BLAIKES! A MARVEL MONTHLY DECISION TIME FOR SOOLIN or CONDEM VILA and AVON to DEATH? Do you know the 2nd part of the FRUIT Full COLOUR PIN~UP!

### FANTASY FEVER

Britain's first and only fantasy media magazine is already gearing up for the Summer of Madness. Between now and the end of the year most of the scheduled major movies will be in the fantasy genre.

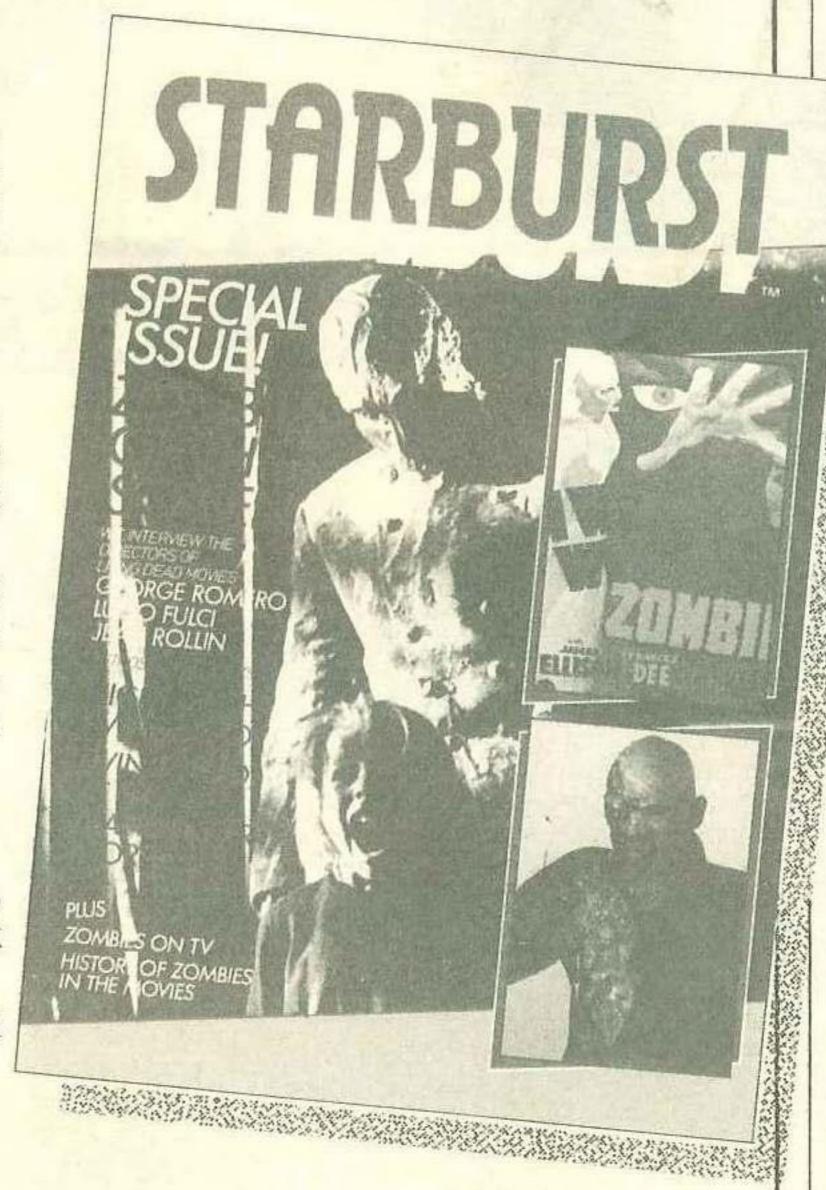
Star Trek 2, The Secret of Nimh, The Thing, Poltergeist, Blade Runner, ET, Dark Crystal, Tron and Videodrome are among the biggies lined up for pre-Christmas release. Not to mention Revenge of the Jedi, slated for an '83 opening.

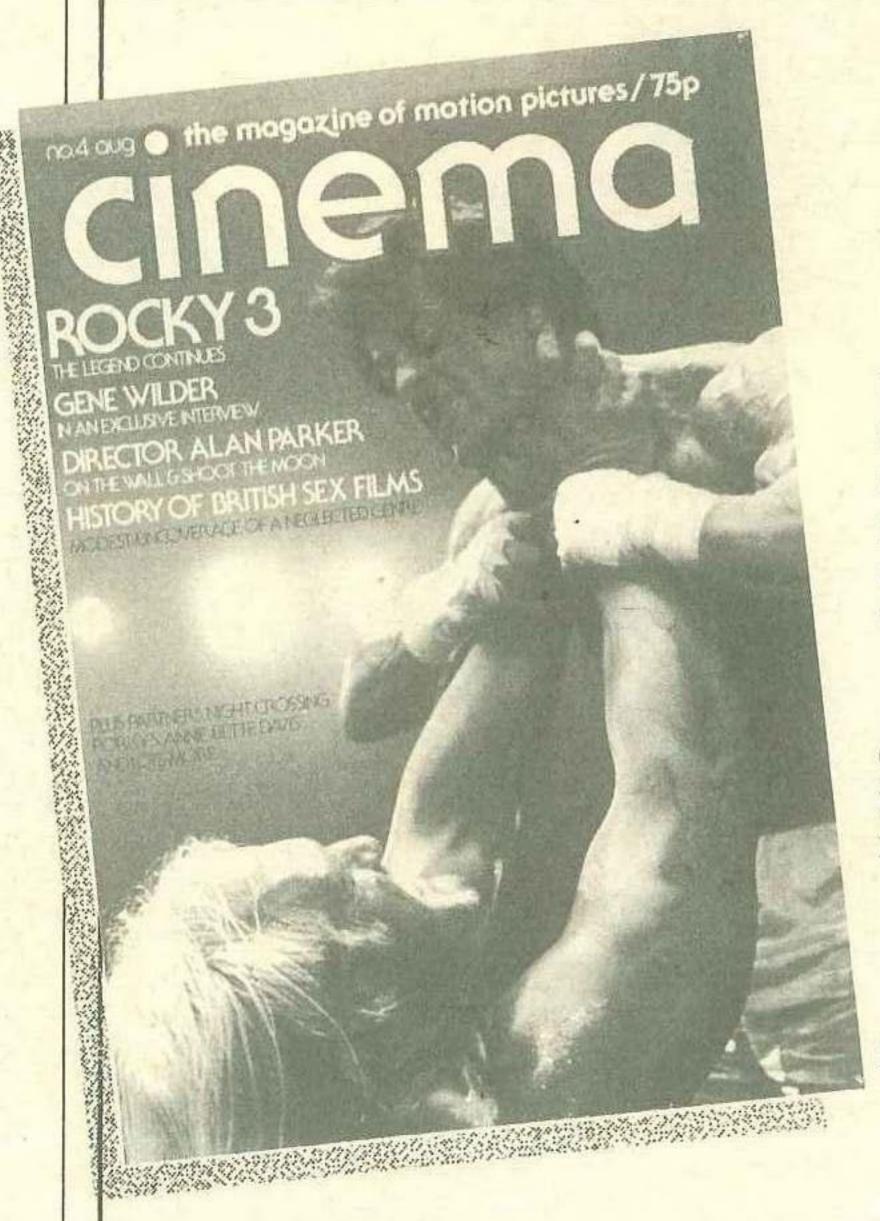
During the next few months *Starburst* will be covering the making of these pictures and presenting in-depth interviews with stars on both sides of the camera. In short, detailed coverage of the most prolific corner of the film industry.

Starburst is changing format to cope with the overload, beginning with our big fiftieth issue. And the new-look Starburst is just too good to miss.

So place a regular order with your newsagent now and make 1982 the year of Fantasy Fever.

Starburst: The Magazine of Cinema and Television Fantasy





# O the magazine of motion pictures/75p Complete Coverage

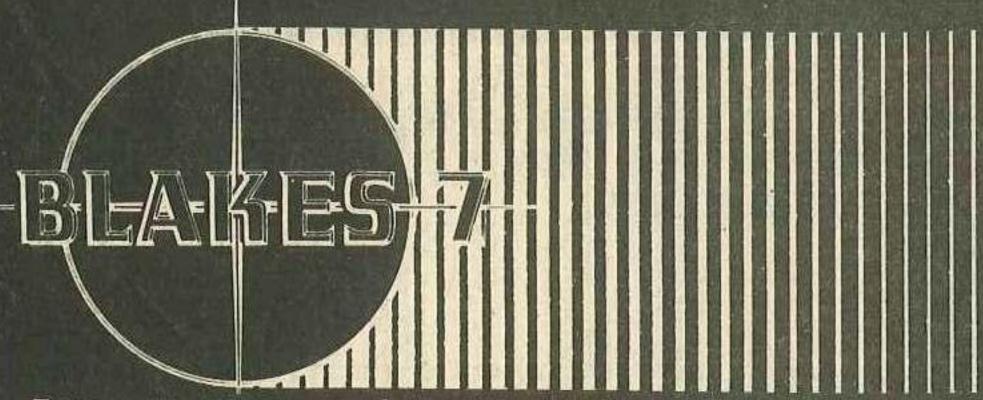
Unlike the other film magazines available in your local newsagents, cinema does not restrict itself to one narrow aspect of the movie business. Among its colour-packed pages you will find features on the art movies as well as the exploitation films, interviews with producers as well as directors and stars, previews of coming attractions and retrospectives on movie classics.

Cinema does not include token coverage of the video scene in an effort to boost flagging sales. The specialist video mags offer a more complete picture than any film magazine ever could.

What cinema offers in each 64 page, monthly issue is information on movies—past, present and future. Pure and Simple.

What film fan could ask for more?

Cinema: the magazine that understands movies



Editor: Bernie Jaye, Art: Floron Florenzo; Neil Diamond.

Consultant Editor and photographs: Ken Armstrong

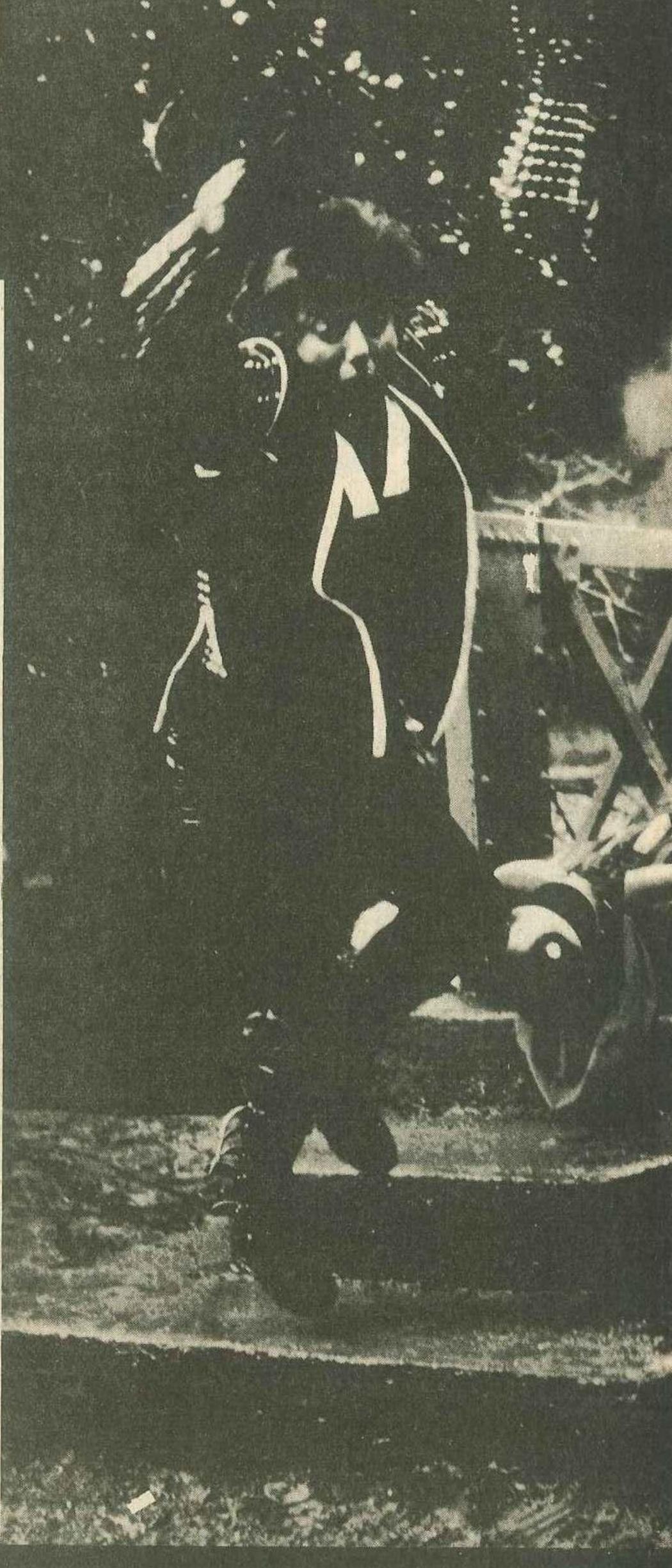
### **FEATURES**

### COMIC STRIP

### TEXTSTORY

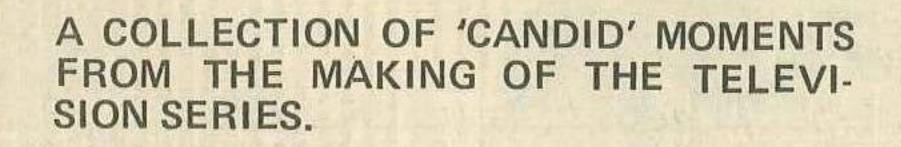
### LETTERS

### PIN-UPS



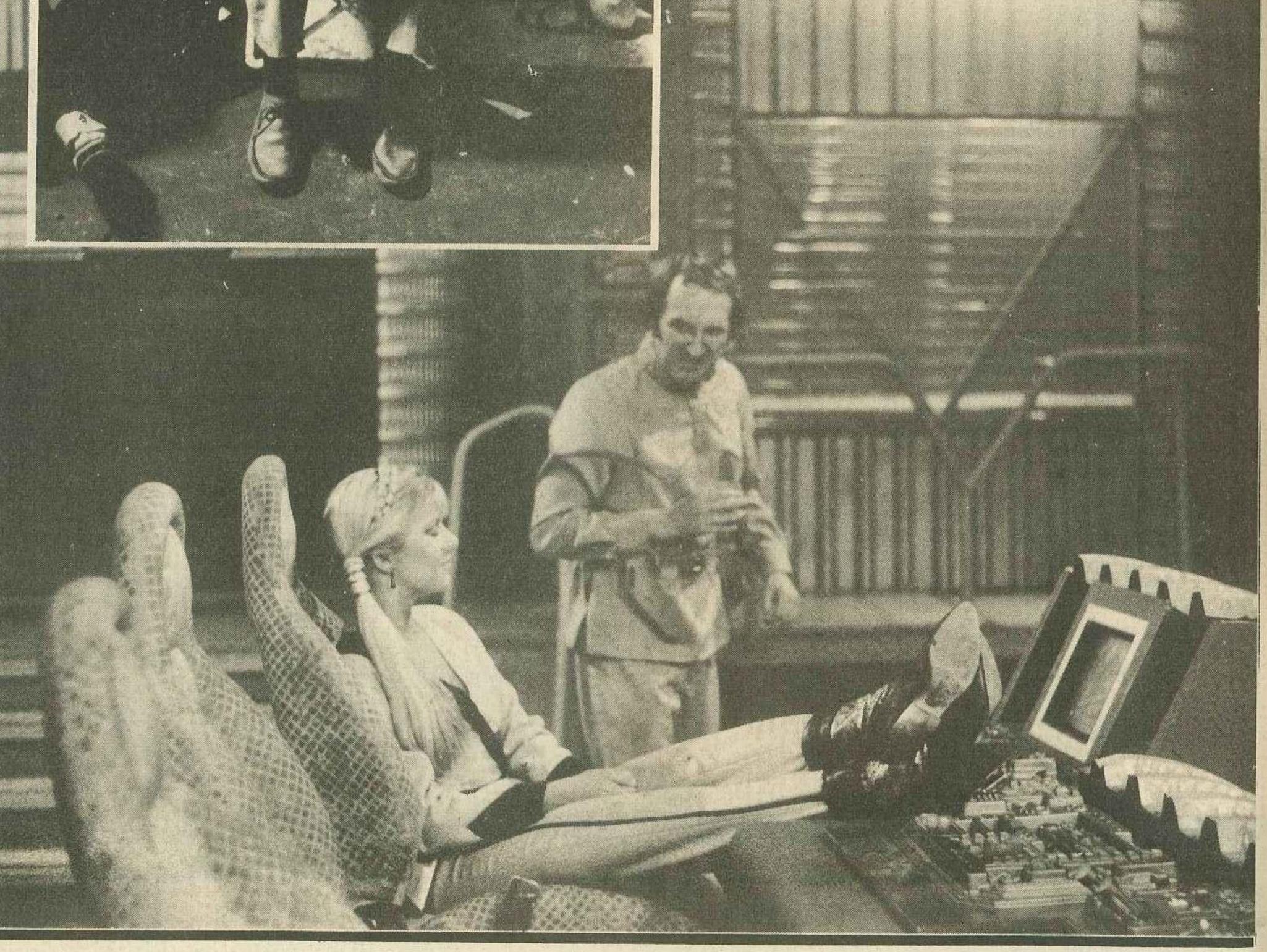
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### SCRAPBOOK -

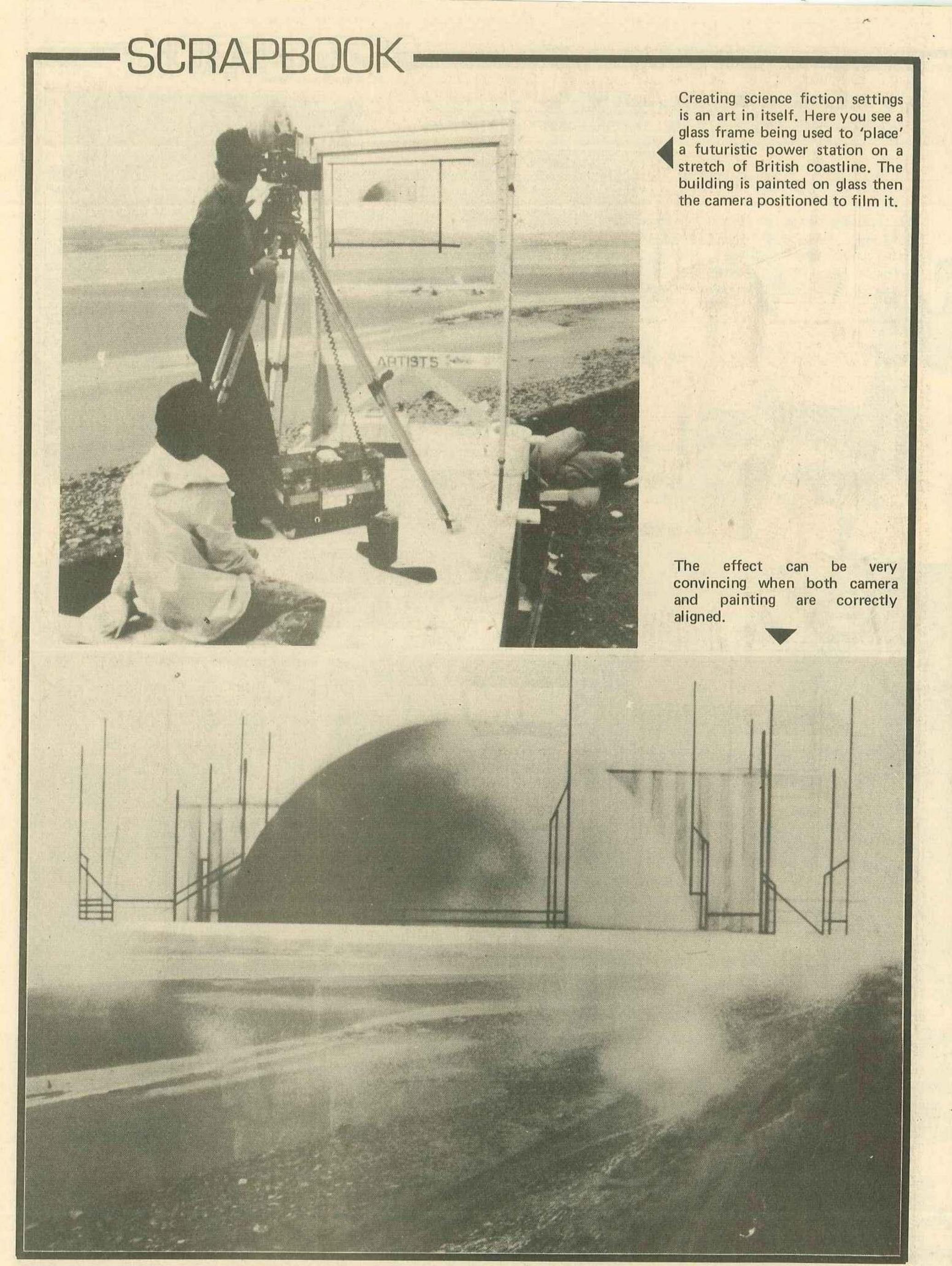


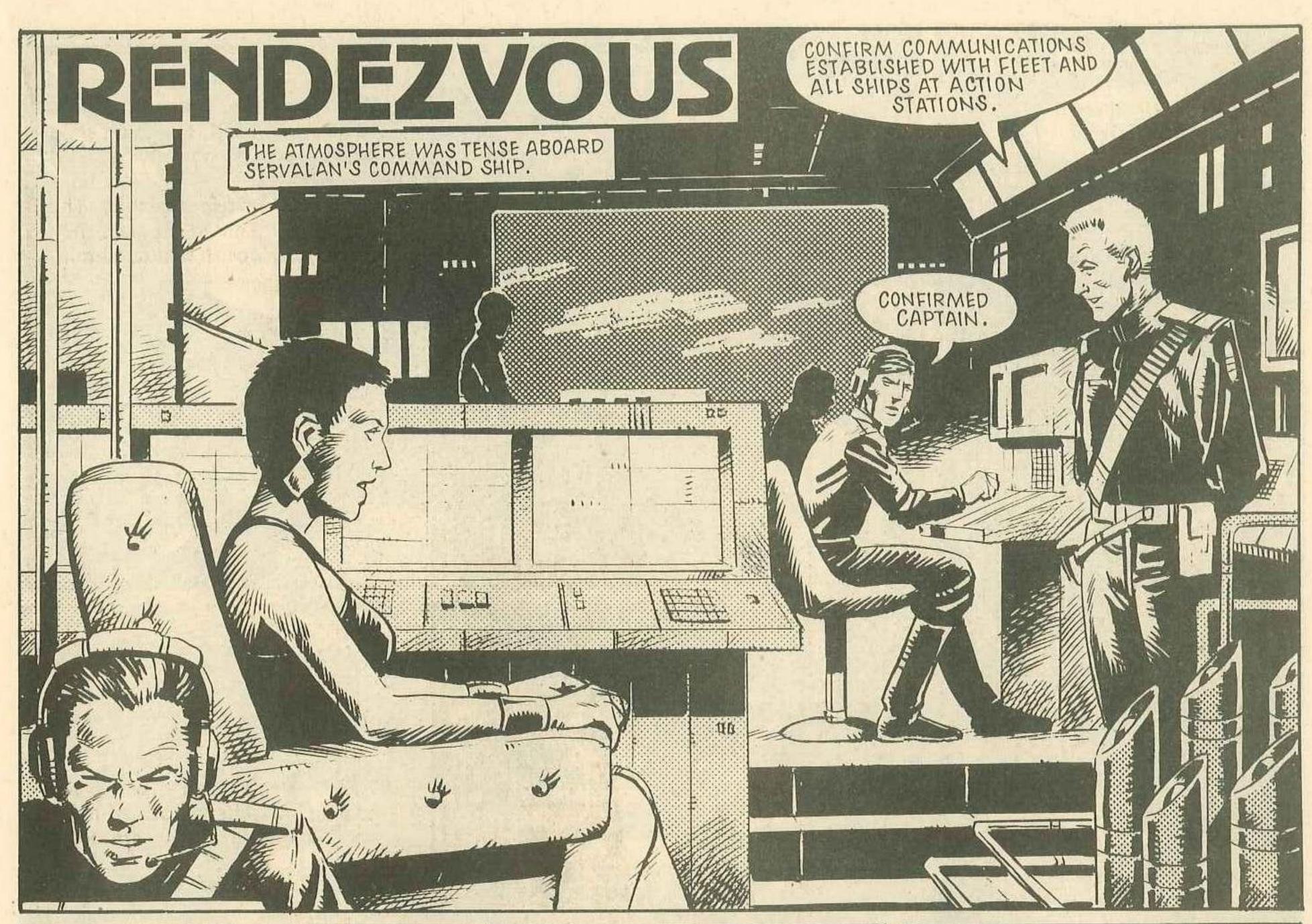
A face never seen in front of the tv cameras but one, without whom, BLAKE'S 7 would never have been made. Vere Lorrimer, producer of the fourth series and director of many episodes from previous series, finds a quiet corner in the recording studio to check through the script.

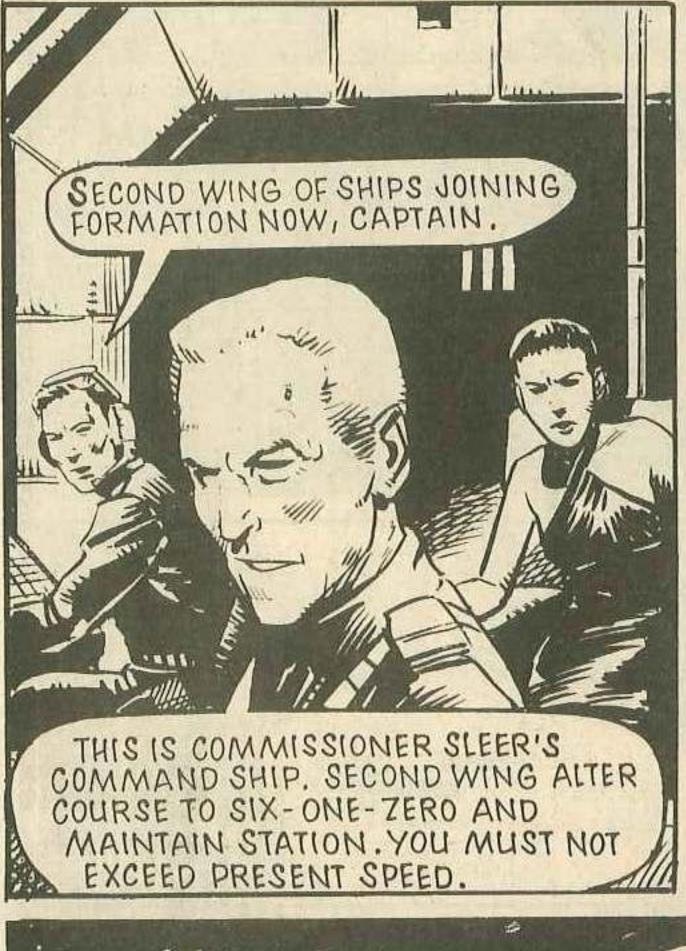
"You make a lousy drink," Vila tells Soolin. Mike Keating's first taste of his brightly coloured drink brought an immediate reaction . . . sack the studio manager for dishing up stuff like this!



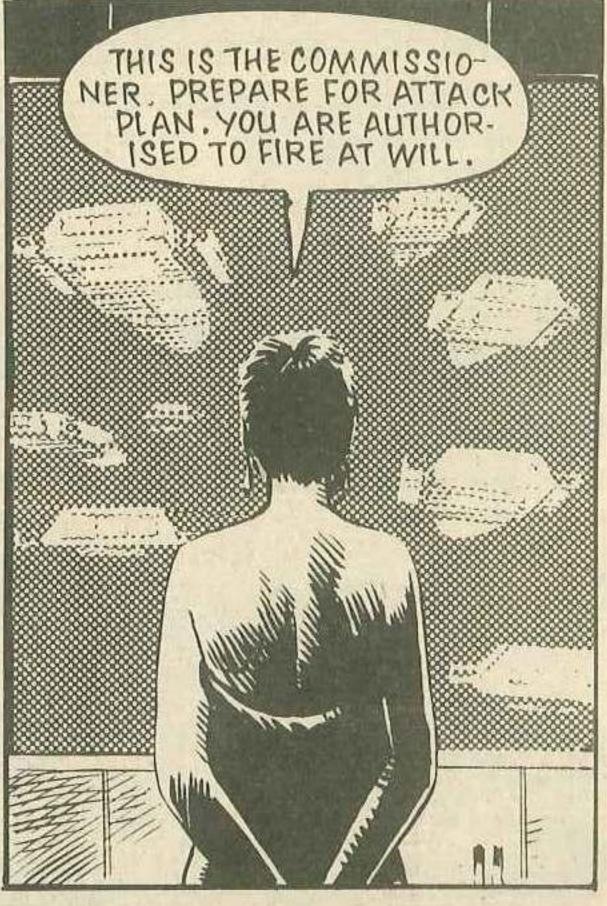


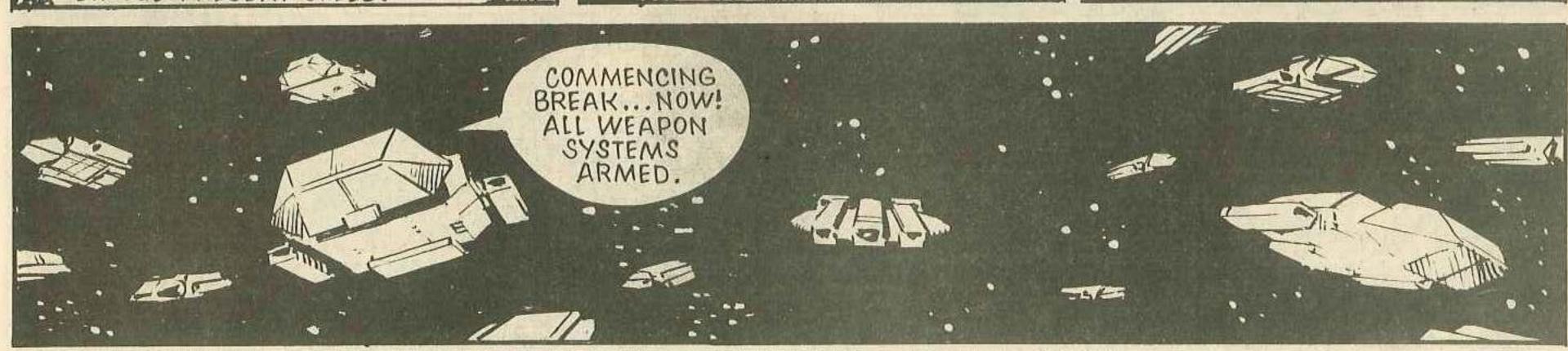


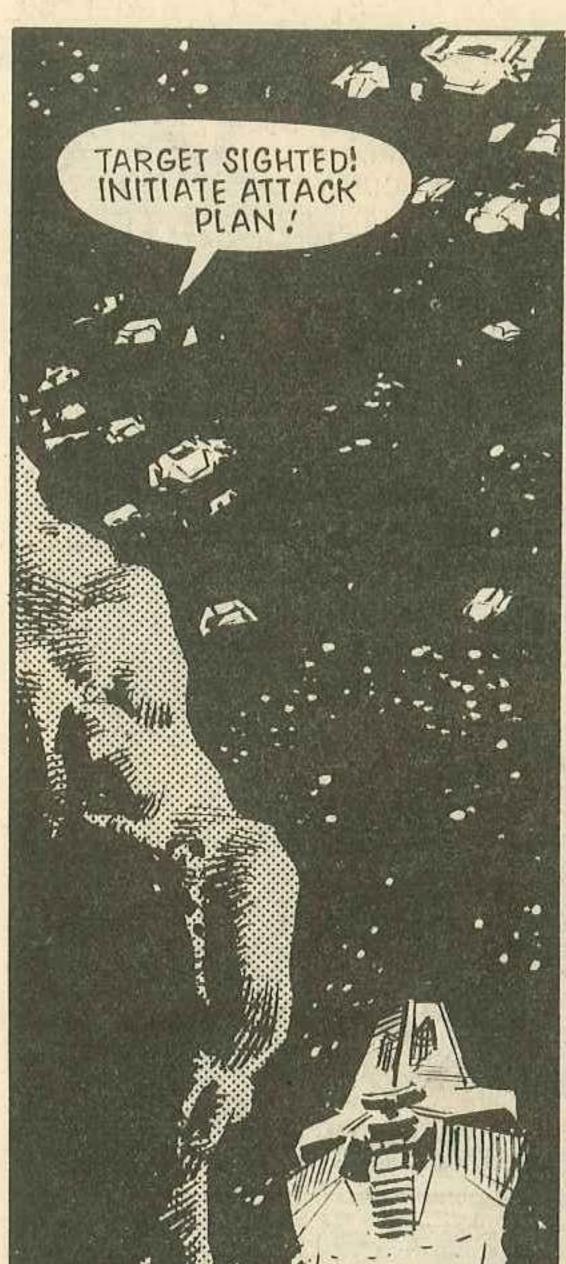


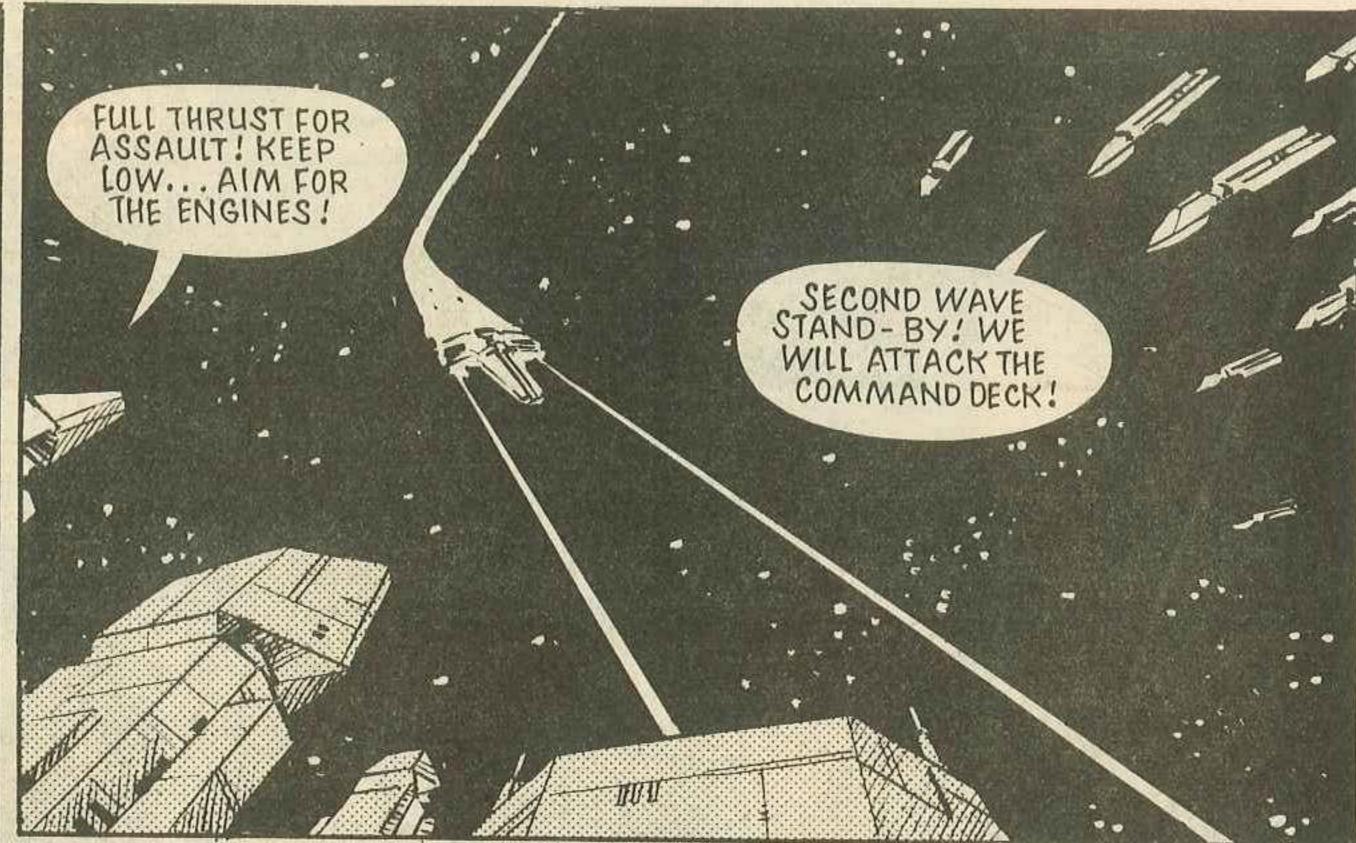


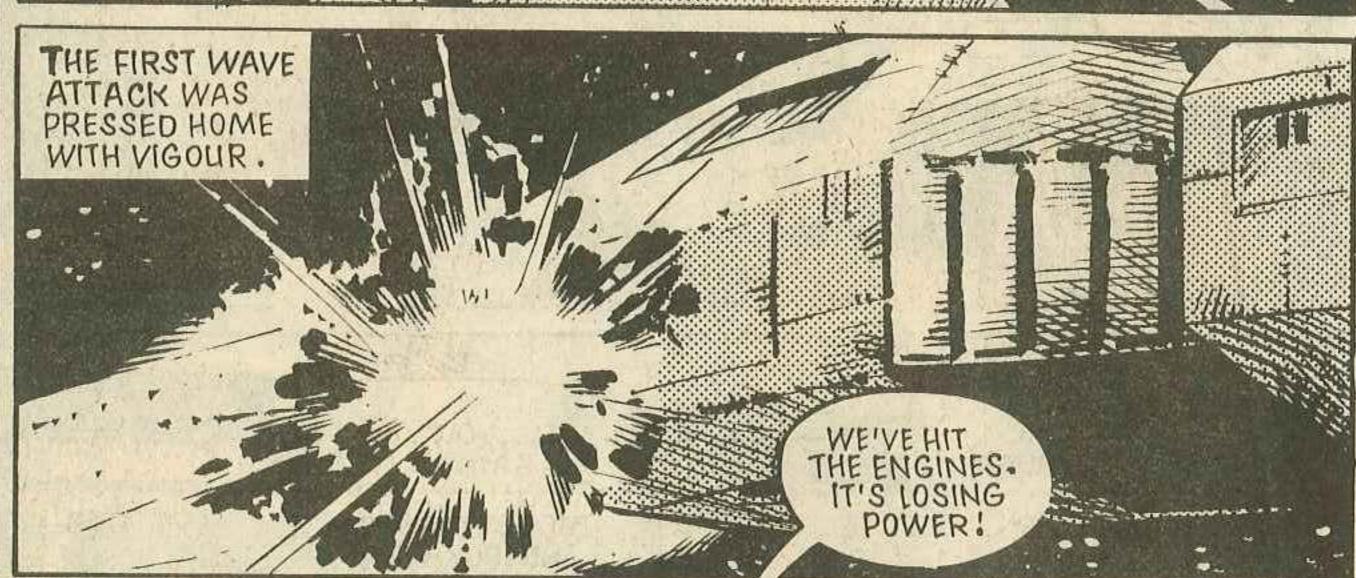


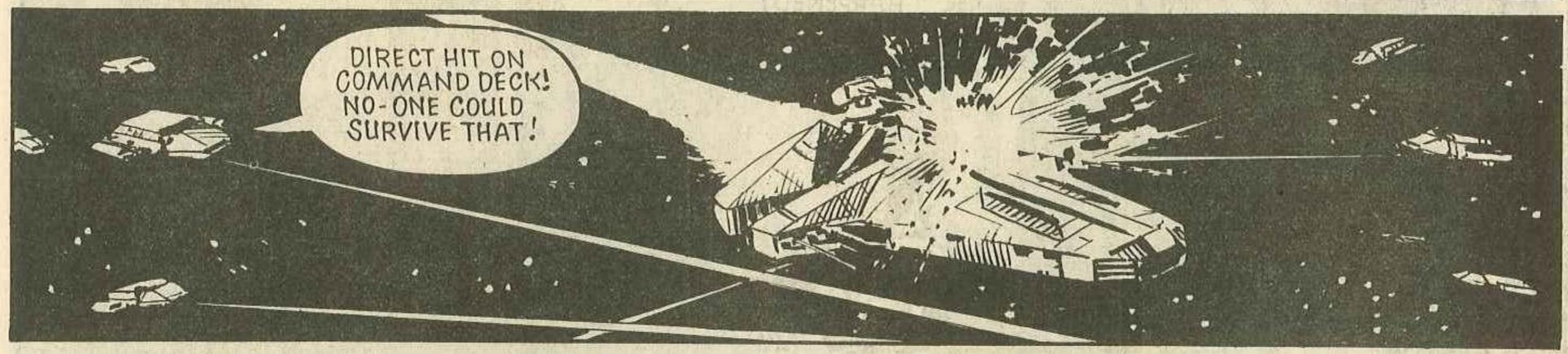


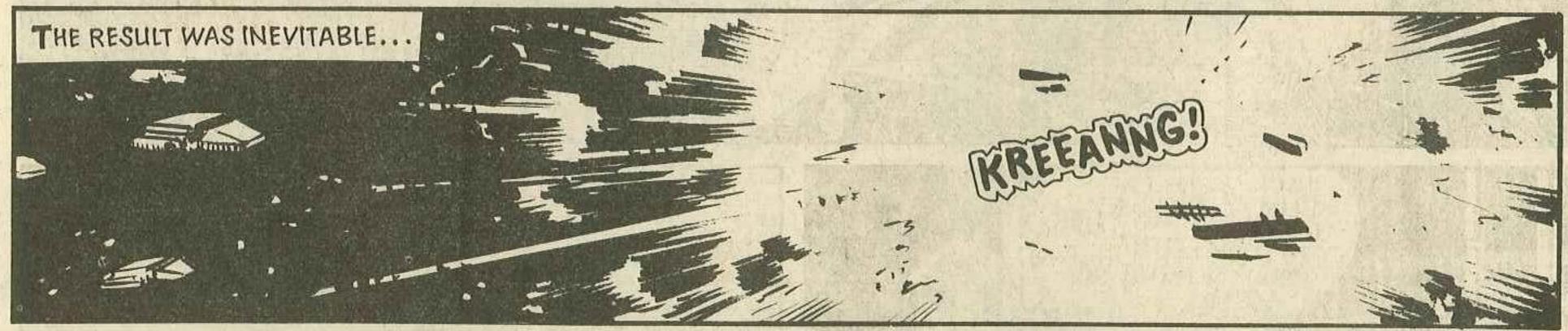




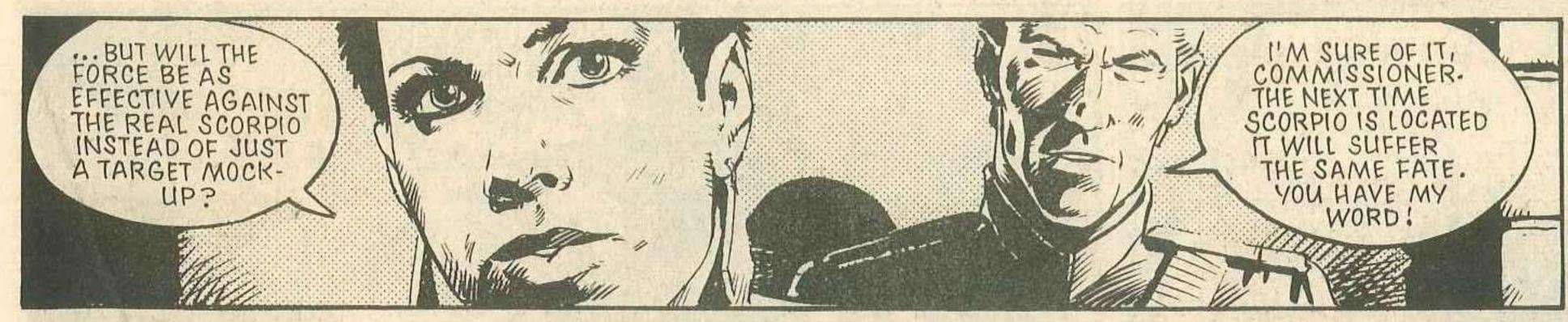


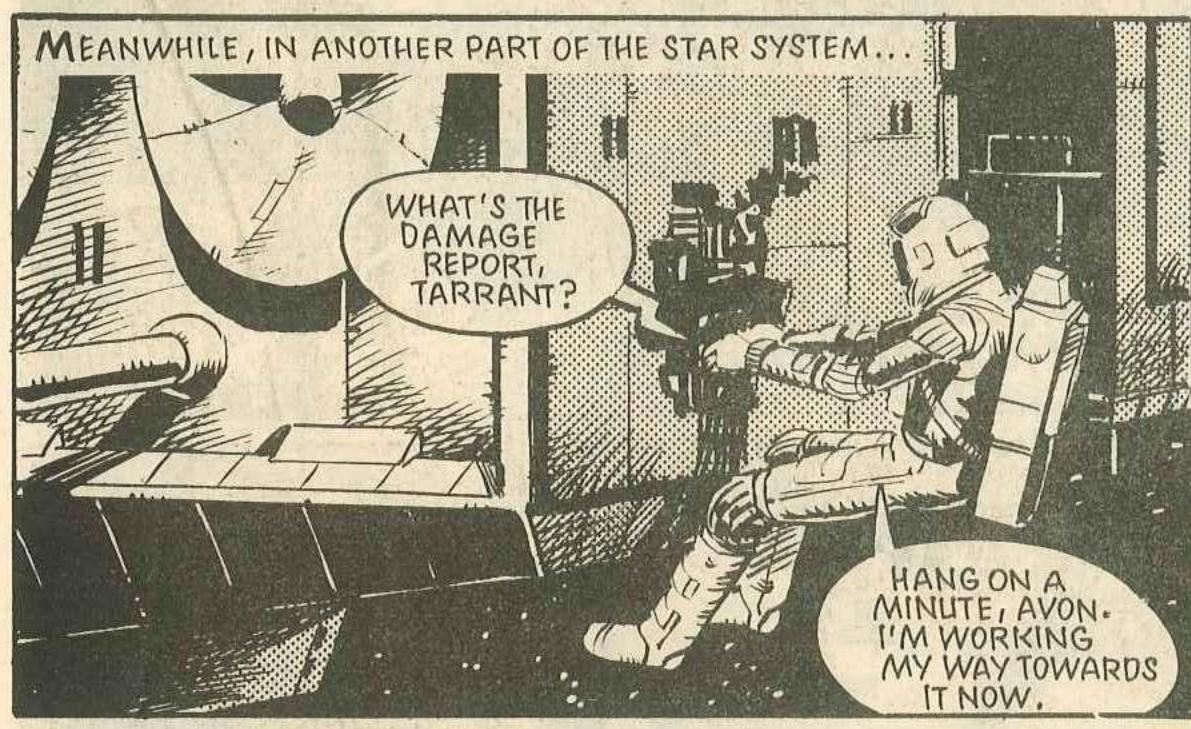






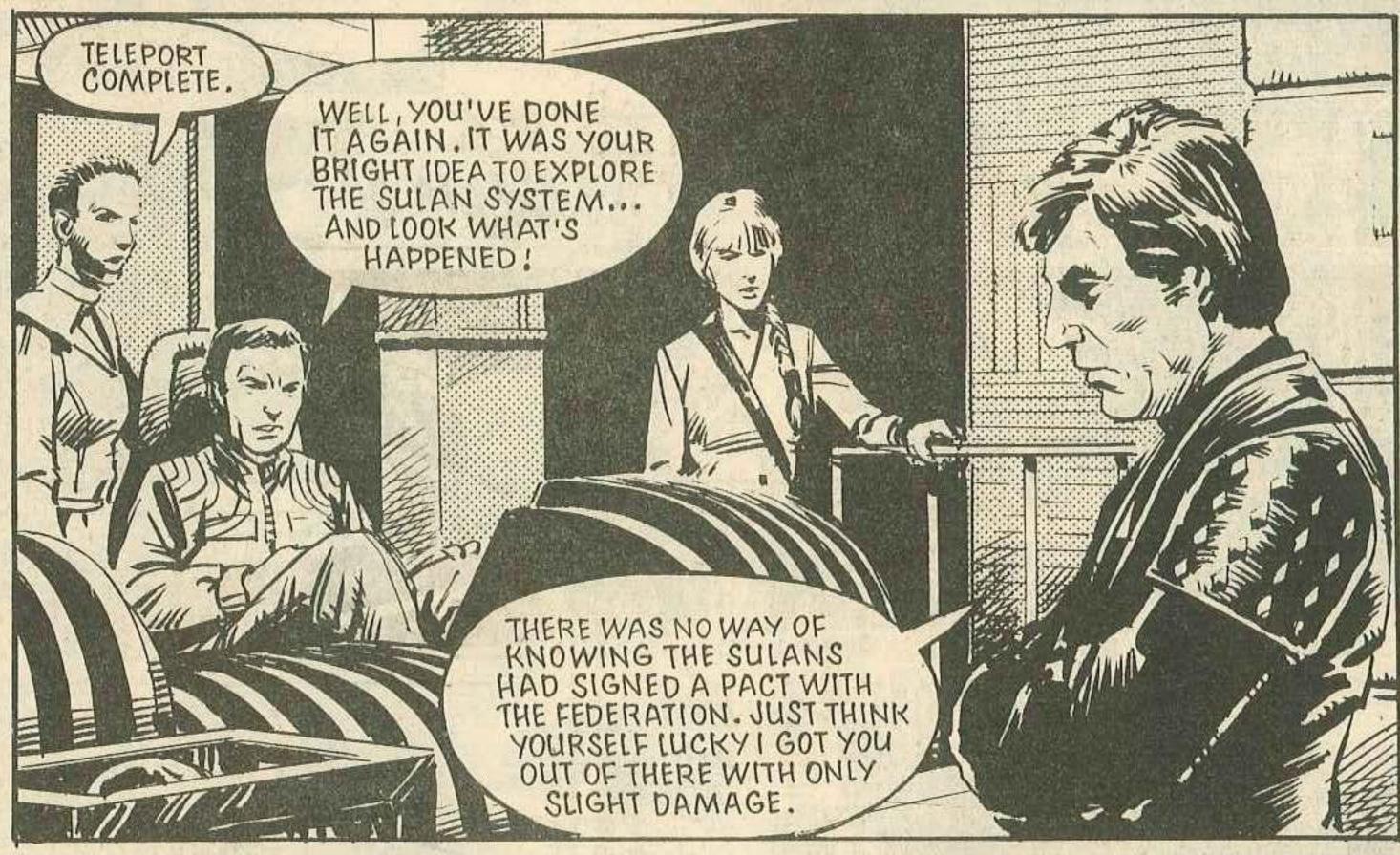


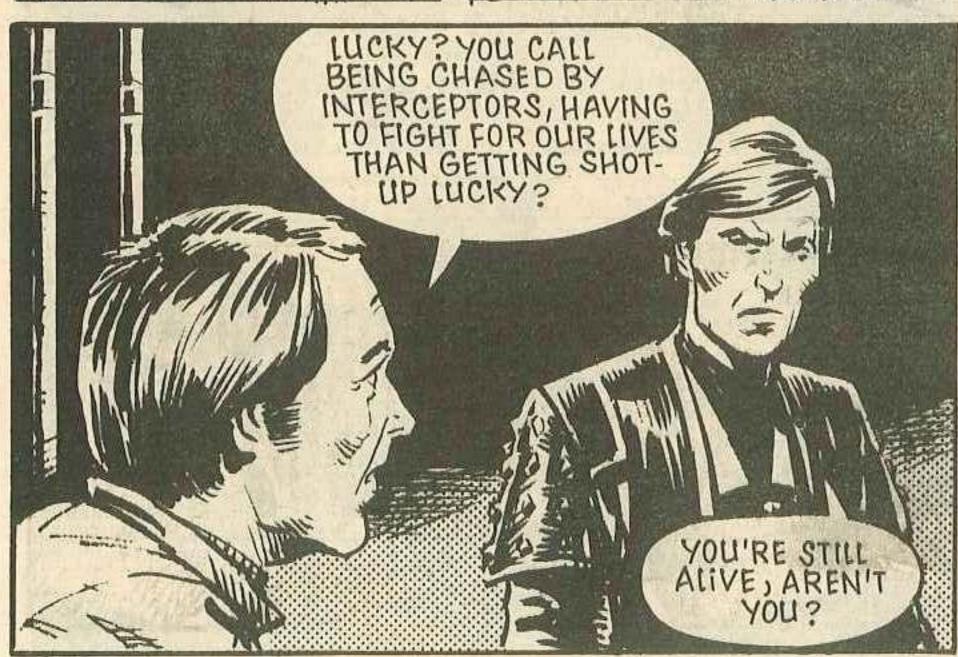


















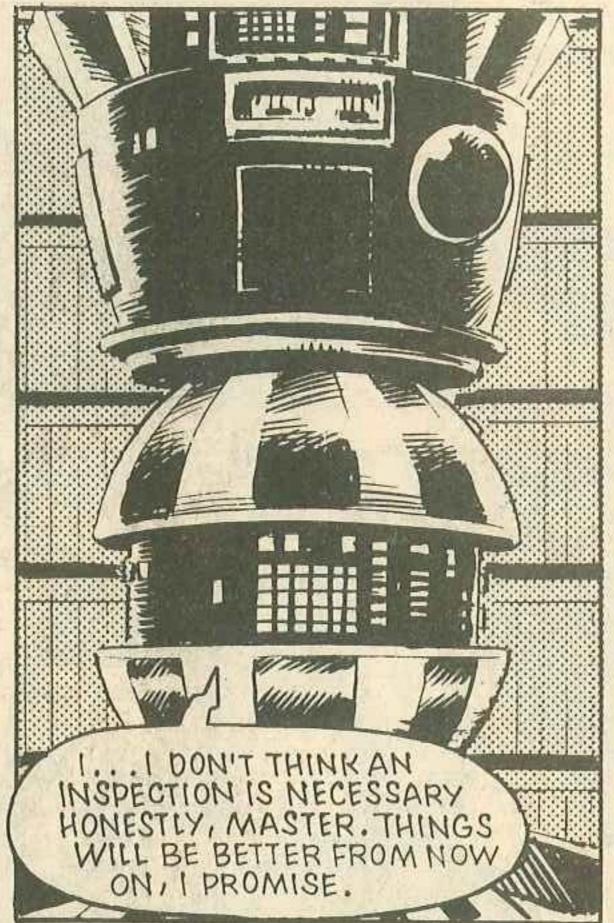


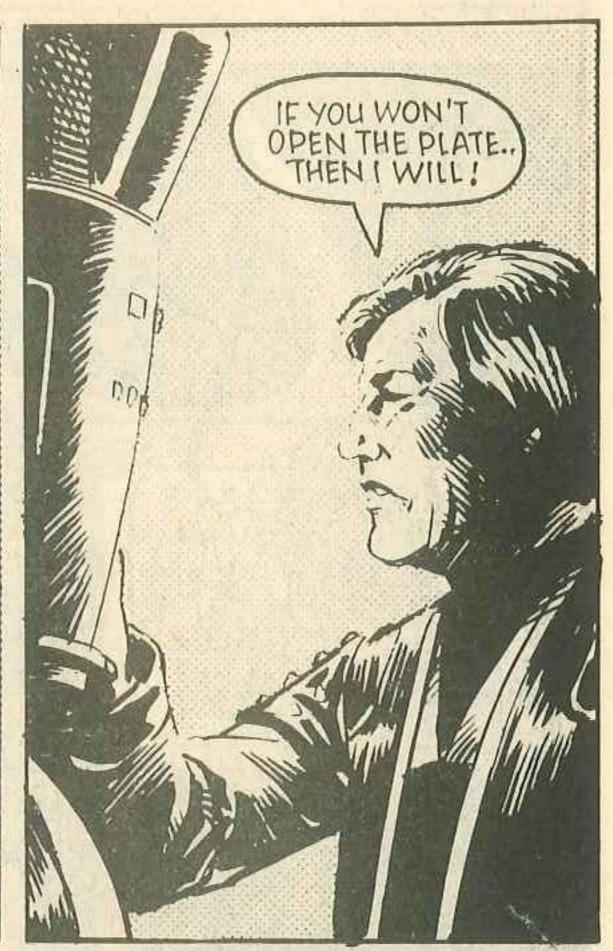






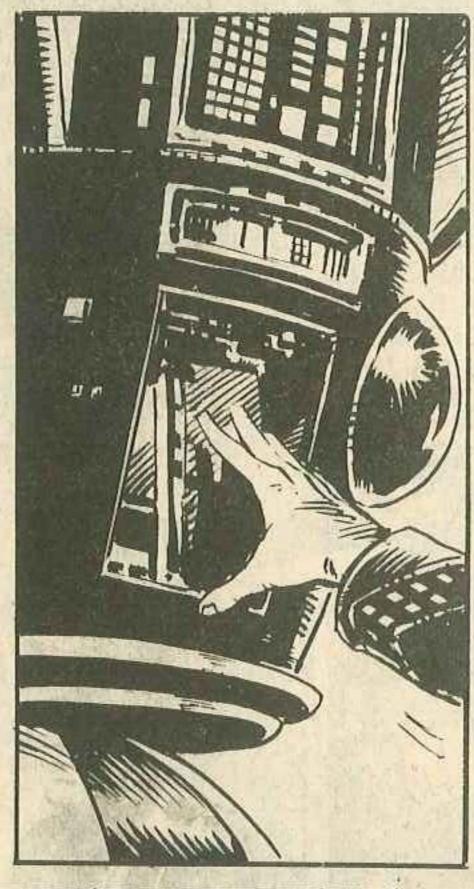


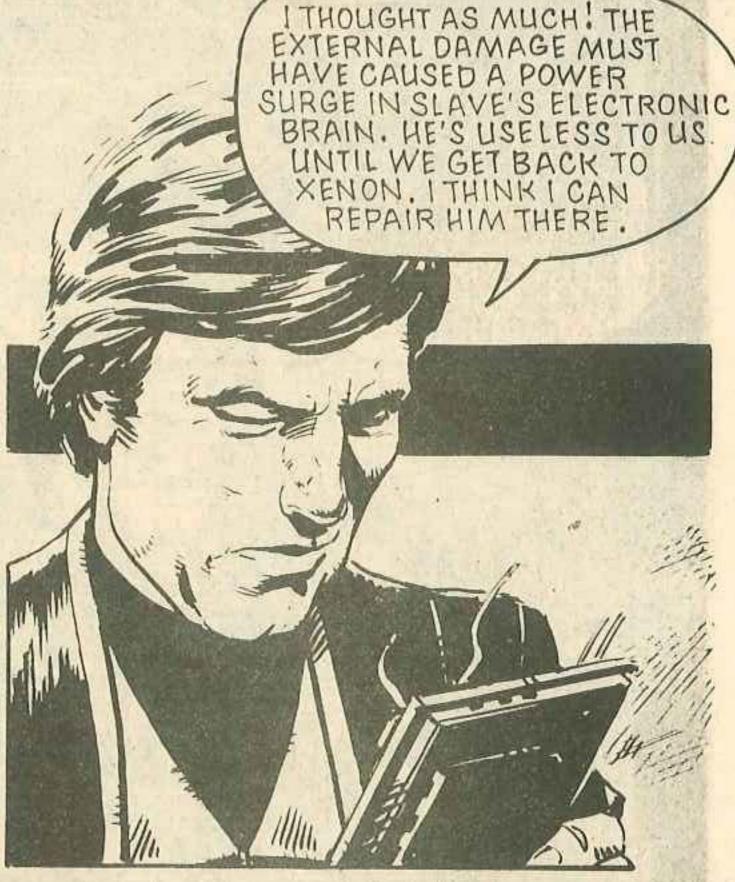




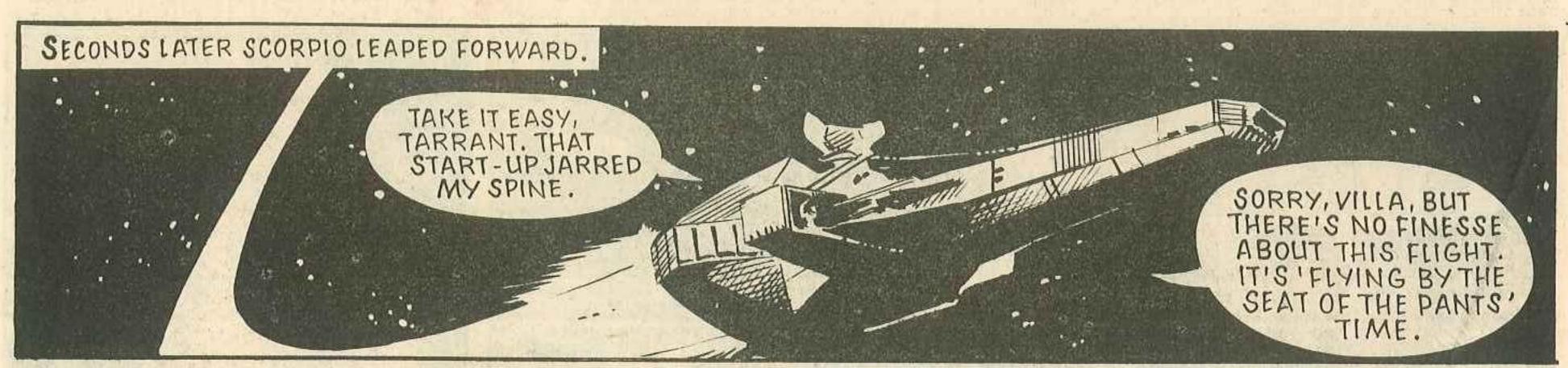




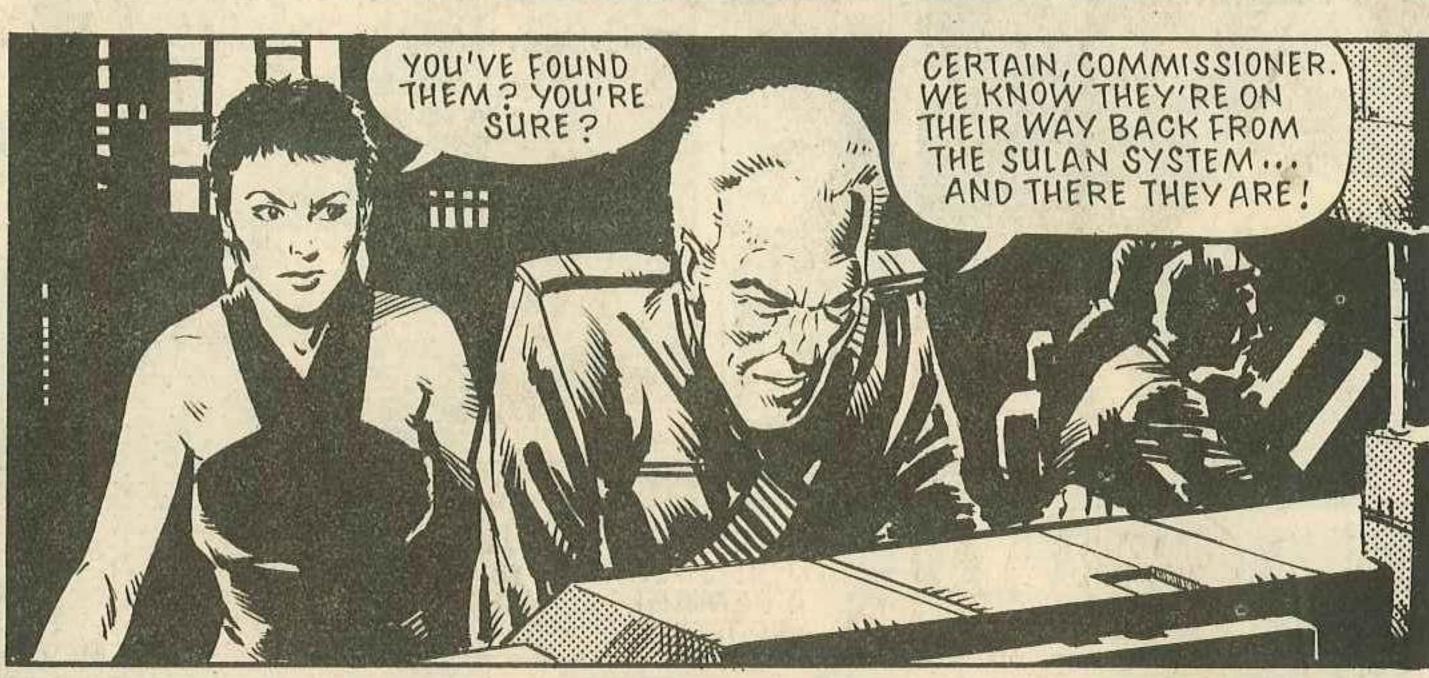










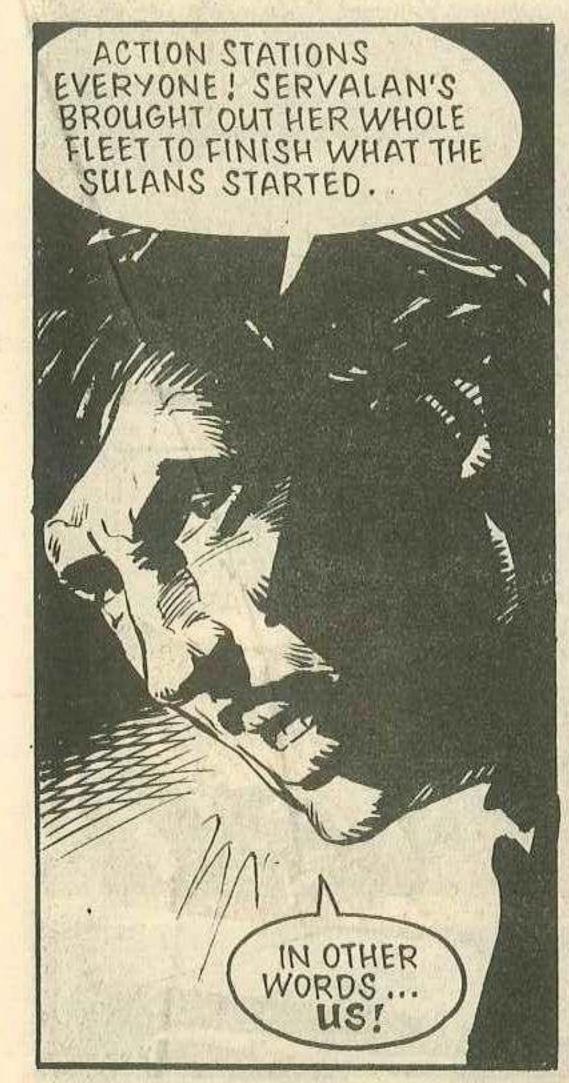




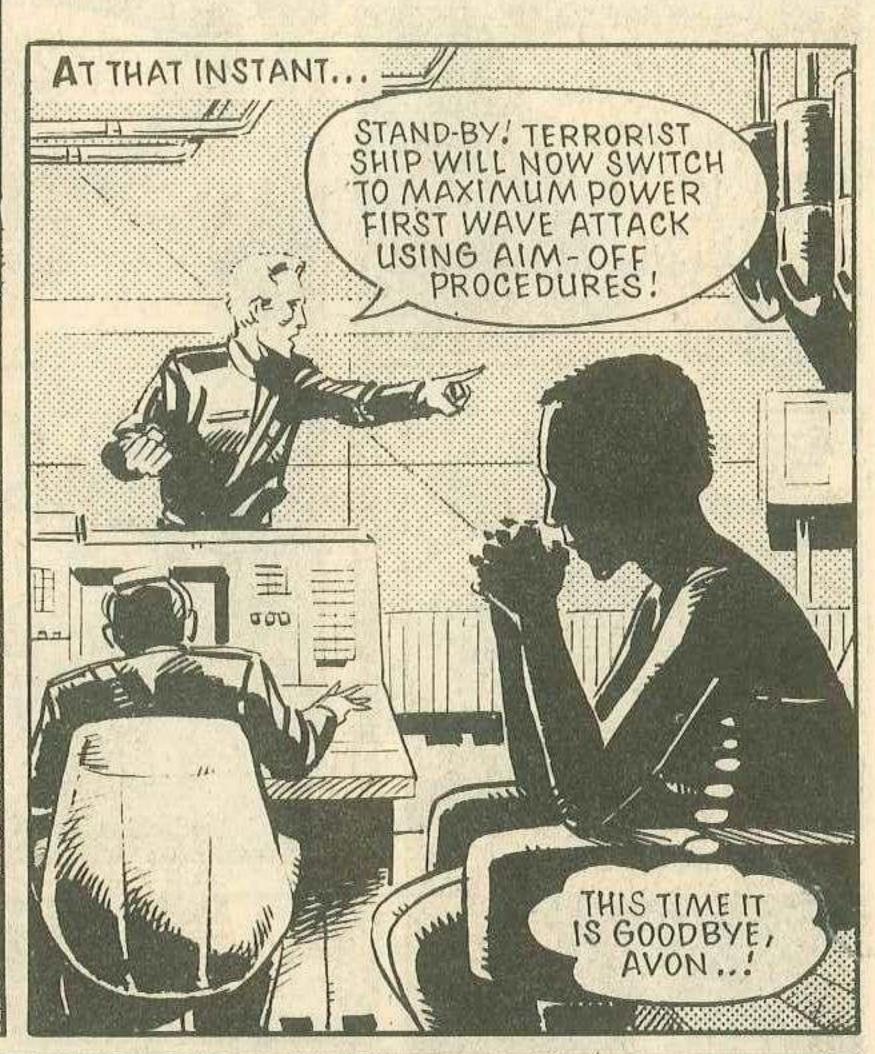






















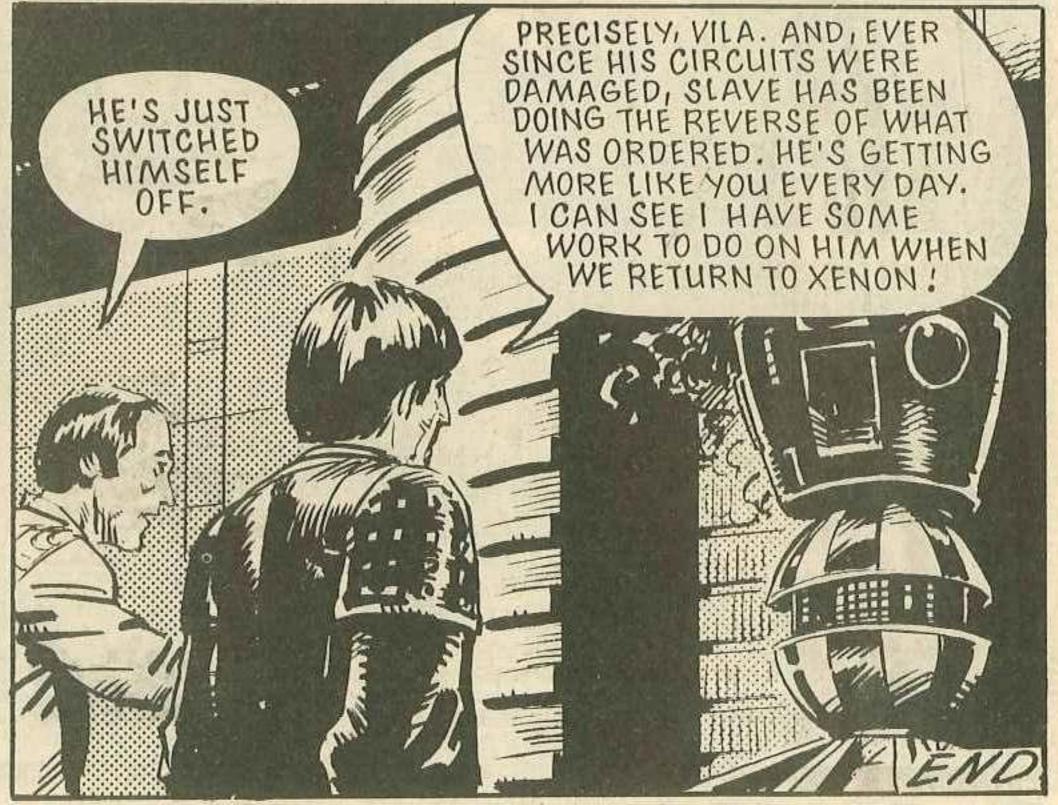












All correspondence to: Bernie Jaye, Marvel Comics Ltd., Jadwin House, 205-211 Kentish Town Road, London NW5.

It's very important you keep us informed of what you would like to see in your magazine, what you think of the features and stories and what your views on the programme are. We want to give you the monthly magazine you want to read. So, keep your letters coming and, remember, each letter receives personal attention.

Here are a selection of the letters we've received so far . . .

Since printing the names and addresses of some of the BLAKE'S 7 Fan Clubs, two of the addresses have now changed. I'd be grateful if you could print the new addresses in your fantastic magazine in order for fans to keep in touch with their heroes. They are

LIBERATOR POPULAR FRONT
Audrey Walker
5, Bledlow House
Capland Street
London NW8 8RU
.... and ....
HORIZON
Sharon Eckman
48, Gresham Gardens
Golders Green
London NW11

Many thanks, Heather Lulham, Ashford Common, Middx.

I am writing to you to congratulate you on BLAKE'S 7 MONTHLY. The star profiles are excellent so are the occasional puzzles and the features are superb. One drawback, however, is the artwork. Some of the likenesses in the

they might be. I hope you can resolve the problems soon.

Darin Brown, Abingdon.

We're trying all the time!

Now the series has ended I should just like to say I think the BBC have made a big mistake in stopping the show. With all the rumpus there was about the ending, as we saw for several weeks on the BBC's own programme, Points of View, how can the BBC ignore the desires of the viewing public? It was crystal clear people wanted more of the same . . . or something very similar . . . at least using some of the same characters. Are the BBC an organisation designed to serve the British public or not? Please do all you can to make them see sense and bring back this excellent show!

Deborah Grundy, Whitfield, Manchester

You have expressed the views of many hundreds of readers who

have written to the magazine with the same opinion, Deborah. It is, however, not up to the magazine to influence the BBC. Only fans of the programme can do that by writing to the Director General of the BBC and, once again, putting their views to him. Perhaps the BBC may see sense in the end. Who knows? Meanwhile, we at the magazine will do all we can to bring news of your heroes to you each month.

When your magazine first came out I found it lacking but, when it reached number 4, it had improved greatly. Loop of Death was a brilliant story and Battle Cruiser was by far the best comic strip. I also like the idea of informing us of fan clubs. Keep up the good work!

Andrew Smith, Malvern, Worcs.

P.S.

What has happened to the clipguns and the like from the series? Is there any chance of getting one?

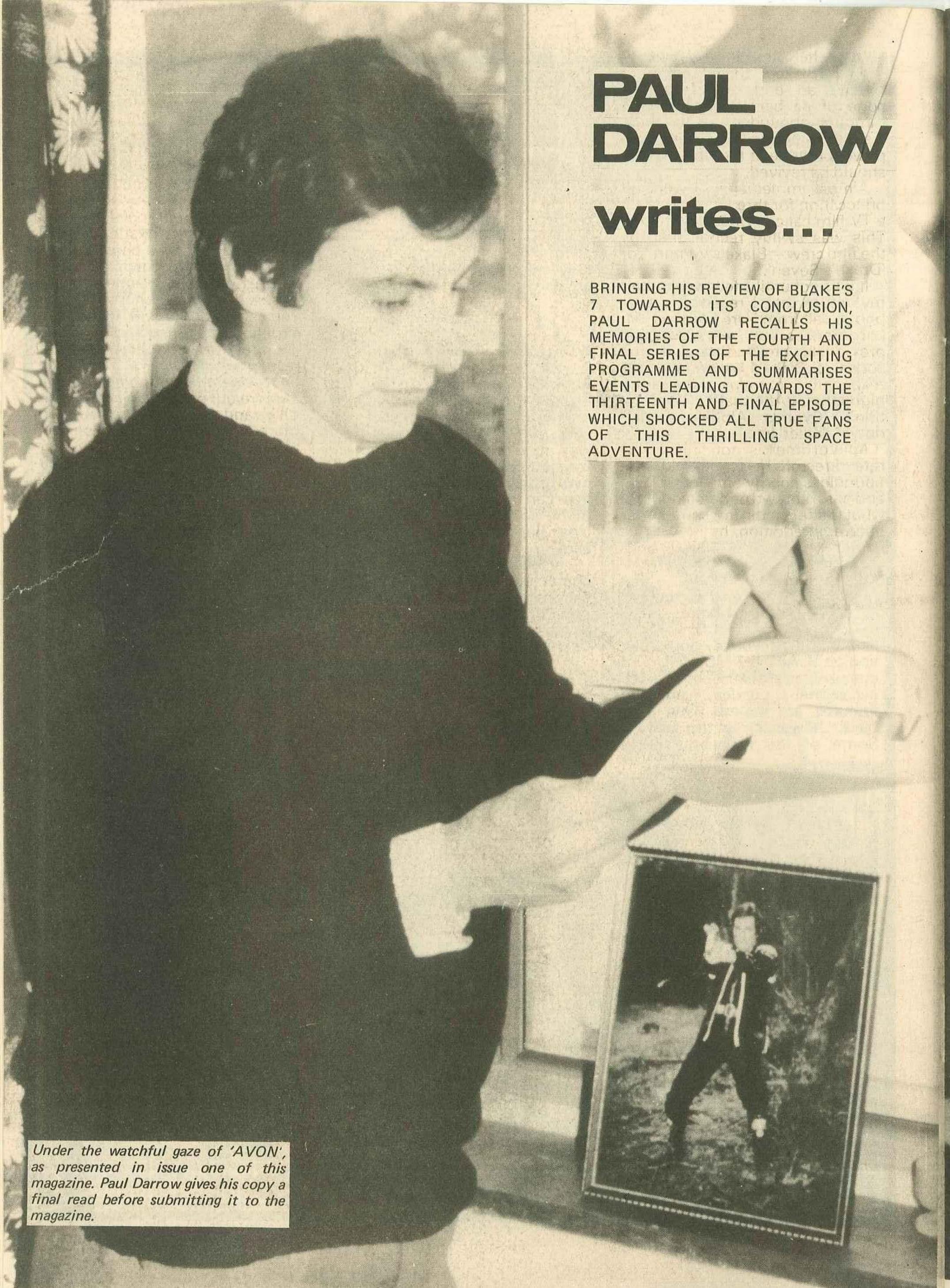
I'm sorry, Andrew, but all items used during the series are the property of the BBC and it is their policy to sell such items. Usually they are taken apart and used again in other weapons etc. to appear in other series.

In one of your issues you printed a picture of Paul Darrow lying on his back with a coat on. Can you please tell me why he was wearing one?

Jenny Fuller, Edinburgh.

The photograph was taken on a very wet day during location filming, Jenny, and Paul was wearing a plastic coat to protect his costume from the very wet ground. He had to lie for a long time on the soggy soil while the camera was positioned then, before the shot was taken, his coat was removed. He was very wet indeed but, as you can see, he never stopped smiling ... until the camera was rolling, that is! After all, Avon hardly ever smiles, does he?



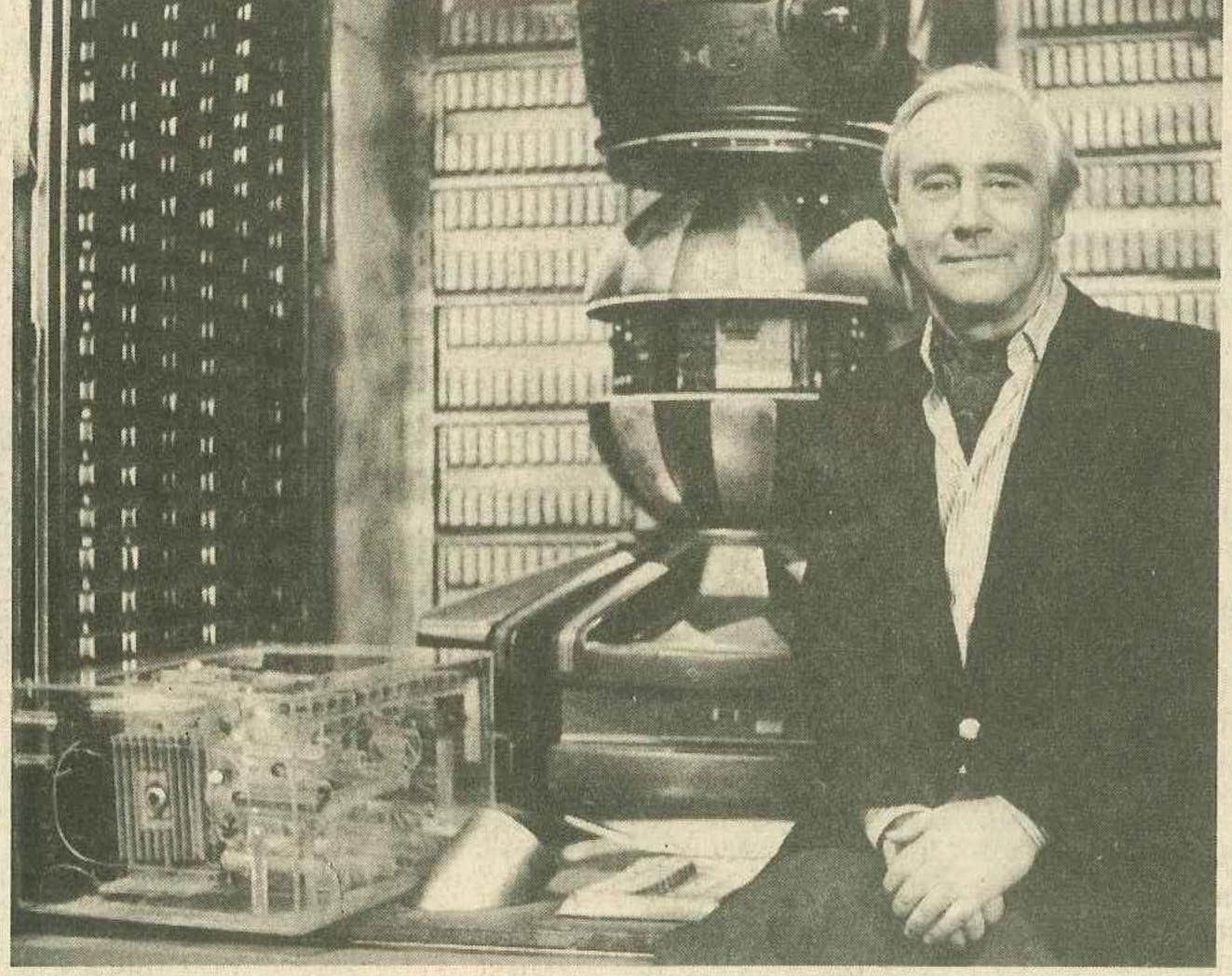






It was a pity Juliet had to die - but no-one could ever mistake Avon for Romeo!

It was a standing joke that, as Peter Tuddenham had been the voice of three major characters, Orac. Zen and now Slave, he must be one of the highest paid actors at the BBC.



because I wanted to dissect Avon's personality, carry his moods to extremes, emphasise his faults and reveal the savagery required of such a man in such a hostile environment.

I was aware that this might alienate an audience – alienate you – but, if you wanted to see Superman or Flash Gordon, you could go to the cinema. Avon was not super or flash but a human being, like many of us today, who had to behave as he did because, unlike Clark Kent or Dr who, there was always the possibility that Avon might lose! In the end—we all lost.

I believe that, in televison today, the intelligence of the audience is often underestimated. I believe that you would prefer to see your heroes, 'warts and all', rather than in shining armour astride white horses in a situation where right always triumphs. You and I know that is not true of today and very much doubt that it will become a truism tomorrow.

Under Mr Lorrimer's guidance, we tried not to underestimate you. We tried to plumb the depths of our characters so that you would recognise their traits and respect them for their honest presentation. We aimed for a greater realism in the Great Unreality.

As I write this, I believe that we must have achieved something. I am still receiving over a hundred letters a week and the BBC has been inundated with letters requesting — in some cases, demanding — another revival of the series.

It is a source of some pride for all of us who took part in it that, 'the poor man's Star Trek', should turn out to be not quite so poor after all! So it came about that, in September 1981, Blake's Seven were, 'rescued', for possibly the last time. I use the word, 'possibly', advisedly. For, as the men who climbed Everest will tell you, nothing is impossible!

Servalan, the Lucrecia Borgia of Outer Space, had left us to rot and die. But she reckoned without the determination of Blake's crew and the fact that, if they had once been of value to her, they might still be of value to someone else. That, 'someone else', duly appeared in the form of Dorian. A two hundred year old man who needed our brains in order to survive for another two hundred years.

Obviously, he wasn't going to get far on Vila's brain, so Avon was his chief target. Two ruthless men confronted one another. The first

are now all amalgamated under one namestyle and henceforward the Company is known as:-

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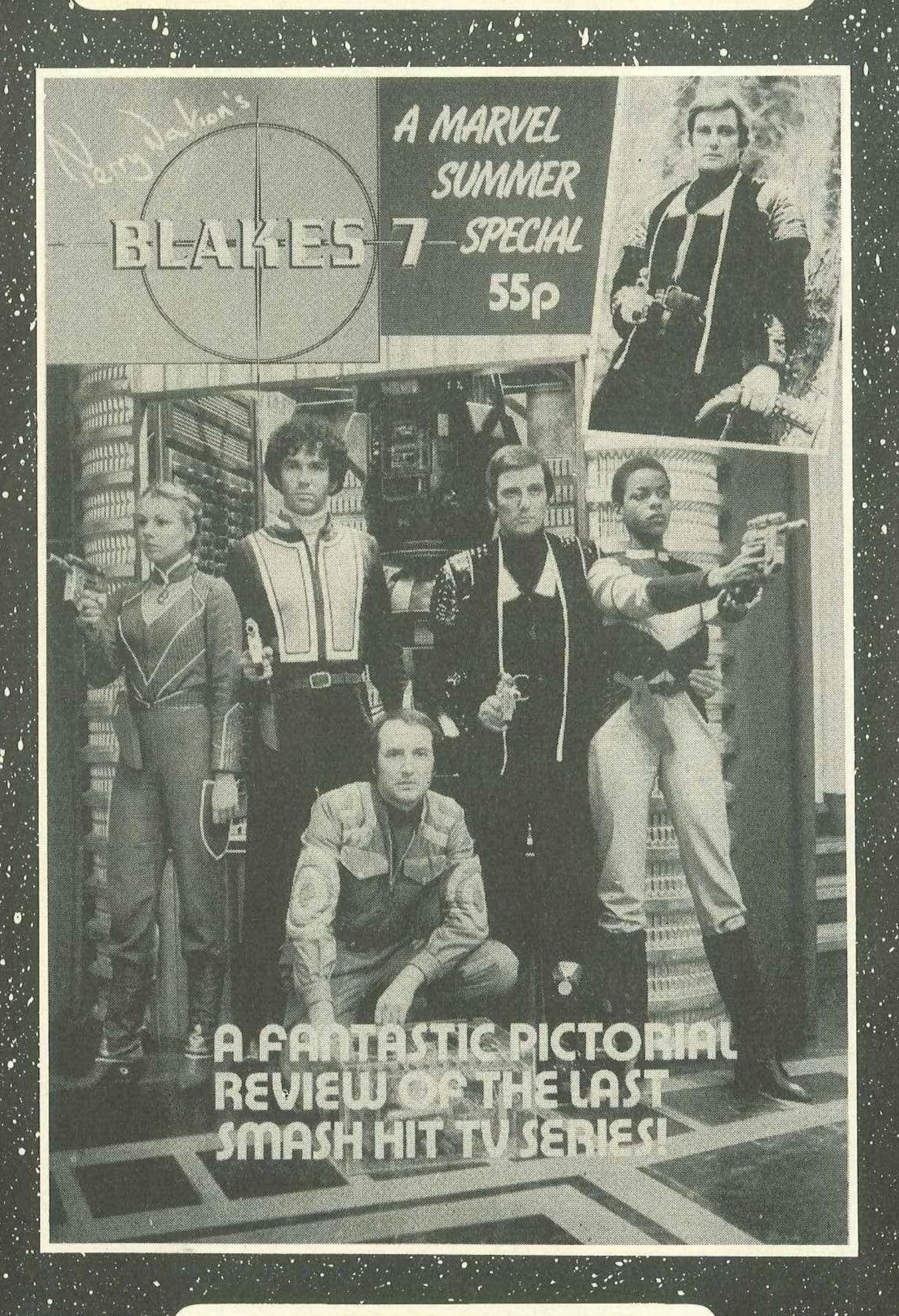
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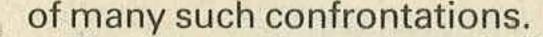
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The last confrontation of all, that between Avon and Blake, was to come later. Our very own Clash of the Titans.

Dorian, unfortunately, made two fatal mistakes. He underestimated the opposition and he trusted a woman (Soolin). Avon never made mistakes like that.

However, Dorian was almost a match for him and it took the intervention of a half tipsy Vila and a forgotten Federation gun to swing the result. Dorian died - and the Creature that had absorbed his sins and kept him young died with him. He couldn't really complain. Two hundred years is a fair run!

Now we were running again. Running after the elusive Blake. Running out of time. Now we had a base - Xenon - and a new ship that we had stolen - Scorpio.

One thing was made very clear at the end of that first episode of the new series. Dorian had ruthlessly suppressed any attempts to wrest either his ship or his base away from him. If we were going to hold on to them, it would mean that Avon and the rest would have to be even more ruthless.

One other thing. Cally was no longer with us. If you have watched the series, you will know what that meant to Avon. Jan Chappel's departure from the programme left a gap that was never filled. She had her own good reason for leaving. I, for one, wish she hadn't.

Of the fifty two episodes that constituted, Blake's Seven, I thought least of, 'Harvest of Kairos', in series three.

To redress the balance then, I must say that, 'Power', episode two of series four - written by the same author, turned out to be one of the best. Ben Steed put everything into that script.

Sex - in the shape of Juliet Hammond Hill. Violence - in the shape of Dickon Ashworth. And he confirmed two new members into the regular cast.

The first of the newcomers was a

computer that replaced the sorely missed Zen. 'Slave', was the creation of Script Editor Chris Boucher, but its servile voice belonged to none other than Peter Tuddenham.

It was a standing joke that, as Peter had been the voice of three major characters, - Orac, Zen and now Slave - he must be one of the highest paid actors at the BBC. Although he insists that this is not so, perhaps he ought to be! To create three such characters as competently as he had done deserves some reward.

Of all the members of Blake's seven, I miss the computers the most. But then, Avon was always much more at home with machines than he ever was with people! Machines, if you look after

them, rarely let you down.

'Power', dealt with the conditions on the surface of the planet above our new base - Xenon. Inevitably, it was ruled by a bunch of hairy primitives. In Space - nobody shaves!

Despite the hindrance of Miss Hammond Hill, Avon and Vila and the rest fought for, and gained control of the planet and the new space ship - Scorpio.

It was a pity that Juliet had to die. But then, no-one could ever mis-

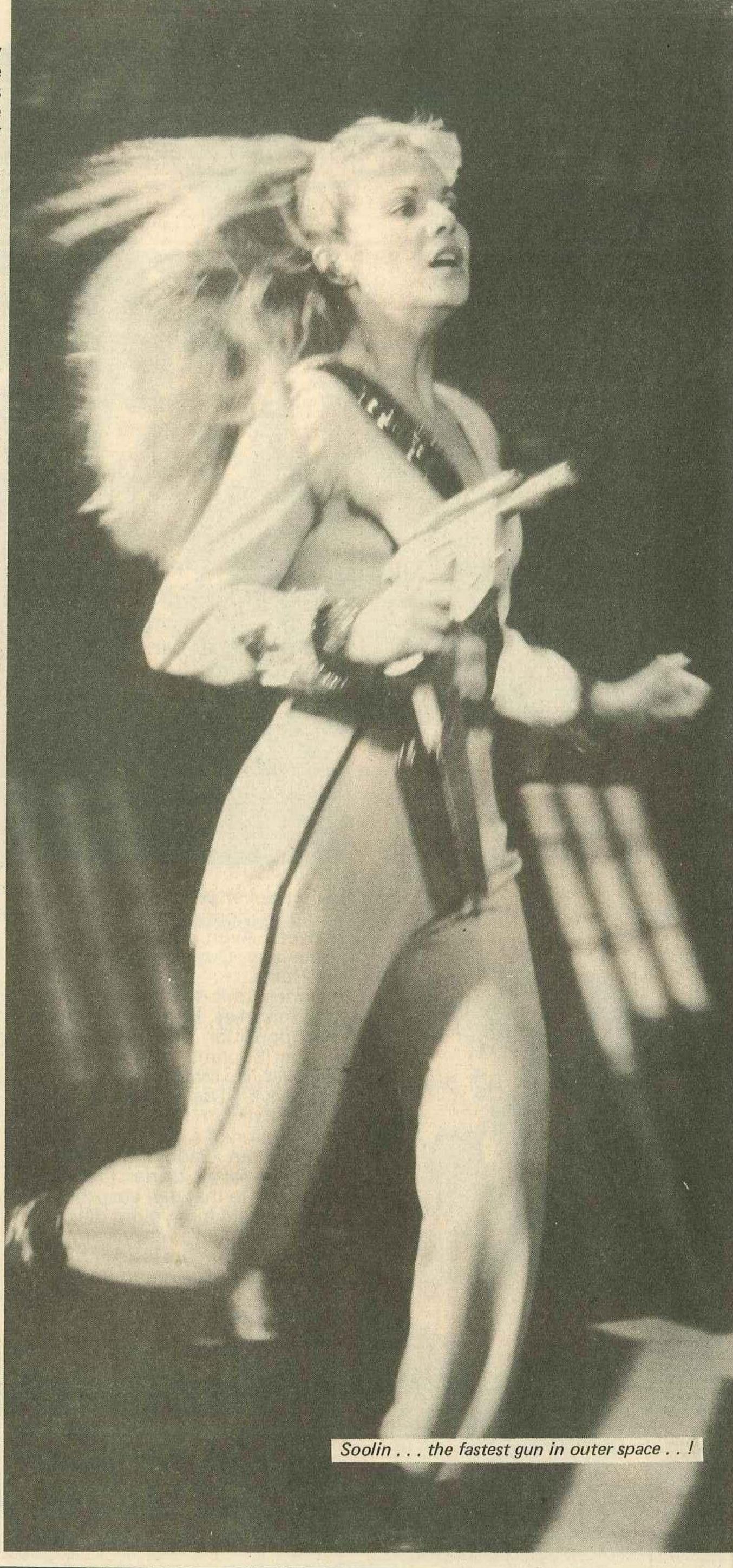
take Avon for Romeo!

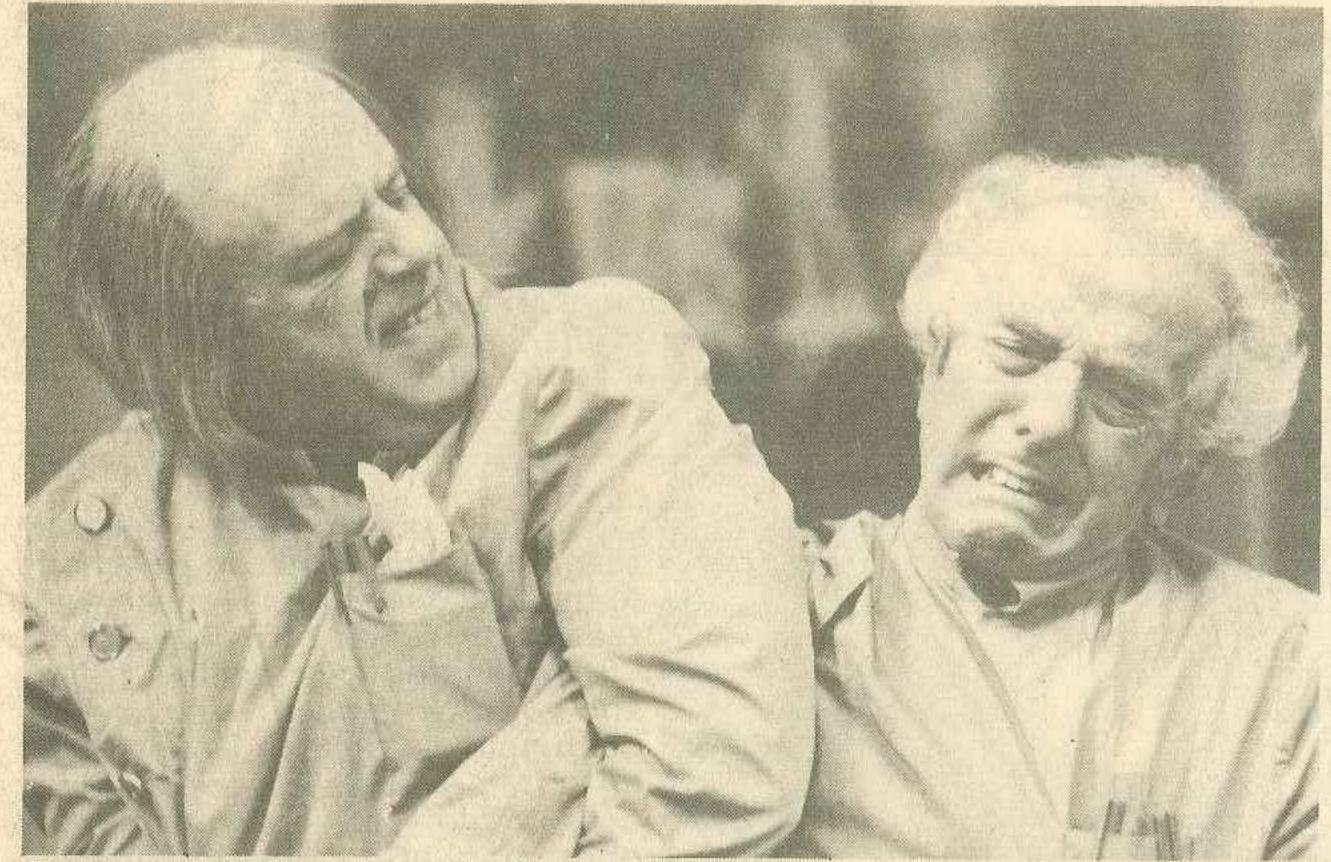
The idea behind this new series was that we would be building our strength upon a sure foundation in order to launch a final assault upon Earth and the Federation. That's like putting Vila into a boxing ring with Sugar Ray Leonard. There was little chance that the Federation would ever be overwhelmed. The reverse seemed more likely.

What then was our real purpose? As far as Avon was concerned, the object remained the same as always - to find Blake. Avon was, 'top dog', and had been for some time. But there was always the spectre of Blake to contend with.

Avon had to find him and join up with him again. Or - kill him! So gathering experts and allies on route, Avon led the others along the well worn trail. Unfortunately, the experts and allies were not very sturdy. In order to save themselves, we either had to kill them or ditch them, or they fell foul of Servalan.

Servalan - now thinly disguised, but fooling no-one, as someone called Sleer. It was a shame to lose the lovely Barbara Shelley and the upstanding Peter Byrne, but nobody mourned the massive robot, Muller. Except Avon - who recog-





Egorian and Pinder — the malevolent version of Laurel and Hardy in space.



Roy Kinnear led his 'old mate Avon' into a lot of trouble.

Tarrant revealed he was prepared to sacrifice anyone for the sake of a schoolboy crush on a lady with a very funny hairdo!



nised it as a considerable scientific achievement and a potential source of enormous power.

Tarrant blew it up!

At times, it was difficult to decide which side Tarrant was supposed to be on. At other times, he didn't seem too sure himself. Perhaps he had been distracted by our other new crew member – Soolin?

Soolin was supposed to be the fastest gun in Outer Space. But the Western myth held true. No matter how fast you are, there is always someone who is faster! At first, she wasn't really much help and she was an uneasy presence among us.

In, 'Assassin', however, she proved to be of some worth when the spider – or in this case, the crab – sat down beside her and did frighten her away as it would have done Miss Muffet. Otherwise, it was later revealed, her main function was to tell us about the planet Gauda Prime. Two words of

fatal significance.

Avon and Vila were the only remaining members of the original, 'Seven'. Ranged alongside them now were three people they felt they could not trust as they had once trusted Cally, Gan and Jenna. Two old foxes were running with three young hounds. The hounds did not realise, until it was too late, where they were running to!

On our way to Gauda Prime, we outfought the Space Rats – a group of cosmic Hells Angels. We outwitted a puckish computer expert – the wily Stratford Johns – and escaped the evil machinations of Egrorian and Pinder – the malevolent version of Laurel and Hardy.

Roy Kinnear led his, 'old mate Avon', into a lot of trouble and proved that all that glittered was

not, 'Gold'.

Servalan seduced Tarrant and murdered Dayna's lover. She was always very good at separating the men from the boys!

Avon made it clear that he was prepared to sacrifice Vila, if it meant saving his own neck.

Tarrant revealed that he was prepared to sacrifice anyone for the sake of a schoolboy crush on a lady with a very funny hair do.

Fortunately, no member of the crew made the supreme sacrifice for twelve episodes. Script Editor Chris Boucher was writing the last, the thirteenth episode. In it, he was preparing the greatest, the final, sacrifice!

## KEN ARMSTRONG

Continuing our series of interviews with those connected with the making of the extremely successful television series, we thought it about time our very own photographer and interviewer, Ken Armstrong, should be given a chance to tell of his experiences during the filming of the fourth series. In his own words it was . . . A year of experience!



When I was asked to become the magazine representative attached to the BBC series for the making of the fourth series of BLAKE'S 7, I was delighted but I didn't really know what to expect. Never having been quite so close to TV personalities before I was not certain how they would receive the idea of a photographer dogging their every move, on and off the set, for a year. My fears, as I was soon to find out, were unfounded . . . but more of that later.

Having been introduced to the series producer, Vere Lorrimer, in the hallowed portals of the BBC, I was soon put at my ease and, as others have mentioned time and again, his bubbling enthusiasm for the programme soon rubbed off on me. I must say at this time that it is largely thanks to Vere that the magazine came into being. Had he not ensured every door was open to me and where problems arose, smoothed the way, fans of the series would not have the quality we like to think the magazine provides.

Like others who have spoken about the making of the fourth series, the appalling weather which heralded the start of location filming sticks firmly in Ken's mind.

My first sight of Avon was as an apparition in black slithering through the mud of Box Hill, sheltering under an umbrella and looking somewhat less than fearsome as he headed towards the mobile catering van to collect his lunch. Suddenly, Avon and the rest of the cast, as they followed him from the dripping area of trees where filming had taken place, looked very human indeed.

I was introduced to all the principals and the director of that particular episode, Mary Ridge, and made to feel immediately at home. If this is what it's going to be like for the rest of the year, I said to myself, it's going to be fun. And it was . . . even in the pouring rain!

## INTERVIEW.

My deepest thanks must go to Paul Darrow for not only putting me at my ease from the very beginning, but also for making certain I knew in advance when things were about to happen. He also made time both on location and in the studio to introduce me to all the guest artists who arrived to add their own skills and performance to the series. He likewise made himself available not only for interviews but also for the timeconsuming special photo-sessions which are so important when trying to present to the reader a different and exciting aspect to the series. Mike Keating, Josette Simon, Glynis Barber and Steven Pacey followed in Paul's footsteps and it felt, after just a few days on location, that I had known the principals as long as they had known each other.

Having arrived with the cast, the next task for Ken was to actually produce the material he was there to gather. No easy matter when film and TV cameras are also jostling for the best shot.

The senior studio cameraman, Dave White, and the location cameraman, Finton Sheenan, are owed a great debt of thanks. They soon came to accept that 'the guy from the magazine' was always around on location and in the studio and were soon offering services as to how to get the best angles and best positions for my photographs. In the studio, especially, when cameras move so quickly between shots and there can be as many as five cameras working on a set the size of Scorpio's flight deck, it is important not to get in their way. After all, studio time is extremely expensive and no-one would have thanked me if a scene had to be reshot because 'the guy from the magazine' suddenly appeared as an uninvited sixth member of the crew!

Another problem trying to take photographs in a TV studio is that television cameras are designed to work on low light and are extremely sensitive to 'flares' of light. A special spray is used on shiny objects to take away the brilliant reflections in order for the cameras not to get any sudden bright spots



The cast made time for the special photo sessions so important to creating original material for the magazine.

on their lens. So what, you may ask? Well, it means a photographer cannot use a flash gun to take still shots. All pictures must be taken using available light. To compensate for this, a very fast film speed has to be used and a wide aperture set. For those who know about photograpy, this means the depth of field in the photograph is very limited—the point of focus has to be exact—or the whole picture looks very fuzzy.

An additional complication is in

trying to get a good mixture of colour as well as crisp black and white pictures. This involves using two cameras, one for each process. When the action starts you have to be ready to switch from one camera to the other, remember which camera contains which film ... as well as ensuring the speed and aperture and focus are correct ... then, a quick check to ensure the composition of the picture looks right then ... if the actors are still there ... take the shot!

Having described some of the difficulties involved in bringing the pictures to readers of this magazine, Ken assures us there were lighter moments also during the tense assignments.

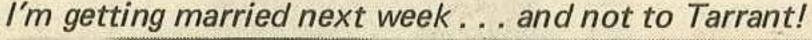
During the episode 'Warlords', Steven Pacey as Tarrant was required to get into a tight clinch with the actress Bobby Brown, playing Zeeona. It was to be a very tender love scene between the two. During the rehearsal immediately prior to filming, I moved in to take a close-up of them drawing together for a meaningful kiss. As my camera clicked away, Bobby Brown glanced out of the corner of her eye, saw me then whispered ... 'I hope you're not going to print that shot. I'm getting married next week . . . and not to Tarrant!

On another occasion when I was joining the crew for location filming on the Dorset coast, I arrived at the 'base camp' where all the prop and make-up vehicles were parked. The camera crew were busy preparing the set for the first sequence of the day and I was unloading my equipment from my car when one of the floor managers dashed across to where I was standing. 'You're late,' she said. 'They're expecting you across in the caravan. You'd better hurry.' I was a little puzzled by this but, lugging all my equipment over to the caravan, I was ushered inside by the floor manager. Inside were the rest of the cast who all smiled in greeting but looked a little puzzled as to why I was in the make-up caravan . . . as was I. 'You'd better hurry up and get changed,' continued the floor manager. 'You're on in ten minutes.' I think my puzzled expression said it all. 'Y . . . you are one of the extras . . . aren't you?' asked the now worried girl. At this point, everyone in the caravan burst out laughing. The girl was told of her mistake and also who I was. She blushed brightly but . . . thinking back on it ... if nothing had been said, I could have taken part in my favourite TV programme an an extra! Ah, well ... maybe next time!

Later that same week, when the crew were filming in a refuse disposal centre in Poole, I was introduced to one of my favourite comedy actors, Roy Kinnear. Roy was a guest artist in 'Gold' and, living up to his reputation of being an extremely funny man both on and off the set, he kept everyone in



A very happy cast . . .







Roy Kinnear . . . kept the entire cast and crew in stitches . . .

stitches the whole time.

Glynis Barber found she could not look Roy straight in the eye when delivering her lines because she burst out laughing each time their eyes met. There was also one occasion when the camera crew took nearly fifteen minutes to prepare for a shot where Roy was to turn to Avon and Soolin, point to a ladder and say 'It's over there.' At that moment, all Avon and Soolin had to do was to rush across to the foot of the ladder. All very simple,

one would think, but things are never simple with Roy Kinnear on the set. Roy spent the fifteen minutes using every voice in his vast repertoire to say 'It's over there ...' With each change of voice, Paul Darrow and Glynis Barber laughed louder and louder. Eventually, when the camera was ready and the director called for action, Roy said his line ... but in a perfectly normal voice ... and Paul and Glynis curled up with laughter! Roy has that affect on people.

As mentioned earlier, Ken has been responsible for not only providing the photographs for the magazine but the interviews as well.

I must admit it's strange to be interviewed myself, but the interviewing of the cast of the series I found was a terrific experience. When someone tells you a brief outline of their life, their approach to their work and their hopes and

fears for the future, it places you in a privileged position. I'm afraid I do not hold with some journalists who attempt to create sensation from ordinary facts and, above all, if someone does you the courtesy of granting in interview, what they say should be recounted in an honest way and not twisted or taken out of context just to satisfy the demand for gossip.

Most of the interviews were conducted in the stars' dressing rooms either during a long break in recording or once work for the day was over. Without exception, all the principals spoke honestly and

their approach to the acting profession. The one interview that will stick in my mind, however, was the one I had with Jacqueline Pearce, the seductive Servalan. Jackie's presence both on and off the set is undeniable. She told me when she takes a part, she really lives it and her part as Servalan was no exception. Jackie was interviewed in her dressing room between rehearsal and filming. She looked as though she ate men for breakfast and, at any moment, I was expecting Federation guards to burst in through the door and carry me off screaming. Once we began,

and we had a long and very interesting conversation. It is a great pity her involvement in the fourth series was not as extensive as it might have been. The series needed a character like Servalan to emphasise the ever present threat to our heroes. Since she did not appear in the final episode, however, it does leave the way open, should the BBC change its mind, to bring her back in a sequel or a spinoff of the programme. Let's hope they do!

Now the series has ended, what is Ken's lasting impression of that year spent working on location and in the studio with the cast?

Above all, the happy atmosphere both on and off the set between cast and crew is what sticks in my mind. I was made welcome by everyone and I saw guest artists and extras treated the same way. The cast worked extremely well together and it is sad they have all gone their separate ways now perhaps never to work together again. I think we need a series like Blake's 7 to provide us with a few moments of sheer escapism and excitement.

One incident from the studio filming which still makes me smile today happened during the filming of 'Warlords'. It was the last scene of a particular day and the director was trying to squeeze it in before the studio lights were switched off on the dot of 10pm. Vila and Tarrant were trying to clear a way through a tunnel blocked off by rocks and debris. There was to be much heaving and grunting in the confined space of the polystyrene tunnel as the 'heavy' boulders were moved and the roof was to cave-in during the process. The object was to get out of the tunnel before disaster overtook them . . . but the electricians struck first. Just as Vila was about to move the last boulder, the main studio lights were cut and recording stopped. That instant, from somewhere in the gloom, came a rumble as the fake roof of the tunnel collapsed and 'boulders' rolled between the now silent cameras. Through a cloud of dust Mike Keating's urgent voice called out. 'We're through, Tarrant! We're through!' The studio crew dissolved in laughter.



Jackie's presence both on and off the set is undeniable . . .

# ASH DRAG...

Your chance to put any question you like to the super-computer. If you're lucky enough to have your question printed here, then we'll send you an autographed photo of the **BLAKE'S 7** cast!

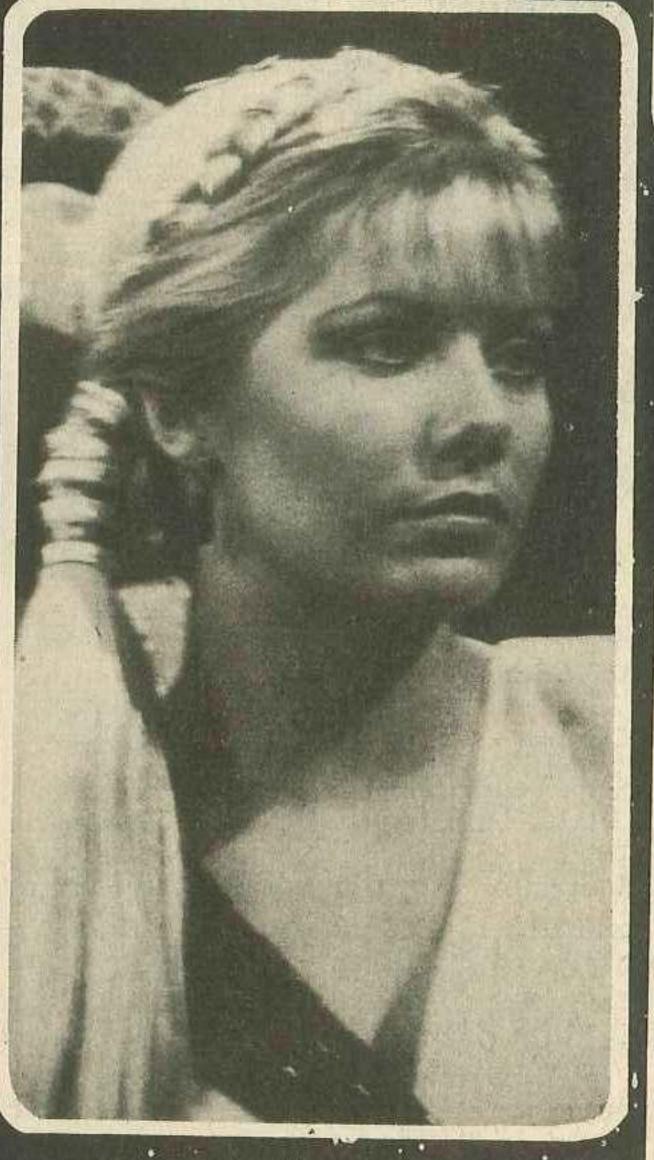
At the beginning of the magazine, Issue I, it was stated Soolin came from Darlon IV, yet she was heard to say in episode thirteen of the series she came from Gauda Prime. Can you please tell me which is correct?

Martin Collins, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

Both parts of the information are correct but I feel I should explain in more detail to set your mind at rest. Although a native of Earth, Soolin and her family moved to Darlon IV when she was a child. At the time of their move, Darlon IV was a frontier planet whose natural mineral wealth had not then been discovered. When the Federation realised the planet's potential, they decided to redesignate the planet an Open Planet, permitting the rule of law to be suspended and the mining consortiums, controlled by the Federation, to act as they pleased. This resulted in the murder of Soolin's family which led to her seeking her revenge on them. She succeeded in killing all those responsible for the murder of her parents but, during that time, the Federation's re-designation of the planet moved into its second phase. A 'Named' planet, as was Darlon IV, was entitled to its own charter . . . one which could never be changed. Only when a planet was renamed was it possible to establish a new charter ... and a new governing body. The Federation decided to rename Darlon IV as Gauda Prime, thereby giving it their own imposed charter and governing body and denying all rights to those who had first established themselves on the planet when it was part of the Frontier world. Therefore, Darlon IV and Gauda Prime are one and the same planet. I hope that satisfies your curiosity?

Mandy Watkins of London, NW6, asks ... What are you made of, Orac? My brother says you're made of plastic, but I don't think so. Please settle this argument.

I shall be delighted to! How dare your brother suggest that such an advanced machine as myself is made of plastic! I am no cheap toy! My construction is of a substance known as Pexilite, an extremely durable and light substance developed by my creator, Ensor. The internal workings of my brain are of even more durable substances but, in case anyone has the idea of trying to duplicate me, I shall never reveal those to you!



William Trent from Poole, Dorset, would like to know what metal is used on Scorpio.

The basic construction of the ship is split into three parts. The first is the hull, composed of a mixture of Duralumin and Platoxide, coated with a silicon resin. It is the resin which gives the ship it reddish appearance. There is an inner hull, separated from the outer by a thin space and a layer of polymer liquid. This inner hull is constructed from Argomac, one of the lightest yet strongest metals known. The polymer liquid circulating in the space between the hulls serves the purpose of 'plugging' small meteorite holes and slight damage to the outer hull should the ship suffer such damage. This makes the hull self-sealing to a large extent except, however, when major damage occurs, such as lasar charge blasts etc. The entire interior of the ship is constructed from alulite, a derivitive of the metal you know as aluminium. Alulite, however, is lighter, stronger and more resistant to damage than aluminium and is used as standard construction material on most ships in service at this time.



Sharon Mitchell of Coventry wonders if Orac has the powers of telepathy?

How narrow-minded you human beings are! Telepathy is simply a human ability to receive or transmit tiny electrical impulses generated in the brain of the subject being studied ... or the person wishing to transfer thoughts to another's brain. My sensors are so sensitive I have the ability to detect such brain electrical impulses many hundred spacials from where I may be located. I also can transmit impulses of the same frequency up to the same distance. So, you see, when you talk about telepathy, you are simply talking about a function which almost every advanced machine could possess . . . only I can do it much better than any other machine!

## QUANTUM JUMP



need more power, Slave! Full override on the photonic drive! Got to achieve standard by fifteen to pull out!'

Sweat trickled down Tarrant's taut features as he struggled with the controls in front of him. He heaved the levers back but the red flashing lights remained on.

'I'm deeply sorry, Sir,' droned Slave, 'but it is not possible to do as you wish, much though I would like to comply.'

'Cut the niceties,' yelled Tarrant.
'That power . . . I need it now or the ship will crash!'

'As I advised before, Sir,' continued the machine, 'I cannot implement your orders. Travelling at this speed, the relay mechanism

cannot make contact due to inertial forces.'

'Then reverse power,' growled Tarrant. 'The power reduction should permit the contact — then you can apply full thrust to break us free!'

'Again I must apologise, Sir. Scorpio is locked into a parabolic curve which neither permits an application of more power nor a reduction of thrust.'

'You mean whatever I try to do Scorpio will crash into that red giant of a planet in front of us?' There was a note of disbelief in Tarrant's voice.

'I... I'm afraid that is correct,' confirmed Slave sadly.

'The ship is doomed to crash be-

cause of a design fault?"

'That is the case, I'm sorry to say, Sir.'

'And there's nothing you can do about it?'

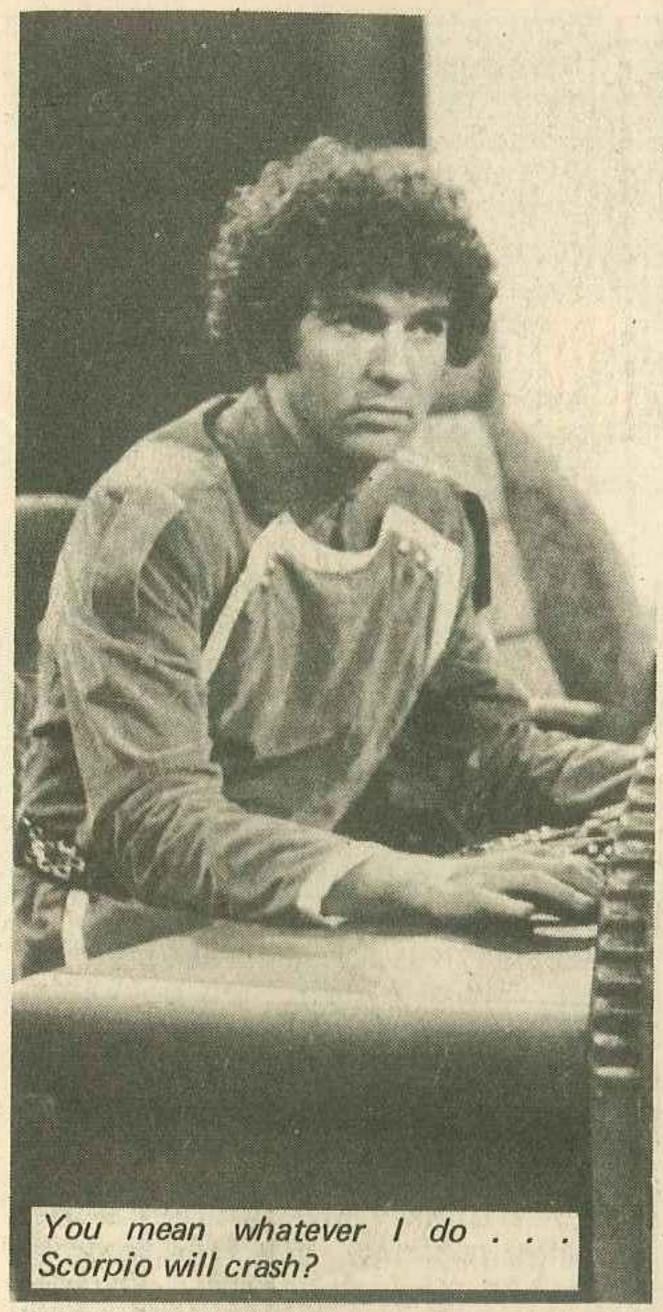
'Confirmed, Sir. I... I really don't know what to say . . .'

'Well I do,' boomed the voice from behind Tarrant. 'Switch yourself off while Tarrant and I find a way of resolving the problem.'

'The simulation is at an end, Master?' asked Slave addressing Avon.

'Yes, Slave, and we can all thank our lucky stars this was indeed merely a simulation. If it had been the real think, Scorpio would be just so much space dust.'

Tarrant eased himself out of his



chair, wiped his brow, and gave Avon a sheepish grin.

'I was getting carried away by that. For a moment I really believed Scorpio was going to crash.'

You reacted exactly as you would do were the situation actually happening,' said Avon moving to study the controls. 'It's the only way to achieve the necessary result. This wasn't a game, Tarrant. I set up the programme to find out if Scorpio was one-hundred-percent fit for flight... and we've found the ship is not.'

'Any ideas where the fault lies?'

'I suspect somewhere in the design of the relay circuits but I'm not sure. We'll have to dismantle the entire unit before we know for certain.'

Tarrant looked hard at Avon. 'But that will take days. We can't afford to have Scorpio out of action that long.'

Avon turned to give Tarrant a half smile. 'I'm aware of that. Before I disconnect the main relay the system will be bypassed with a

direct drive unit.'

'That will enable us to fly but any power surge requirement will mean switching to manual.' There was a note of reproach in Tarrant's voice.

'It means you'll have more work to do, that's all.'

Avon turned to leave the flight deck, nearly colliding with Vila as the worried-looking man barged in.

'What's the matter with you?. growled Avon. 'Someone announced free drinks?'

'I'm not always chasing a bottle,' retorted Vila, looking hurt. 'In fact, I'm looking for Dayna.'

'Then you're looking in the wrong place,' announced Avon, moving into the heart of the ship. 'Tarrant and I have been here on our own for the last two hours.'

Vila waited until Avon's footsteps faded into the metallic interior of Scorpio before he turned his gaze round the flight-deck.

'What on earth are you looking for?' questioned Tarrant, realising Vila was more on edge than normal.

'Have you or Avon taken a bracelet from the rack?'

'No. Why?'

Villa pointed to the bracelet rack beside the teleport. 'Because there's one missing. That's why.'

There was indeed a bracelet missing from the rack. Avon had made it policy for the crew to leave the teleport bracelets in that one place at all times. Unless . . .

'You don't mean you think she's gone to the surface?' Tarrant was beginning to realise the scope of Vila's problem.

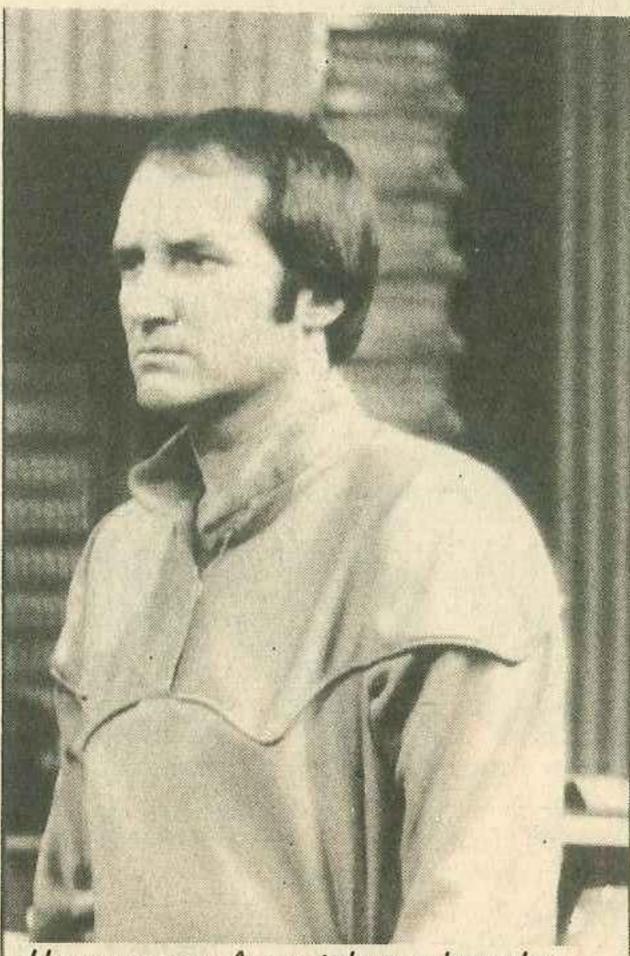
'Precisely. And you know how Avon feels about people wandering about up top without his permission.'

'Then you'd better give her a call and tell her to get back fast,' said Tarrant, moving to join Avon below. 'I won't say anything to him. You can trust me.'

'I know I can,' muttered Vila. 'More than I can say about Avon.'

Vila wondered, as Tarrant left, if he should have told the whole story.

'They said it was around here somewhere but I'm damned if I can see anything.'



Have you or Avon taken a bracelet from the rack?

'It would help if we knew what we were looking for.'

'The guy just spoke of a bright column of flame, the ground shaking then the sight of the ship blasting off. I reckon it must have come out of a silo of some kind. Maybe one that's normally covered.'

'Great,' muttered the other dark form sheltering under a bush, his eyes scanning the misty horizon. 'We're looking for something we may never find unless we happen to be standing beside it when the people we've come to capture take off in their ship... leaving us standing here like wrinkled vacuum-dried prunes!'

The first dark form moved closer to the other. In such close proximity to each other the odour of their filthy clothes was overpowering but each noticed only a slight change to the air surrounding them. The taller of the two looked with mild reproach at the other.

'Time you had a wash, isn't it?'
'I'll have one when you do,'
grumbled the other.

A heavy silence fell over the two as each scanned his own part of the depressing horizon, ugly-looking guns at the ready.

'What a place to choose as a base. You sure we're on the right



planet?"

'Course we are,' hissed the other. 'That old guy wasn't lying to us. He knew we'd kill him if he didn't tell the truth.'

'Yeah,' smiled the other. 'But what he didn't know was we were

going to kill him anyway!"

The sound of cruel, soft laughter penetrated only a short distance into the misty atmosphere. The noise, however, drifted just far enough.

Something made Dayna stop. Instinctively she dropped to one knee, her hand feeling for the gun at her belt - the gun which was not there. She muttered a curse to herself as she pressed closer to the damp soil. The sound had come from her right, close to the base entrance, the one to which she was returning. Was someone coming out to find her? It was a possibility. She looked for an instant at her bracelet. Should she make a call? Perhaps not. What if the source of the noise was hostile? The sound from the bracelet would give her position away. Using all her huntress skill, she wormed her way up the banking separating her from the area of the base entrance.

Cresting the rise, Dayna's heart skipped a beat. There, in the shadow of a gnarled bush were two shapes. Two men, neither of whom she recognised. Even from her position, the smell reached her sensitive nostrils. It was a smell never to be forgotten. They all

smelled the same. It was years of behaving like animals, living rough, eating whatever could be killed, killing anything that moved. It tainted them all. Gradually the shape of their wicked weapons also came clear. Now there was no doubt.

'Bounty Hunters,' she mouthed

to herself.

Dayna slowly lowered herself into the dank vegetation. There was no way back to the base while those characters remained under the bush. Were they there by accident . . . or were they searching for Xenon base? There was no way of telling. Not just yet. It was while Dayna was trying to determine her next move that fate took a cruel twist.

'Dayna . . . Dayna! Come in, Dayna!'

The voice of Vila crackling from Dayna's bracelet made her jump.

If you can hear me, answer, continued the voice before Dayna's hand covered the speaker, muffling any further sound.

Dayna rolled back down the slope, her hand still covering the bracelet. Did they hear? Surely they must have done . . . but there

was no way of telling.

'Villa,' brethed Dayna into the transmitter, 'stop broadcasting. There are two bounty hunters near the base entrance! I'll keep them under surveillance and report back. Better warn Avon. Out!'

'Warn who, luv?'

The pressure of ice-cold metal against Dayna's cheek said it all. She froze where she lay on her back. The smell was strong again. She felt her heart sink before a wave of nausea swept over her.

\* \* \* \* \* \*

'Avon!' screamed Vila, charging through Scorpio's lower corridor. 'AVON!'

A firm hand reached out from behind some machinery as Vila ran past, arresting his movement.

'Yes, Vila?' The voice was cold. There were times when Vila was uncertain whether. Avon was on his side or not. This time, however, he knew he would be.

'B.. bounty hunters — on the surface. Dayna . . . she's in trouble, 'blurted Vila, his eyes wide with

tear.

Avon's response was predictable. His grip tightened on Vila's arm as he drew the frightened thief towards him. 'Dayna's on the surface? She's been captured by bounty hunters?' There was real menance in the voice.

'I...I think so,' stammered the smaller man. 'I...I've tried to contact her ever since she told me there were two of them....close to the base entrance. B... but there's

not reply. Nothing."

Avon released his vice-like grip on Vila, causing the man to stagger back. 'I suppose the pair of you thought it would be quite a giggle for her to go out without letting me know,' said Avon accusingly. Vila said nothing. He knew Avon's moods . . . and this was the most threatening. 'Come on, the pair of you.'

With that, Avon raced towards the flight-deck, leaving Tarrant and Vila to look helplessly at each other for an instant before they, too,

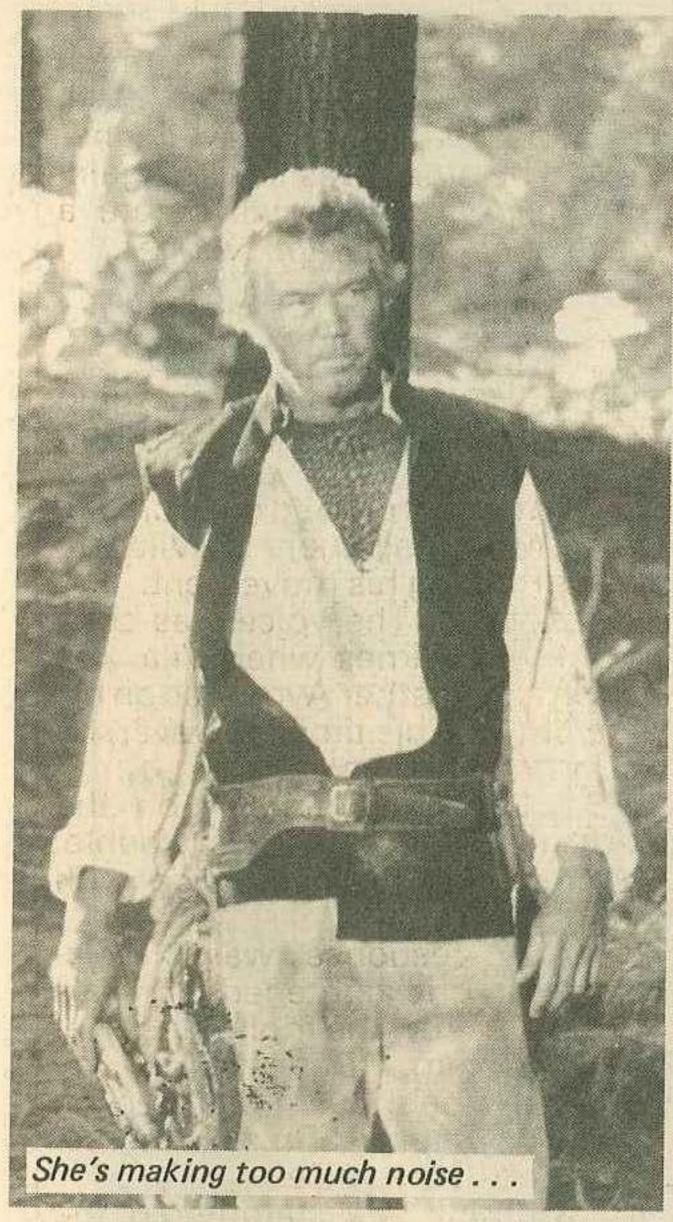
followed.

Avon was already on the flight-deck when Vila and Tarrant arrived. The controls of the teleport desk lay exposed before him as he switched wires and made new circuits.

'What are you doing?' ventured

Tarrant.

'You said she was wearing a bracelet. At least I assume so since you were in radio contact with her?' Vila nodded. 'Then we will



use that to our advantage and, instead of broadcasting, merely listen in.' Avon pressed the last wire into place and flicked a switch.

'I didn't know you could do that,' whispered Vila to Tarrant, but it was Avon who answered.

'Any transmitter can be made into a receiver – if you have the knowledge, that is, All we have to do to hear what's happening is this.' Avon twisted a small dial.

The scream echoing out over the speaker was long and loud. It could only be Dayna. Tarrant and Vila both winced, Vila more than Tarrant.

'Where are they?' commanded the voice. 'Better speak up, luv or there'll be more of the same. It's your choice.' The voice was deep and cruel. It's owner was obviously enjoying his work.

'N.. never. D.. do what you like. I.. I've told you I'm on my own.' Dayna sounded as defiant as ever but there was a catch in her voice. She was hurt. That was obvious.

'You like making things hard for yourself. Don't you?' The question came from another, deeper voice.

The scream which followed affected even Avon. He never let it show, but his actions were only too clear. The cable he wrenched from beside the teleport desk was sparkling with live energy. As he moved it towards the matrix of wires Tarrant took a pace forward.

'No, Avon! Not that!'

'What do you suggest? Let her die in agony having first revealed our base entrance to those murderers?'

'What's going on?' shouted Vila.

'Why the cable?'

'Avon's going to reverse polarity on the circuit,' hissed Tarrant. 'He's going to send a lethal charge into the teleport bracelet. In other words, he's going to kill Dayna!'

The truth dawned on Vila. 'You

The truth dawned on Vila. 'You can't!' he protested. 'We've to to get out there and save her... not kill her!'

'And risk even more life?' Avon was as cold as Vila had ever seen him. 'Never! She was foolish enough to go out on the surface alone — stupid enough to get caught — but her stupidity will not endanger our existence!'

'Your existence, you mean,' yelled Vila taking a pace towards Avon. 'You're only worried about

yourself - no-one else!'

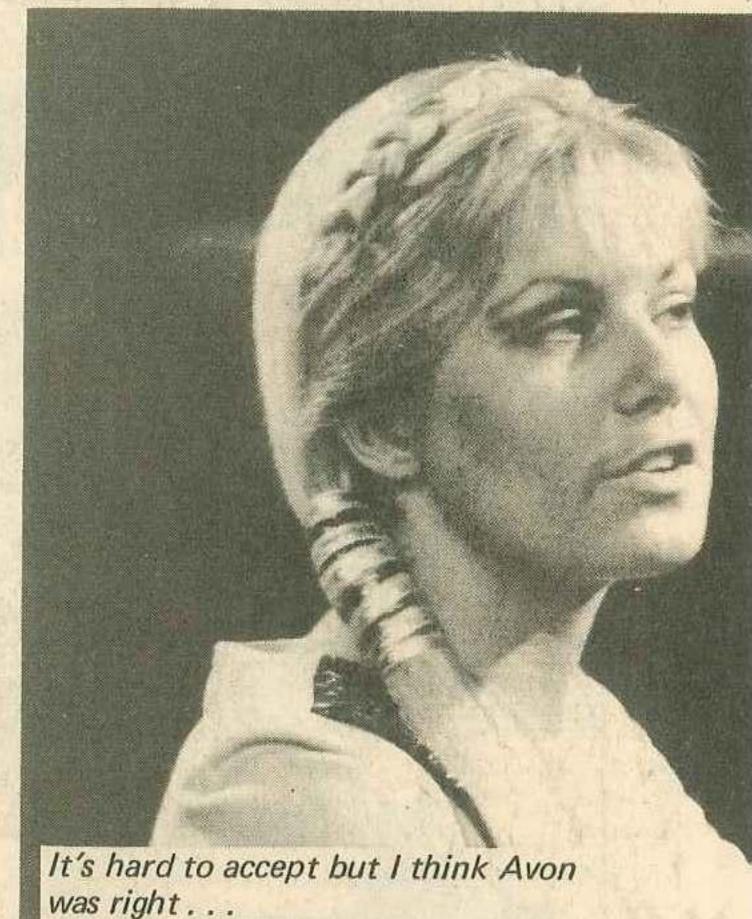
'Maybe so,' growled Avon, easing the sparking cable towards the transmitter, 'But however you care to look at it, this is how it will be resolved.'

'She's making too much noise,' complained the smaller bounty hunter, withdrawing his knife. 'Let's take her back to the ship and interrogate her in comfort.'

'Maybe you're right,' agreed the other, keeping a tight grip on Dayna's shoulders. 'She might bring the others running and it would be a shame to get into a gunfight when we could take 'em at our leisure, given the right information, that is.'

With that, the smaller man shouldered his rifle, glancing about with great caution. He reached inside his stinking shirt and withdrew a small device designed to secure wrists and ankles together, rendering the captive immobile.

'Here,' he said, tossing the device to his taller companion. 'Shove the securer on her. She looks the dangerous type, given



the chance, that is.'

The other did as instructed, securing the left wrist first. Through her bitter tears Dayna calculated her chances of a break and decided against it. At least, not yet.

'Ere,' said the large man examining Dayna's bracelet. 'Reckon this could be a weapon? I've heard some funny things about them terrorists. Got all kinds of devices and things.'

'Better remove it anyway,' affirmed the other, 'just in case.'

With both wrists secured and her knuckles touching her boots, Dayna looked with hatred at the grinning man as he unclipped the teleport bracelet.

'No distractions now, luv,' he sneered, holding the bracelet triumphantly. 'You're friends can't

help you now.'

With that, the man seemed to glow. An expression of alarm crossed his face before the startled gaze of both Dayna and his companion, the bounty hunter fried to a cinder. In seconds only a shriveled, twisted form remained, even the bracelet was nothing more than a pool of molten metal. Dayna looked up to see the remaining bounty hunter advancing on her. At that moment she prayed for death but she suspected there would be no swift relief for her. She was right.



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