

# BLAKES 7

A MARVEL MONTHLY

No.3 DECEMBER 1981 45p

# BASED ON THE SMASH-HIT TV SERIES!

## Meet STEVEN PACEY —in depth feature —inside

## WIN A DATABASE ELECTRONIC VIDEO GAME COMPUTER

### FREE COMPETITION!



plus

### PULL-OUT COLOUR PIN-UP





# BLAKES 7

*The Cast*

<i>Paul Darrow</i> .....	<i>Avon</i>
<i>Michael Keating</i> .....	<i>Vila</i>
<i>Josette Simon</i> .....	<i>Dayna</i>
<i>Steven Pacey</i> .....	<i>Tarrant</i>
<i>Glynis Barber</i> .....	<i>Soolin</i>
<i>Jacqueline Pearce</i> .....	<i>Servalan</i>
<i>Peter Tuddenham</i> .....	<i>Voice of Orac/Slave</i>
<i>Vere Lorrimer</i> .....	<i>Producer</i>

Editor: STEWART WALES Art: BERNARD MCGOWAN  
 Art Assistance: JACKI THORN Photographic: KEN ARMSTRONG

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# ZAP! KAM! POW!

As Avon grimly searches for a quick way out, the two guards close in, determined he will not escape. The first guard rushes in, a powerful uppercut from Avon's clenched fists sends the man reeling. The second attacker is close behind. He comes in low, Avon spins and grips him round the neck. The next instant, the man is flying through the air.

Such fast and dramatic action looks very convincing on the screen and seems to flow very smoothly — but a great deal of effort must go into the making of such a scene. If even one of the punches connects or the man being thrown lands on a hidden stone it could be disastrous for the actors concerned.

Preparation for such fight scenes starts with the fight arranger walking the actors through their action. When the fight starts everything must happen quickly and smoothly and angles must be carefully studied by the cameraman about to film the sequence. It must look to the viewer as though the punches, kicks, etc. all connect even if there is a degree of air space between the flailing limbs. Everyone taking part must know their own 'cue' in order to minimise any chance of getting hurt. That is a vital part of the exercise since, as often happens, the scene must be performed three or four times in front of the camera until the director is satisfied with the result.

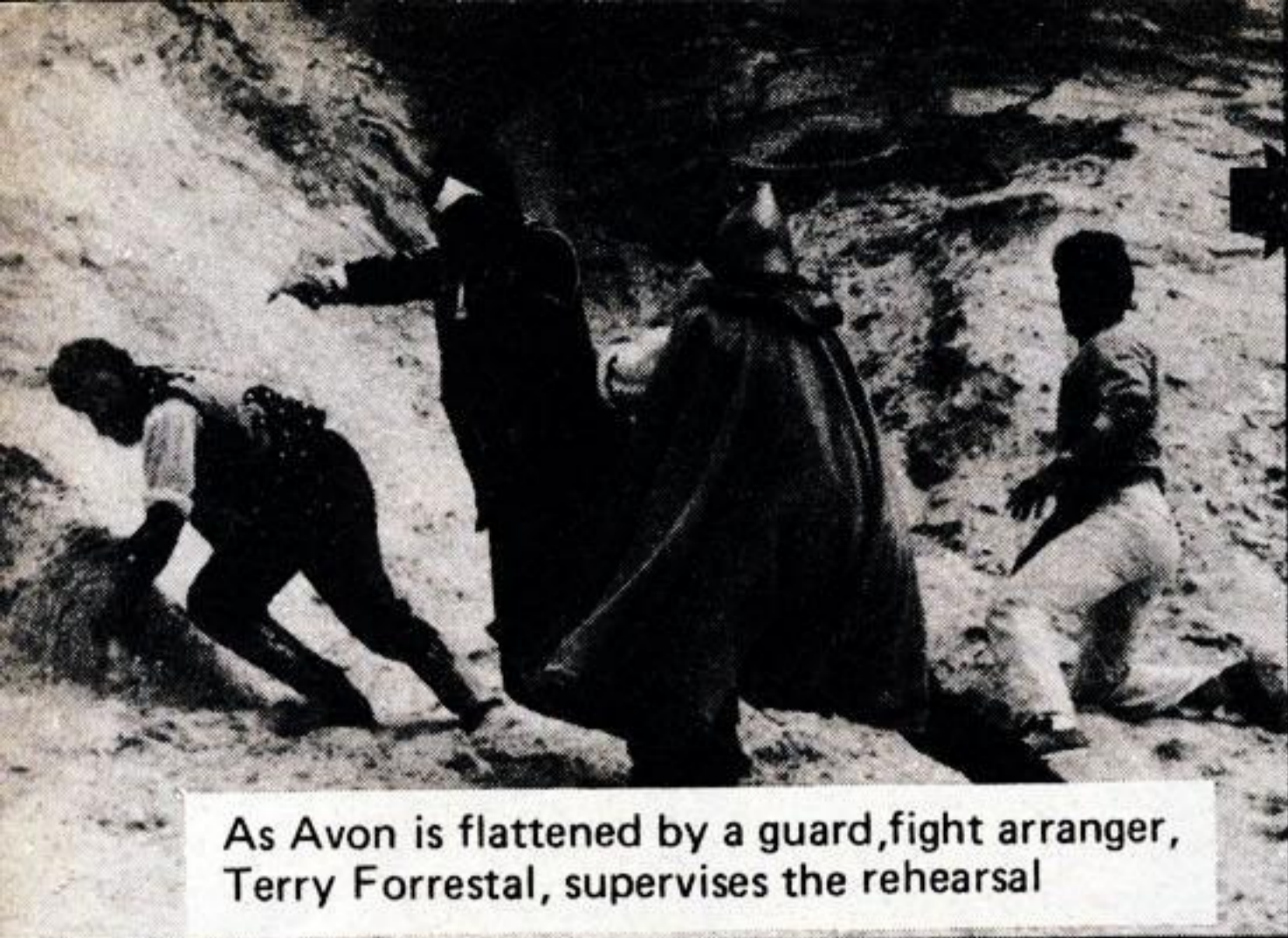
When it comes to close-ups of fight scenes, there is no room for 'Stand-ins' so each principal must do his or her own stunts, something they all relish. Here is a selection of some of the action sequences from the making of the fourth series. . . and the preparations required to create successful television viewing.

## A SCI-FI PUNCH-UP!



Actor Harold Messias takes one on the chin from Paul Darrow.





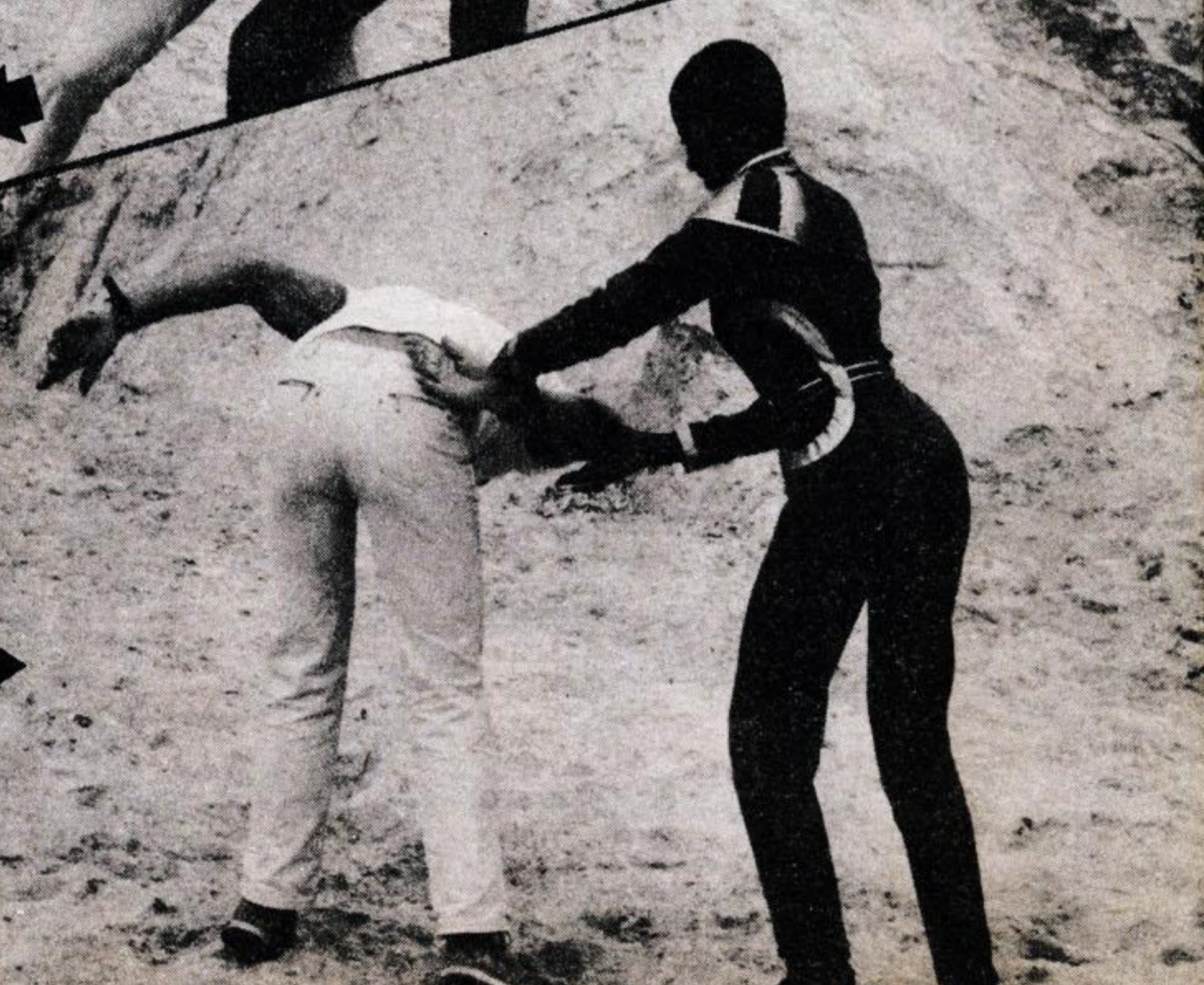
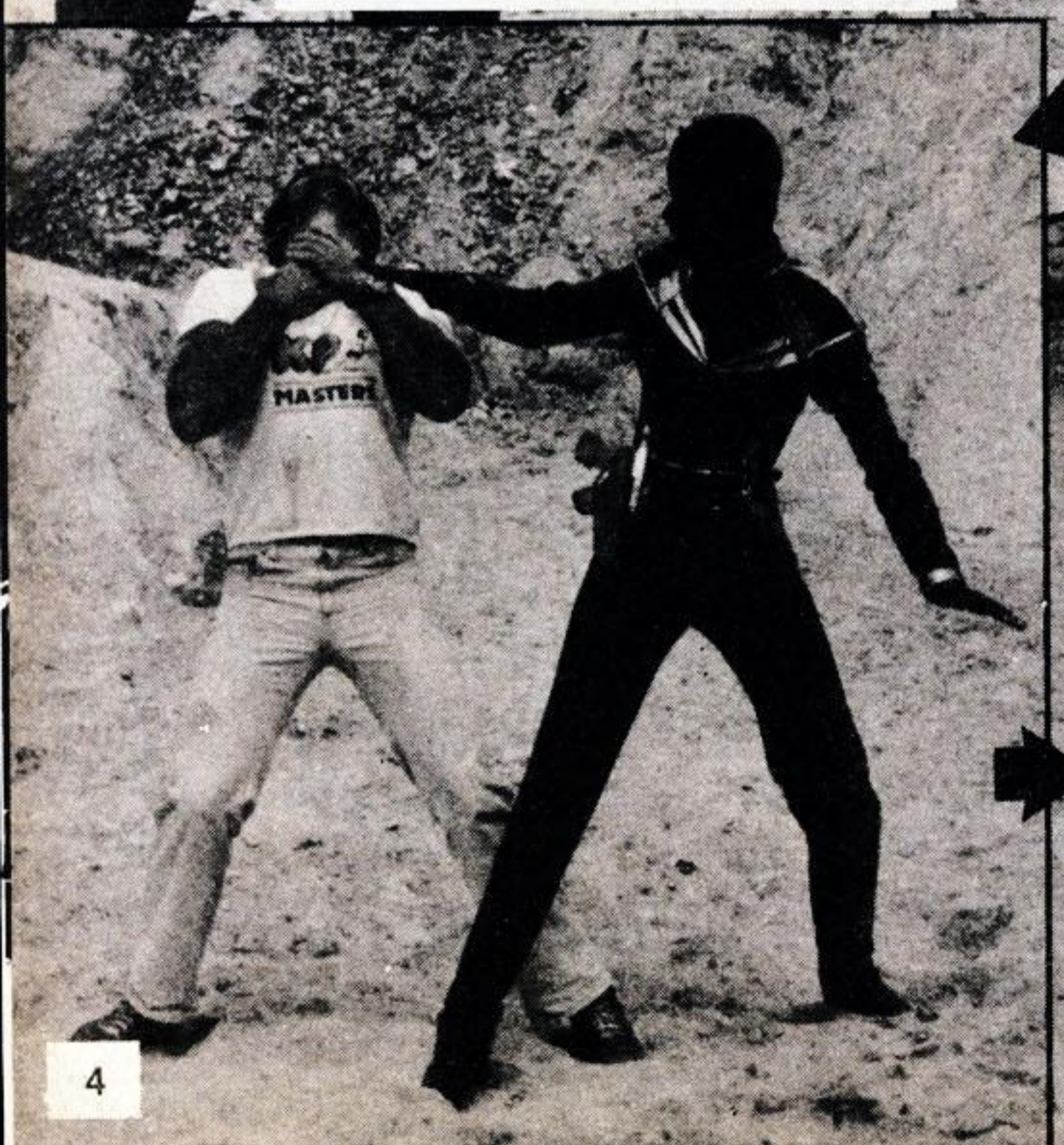
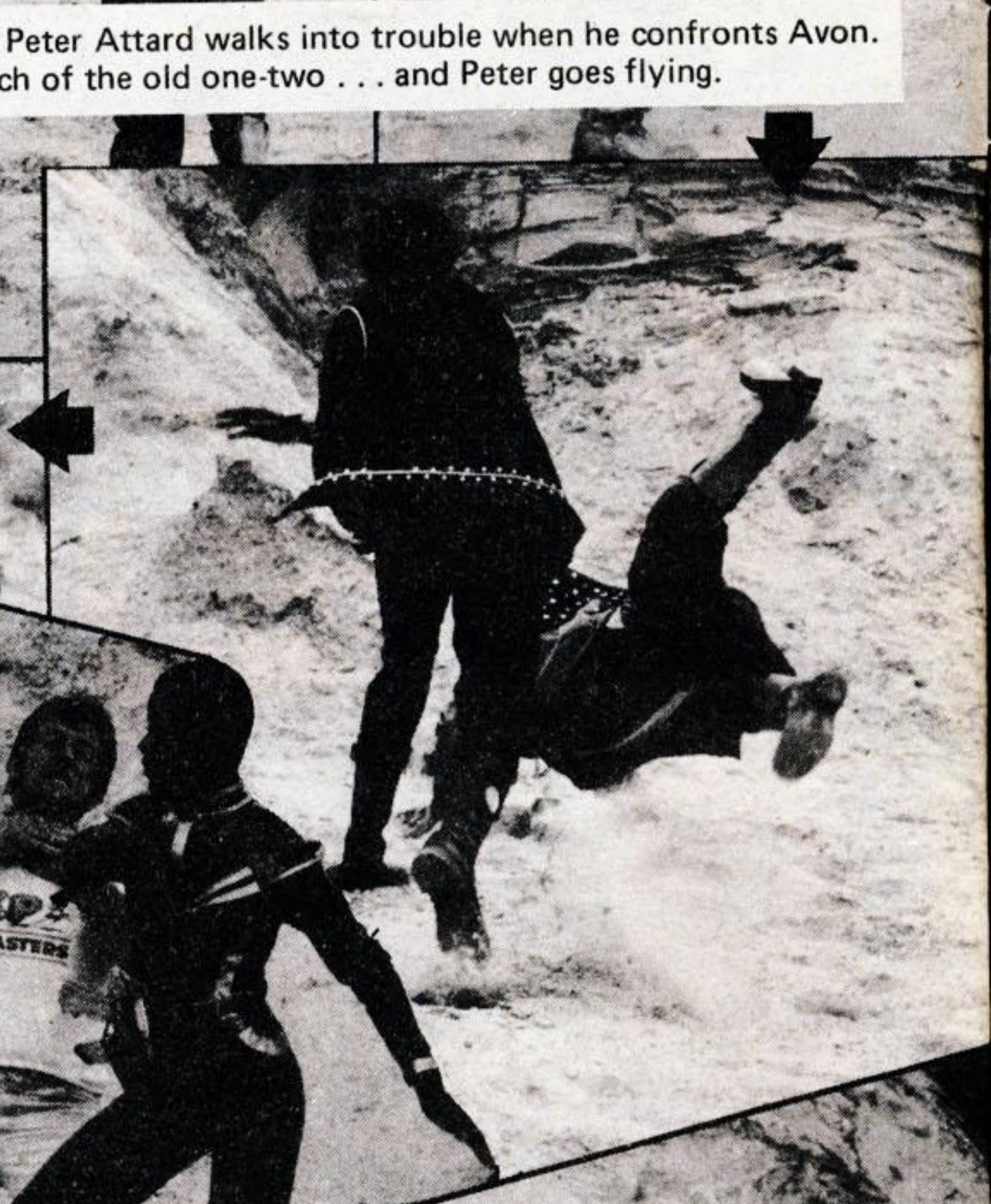
As Avon is flattened by a guard, fight arranger, Terry Forrestal, supervises the rehearsal



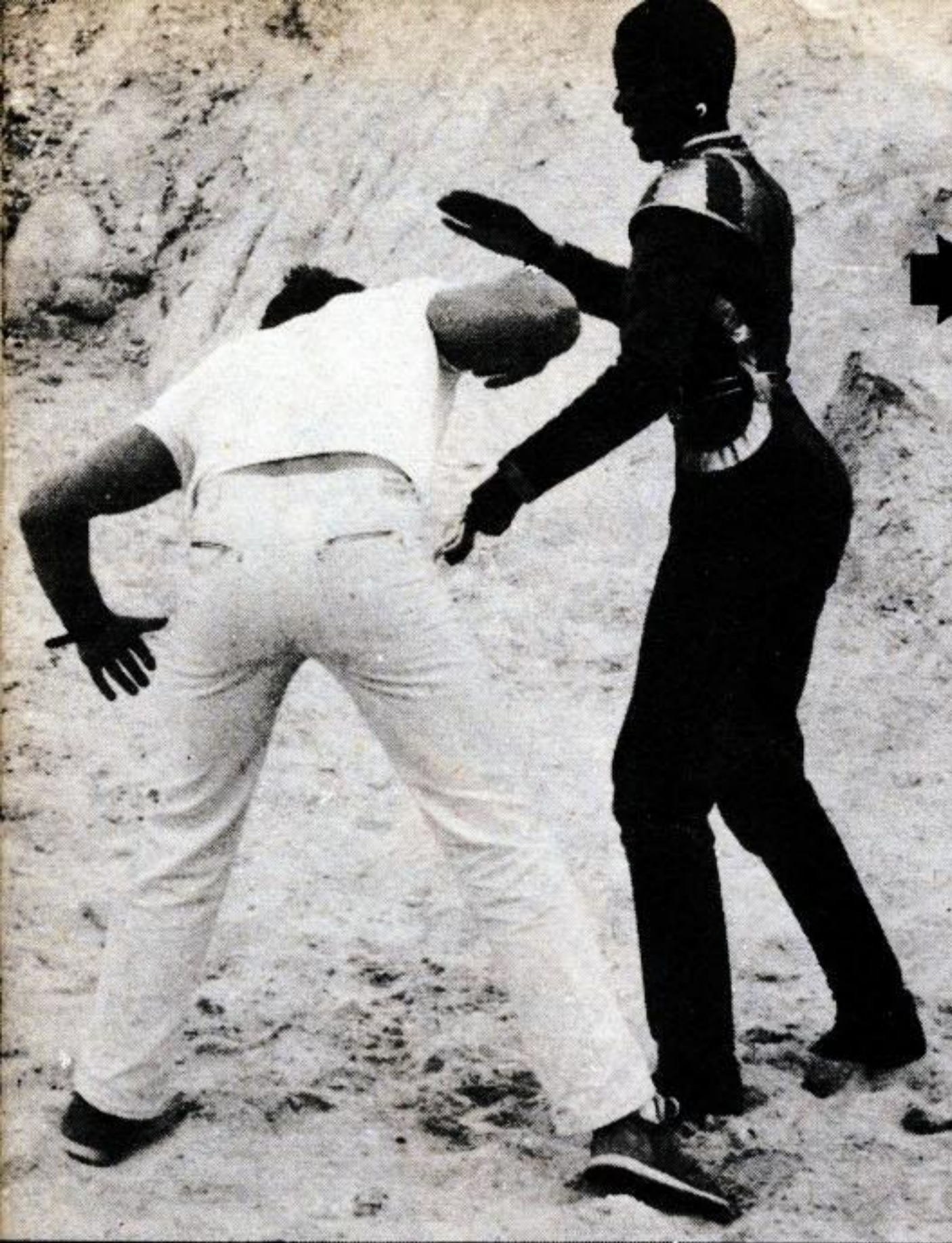
Actor Peter Attard walks into trouble when he confronts Avon. A touch of the old one-two . . . and Peter goes flying.



Producer Vere Lorrimer instructs Dayna (Josette Simon) about the action he wants to see. Rehearsal starts with fight arranger, Terry Forrestal, being put through the mill by Josette. The final sequence, however, is changed as Dayna encounters actor Peter Attard. A fast kick to her gun hand sends Dayna reeling . . . ending in an exhausted heap on the ground.



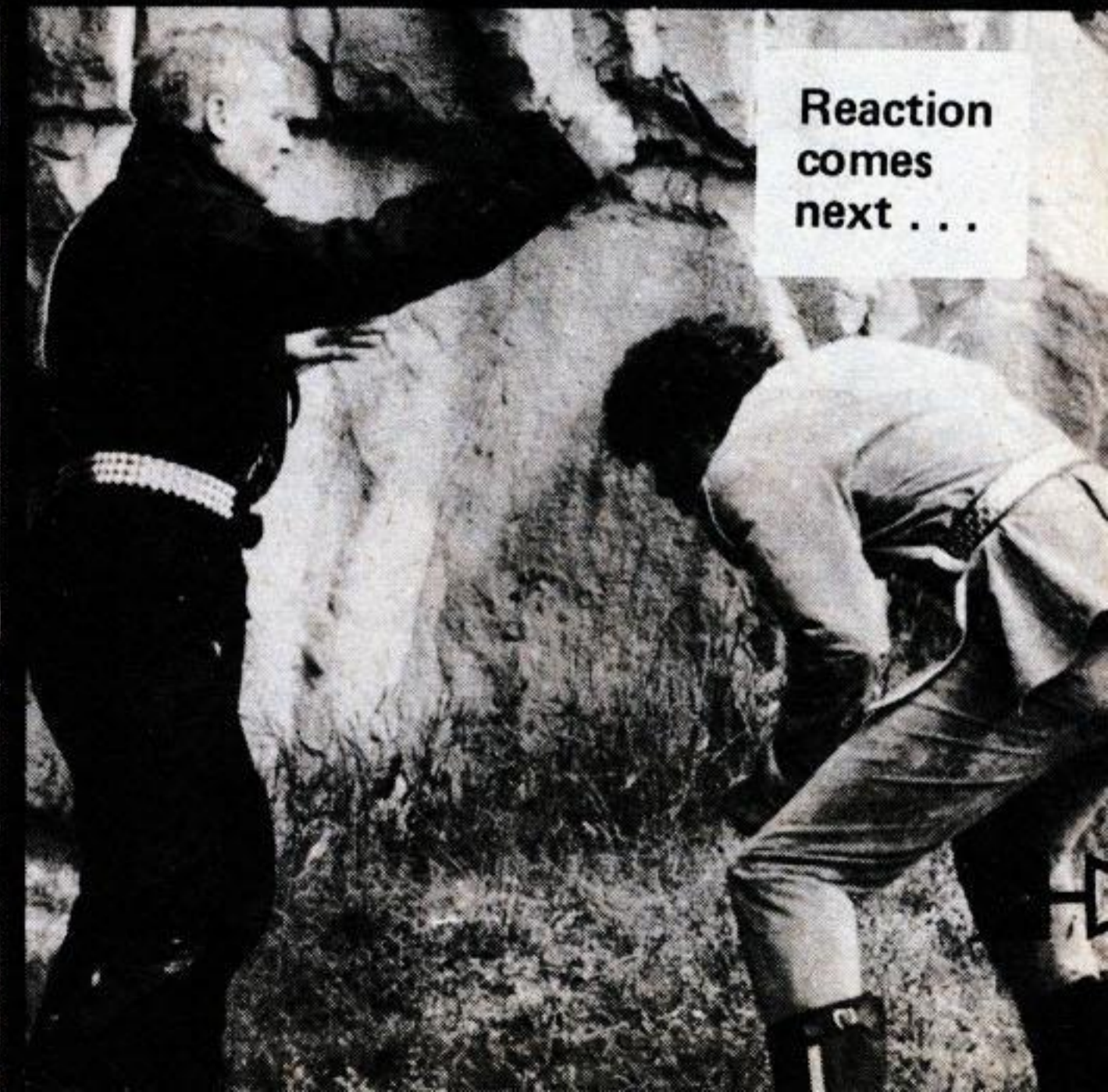
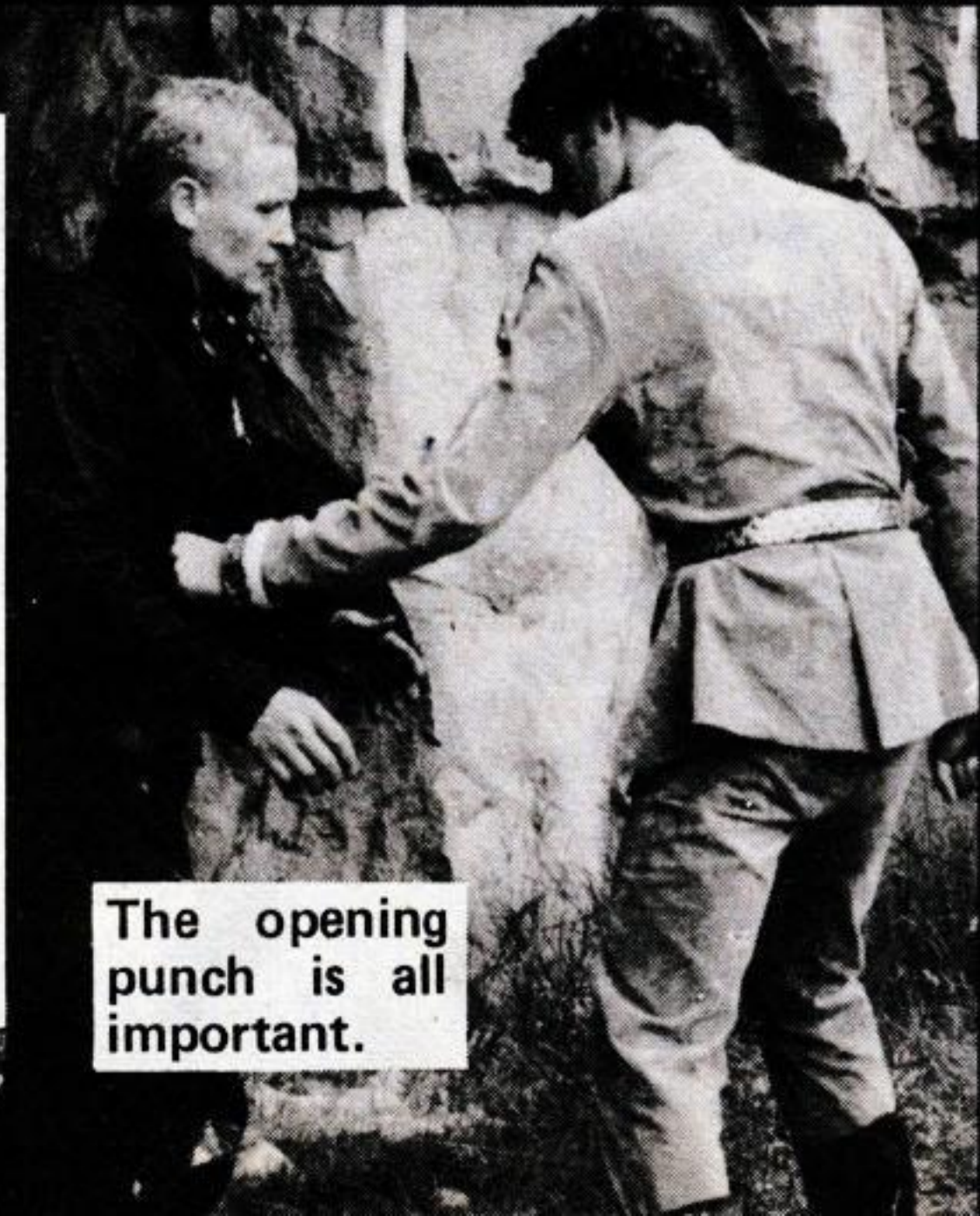




**Rehearsing for an important fight scene, Steven Pacey goes through the motions in slow time with his opponent, Mike Potter.**

The opening punch is all important.

Reaction comes next . . .

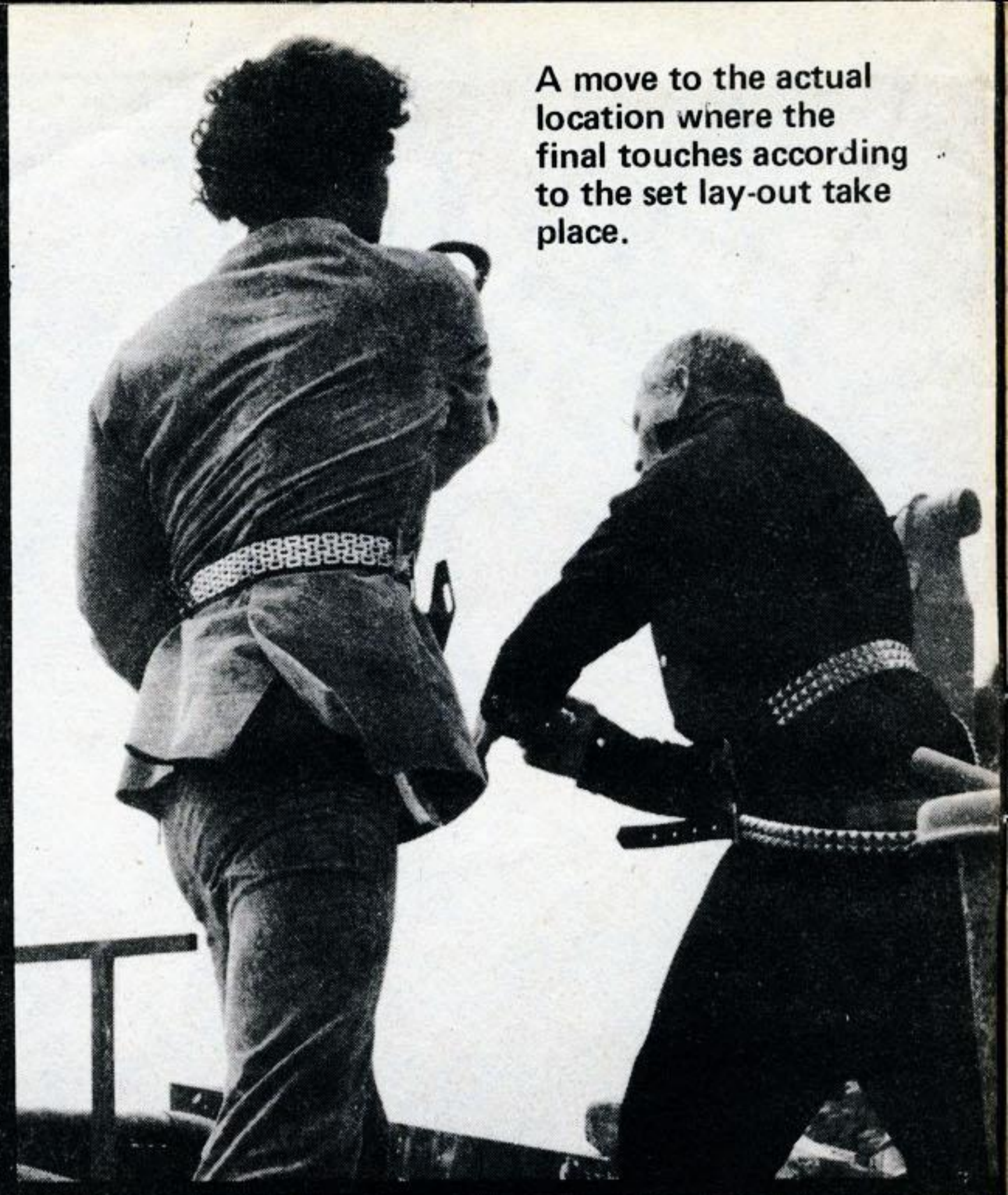




The response must look hard and convincing. A boot goes in hard and fast.



A move to the actual location where the final touches according to the set lay-out take place.



When the cameras are rolling, a stick will be used to despatch the guard. He has to turn and fall exactly in the right place.



The final performance for the cameras. A powerful blow from Tarrant . . . and the guard heads towards his doom in the jaws of the waiting crusher!



# RENEGADE

TENSION MOUNTED AS THE TWO SHIPS CLOSED...

COMMISSIONER... WE HAVE THEM IN WEAPON RANGE!

THEN INITIATE FIRING SEQUENCE. I WANT THEM DESTROYED!

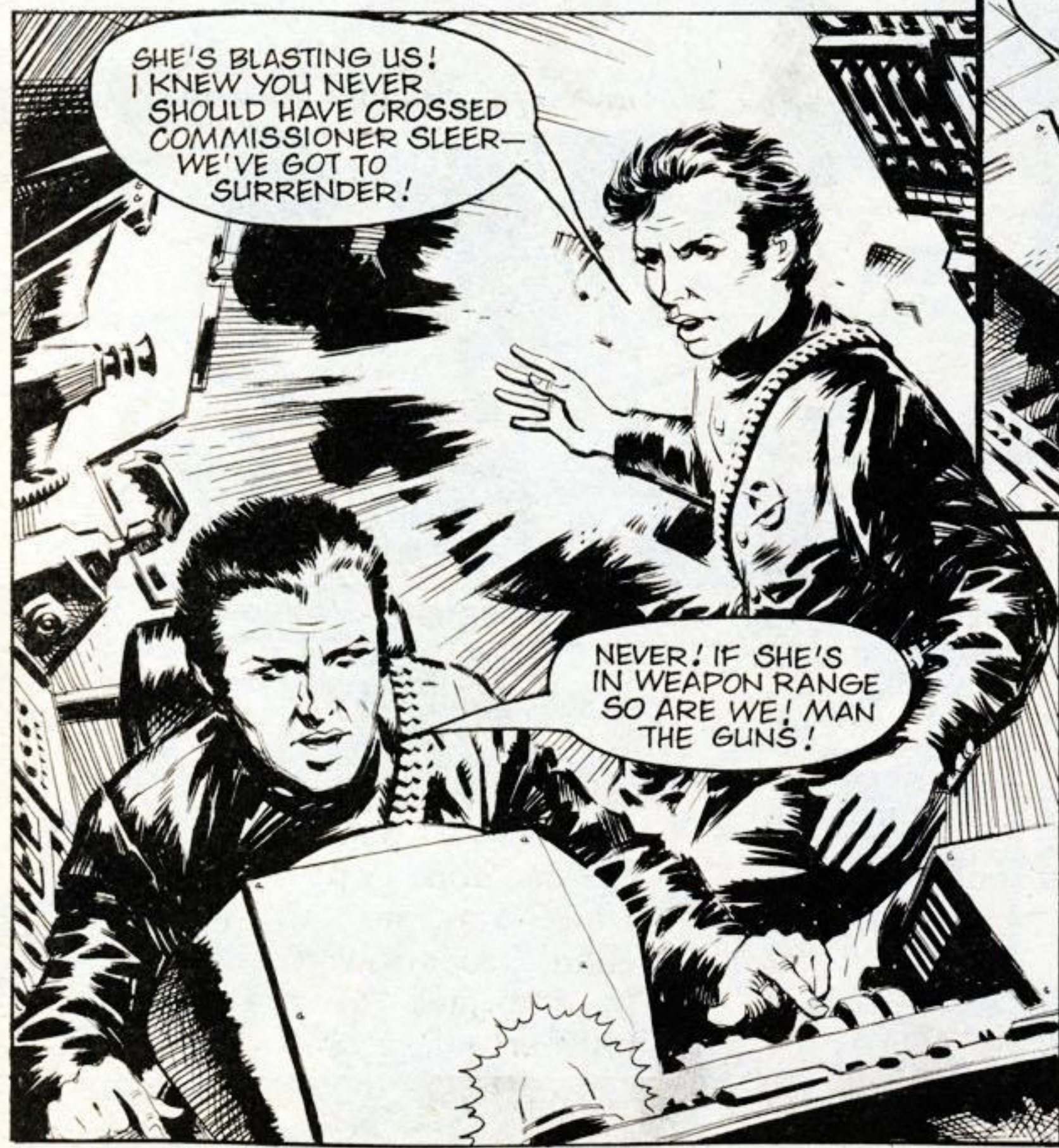


LASER CHARGES FIRING!



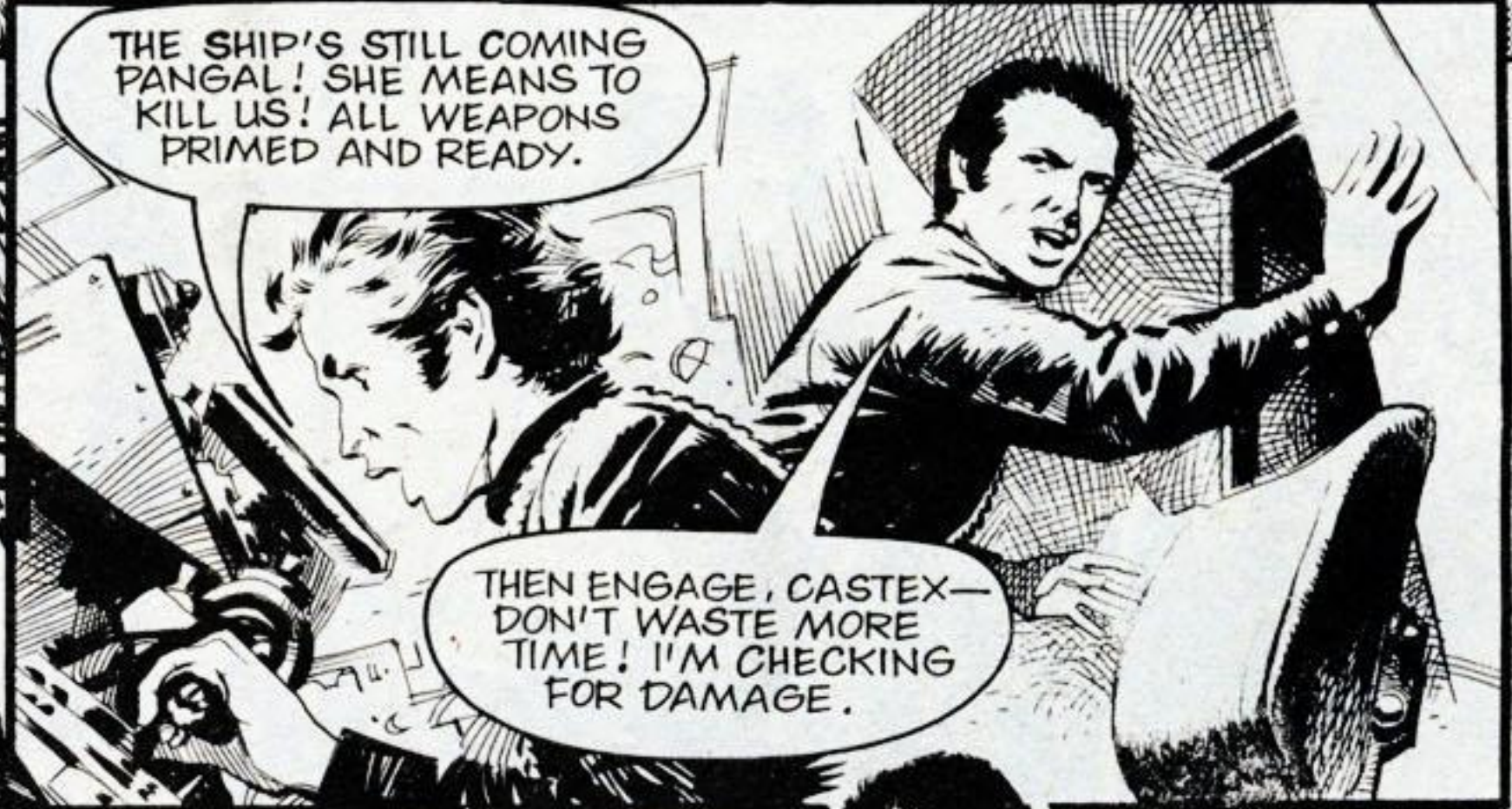
*Kennedy*

SHE'S BLASTING US! I KNEW YOU NEVER SHOULD HAVE CROSSED COMMISSIONER SLEER— WE'VE GOT TO SURRENDER!



NEVER! IF SHE'S IN WEAPON RANGE SO ARE WE! MAN THE GUNS!

THE SHIP'S STILL COMING PANGAL! SHE MEANS TO KILL US! ALL WEAPONS PRIMED AND READY.



THEN ENGAGE, CASTEX— DON'T WASTE MORE TIME! I'M CHECKING FOR DAMAGE.

LASER CHARGES FIRING NOW! WE CAN'T KEEP THIS UP FOR LONG! PANGAL!



YOU MUST, CASTEX! IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE! STAY WITH IT!

DANGER  
ESCAPE CAP  
ARE OF ROO  
2121211210





MAXIMUM POWER! FIRE!

PANGAL... PANGAL... AHHHIEEEE!

YOU'VE DONE WELL, CASTAX. FAREWELL...



YOUR ORDERS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT, COMMISSIONER. THE RENEGADES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED.

YOU SOUND CONFIDENT, CAPTAIN—I WISH I HAD YOUR FAITH!

MEANWHILE, ON THE PLANET XENON, AVON HAD ARRIVED TO INSPECT THE SCORPIO IN ITS UNDERGROUND SILO. THEN...



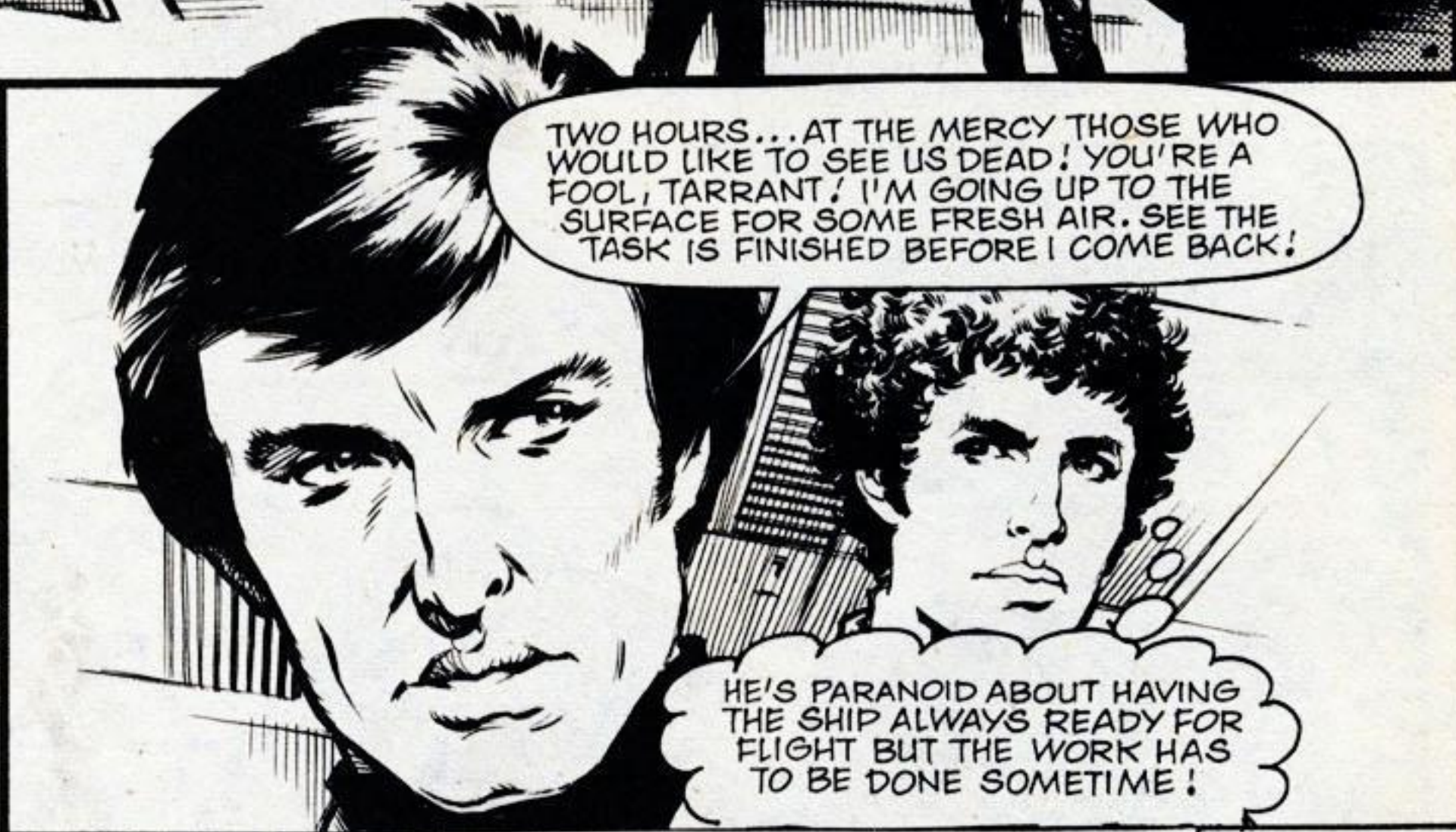
YOU TOOK OUT THE DRIVE UNIT WITHOUT ASKING MY PERMISSION?

IT HAD TO BE INSPECTED, AVON. I'VE FOUND TWO FAULTS IN IT ALREADY!



AND WHAT HAPPENS IF WE HAVE TO TAKE OFF IN A HURRY...? PERHAPS TO SAVE OUR LIVES...?

BUT THERE'S NO EMERGENCY. THAT'S WHY I DID IT NOW. I SHOULD HAVE IT BACK TOGETHER IN A COUPLE OF HOURS.



TWO HOURS... AT THE MERCY THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE US DEAD! YOU'RE A FOOL, TARRANT! I'M GOING UP TO THE SURFACE FOR SOME FRESH AIR. SEE THE TASK IS FINISHED BEFORE I COME BACK!

HE'S PARANOID ABOUT HAVING THE SHIP ALWAYS READY FOR FLIGHT BUT THE WORK HAS TO BE DONE SOMETIME!

MOMENTS LATER, AS AVON EMERGED ON THE SURFACE OF XENON...



UH? A SPACECRAFT THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT KIND... BUT IT SHOULD LAND NOT FAR FROM HERE!



AS EVER, AVON WAS RIGHT...

FEDERATION ESCAPE CAPSULE! AND... IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN... A SECURITY ENFORCEMENT OFFICER IN IT!

UURGH...! WH-WHAT MANNER OF PLACE IS THIS?



AAHHHH! NO...NO...!



EEECHHH...! F...FOR PITY'S SAKE... HELP ME! HELP...!

WHY? I HAVE SPENT MY LIFE FIGHTING THE FEDERATION. TELL ME WHY I SHOULD CHANGE NOW?



... BUT TOO MUCH CAN KILL!

RAARRR!

UUUUUUHHH!



I... I'M AGAINST THE FEDERATION, TOO NNNNGGH... P. PLEASE DO SOMETHING! CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE...!

A LITTLE PAIN IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL...



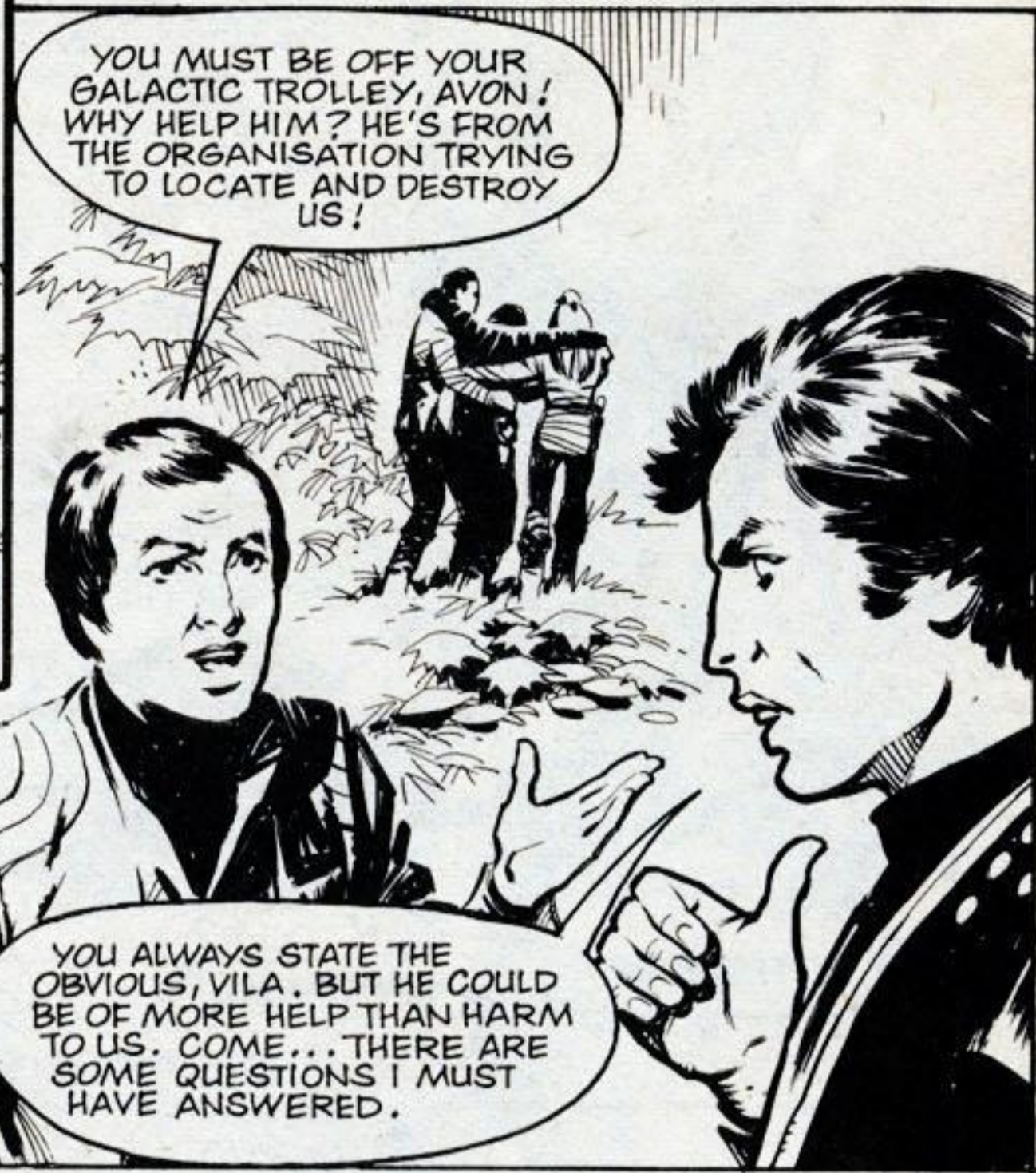


A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

AVON! WE SAW THE CAPSULE ARRIVING ON OUR SCREENS HOW DID YOU...?

EXPLANATIONS LATER. JUST GIVE ME A HAND WITH HIM!

B... BUT HE'S A FEDERATION MAN...!



YOU MUST BE OFF YOUR GALACTIC TROLLEY, AVON! WHY HELP HIM? HE'S FROM THE ORGANISATION TRYING TO LOCATE AND DESTROY US!

YOU ALWAYS STATE THE OBVIOUS, VILA. BUT HE COULD BE OF MORE HELP THAN HARM TO US. COME... THERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS I MUST HAVE ANSWERED.

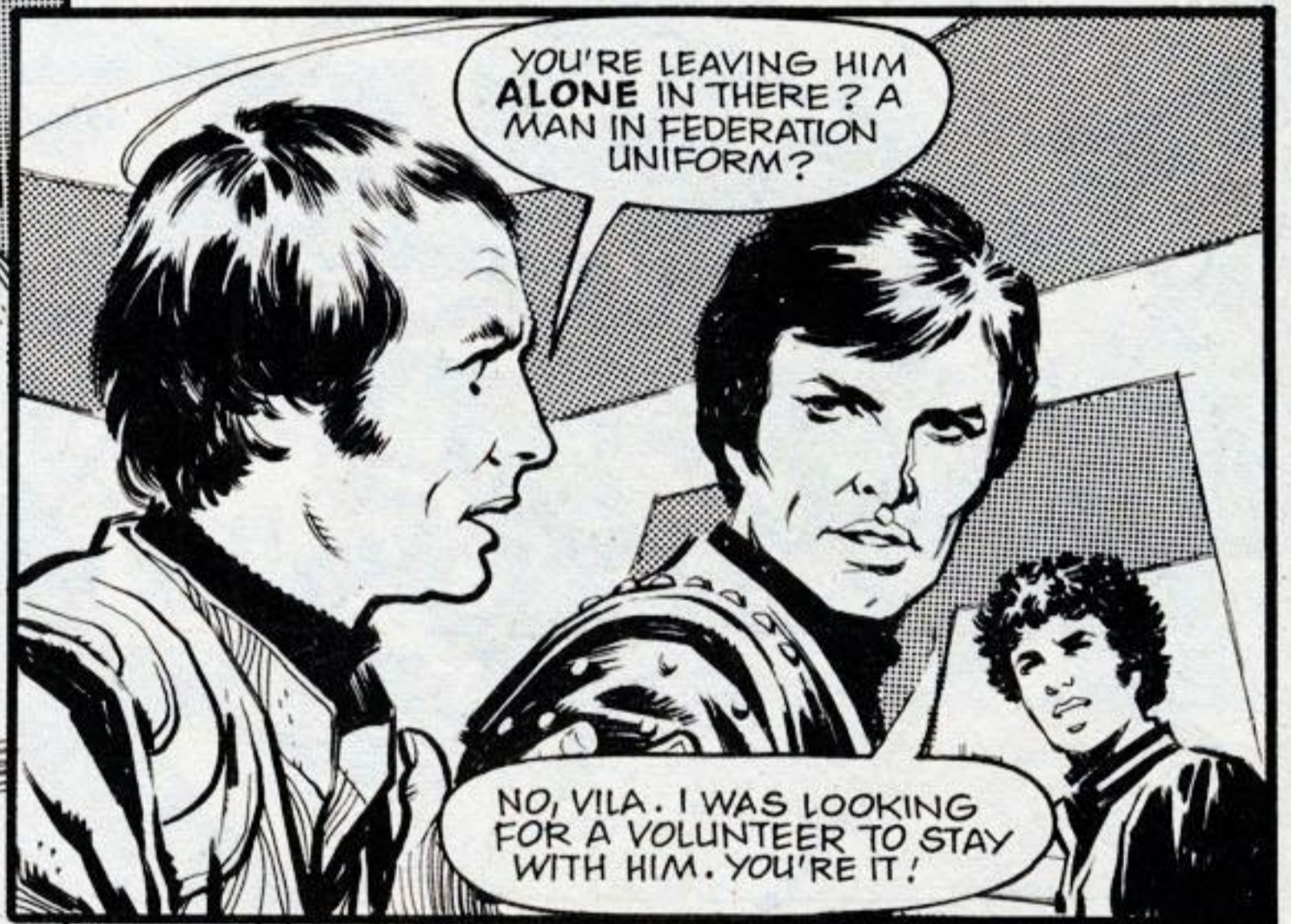


LATER, IN THE BASE RECOVERY ROOM...

ORAC SAYS IT WILL BE HOURS BEFORE HE'S FIT ENOUGH TO SPEAK, AVON.

THAT IS CORRECT. INJURIES SUSTAINED HAVE AFFECTED HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM. I SHALL HAVE TO MONITOR HIS PROGRESS.

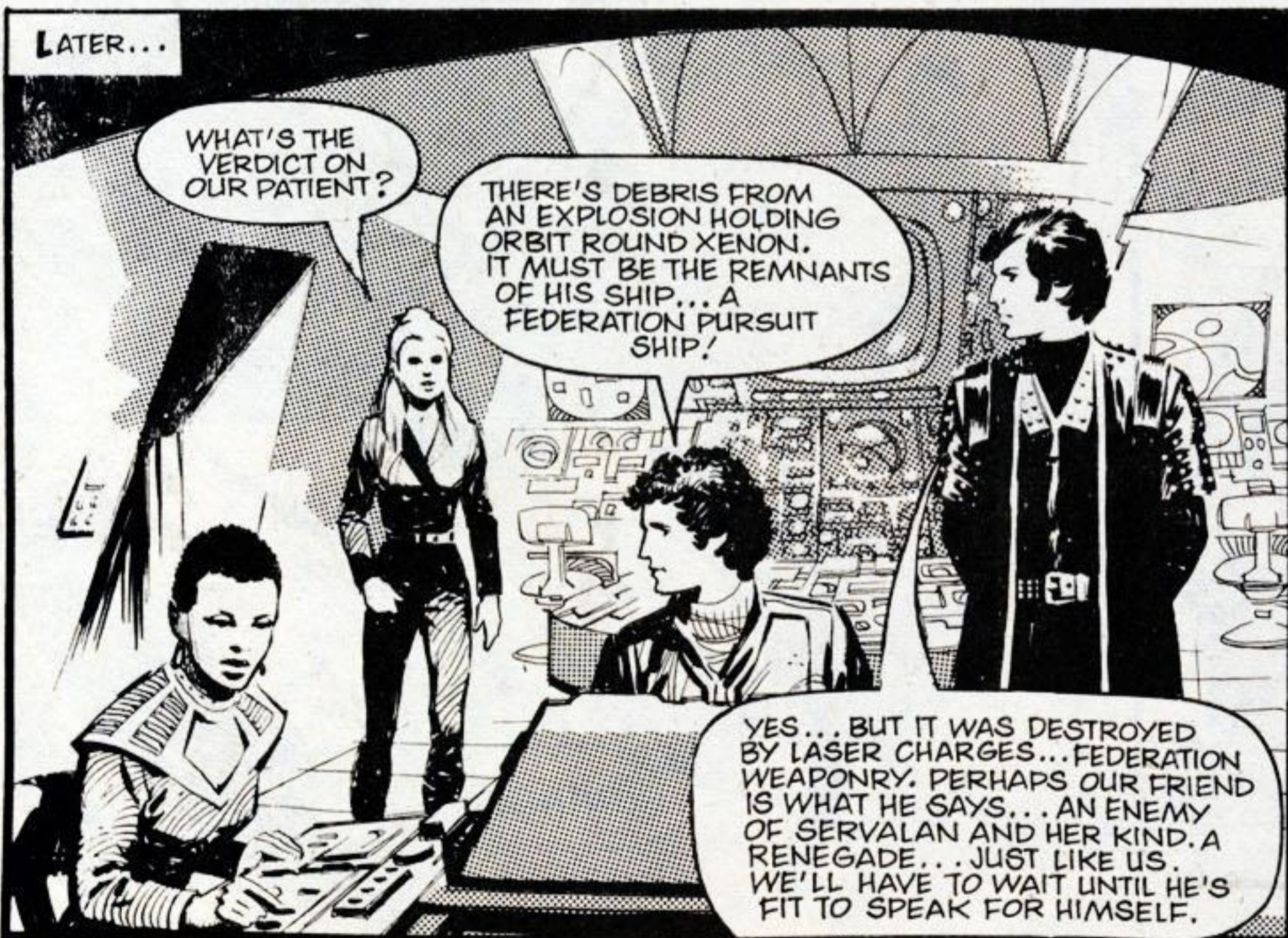
THEN WE'LL LEAVE YOU TO IT, ORAC. LET US KNOW OF DEVELOPMENTS.



YOU'RE LEAVING HIM ALONE IN THERE? A MAN IN FEDERATION UNIFORM?

NO, VILA. I WAS LOOKING FOR A VOLUNTEER TO STAY WITH HIM. YOU'RE IT!

NEARLY AN HOUR LATER...



LATER...

WHAT'S THE VERDICT ON OUR PATIENT?

THERE'S DEBRIS FROM AN EXPLOSION HOLDING ORBIT ROUND XENON. IT MUST BE THE REMNANTS OF HIS SHIP... A FEDERATION PURSUIT SHIP!

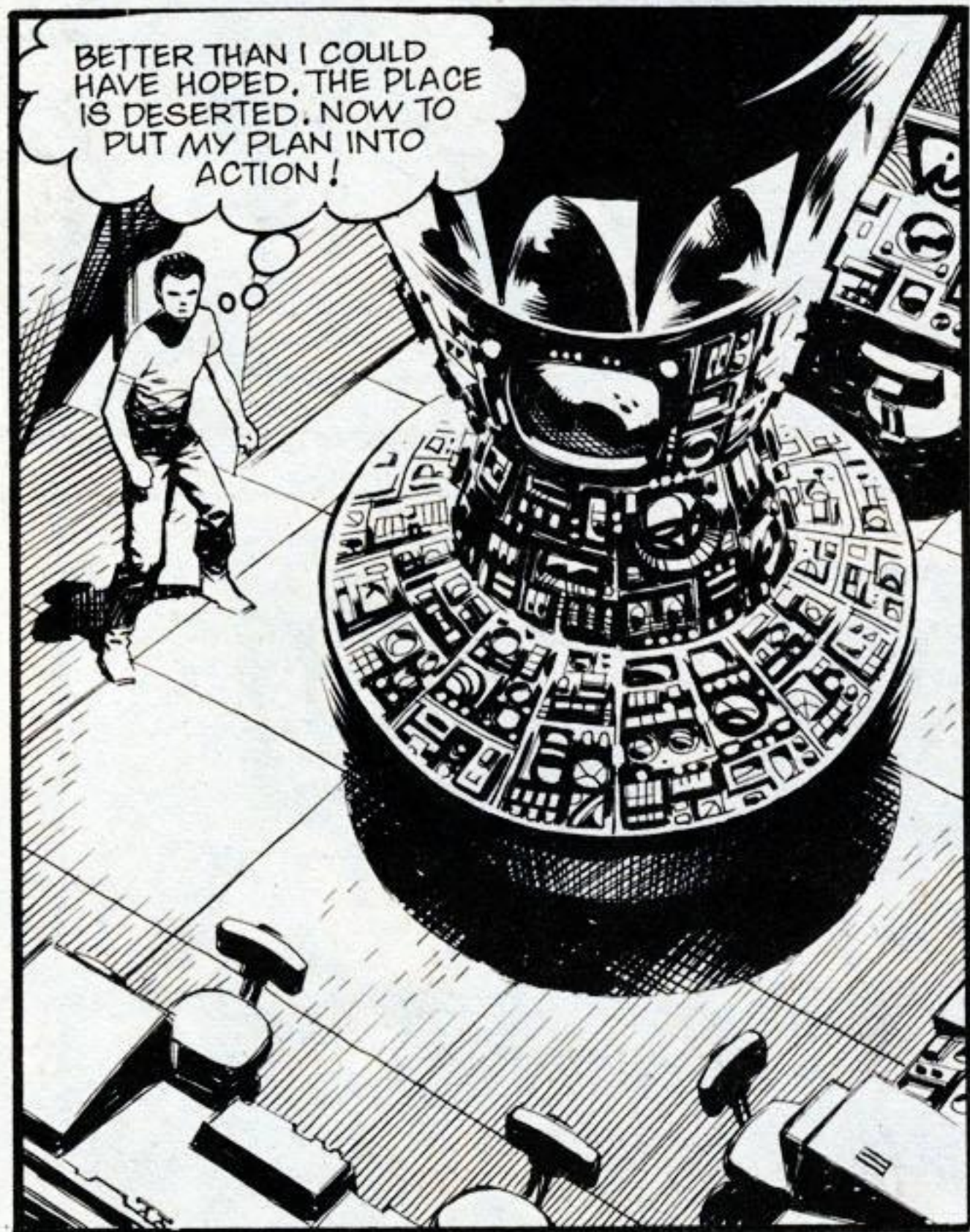
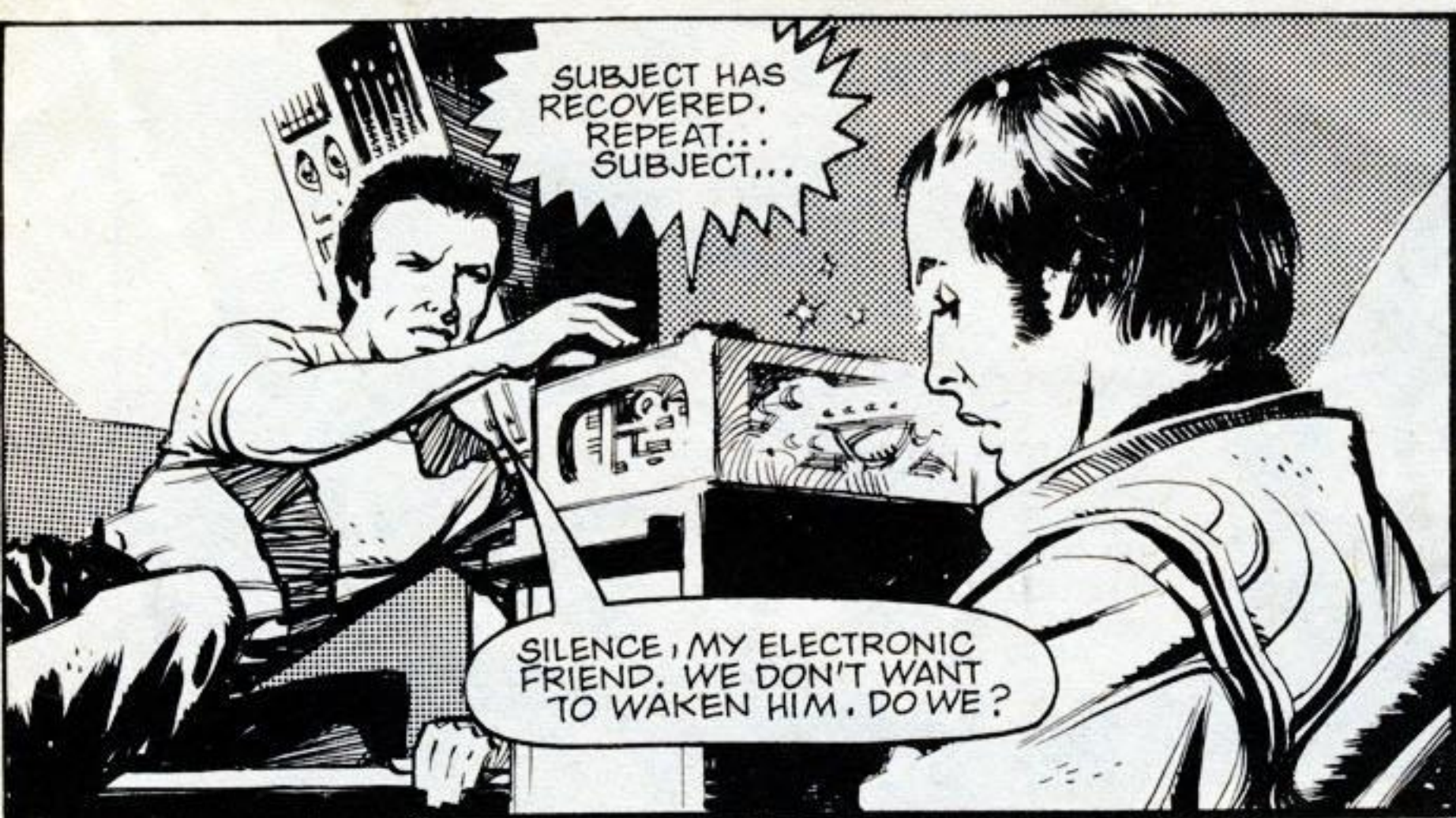
YES... BUT IT WAS DESTROYED BY LASER CHARGES... FEDERATION WEAPONRY. PERHAPS OUR FRIEND IS WHAT HE SAYS... AN ENEMY OF SERVALAN AND HER KIND. A RENEGADE... JUST LIKE US. WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL HE'S FIT TO SPEAK FOR HIMSELF.



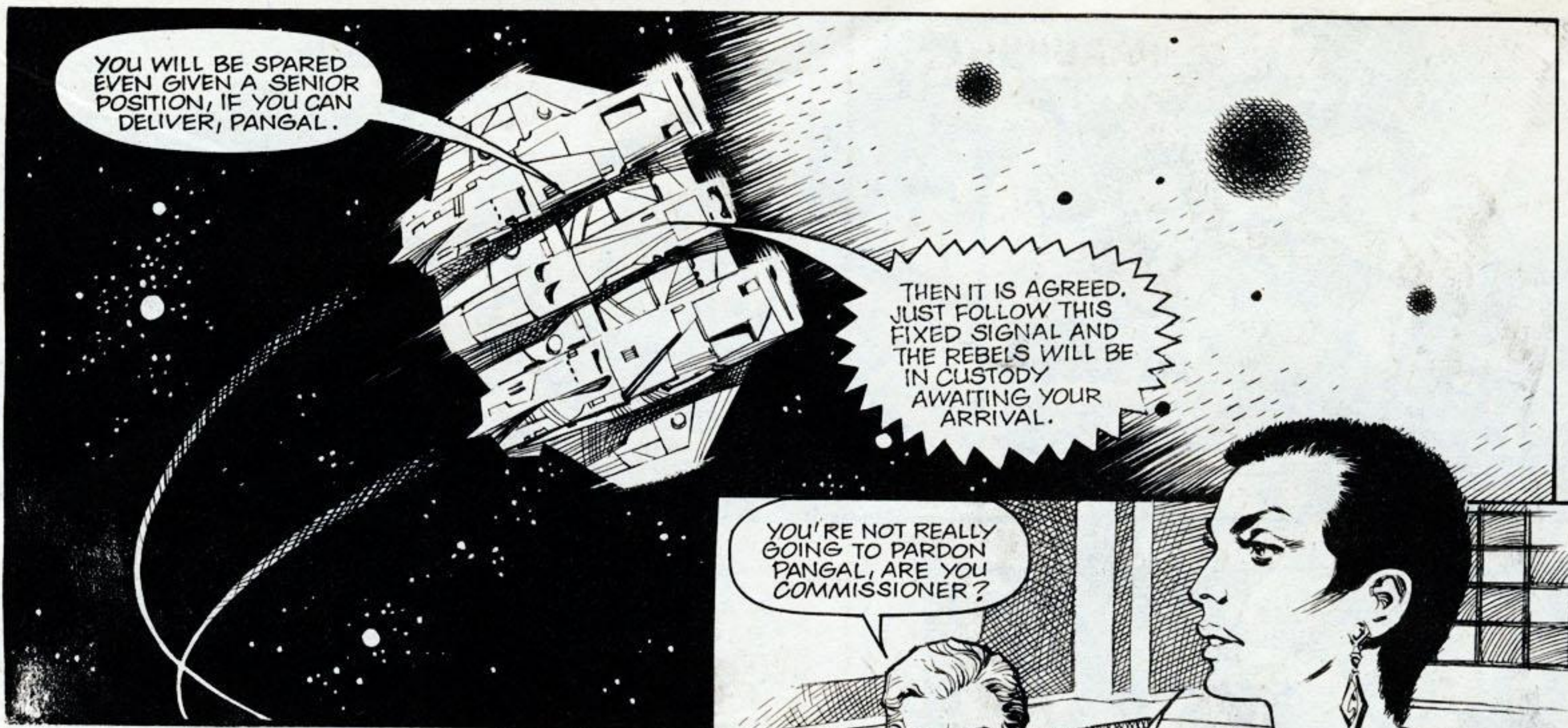
SUBJECT HAS RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS. BODY FUNCTIONS RESTORED TO NINETY-PER-CENT EFFICIENCY.

UHH? ONLY ONE ON GUARD... I KNOW HIM. HE'S THE ONE CALLED VILA. AND THE ONE WHO SAVED ME WAS AVON!









YOU WILL BE SPARED EVEN GIVEN A SENIOR POSITION, IF YOU CAN DELIVER, PANGAL.

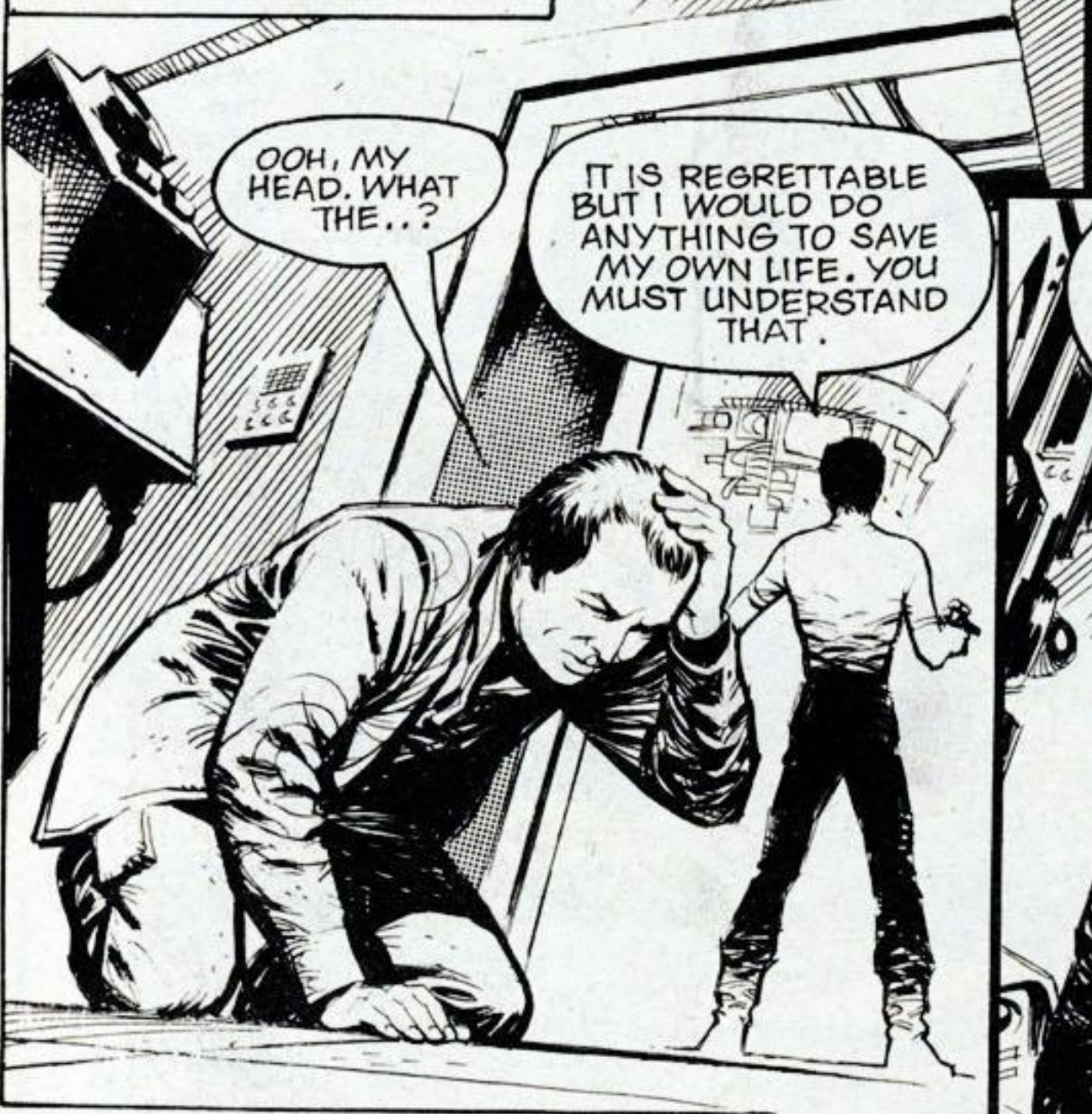
THEN IT IS AGREED. JUST FOLLOW THIS FIXED SIGNAL AND THE REBELS WILL BE IN CUSTODY AWAITING YOUR ARRIVAL.



YOU'RE NOT REALLY GOING TO PARDON PANGAL, ARE YOU COMMISSIONER?

OF COURSE NOT, FOOL! BUT IF HE CAN DELIVER AVON AND HIS REBELS TO ME... I WILL MAKE HIS DEATH QUICK AND CLEAN. NOW LOCK ONTO THAT SIGNAL AND SET MAXIMUM SPEED!

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...



OOH, MY HEAD. WHAT THE...?

IT IS REGRETTABLE BUT I WOULD DO ANYTHING TO SAVE MY OWN LIFE. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT.



YOU TOLD AVON YOU WERE A RENEGADE NOW THIS!

QUITE RIGHT, AND I STILL AM A RENEGADE. HOWEVER, I PLAN TO CHANGE ALL THAT BY HANDING YOU OVER TO COMMISSIONER SLEER... OR SHOULD I CALL HER SERVALAN? SHE SENTENCED ME TO DEATH FOR KNOWING THAT. HER SHIP'S HOMING IN RIGHT NOW!

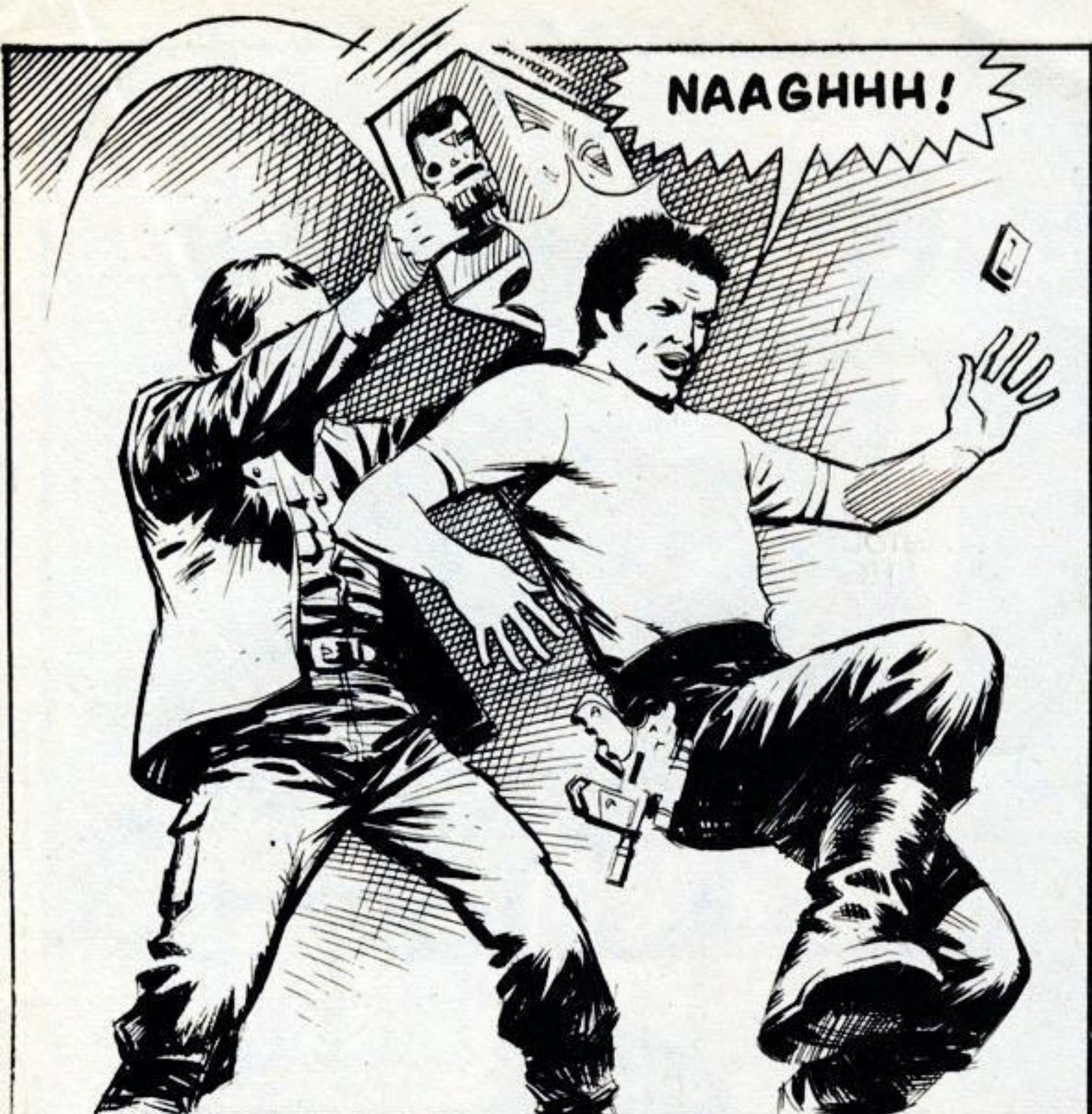
SERVALAN HERE... MUST DO SOMETHING!

THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO SAVE YOURSELVES. VILA LIES UNCONSCIOUS NEXT DOOR... AND EVEN YOUR COMPUTER, ORAC, IS RENDERED USELESS.



I WOULDN'T COUNT ON THAT, PANGAL!





NAAGHHH!



WOW! DID I DO THAT?

NO, IT WAS ORAC, VILA!

THE DANGER'S ONLY JUST BEGINNING! THE TRANSMITTER'S STILL BROADCASTING ON A FIXED BEAM. SERVALAN'S ON HER WAY. IS THE SCORPIO READY FOR FLIGHT?



THAT CAN ONLY BE BENEFICIAL. GET MOVING, ALL OF YOU AND BRING PANGAL WITH YOU! THE SCORPIO IS ABOUT TO TAKE OFF!

UH? WHAT'S HE PLAYING AT? IT'S NOT DEATH OR GLORY TIME AGAIN, IS IT?

SHUT UP AND MOVE, VILA!



ALMOST, AVON IT'S JUST THE TELEPORT THAT'S NOT WORKING PROPERLY.

MOMENTS LATER...



FEDERATION SHIP APPROACHING HIGH VECTOR ORBIT.

THEN SET COURSE FOR LOW TRAJECTORY FLIGHT PATH. WE'LL ATTACK FROM THE DARK SIDE OF XENON!



JUST THEN...

THE SIGNAL'S STOPPED, COMMISSIONER! WHAT SHALL WE DO?

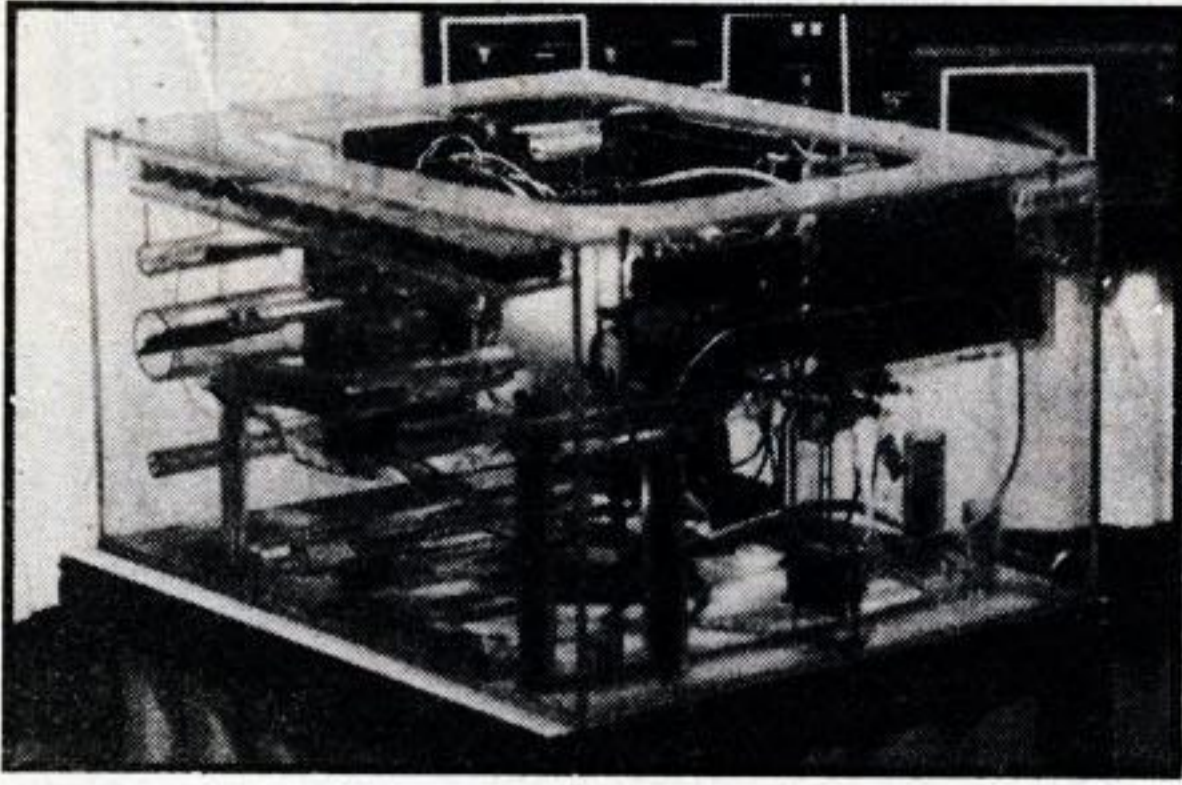
IT MUST HAVE ORIGINATED FROM THIS PLANET. PANGAL'S EITHER HAD A POWER FAILURE... OR WE'RE FLYING INTO A TRAP— PREPARE FORWARD LASERS AND ENTER HIGH ORBIT. WE'LL WAIT AND WATCH.







# RISK



# URAC

Your chance to put any questions 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 Seven cast!

David Shelley from Wandsworth wants to know why spaceshots like the Voyager craft do not land on the planets they are sent to examine.

The Voyager craft were sent to examine the solar system's outer planets. Not only could they not carry enough fuel to make the landings and take-offs that would be needed to touch down on all of them, but it would be virtually impossible for a crude craft like Voyager to enter the atmospheres of Jupiter and Saturn. The intense radiation and magnetic fields of these 'gas giant' planets would destroy the computer control equipment on the probes. Even if enough fuel were carried AND the computers were shielded well enough, a landing would still be impossible since gas giants have very little in the way of surface to land on — the dense gas of their atmospheres just gets thicker and thicker until it becomes first liquid and then solid.

Rob Browning from Stone asks about the substance known as anti-matter.

To understand anti-matter, we must first understand that NORMAL matter is made up of atoms — each atom consists of a nucleus which has POSITIVE electrical charge and an electron which has NEGATIVE electrical charge. In the anti-matter these electrical charges are reversed (this explanation is very simplistic since most atoms are considerably more complex than this). The significance of anti-matter lies in its main property which is that it will totally destroy any normal matter that it touches. This makes it one of the most destructive materials known to Man and has also led to it being used in some extremely powerful (and dangerous) spacecraft propulsion systems.

Information on a spacecraft named Friendship 7 is requested by Jason Williams from Newport.

Friendship 7 was the name of the first Mercury capsule to attain orbit in the American space programme. Mercury capsules were single-seat capsules and the pilot of Friendship 7 was Lt. Col. John Glenn — he made his historic flight on 20 February 1962, completing three orbits to become the first American in space. Measuring just over six feet across and twelve feet long, Friendship 7 was a very crude spacecraft: Glenn became a national hero after his flight — a well deserved reputation considering the nature of his craft.

Jim Davis from Loughborough has heard that time runs differently for astronauts than it does for planet dwellers, he asks whether this is true.

It is partly true — the phenomena we are dealing with here is called the 'time-dilation effect'. The effects of this phenomena mean that time will run more slowly for you if you are travelling at high speed. For example, say a ship leaves Earth in the year 2000 to travel the 4.28 light years to Centauri — the round trip might appear to take ten years to the ship's crew, but well over thirty years would pass on Earth while they are gone. Ships such as the Scorpio that are used on long distance voyages have automatic compensation devices built into their drive engines to minimise the effects of time dilation — without such compensation, normal life within the galaxy would be impossible since you would be unable to undertake any long journey without returning home to find that everyone you knew had died hundreds of years before.

Richard Walker from Maidstone wants to know how many stars there are in the sky.  
I regret that this is an impossible question to answer, even for such an intellect as myself. The simplest way to answer is to say that the harder you look, the more there are: there are approximately 100,000,000 stars in the milky way galaxy that we call home. But the milky way galaxy is only one of at least 100,000,000 galaxies in the known universe — as radio and optical telescopes improve, Man is able to see further and further into the depths of space and he just goes on discovering more galaxies...





# COULD YOU FLY THE SCORPIO?



- A) DO YOU HAVE THE QUALITIES TO MAKE A GOOD SPACE FLIGHT COMMANDER?
- B) TRY THE TEST BELOW AND CHECK YOUR SCORE AGAINST THE COMPUTER PRINT-OUT ON PAGE 22. REMEMBER, YOU NEED TO BE QUICK THINKING, DECISIVE IN TENSE SITUATIONS AND HAVE THE COURAGE OF YOUR CONVICTIONS.
- C) The test falls into two parts. The first assesses you as a person. The second indicates your decision-making ability. Good luck!

## QUESTIONS

1. To qualify for space flying, you have to be fit. Given the choice, how would you choose to get fit?
- Take up weight-lifting?
  - Read a book about fitness?
  - Take up jogging?
  - Play football?

2. You are about to take-off in a jet aircraft for a long flight. How would you react?
- Try to follow your route with a map?
  - Think about what the pilot and crew should be doing?
  - Relax and have a nap?
  - Ask the stewardess for a paper bag?

3. You are listening to your favourite radio programme when your transistor radio stops. Would you:-
- Give it a thump?
  - Open the back and see if anything is loose?
  - Change the batteries and see what happens?
  - Take it to a shop for repair?

4. After a heavy shower of rain you take a walk alongside a swollen river. From the bank you hear shouts for help and see a young boy being swept along in the current. There is no-one else around to hear the cries. Would you:-
- Dive in and rescue the boy?
  - Call to him not to panic and go for help?



- Throw him something to hang onto?
- Find a pole of some kind and try to reach him from the bank?

5. You have been asked to connect the 'live' wire in an electrical circuit to a terminal while the electricity current is switched off. Each wire is standard colour coded. Would you:-

- Connect the yellow and green wire?
- Switch on the current and see which gives you a shock?
- Connect the blue wire?
- Connect the brown wire?

## IN FLIGHT DECISIONS

6. Your flight computer tells you you have 2,000 kg of fuel on board. Your ship uses 75 kg of fuel per minute and the nearest refuelling space station is 15 minutes flying time away. You will require 420 kg of fuel to manoeuvre the craft alongside the refuelling point and dock with the station. Would you make it and how much fuel would you have left?

- Yes and 520kg left
- Yes and 330kg left
- No and none left
- Yes and 455kg left
- Tell the computer to work it out.

7. Your space ship is in orbit round Earth. A working party of four men is outside working on repairs to a damaged solar panel and each man wears a jet pack. One of the men accidentally cuts his safety line securing himself to the ship and drifts off to the rear. As commander, would you:-

- Immediately reverse the ship towards the man?
- Order two men to go after him?
- Accept the loss of one crewman and tell the others to carry on?
- Wait for the man to return to the ship on his own if he can?

8. Your cargo ship is in transit between two planets when, in deep space, you are intercepted by a strange vessel. The commander of the other ship opens a visi-channel to you and explains he has a problem which

he would like to discuss in person with you and requests you teleport himself and three of his men on board. Would you:-

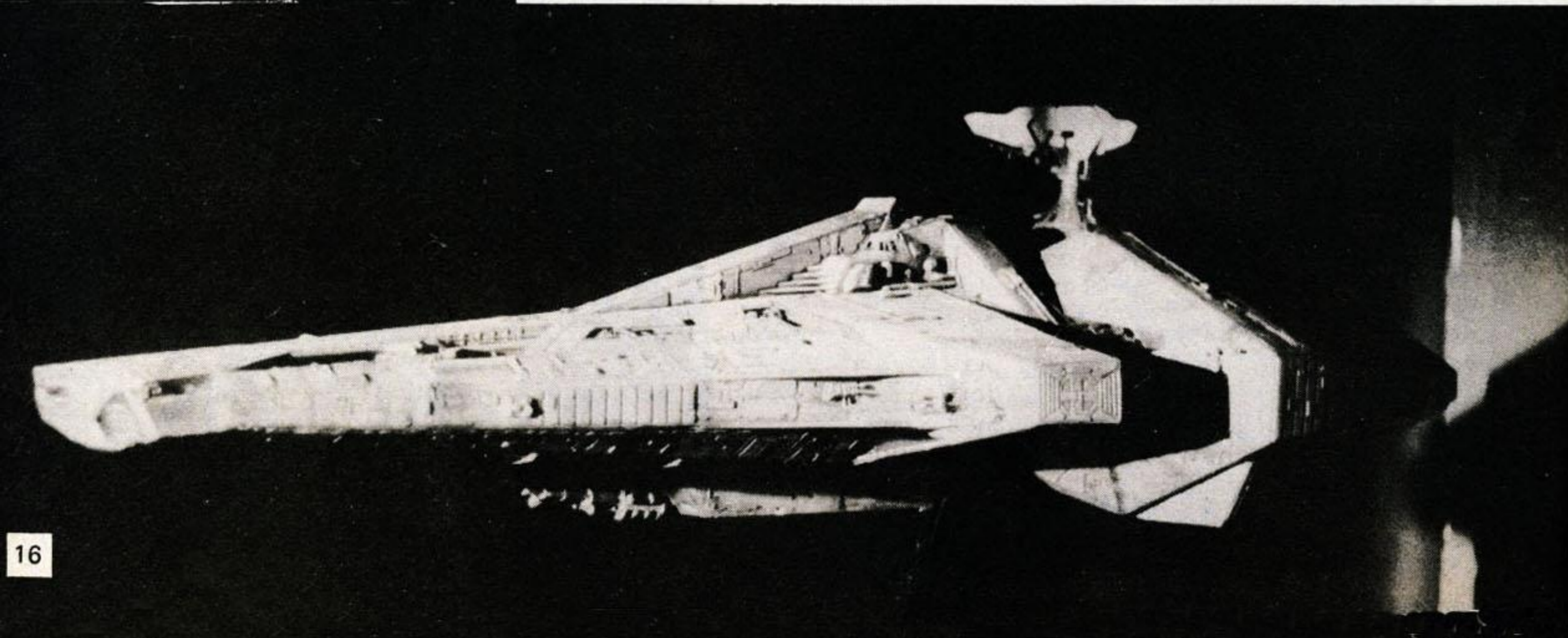
- Demand to know his business before teleporting his party?
- Bring him on board immediately with his men
- Bring only the commander on board with your men at action stations?
- Blow his craft out of the galaxy.

9. In flight, your ship develops a major electrical malfunction. You have to make an emergency landing on an unfamiliar planet about which you know very little. Your only working computer manages to select a possible landing site before it also ceases to function. Would you :-

- Send a probe to the planet and await confirmation of the suitability of the site?
- Take the ship straight in and hope for the best?
- Gently hover over the site then land?
- Teleport a landing party to the site to report then land on their instructions?

10. You arrive with your ship on a hitherto undiscovered planet where the inhabitants are extremely primitive. They have hardly progressed from a semi-ape stage. If you had the choice of which development to display to them, which would it be?

- How to make fire.
- What a computer is and how it works
- How to make a wheel and use it
- How to make weapons.





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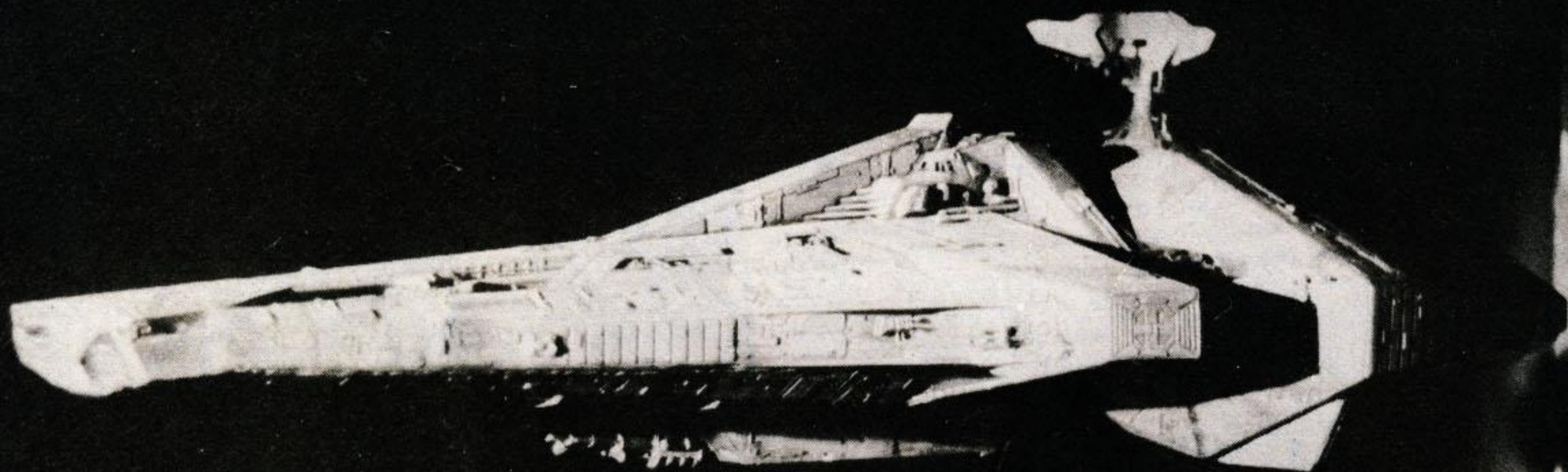
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5. You have been asked to connect the 'live' wire in an electrical circuit to a terminal while the electricity current is switched off. Each wire is standard colour coded. Would you:-

- a) Connect the yellow and green wire?
- b) Switch on the current and see which gives you a shock?
- c) Connect the blue wire?
- d) Connect the brown wire?

## IN FLIGHT DECISIONS

6. Your flight computer tells you you have 2,000 kg of fuel on board. Your ship uses 75 kg of fuel per minute and the nearest refuelling space station is 15 minutes flying time away. You will require 420 kg of fuel to manoeuvre the craft alongside the refuelling point and dock with the station. Would you make it and how much fuel would you have left?

- a) Yes and 520kg left
- b) Yes and 330kg left
- c) No and none left
- d) Yes and 455kg left
- e) Tell the computer to work it out.

7. Your space ship is in orbit round Earth. A working party of four men is outside working on repairs to a damaged solar panel and each man wears a jet pack. One of the men accidentally cuts his safety line securing himself to the ship and drifts off to the rear. As commander, would you:-

- a) Immediately reverse the ship towards the man?
- b) Order two men to go after him?
- c) Accept the loss of one crewman and tell the others to carry on?
- d) Wait for the man to return to the ship on his own if he can?

8. Your cargo ship is in transit between two planets when, in deep space, you are intercepted by a strange vessel. The commander of the other ship opens a visi-channel to you and explains he has a problem which





# STAR PORTRAIT

Avon paces the Scorpio flight deck, glancing about at the unfamiliar machinery. Tarrant settles himself in one of the command seats, takes in the instrument lay-out like the trained space pilot he is, and seems confident.

"Can you fly this ship?" demands Avon.

"It's just a Wanderer Class planet-hopper. Mark II by the looks of it. Obsolete but functional."

"I want it flown, not catalogued," snaps Avon irritably.

"No problem," smiles Tarrant.

With that, the trained pilot of Blake's 7 takes command of the Scorpio's first flight under new management, propelling himself and the rest of the cast into the fourth series of this exciting programme.

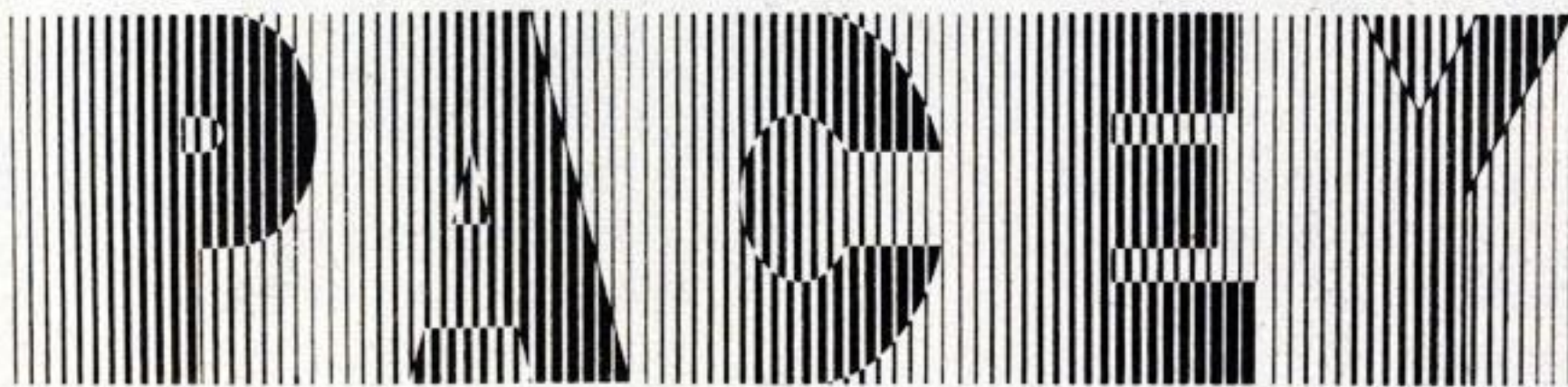
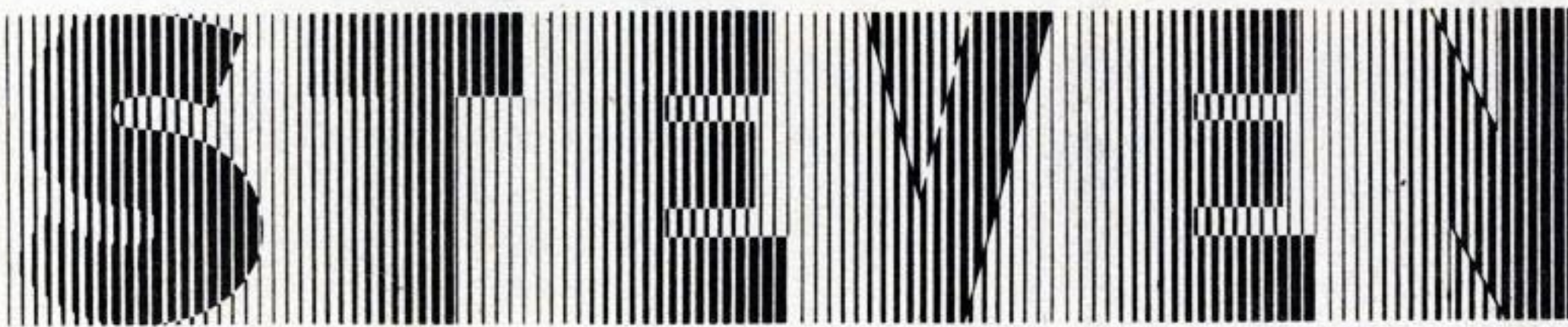
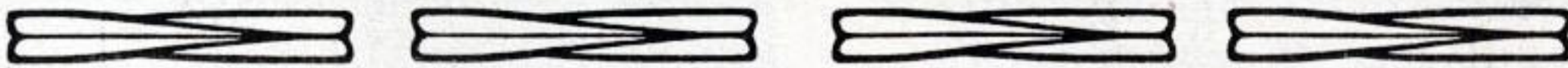
"It's a shame Monday nights (transmission night for the series) are such bad nights for the Scorpio crew," comments Steven Pacey. "There's always some dramatic and tense moment just around the corner and it's not very easy to smile when the Federation are hot on your heels. I'd love to see just a few more laughs injected just to break the tension now and again."

Steven's remarks hint at a degree of comedy acting in his background and, believe it or not, the grim and efficient space pilot loves to do nothing better. Having tackled many things in his career, making an audience laugh is the thing he enjoys most of all.

"I decided I wanted to be a comedy actor at the age of six," smiles Steven. "At that time I was living with my parents in Brighton and my brother, Peter, was already starting in the business. By the age of eight, I was taking drama lessons at the Florence Moore Theatre Studio in Brighton where we put on one or two productions. I thought it was terrific. I loved having an audience to play to."

Steven's professional career really got underway when, at the age of eleven, he secured his first part.

"My brother was assistant stage manager at the Intimate Theatre, Palmers Green. When he heard they were looking for a 'lad' for their next production, he immediately thought of me. I auditioned then got the part.





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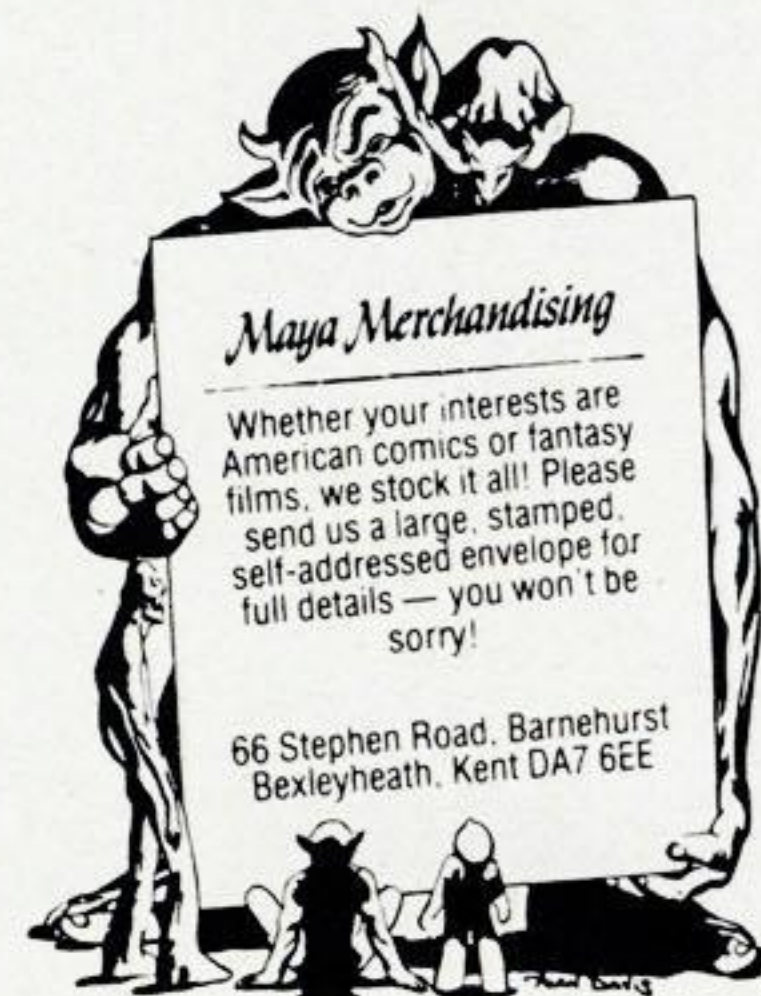
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**BLAKES 7**

**STEVEN PACEY**

as

**TARRANT**



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That's right. After the enthusiastic response to our first poster magazine effort, *Excalibur* (still available from the address below), we bring you another of our bumper, value for money film tie-ins. Featuring the new John Carpenter movie, *Escape from New York*, the second Starburst Poster Magazine boasts information on the stars, the director and the special effects of the great science fiction film. All this plus a full-size reproduction of the movie poster.

The *Escape from New York* poster magazine is available from all good newsagents, or if in difficulty it can be obtained by sending 85p (which includes postage and packing) to Dangerous Visions, 19f Spital Road, Maldon, Essex. Make all cheques and POs payable to Dangerous Visions. Send no cash!

## ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

a starburst poster magazine

### THE OFFICIAL POSTER MAGAZINE OF THE MOVIE

number 2 65p

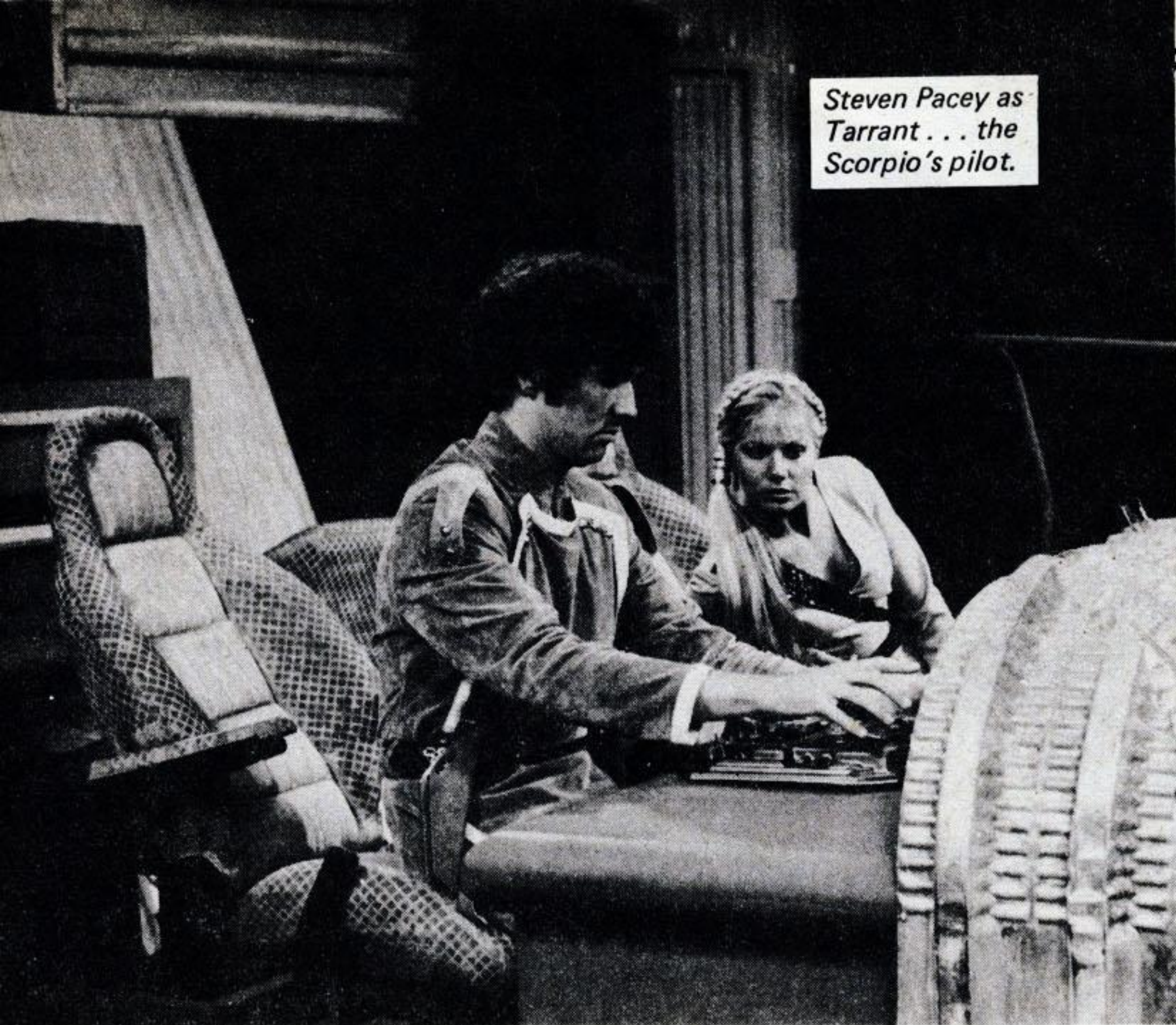
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INCLUDES A FABULOUS 24" x 35" POSTER





Steven Pacey as  
Tarrant . . . the  
Scorpio's pilot.



"Suddenly I found myself acting alongside stars such as Bill Frazer and Peter Jones in the farce 'Collapse of Stout Party' by Trevor Peacock (who also acted in the performance)."

Steven's appearance in such a production did not alarm him. "When you're that age you have no fear, no nerves about acting in front of an audience. All the phobias come later when your career really starts to develop and you worry about the future. At that time, however, I found the whole thing very exciting and it made me determined to make acting my life.

"As with all the best stories," continues Steven, "there was an agent in the audience during my first performance and from then on I had myself an agent. It was the start of a short but dazzling childhood career," he laughs.

Before his problems began, Steven secured the part of 'Lucius' in the film 'Julius Caesar' — a fellow actor among the many international stars in the film being Michael Keating.

"Being propelled into the world of films at the age of eleven, I can understand how so many child actors can become spoiled brats. The world is so unreal. I remember one incident in particular," continues Steven. "I had walked on to the 'set' of a film Sammy Davis Junior was making, 'One More Time'. I should never have been there and was standing in the way of the lights and generally getting under everyone's feet. Then, when an electrician had to move a light he accidentally backed into me then apologised. 'Sorry, sir,' he said. 'Sir?' — to a boy of eleven! I should have had a clip round the ear then been booted off the set but that's how unreal the whole

film business is as far as children are concerned."

By the age of twelve, Steven was appearing in a play at Studio 68. "It was virtually a 'two-hander' where I had almost every other line. I remember sitting outside the theatre in my parents' car reading the script and memorising my lines. I managed to learn over sixty pages in about half-an-hour! It's something I could never do now! At that age, though, it all seems so easy especially if it's something you really want to do."

At the age of thirteen, however, Steven's childhood career was drawing to a close — through no fault of his own.

"I was playing opposite Kenneth Moore in 'The Winslow Boy' in the West

End production. There was the marvellous cross-examination scene where Kenneth Moore bullies the boy trying to get him to admit he has stolen a five shilling postal order. The climax is when he stands and announces, 'The boy is a liar and a thief!' I protest my innocence and burst into tears. A very dramatic moment. However, I was at the stage in life where I was growing fast and, by the end of the run, Kenneth Moore was having to LOOK UP to me which made the whole thing seem ridiculous. At the age of thirteen I was five-foot-seven — and out of work!"

For Steven, it was back to school until he stopped growing. "All I wanted to do was get back into acting. By the time I was sixteen I was bursting to get back into the business. I visited my former Agent — to find out he'd moved and changed to a literary agent. Was it something I said?"

"Taking my courage in both hands, I went back to the company which had produced 'The Winslow Boy' and asked if there was anything going. Looking back, how I ever had the nerve I shall never know! It proved to be the start of a whole new career for me, despite the odds being stacked against it. They told me the musical 'Godspell' was about to go on tour and an understudy was required. I jumped at the chance. Very shortly, I was given a part in the production then, before long, found myself playing the part of Jesus. I discovered I was the youngest person ever to have played the part and was thrilled with the success. There I was, on the road at the age of sixteen, earning £100 per week and life couldn't have been better. I must confess," says Steven candidly, "from the age of sixteen until now — I've had a ball! I've been extremely lucky with the parts which have come my way."



Tarrant is part of the crew  
and must fulfil his role  
according to the mix pro-  
vided.



*I would like to find myself in more dangerous situations . . .*



Steven's first introduction to television was in the series 'Mother Makes Five' for Thames TV. "I played the friend of one of the sons and I had to wear a massive coat which once belonged to Liberace. It was a large furry one and, with the collar pulled well up, I had to chase a girl round the garden pretending to be a gorilla!"

"I found the whole business of television fascinating. There was so much to learn and a different acting style to adopt. I found I wanted to know everything about the technical side of production and my thirst for knowledge still keeps me interested in that side of the business."

So well did Steven settle into television that, at the age of seventeen, he completed seven television productions in one year. One of those he remembers with particular affection.

"Granada produced a series under the 'umbrella' title of 'Red Letter Day', I was given a leading role in an episode entitled 'Match Fit'. It was about a scottish football manager, played by Roddy McMillan — a lovely man who has since died. I played his friend and the whole film was seen through my eyes as I narrated the story. It was a super change for me and I thoroughly enjoyed it."

Such 'voice-overs' then became one of Steven's main lines of work. He has completed well over three-hundred broadcasts for radio and has made many commercials.

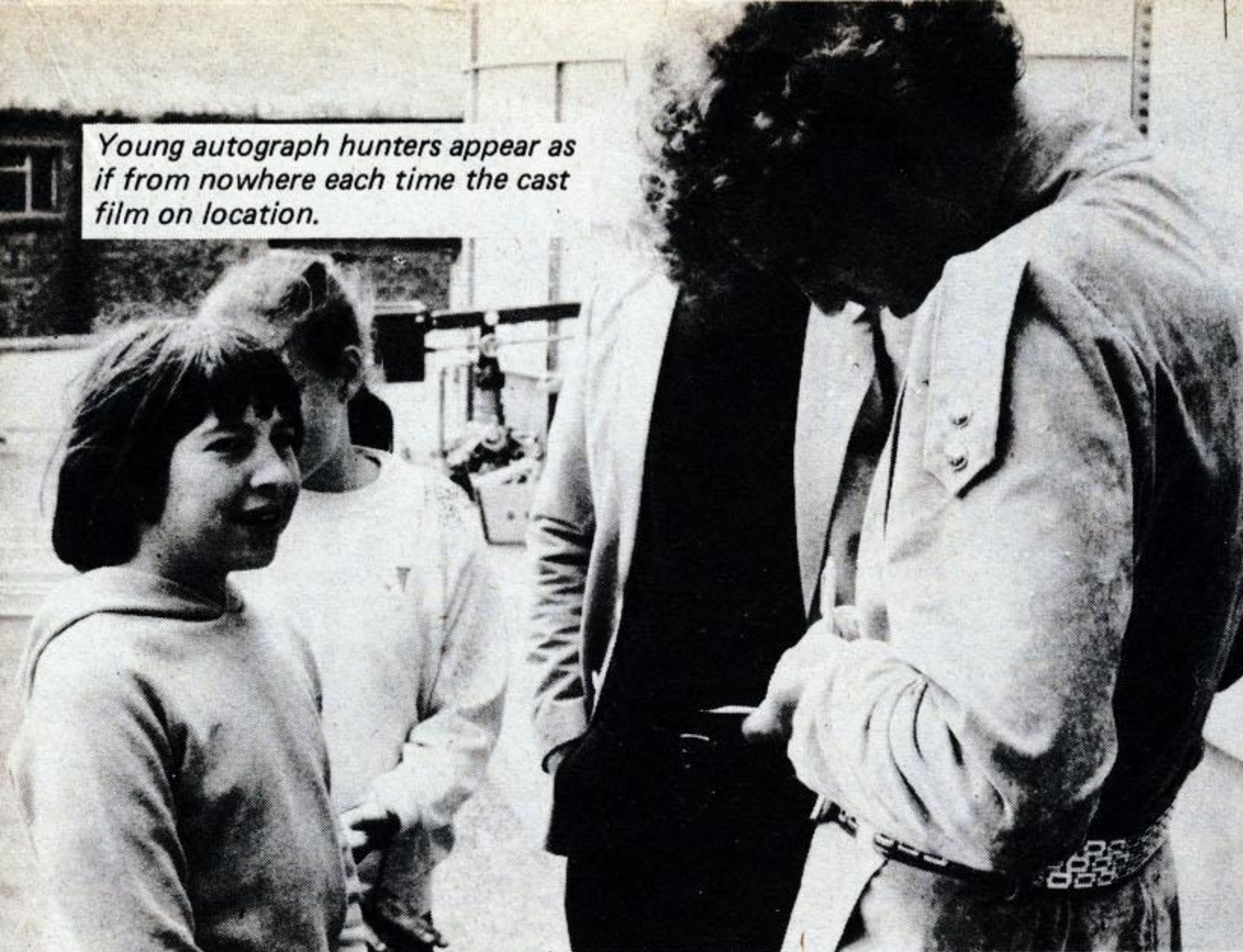


*That tender moment as Tarrant and Servalan draw close, a cube of Earth Spring Water helping to form a bond between them.*





Young autograph hunters appear as if from nowhere each time the cast film on location.



"I enjoy working for radio and doing 'voice-overs' because voices are not too easily identified and, if you have the technique, are quick and easy to do. When I first heard my voice on radio, I cringed and wondered why I acted the part the way I did. I'm still critical of the way I work and hope I will always be hard with myself. I believe the day you stop being self-critical is the day you allow your acting talent to slide into the doldrums. I hope I never permit that to happen."

Performances in 'Cuckoo Waltz' (Granada), 'The Sweeney' (Thames), 'Parables' (ATV), 'Leave Him to Heaven' (BBC), 'Cedar Tree' (ATV) and 'Purple Twilight' (ATV) all led Steven towards 'Blake's 7'. But it was a chance encounter which really secured him the part.

"I was visiting the BBC where my brother was playing in a television performance and we arranged to meet afterwards in the bar. During the short time there, I met Chris Boucher, Script Editor for the series, who, unknown to me, was looking for someone to play the part of Tarrant. It was he who mentioned me to those in charge of casting and I was offered a test.

"When I saw that Tarrant was supposed to be in his mid-thirties — and I was barely twenty-four — I thought there would be no chance for me at all. I took the test, however, playing the role as tough and mean as I could with a gruff voice. I then heard nothing for weeks until finally confirmation arrived. I couldn't believe it. So I've been stuck with this silly voice in the series ever since!"

As a character arriving into an already established series, Tarrant and the way he fitted-in with the rest of the crew was something left very much to the script-writers.

"There's very little scope for developing a character like Tarrant on your own," says Steven. "He is part of the crew and must fulfil his role according to the mix provided. One area I would like to expand is that of danger. I enjoy doing my own stunts and fight scenes and would like to find myself in more dangerous settings. Also, we seem to ignore the fact that we have two super girls in the crew and, after three years in space, surely there must be some kind of romance in the air!"

Tarrant does get a chance to show the more tender side of his nature when he is thrown together with Servalan in one episode and Steven's performance is well worth watching.

"Actually," admits Steven, "that episode also provided a lot of laughs. I was approaching Servalan with a small, glass cube filled with 'Earth Spring Water'. I had to sit on the edge of a bed with her, say some lines which would draw the two characters together in such a way as to indicate a spark of love between them. Then at the crucial

*A photo for the family album. these lucky youngsters manage a starring role with the stars when they find them on location in Dorset.*



moment when I passed the cube to her — it broke! The pair of us were soaked!"

Needless to say, that incident is not the one used in the final version!

When Steven has time to himself, he loves to go sailing off the South Coast of England in the boat he part owns with his brother. "Photography is also one of my hobbies." "I have a movie camera with sound which I love to use. If anything moves, I shoot it. I also like to use the slow-motion setting on it to record such things as people diving etc."

As a Gemini, Steven is supposed to have a dual personality. Does he believe in such things? "I'm afraid not. I don't really believe you can divide the world into twelfths. Some people may exhibit the traits associated with their star sign but, in general, I don't believe such things should — or do — rule your life."

One area where Steven does reflect at least some Gemini traits is in his 'all-round' ability in the theatre and on television. Apart from his love of dramatic acting, he also likes to sing.

"As a kid I did the usual thing of standing in front of the mirror with a hairbrush acting as a microphone and giving my version of the latest Frank Sinatra or Tony Bennet hit. Since then I've been in quite a few musicals and thoroughly enjoyed them. At least no-one's complained about my singing voice yet!"

When time permits, Steven is a keen squash player. "It helps balance the other side of my life — because I also love to eat and drink!"

From having a dream of becoming an actor at the age of six, Steven Pacey has come a long way from the boy who attended the Florence Moore Theatre Studio in Brighton. He has realised his ambition and has gained an amazing wealth of experience in the acting business in just a few short years. Now, with 'Tarrant' in 'Blake's 7' to add to his long list of successful parts, he is well on his way to stardom. . . and not just at the helm of the Scorpio either!\*



# CAN YOU FLY THE SCORPIO?

## ANSWERS

CHECK YOUR SOLUTIONS TO THE QUIZ AGAINST THE ANSWERS BELOW AND DISCOVER IF YOU WOULD MAKE A GOOD SPACE COMMANDER

(1) a: 3 b: 0 c: 5 d: 2

Jogging is the best way to keep generally fit since it exercises most muscles in the human body. Weight-lifting only builds muscle and does not tone up the whole body. Playing football does not provide enough constant physical exercise to improve all the body's muscles including lung exercise.

(2) a: 2 b: 0 c: 5 d: 1

You score nothing if, as a passenger, you worry about what the pilot and crew should be doing. They know their job and don't need you worrying about them. If you try to follow the route by a map you will at least keep yourself occupied but it is very difficult to identify landmarks from a high-flying jet. Asking for a paper bag, if you are a poor flyer, is at least being prepared for the worst but to relax and have a nap is the best thing you can do, leaving the pilot and crew to fly you to your destination.

(3) a: 0 b: 2 c: 5 d: 3

Giving an electrical appliance a thump is the worst thing you can ever do. Opening the back to examine it is reasonable but, if the radio is a new one, it could mean the guarantee is then invalid. Taking the radio to a shop could mean that you have to do without it for some time while it is placed on the repair list but, if you change batteries first, you will soon discover if that is where the problem lies and anyone can change batteries!

(4) a: 0 b: 1 c: 3 d: 5

Even if you are a strong swimmer, never dive into a swollen river in a rescue attempt. You could also suffer drowning in a powerful current. Calling for help could mean any chance of saving the person has been lost but, if you throw something to hang onto, you might hit the person in the water rendering them unconscious. Best to try and reach them with something long from the bank and pull them ashore like that. Life is too precious to risk in any foolhardy way.

(5) a: 0 b: 0 c: 0 d: 5

Electricity is dangerous! Never play with it and know what you are doing before even becoming involved with it. The standard electric wiring codes are as follows:  
Yellow and Green — Earth wire  
Blue wire — Negative current  
Brown wire — 'Live' wire  
Never under any circumstances touch a wire which could be connected to a 'live' circuit or switch on the current when there are any exposed wires showing.

(6) a: 0 b: 0 c: 0 d: 5 e: 1

Every space commander should have a good grounding in mathematics since computers sometimes go wrong and supply an incorrect answer. You must be able to work out simple sums yourself and check that the computer is functioning properly.

(7) a: 0 b: 1 c: 3 d: 5

If you reverse your ship, you will certainly risk losing the other men working outside. By ordering two men to go after the first, you risk losing them as well but telling your men just to carry on is a hard decision to make. Since the first man has his own jet pack, he should be able to stop his fall away from the ship and return on his own. Remember, you have the lives of all your crew to think about, not just one man. Let him take his chances on his own.

(8) a: 1 b: 0 c: 5 d: 0

You have never seen the other commander before and know nothing of his intentions. If he will not discuss his 'problem' with you before teleporting to your ship, you must bring your crew to actions stations then accept only the commander on board. Take no needless risks. To blow his ship apart achieves nothing and may land you in trouble if there are more of his kind about.

(9) a: 0 b: 3 c: 5 d: 0

With all your electrical systems out of action, you might be able to launch a probe, but you would never receive its signal. Likewise, you would have no energy to teleport your team to the planet nor receive their signals. You have to land first time on the ground and a gentle hover over the selected spot will soon tell you if it is suitable or not. Bringing the ship straight in would be brave but a little foolish. The site might be a soggy morass!

(10) a: 3 b: 0 c: 5 d: 2

In a primitive society, weapons are the first thing any intelligent species will discover for themselves. They need no help there. To show how a computer works might make them worship you and your crew as gods but will be of little influence to their development since they will neither understand nor ever be able to use such a device to its best advantage. Introducing fire would be a major development but, as it occurs naturally in an atmosphere able to sustain life, the people will soon discover that for themselves. The wheel, however, is something which can have the most profound influence on any race and has led to some of the biggest advances in our own history. The wheel is the greatest gift you could give them.

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## IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE...

★ MEET JACQUELINE PEARCE (*The amazing Servalan*).

★ WE TALK TO CHRIS BOUCHER - *Blake's 7* script editor.

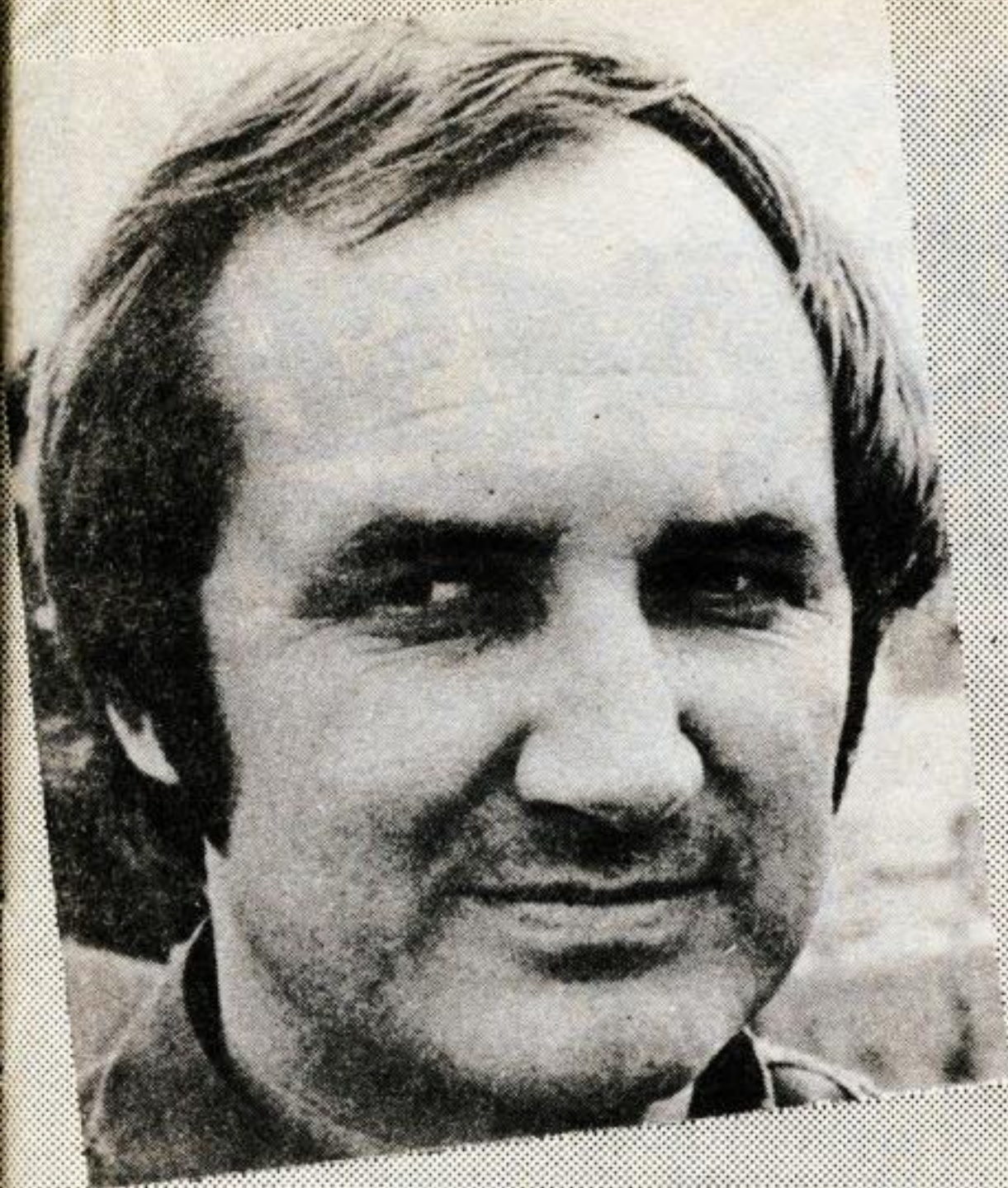
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When you have decided on your answers write them on a postcard — for example, if you think base 1 is hitting craft A write '1 — A' and so on for all six. Now add your own full name, age and address and ask an adult to sign it as your own unaided work. Send it to the following address to arrive not later than 31st December 1981.

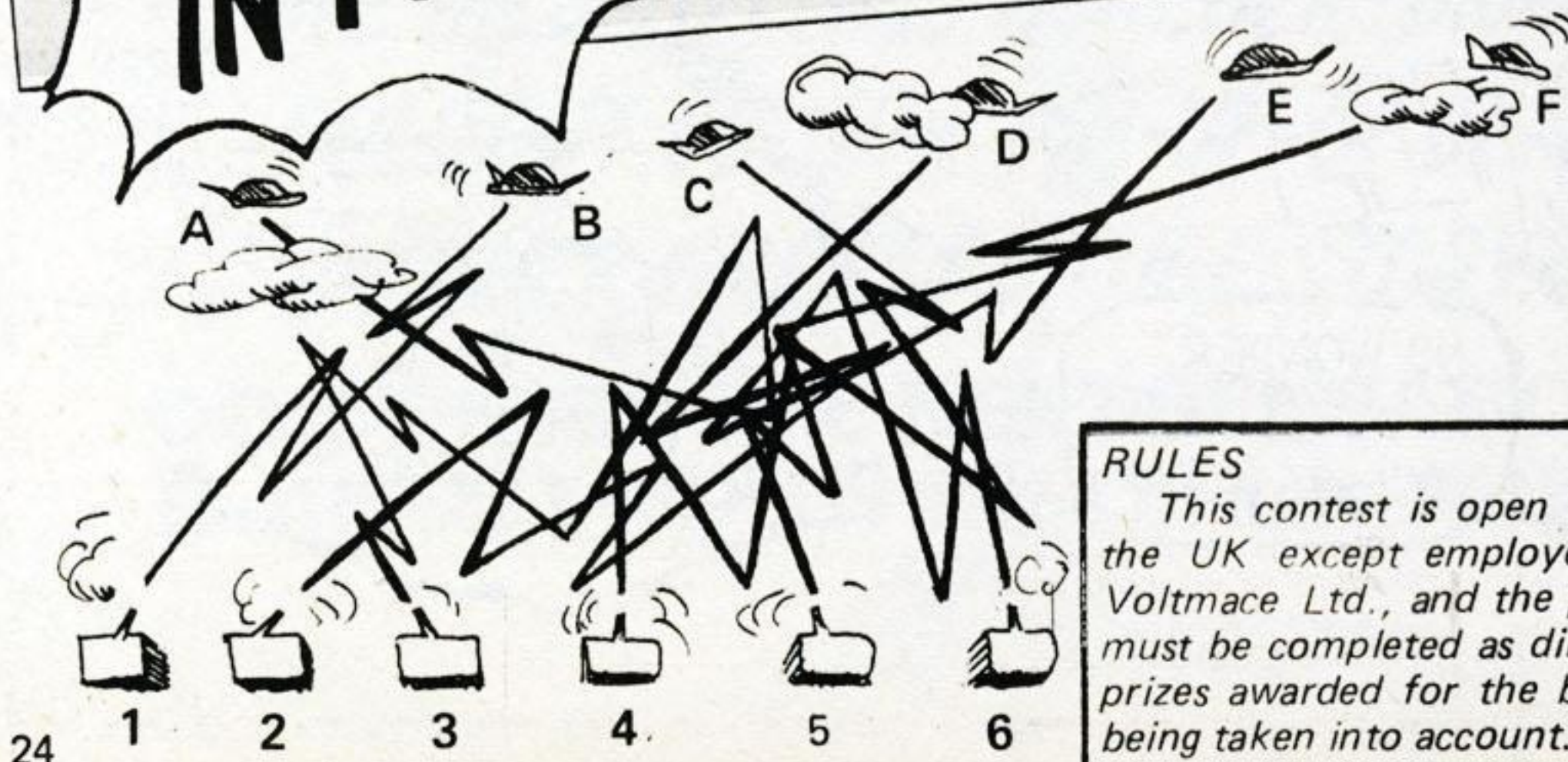
Video Game Competition,  
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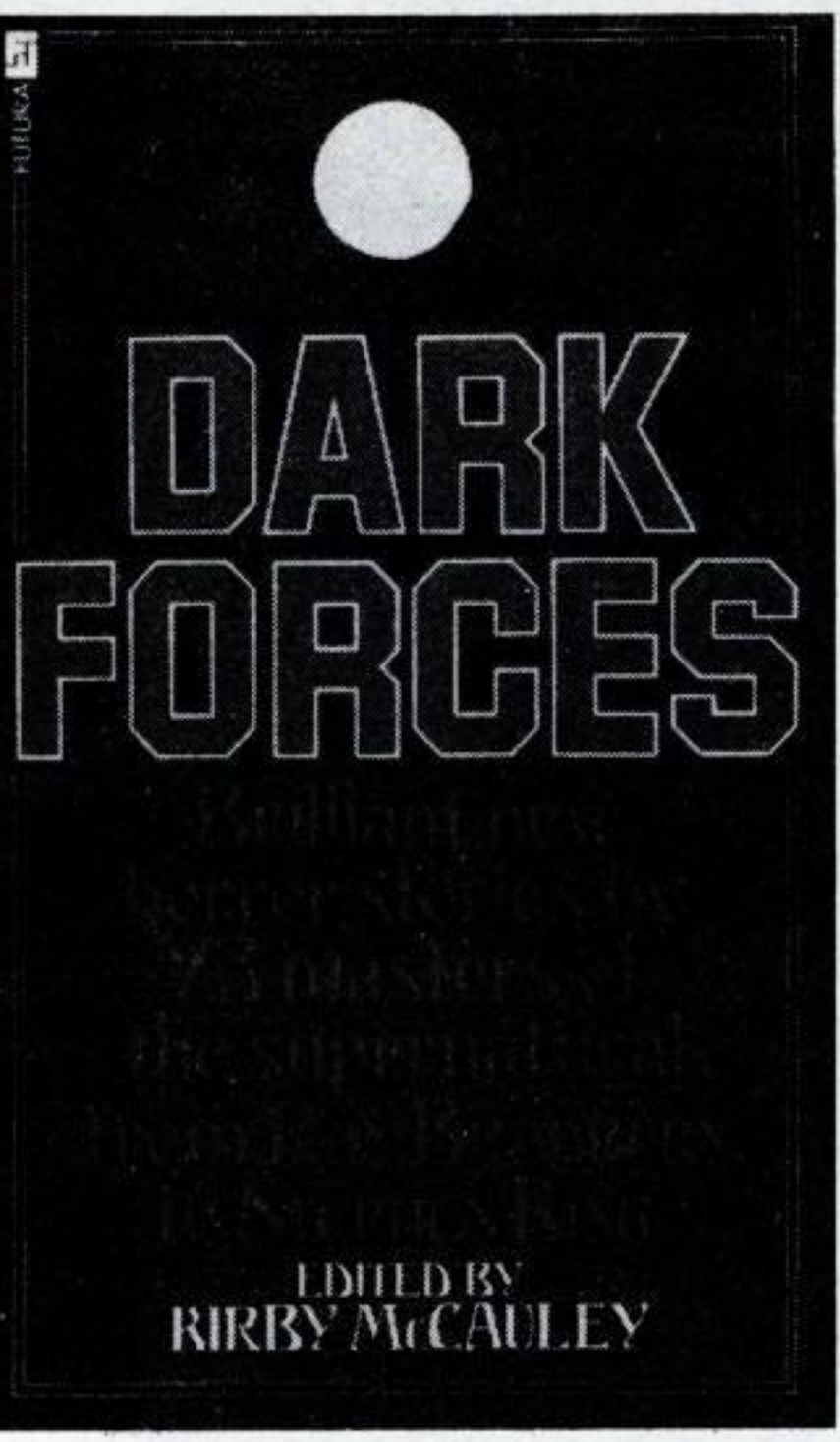
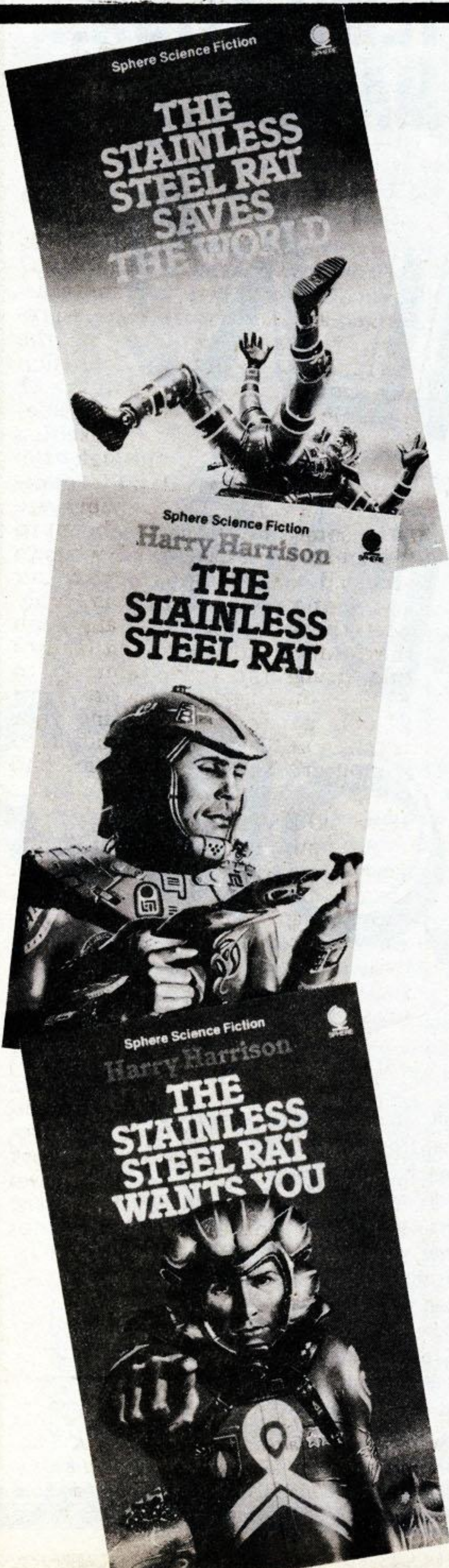


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# BLAKE'S 7 BOOK REVIEW



**DARK FORCES.** Edited by Kirby McCauley. Published by Futura at £1.95.

This collection of varying-length horror stories contains a nice mix of tales: from the mildly shocking, to the dreadful — not for the faint of heart! One delightful aspect of the book is that all of the stories are 100% new — no collection of old stuff here, so you don't have to buy a load of stories you've already read in order to get some that you haven't! It's a weighty volume — running out at over 550 pages and this, together with the high standard of writing make it very good value indeed. When you look around to see a 140 page third-rate novel costing you over a quid, the £1.95 price of Dark Forces is very good value indeed!

**STAINLESS STEEL RAT** by Harry Harrison Published by Sphere at 95p each.

It's 'be-fair-to-SF-authors' time — having said last month how much we didn't like Harrison's latest offerings, we thought it only fair to take a closer look at some of his other material which we are sure will appeal to the majority of our readers and which certainly appeals to us!

The stainless steel rat is James Bolivar DiGriz — the smoothest, con man in the known galaxy (one of our writers has already paid homage to DiGriz!). Better known as 'Slippery Jim, DiGriz is happily leading a life of crime until the dreaded 'Special Corps' catch up with him. In the first book of the series, 'The Stainless

Steel Rat', Slippery Jim is first captured by, and then recruited to, the Corps which is a sort of Galactic SPG. The remainder of that book and all of the other three (the one not illustrated is 'The Stainless Steel Rat's Revenge') are devoted to Jim's sometimes stunning, sometimes hilarious and constantly entertaining adventures with the Corps. For our money, the most enjoyable of the books is '... Saves the World' — Harrison has always been the best of the brave writers who have tackled time travel and he uses it particularly well in this book.

If you like SF novels and you've not met the Rat — then gamble a quid on one of these: he's one of the greatest characters to come out of contemporary SF!

There's only one way to make sure that you never miss an issue of **BLAKE'S 7**— take out a regular subscription so that your favourite monthly is delivered to your door.

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# THE MOST VALUABLE OBJECT IN THE GALAXY! COULD THE MASTER CRACKSMAN RESIST THE TEMPTATION... OR WOULD HE MAKE IT...



## VILA'S BIG SCORE

An image flickered across the screen in front of Vila's bored eyes. He was thumbing through the Scorpio's databank on Harridin IV, the worthless little mudball of a world to which they were heading. The image shattered his boredom to a thousand pieces, replacing it with intense interest. He held the page on display and studied it for a long time. He didn't so much study it as gloat over it. . . this was it, the big score that every thief dreams of.

He had discovered the most valuable object in the Galaxy. The fact that it was also the most well-guarded object in the Galaxy didn't bother him unduly. His whole life had been devoted to finding keys for locks which were meant to be locked, to opening doors which were supposed to remain shut. He smiled gently as he killed the screen.

Actually it is inaccurate to describe Harridin IV as a

mudball. SANDball would be more appropriate. As you approach the planet from out-of-system, it is very striking — its fierce yellow face dominates the inner planets. It looks bright, friendly and cheerful. But from a close orbit, when your scanners can rove over the surface, you can see just how wrong was your initial impression. The cheerful smile worn by Harridin IV is the fixed grin of a death mask. Harridin IV is a dead world.

The happy yellow you saw from far out is an unrelieved desert; sometimes rocky, sometimes sandy, sometimes both and always barren. What little water remains on the world is locked in ice at the polar caps or buried in deep subterranean lakes, where only the Federation's powerful technology can extract it.

The place is hardly worth occupying at all. Its only



inhabitants are the nomadic tribes and the Priesthood: religion was big business on Harridin IV. The planet was supposedly the seat of an ancient and long dead civilization — rumoured to have been Lords of the Galaxy while Man was still scabbling in the trees of Earth.

What little remained of this race of fabled super beings had given rise to an obscure religious cult whose only claim to fame was that it bled vast amounts of money from those of its followers rich enough to make the pilgrimage to Harridin IV.

All of this however, was of little interest to Avon. To him, Harridin IV was neither a place of barren beauty nor spiritual salvation. It was a possible bolt hole, a refuge from the Federation forces, which he and his team might have to use in the future. Leaving Soolin as base guard back on Xenon, the team were here to check out the sand planet's suitability for the role of hiding place.

Two hours after achieving orbit, though, Avon's thoughts were not centred on the planet beneath him. They revolved like a whirlwind around Vila. The unreliable, couldn't-care-less Vila who was late and delaying the landing party.

"Well?" Avon snapped at Dayna as she entered, "Where is he?" His impatience made little impression on her. Her frown was one of confusion and worry. "He's not on the Scorpio, Avon", she replied. "I just don't understand it. He can't have gone down alone, it's far too dangerous for him".

Tarrant, too, was surprised, "Well he MUST be down there," he said. "Our teleport does not have the range to get him anywhere else."

Avon's temper was rapidly approaching breaking strain. "Damn him!" he snarled. "He's putting the whole mission at risk. We continue the survey without him. If he's not back by the time we're finished, we leave without him."

"But, Avon. . ." Dayna started to reason with the gaunt figure in black.

"No 'buts'," Avon's voice was cold and calculating now. "We cannot waste time and energy searching for an irresponsible fool like Vila. Activate the teleport — now!" Three figures flickered out of existence on the ship to reappear on a mountaintop of the planet beneath.

Normally, Vila liked cities. Cities were warm and safe, plenty of places to hide in cities. This one was different. Backing on to the great Red Mountains, the place seemed all wrong. The low buildings were a cold uniform white. There was a constant skin-ripping wind howling off the mountains. It picked up sand on its biting breath and hurled it at his face. The buildings seemed to huddle together, hunched up against the mountain wall, cowering before the withering blast of the vicious wind. The figures he could see all wore thick dark cowed cloaks. They too bent against the gale as they moved like ghosts among the sad buildings.

"Greetings, brother," The deep voice startled Vila. He turned. The tall figure standing beside him had arrived there noiselessly. The voice spoke again from beneath the cowl, "You have the look of one searching for something. Many who come to our poor world have the same look. The holy order of Starcore can provide what you seek."

Vila breathed a deep sigh of relief. He'd thought at first that he was being picked up by a guard. But the guy was a salesman — a religious salesman, peddling the planet's



## "He's not on the Scorpio, Avon..."

obscure cult. Vila started to enjoy himself. Putting on a face of penitent honesty and sincerity, he faced the tall figure. "You are correct, brother," he said, "I have come in search of peace and truth."

Behind the cowl's shadows, Vila's expert eye saw the smile of a tall man. The smile he had seen so many times on the faces of a thousand con-men as they are about to sting their victims. This priest was out to take Vila for every credit he had. "Come with me, brother. And I will lead you on the path to true happiness." Vila followed the cowed figure through the grey alleys of the sprawling city. He smiled — it made his task all the more sweet now he knew he was to steal from a bunch of con-men.

There are several ways a star can die. It can go nova — tearing itself apart, spilling its guts over a vast volume of space. It can implode, crushing itself with its own gravity until all that remains is a black hole in the fabric of space-time. In a very few stars, though, the nuclear fires just die out; the lighter elements of these ones just drift away to become clouds of interstellar dust. The few tiny traces of heavy elements, however, drift inwards, collecting together and fusing until they form an incredibly dense ball of matter.



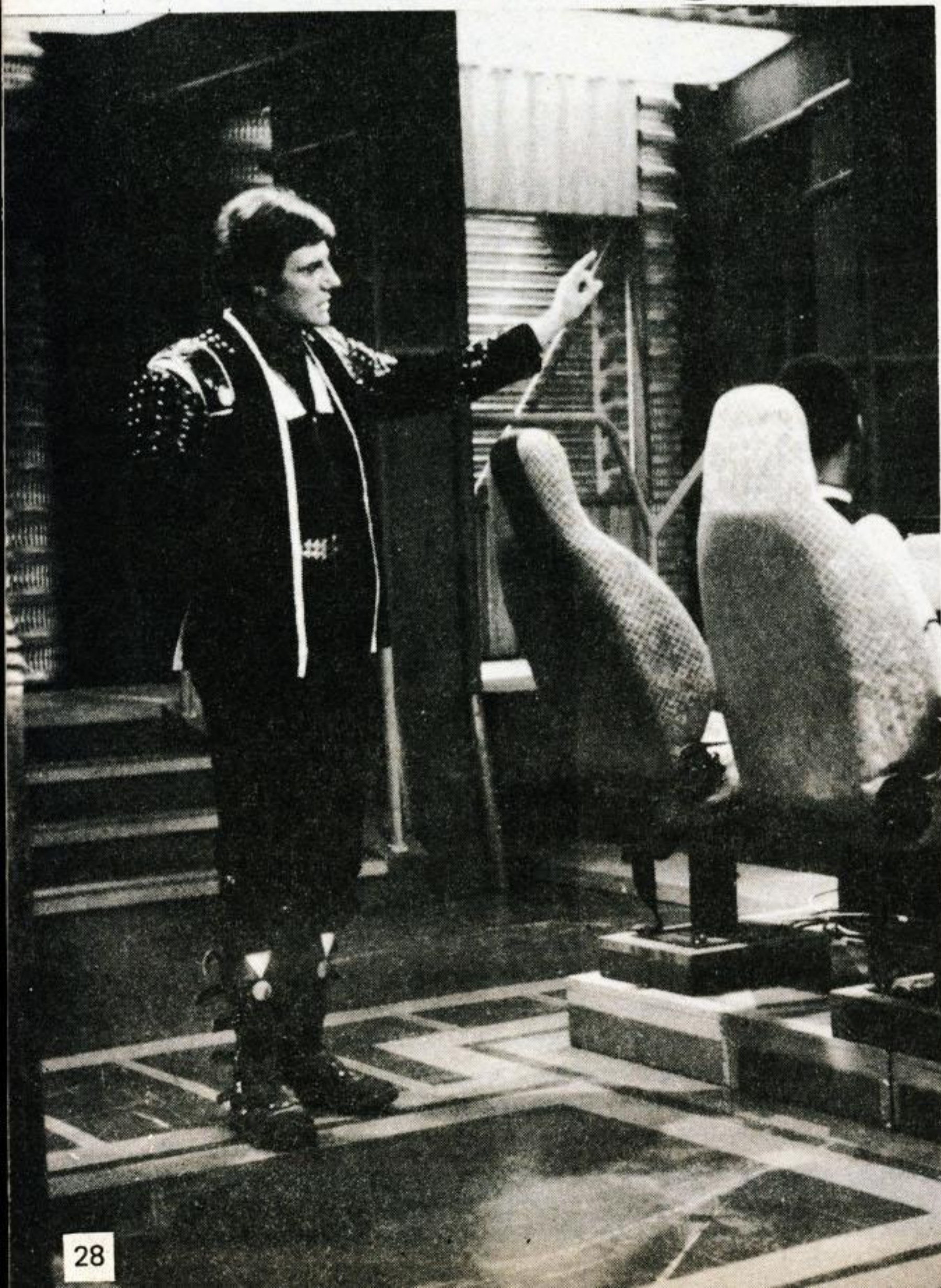
Now, if the only trace element present in a dying star is carbon, then after its death, that star will leave a superdense ball of carbon. Man has another name for superdense carbon — he calls it diamond.

The piece of diamond that Vila was looking at was at least one foot in diameter. A perfect sphere, it sat on top of its pedestal in the holy shrine-room catching the tiny amount of light coming from the wall-torches. Deep in its heart, it almost seemed alive. It took the torchlight and changed it, moved it around, formed it into something stunningly beautiful. It was uncanny. Vila could understand how a religion had grown up around this thing. It was all that remained of a once brilliant star. They called it Starcore and kept it in this deep underground chamber, protected by devices and systems of great sophistication and power.

Vila's eyes scoured the room, soaking up details of the systems. The guards they had passed were obvious. They were also very large and well-armed. On his way down here, he had been led through several energy barriers of a type unknown to him. His guide had used an odd-shaped lump of crystal to open them.

Inside the chamber, the atmosphere was dank and

## "Slave, is Vila back on board yet...?"



musty. The walls were covered with a grey moss which almost seemed to vibrate with the deep bass pulsing which came from the pedestal. Vila had heard that pulsing once before — it was from the mechanism of an anti-matter generator. It was mounted in the pedestal itself and surrounded the Starcore with a field of encased anti-matter. The field would instantly vaporise anything that tried to come closer than three feet to the Starcore.

From behind the mask of religious fervour that he wore, Vila was judging distances, calculating field-strengths. Tonight he would steal the Starcore.

Just as the sun was setting on the city, Avon, Tarrant and Dayna were arriving back on board the Scorpio. The survey had been inconclusive — Harridin IV did have sufficiently remote terrain to offer good cover, but the shortage of water might rule out long-term shelter. It could be used in dire emergencies only.

As they prepared to leave orbit, Avon barked a question at the ship's computer, "Slave, is Vila back on board yet?"

"I'm terribly sorry, sir." The computer replied. "He has not returned and I beg you most humbly not to deactivate any of my systems, if the fault lies with me. . ."

"Oh, for heaven's sake," Avon broke in on the obsequious babble, "How could it be your fault?"

"Well he was scanning my databank record of Harridin IV just before he disappeared. He may have seen something there which caused him to go. Oh, I KNOW it's my fault. PLEASE don't turn off my creative pathways. I promise it won't happen again. . ."

"Shut up." Avon's voice was as cold as the interstellar void. "Display for me what you showed to Vila — now".

A few minutes later, Avon called the others over to the screen. A picture and description of the Starcore was displayed there. Avon indicated it, "If you were Vila and you saw that, what would you want to do. . .?"

Tarrant didn't hesitate, "I'd want to steal it, of course. But. . ." He stopped dead in his tracks as the realisation gripped him. Avon gave his orders calmly, "Well, you know where to find him, don't you! Go and bring him back — in one piece if possible!"



One hundred and ten miles beneath the ship, Vila had a very empty sick feeling in his stomach. He was approaching the most dangerous part of the scheme: the guide had succumbed to the capsule of stun gas that he'd taken from a clipgun stun cartridge. Vila now had the crystal key and it had taken him past the first set of guards and through the energy barriers. The guards wouldn't recognise him underneath the deep cowl of the cloak. But what if he were challenged verbally? He'd be spotted for an offworlder as soon as he opened his mouth.

It happened: "Hey, Priest", a particularly brutal-looking guard called to him, "Where you go?" There was no turning back now, Vila had to commit himself. The folds of the cloak that he wore puckered out once. . .twice. . .as though plucked by an invisible hand. Two clipgun stunshots took the guard full in the belly. Vila was sure that the crash of the massive body against the stone floor would alert the whole city. He scurried on. . .

Two minutes and three more unconscious guards later, he was inside the Starcore chamber. The glittering globe sparkled atop the pedestal as he padded towards it. He pulled the hardware that he would need from the folds of that very, very convenient cloak.



# He was approaching the most dangerous part of the scheme...



To turn off the anti-matter generator was impossible. Once you started one of those things, you couldn't stop them in anything less than two years. It took that long for their strange energy fields to deactivate safely. You could, however, if you knew about such things, cause a brief interruption by pitching a close signal back towards the transmitter at the same frequency as the original beam. Vila knew about such things. The means to achieve it, however was another matter. The signal would have to be one millisecond late every four milliseconds for a constant three full seconds to even obtain a three second break while the generator's brain deciphered what was happening. The device causing the interruptions would have to be virtually on the same spot as the object being guarded, thereby making the machine believe the break was being caused by some degree of reflection from the Starcore. What device could do that? Vila smiled as he removed his teleport bracelet. He was convinced if he set his communicator to a spare frequency at random pitch it would do the job. It had better. If it failed — if just one short pulse was out on calculation — half of the planet on which he was standing would cease to exist.

Vila set about getting at the pedestal's control mechanism. He had correctly guessed it to be under the floor. It was protected by a complex sonic lock — it yielded to his expert fingers in seconds.

He knew he couldn't get his hands inside the field area, pick up the Starcore and get it out unless it was within the three second interruption. Could he count accurately enough to avoid death and destruction? Normally it was a chance he would never take, but this was different. There was a fortune to be had. He swallowed hard then moved towards the anti-matter field:

Holding his bracelet between clammy fingers, Vila edged as close as he could, gingerly raised the bracelet over the protected area, fingered the transmitter — then dropped it as gently as he could.

The clunk of the bracelet hitting and staying on top of the Starcore caused his mind to start counting. One — the field started to shimmer. Two — there was a dull whine coming from the machine. Three — Vila lunged forward. It really would be death or glory this time. Suddenly, he had it in his arms. The Starcore was his! That instant, the whine of the machine ceased as it resumed its function, unaware it had lost the precious object it was guarding. Vila allowed himself a wry smile as colour returned to his cheeks. He had just made himself the richest man alive.

It was then things started to go badly wrong. . .

**THE WALLS WERE MOVING!** Or rather the moss that covered them was. It was growing, expanding — Vila backed warily away from the nearest moss surface and as he did, his bracelet slipped from its position on the Starcore. It bounced against a tendril of the moss and started to bubble!

The moss was secreting a very powerful acid. Within seconds it had eaten a hole in the bracelet. Vila's mild terror became eye-bulging panic. In an instant his adrenalin-prompted mind worked out what was happening, he should have seen it before, of course. There was a PART of the defence systems — a living burglar alarm: if all other measures failed the removal of the object from the pedestal triggered the moss to start expanding. . . and dissolving everything in the chamber except the Starcore and the pedestal. How many greedy villains had already been reduced to component atoms by it? It probably ran into hundreds. And Vila was going to be the latest. He had



retrieved his bracelet but it was useless now and the moss had closed across the door-opening. He was trapped.

Suddenly he noticed that one wall of the moss was changing colour. It went from green to brown and then to red. He really only took passing note of this fact — it was of little importance whether you were killed by red or green or brown moss. They'd all hurt like the devil!

Then something happened that MADE him take notice — a voice bellowed from behind the red area, "Vila! Are you in there?" It was Tarrant.

"Yes, Tarrant, YES — GET ME OUT!" Vila screamed back. Seconds later, the red wall vaporised and Vila saw Tarrant and Dayna on the other side holding low intensity lasers on it. He clutched the Starcore to his chest and dived through, landing in an undignified heap on the other side.

"Use your bracelet, you idiot!" Tarrant shouted at him. There's a pack of guards on our tail.

Vila struggled to his feet and waved the useless device in front of Tarrant, "If it worked, I'd have been long gone." The words were hardly from his mouth when a salvo of plasma bolts fried the wall behind him and started to boil the rock at his feet. The guards had arrived! At the same instant, Dayna threw her strong arms round his waist. "I've got him! Let's clear here FAST," she screamed, at the same time hitting the activate button of her bracelet. Tarrant followed a fraction of a second later and all three of them materialised in the peace and safety of the ship.

When the Scorpio was safely out of the system, they all clustered round Vila and his prize in the command area. Far from being irate, as Vila had thought he would, Avon was almost smiling as he inspected the Starcore. "Superdense carbon, eh?" Avon said as he peered deep in the heart of the thing. "Do you have any idea what a ball of that material this size would weigh?"

Vila's elation started to waver. "Well, about five kilos, I suppose. That's what that weighs, anyway. Look — what are you getting at, Avon. . .?"

Avon balanced the ball delicately on the tips of three fingers. Assuming the scholarly tones of a lecturer, he addressed them all, "Superdense carbon is the third most dense material known to man. A ball this size would weigh approximately the same as the Earth's moon."

"B-but it can't." Vila was unable to keep the desperation from his voice. "It's a different type of carbon, that's all . . ." His voice trailed off as he saw Avon's grin broaden into a full smile. He was inspecting the bottom of the globe very closely — the area which would be hidden when it rested on its pedestal. "Ever heard of a gentleman called diGriz, Vila?"

If Vila's heart could have sunk any further it would have come out the bottom of his boots, "James B. diGriz — greatest crook ever known in the history of man. Operated about 200 years ago. Always used to leave a calling card — a picture of a rat. Some sort of private joke of his".

Avon tilted the base of the globe towards Vila. Just visible on the surface was the tiny engraved image of a rat together with the words "This replica brought to you courtesy of Jim diGriz".

"It would appear that Mr diGriz has beat Mr Vila to it

— by some 200 years. He evidently left this replica behind to cool his trail and the inhabitants have never discovered that the real object has gone." Avon tossed the globe to Vila, "Poetic justice, Vila. You risked your neck for a worthless lump of glass."

Tarrant chuckled, "Never mind, supercrook. I'm sure you'll find a use for it." Dayna smiled. "Yes, Vila — you know, if you flattened one end it'd make a great paperweight."

But Vila wasn't listening — it didn't really matter what it was made from. The whole point was that it HAD been the most well-guarded object in the galaxy. It was now the most famously-stolen object in the galaxy and it was Vila who had released it from its guards. Perhaps in a couple of hundred years they would talk in awe about the Big Score of the Great Vila. Vila smiled. . . yes, he would rather like that. ●



**Perhaps in a couple of hundred years they would talk about the Great Vila...**



In the first issue of Blake's 7 we invited readers to write in with their views on the magazine. The response has been fantastic and for the benefit of all concerned here's a cross-section of the letters we have received . . .



Ever since I heard that a Blake's 7 Monthly was to be made, I waited anxiously for it's arrival. When it came out, I sat down and read every scrap of it, three times in a row. I'm afraid that I didn't enjoy it half as much as you - I enjoyed it twice as much as you (Eh?). I thought the free gift was great and I stuck it on my tee-shirt for everyone to see. I have watched the series from the very start at the time of Blake, and so far I have seen every episode. It was great to see a picture of them (the original crew) inside your mag, and I hope we'll be seeing more of them. So, I'll concentrate me likes into one long sentence - Stories were great, art was magnificent, info was fabulous and photos were brilliant. Make mine Blake's Seven Monthly for ever and Make mine Marvel.

Yours Blake's Sevensly,

Charles Melvin  
Aberdeen  
Scotland.

P.S. How about a colour photo of Liberator and/or Scorpio in future?

I have been a fan of Blake's 7 for three years now, as you can imagine I have collected a great deal of paraphernalia on the programme, when I heard of your magazine I immediately reserved it, when it eventually arrived the cover looked great but when I opened it YUUCH. All the facts behind Blake's 7 are copied word for word from the BBC's 'Quick Guide to Blake's 7'. If you do write anything could you make sure it hasn't been published before.

As for the artwork, could you make sure that the characters at least look like the actors, the publicity work for the magazine was much better.

Many of the programme's fans are adults your magazine talks in an oversimplified manner, I mean unless you knew about the programme you wouldn't buy the magazine.

It pains me greatly to make these points but I feel they are justified, why don't you make it like the Doctor Who Monthly that is better for the fan and very enjoyable to read.

I bet the photographs you're offering in 'Ask Orac' are signed into the actual photograph, like the photographs which were given in Doctor Who's crazy caption competition, I wouldn't consider them as actual autographs.

Steven Pagomenos,  
Hendon,  
London

*Sorry we can't please everybody. Regarding your comments on the standard of artwork, (character likeness) you must remember that to capture five or six likenesses all in the same frame is no easy task. In our opinion, Ian Kennedy is one of Britain's best strip artists - we'd be hard pushed to think of anyone better. You might also like to know that the cast was pretty happy with the way they were depicted.*

I picked up the first issue of Blake's 7 with my fingers crossed, hoping that Marvel UK had published another winner. I was right.

The comic strip and the photo features were clear examples of Marvel's unique style of magazine publishing.

So let's take the magazines' contents and give you my verdict.

The story "Mission of Mercy" had excellent artwork by a vague artist called Kennedy (come on Marvel, print the credits). It was the script which brought the house down. It lacked originality and style. I'm not saying it was awful, but with a little improvement here and there, you could have a top-class strip on your hands.

The features are great and the exclusive photos go with very interesting reports from the TV series.

An episode guide to the four series would go down very well, interested?

The smaller articles are very interesting, but throw "Vilas Gags" right out of the magazine, it does not fit in.

You've got an excellent book on your hands, keep up the good work, and until Avon sells cosmetics,

Make mine Marvel,

Mark English,  
Carshalton,  
Surrey.

*Your criticisms of "Mission of Mercy" have been passed on to the Scriptwriter for his perusal. If you think you could do a better job why not try and write a script yourself? Provided it gets past Vere Lorrimer you'll be in business.*

As an ardent follower of Blake's 7 may I congratulate you on the advent of your magazine, albeit a bit late. I have waited 4 years for such a magazine focussing on the original, exciting and thoroughly enjoyable BBC production 'Blake's 7'.

I was delighted to see a generous splattering of photos, some colour too, and well produced. The film review is a good idea, as is the book review. These plus all the other articles, and a well illustrated comic strip go to make up a great magazine for all Blake's 7 fans, young and old.

I have one chief criticism however. I was disappointed to see the lack of coverage of the original 'Blake's 7, especially Blake himself. I can only hope that future issues will carry features on Blake and his original companions.

Thanks for a great magazine, keep it up.

Emily Brooks,  
Flockton,  
Yorkshire.

*Thanks for your comments, Emily. Regarding your request for features on past series I can tell you that we are currently raiding the BBC archives and as a result should be able to bring you what you want very soon.*

BLAKES 7

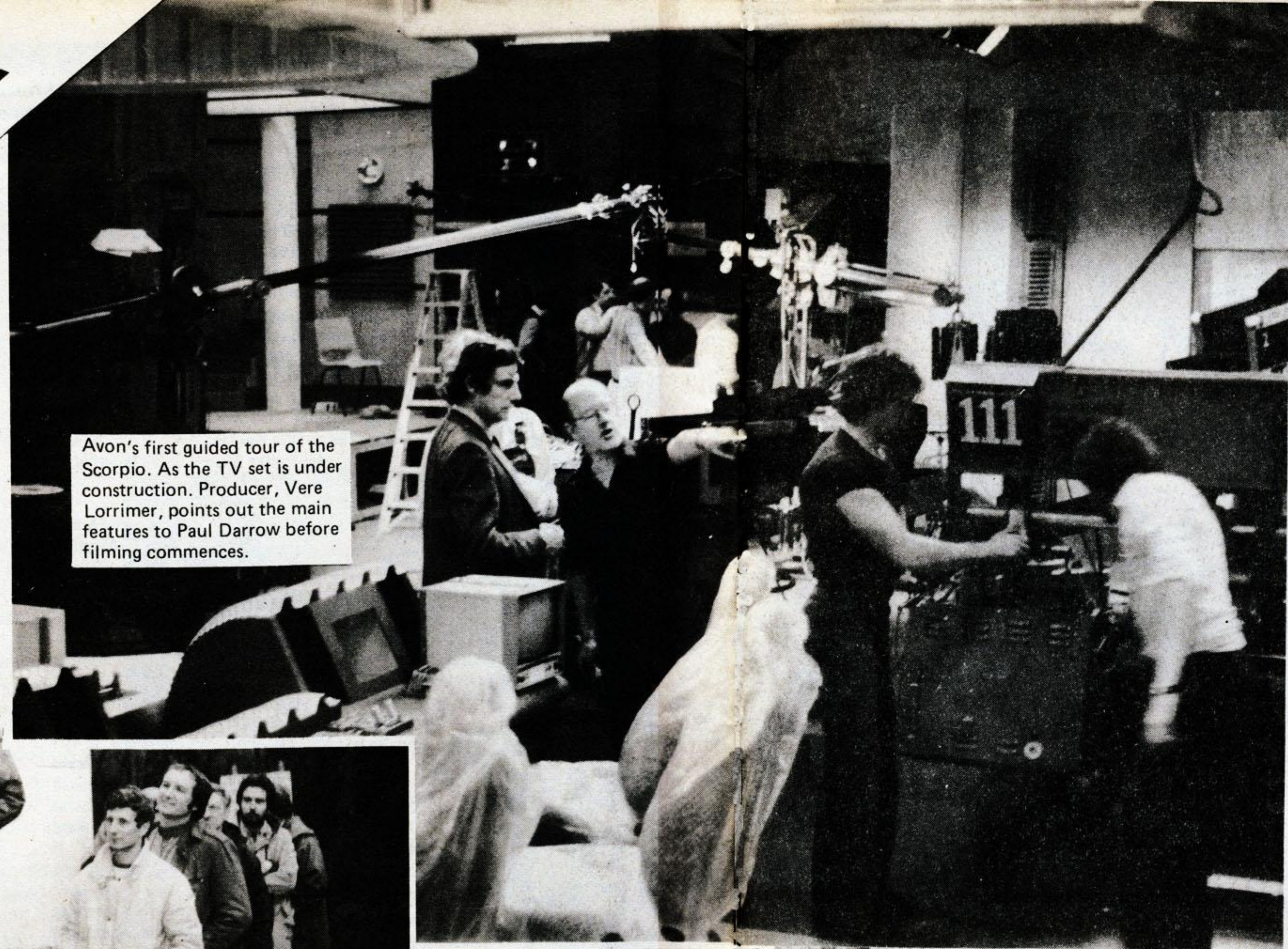
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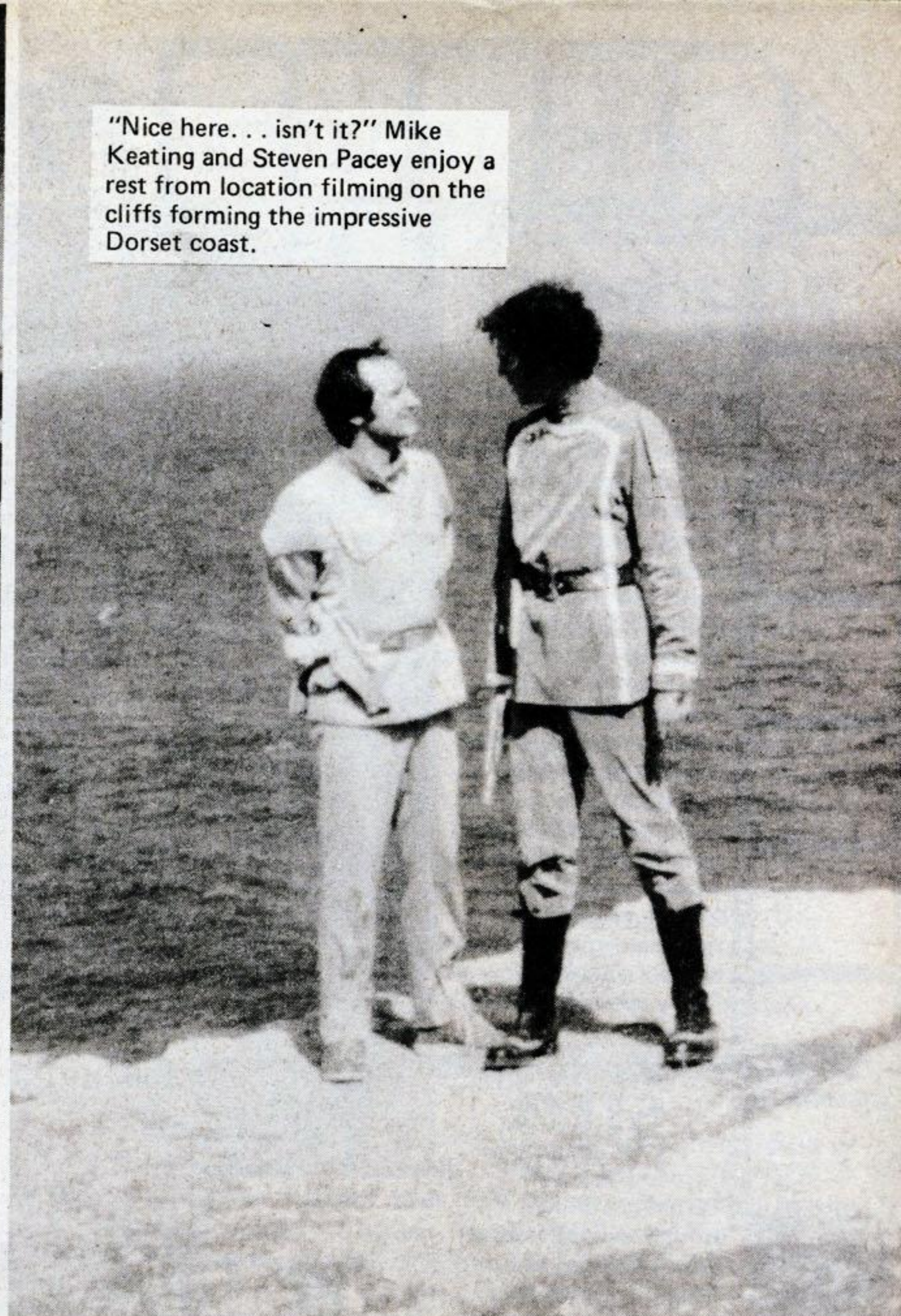
**BLAZES 7**

# SCRAPBOOK

Moments from the recording of the series — or — the sort of things which never appear on your TV screens!

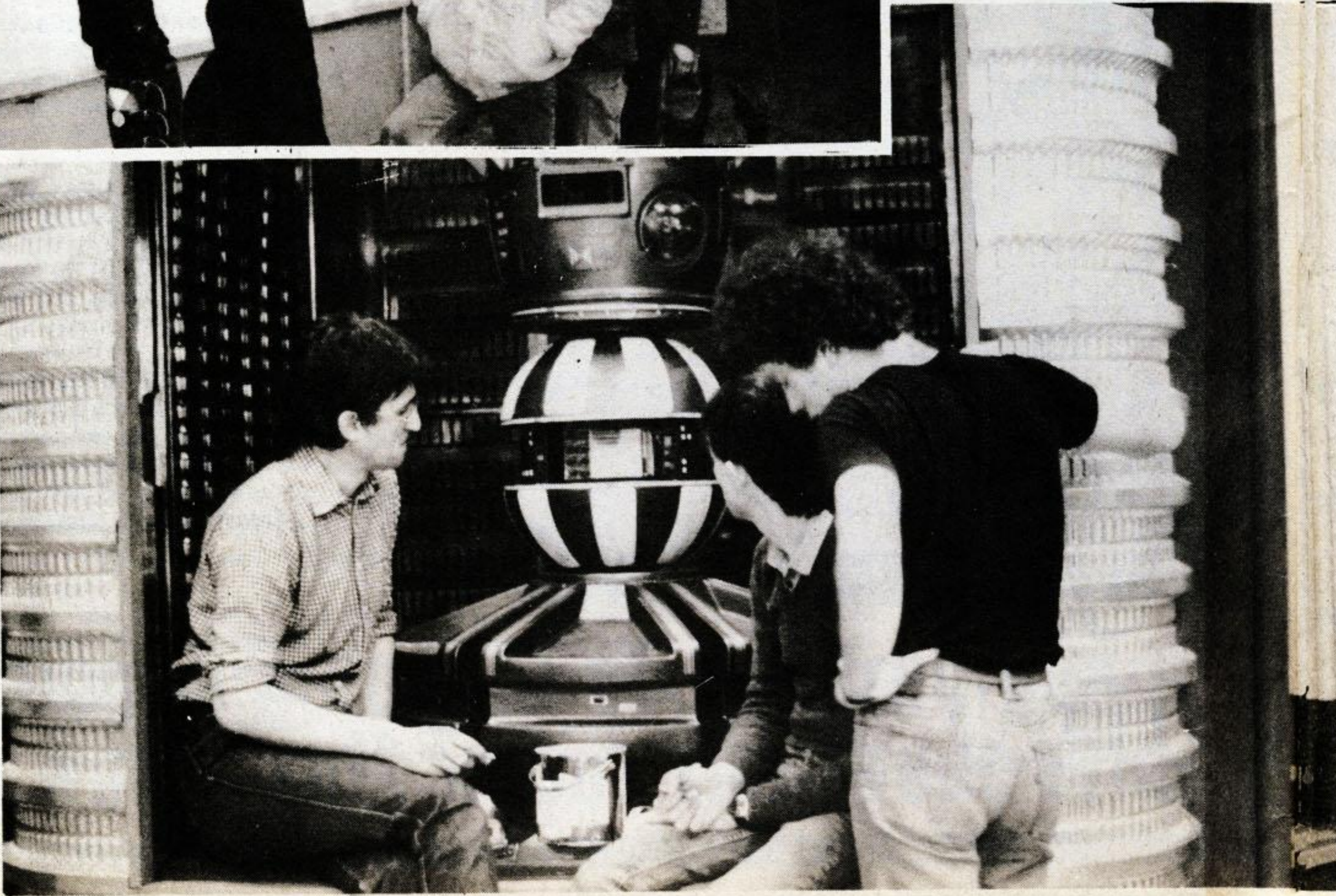


Avon's first guided tour of the Scorpio. As the TV set is under construction. Producer, Vere Lorrimer, points out the main features to Paul Darrow before filming commences.



"Nice here... isn't it?" Mike Keating and Steven Pacey enjoy a rest from location filming on the cliffs forming the impressive Dorset coast.

On location even the stars have to queue for their lunch from the mobile canteen. Paul Darrow enjoys a joke with the chef... about the size of the portions perhaps?



A lick of paint never hurt any computer! Visual effects man, Andy Lazell (left) and his associates prepare Slave for his TV debut.



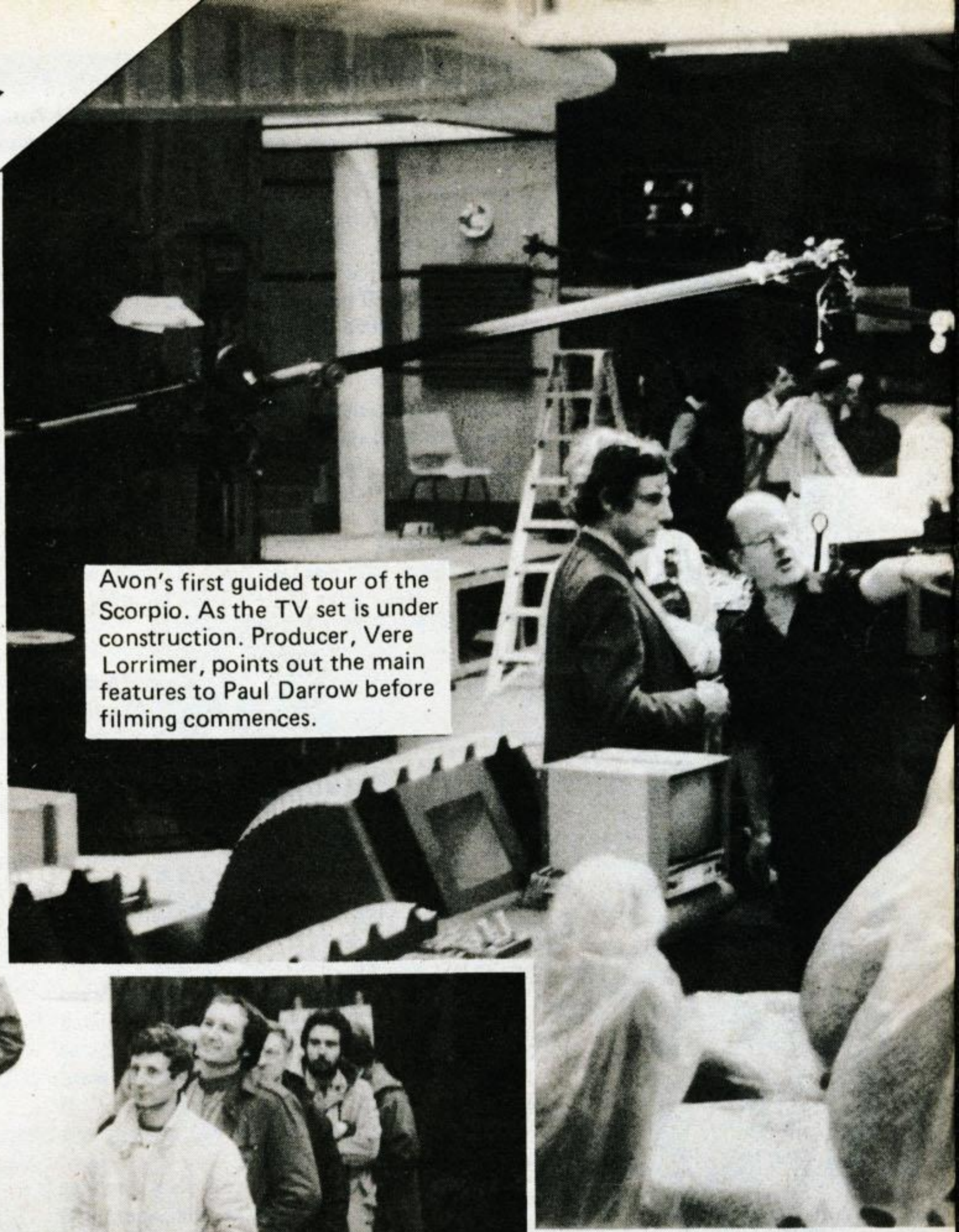
A dutiful bow from guest artist, Roy Kinnear, as he acknowledges a splendid performance from Paul Darrow.



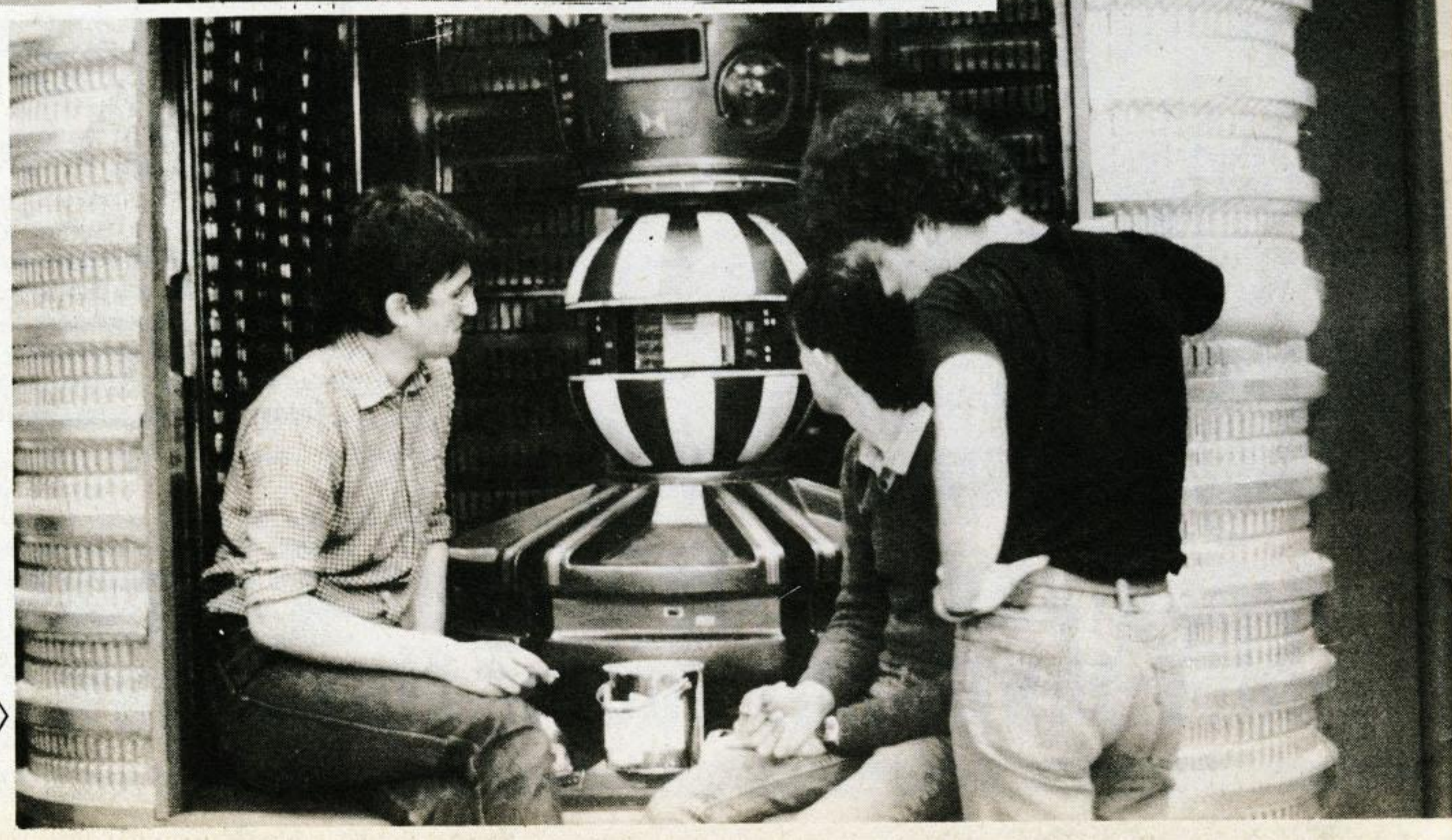
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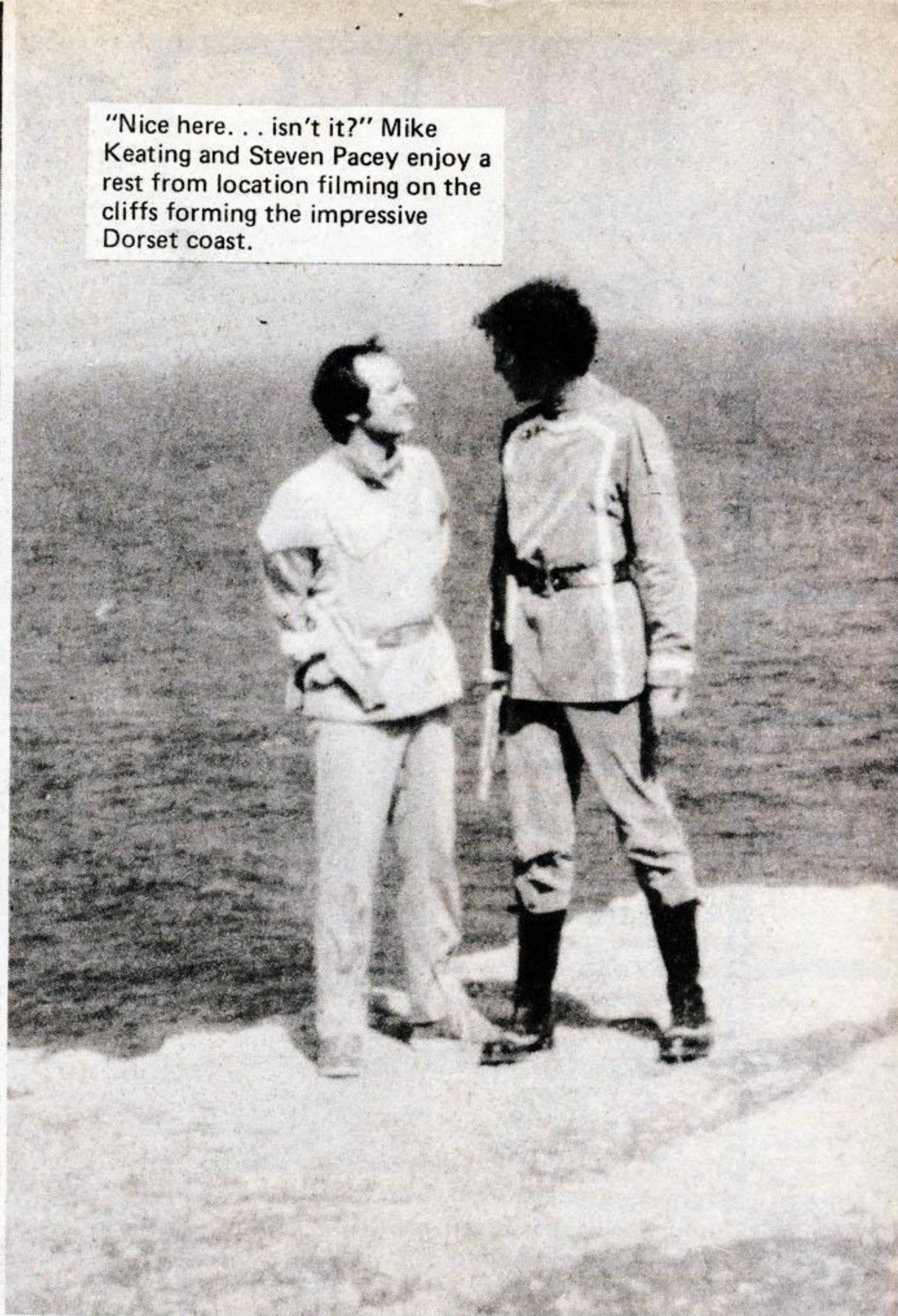
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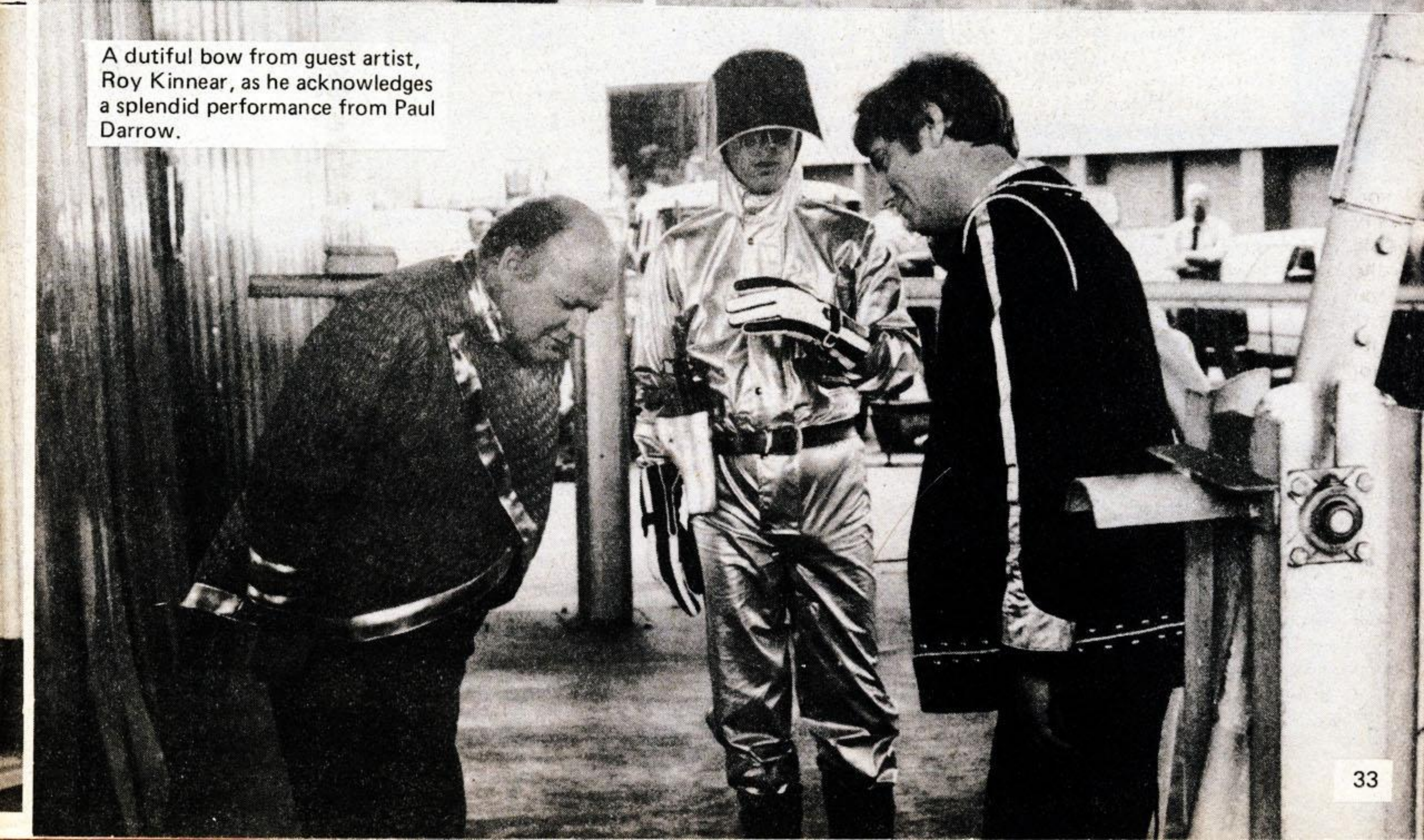




"Nice here. . . isn't it?" Mike Keating and Steven Pacey enjoy a rest from location filming on the cliffs forming the impressive Dorset coast.



A dutiful bow from guest artist, Roy Kinnear, as he acknowledges a splendid performance from Paul Darrow.





# film review

Return of the son  
of...  
**ZORRO!**

The Zorro legend has been around on film almost as long as the cinema has been in existence. The various productions that have graced the screen have always been good clean fun and, although this latest offering — **ZORRO THE GAY BLADE** — is a trifle more tongue-in-cheek, it promises to equal its forerunners in exciting stunts and unlikely plots!

Somehow, though, it doesn't really matter whether you can believe what's happening or not — just sit back in the seat and enjoy every swash and buckle!

## **MAN of STEEL**

Something to look forward to this Christmas will be a double bill, at selected ABC cinemas, of both Superman movies! If you haven't seen either one of them, then give your eyes a chance this time around — if you have seen them, then we're sure you'll want another look!



# TEASERS...

*During the endless phone calls we make every month to track down forthcoming new releases, we sometimes pick up little snippets of info on film projects which are either planned or in production but not yet ready for release. Some of these serve to tease OUR appetite enough to want to know more, so we've decided to share our suffering — whenever we hear some juicy rumour of piece of news we'll print it here, in TEASERS: CLINT EASTWOOD now filming FIREFOX in which he plays the role of NATO pilot charged with stealing a top secret Soviet aircraft. The book was one of the best aviation novels of the decade, and if the flying sequences can be done properly then it's going to be very good indeed. CONAN THE BARBARIAN is now being filmed, or we should say HAS BEEN filmed. Production wrapped up in September of this year and the finishing touches are now being applied to the whole project. Arnold Swartzenegger plays the massively muscled man-mountain in what promises to be a punchy and powerful production.*

*Tell you more when we hear it! SWORD AND SORCERY is the theme for another new movie — from a production firm you wouldn't believe — more next month!*

*NEW SF movie from the man who brought you ALIEN — watch this page!*

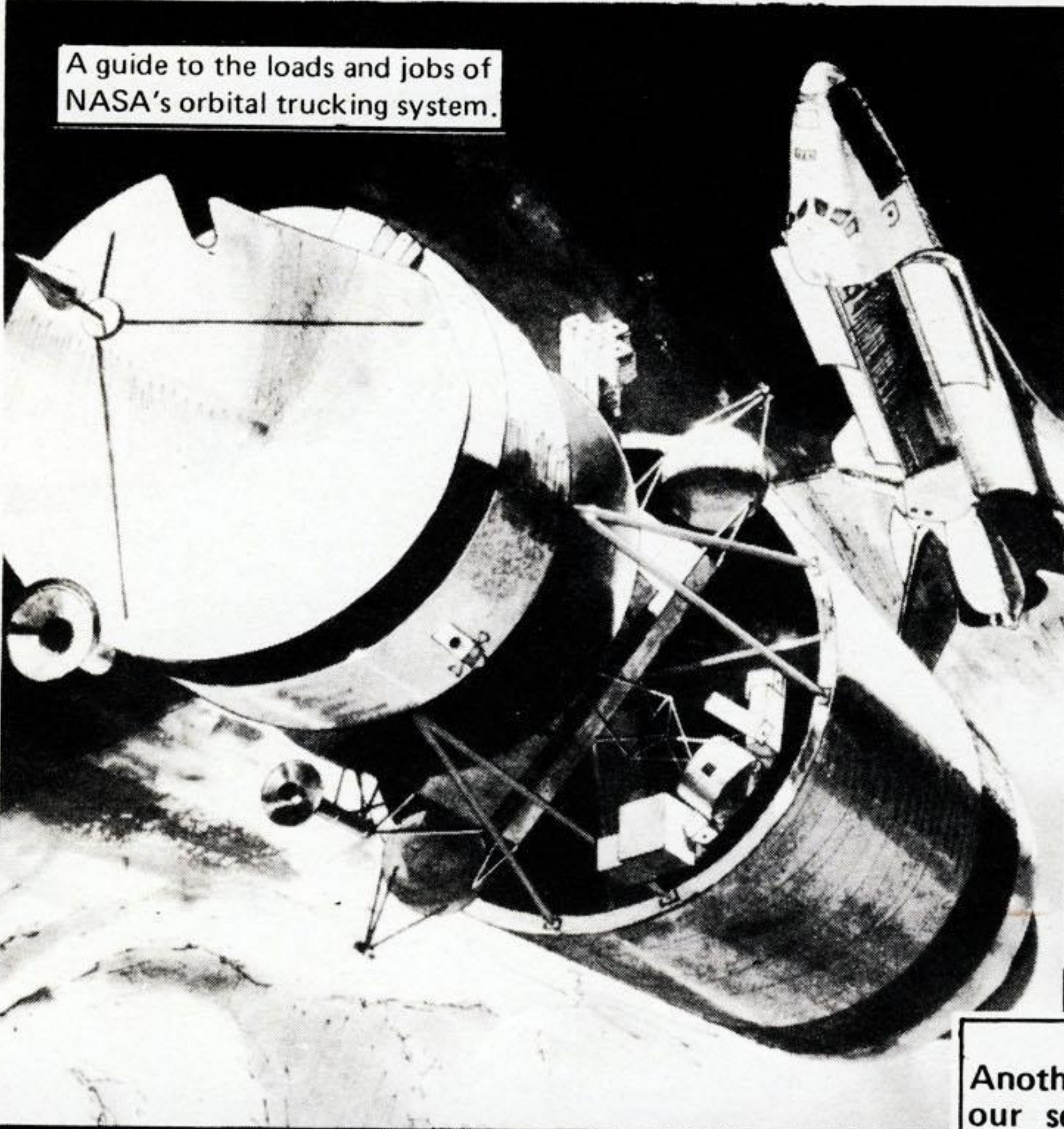




# SHUTTLE/1

## SATELLITE LAUNCH/ MAINTENANCE

A guide to the loads and jobs of  
NASA's orbital trucking system.

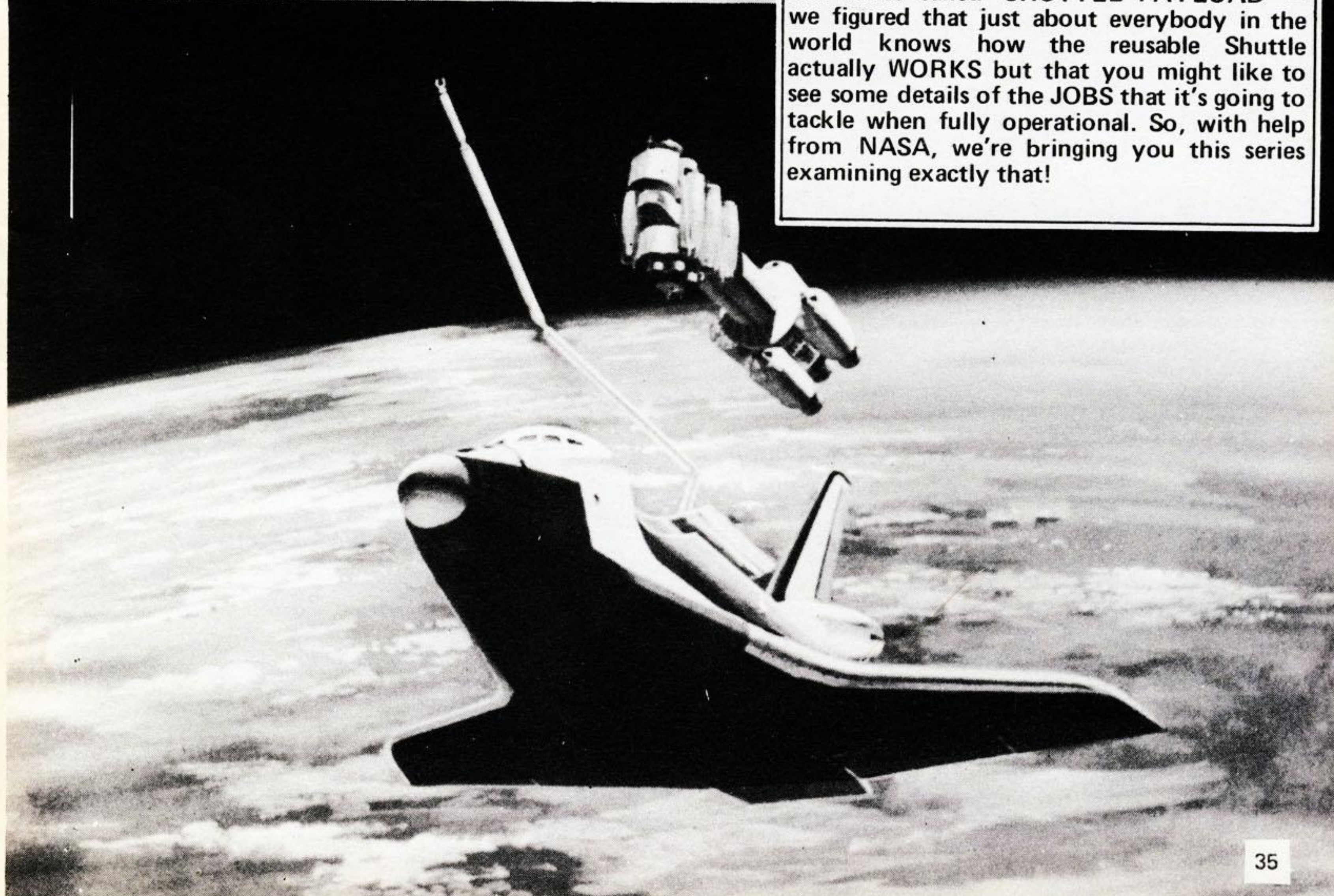


With the Shuttle system we will, for the first time, be able to repair orbiting satellites without having to bring them out of orbit to do so. In the past the cost of bringing down a malfunctioning satellite has been so great that it has been cheaper to build a new one and forget about the old one altogether.

This picture shows Shuttle with its manipulator arm extended to retrieve a large satellite in need of repair. If the technicians on the vessel feel that the module is beyond repair, they can easily haul it back to Earth for major surgery.

Another major task for Shuttle will be to haul deep space probes into orbit where their own propulsion systems can drive them out to their incredible destinations. Here you see a modular package designed to observe the behaviour of the sun from very close up. Its power system utilises part of a Shuttle main tank. The incredible journey for this craft would take it first out to Jupiter for a slingshot orbit back towards the sun's poles.

Another new feature for you this issue is our series called 'SHUTTLE PAYLOAD' — we figured that just about everybody in the world knows how the reusable Shuttle actually WORKS but that you might like to see some details of the JOBS that it's going to tackle when fully operational. So, with help from NASA, we're bringing you this series examining exactly that!



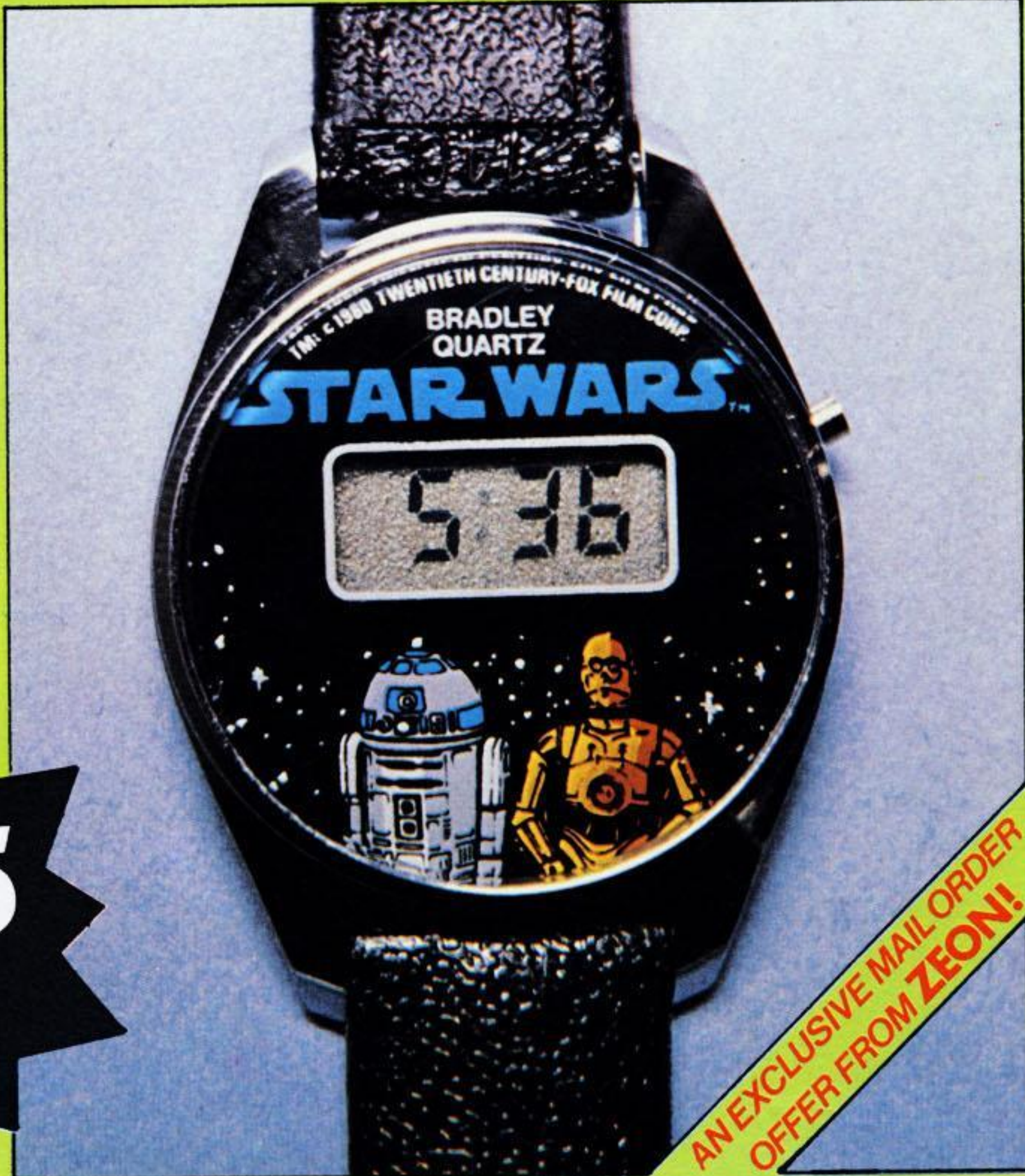


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