizzed there and describing scenes he witnessed shot) for *Starlog* #81 (out in March 1984). Full-length interviews with other BB folks followed: Christopher Lloyd (a friend of Assistant Publisher Milburn Smith, who moonlighted as an Off-Broadway playwright; Lloyd was in one of his plays back in the late 60's-early 70's and Smith used to drive him home late evenings after rehearsal; *Starlog* #82), screenwriter Earl Mac Rauch (issue #84), Jeff Goldblum (#85), Peter Weller (#86), Lewis Smith (#87) and director W.D. Richter (#89). Not long afterwards, Lee was on the set of **2010** for *Starlog* and scored a full-length chat with John Lithgow (who's in that movie, too), so *Starlog* #93's Lithgow story capped our theatrical release-era BB coverage.

As you may noticed, there *was* a ***Buckaroo Banzai*** cover. That's thanks to my 20th Century Fox publicist pal Terry J. Erdmann. I had managed to convince Editor Zimmerman and the Publisher Powers That Be that ***Buckaroo Banzai*** deserved a *Starlog* cover (#86, out before the movie's scheduled bow). Publisher Norman Jacobs wasn't crazy about this notion and demanded a "sci-fi" image with the film's hero (Weller) and special FX or some hi-tech machinery. No such image, Norm vowed, no *Starlog* cover. Ah, fun. Good times. As I've often said, "Publishers? Why did it have to be Publishers?"

Well, fortunately, it so happened that I was out in Los Angeles—staying with Lee Goldberg—for two or three days after the latest Creation Conventions-sponsored *Starlog* Festival held there. Lee and I had been invited to stop by the 20th Century Fox Studios lot and visit the set where John Carpenter was directing ***Big Trouble in Little China*** (script by BB's director W.D. Richter). How could we not go? Those faux Chinatown street sets were fabulous, and we watched enthralled as Carpenter set up a dialogue scene with Kurt Russell and Kim Cattrall. Our host was publicist Terry Erdmann (who had promoted BB and gave away those colorful Banzai bandanas at SF conventions, where I met him). So, I told Terry about the Norm-mandated BB cover photo problem.

We were already on the studio lot, so Terry took us to the 20th Fox PR Department and found a BB image that would fit Norm's criteria (and which I liked). But that photo WASN'T yet approved for press use. So, Terry "walked it through" the

offices of several 20th Fox PR execs, showing the image (Lithgow torturing Weller) and explaining the situation—"their publisher wants a slide like this one or no cover." And Terry managed to get it approved in turn by every publicity VIP who had to be consulted. It's 35 years later and I can no longer recall for certain if I got to take that very slide in a plastic sheet with me and fly back to NYC (that is my vague memory) or if they sent it out for duplication and Terry FedExed the dupe to me a day or two later. Doesn't matter. The result was that ***Buckaroo Banzai*** got the cover of *Starlog* #86.

The Realm of Unintended Consequences:

- Alas, *Starlog* #86 didn't sell all that well on the newsstands. We never understood why. Was that cover overly busy with its infestations of too many coverlines, per company policy? Although *Starlog* had ALREADY published four BB articles in previous months, did readers not know that ***Buckaroo Banzai*** was science fiction? Was the movie just indifferently marketed so few of any audiences really knew what it was?
- However, guess what! Not as many readers as usual—say compared to the next, *Starlog* #87 with its ***Ghostbusters*** Special FX cover—picked up that issue. So, years later, as ***Buckaroo Banzai*** evolved into a much-loved cult flick, *Starlog* #86 became a top seller in our Back Issues ad, as those who missed it the first time now ordered it. As our inventory of #86 dwindled, we even kept raising its price. Before we finally sold out of it altogether, a copy was going for \$125. Really. I looked it up to be sure that my memory was correct. And you COULD have bought that issue new on the racks in 1984 for \$2.95.
- After I became Editor, we continued to ask about ***Buckaroo Banzai*** whenever we interviewed someone associated with the movie. Over the years, we finally talked to Carl Lumbly, Vincent Schiavelli and then Clancy Brown (four or five times for him!) as well as again interviewing Weller (four times); Richter, Lithgow and Goldblum (three each); Lloyd (once more). I always hoped to nab Ellen Barkin, Ronald Lacey and Dan Hedaya, but that didn't happen. Sigh.
- Eventually, thanks to SF conventions (where I was a fellow guest) and press events I attended, I even got to meet in person Richter, Lithgow, Smith, Brown and Goldblum. That was fun!
- Meanwhile, *Starlog* ended its 33-year-run as a print magazine in 2009. I've long since retired, disabled. But I still eagerly await... ***Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League***. Coming soon someday. After all, they promised. 

David McDonnell edited ***Starlog***, ***Comics Scene***, ***Fangoria*** and many of your other favorite magazines. You can [find him on Facebook](#).

Remembering the Promotional Material

By Charley Todd

The wonderful thing about *Buckaroo Banzai* is that people from many walks of life enjoy the movie. Over the past several years, I have met many people who enjoyed the film. In all of those conversations, it is rare to find someone who remembers seeing the promotional footage before the movie's release. The footage was about 12 minutes long and featured a variety of scenes meant to excite and lure patrons to its theatrical release.

Recently, I discovered that a friend of mine had seen the promotional footage and remembered it well. We have known each other for years, and I had no idea. I asked Anthony to share his memories, and here is what he had to say.

Charley Todd: What do you recall about the “preview” experience?

Anthony Taylor: I was part of the audience for the marketing preview at the Atlanta Fantasy Fair convention in 1984, about a week before the movie opened in theaters. We heard a bit about the movie from a studio representative, then saw a shortish montage of scenes from the film. I recall being absolutely baffled by what I saw until I started to get the humor—Dr. Lizardo fascinated me. By the end of the presentation, I was totally onboard for the experience; I grabbed a handful of Banzai Institute headbands and stickers (which I put all over everything for several years) and was absolutely primed to see the film when it opened shortly thereafter.

Charley: What did you think about that experience then, and how do you feel about it now?

Anthony: The audience response was very favorable, everyone laughed at all the right places and “oohed” and “ahhed.” The giveaways were some of the best premiums ever, in my opinion. I thought it would be a huge hit! I'm really glad I got to take part in the experience, as I know very few people actually did.

Charley: For some, *Buckaroo Banzai* is an instant love. For others, an acquired taste. What was your initial impression?

Anthony: I was pretty much instantly enamored. I grew up reading smart science fiction and was pretty thrilled to see a film that challenged me on an intellectual level as well as being slyly humorous.

Charley: Critically speaking, what was your favorite aspect of the film?

Anthony: I love the dialog and the performances, especially by John Lithgow. I think the art direction was pretty great for a film with such a low budget, as well. And the music!

Charley: Have you had an BB cast encounters over the years?



Nancy Allen, Anthony Taylor, and Peter Weller—DragonCon 2014

Anthony: I was able to interview Peter Weller onstage at Dragon Con several years ago, a presentation that was supposed to be all *Buckaroo Banzai* related until Nancy Allen was announced as a guest, and then it was changed to a Robocop panel. I did get to talk to him a bit about BB though, and get several photos signed.

Charley: What is your favorite *Buckaroo Banzai* moment?

Anthony: “Which one was yes, go ahead and destroy Russia... or number 2?” Too many great lines to list them all!

Charley: As you look back over the years, what is the personal appeal of *Buckaroo Banzai* and the Hong Kong Cavaliers?

Anthony: That they did things their own way, and always respected the ways of others. We live in a time when philosophy is denigrated in favor of jingoism, and I for one would love to see Buckaroo and his pals out there toeing the line in favor of justice and freedom.

Charley: What are your favorite memories involving BB?

Anthony: I used to own a Gibson Corvus electric guitar, the same model Perfect Tommy plays. That's why I got it!

Charley: Why do you think *Buckaroo Banzai* continues to grow a cult following?

Anthony: Because it has something for just about everybody, and if you're smart you get it. I love that it's a magnet for smart people. 🐉

Anthony Taylor is a writer, entrepreneur, and the author of [The Future Was FAB: The Art of Mike Trim](#), and [Arctic Adventure!](#) - An Official Thunderbirds Novel. He is a frequent collaborator to [Scream Magazine](#), and his work has appeared in [Famous Monsters](#), [SFX](#), [Video Watchdog](#), [Fangoria](#), and many other magazines. He recently recorded commentary tracks for the Shout Factory! full series Blu-ray release of **Space: 1999**. He also organizes [Monsterama](#), a convention celebrating the fantastic in film, art, and literature.

Beyond the 47,000 Facts of Pinky Carruthers

By Scott Tate

- **Worth a pretty penny for Penny Priddy:** In October 2006, a collection of more than 100 pieces of jewelry owned by Ellen Barkin sold at auction for a total of \$20.3 million. According to a statement at the time by Rahul Kadakia, head of the jewelry department at Christie's auction house, the collection was "the highest single-owner jewelry sale of the past 15 years in the U.S. [and] among the top four ever worldwide."
- **Cash on demand:** In two unrelated made-for-TV movies, Rosalind Cash played characters with similar names: Freida Lovejoy Burton in *Sister, Sister* (1982) and Frieda Barton in *Special Bulletin* (1983). Incidentally, her character in *Special Bulletin* shared something in common with Cash's John Emdall: She and her companions used the threat of an atomic explosion as leverage.
- **A peer appears:** Jamie Lee Curtis, who portrayed Buckaroo's mother Dr. Sandra Banzai in the cut intro footage, is a titled peer in the United Kingdom by virtue of her longtime marriage to actor/director Christopher Guest. Since 1996 Guest has been the 5th Baron Haden-Guest of Saling, in the county of Essex. As such, Jamie Lee is entitled to be formally announced as either the Baroness Haden-Guest or Lady Haden-Guest, although she rarely uses it.
- **Real-world heads of government portrayed by TABB alumni:** U.S. President Richard Nixon (Dan Hedaya in *Dick*, 1999), Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori (Robert Ito in *Lima: Breaking the Silence*, 1999), and U.K. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, twice (Ronald Lacey in 1990's *Stalingrad* and John Lithgow in 2016's *The Crown*).
- **Hunting down a Senator:** Mariclare Costello (Sen. Cunningham) appeared in over a dozen episodes of *The Waltons* between 1972 and 1977 as Miss Rosemary Hunter (later Rosemary Hunter Fordwick).
- **The Kurgan connection:** Gregory Widen, who co-wrote *Highlander* (1987), also scripted the *Tales from the Crypt* episode "Half-Way Horrible" (1993) which starred Clancy Brown.
- **Go West, young man:** *Buckaroo Banzai's* Sec. of Defense Matt Clark frequently appears in Westerns, including two unconventional ones that also include Christopher Lloyd: *Back to the Future, Part III* (1990) and *A Million Ways to Die in the West* (2014).



Source: MGM Home Video

- **Reporting a trend:** Jane Marla Robbins, who played one of the reporters at Buckaroo's press conference in *Buckaroo Banzai*, also played a reporter in the 1973 movie *The Werewolf of Washington* and again in a 1989 episode of *Murder, She Wrote*.
- **Insert clever title here:** The title sequence for *Buckaroo Banzai* was designed by Wayne Fitzgerald, who previously used the same distinctive stencil lettering in the title sequence for another film, *That Cold Day in the Park* (1967). Another designer, Phil Norman, also selected it for the opening title card of *The Love Boat* (1977-86).
- **You play my joint, you're just another act:** A highly incomplete music discography of the cast includes *With Pen in Hand* (1968), *Retro Nuevo* (1988), *Big Band Jazz* (2015) and many more by Billy Vera and the Beaters; *Singin' in the Bathtub* (1999), *The Sunny Side of the Street* (2006) and more by John Lithgow; *The Capitol Studios Sessions* by Jeff Goldblum and the Mildred Snitzer Orchestra (2018); and quite a few from Casper Lindley's actor in his other career, from *Bill Henderson Sings* (1959) through *Beautiful Memory: Bill Henderson Live at the Vic* (2008).
- **Renaissance man:** You may be aware that [Peter Weller earned a doctorate](#) in Italian Renaissance art history to become an art historian in his mid-sixties. What you may not know is that the spark behind his studies was lit on the set of *Buckaroo Banzai*. Bruce McNall, who was the main broker behind the creation of Sherwood Productions, was also a dealer in ancient Roman coins. When Weller signed onto the film, he became acquainted with McNall and fascinated by his collection. That romance of connecting with ancient civilizations through their artifacts was the impetus that sent Weller down the road to earning his PhD. 🐾

INTERVIEW: Earl Mac Rauch

By Steve Mattsson

Some of Earl Mac Rauch's influences, like the work of writers William S. Burroughs and Thomas Pynchon, are obvious, but others are more obscure. I've always been curious about the origins of Buckaroo Banzai and Mac was gracious enough to answer a few of my questions on this subject.

Steve Mattsson: What TV shows and movies did you watch when you were young? Did any of these influence the creation of Buckaroo Banzai?

Earl Mac Rauch: When I was a kid (1950s, early 60s), I watched what every other kid watched. There were only three TV networks, so we all pretty much watched the same shows—[Have Gun Will Travel](#), [Twilight Zone](#), [Alfred Hitchcock Presents](#), etc.—and when we went to the movies, at least in my own case, we went generally without even knowing what was playing, unless you felt like checking a newspaper. In other words, we typically found out what was playing when we showed up at the theater. On Saturdays, there was usually a double feature, along with a cartoon and sometimes even a serial. If you're asking what kinds of films I liked best, I would have to say horror movies, the cheaper the better, Japanese or Roger Corman productions: [The Blob](#), [Bucket of Blood](#), stuff like that. Maybe I always envisioned Buckaroo as the hero in a Japanese movie or even as a big Japanese movie star, in which case we should have had Raymond Burr doing commentary on the movie as in the US version of [Godzilla](#). That would have been pretty funny, hearing him discuss the Jet Car.

SM: Buckaroo Banzai has been described as “Doc Savage for the 80's.” Was Doc a precursor of Buckaroo?

EMR: People sometimes bring up Doc Savage. In all honesty, however, I suppose I must have heard of Doc Savage, or perhaps seen a Saturday serial when I was a kid, but to this day, I've never read any Doc Savage stories

SM: Philip José Farmer's *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life* is the first place I read of H. Ashton-Wolfe's Hanoi Shan. Were you aware of Farmer's work?

EMR: I didn't read the book by Farmer, but I admire his work a lot. Pretty amazing, the original stuff he turned out, mixing genres, etc., something of a post-modernist ahead of his time. I only learned of Hanoi Shan through Ashton-Wolfe, whose crime stories I naively assumed were real—a common mistake, as it turns out. Thinking Hanoi Shan was real and liking the name, I used it.

SM: Why the switch from Hanoi Shan to Hanoi Xan?



EMR: The studio wanted it changed to Xan in print, which I actually like better, particularly since he has nothing really to do with Ashton-Wolfe's character, except as a fairly stock archetype of the crafty and mysterious criminal mastermind who lives in the shadows, in the vein of Fu Manchu, Professor Moriarty and the earlier fictional Parisian archvillain Fantômas. For that matter, there's Blofeld, Goldfinger, and Dr. No, and every other Ian Fleming master villain. Hanoi Xan is an amalgam of all those guys but also something more, something supernatural.

SM: Yoyodyne first appeared in the works of Thomas Pynchon. Death Dwarves and the Nova Police first appeared in the works of William S. Burroughs. Comment?

EMR: I'm a big fan of Burroughs and Pynchon is probably my favorite living American author.

RK: Pynchon's 1990 novel *Vineland* featured a band called, “Eddie Enrico and his Hong Kong Hotshots.” Any thoughts on the similarity to “Buckaroo Banzai and the Hong Kong Cavilers?”

EMR: Whether the Hong Kong Hotshots have ever heard of the Hong Kong Cavaliers, who knows? Hong Kong is a pretty big place.

SM: Finally, I'd like to hear about some BB connections in your pre-Banzai work. You used Rocket 88 as the name for a club in *Arkansas Adios* and in *New York, New York*. It almost seems to be a leitmotif for you. What's the scoop?

EMR: [Rocket 88](#)...well, it's the number of keys on a piano and also a paean to the famed Oldsmobile. Or maybe it's from the R & B song I used to play in a band. Or maybe the 88 guys I killed and buried in the desert. Sorry, that's the best I can do. 🐾

**From the Files of Earl Mac Rauch:
“Banzai Institute Role Models”**

by Johann von Dentzer, *Ausserordentlicher Professor, Institut für Soziologie, University of Göttingen*

Editor’s Note (again): Tradition mandates that every anniversary issue of *World Watch One* include at least one attempt at pleading with screenwriter Earl Mac Rauch for new, never before seen files in his voluminous archive of Banzai-related documents so we can publish one for your reading pleasure. This turn took several rounds to find something suitable for publication, but, in the end, Mac came through for us once again. His email included the attached document and a note that said, “Found this excerpt from a monograph on the Institute by a distinguished visiting German sociologist a few years back. Feel free to use.” We hope you enjoy.
—DB

In any in-depth analysis of a given society, it is essential to recognize that the symbolic structures which govern it are at least as important, if not more so, than its organizational workings. In this light, the idea of “role models” assumes its importance, since the term itself is implicitly hierarchical, presupposing different roles within a structure. Everyday roles, therefore, are symbolized; they have a signification, situated in the societal hierarchy. Before examining such roles in themselves, it is instructional to ask who designed the roles, or, put another way, who are the elite with privileged access to the symbols of power.

The task is made straightforward by the relative simplicity of the Banzai Institute to which its residents are bound by reciprocal obligation and friendship ties, and in which there are but three basic spheres of human endeavor: study and research, combat, and manual labor. At the same time, perhaps paradoxically, the Institute transcends the narrow confines of everyday ordinary life by offering a unifying point of cultural and philosophical reference...

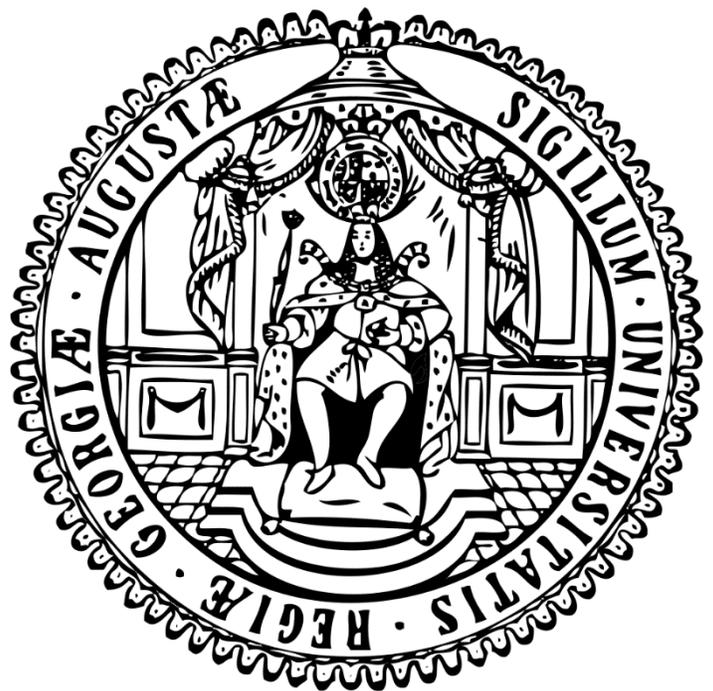
The Institute’s well-known triumphs in the temporal realm, however, have not been without cost. To keep one foot in its founding ideals and the other in the scientific mainstream has required a nimble balancing act. Schisms have developed, as the Institute’s well-known “hermit movement” began as a backlash to what some felt was a hierarchical organization that had grown too comfortable with governmental authority and the financial markets. Hence the movement preached withdrawal from the machinations of the world, to a place of solitude and oneness with all—*monos* in Greek—through the rites of meditation and self-denial.

It was Rawhide who drew up the manifesto for this monastic movement. Called Rawhide’s Rules, the document stressed the vows of poverty and chastity as well as hospitality to travelers

and charity to the poor. In its radical form, however, the movement had a less than charitable effect and soon sought to dominate all aspects of social life, even as its monastic message became increasingly narrow: to denounce pleasure in morality’s name.

Like other disciples who changed from pleasure-lovers to pleasure-haters, Rawhide lived a sexually profligate life before becoming a Research Fellow at the Institute, where he would eventually choose to live as a hermit in the Chihuahuan desert, preaching the evils of the impure life and the benefits of its renunciation. Under his influence many loose-living Institute scholars left their wayward ways to eke out an ascetic existence in the desert, while Mrs. Johnson played a similar role as spiritual mother to a small group of anchorites who also disavowed their former lives of vice and refused to leave their rooms for several years, electing to live shut off from the rest of the world except for a single small window through which food and study materials were passed.

Given the dangerous tenor of the times, a quiet life of contemplation is not for everyone, however, and most residents of the Institute continue to practice the *bushido* virtues of Buckaroo Banzai in the popular imagination: physical courage, fighting skills and personal loyalty, elements incorporated into the ethos of the Blue Blaze irregulars—the Institute’s first line of defense... 🦅



The University of Göttingen was founded in 1734 by George II, King of Great Britain in Göttingen, Germany. 45 Nobel Prize winners have come from its alumni, faculty, and researchers. Its motto is “*In publica commoda*” (For the good of all.)

Sekret Origins

By Tim Monro

Buckaroo’s Bow Tie

Peter Weller gives props to Adam Ant as an inspiration for the fashion style of Dr. Banzai. But if costume designer Aggie Guerard Rodgers didn’t see the video for Bauhaus’ 1981 single [“Kick in the Eye”](#) before she dressed Buckaroo for the Team Banzai march, then I’ll eat my headband!

The video is hella murky, but the slicked back hair, tailored gray suit, and red bowtie look super familiar. The lead singer’s name is even “Peter Murphy” for god’s sake!*

The Lectroids’ Look



Source: Tim Monro

In the screenplay *Shields Against the Devil*, the evil aliens who cause so much trouble for Team Banzai are described as giant red and black insects. How’d we get from bugs to the Lectroids we know and loath?

According to an article in *Cinefex* #19, the idea of insects was quickly dropped. The crew then started looking at the work of, “An anthropologist in Canada [who] designed a model of what he thought dinosaurs might have evolved into...” This person is Dr. Dale A. Russell and according to Wikipedia he is actually a geologist and paleontologist, so suck it *Cinefex*!

Also according to Wikipedia, this is some of the work he did to develop his “Dinosauroid”: He noted that “Over geologic time there had been a steady increase in the encephalization quotient or EQ (the relative brain weight when compared to other species with the same body weight) among the dinosaurs. Russell had discovered the first Troodontid skull, and noted that, while its EQ was low compared to humans, it was six times higher than that of other dinosaurs. Russell suggested that if the trend in Stenonychosaurus evolution had continued to the present, its brain case could by now measure 1,100 cm³, comparable to that of a human.”

I don’t pretend to understand any of that, but it sounds like a lot of work. I didn’t go to as much school as Dr. Russell, but I bet I watched more Saturday morning TV. It’s obvious that



One if by air and two if by sea: Add a cockpit and a particle beam weapon to a spider conch shell and it turns out that you end up with a handy dandy thermopod that drives like a truck. Source: **(Left)** www.worldwidewildlifeproducts.com, **(Right)** MGM Home Video

Russell could have saved tons of time by studying Sid & Marty Kroff’s Sleestaks from their 1974 TV series [Land of the Lost](#). Just sayin’.

So, how do we get from Dinosauroids to, “Evil, pure and simple from the Eighth Dimension?”

According to the article in *Marvel Super Special* #33, the final inspiration for the look of the Lectroids came from production designer J. Michael Riva sporting a lobster tail on his nose. It sounds like they had some damn fine lunches at those Hollywood pre-production meetings.

I think we’ve finally arrived—slap a lobster tail on the face of a Dinosauroid and you’ve pretty much got a Lectroid. If you found any of this confusing, the key to remembering the evil aliens’ evolution is shouting the mantra; “*Lizards, Lobsters, Lectroids!*”

Thermopod Provenance

Once Riva obtained inspiration from playing with his food, the idea for spaceships from the sea flowed naturally. In *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, Rick Richter wrote the line, “Why do we always expect metal ships?” so in *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* we get certified organic spaceships.

The Red Lectroids’ Thermopod is obviously based on a spider conch shell.

Yoyodyne’s big spiny ship is probably based on a specific seashell too, but I couldn’t find a picture of it on the internet instantly and got bored. If one of you readers knows what kind of shell it is, send a hi-res pic to [Dan Berger](#). He loves that kind of crap. Ω 🐌

*Many thanks to BBI Jemiah Jefferson for calling the *World Watch One* staff’s attention to this video.

Ω **Editor’s Note:** I do not love that kind of crap. —DB

In Medias Res:

The Buckaroo Banzai Production Binders

By Sean Murphy, Dan Berger,
DeWayne Todd, and Steve Mattsson

Introduction and Overview

Sean Murphy

Among the limited number of Buckaroo Banzai items available officially (including the novel and comic books) and unofficially (the scripts and bootleg soundtrack) certain unique items become “holy grail” relics among Banzai fans. One of these is a collection of documents called “The Essential Buckaroo.”

Initially, in a 2004 interview with *World Watch One*, W.D. Richter gave the impression that The Essential Buckaroo was a collection of writings made by Earl Mac Rauch, saying, “We had a reference book while we were making the film that we called ‘The Essential Buckaroo.’ It became sort of a curiosity in the production department because it was essentially all of those false starts Mac had made over several years [while developing the script].”

It turned out that this reference to The Essential Buckaroo was made in error.



What Richter was actually referring to was a document called “A Buckaroo Banzai Sampler”, which we’ll cover in a future issue of the newsletter. However, this innocent mistake led to something wonderful.

Ernie Cline read the [September 2018 issue](#) of *World Watch One* where DeWayne Todd was interviewed and The Essential Buckaroo was mentioned. Ernie realized he had something special and emailed us to say, “Guess what I purchased off of ebay in France two years ago? A copy of the BB production script and storyboards used by production illustrator Tom Southwell—and it includes a copy of “The Essential Buckaroo!”” We were both surprised and elated, to say the least. Ernie kindly shared the contents of the production binders with *World Watch One* to help us document this amazing discovery.

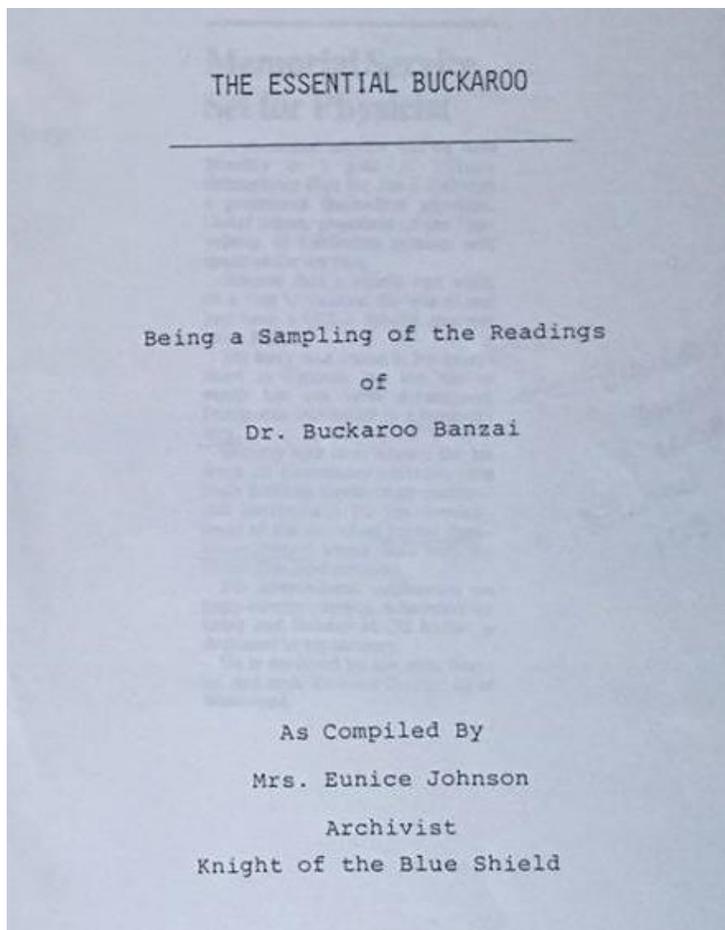
Binder #1 contains the **script** of the film called *Shields Against the Devil—Another Buckaroo Banzai Thriller*, a 110 page second draft dated September 17th, 1982.

Binder #2 contains **storyboards** for the film totaling 363 pages.

Binder #3 contains two items:

- 1) A variety of **production illustrations** for the film, spread over 82 pages, such as Buckaroo Banzai logos, clothing, vehicles, and an alternate BB comic book cover.
- 2) **The Essential Buckaroo**, which is a collection of 145 pages of **newspaper and magazine articles** that inspired/informed the movie, as compiled by Mrs. Eunice Johnson, Archivist, Knight of the Blue Shield.

The sheer volume of information contained within the production binders required a group effort to properly digest and discuss their contents. We’ve decided to tackle the contents of each binder in separate articles in an effort to give Banzai fans an overview of this amazing production information.



Production Illustrations

by Dan Berger

As discussed in the introductory article, over half of the goodies found among the three binders comprising the Buckaroo Banzai production documents are visual images, either in the form of storyboards (discussed in the next article) or production illustrations. This comes as no surprise. Film is a visual medium, and W.D. Richter had a very clear game plan in place to achieve the look he was after.

In a June 12, 2019 email, Richter said, “Mike Riva [production designer] and Jordan Cronenweth [cinematographer] were to be the production’s heart and soul. Jordan’s inspiration (and his lighting package) never left us, and Mike truly created so much of the movie that I feel he, Mac [screenwriter Earl Mac Rauch], and Richard Marks (our editor) “made” the movie as much as I did.” As production designer, Riva was responsible for the overall visual look of the picture, while Cronenweth’s responsibilities as cinematographer encompassed the technical and artistic decisions behind lighting the various scenes and capturing them on film, as well as managing the crews responsible for these tasks. Sadly, shortly after filming began, David Begleman fired Jordan Cronenweth from the production. Thus Cronenweth’s inspiration remained imprinted on the film even after “leaving” the production.



He’s got the look: According to W.D. Richter, Michael Riva was the first person put on payroll for *Buckaroo Banzai*. In this rare photo taken by Richter, Riva explores possible Lectroid wardrobe looks by improvising a “found objects” approach to the Lectroid aesthetic.

Cronenweth’s name immediately caught my attention due to his work as director of photography on *Blade Runner*. He was instrumental in helping to achieve the unique look of that film through his remarkable lighting set-ups, and I couldn’t help but ask if that film had caught Richter’s eye in the lead-up to

BUCKAROO BANZAI

Buckaroo Banzai. Richter responded, “I definitely wanted to bring the *Blade Runner* visual richness to the film because I wanted it to look haunting but sound like *Dr. Strangelove*. Mac’s script triggered that approach for me.”

Cronenweth wasn’t the only *Blade Runner* alum working to deliver *Buckaroo’s* visual punch. Three people are listed as Production Illustrators in the credits for *Buckaroo*: Tom Southwell, Tom Cranham, and Sherman Labby. Of those three, both Southwell and Labby were production illustrators on *Blade Runner* as well.

As fate would have it, the production illustrations in Binder#3 all appear to be the work of Tom Southwell. Southwell signed or stamped the vast majority of his contributions in the binder, making it easily identifiable as his work. That left a few unmarked pages of unknown provenance floating in the binder. I asked Richter for clarification on this point. “Our budget was so limited that no illustrator was on full time,” said Richter. “I think when one of them had finished a bunch of pressing work and left and was unavailable when we needed more, we brought on the best we could find at that time.” Sadly, this information was not much help in narrowing down the specific work of each illustrator.

Given that the bulk of the production illustrations in Binder #3 are signed by Tom Southwell, this section will focus on him and his work as seen in the Buckaroo Banzai Production Binders.

Some of this work has already appeared in the pages of *World Watch One*. Several versions of the Yoyodyne logo appear in the [April 1986](#) issue, as do a sketch of the Blue Blaze Irregular logo on the cover of the [August 1985](#) issue and again in [November 1986](#). A stylized 1950s Jet Car image also appears in the November 1986 issue, while the “Can Hanoi Shan Kill Buckaroo?” comic book cover sketch crops up in the [Fall 2004](#) issue.

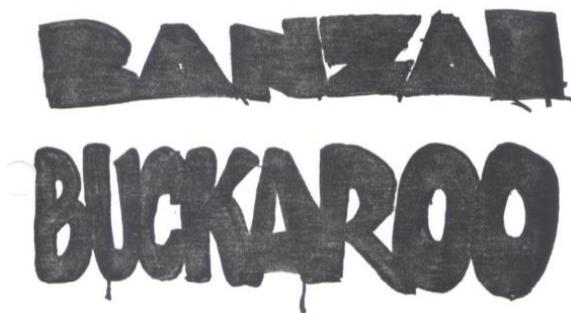
For the purposes of this article, we have done some editing to the images as they originally appear in the binders to make more efficient use of page space for layout purposes. None of the actual logos and sketches have been altered, but their placement on the page and the placement of notes written on the original images may have been shifted from their original appearance.

According to the [Internet Movie Database](#), Tom Southwell's first illustrator credit in film appears in 1979's *The Muppet Movie*. His credits as a production illustrator previous to Buckaroo include *Nice Dreams*, *Heart like a Wheel*, *Stroker Ace*, and uncredited work on the TV miniseries *V*. His best remembered work from this period is probably [from Blade Runner](#), where he was responsible for concept illustrations ranging between Spinner logos and key cards to neon sign designs and [magazine covers](#), and even a makeover of Syd Mead's original design for the vidPhon case.

Southwell's work on *Buckaroo Banzai* was similarly varied. It is difficult to ascertain what percentage of his work on the film is represented in the production binders, but it is clear that his talents were put to a wide variety of uses. In total, the binder contains 82 pages of logo designs and lettering experiments in various degrees of development

Of particular interest are several annotations sprinkled among the sketches. These appear to be a mixture of Southwell's notes to himself—likely gathered from a combination of production meetings and his own brainstorming, and what appears to be director's notes made by Richter. The notes are sometimes a little cryptic. Their primary function was to provide the broad strokes of how to approach a specific design rather than a detailed roadmap. The following is an example pertaining to the development of a specific style of lettering for Buckaroo's logo: "Buckaroo Banzai: Solidarity. Dripping paint. No Western. No Japanese style lettering." Southwell then appears to quote a guiding principal for the design voiced by Richter, "The words themselves say those things." —R.R."

These initial notes are followed by what appear to be an initial stab at hashing out ideas surrounding the principals provided:



This is followed with a note by Southwell reminding himself to ask Richter: "Is this the logo B.B. would use himself?" He then lays out exactly how Buckaroo might use the logo, "On the side of the bus? Comic book? B.B.'s personal mark? Movie title?" There is a line below that followed by further notes for style ideas regarding fonts, "Try bold W.W. II German letters. Gerald Scharff style lettering."

Southwell's note about World War II era German lettering is confusing. A separate page includes two graphic design images in German, presumably to provide reference for the lettering in question, but they appear in conjunction with development of an unused Lectroid banner rather than a Buckaroo logo.

The "Gerald Scharff" reference is also puzzling at first: a Google search of that name failed to reveal anything easily connected to lettering styles of any kind. It is probable that Southwell was referring to [Gerald Scarfe](#), the English illustrator responsible for Pink Floyd's album art on *The Wall* (1979) and the animation sequences in the 1982 film of the same name.

This tracks well with Southwell's "Solidarity" note. Here he is most likely referring to Jerzy Janiszewski logo design created in August 1980 for the Polish Free Trade Unions that defied Soviet law during the Soviet Union's occupation of Poland. The logo became a national symbol of freedom and democracy, themes that might resonate with a hero like Buckaroo. It is also done in a loose style similar to Scarfe's lettering on *The Wall*:

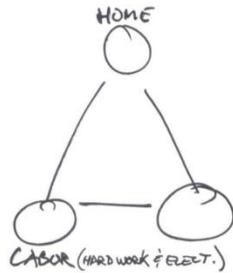


Taking inspiration from both Scarfe's and Janiszewski's designs, Southwell worked up a series of variations on the same look:



Sadly, none of the designs from this line of development managed to make their way into the final film. One of the variants nearly made it by way of the alternate comic book cover seen on page 54 in this issue.

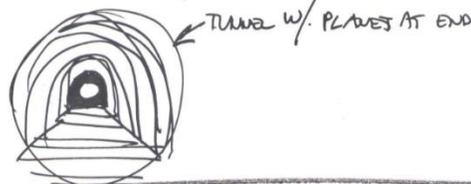
Another rich deposit of annotations appears with the initial design ideas for the Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems logo. The first notes we find are attached to a space shuttle mission patch provided as visual reference. The notes read, “Like McDonald Douglas. Industrial revolution. Desperation. Our craft going back to planet. Combine electricity & manual labor. It will get us back to our planet. Tunnel with planet at end.”



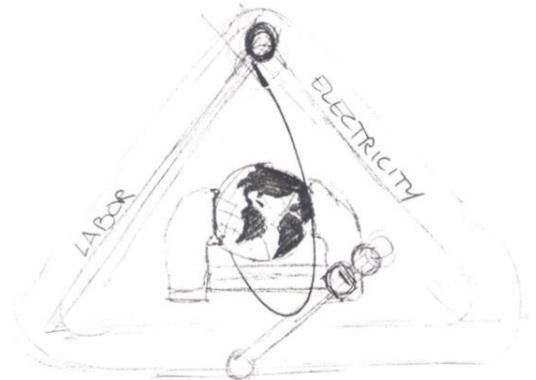
veeee

DESPERATION
OUR CRAFT GOING BACK TO PLANET.
COMBINATION OF ELECTRICITY & MANUAL LABOR
WILL GET US BACK TO OUR PLANET.

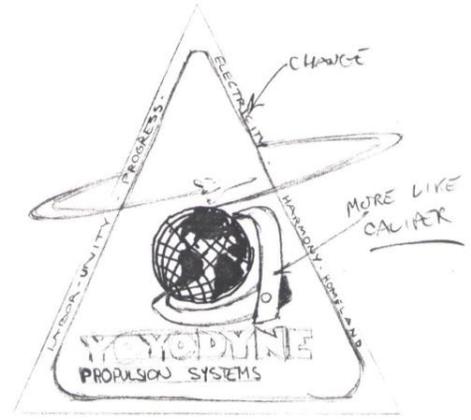
LIKE MACDONALD DOUGLAS
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
DESPERATION
OUR CRAFT GOING BACK TO PLANET.
COMBINE ELECTRICITY & MANUAL LABOR
IT WILL GET US BACK TO OUR PLANET.
TUNNEL WITH PLANET AT END.



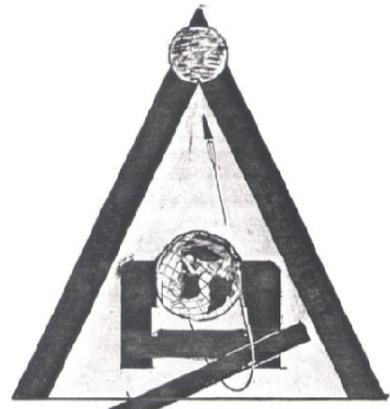
1938 - BANNERS



YOYODYNE



C. 1950's



C. 1950's

Yoyodyne from soup to nuts: The Buckaroo Banzai Production Binders yielded an illuminating overview of the Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems logo from brainstorming (Above) to working through a 1950s version of the logo (Right, Top to Bottom). It is clear that “desperation” was a difficult abstraction to weave into the design, represented perhaps by the Earth caught in the same vice-like grip the Lectroids’ feel in exile on a goddamn planet of monkey boys.

This first stab at riffing off a combination of Lectroid characteristics (electricity, industry), motivations and actions (desperation, manual labor, going home, etc.), and ways to visualize those attributes (visual reference, “tunnel with planet at end”) is accompanied by a second page that frames some of these features visually. A note accompanies the sketches, reaffirming the concepts, “Desperation. Our craft going back to planet. Combination of electricity & manual labor will get us back to our planet.” There is also a brief note that reads, “1938—Banners,” at the bottom of the page.

Only one sketch of a Lectroid banner appears in the production documents. By contrast Southwell’s work on the the Yoyodyne logo was long and involved. The logo went through an evolution of sorts, beginning with how it might have first appeared with the rise of the company in the 1950s. This version of the logo in particular appears to be the sandbox in which Southwell experimented with visualizing the attributes spelled out in his initial notes. Three different versions of the logo from this era appear among his production illustration sketches in various degrees of development and polish. The final design in the sequence introduced many of the elements that appear in the logo as seen in the film, but the incorporation of “Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems” within the design remained unresolved.

Southwell abandoned the triangular configuration to focus on refining the caliper motif and Yoyodyne lettering in his 1960s and 1970s versions of the logo. It is interesting to note that the shape of the stylized missile or rocket launching from Earth in the design

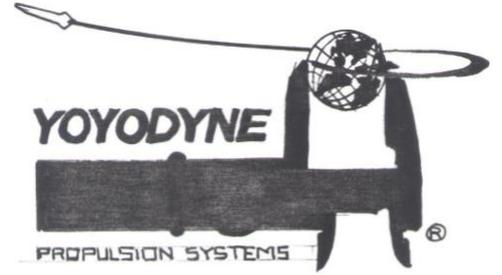
also changes from design to design, while the earth itself appears as a globe from the 1950s through the 1970s designs.

The 1980s logo resolves all of these experiments into the design seen in the movie. The triangular design of the 1950s is back, now merged with a slightly simplified version of the caliper design from the 60s and 70s versions. The globe motif has been replaced with a plain circle, which could just as easily serve as a representation of either Earth or Planet 10. The logo that appears here is one step removed from its final draft, as notes from Richter indicate that the design should be flopped along the horizontal axis and the “Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems” text enlarged.

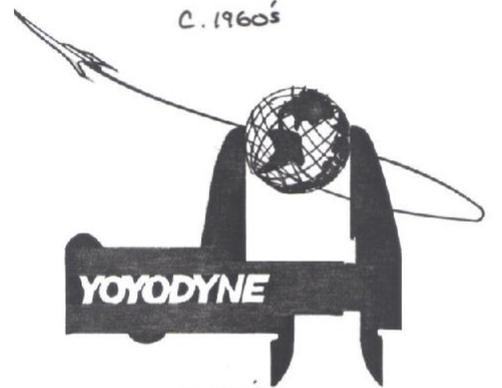
Another logo with a notable evolution is the Blue Blaze Irregular patch seen on Scooter Lindley’s hat in the film. From all appearances given the documents available, the Blue Blaze logo was more or less born full grown from the head of Southwell and approved by Richter on May 9, 1983. A series of four tiny doodles playing with alternate takes on the design appear on the same page, but it is unclear if they were predecessors of the design or variants sketched out for further exploration.

What is clear is that, by May 18, Southwell developed two slight variations on the same design for what a note describes as a “Hand wrought bronze or iron [logo] for a gambling house *or* branding iron.” One of the designs shows two Bs in a circle facing away from one another. A second shows two Bs in a circle facing inwards towards one another. Eventually, the variant with the two Bs facing outwards from one another was adopted as the design for the kaleidoscopic display of the film’s opening title sequence just before the opening crawl describing Buckaroo’s convoluted upbringing and imminent assault on the dimension barrier.

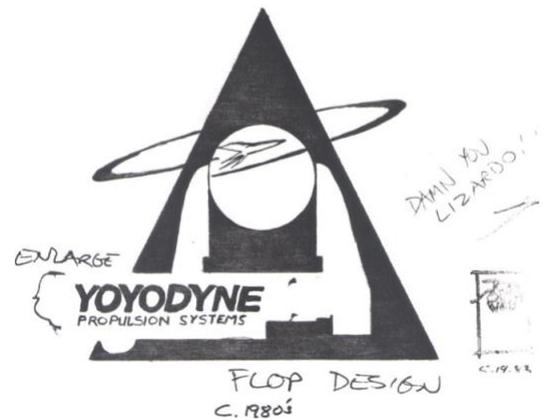
On May 23, Southwell was back at playing with the “branding iron” variation of the logo again, this time with the inward and outward facing Bs in a square rather than a circle. This design is reminiscent of seals often found on Japanese wood block prints, but it is unclear what function they were designed to serve in the film. This may be an indicator of why the designs were absent in the movie: they were simply an experiment that never found a use on screen. Such casualties of the design process are not unusual, but it is a shame that such an attractive logo went fallow.



C. 1960s

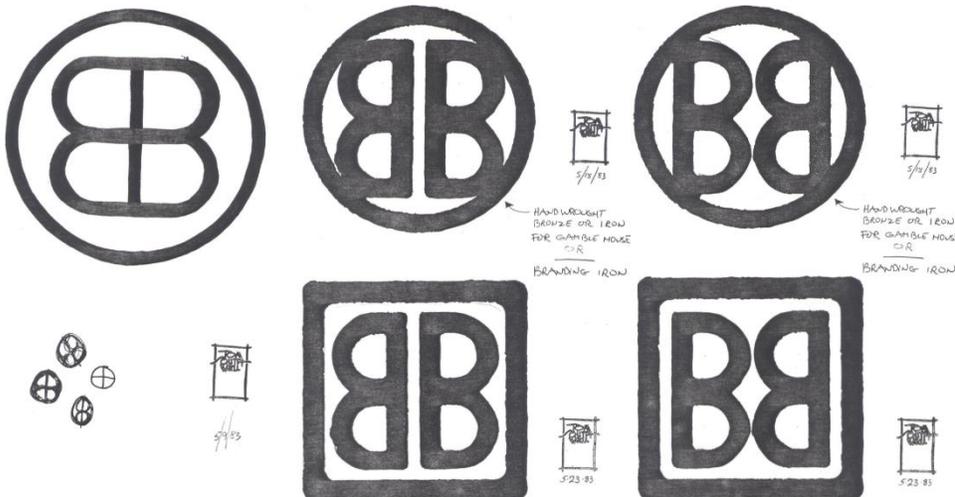


C. 1970s

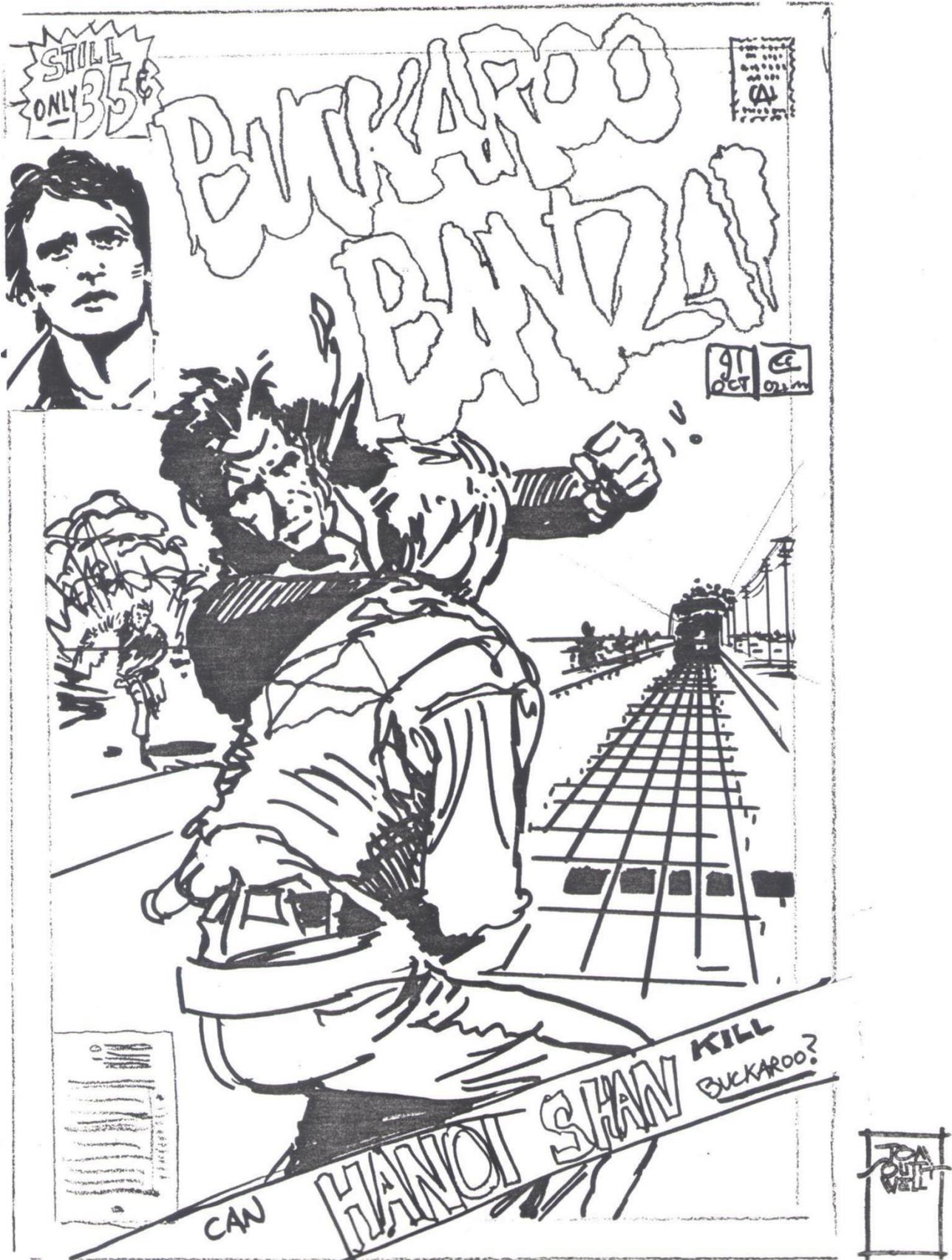


FLOP DESIGN
C. 1980s

Above: Tom Southwell takes the Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems logo through its paces in designs from the 1960s (**Top**), 1970s (**Middle**) and 1980s (**Bottom**). A note from W.D. Richter saying “Damn you Lizardo!” can be seen scribbled to the right of the 1980s version of the logo. Clearly the sense of fun actors and crew often associate with the making of *Buckaroo Banzai* started from the top with Richter.



Left: Of note amongst the Blue Blaze Irregular and “branding iron” logo designs is the inclusion of dates and Southwell’s trademark stamp. Less certain is what the dates represent. Many of the illustrations found in the binder are stamped but not dated, while some of the stamped work appears to be dated in a different hand than others. Typically, illustrations are stamped and dated to represent a locked design or director approval for use in a film. The presence of a second set of handwritten dates may indicate images dated by Southwell for his own reference.

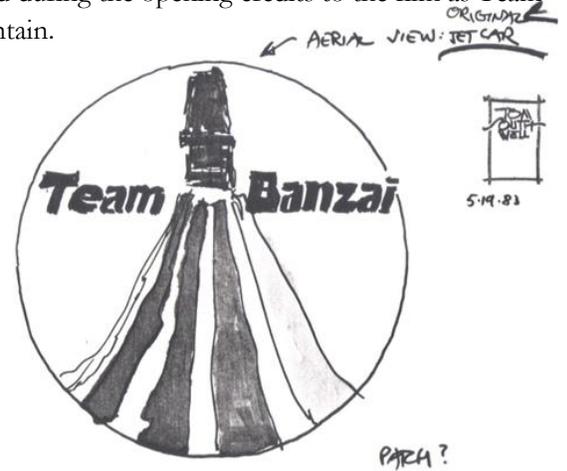
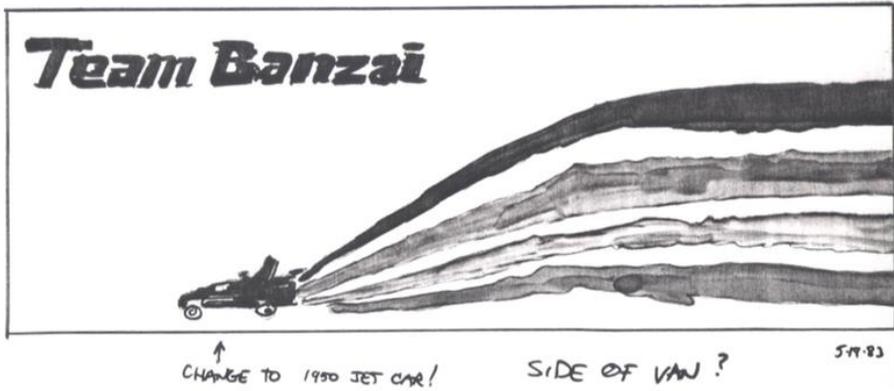


Can Hanoi Shan Kill Buckaroo? This alternate take on a Buckaroo Banzai comic book cover by Tom Southwell was one of several concept illustrations left unused from the pre-production process.

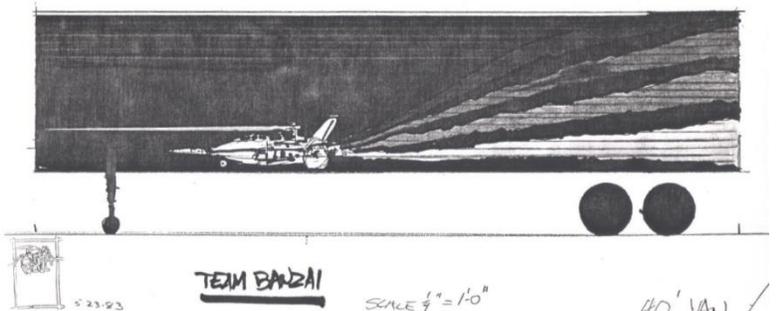
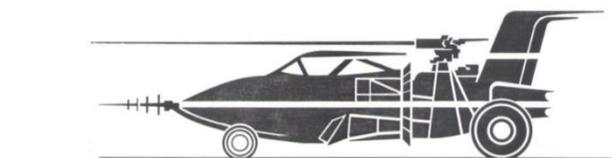
BANZAI INSTITUTE FOR BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING AND STRATEGIC INFORMATION 54

The day after Southwell's "Branding Iron" logo was approved, the beginnings of the Team Banzai Jet Car logo emerged on May 19, 1983. Two versions—a rectangular logo showing the 1980's Jet Car in profile complete with flames surging behind it, and the more familiar circular design with the Jet Car and flames seen from above—appear in the binder. Richter wrote the word "Patch?" as a question next to the circular design, indicating perhaps that the design was created first as a part of a general program of brainstorming and later identified as a candidate for the Team Banzai Jet Car patches seen in the film.

Richter requested that the 1950's Jet Car replace its 1980's counterpart and Southwell was off to the races. A second note by Richter muses if the rectangular logo should appear on the side of a van. Instead, the logo was developed to appear on the side of a semi-trailer. A second semi-trailer bears the circular logo shown above, but it is unclear what vintage of Jet Car appears on it. The semi-trailers appear briefly in a "blink and you'll miss it" moment deep in the background during the opening credits to the film as Team Banzai prepares the Jet Car for its trip past the sound barrier and through the mountain.

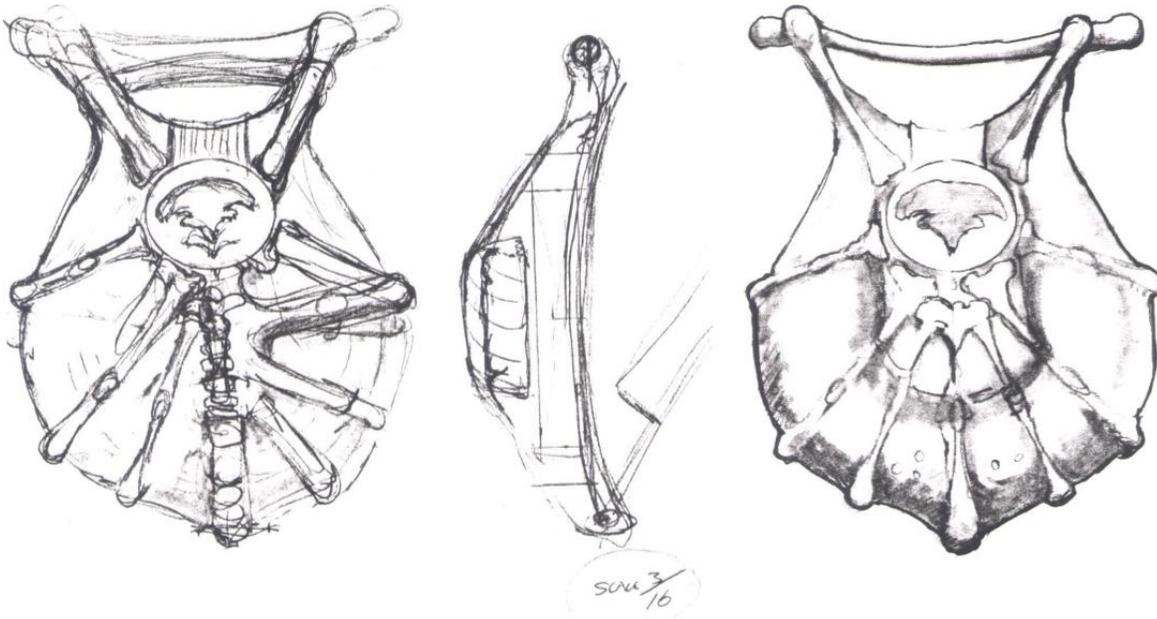


The Team Banzai Jet Car logo appears as both a side view (Top Left) and an aerial view (Top Right) of the jet car in these two designs both dated May 19, 1983. The circular aerial version does not receive further treatment within the pages of the production binder, but an updated design featuring the 1950's Jet Car and an alternative incorporation of the "Team Banzai" text (Right) appears to be a lineal descendant of this early concept work. Meanwhile, the rectangular design and the 1950's Jet Car incorporated within it saw a great deal of further exploration within the production binder, taking up no fewer than twelve pages—or approximately 1/8th of the entire binder. The annotated initial sketch of the 1950's Jet Car (Bellow Left) and the finished version (Bottom Left) used for the semi-trailer logo (Bellow Right), also seen in a May 23, 1983 sketch drawn to a scale of 1/4 inch = 1 foot (Bottom Right). Photo courtesy of the Todd Archives.



The majority of the production illustrations fall along similar lines. Of the eighty-two documents in the binder, twelve are devoted to the Team Banzai logo, thirteen to the Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems logo, twenty seven map out a broad range of lettering and font experiments, and six work their way through the Blue Blaze Irregular logo design. The balance of the pages are an eclectic mishmash of obsolete logos, Jet Car illustrations, even an alternate comic book cover for the “latest issue” of *Buckaroo Banzai* that appeared in the film.

Mixed in with these more representative offerings are several other illustrations of note. Two pages are devoted to what appears to be a piece of Lectroid technology, inspired perhaps by the shape of a horseshoe crab shell. No annotations accompany the images, so it is difficult to tell for certain exactly what the sketches are supposed to represent. Given the almost breastplate-like shape of the object, it is possible that the sketches are for an early version of the breather vests that allow Buckaroo and the Hong Kong Cavaliers to see past the Lectroid disguises to reveal their true forms. The only other clue is that the sketch is at 3/16 scale. The rest is left to conjecture.

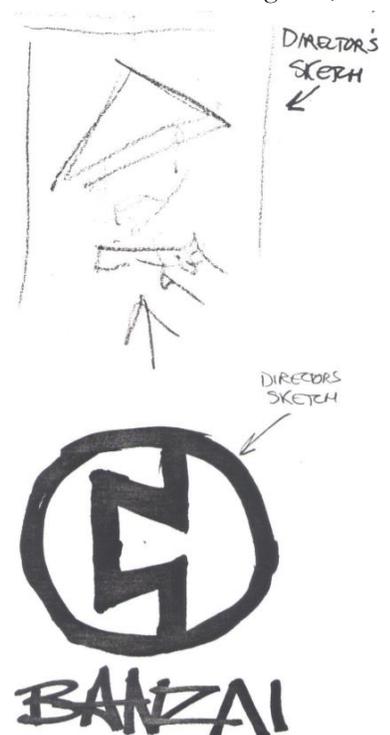


Arcana and addenda: While the majority of the production illustrations within the production binders fall into easily determined categories, (logos, font selections, visual reference, etc.), this sequence of images (**Left**) proved elusive. They appear to be objects of Lectroid technology, but no notes were found to explain them. More easily identified and better marked are two sketches drawn by W.D. Richter (**Below**) as reference for further development during pre-production. In addition to Richter’s annotations throughout,

Two of the director’s own sketches appear in the binder as well. One is an extremely rough sketch of Hanoi Xan that appears in conjunction with the sketches and notes for the alternate comic book cover. The same page contains a rough sketch of Xan by Southwell in which the World Crime League boss menaces an unseen adversary with a hand gun. If you cross your eyes and hold the sketch a couple of feet away from your face, it is possible to imagine that Southwell’s Xan sketch was based on notes that artist Michael Wm. Kaluta later developed into the comic book cover prop seen in the film (and discussed in our [March 2019 issue](#)). Richter also sketched a Banzai logo that appears in the binder. Southwell refined this design as part of his production illustrations duties, but the concept appears to be one of several “roads not taken” among the logos.

There are several absences among the production illustrations, most notably the Banzai Institute seal, the red and white 88 logo, and the triangular BB logo seen most prominently on the grill of the World Watch One bus. Without access to a more comprehensive catalogue of production illustrations and people familiar with exactly which production artists worked on what during pre-production, much is left to speculation. Tom Southwell was unavailable for an interview.

What is clear is that there was much more in store for the illustration team than logos and fonts. Envisioning the “look” of a film is only one of several fronts tackled by the production illustrators, as we will see in our next article about storyboards.

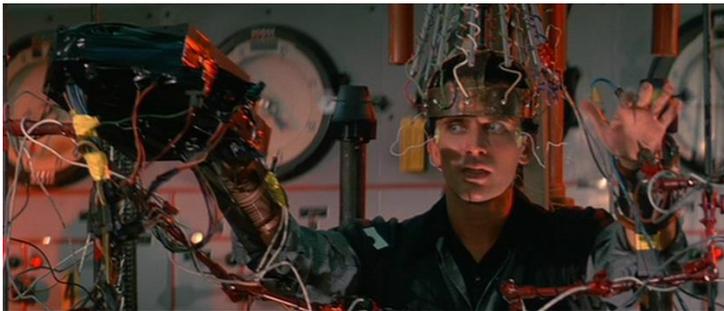


Storyboards

Sean Murphy

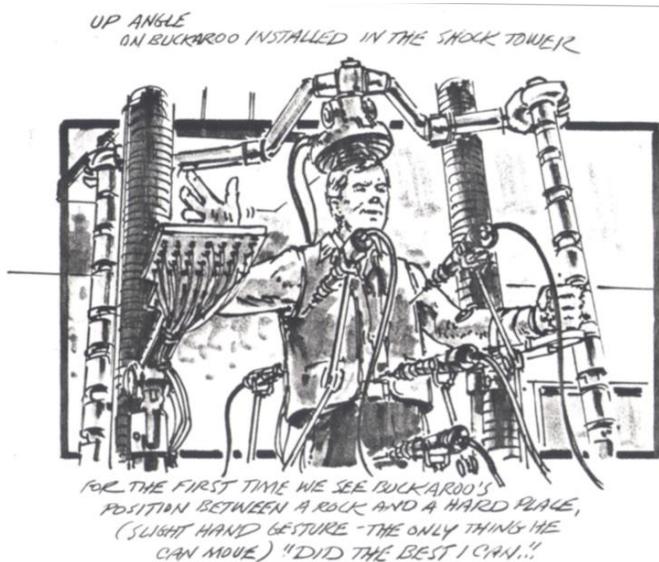
The production binders purchased by Ernie Cline are a treasure trove of Banzai materials but the crown jewel has to be the production storyboards. According to Wikipedia, a storyboard is, "...a graphic organizer in the form of illustrations or images displayed in sequence for the purpose of pre-visualizing a motion picture, animation, motion graphic or interactive media sequence." The storyboards give a look and feel to the script by showing how the shots might be composed for the screen and providing the details needed to convey the script visually.

For example, when the script says that Buckaroo is put into a shock tower by Lizardo, what does that mean? What does the shock tower look like? By looking at the storyboards we know that this:

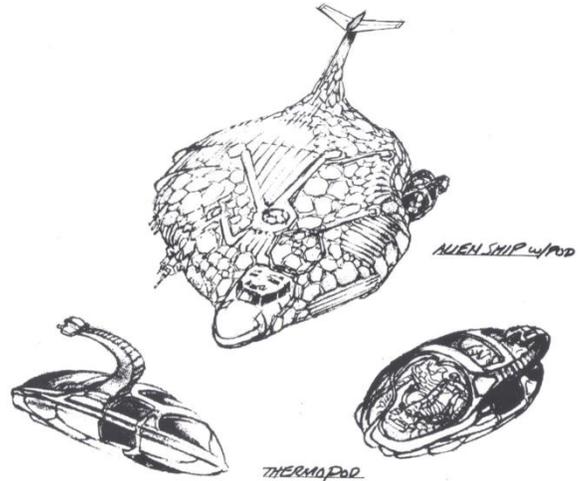


Source: MGM Universal

...started out as this:



Storyboards also give us the opportunity to see how things can change from this pre-visualization stage to the final film. The design of the Lectoroid's escape ship and thermopod, as found in the storyboards, show a more scaly look combined with actual parts from an Earth based ship. The movie went for a more organic look for both of the Lectoroid ships.



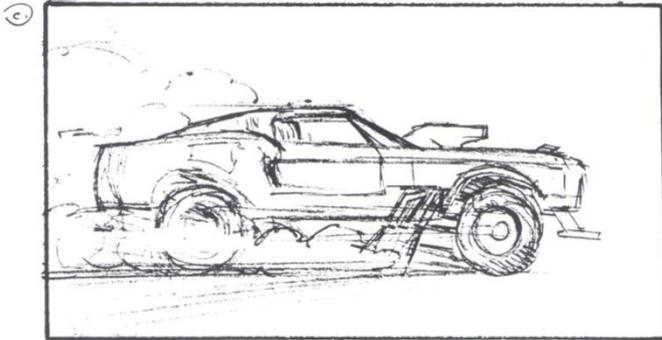
The documents found in the production binders are composed of 363 pages of **Buckaroo Banzai** storyboards, once several duplicate storyboards were removed. There are six full color pages of storyboards that depicted an early concept for the Eighth Dimension.

There were three production illustrators on the crew for Buckaroo Banzai; Tom Southwell, Tom Cranham, and Sherman Labby. We aren't sure exactly who was the primary storyboard artist, or how the works was divided up. The storyboards cover seven sequences found in the **Shields Against the Devil** script dated September 17th, 1982 (with the hunter sequence represented twice) and there are not storyboards for every sequence in the film. The storyboarded sequences found in the Essential Buckaroo are:

- 1) Jet Car is attacked by missiles and goes through the mountain to the Eighth Dimension (156 pages)
- 2) Emilio Lizardo's first attempt with an overthruster, which ends with him possessed by Whorfin (28 pages)
- 3) Three duck hunters discover the Thermopod and Buckaroo Banzai is chased (43 pages)
- 4) Two duck hunters discover the Thermopod and Buckaroo Banzai is chased (42 pages)
- 5) John Parker drops off a package at the Banzai Institute (26 pages)
- 6) Buckaroo drives the Jet Car into Yoyodyne (24 pages)
- 7) Banzai and Lizardo fight in the sky (17 pages)
- 8) Banzai Optical effects (8 pages)

There is no way that we can cover all of these storyboards in an article, so we're just going to focus on the section with the jet car. Although these storyboards are in order, we have removed some in-between pages for space concerns.

The first revelation found in the storyboards is that the Jet Car is actually a Jet CAR, not a truck, as is seen in the film.



CAR BLASTS PAST CAM... (MATCH CUT TO)



Source: MGM Universal

The second revelation is that the Jet Car is attacked by soldiers with rocket launchers and machine guns, as found in the *Shields Against the Devil* script. This sequence makes it even more relevant for the Secretary of Defense to be on hand to see what happens.



CAM ANGLES ROUND 180° TO SHOW BUCKAROO INTENSE AT THE CONTROLS... (CUT TO)

1. Cam angles round 180° to show Buckaroo intense at the controls...(cut to)



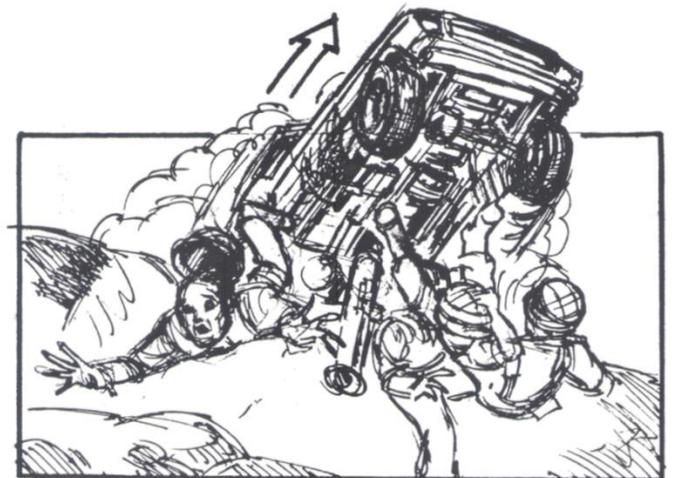
ANGLE ON MISSILE TEAM—TRACKING 'BUCKAROO'S' CAR (CUT TO)

2. Angle on missile team—tracking Buckaroo's car (cut to)



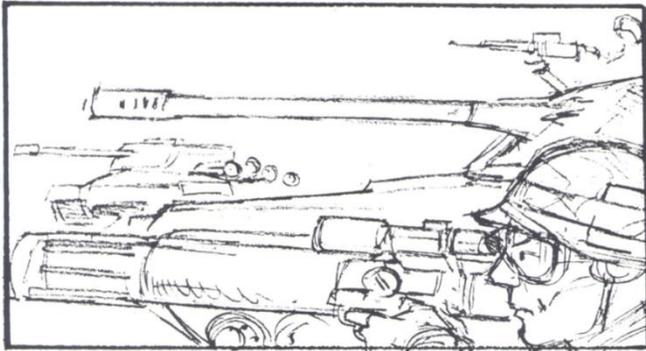
ANGLE CLOSE OVER GUNNERS SHOULDER... CAR IS ON TOP OF THEM... (CUT TO)

3. Angle close over gunners [sic] shoulder. Car is on top of them...(cut to)



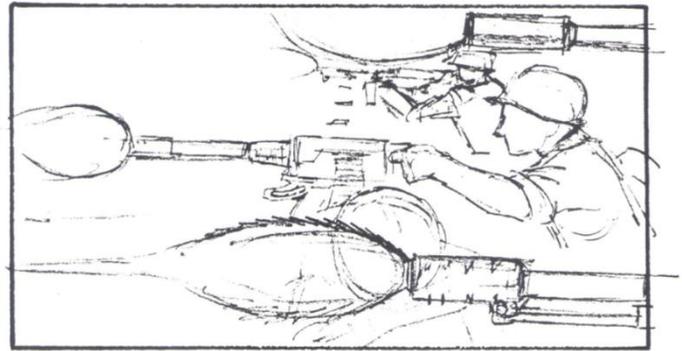
LOW ANGLE IN FOXHOLE—EAGLES DIVE FOR COVER AS JET CAR BECOMES AIRBORNE ABOVE THEIR HEADS... (CUT TO)

4. Low angle in foxhole—Eagles dive for cover as Jet Car becomes airborne above their heads... (cut to)



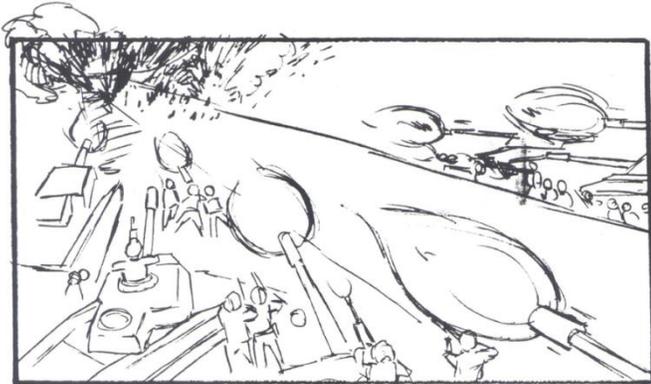
ANGLE ON EXPECTANT EAGLES...

5. Angle on expectant Eagles...



ANGLE ON EAGLES—GUNS BLAZING

6. Angle on Eagles—guns blazing



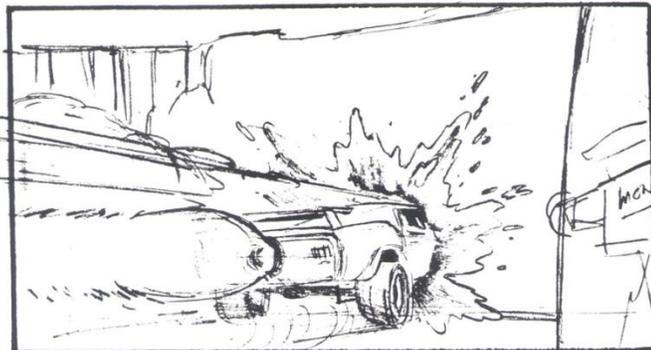
ANGLE PAST EAGLES DOWN ROAD BUCK MUST PASS... COMPLETELY ENVELOPED IN FIRE... (CUT TO)

7. Angle past Eagles down road Buck must pass... completely enveloped in fire...(cut to)



ANOTHER ANGLE UP THE ROAD AS JET CAR EMERGES FROM FIRESTORM—WORST EVER... (CUT TO)

8. Another angle up the road as Jet Car emerges firestorm—worst ever...(cut to)

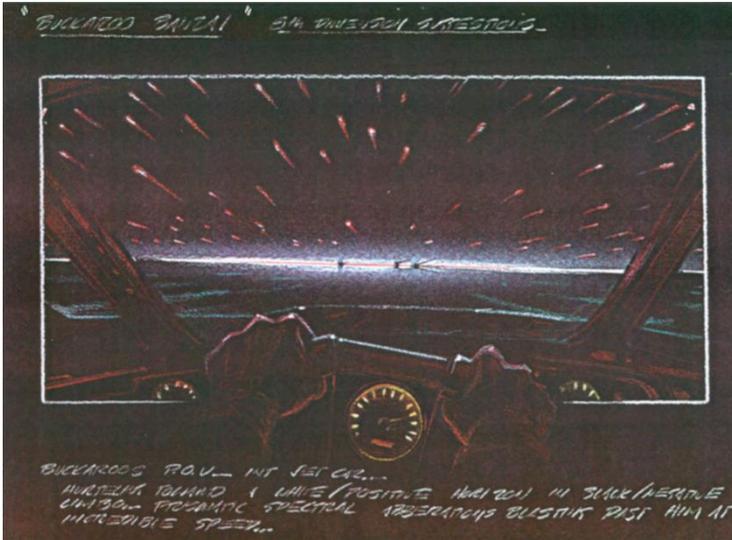


ANGLE CLOSE ON CLIFF WALL—JET CAR IMPACTS (IMPACT EFX?)

9. Angle close on cliff wall—Jet Car impacts (impact EFX?)

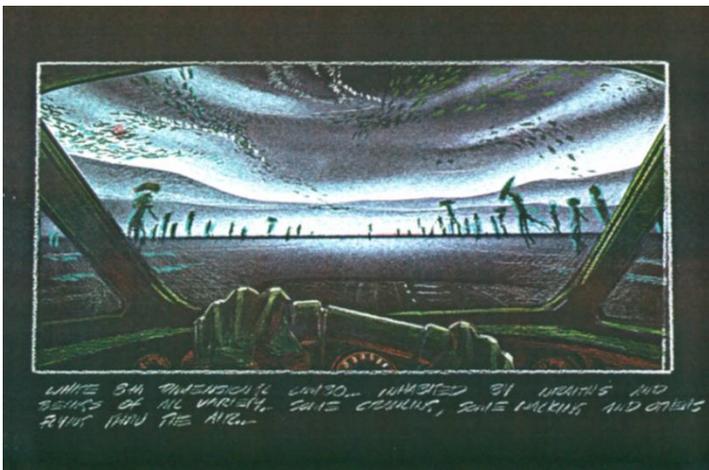


Finally, the storyboards take us through the Eighth Dimension and do something we've never seen in a storyboard before; they show what the Eighth Dimension might look like in color!

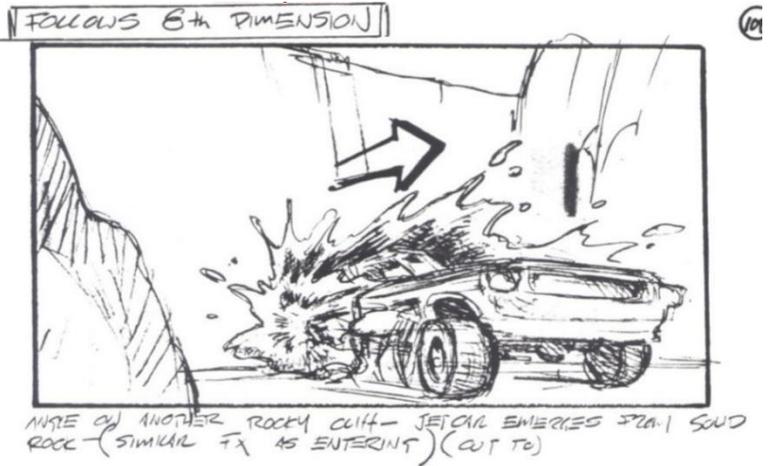


10. **“Buckaroo Banzai” 8th Dimension Suggestions**
 Buckaroo P.O.V.—Int Jet Car...hurtling toward a white/positive horizon in black/negative limbo... prismatic spectral [sic] aberrations [sic] blasting past him at incredible speed...

11. **Angle on Buckaroo various interactive lite [sic] sources bathing him in polychromatic lite [sic]...as the Jet Car continues to slow and he emerges into...**



12. **White 8th dimensional limbo...inhabited by wraiths and beasts of all variety...some crawling, some walking and others flying thru the air...**



13. **Follows 8th Dimension Angle on another rocky cliff—Jet Car emerges from solid rock (same FX as entering) (cut to)**

You may wonder why, if the jet car attack sequence was storyboarded, it did not end up on screen. The easiest answer to this question is that the script used for the storyboards, *Shields Against the Devil: Another Buckaroo Banzai Thriller* by Earl Mac Rauch (Second Draft 9/17/82), was not the final shooting script. By the time they got to the final script, called *Buckaroo Banzai* by Earl Mac Rauch (Shooting Script, Revised Third Draft, 4/29/83), the jet car attack sequence had been removed.

While it's sad that the sequence was cut, it's easy to imagine that budget constraints probably had something to do with its removal. The jet car attack sequence would not have been cheap to shoot, especially with the need for extras, vehicles, weapons,

the fake version of the Kremlin for Buckaroo to drive through (See storyboard images from this in next article), and the cost of stunt work and explosions.

The storyboards provide a fascinating look at how much visual thinking and pre-work goes into putting together a film and how the storyboards help bring the script to life. While there is not a one-to-one correlation between the storyboards and the released film, you can clearly see the film we love outlined there.

The jet car attack sequence was not the only difference between the script in the production binders and the final shooting script as we'll see in the following Script Comparison article.

Script Comparison

By Steve Mattsson

Shields Against the Devil: Another Buckaroo Banzai
Thriller Second Draft 9/17/82

Buckaroo Banzai Shooting Script—Revised Third Draft
3/30/83

A deep dive into the Buckaroo Banzai Production Binders gives us the chance compare an earlier version of the screenplay and the shooting script. Although a later version of the shooting script exists, we are using the one dated 3/30/83 because it is the one most readily available on the internet.

http://www.scifiscripts.com/scripts/banzai_script.txt

The Revised Third Draft of the *Buckaroo Banzai* screenplay is very close to the filmed version. *Shields Against the Devil* contains some significant differences.

The character Pecos is an active participant in *Shields*, but was “in Tibet” during the later version. Pecos mainly filled Reno’s role in *Shields*. Reno was still around, but he had fewer lines.

The biggest difference between the two scripts came during the Jet Car sequence. As part of the test, General Catbird deployed a company of elite troops who tried to destroy the Jet Car while Buckaroo appeared to attack the Kremlin. Here is some dialogue from that sequence:

GENERAL CATBIRD

It's fast. I'll give Banzai that.

GENERAL CATBIRD

(raising binoculars)

You can run. But you can't hide...not from the talons of my Screaming Eagles.

SENATOR CUNNINGHAM

Personally, General Catbird, I don't think Buckaroo's trying to hide. He's using a fast machine to teach certain slow minds a lesson: all the high-tech hardware in the world is useless against one American boy in a good car.



GENERAL CATBIRD

Let me point something out, Madame Senator from Detroit, war is a demolition derby, not a stock car race.

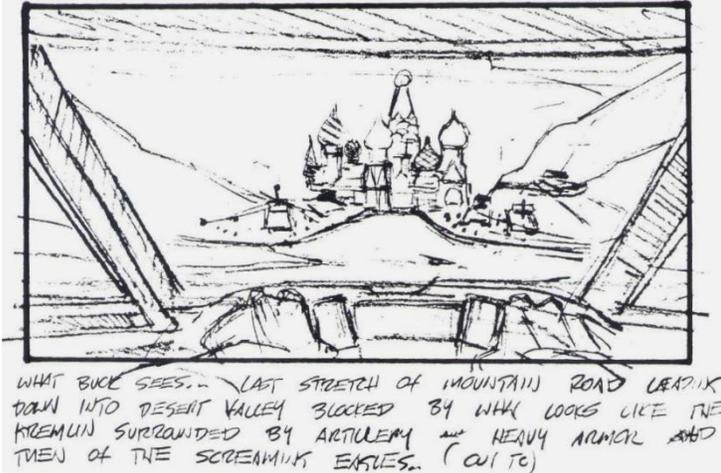
Despite the troops’ best efforts, Buckaroo rams the Jet Car through a cloth façade of the Kremlin. He then rockets toward a familiar mountain range and his date with the Eighth Dimension. As a set piece in an action movie, the “troops vs. the Jet Car” is exciting, but when conducting a scientific experiment, you want to eliminate as many variables as possible. It’s doubtful that Buckaroo and Hikita would choose to complicate the Overthruster test like this. In the end, cutting the sequence probably came down to a matter of budget. This line from the filmed version saved the production thousands and thousands of dollars in special effects.*

GENERAL CATBIRD

It's fast. I'll give Banzai that, but one heat seeking missile and he's history.

Perhaps, General Catbird, perhaps not.

An odd sequence, unique to *Shields*, is where a “cornball emcee” introduces The Hong Kong Cavaliers prior to their gig at Artie’s Artery. Initially, he is just awkward and unfunny. Later his patter devolves into paranoia, until he has a mental breakdown on stage. Uncharacteristically, Buckaroo chooses to subdue him physically rather than treat his condition medically. Then the music starts and we’re back at the Artie’s we know and love.



Another change is that after Dr. Lizardo escapes from the insane asylum, he short circuits the Banzai video game at a pizza parlor where “wayward youths” are listening to Hong Kong Cavalier music on the juke box.

In the filmed version, Buckaroo commandeers a Harley when a motorcycle convention sets up at the hotel where the infamous press conference occurs. In *Shields*, a circus troop is unloading equipment. Buckaroo takes a fancy circus Honda and it’s a clown who says, “Hey, you can’t ride that!” Later, large plumes of pink and blue smoke pour from its exhaust pipes and trick handlebars come off in Buckaroo’s hands while he pursues the Yoyodyne van.

The duck hunter sequence and Buckaroo’s escape play out differently in *Shields*. There are three duck hunters and it’s only a two man thermopod (no Jon Valuk). The state trooper is happy to let the executives from Yoyodyne clean up the mess. They do this by bringing in a helicopter to lift the black thermopod back to Yoyodyne. Buckaroo rescues Hikita and then takes his place inside the crate. Buckaroo escapes once he’s inside the Yoyodyne compound, but is re-captured when he hails a cab driven by the escaped Lizardo. Buckaroo escapes again when John Gant self-destructs the thermopod, killing many red aliens.

Other small differences:

- Buckaroo’s father, Masado Banzai is called Takeo Banzai.
- As seen previously, General Catburd’s name is spelled “Catbird.”
- There’s a roadside billboard on the way to Yoyodyne, with heavy foreshadowing, that reads, “GROVER’S MILL, NEW JERSY, THE TOWN ORSON WELLS MADE FAMOUS...VISIT THE WAR OF THE WORLDS MUSEUM, 10 MILES.”

- Mrs. Johnson is “a kindly old lady” with all of the same lines as the teenage Mrs. Johnson, except for the addition of, “My stars...”
- Billy Travers is 12-years old, which makes his line, “My phone phreaks went into town for the big ice cream social...” a little less weird.
- John Emdall looks like [Lola Falana](#).
- The Black Aliens are targeting Moscow instead of Smolensk.
- There are three strike groups at Yoyodyne—Apache Team led by Reno, Bronco Team lead by Pecos, and Chaparral Team lead by Perfect Tommy (A, B, & C). All are equipped with flame throwers.
- The Secretary of Defense accidentally shoots himself in the leg during the assault on Yoyodyne.

There is some holdover from an even earlier version of the Banzai script, *Lepers From Saturn: A Buckaroo Banzai Adventure*. In *Shields Against the Devil*, the aliens are from Saturn rather than Planet 10. A famous sequence from the film reads like this in *Shields*:

DOCTOR LIZARDO

So where are we going? Tell me!

RED INSECTS

To Saturn!

DOCTOR LIZARDO

When?

RED INSECTS

Real soon!

The last significant difference between the scripts is obvious from the above. In the film, the aliens are Lectroids. In the *Buckaroo Banzai* Shooting Script they are Arachtoids. In *Shields*, they are giant insects with mandibles. The Lectroids’ red & black coloration, penchant for sweets, and use of terrestrial ants for torture are all artifacts from when they were giant ant-like creatures in earlier versions of the script. Scooter describes the poison from the aliens’ stingers as, “Formic acid. Ant venom.” Giant ants with clacking mandibles would have been terrifying, but more expensive and less expressive than the Lectroids we’re familiar with from the filmed version.

The Essential Buckaroo:

By DeWayne Todd



Photo by DeWayne Todd

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai has a fascinating element of realism to it. Often hard to describe, the film is frequently referred to as a “docudrama”, portraying fictional events in the context of the real world. The science, technology, and political climate of the film makes it feel as if Buckaroo Banzai and the Banzai Institute are only one small step removed from our reality and the story is only an extension of the world in which we live.

Within the assortment of documents that formed *The Essential Buckaroo* is a collection of 145 pages of magazine articles, newspaper clippings and book excerpts, taken from the “real world” that create a contextual background for Buckaroo Banzai.

Compiled by “Mrs. Eunice Johnson: Archivist—Knight of the Blue Shield,” this collection includes assorted “hand written” notes from Buckaroo and other members of Team Banzai, as well as highlighted sections to give insights into the connection between realities. It is clear that the creative team of Richter and Rauch were focused on bringing a sense of credibility to the events of the movie and book. As American author, Robert E. Howard once wrote to H.P. Lovecraft, “I like to have my background and setting as accurate and realistic as I can.”

More than simply being a random stack of clippings about events, perspectives, and news items that might have inspired the telling of the story, these articles form a framework for *Across the Eighth Dimension* that makes the film believable.

By creating a detailed index and categorization of these fifty-five separate clippings, the seemingly random and disconnected readings can be broken into several distinct categories which sheds a fascinating insight to the connection between the realm of Buckaroo Banzai and the real world.

Index of the Sampling of Readings

Character

- *Singing Cowboys Ride the Comeback Trail*
- *Riders of the Range: Gene Autry*—Book Chapter
- *Where Have You Gone Captain Midnight?*
- *Why Chivalry Still Lives in the United States*

Philosophy

- *The Simplification of Life*
- *A Word About Craftsman Architecture*
- *Embracing All Human Powers*—Advertisement
- *Self-Hypnosis*—*Tapes for Weight, Smoking*

Medical

- *Inside the Brain: The Only Way to Learn Neurosurgery is to Open People’s Skulls*
- *Amputees’ Device Being Developed*
- *New Lens for ‘Blind’ Tried Out by Doctors*
- *A Mouthful of Rock Isn’t Quite Her Taste in Music*
- *Ions Created by Winds May Prompt Changes in Emotional States*
- *Electricity and Bone Healing*
- *The Body Electric*
- *Heart Arrhythmias (Or: Problems with the Ticking of Our Ticker)*
- *Taste Buds...*
- *Ion Cloud*—Advertisement
- *The Medical Consequences of Nuclear War*

Biology

- *Dr. Hartman’s List of Lethal Foliage*
- *Green Beans That Grow 5-Foot Long and Weigh Up to 75 Pounds Each!*

Science

- *Far Out Physics*
- *Physics’ Newest Frontier: Unified Theory*
- *The Case of the Missing Mass*
- *The Cosmic Code: Quantum Physics as the Language of Nature*
- *Tornadoes, Williams Plaza Hotel and You*

Character

There can be many influences on an individual like Buckaroo Banzai and from the compiled items in the *Essential Buckaroo*, a couple of specific influences are emphasized.

For example, Gene Autry is the subject of multiple clippings. Also known as the Singing Cowboy, Autry made his film debut in the 1935 cross-over science-fiction, musical, western serial *The Phantom Empire*, which features an underground empire with towering buildings, robots, ray-guns, advanced television, and elevator tubes that extend miles beneath the surface of the earth. The parallels between Buckaroo Banzai, who is also a crooning cowboy in a science fiction tale are not hard to see. Interestingly, Gene Autry is the only celebrity to have five Stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, each earned for a different talent that he possessed, much like Buckaroo being a master of many different fields.

It was also Gene Autry who drew up the “Ten Commandments of the Cowboy,” a set of guidelines that stress core virtues like truthfulness, patriotism, respect for women, and religious and racial tolerance. These “Commandments” echo the core values of Buckaroo and Team Banzai.

Another famous personality, that is highlighted in the readings is radio and television star of the early fifties, Captain Midnight. As the successor to Little Orphan Annie, Midnight led a “Secret Society” with over 500,000 members. All it took was the top of a jar of Ovaltine to be added to the roster and receive a special “members only” ring. The “Secret Squadron” espoused core values like helping one another, being loyal to your country, and obeying your parents and was a clear parallel to the Blue Blaze Irregulars. “Justice through strength and courage” was the official motto of Captain Midnight’s followers and the same might easily have been extended to Buckaroo’s own network of resources. A handwritten note on the article declares, “Brought to my attention by Junior Knight of the Blue Shield, Scooter Lindley. Promote this boy? Shows great promise.”

A final clipping in this category takes a fascinating look at why chivalry has disappeared from most of the world but still survives in America through traditional heroes and role models like John Wayne, Jack Kennedy, the Lone Ranger, and Superman. According to the article which is taken from a book entitled *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, the code of chivalry emphasizes the importance of “Romantic love infrequently consummated, protection of women and children, courage, truthfulness, physical prowess, idealized sport, piety, loyalty, selflessness and sacrifice.” These are certainly virtues that the writer of the book (Mark Girouard) might have ascribed to Buckaroo Banzai, had he read of Buckaroo’s high moral character and the Five Stresses, Four Beauties and Three Loves.

Philosophy

Several articles in the area of philosophy emphasize the importance of living a simple life that is focused on taking pleasure in the quality of one’s workmanship. Two of extracts are taken from books written in 1909 and 1912 by Gustav Stickley who wrote about architectural design but emphasized

the importance of simplicity, sincerity, and finding “beauty in daily life,” the message behind Buckaroo’s iconic headband kanji.

The note, “How true,” is scrawled next to an extract from a book written in 1887 by Edward Carpenter that focuses on what is important and how trivial matters have so absorbed people’s minds (in the late 1800’s mind you) that, “if a chariot of fire were sent to fetch us, ten to one we should not see it.”

Also included in the readings is an advertisement for a series of “training courses” by one Edmund Shaftsbury who wrote books on developing personal magnetism and advanced mental exercises that would aid improving self, mastering conflict, controlling others, and practicing thought transference. The author wrote over a hundred such books in the late 1800’s and into the 1920’s. This advertisement has a handwritten note from Buckaroo stating, “Did Shaftsbury know father? Ask the Professor.”

These philosophical perspectives of mental strength, self-improvement, and simplicity echo the core tenants of Buckaroo’s way of life.

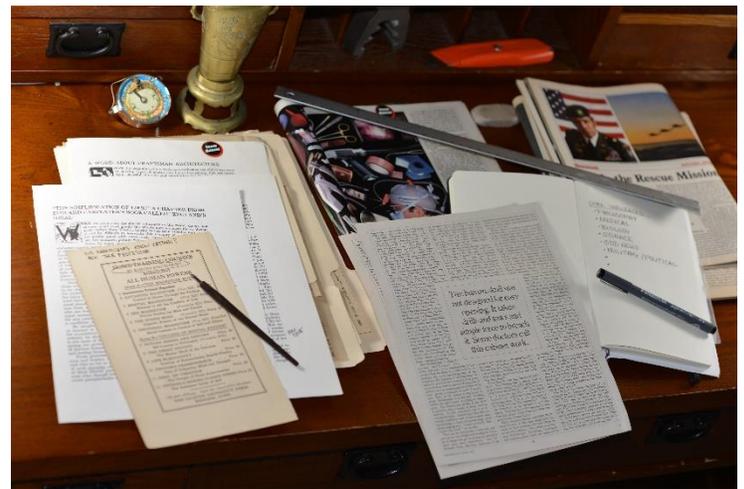


Photo by DeWayne Todd

Medical

Within the category of articles related to the medical field, there are several discourses on the medical practice including a detailed exploration into the life, philosophy and dark humor of neurosurgeons for whom there are no “dry runs.” This article from *Esquire* magazine parallels the brief glimpse we are given of Buckaroo as neurosurgeon. The article states that “the human skull was not designed for easy opening. It takes drills and saws and simple force to breach it. Some doctors call this cabinet work.”

To give legitimacy to the notion of implanting an Eskimo boy with a “computer chip” that is connected “to a subcutaneous microphone which will permit the patient to transmit verbal instructions to his own brain,”† several articles cover breakthrough medical technologies like an amputee that can

control an artificial leg through conscious and subconscious thought; a new artificial lens to help the blind; and a woman who can pick up radio waves with her teeth.

There are five separate clippings that discuss the impact of electricity on the human body. The effects of electricity can include emotional changes, expedited bone healing, heart wellbeing, and general improvements in mood and productivity of an individual, all as a direct result of electrical stimulation or ionization of the air in our environment. In these articles, combined with a clipping on the difference between that a taste bud senses and what the brain reads as the flavor of food gives a reminder of the “mental brain washing” the Lectroids use to make us see them as human.

Biology

One reading is simply a detailed listing of the “deadly plants” that can be found in nature, along with the effects of eating them. Two plants are circled, Rhubarb and Yellow Jessamine, with Jessamine appearing in a subsequent story about a man who died under mysterious circumstances. This listing provides some context for the natural herbs and poisons that the infamous Hanoi Xan is known to utilize.

An advertisement for an amazing green bean that grows up to 5-feet long and weighs up to 75 pounds may be part of the solution to world famine. Given that the food crisis is a topic that the Banzai Institute is relentlessly seeking to find an answer to, it is likely that this reading could be connected to the mysterious watermelon experiments in the Banzai Lab.

Science/Physics

Multiple clippings from the world of physics focus on the emerging and controversial issues like theoretical particle physics, neutrinos, and a unified theory of the universe. While none of these articles directly address the physics of Buckaroo Banzai, there are many “Banzaiesque” concepts including descriptions for possible designs for antigravity devices, faster than light travel, time machines, and psionics.

A note from Perfect Tommy states, “Buckaroo—Let’s discuss.”, directly adjacent to an article on “missing mass” that states, “They (neutrinos) can pass through the entire earth as if it weren’t there.” The idea of “moving through matter” is reinforced by real world scientific concepts like this.

Another reading highlights a statement about the difficulty of testing any grand unified theory of the universe, which would, in the words of the author be like, “searching the eyes of Laura Antonelli for flecks of retinal silver contributed by her genetic ancestor, the lungfish.” This allusion elicits a handwritten note saying, “Now wait a second....”

† **Earl Mac Rauch**, *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* (New York: Pocket Books, 1984), 21.

Index of the Sampling of Readings Cont.

Military/Political

- *Inside the Rescue Mission*
- *Army ‘Attacks’ Scout Bivouac by Mistake*
- *Downsizing Army to Buy 80 ‘Attack’ Buggies*
- *Capoeira, An Art... Maybe the Most Deadly Martial Art*
- *Falklands Raiders Said to be Elite British Unit*
- *U.S. Forces Ill Prepared, Joint Chief Says*
- *Your Next Leader is Behind You*
- Senator Roger Jepson Quote
- *Singing the Blues at J.P.L.*
- *Military’s Future in Space: A Matter of War or Peace*
- *The New Soviet Arms Buildup in Space*
- *Pressures are Increasing for Arms Race in Space*
- *Spacewar*—Book Review
- *Camouflage Shirt Jacket*—Advertisement

Odd News

- *Memorial Service Set for Physicist*
- *Hungry Super-Termite Discovered in Florida*
- *Two Die in Explosion of ‘Dream’ Invention*
- *The Devil Himself and His Flowers of Evil*
- *Fireman Hands it to His Toe—Transplanted as Thumb*
- *Soviet Deserter Hides 30 Years in Pigpen*
- *U-2 Planes to Probe Mysterious Cloud*
- *Mystery Cloud Circles Earth: Stratospheric Puzzle Sighted 11 Miles Up*

Technology

- *Technologies of the ‘80s*
- *Machine Lets You Talk to the Dead*
- *Guide to Jargon of the Subculture of Hackers*
- *Joy of Hacking*

For What It’s Worth

- *Classes of Shippers*

Military/Political

The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai does not cast the U.S. government and military in a flattering light, but the portrayal is a product of its time as evidenced in multiple articles from the readings. These articles highlight problems with the U.S. military of the late ‘70’s and early ‘80’s. For example, there is a lengthy interview and critique of what went wrong with the failed attempt to rescue hostages at the Iranian embassy. Additionally, there is an article about an inadvertent attack on a Boy Scout Troop that was camping during military war games.

Articles focus on problems with military bureaucracy and the shift from big military to smaller, mobile, and highly specialized soldiers that use technology like specialized ‘attack’ dune buggies and advanced martial arts techniques.

The following quote from Senator Roger Jepson is handwritten on a single sheet of paper, “We can spend billions annually on the most modern and sophisticated weaponry, but in the final analysis it is the infantryman, sailor, pilot and medic that will determine our nation’s strength.” This vision of small group effectiveness is echoed in another article on the Elite British soldiers that performed an amazing raid during the Falklands War which might parallel why small groups of individuals and small-scale strike teams are more effective in Buckaroo Banzai than large scale assaults (sorry Tommy).

Multiple articles emphasize growing concerns about the weaponization of technology and research, including scientists from the Jet Propulsion Lab that have seen a shift from space exploration projects to development of weapons that could be used in a space conflict. In the early eighties, the Reagan administration had launched the Strategic Defense Initiative (“SDI”) that envisioned killer satellites, orbital platforms, and precision lasers, fired from space in an attempt to “catch up” with developments from the Soviet Union. These trends are echoed in Buckaroo Banzai as the army pushes to buy or seize the jet car, “in the name of national interest, of course.”

Technology

An article removed from *Business Week* highlights the key developing technologies for the ‘80’s, which include high performance silicon chips; artificial intelligence; new building materials at the “micro-science” level; biotechnology that includes genetically modified plants and livestock; and new technology to find underground natural resources without drilling. As with other overview clippings, this article is filled with technological buzzwords that integrate well into the jargon of Buckaroo Banzai.

Other technology readings include an article about a machine that allows a person to talk to the dead, which might parallel some of the attempts to communicate with a deceased Penny Priddy. According to a report from the *National Examiner*, this device has “confirmed” that the dead move among us and that Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler exist in the afterlife. Perhaps this would form the seed for a future adventure of Buckaroo Banzai.

In the early ‘80’s a new breed of individual emerged, the computer hacker. As described in two lengthy articles on hackers, the original term applied to individuals who were simply “passionate devotees of the computer who prefer beating, crashing, and perfecting the system to meals, sleep, dating, or good grades.” With a definitive list of definitions for words like Bug, Crash, Crock, Crufty, Frobnicate, Hairy, Moby, POM, Real World, User, Luser, and Wizard; the information

from these clippings formed the backdrop for Team Banzai’s resident computer expert, Billy Travers, hacking into the YoYoDyne network. Being “in the know”, makes the threat of some “computer whiz kid” even more real.

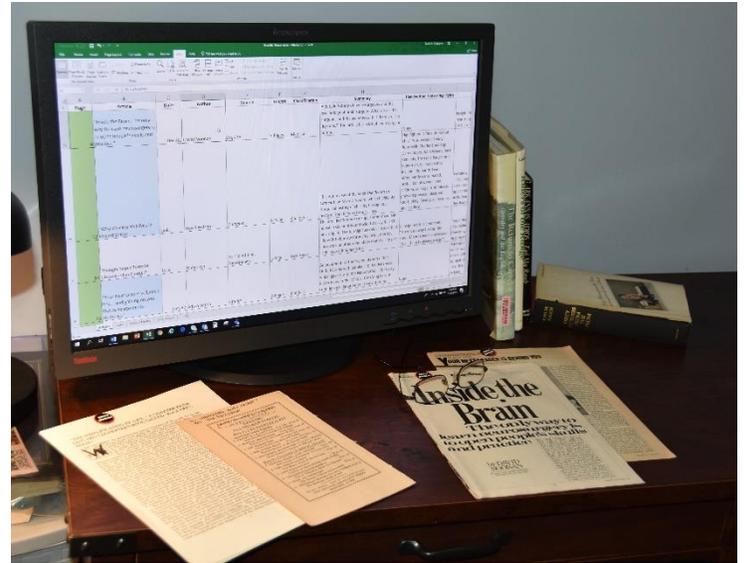


Photo by DeWayne Todd

Odd News

Throughout the collected readings are diverse news stories, any of which might fit within the footnotes of Buckaroo Banzai. For example, a prominent physicist of Japanese/American heritage was found dead in an apartment while in Geneva. Although ruled a natural death, someone has scrawled, “Unlikely! Shan’s work? Yellow Jessamine poisoning?”‡ on the side of the article. The details are reminiscent of the death of Penny Priddy.

Other stories include the discovery of a “super-termites” that can eat a house in 6 months, a Soviet defector who hid from the government for over 30 years, and a mysterious cloud that has encircled the earth and is being probed by U-2 planes. All these might have formed sub-plots in the Banzai movie if more sub-plots had been needed.

In Rockford, Illinois, a news article tells of two men died in an explosion of a “dream invention” involving perpetual motion. Within the margin of the newspaper, a handwritten note asks, “A primitive gravity catapult? Perhaps discuss with Hikita Monday.”

In a profile story, the tale of Chang Chi-fu,≈ the world’s biggest heroin trafficker is discussed. Living in the ‘Golden Triangle,’ a vast impenetrable region of Southeast Asia, Chang rules his empire with a personal army of 5,000 well-equipped and well-trained soldiers, many armed with American-made M-16

‡ Multiple references to “Shan” show an early version of Hanoi “Xan’s” name.

≈Chang Chi-fu belonged to the Shan ethnicity. Coincidence?

carbines. Sounding much like a real-life version of Hanoi Xan himself, the article declares Chang to be “the most evil man on Earth” because of his ruthless tactics to force peasants to grow the opium that feeds his heroin drug cartel.

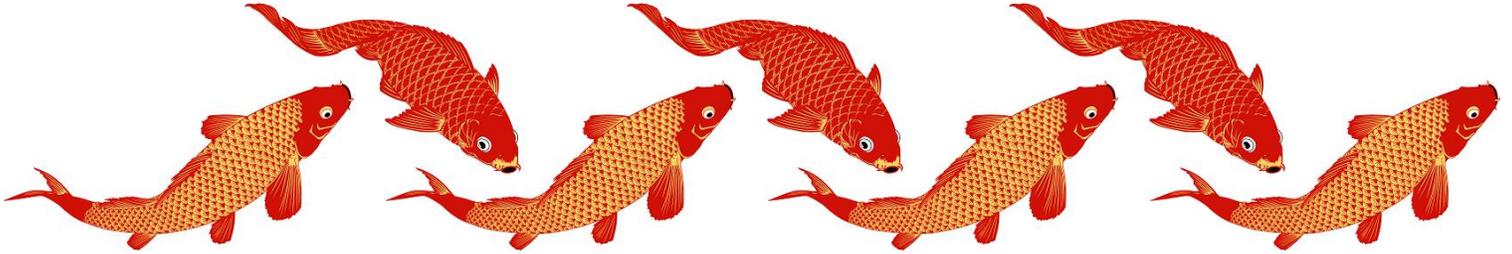
For What It’s Worth

Included in the sample of readings is neatly clipped extraction from the Alaska Administrative Code (AS17.20.180) that defines the classes of shippers of shellfish for state regulation.

For those that are interested, the classes include: reshippers, repackers, shell-stock shippers, and shucker-packers.

An astute reader of the collected readings might be prompted to ask, “What is the ‘Classes of Shippers’ law code doing there?”

To which Mrs. Johnson might retort, “I’ll tell you later.”



Mystery Solved!

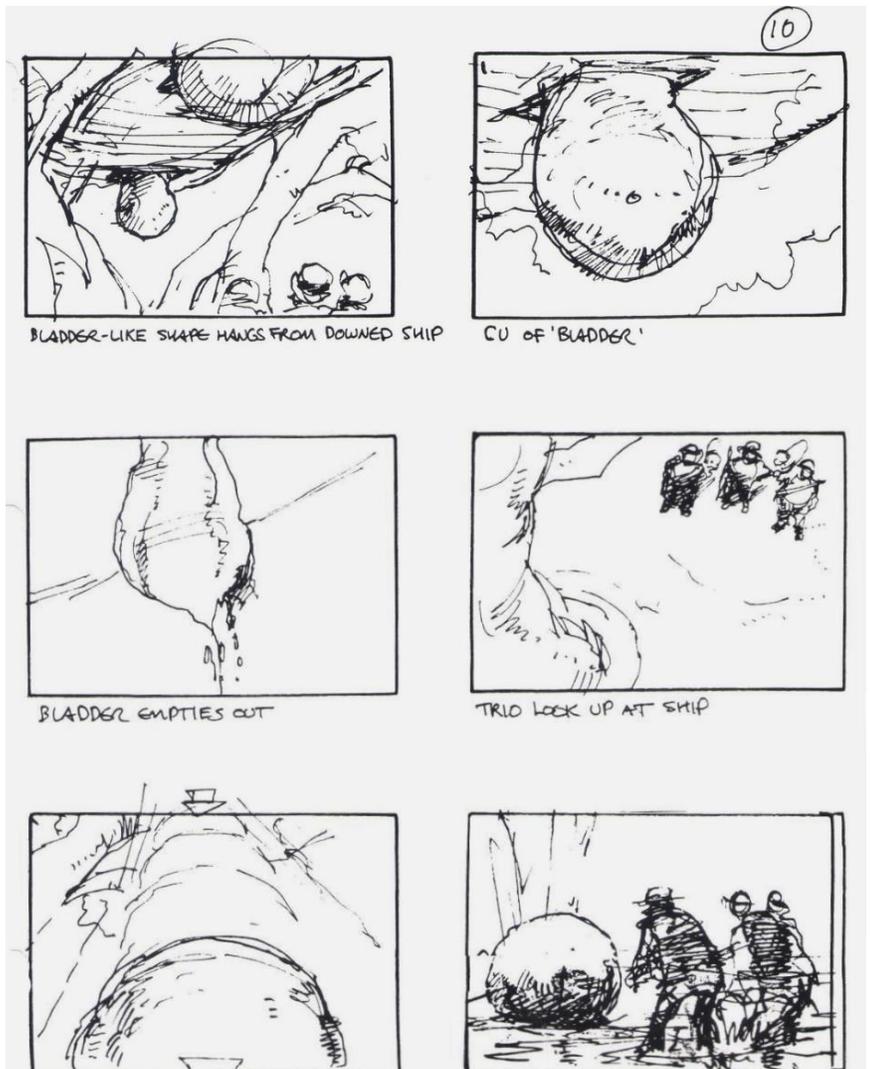
By World Watch One Staff

One of the great benefits of perusing the production binders is the journey of discovery they provide. Sometimes the documents reveal the creative roads not traveled during the making of *Buckaroo Banzai*. Other times they answer questions we didn’t even think to ask before, like, “Why did the Black Lectroid thermopod look like a flying dinosaur in the sky and a gigantic beach-ball on the ground?”

The storyboards for an early version of the duck hunter sequence provide the answer: The beach-ball is actually an “escape bladder” that oozes from the bottom thermopod. It then plops to the ground with the Black Lectroid crew inside.

The top tier of page ten and the bottom two tiers of page eleven of the storyboards for this sequence show the filmmakers’ intention. 

Telling the whole story: While these pages of the storyboards reveal some additional details about the ill-fated flight of the Black Lectroid thermopod (**Right**), they do not tell the tale in full. It is clear from the DVD and Blu-ray extras for *Buckaroo Banzai* that additional footage from the duck hunter scene was shot that never found its way into the final film. Exactly how much more and whether or not it included this sequence remains a mystery.



Team Banzai

Events Calendar

Please note all dates, locations, and other details may be subject to change. Be sure to visit the links for updates and more info.

AUGUST

[Dragon Con](#) (Aug. 29-Sept. 2 in Atlanta, GA). One of North America's largest and most venerable genre-friendly gatherings. Be on the lookout for BBIs cosplaying at the annual costume parade August 31 at 10am.

[Cleveland National Air Show](#) (Aug. 31-Sept. 2). Come for the USAF Thunderbirds, stay for the [Shockwave Jet Truck](#).

SEPTEMBER

TABB Cast Birthdays: James Keane (Sept. 26), **Ronald Lacey** (Sept. 28)

[National Swap Ideas Day](#) (Sept. 10). Get together with friends, family, co-workers, or whoever to share your ideas and hear theirs in return. Any topic, large or small: life hacks, what-ifs, technological tweaks, creative concepts, philosophical views...anything to stimulate new perspectives amid a spirit of sharing and tolerance.

[Rose City Comic Con](#) (Sept. 13-15 in Portland, OR). Sci-fi, comic, anime, cosplay, gaming, and more. Rumor has it that BBI Rainbow Kitty may be on the scene.

[Fantastic Fest](#) (Sept. 19-26 in Austin, TX) describes itself as "the largest genre film festival in the U.S. specializing in horror, fantasy, sci-fi, action, and just plain fantastic movies...a chance to find new favorites and future genre classics."

[Oktoberfest Zinzinnati](#) (Sept. 20-22 in Cincinnati, Ohio). Hoist a stein alongside more than 575,000 attendees at the largest Oktoberfest in the U.S. and Over-the-Rhine. In addition to beverages and food, you can witness the Running of the Wieners (100 dachshunds dressed in hot dog bun costumes) or participate in the World's Largest Chicken Dance.

[BugFest](#) (Sept. 21 in Raleigh, NC). 35,000 visitors swarm annually to the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences for the nation's largest single-day insect-themed festival. Interactive activities and displays include everything from beekeeping demonstrations to roach races, with a special emphasis this year on beetles. Dine at Café Insecta, specializing in creepy crawly cuisine made from exactly what you think.

[Autumn equinox](#) (Sept. 22). Suggested ideal viewing location: El Castillo, the temple pyramid at Chichen Itza on the Yucatan Peninsula, where the setting sun highlights the statue of Kukulcan. Your place or Mayan?

[3rd International Conference on Biomedical Engineering and Bioinformatics](#) (Sept. 25-27 in Penang, Malaysia). Discuss the latest breakthroughs in the birthplace of such luminaries as Dr. Wu Lien-teh (first medical student of Chinese descent to study at Cambridge, and the first Malayan nominated for a Nobel Prize in Medicine) and Jimmy Choo (the shoe guy).

[The Phuket Vegetarian Festival or Nine Emperor Gods Festival](#) (Sept. 28-Oct. 7 in Phuket, Thailand). Take a spiritual journey where the faithful abstain from meat during this portion of the lunar cycle for health, peace of mind, and as an appeal for divine blessings. The vegetarian dishes are amazing. Also witness the feats of the *mah song*, those said to be possessed by the gods, as they walk on hot coals, engage in extreme body piercing, and offer other displays of physical endurance.

OCTOBER

TABB Cast Birthdays: William Traylor (Oct. 8), **Leonard Gaines** (Oct. 13), **John Lithgow** (Oct. 19), **Christopher Lloyd & Jeff Goldblum** (both Oct. 22), **James Rosin** (exact date unavailable)

[9th Annual Brain Metastases Research and Emerging Therapy Conference](#) (Oct. 4-5 in Marseille, France). "Dr. Banzai is using a laser to vaporize the pineal tumor without damaging the quadrigeminal plate...People are gonna come from all over."

[World Grand Prix of Darts](#) (Oct. 6-12 in Dublin, Ireland). Any Lectroids caught spitting stingers will be disqualified and turned over to the Nova Police.

[Curious Events Day](#) (Oct. 9). Whether you're a Mulder or a Scully, we can all agree that the world is a deeply weird place. Follow your own sense of curiosity by brushing up on some of history's unsolved mysteries or digging into a conspiracy theory.

International Skeptics Day (Oct. 13). Or is it? It's good to be open-minded but it's also good to hone your critical thinking skills. Mark today by exploring resources like our friends at the [Center for Inquiry](#) (publishers of *The Skeptical Inquirer*) and [Snopes](#).

Oct. 31: On this date in 1938, the day after the *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast by "[the guy in the old wine commercials](#)," a bunch of guys named John filed for Social Security numbers in Grover's Mill, NJ.

NOVEMBER

TABB Cast Birthdays: Jane Marla Robbins (Nov. 2), **Vincent Schiavelli** (Nov. 11), **Jamie Lee Curtis** (Nov. 22), **Michael Santoro** (Nov. 23), **Matt Clark** (Nov. 25)

[Levitation music festival](#), formerly Austin Psych Fest (Nov. 7-10 in Austin, TX). With more than 60 acts, if your tastes run anywhere along the goth-metal-psychedelic-experimental portions of the musical spectrum, this is the place to be.

[GalaxyCon](#), formerly Louisville Supercon (Nov 22-24 in Louisville, KY). Large con with celebrities and activities from a wide variety of genres and media, including gaming in both video and tabletop forms. Look for a TABB anniversary panel.

[Wolfenoot](#) (Nov. 23). "The Spirit of the Wolf brings and hides small gifts around the house for everyone. People who have, have had, or are kind to dogs get better gifts... You eat roast meat (because wolves eat meat) and cake decorated like a full moon."

[Celebrate Your Unique Talent Day](#) (Nov. 24). "Nobody is nobody. Everyone has something to offer."

15 Years of World Watch One

by Dan Berger

Fifteen years have come and gone since the present-day *World Watch One* made its debut in the Fall of 2004. In effect, this issue celebrates an anniversary within an anniversary, which was kind of a strange revelation to me. I don't usually think of the newsletter in terms of where it has gone except to make sure that we do not repeat ourselves. Creating something is, by nature, a struggle with the immediate present and the future deadline looming in front of it. It's a little like driving a car really fast at a brick wall and then hitting the breaks to see how close you can come to the wall without actually damaging the car. It got me thinking, "What have I been doing for the last fifteen years? This is nuts."

Many of us are of an age now where we contemplate the brick wall more often than we used to, especially when the deadline is a bit more literal.

Rutger Hauer passed away this summer. For a lot of us oldish in the way of science fiction fandom, that was a difficult day. Somehow, by sheer luck or cosmic serendipity, Hauer managed to boil down the perfect epitaph from a film scene he thought over written; an elegy he sharpened the night before shooting *Blade Runner's* final showdown between replicant Roy Batty and blade runner Rick Deckard on a cold, rain-drenched set:

"All of those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain."

In many ways, maybe most, writing a newsletter is about capturing moments in time before they are forgotten forever. Batty's monologue speaks to the future as the uncertain end of a fleeting present: fragile, transient, and ultimately lost in the looming bigness of the universe around it and the moments that follow it. The future isn't just the canvas on which we paint visions of a better tomorrow, it is also a darkness where the past is destined to slowly lose its way, and disappear. Newsletters, like most writings, are made as torches guarding that light from losing itself to the vastness of time. That, at least, is the impulse.

As Banzai fans, we know well the prospects of vanishing hopes and the toll taken by our stroll through the decades. In 2003, *Buckaroo Banzai* fans had a lot of reasons to nibble on their own personal store of cynicism. The prospect of a *Buckaroo Banzai: Ancient Secrets and New Mysteries* television series had excited imaginations along with the appearance of an official Banzai Institute website in 1998 and the promise of a *Lizardo Quartet* of Buckaroo Banzai novels. But by 2003, it appeared likely that all fans were going to see from the talk was a Special Edition DVD and a reprint of the novelization, both released in 2002. These offerings were welcome additions to Banzai



collections everywhere, but the trailing silence on the television and book series fronts did not encourage optimism.

This was the situation when, late in 2003, members of the [World Watch On-Line](#) mailing list began to notice that Buckaroo's 20th anniversary was nearly upon us and that maybe we fans should try and do something to celebrate the occasion. In their not-so-secret hearts, many on the list yearned for a *Buckaroo Banzai* convention or fan gathering of some kind. Several familiar with fan convention-running and even those of us (like myself at that time) unfamiliar with convention organizing realized that wasn't going to happen, for all kinds of reasons: No money. Not enough lead-time. No way we were going to book special guests with enough draw to generate a viable attendance number to pay for everything. No clear destination city that would satisfy everyone. It dragged on long enough that, in February 2004, I made the unwise decision to say, "Hey, we're not going to pull off a convention, but we could sure as hell pull off a newsletter. What about bringing back *World Watch One* for an anniversary issue?"

Not my exact words, but near enough. I wanted to know what the deuce had happened to the franchise we all kept hoping would return for the last twenty years, and capture those moments before they were forgotten. Bringing back *World Watch One* seemed like a good way to find out.

That's when the levy broke. In very short order, all sorts of moments were happening, and continue to happen time after time to this very day. Here are some of the highlights:

Brothers in arms: The first memory I have of being sucked into the newsletter's undertow was seeing someone say "yes" to that email about bringing back *World Watch One*, and then saying, "Oh, and I'd be happy to help as an equal partner." I cannot stress how important that moment was. I didn't know it yet, but Alan "Dragon" Smith, said comrade in arms, had already done what I proposed to do by pulling the original *World Watch One*'s bacon out of the fire and plating it for two issues after the original Directors had retired from the job. That was a good day.

The big guns: Alan and I were both pretty flush with the enthusiasm of bringing back the newsletter, but we didn't really have a next step in mind. What to do?

What else? Contact the Banzai Institute. The Institute website had a contact button for email, so email them I did.

I'm not sure what I was expecting, but what I got was an email from Michael Okuda of *Star Trek* fame. That in and of itself was a bit of a mind blower. But it was nothing compared to how I felt when I read, "W. D. 'Rick' Richter said he's delighted at your interest in Buckaroo Banzai and he has volunteered to do a brief phone interview for your zine, if you're interested..."

That "brief" phone interview ended up lasting for a good hour-and-a-half. The article that emerged captured over a decade of Buckaroo's post-release story that, until that point, was profoundly underreported. It was a big "mission accomplished" moment in the "finding out what the hell was going on for the last twenty years" department. I still have the cassette tape of it. Those are the kind of moments you want to last forever.

Going Old School: Even in the digitally-driven present, there is a romance to receiving a physical piece of mail from someone other than a marketer. That was just as true back in 2004, and one of the foundational ideas behind the 20th anniversary issue was harnessing some of that old postal magic. That first issue Dragon and I did together was a paper newsletter, and it wasn't cheap. Duplication costs, postage, mailing envelopes, Bonus items—all of it came from our own pockets and went to the hundred or so people who responded to us, free of charge. I don't think either of us would do that again, but I think we're both glad that we did.

The Garden of Forking Paths: Unofficially, the present day *World Watch One* is referred to as "v.2.1." Why is that?

Without diving too deeply into the topic, the short answer is that Dragon and I ended up going separate ways leading up to the 2006 issue covering Moonstone Book's foray in *Buckaroo Banzai* comics. The result was the creation of two separate *World Watch One*'s—an "Underground Edition" helmed by Alan and a "Chicago Bureau Edition," captained by yours truly. "2.1"

is an acknowledgement that the newsletter is always changing, just as it did for those who preceded us, and that any given person is only a steward of the present version.

It also turned out to be a boon for fellow fans. Instead of one newsletter coming out every couple of years, now there were two editions, upping the frequency substantially. And there's always room for more. Anyone reading this that thinks helming *World Watch One* is for them, I say, "Why not? Go for it!"

Expect the unexpected: I have always thought that the best issue of the newsletter is ahead of us, so it seems unfair to raise up or cast down previous issues in total. However, there are definitely those days when something gelled unexpectedly or an unforeseen opportunity arose that still makes me look back and say, "Damn, that was awesome."

First on that list was the day Steve Mattsson said that he had an interview lined up with Lewis "Perfect Tommy" Smith for our October 2016 issue. Our last interview with a main cast member previous to that was Billy "Pinky Carruthers" Vera in the Fall 2004 issue and, well, c'mon. It's Perfect Tommy! Smith gave us a great interview, which was the perfect way to come back after an unusually long hiatus between issues at the time.

At the same level of awesome was the previously mentioned email from Mike Okuda about a Rick Richter interview, but another high point from the 2004 issue was the day that Alan and I spit balled ideas for bonus items to include in the newsletter. My favorite was the Jr. Blue Blaze Cryptography Set, made from, "a sturdy and nontoxic watermelon-based composite material," for Jr. Blue Blazes around the globe to foil Xan, one cryptogram at a time. I remember getting a couple of emails from fans talking about how they'd gotten a kick out of sending and receiving messages with a friend using the decoder. Another "mission accomplished" moment.

Then there was the time that Earl Mac Rauch sent us an Institute dossier on the biographical information for Hanoi Xan's inner circle. We published this World Crime League Watch List in our March 2006 issue, and later donated our layout to Moonstone Books for republication in their *Buckaroo Banzai* comics. The watch list ended up getting republished in both the TPB and hardcover collection of the "Return of the Screw" miniseries based on the "Supersize Those Fries" script for *Ancient Secrets & New Mysteries*. It definitely made us feel like "the little newsletter that could," especially only two issues in.

Then along came this issue. We had more new contributors in this single issue than we have over the course of the last fifteen years of publication, everybody from *New York Times* bestselling

authors to music critics, horse farmers to retired magazine editors. If you haven't already, go back to the Acknowledgements page and take a look at the list of people who contributed. It is an impressive list.

Oh, the places you will go: The newsletter hasn't lacked ample opportunities for exploration. I have knocked on many, many doors (well, many e-mail in-boxes anyway) since 2004 trying to drum up all sorts of different things to put into the newsletter's pages. Of the Buckaroo Banzai fans I have contacted over the years, the vast majority have been kind, enthusiastic, helpful, and beyond happy to contribute their time and energy to the newsletter. There is probably a bad egg or two out there somewhere, but it has been my experience that Buckaroo tends to attract the best sorts of people as fans.

Earlier in this issue, I mentioned some of the people and places that I would never have seen if not for the newsletter, from New York City, to Peoria, Illinois. All were places that *World Watch One* gave me a reason to visit. I expect that trend to continue.

The future is tomorrow: Perhaps the most exciting part about writing the newsletter has been the dawning realization that a world without a *Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League* film is still a place where Team Banzai can thrive. In 2004, I thought for sure that material for another newsletter would be slim pickings. A few months later, Moonstone Books announced their intentions to publish *Buckaroo Banzai* comics, and suddenly I had more on my plate than I'd bargained for. Eventually, Moonstone's comics output slowed and ceased altogether. Suddenly, Kevin Smith was talking about reviving Buckaroo on the small screen and hopes were riding high once more.

And the beat goes on. Earlier this month, the [Banzai Institute Facebook page](#) posted a [Gizmodo article](#) regarding film projects that Disney should revive now that they own Twentieth Century Fox, and there was Team Banzai's photo right at the top of the page. And who should respond to the article but Kevin Smith with a tweet to the effect that 1) MGM Television owns the rights to Buckaroo Banzai, not Disney/Fox, and 2) yes, it is about damn time to bring back Buckaroo. Plus, did we mention that there is an Earl Mac Rauch manuscript for a *Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League* novel waiting in the wings for a possible 2019/2020 publication date?

Yes. Yes we did.

With talk like that, it appears that we will have moments enough to write about in *World Watch One* for another fifteen years or more. Not all of those moments will pan out, but their light will shine on because Blue Blaze Irregulars continue to keep the

flame alive. For now, we'll keep plugging along, doing our best to track down the good stuff and writing it down for you.

So, thanks for joining us for another issue, and stick around a spell. Now, if you'll excuse us, it's time to saddle up again. We're still on the clock, at least for a few more moments. 🐎



We're not sure what this tweet means, if anything, but we recommend monitoring Kevin's Smith's social media accounts.

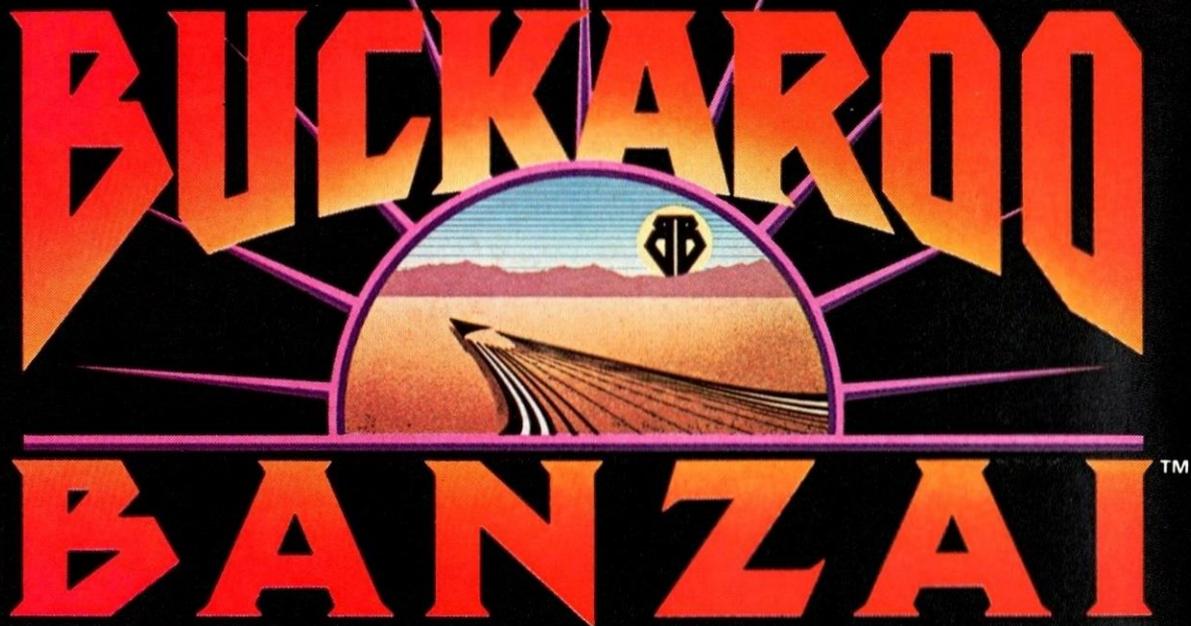
BUCKAROO WHO? *The designer and driver of the Jet Car, a vehicle able to roar unharmed through solid matter.*

BUCKAROO WHO? *An expert in martial arts, particle physics and fluent in a dozen languages.*

BUCKAROO WHO? *An extraordinary brain surgeon.*

BUCKAROO WHO? *Leader of the Hong Kong Cavaliers, one of the toughest, most popular hard-rocking bar bands in East Texas.*

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