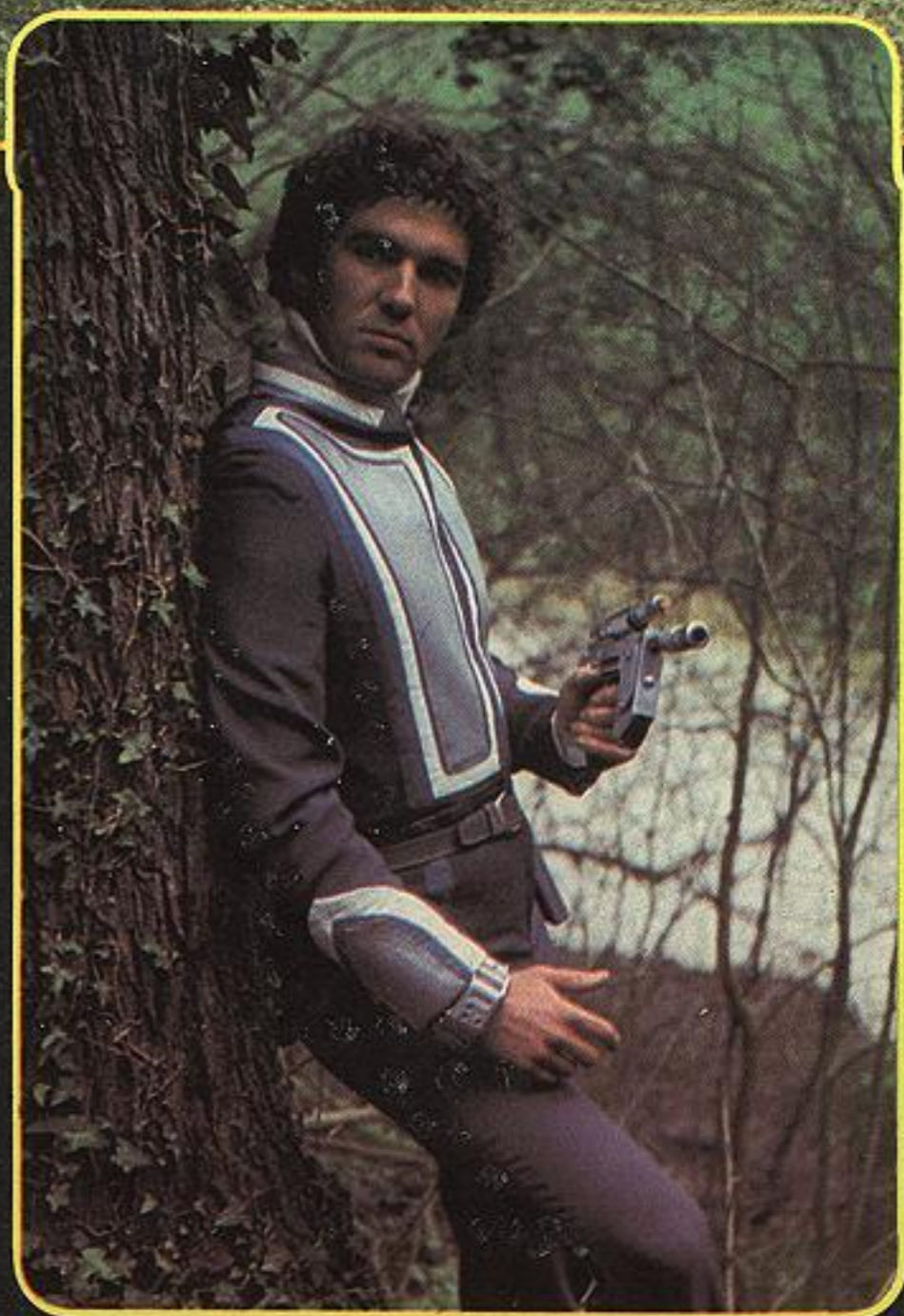
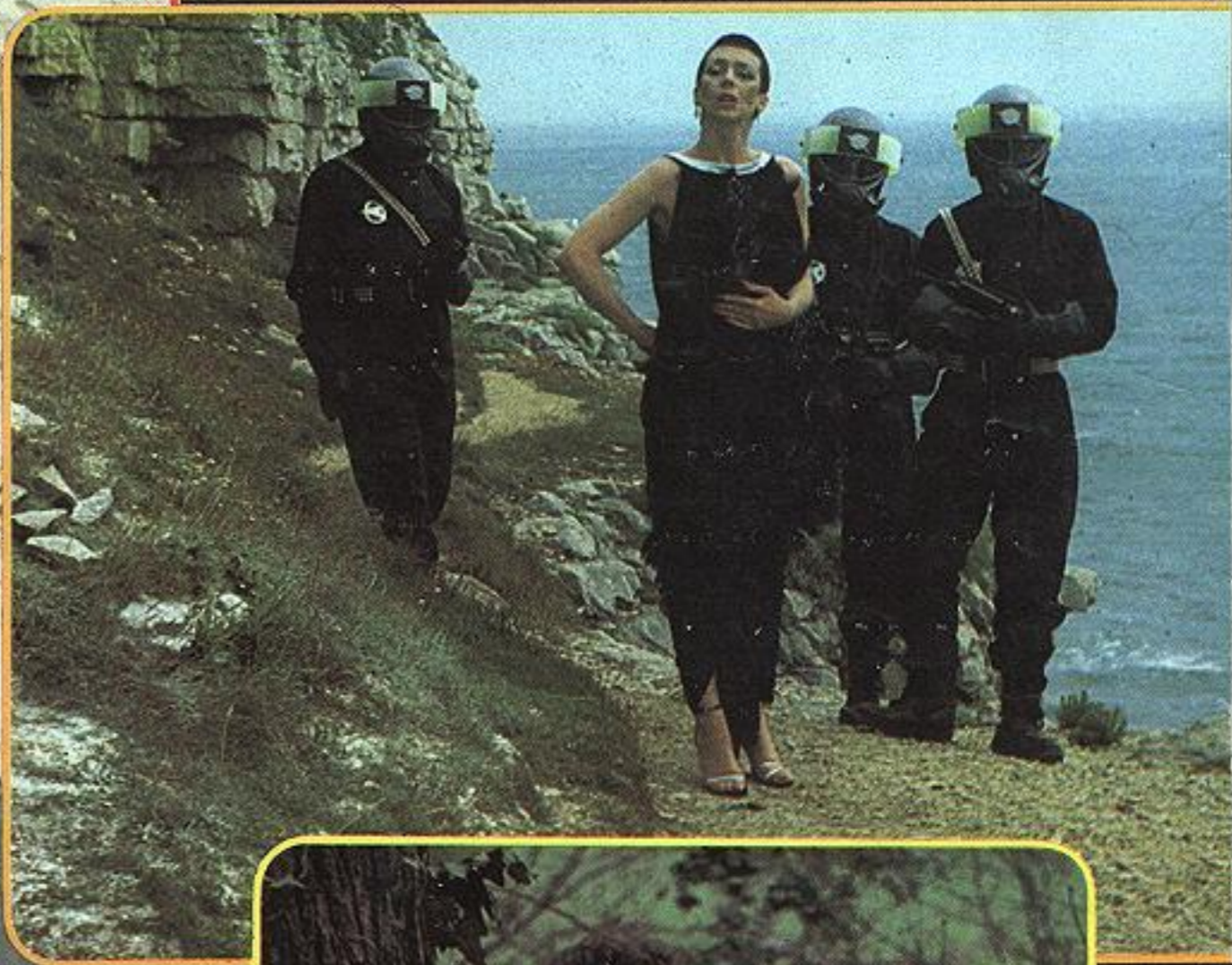
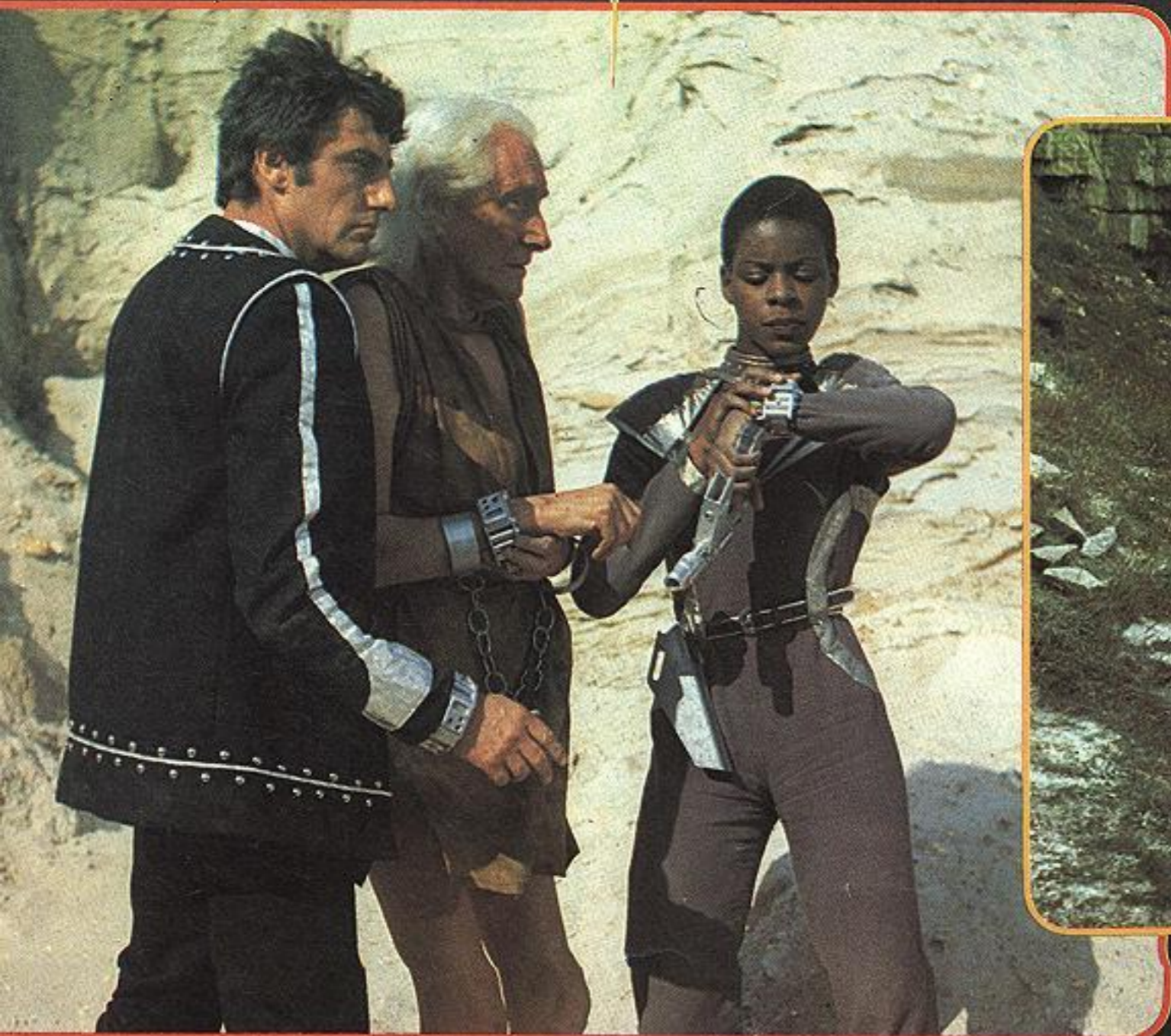


*Perry Nakions*

# BLAKES 7

A MARVEL  
MONTHLY

NO. 15 DEC. 45P



**THRILLING SPACE ACTION  
WITH AVON AND HIS CREW...**

**DANGER LOOMS WHEN  
SERVALAN APPEARS!**

**ANOTHER FANTASTIC  
PULL-OUT POSTER...**

**THIS MONTH TARRANT!**

# £11 CASH BACK!

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**DURACELL®** lasts up to 6 times longer than ordinary batteries

# BLAKES 7

Managing Editor: Bernie Jaye, Design: Floron Florenzo

Consultant Editor and photographs: Ken Armstrong

## FEATURES

**SCRAP BOOK** ..... P.4

A photo-feature to surprise you.

**FAN SCENE** ..... P.22

A listing of all the fan clubs with some extra info about them.

**MIKE KEATING – MAN OF MANY PARTS** ..... P.26

Mike Keating talks to Ken Armstrong.

## COMIC STRIP

**OVERBOARD** ..... P.11

Vila finds himself adrift in space!

## TEXT STORY

**PLAGUE: PART II** ..... P.33

Can the crew of Scorpio counter the plague and deal with Servalan?

## LETTERS

**POINTS OF VIEW** ..... P.25

We received a letter from Vere Lorrimer, the producer of B-7. See what he has to say.

## PIN-UPS

**CALLY** ..... P.16

**TARRANT** ..... P.18

**VILA** ..... P.21





**MORE CANDID SHOTS  
OF YOUR FAVOURITE  
TV STARS FROM THE  
OTHER SIDE OF THE  
CAMERA.**

Remember the scene in 'SAND' in which Tarrant and Servalan enjoyed a meal together. On the menu that day was fresh salmon . . . no cheap props for the BBC. After two 'takes' . . . and two meals . . . both Jaqueline Pearce and Steven Pacey had seen enough of fresh salmon to last them a long time.

Take a close look! Paul Darrow is AVON — right down to the soles of his boots. The tread on his footwear looks like it owes much to the design of the tyre namesake!

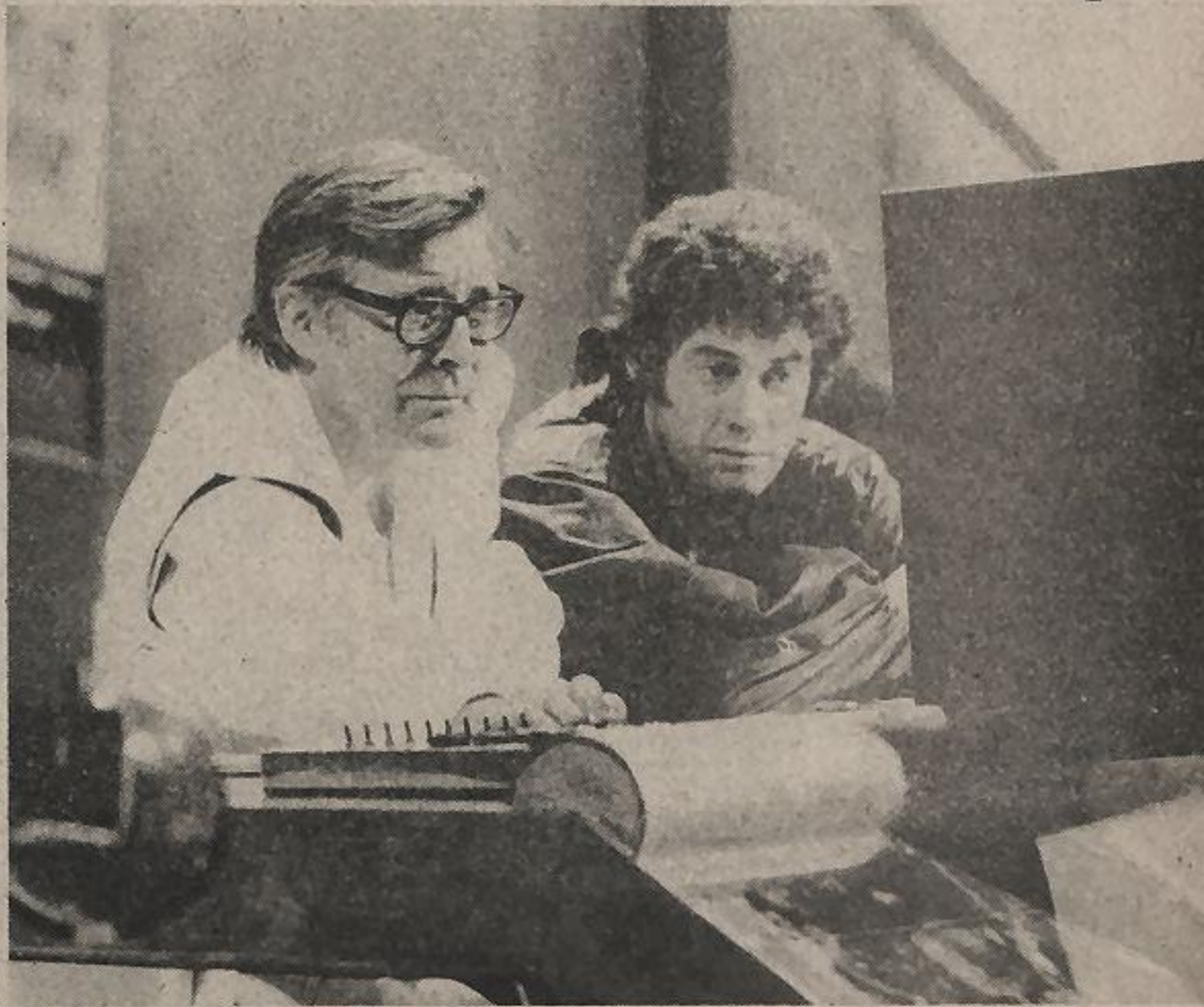


During 1978, Michael Halsey and Gillian Bailey, as Varon and Ravella, appeared in 'THE WAY BACK', by Terry Nation, first episode of BLAKE'S 7 ever shown.

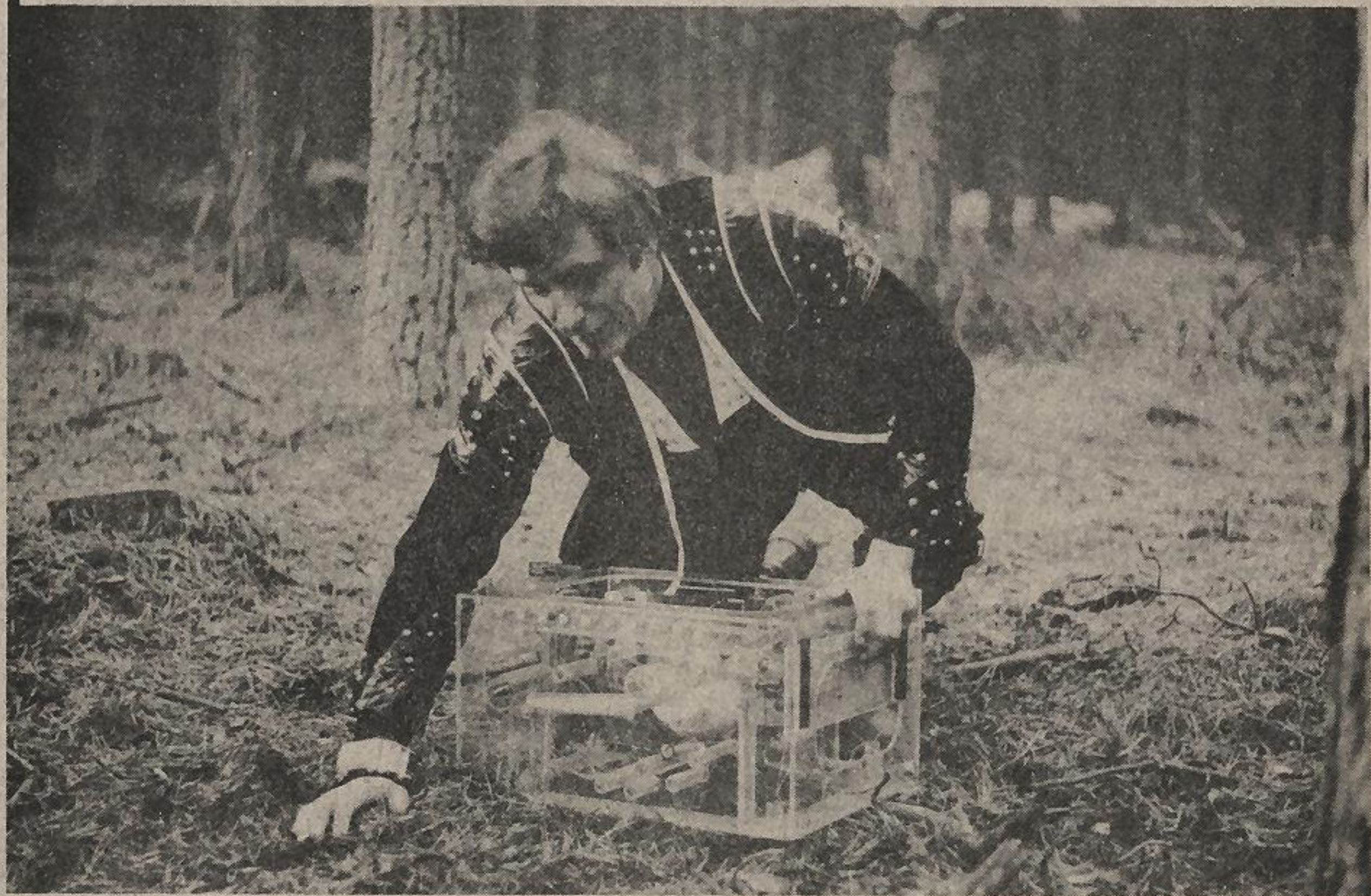


More fresh food on the menu. This time, however, Gareth Thomas was faced not with fresh salmon but spit roasted rabbit. "Not bad", was the verdict, "even if the knife was blunt!"

Episode 7 of the first series saw Paul Daneman as Doctor Bellfrier with Gareth Thomas as Blake in the story entitled 'KILLER'.



# SCRAPBOOK



↑  
"He's stopped flashing!" As the camera starts to roll during filming for the final episode of the series, Paul Darrow notices Orac has ceased to function. The remedy? A new set of batteries, a quick check of his wires and Orac is as good as new.

←  
A unique moment in BLAKE'S 7. With a loaded gun in his hand and Servalan in his grasp — Tarrant fires the wrong way! This, however, was in the nature of things during 'SAND' by Tannith Lee when everything was not as it seemed.

Soolin and Zeeona take over at the helm of Scorpio. Not a taxing job in the slightest by the looks of it. Everything under control — ship shape in fact!



A brief lull during rehearsal for 'WARLORDS' allowed time for appraisal of the silverware provided by the props department. And, just for the record, the cups were silver!



# AT LAST!

YOUR CHANCE TO OWN PHOTO-GRAPHS OF YOUR TV HEROES!

## SMASH HIT!

**BLAKE'S 7 MAGAZINE — FANTASTIC PHOTO OFFER!**

*Your own personalised package for just £7.00 (incl. p&p.)* After popular demand from you, readers of this magazine, we are delighted to offer you the chance to purchase packs of photographs of the BLAKE'S 7 cast and the ships and equipment used during the smash-hit tv series.

No fan collection will be complete without these special pictures taken during the filming of the fourth series. So don't delay, write today for your own special collection of unique photographs from BLAKE'S 7 MAGAZINE!

### THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

We are proud to offer you two photo packs, each as unique as you decide. The offer is split into four sections allowing you as wide a choice of the available photographs as possible. Once you have decided which of the two black and white photo packs you wish to buy you may select any one of the colour photographs from the selection shown on p.10. In addition, you may select, for a further fee, any black and white photograph printed in any issue of BLAKE'S 7 magazine providing you clearly specify which issue, page number and brief description of the picture you wish to buy.

Read carefully the instructions below and complete the attached order form. If you do not wish to cut the coupon from your magazine, please make an exact copy of the form as shown here before filling in the details of your order.



### THE PHOTO PACKS

#### Pack 1

Pack 1 contains one 10" x 8" print in black and white of each the following:

AVON, TARRANT, VILA, SOOLIN, DAYNA, SERVALAN.

#### Plus

A 10" x 8" colour print from the selection displayed overleaf. (Please remember the price of a photo pack includes only one colour print of your choice. Further colour prints may be purchased separately for an extra charge).







**Pack 2**

Pack 2 contains one 10" x 8" print in black and white of each of the following: SCORPIO, LIBERATOR, SLAVE, ORAC, BLAKE, THE SCORPIO CREW.

Plus

One 10" x 8" colour print from the selection displayed overleaf. (Again the price includes only one colour print of your choice).

**READER'S CHOICE PHOTOGRAPHS**

As mentioned before, should you wish to buy copies of photographs used in the magazine but not listed in the offer displayed here, please complete the appropriate box of the order form stating the issue number of the magazine, the page number on which the picture appears, a brief description of the picture (so as to avoid confusion and supply of the wrong picture) then add the price of the total number of desired pictures to the cost of the photo pack offer.

**ADDITIONAL ORDERS**

Should you wish to purchase more than one colour print from the selection displayed overleaf, please clearly print the letter code of the photo(s) in the appropriate space on the form and remember to add the price of extra prints to the price of your selected photo pack

Please remember, to take advantage of the magazine picture selection offer; you must first buy one of the two photo packs on offer.

**COLOUR  
SELECTION  
ON NEXT PAGE**

This offer applies to readers of the magazine resident in the United Kingdom. For readers resident in the rest of the world, please add 20% to the purchase price to cover postage and packing.

Send your order to:  
Blake's 7 Photo Pack Offer, Marvel Comics, Jadwin House, 205-211 Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2JU.

Please make cheques/PO's payable to Marvel Comics Ltd., and allow six weeks for delivery from receipt of your order.

To: Blake's 7 Photo Pack Offer, Marvel Comics, Jadwin House, 205-211 Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2JU.

Please send the following:- (tick appropriate box)

Photo Pack 1  @ £7.00

Photo Pack 2  @ £7.00

My chosen colour photograph is: . . . . . (write letter code of photo)

Please send additional colour photographs @ £1.60 each  
(write letter code(s) of photo(s) here . . . . .)

Please send Readers Choice photograph(s) @ £1.00, as stated below

Issue No.	Page No.	Description of picture

Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

I enclose cheque/PO No. . . . . value £ . . . . .

Signed . . . . .

(If under 16 this space to be countersigned by parent or guardian)



# Choose your colour print(s) ★ from here ★



A. Group shot in front of Slave.



B. Group shot with Orac.



C. Group shot at flight controls.



D. Teleport trio Vila, Dayna, Soolin.



E. Avon with gun.



F. Avon at Controls.



G. Tarrant in close-up.



H. Tarrant standing.



I. Vila with gun creeping.



J. Vila smiling.



K. Soolin standing, smiling.



L. Soolin with gun.



M. Dayna with gun.



N. Dayna smiling.



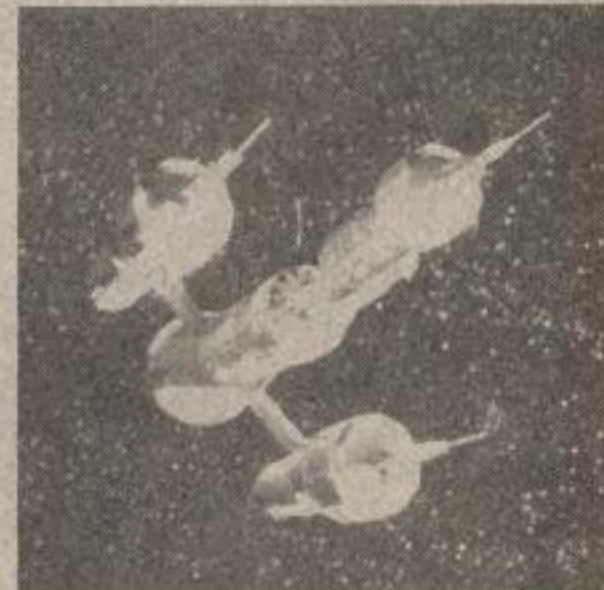
O. Blake and Avon.



P. Slave.



Q. Scorpio.



R. Liberator.

# Overboard

SECTOR FIFTEEN—STAR SYSTEM CRYNO  
CALLUS—A SHATTERING IMPACT ROCKS  
SCORPIO...

ALERT—ALERT  
OUTER HALL  
PENETRATED!

SLAVE—YOU BUNGLING  
MACHINE—WHAT THE  
DEVIL HAPPENED? WHY  
WEREN'T WE WARNED?

I... I'M DEEPLY SORRY  
MASTER, BUT NO DEBRIS  
REGISTERED ON MY  
SCANNERS. I DON'T KNOW  
HOW IT HAPPENED.

ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE'S  
HOLDING BUT NOT FOR LONG  
THERE'S STILL SOME DEBRIS  
WEDGED IN THE HULL.

THEN WE'D BETTER  
REMOVE IT. GET YOUR  
SPACE SUIT, VILA.  
YOU'RE COMING  
WITH ME!

Y... YOU DON'T WANT  
ME OUT THERE. I'M  
NO GOOD WORKING  
IN A SUIT.

YOU EITHER PUT IT  
ON AND HELP ME  
OUTSIDE... OR WE  
ALL HAVE TO WEAR  
SUITS WHEN SCORPIO'S  
ATMOSPHERE IS  
SUCKED OUT. GET  
DRESSED!

THERE'S THE  
PROBLEM. LET'S  
GET TO WORK.

GOOD GRIEF! HOW  
COME SLAVE NEVER  
SPOTED SOMETHING  
THAT BIG—AND THERE'S  
MORE ALL ROUND US.

THERE'S OUR ANSWER  
VILA. THE SHIP, OR WHAT-  
EVER IT WAS, MUST HAVE  
BEEN HIT BY RANTOGEN  
CHARGED METEORITES.

ABSORBS RADAR  
WAVES, DOESN'T IT  
AH, WELL—ONE GOOD  
HEAVE...

THAT INSTANT...

IT'S  
COMING...

VILA—LOOK  
OUT! MORE  
METEORITES..!

AAAAAH!

VILA—HOLD TIGHT! WE'RE BREAKING AWAY...!

SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO THEM THEY'RE DRIFTING FROM THE SHIP!

WE'VE GOT TO HELP THEM BEFORE THEY GET TOO FAR! THE TELEPORT!

NO CHANCE, DAYNA. NEITHER AVON NOR VILA HAVE A BRACELET. WE CAN'T TELEPORT THEM BACK.

TRYING TO FIX THEIR TRACK IN SPACE IS TRICKY. MORE THAN A FEW SECONDS OUT THERE AND WE COULD LOSE YOUR LOCATION AS WELL!

GIVE ME TEN SECONDS—NO MORE—THEN REVERSE THE TELEPORT. I'LL HAVE THE BRACELETS ON THEM IN THAT TIME.

THEN I SHALL JUST HAVE TO TELEPORT OUT TO THEM WITH THE BRACELETS. SET THE CO-ORDINATES!

GIVEN MOMENTUM BY THE METEORITE IMPACT, AVON AND VILA DRIFTED FURTHER AND FASTER FROM SCORPIO...

KEEP A TIGHT GRIP, VILA! THEY'LL THINK OF A WAY TO REACH US!

C... CAN'T HOLD MUCH LONGER. WRENCHED ARM ON IMPACT... CAN FEEL VERY LITTLE WITH THE OTHER...

JUST THEN...

LOOKS LIKE HELP IS ARRIVING!



QUICKLY, PUT THE BRACELET ON. ONLY TEN SECONDS...

I... I CAN'T HOLD ON...



D... DRIFTING AWAY...! HELP ME...!

I'LL THROW THE BRACELET VILA. CATCH IT!

WITH AGONISING SLOWNESS THE BRACELET DRIFTED IN VILA'S DIRECTION...



G... GOT TO REACH IT...



C... CAN'T MAKE IT...!



TEN SECONDS UP. TELEPORTING NOW!

NO, TARRANT WAIT...!

DAYNA'S CRY CAME TOO LATE...

I... I'M ON MY OWN AND DRIFTING FASTER TOWARDS THE PLANET GRAVITY'S PULLING ME DOWN! THIS IS IT... I'M FINISHED...!



MEANWHILE...



YOU MADE IT - BUT WHERE'S VILA?

YOU PULLED US BACK TOO SOON HE'S STRANDED IN SPACE THANKS TO YOU!

IT WASN'T TARRANT'S FAULT!



YOU SOUND LIKE YOU DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT VILA - WELL I DO! I'M GOING BACK AFTER HIM!

NO! IT'S BAD ENOUGH LOSING ONE CREW MEMBER WITHOUT THE REST BEHAVING LIKE LEMMINGS!



WE CAN'T STAND BY AND WATCH VILA DIE!

I HAVE NO FRIENDS! BUT VILA COULD STILL BE OF USE TO THIS SHIP IF HE CAN BE SAVED. GET ME AN ASTROCORD.

SURELY THE LIFE OF A FRIEND IS WORTH THE RISK!



REDUCE SPEED WHEN I START TRAILING BEHIND SCORPIO, THEN FOLLOW MY COMMANDS FOR FLIGHT APPROACH TOWARDS VILA.

NOW I KNOW YOU'RE MAD! VILA'S CLOSING WITH THE PLANET AT ONE HECK OF A RATE. HE'LL BURN-UP IN THE ATMOSPHERE IN MINUTES!



AND SO WILL I UNLESS YOU FOLLOW MY DIRECTIONS TO THE LETTER. NOW DO IT! THAT'S AN ORDER!

AT THAT MOMENT...

I KNEW I'D DIE ONE DAY— BUT NOT LIKE THIS! I HOPE IT'S GOING TO BE QUICK!



TH- THE HEAT...! IT... IT'S STARTING. CURSE YOU, AVON! YOU'VE FINALLY KILLED ME!



THEN, OUT OF THE CORNER OF HIS EYE, VILA SAW AN UNBELIEVABLE SIGHT...

UH? I MUST BE DREAMING!



A... AVON... I THOUGHT...!

DON'T THINK, VILA IT ONLY COMPLICATES THINGS. TAKE US UP TARRANT!



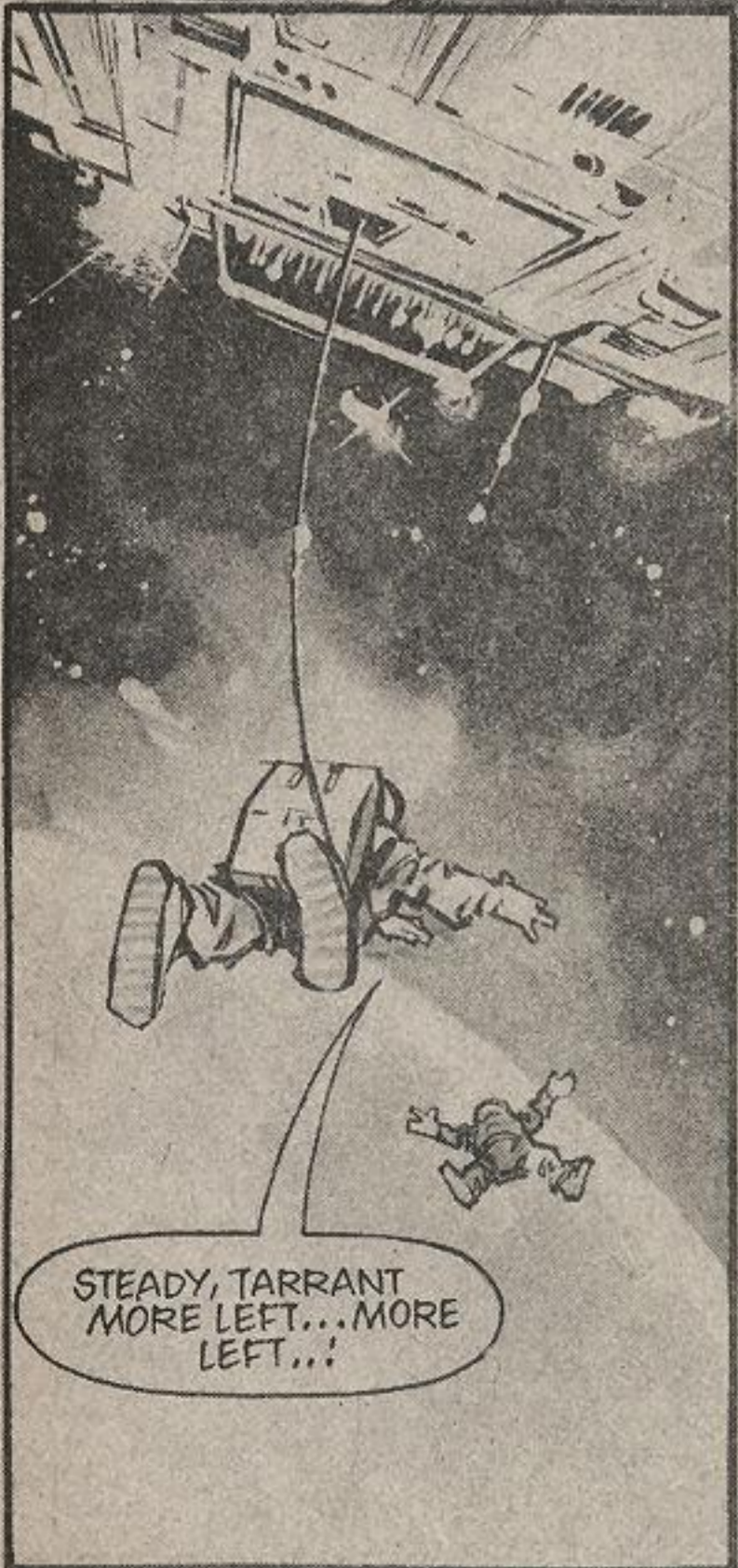
*Justin '82*

WE THOUGHT WE'D LOST YOU, VILA! IT'S GREAT TO HAVE YOU BACK!

AVON RISKED HIS LIFE FOR ME. I OWE HIM A LOT!

YOU OWE ME THE PRICE OF A BRACLET. NEXT TIME CATCH IT!

STEADY, TARRANT MORE LEFT... MORE LEFT...!

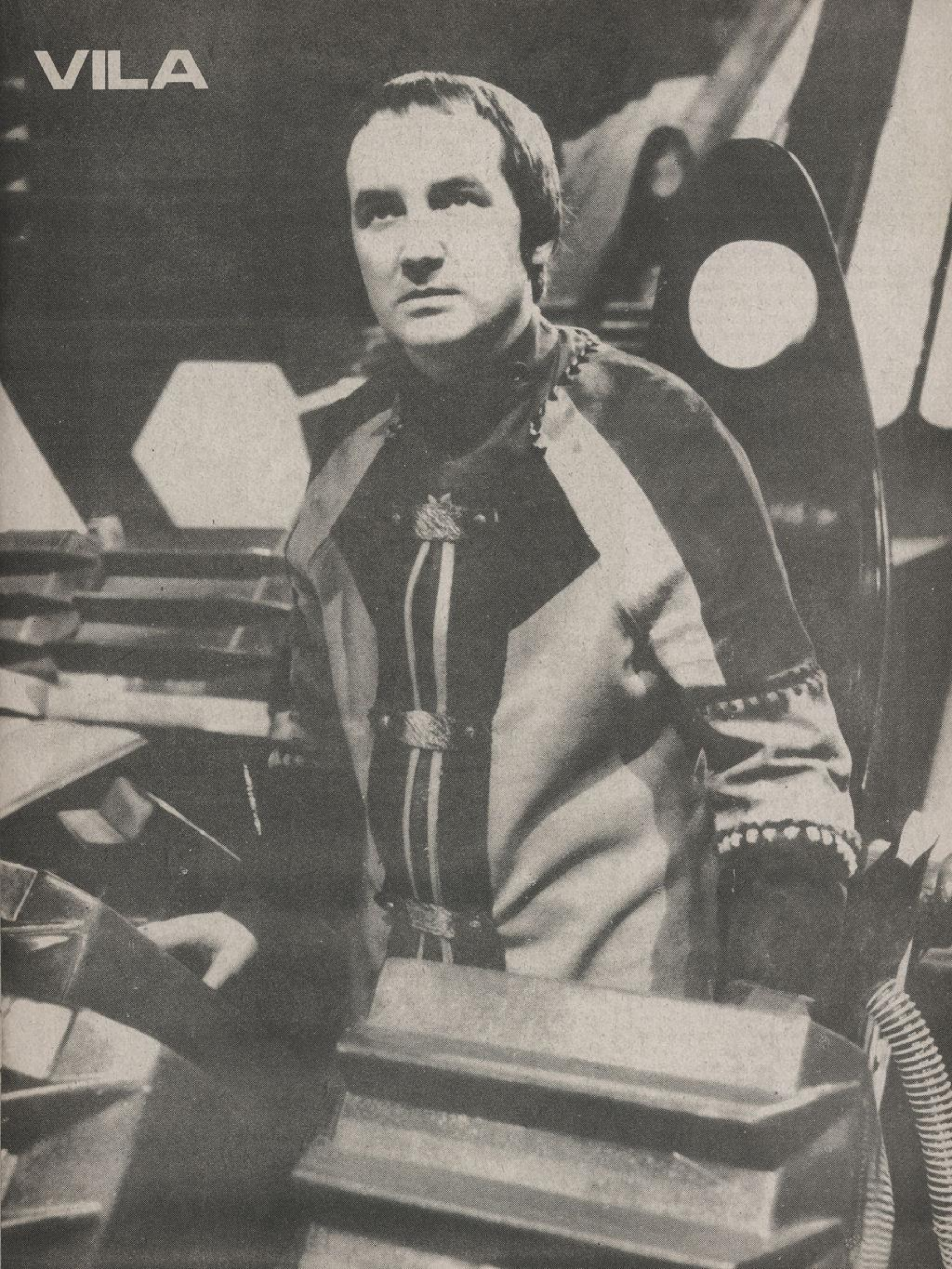


**CALLY**





VILA



# FANSCENE

Such has been your response to our feature about the BLAKE'S 7 convention featured in last month's issue we felt it only right to devote some space (get the pun?) to those involved in producing BLAKE'S 7 fan material and to review other publications available.

At the time of going to press, the details given below are correct. Should any of those mentioned, either personal addresses or publication titles, be incorrect, we will ensure the information is updated in future issues.

Now, for all you real fans of the series, read on . . . . .

★ **Name:** ANALOGUE

**Address:** BM Box 2874, London WC1N 3XX.

**Comments:** A social club for all Blake's Seven fans in their 20's, 30's and 40's and who live in London. Not a fan club – fees cover contact with other London members with whom you can organise get-togethers or arrange to meet people individually. Annual fee is £7. Any London based fans feeling affluent should write for further details. *Do not* send any money with enquiry.

**Name:** THE BORED WITHOUT BLAKE COMMITTEE (Known as the BBC!).

**Address:** Miss Deborah Walsh, 1 Tufts Street, Malden, MA02148, USA.

**Comments:** First US based Blake's Seven Club. Please write for membership details enclosing 2 IRC's (international reply coupons can be bought in your post office).

Publishes B7 Complex.

**Name:** BLAKE'S SEVEN SWAP AND BUY FAN CLUB.

**Address:** Anthony King, 30 Midlothian Street, Clayton, Manchester, M11 4EP.

**Comments:** No membership fees, no newsletters – the idea is if people write saying what Blake's Seven articles they want and/or want to get rid of and whether they want to sell/buy/swap they will be written to with any information of who is interested.

Also sells stickers.

**Name:** GATHERING

**Address:** Pat Jenkins, 14 Chartwell Close, Church Stretton, Shropshire.

**Comments:** A news and information service for Paul Darrow fans. Run with his help and approval. Send SAE to Pat.

**Name:** HORIZON

**Address:** Pat Thomas, 88A Thornton Avenue, Chiswick, London W4.

**Comments:** Second largest Blake's Seven fan club. Produces four news-





letters a year. Dues are £2.50 plus four large SAE's bearing 42p or 32p postage (these are for the newsletters). For more information, send a SAE to Pat.

Produces the zines, Alternative Seven, Horizon, Oracle, Strangers Among Us, Tarial Cell and The Epic.

**Name:** IMIPAC

**Address:** Chris Clark, 111 Morley Hill, Enfield, Middlesex.

**Comments:** An appreciation society for Avon, Vila, Zen and Orac fans. Also Blake's Seven in general. Write to Chris enclosing a SAE for details.

**Name:** LIBERATOR POPULAR FRONT

**Address:** Audrey Waller, 5 Bledlow House, Capland Street, London NW8.

**Comments:** Largest Blake's Seven fanclub (featured in Radio Times). Dues per year are £2.75 (for which you get four newsletters). Send a SAE to Audrey for more details. Plans to publish Orbit (genzine).

**Name:** SCORPIO'S SEVEN

**Address:** Michael Chambers, 1 Limbrick Avenue, Fairfield, Stockton, Cleveland, TS19 7PZ.

**Comments:** General Blake's Seven fan club. Dues are £1.75 plus 4 SAE's for which members receive a zine on the cast containing photographs and drawings with a special section at the back with the actor's credits plus four newsletters. Various merchandise is available. Send a SAE to Michael for further details.

**Name:** VILAWORLD

**Address:** Yvette Clarke, 83 Clarendon Road, Shirley, Southampton.

**Comments:** Fan club for Vila/Michael Keating fans. Also covers general Blake's Seven. Dues cost £1 per year plus four large SAE's. Send a SAE to Yvette for details. Publishes the zine Interface.

**Name:** ACC (AUTOGRAPH COLLECTING CLUB)

**Address:** David Marcowich, 15 Lochlea Road, Glasgow, G43 2XX.

**Comments:** This club is for Vilaworld members of 15 years and under with an interest in collecting football and TV star autographs. It's run by David who's

11 years old and lives in Scotland. There's no fee, but 4 stamps to cover postage will be appreciated. Send SAE to David for more details.

## BLAKE'S SEVEN/DR WHO FAN CLUBS

**Name:** LINK UP

**Address:** Xenon Base, c/o Fran Ward, 16 Salisbury Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset.

**Comments:** Blake's Seven/Dr. Who fan club. Send a SAE to Fran for more details. Plans to publish the zine 'Tales From The Cloister Chamber'.

## NEW ENTRY:

**Name:** S.P.I.T. (Steven Pacey is Terrific)

**Address:** Sharon Ginn, 15 Kenilworth Crescent, Enfield, Middlesex.

**Comments:** SPIT is an organisation of Steven Pacey fans to get to know each other. Send SAE for further details.

## AUSTRALIAN BLAKE 7 CLUB

**Address:** Susan Clarke, 6 Bellevue Road, Fauclonbridge, NSW 2776, Australia.

**Name:** AVALON — Cambridge B7 Society.

**Address:** Simon Lambert, T13 Tree Court, Caius College, Cambridge.

## BLAKE'S 7 FANZINES

**Name:** BLAKE'S 7 COMPLEX

**Address:** Miss Deborah Walsh, 1 Tufts Street, Malden, MA02148, U.S.A.

**Comments:** First U.S. based BLAKE'S 7 Fanzine. An excellent magazine printed well and in style. For more details, contact Deborah at the address above.

**Name:** FRONTIER WORLDS

**Address:** Peter G. Lovelady, 2 Broad-oaks Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 1SR.

**Comments:** A Doctor Who/Blake's 7 fanzine of which several issues are available.

**Name:** HORIZON

**Address:** Pat Thomas, 88A Thornton

Avenue, Chiswick, London W4.

**Comments:** A general information magazine containing Blake's 7 material with several issues available.

**Name:** IMAGES

**Address:** Pat Otterwell, 5 Windmill Lane, Derby DE3 3BQ.

**Comments:** A television science fiction oriented publication with a number of available issues.

**Name:** INTERFACE

**Address:** Brenda Callagher, 195 Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 0TQ.

**Comments:** A magazine produced by Vilaworld and comes illustrated with telepics.

**Name:** ORACLE

**Address:** Pat Thomas, 88A Thornton Avenue, Chiswick, London W4.

**Comments:** A complete information guide to the series with interviews of those who have previously been associated with the series.

**Name:** ORBIT

**Address:** Audrey Walker, 5 Bledlow House, Capland Street, London NW8 8RU.

**Comments:** A BLAKE'S 7 related magazine using artwork and stories from budding artists and writers.

**Name:** SLAVE

**Address:** Alex Delicado, 5 Bledlow House, Capland Street, London NW8 8RU.

**Comments:** Several issues available based on a BLAKE'S 7 theme.

**Name:** STANDARD BY SEVEN

**Address:** Miss Anne O'Neill SRN, 38 Stephens Firs, Mortimer, Nr. Reading, Berkshire RG7 3UY.

**Comments:** An excellent magazine for information and good stories.

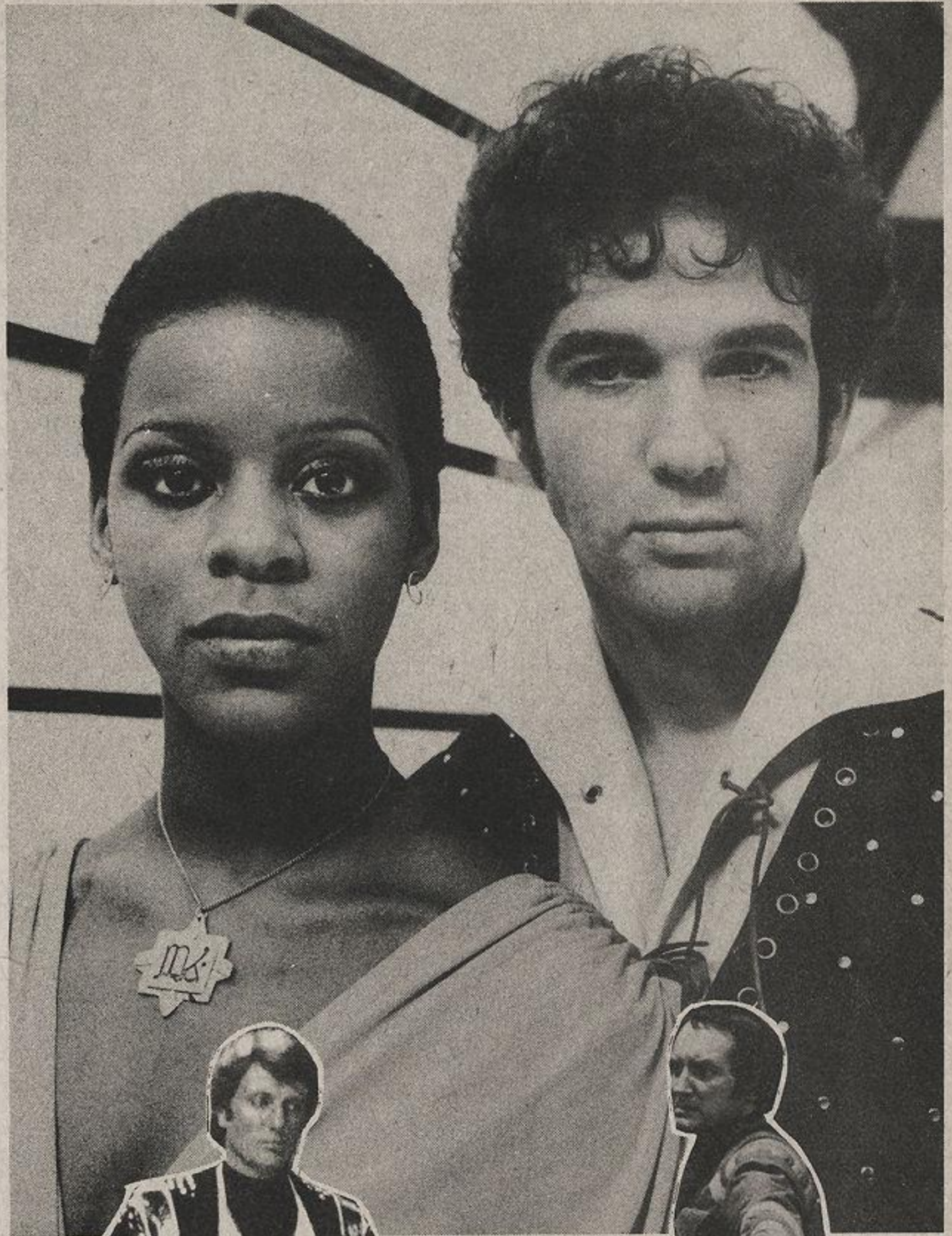
**Name:** TARIAL CELL

**Address:** Pat Thomas, 88A Thornton Avenue, Chiswick, London W4.

**Comments:** A complete guide to each series, the characters, the actors and production staff of the programme. One magazine available for each series.

**Publishers note:—**

With all the publications listed above, it is suggested, should you wish to buy any of the available material, you first make contact with the person concerned, enclosing a self addressed stamped envelope, before sending any money.



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 . . .

I have just perused Issue 13 of BLAKE'S 7 Magazine and I consider it quite one of the best. The centre picture of Paul Darrow is first-class and the magazine is full of humour and most entertaining pictures. The quiz is a smart idea and the 'Scrapbook' pictures are delightful. I wish the magazine all success.

Vere Lorrimer,  
Producer of BLAKE'S 7

## SPECIAL NOTICE TO READERS

### ARE YOU A BUDDING SCIENCE FICTION WRITER?

Since the start of BLAKE'S 7 MAGAZINE we have received a number of excellent text stories concerning your favourite space heroes and we would like to encourage more. If you can write a good original story featuring the crew of Scorpio we will print the best of them in a special section each week.

*Guidelines for all submissions are as follows:—*

1. Stories should not exceed 3,000 words.
2. All submissions should be typed on A4 size paper with double line spacing.
3. Each entry should have a large self-addressed stamped envelope attached.
4. All unused scripts will be returned providing the S.A.E. is attached. If no S.A.E. is included, we will be unable to return the story.
5. All stories should relate to Avon and the crew as represented in the fourth series of the programme.

The writer of each story printed in the magazine will receive a payment of £30, the printed story then becoming the copyright of Marvel Comics Ltd.

Remember that story you've always wanted to write? Now's the time to get it down on paper. Send your entries to the address listed above and good luck!

Dear Ed,  
Great! That's the only word to describe BLAKE'S 7 Magazine. I don't know what I'd do without my copy every month. Please keep up the high standard of features and stories and I'll keep buying the mag!

Barry Cartwright,  
Nottingham.

*Thanks for the comments, Barry. We'd like to point out we don't just print the nice letters we receive but, so far, we haven't had any nasty ones! Let's have your comments, good or bad, and we'll print them. (Ed.)*



Dear Ed,  
I'm very interested in finding out more about BLAKE'S 7 Fan Clubs and the material they produce. Can you help me out?

Colin Walsh,  
Cardiff.

*Look no further than this issue, Colin. We are starting to publish lists of Fan Clubs and the publications they produce and will keep all fans up-to-date.*  
Ed.



Dear Ed,  
**BRING BACK PAUL DARROW!** I was sorry to see his articles for the magazine have come to an end but, as I'm one of his most ardent fans, can't you get him to write some more? I won't say the magazine won't be the same without him - but something will be missing. Get the hint? Please, please give us more of Paul!

Angela Wood,  
London SE13.

*Keep reading the magazine, Angela. There could be a surprise in store for you. Paul is currently working on more ideas for us.*  
Ed.

Ed,  
Who is the best person to write to at the BBC to demand repeats of our all-time favourite programme? Life is not the same since 'Old Auntie' decided to deprive me and my chums of the best science fiction programme ever made. We want action now . . . so who is the man to pester?

Peter Allcott  
Marion Stuart  
Debby Thomas  
Nigel Catlin  
Mark Griffiths  
(all from Reading)

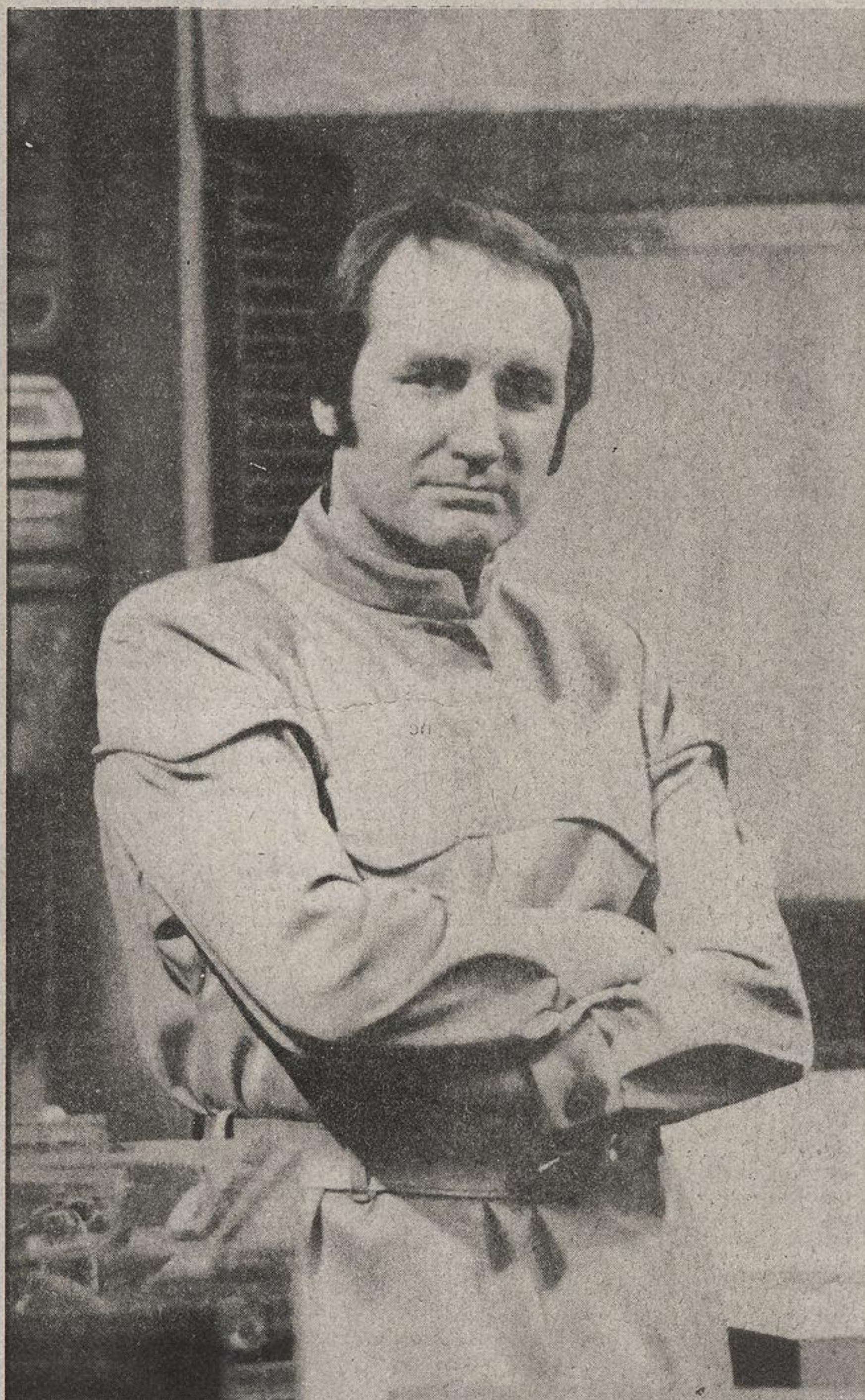
*If you want action, why not go straight to the top? Who better to 'pester' than the Chairman of the BBC himself. The name and address you want is as follows:—*

*Mr. George Howard  
Chairman of BBC Television  
Television Centre,  
Wood Lane,  
London W12 7RJ.*

*If you do decide to take your complaints straight to the top, don't forget to tell him who sent you!  
The Ed.*



# MIKE KEATING



The tension is electric, Blake already lies dead at Avon's feet, his killer standing, mesmerised, staring down at the corpse. Claxons sound as Federation troops storm the building. Arlen reveals herself as a Federation Officer, her gun covering Scorpio's crew. Vila is the first to make a move.

"Oh, now look. I've got nothing against the Federation. I mean I've only ever been along for the ride. I'm not even armed. You can't kill me, I'm completely armless."

As Vila moves towards Arlen, Dayna, on the far side of the room, makes a lunge for her gun. A shot rings out. Arlen's gun has fired and Vila sees his last, desperate chance. He dives for Arlen, knocking her to the ground, the pair struggling for the gun. Vila knocks her unconscious, snatches the weapon, then turns to call to the others. That instant a black shape appears in one of the doorways. Another shot rings out through the smoke-filled room. Vila gasps then falls, the gun slipping from his lifeless fingers. The carnage is about to begin but, for Vila, it is all over.

*Thus Vila, alias Michael Keating, departed the scene of BLAKE'S 7 in the fateful episode thirteen of the fourth series. For Michael, like all members of the cast, the public's reaction to his demise was overwhelming.*

"I had literally hundreds of letters from fans, some protesting at the ending of the programme, others just wanting to know if I was still alive. I must say the reaction was astounding."

*Later, when touring in a play, Michael was also cornered by many of his fans demanding to know if there would be a new series made or if the programmes would ever be repeated.*

"Everyone seemed to expect me to know. In reality, however, the actor is usually the last to know. We have little or no influence on the decision-making processes of the BBC and, I'm sure, never will have."

*Associated with BLAKE'S 7 from the very beginning, Michael has many fond memories of the show and can*

# man of many parts



*even recall his first meeting with the original cast prior to filming for the first series.*

*"The Head of Series threw a wine and cheese party in his office in order for all the principals to meet. I was quite nervous about the whole thing, meeting what I thought were total strangers for the first time but, as it transpired, they were not strangers at all.*

*"Paul Darrow and I had worked together in Julius Caesar, Jan Chappel, Cally, reminded me we had been in a play together when we were twelve or thirteen years old and even Gareth Thomas was known to me. Gareth's brother was a lay preacher at the youth group organised by my local church and, quite often, Gareth would come with his brother to hear him preach. I suddenly found myself amongst friends instead of the strangers I had expected to meet."*

*Throughout the series many of the locations used for film sequences were visited time and again since few places offered the type of terrain required for a science fiction programme.*

*"It meant going back to Betchworth Quarry more times than I care to remember," continues Michael, "but my most memorable site was Wookie Hole, the cavernous underground network of tunnels and vast hidden lakes which few people ever see. The unit was permitted into areas not open to the public and the strange and wonderful sights down there will always stick in my memory."*

*An early taste of location work for the programme came for Michael when*



*Vila gasps — then falls, the gun slipping from his lifeless fingers . . .*

*The carnage is about to begin but, for Vila it is all over . . .*



*Jan Chappell, Cally, reminded Michael that they had worked on a play together when they were twelve or thirteen years old.*

*the unit visited a nuclear power station on the Severn estuary.*

"It was cold and windy close to the shore then, when we went inside the station, the thought of working only a few yards from a nuclear reactor scared the living daylights out of all of us. It was, nevertheless, a great experience and the staff were very kind to us."

*Now, with the ending of the series, what does Michael believe the series has meant to him?*

"Firstly, it's given me a chance to work with a large number of excellent actors and, incidentally, very nice people too. Secondly, it's given me experience of working in television, a completely different medium to the stage but that in itself also destroyed my youthful illusions of television. You see, I used to believe as a child that television presented real images to the audience. Now I know better. Having seen how model filming is done, how the 'teleportation' is achieved and how fantasy is created from thin reality, the charm of the medium no longer exists. It's always the same when you know how something is done, you start looking for the flaws in the image presentation, rather than sitting back and just enjoying what you see on the screen."

*At the conclusion of BLAKE'S 7, it was time for Michael to return to the stage. Before doing so, however, there was time to make a training film and do a 'voice-over' for a commercial. An opportunity to tour in a play soon followed and Michael was off on tour with the company of 'ANYONE FOR DENNIS', the comedy play concerning the Prime Minister's husband and life at No. 10.*

*A long tour of twenty-three weeks and over twenty towns and cities started in February with the show opening in York.*

"It was a long and physically exhausting tour for me," confesses Michael. "I was playing two parts, Major Jump and a frenchman, Monsieur Veuvre. I had to keep on my toes all the time and, when necessary, make a quick costume change."





*An early taste of location work . . . filming beside a nuclear power station on the Severn estuary.*

*It gave me a chance to work with excellent actors . . .*





*I love playing to an audience of children. I've played one of the Broker's men in Cinderella and Alderman Fitzwarren in Dick Whittington.*

*For one thing — Vila could have been a real alcoholic! Imagine having someone like that on the same spaceship as you!"*

*As with all touring stage productions, things are bound to go wrong from time-to-time and Michael's play was no exception.*

"We had the problem that, with a lot of very strong language being used throughout, some of the audience took exception and walked out rather noisily. It's always unsettling for the performers when that sort of thing happens. There was one night when the actor playing Dennis Thatcher was ill and the understudy took over. It's unnerving enough having to stand-in for someone at short notice but, when the person you are substituting is one of the principal characters, it can be doubly hard. That night was no different. The Dennis character had several long monologues to do on stage and, during one of these, I had to do a costume change which involved lots of additional padding, a wig and so on. I needed all the time taken by the speech to complete the change. As luck would have it, that night the understudy 'dried' halfway through the monologue and I was only

halfway dressed. I was given the signal to go on, otherwise the play would have ground to a deathly halt. I think I completed the change in record time — much to the relief of all concerned!"

*A more dramatic event happened when the show was running at Notting-ham.*

"In the play there was a scene set in Chequers, the Prime Minister's country residence, where I was supposed to arrive drunk with another actor, and play a hilarious scene," says Michael. "It was during a period of terrific thunderstorms with lightning flashing everywhere. Well, as the two of us arrived on stage to start the scene, all the lights went out! What on earth do you do when you're on stage in a totally blacked-out theatre? At first we expected the curtain to come down but, when it didn't, we decided to carry on with the scene. I heard later lightning had struck the nearby electricity supply and even the emergency lighting was out but that didn't help us at the time.

"One of the important things an actor must remember at a time like that is not to let the audience panic. It would have been a real disaster if a theatre full of people had stampeded for the doors in the pitch black. No, there was nothing else for it but to carry on and play the scene, making it into a sort of radio play. This lasted for a few minutes until, gradually, the emergency working lights at the back of the stage came on, then the main lights. It was a relief to see the audience were still there!"

*During the eventful tour of the length and breadth of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, Michael met many of his fans and was surprised and pleased by his reception.*

"They were all very kind. There were many little presents including a wallet from an admiring fan in Blackpool; unfortunately the wallet was empty! Another present was for my daughter — a sweater with all the names of BLAKE'S 7 characters woven into it. I



was also lucky enough to meet Yvette Clarke from Southampton, who runs my fan club, during the time the play was on in Salisbury. She gave me a present of a pair of racoons for my birthday!"

*It was during his week in Salisbury that Michael lost his voice during a performance.*

"I had picked-up some kind of 'flu bug which rendered me voiceless but, thanks to a concoction dreamed up by a friend, I was able to carry on – but only just!"

*On reaching Cardiff, Michael decided it was time to take up more job offers and came out of the play. Since then he has had a busy time leading up to his next major challenge – the role of Squire Moneybags in the pantomime presentation of Mother Goose at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle.*

"I'm looking forward to it very much," smiled Michael. "I love playing to an audience of children and I'm sure lots of BLAKE'S 7 fans will come and

see the show. We open on December the sixteenth and go through to the fifth of February."

*What experience has Michael had of pantomime in the past?*

"I've played one of the Broker's men in Cinderella, Alderman Fitzwarren in Dick Whittington, but like all good professionals, I started from the bottom. I played the rear end of a cow for my first panto performance!"

Perhaps by the time Michael is making audiences laugh in Newcastle, fans of BLAKE'S 7 will have heard what the BBC intends to do with the series. A repeat of the fourth series would be a welcome relief for fans to see these episodes again. Was Michael happy with the way the fourth series was planned?

"Paul Darrow said it would have been nice to have a thread through the stories leading logically towards the dramatic ending. I agree. I did wonder sometimes where the hell we were going and what we were trying to achieve. It seemed as soon as we tried to save someone they died. We achieved very little

during the last episodes and, in many ways, it was fitting we came to such an end.

"I believe we could have had a more serious approach to some of the themes tackled, some real love affairs between crew members and, what would have been really interesting – Vila could have been a real alcoholic! Imagine having someone like that on the same spaceship as you!"

In the absence of the BBC exploiting the characters further, the magazine will take up Michael's suggestions so watch out for a mind-blowing story coming soon which will really set you reeling – and Vila too!



# DUNGEON!

FROM



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AARGH!

BUT ELF'S LUCK IS RUNNING OUT...



AIEE!



HELP! OH... GASP... PLEASE... GASP... HELP!

I CAN'T!

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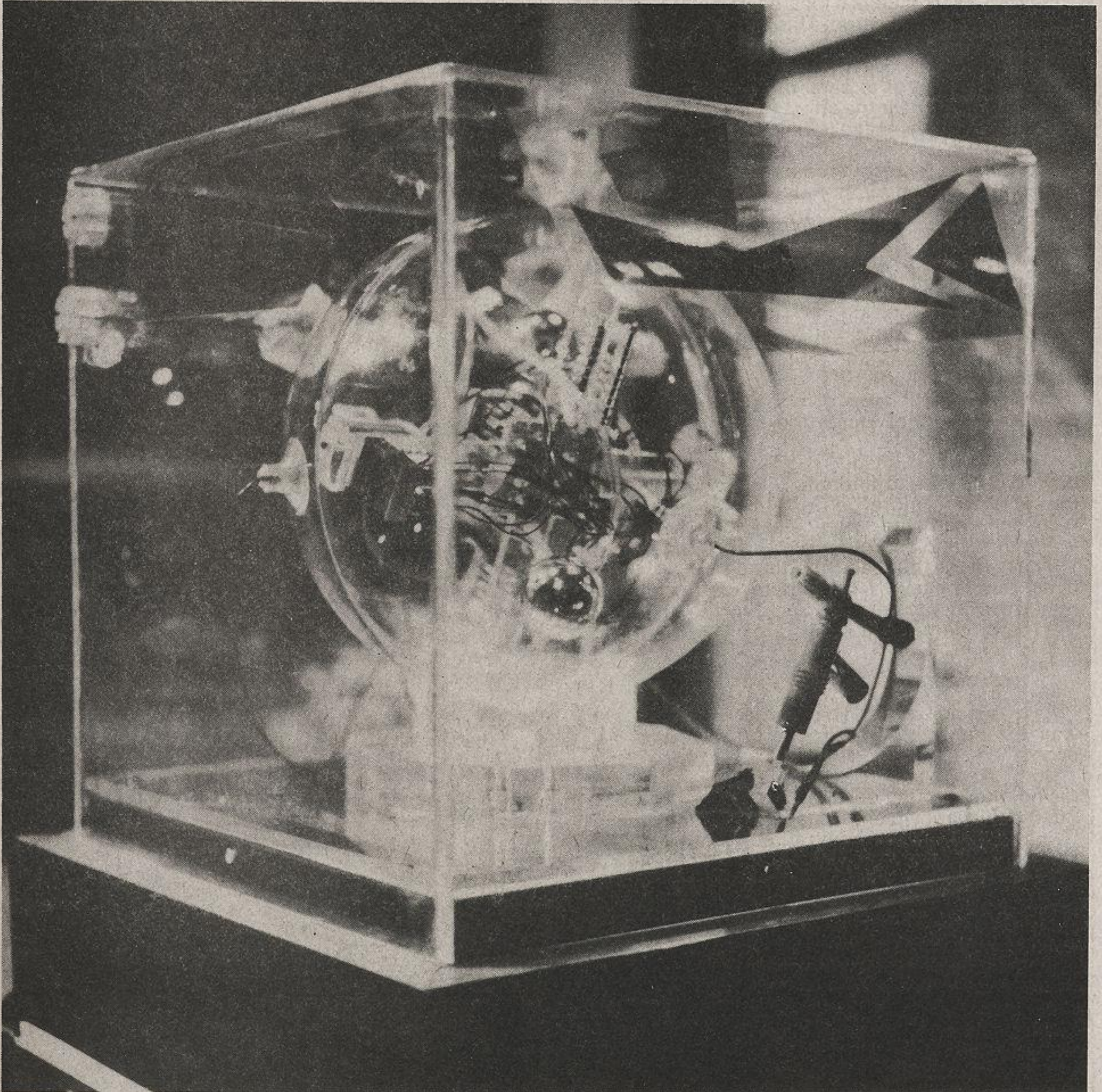
# PLAGUE part 2

*Tarrant and Vila were teleported to an unidentified craft to discover what it was carrying and why it was there.*

*They met with the stench of rotting flesh and a cargo hold full of precious Nevo Crystals. Vila could not resist filling his pockets with the crystals despite orders to the contrary from Avon. He compounded the felony yet further by having a mysterious black box in his possession on return and not reporting to Delta 3 medical bay.*

*This was serious for unbeknown to him Tarrant was dying of the same plague that had hit the ship!*

*At least now, Orac had some information . . .*



*What is it? It looks like another little Orac!*

**P**recisely! I am now able to give you the information you first requested regarding the source of that craft and its crew. They come from the Amridam constellation. Their mission being to transport the vast wealth on board to Federation Headquarters as payment for their freedom. They had been threatened with occupation by the Federation unless a substantial sum was forthcoming. It would seem from the craft's records that the crew were not as loyal and trustworthy as first hoped. They decided to steal at least part of the precious cargo for themselves and triggered a secret device located in a box as part of the cargo. This box contained the Theron ray device which eventually killed the crew but in such a way as to deter others from venturing near the ship.

'In other words, make it look like a plague ship until such time as the crystals could be recovered by the Amridams?' asked Avon.

'Or those appointed by the Federation to recover it,' continued Orac. 'The device is still active and designed to send out Theron pulses once every two earth standard minutes.'

'But if we locate this device and disable it, the crystals will be perfectly safe to handle?'

'That is correct,' agreed Orac, 'but I'm afraid I cannot locate the ray source on the ship.'

'Try a wider scan,' suggested Avon absentmindedly. His thoughts were more on Tarrant's recovery than the vast wealth floating close to Scorpio.

'I have made the scan,' chattered Orac, 'and believe I have determined the ray's location.'

'Where?' demanded Avon.

'Alpha five.'

'B . . . but that's Scorpio . . . our ship!'

'Vila!' yelled Dayna, 'That's what was in the box he brought on board!'

Both Avon and Dayna were racing though the door as Orac offered his final piece of advice. 'The ray will activate again fifteen seconds from now.'

'Are you sure you're feeling all right?' Soolin was looking at Vila's pale and sweating face.

'Er, yeah, just not used to all this hard work,' Vila replied, his probe skidding off the surface of the black box for the umpteenth time. 'Damn it,' he cursed. 'Just another fraction and I'd have done it.'

'You'd better hurry or Avon will be scouring the ship for you.'

'Huh! He'd never find us in here,'

smirked Vila. 'I've got all the time in the world.' Just then, his probe made contact, the tiny light came on illuminating the handle of the device and the box lid was heard to click open.

'You've done it,' beamed Soolin. 'Now, let me see this wealth you've so recently acquired.'

Vila, although feeling very tired and weak, grinned back at her, his trembling fingers jerking back the lid. 'See?' he smiled.

'See what?'

It took Vila an instant to realise something was wrong. He pulled back the lid and scowled as he looked into the dark interior of the box. As he did so, a tiny light source began to glow brighter and brighter. Without thinking, Vila reached in, felt the warm machine inside then carefully withdrew it.

'Wh . . . what is it,' gasped Soolin. 'It looks like another little Orac.'

'I've been done!' exclaimed Vila. 'This isn't what I expected. And why is it getting brighter all the time?'

The next few seconds were a blur. Avon hurled himself through the door, tore the box from Vila's grasp, flung both Vila and an astonished Soolin backwards into Dayna's arms then ripped off his teleport bracelet. This he tossed on top of the glowing box then slammed shut the heavy metal door as the propelled himself backwards.

'The teleport!' he yelled, racing up the corridor.

'Three seconds to go.' Orac's voice was being relayed over the tannoy system. Avon fingered the controls, reversing the setting already on the machine. 'One second . . .' Avon jerked back the controls, there came a loud humming sound then the display screen flashed white in front of his eyes.

When the picture stabilised a few moments later, the plague craft, which was centred in the screen, seemed to glow brightly then subsided to its normal dull colour. Avon took a pace back from the machine, wiped a trickle of perspiration from his forehead then, with his jaw set in a stern line, turned on his heel towards the corridor. 'Vila!' he called. 'Vila . . . I want a word with you . . .'

'I'll kill him! I've threatened before but this time he's going to die!'

Avon's rumbling voice preceded him down the corridor towards Delta Three section. As he heaved round the door, gun in

hand, Dayna blocked his way. 'Put that gun away,' she said. 'By the looks of him you won't need to blow his brains out with a plasma bolt.' Dayna indicated the prone figure of Vila lying on the couch behind her. 'He's got it as well.'

Avon took a few short paces towards the sick men then, through clenched teeth, directed his questions to Orac. 'How long?'

'Do you mean how long will it take for him to recover?' asked the computer.

'No! How long before his dies?'

'All indications are that Vila has more natural anti-bodies to protect him from the Theron ray than Tarrant. With my help he should make a full recovery in two days.'

'And without your help?'

'He will die,' retorted the machine.

Avon swept his eyes round the room. Tarrant was still unconscious, Vila seemed to be in a deathly coma but both Soolin and Dayna glared back at him, Avon's hand strayed towards Orac's key.

'No, Avon!' yelled Soolin. 'That would be murder!'

Avon glared back at the young girl. 'What do you think he nearly did to us?'

'That was different. He didn't know . . .'

'Ignorance is no excuse!' Avon let the full venom in his voice register on the two girls as again his hand moved towards Orac's key.

'Before you silence me I believe you should know one thing,' spat the computer.

'Well?' demanded Avon.

'Scorpio is about to come under attack from a squadron of Federation patrol ships. They are closing at Time Distort four.'

'The devil they are,' exclaimed Avon darting towards the door.

'Avon,' called Dayna after the running figure, 'what do you want us to do?'

'Stay with those idiots,' shouted back the voice. 'There's been enough meddling on this flight. It's time some decisive action was taken! This is man's work!'

Scorpio and the strange cargo craft had been registering on the Federation commander's screen for at least two minutes before the klaxon sounded for action stations. The bellowing horn brought about a flurry of activity on the cruiser's flight deck. All seats were suddenly filled—all except one. Orders and reports were flashing round the communications system before a slim, black figure made its way to



This is man's work . . . !

the one empty seat beside the commander's console.

'A report, commander, if you please,' ordered the feminine voice.

'The Amridam craft has been located drifting in border sector eight but another ship is with it.'

'The other craft. Has it been identified?'

A young technician called from the other side of the flight deck. 'It's the terrorist ship, Scorpio.'

'What? Verify that report!' demanded the dark figure.

'Scorpio confirmed,' came back the reply. 'We cannot detect any sign of crew activity and no force wall has been initiated.'

'You mean they are at our mercy?'

'Confirmed.'

Servalan smiled to herself. 'Then attack! Do not engage the Amritam craft . . . but *atomise Scorpio!*'

'Maximum thrust, Slave,' ordered Avon, flicking all the switches on Tarrant's flight console. 'Give me everything you've got!'

'Er, I'm afraid it's not going to be as much as you would like' apologised Slave. 'There is still only fifty-per-cent power in both drives. If you remember, you and Tarrant were going to replace the stardrive circuit?' The droning voice tailed off.

Avon's fist slammed down on the monitors. 'I'm switching to manual,' he seethed, 'and if it makes you blow up—so be it! If I have to make a decision on survival between you and me, Slave, there's no competition!' With that, Avon forced every thrust lever into the red.

Scorpio bucked then rocketed forward away from the plague ship but already Servalan was issuing orders to her patrol ships to overshoot their target and intercept Scorpio. Some wild laser charges were fired but the range was too great. At any moment Servalan expected Scorpio to vanish from her monitor as it had done so many times in the past but, to her surprise, it remained a constant blip.

'We're holding speed and course with them,' she called excitedly. 'There must be something wrong with the ship—or Avon is playing a deadly game.' She smiled to herself once more. 'But if it is a game, Avon, it's one you're going to lose!'

'Orac!' Avon's voice echoed in the recovery room. 'We can't outrun the patrol ships and I can't maintain this speed for more than



*You mean they are at our mercy?*

a few minutes. We will soon fall within their range unless something can be done to throw them off our scent. Any suggestions?'

Both Dayna and Soolin looked with worried expressions towards the small machine with its flickering lights. Did Orac really hold the key to their survival?

'There is one course of action which could help,' suggested Orac. 'The answer lies here in the recovery room.'

The two girls stared at each other in astonishment. If there was anything which might help in that room they were unaware of it.

'I'm on my way,' replied Avon's grim voice.

'We'll be within killing range in one minute,' stated Servalan's commander. 'Do you wish me to open fire at that distance?'

'No,' replied Servalan's smooth voice. 'Wait for two minutes to ensure every ship is in range before we co-ordinate their fire on Scorpio. I want that ship totally destroyed!'

'How can it work?' protest Dayna.

'Orac said it would and that's good enough for me,' snapped Avon, stepping back from the teleport. He checked the settings one last time before calling into the communications microphone. 'Just say the word, Orac. Everything is set here.'

'Timing is critical,' insisted the computer. 'You must press the teleport initiator the instant laser charges are fired at the ship. It is the only way the plan will succeed.'

'No lectures, Orac,' said Avon in a tired voice. 'I'm ready and waiting.'

There came a long silence. It lasted less than a minute but seemed like an eternity. Sweat was running freely down Dayna's face as she stared helplessly at the hunched figure of Avon, his finger poised over the button.

'Now!' screeched Orac.

Avon's finger hit the button the same instant, the teleport hummed, transporting its charged particles to a pre-determined co-ordinate between Scorpio and the closing Federation ships. One milli-second later it was as if a quanta megition bomb had detonated immediately behind Scorpio. The effect was to slam the ship forward at an alarming speed while acting like a brick wall for those Federation ships unlucky enough to be in the vicinity. The result was devastating. Only excellent pilot skill on Servalan's craft





*Vila's awake and complaining. He wants to know where his uniform is.*

prevented her meeting the same fate as her other four ships. There was little hope of tracking the target craft now. Scorpio was a fast receding speck on the monitors.

'H . . . how the blazes . . .?' stammered the commander. 'We saw no bomb released?'

'I'm tired of asking the same questions,' said Servalan resignedly. 'Suffice to say we've been Avoned!' She turned to flash a thin smile at her worried and stunned commander. 'At least we still have the Amridam cargo ship and its crystals. I suggest we turn and collect them.'

'Wh . . . what on earth is going on?' It was Tarrant, looking pale and exhausted, who spoke as he staggered onto the flight deck. 'Down below there was a kick like a mule! Not the sort of performance we get even from the stardrive.'

Avon looked up from the controls, his unsmiling face greeting his pilot. 'We have Vila to thank for that,' he said. 'By the way, where is he?'

Soolin poked her head round the door. 'He's awake and complaining. He wants to know where his uniform is.'

Avon burst out laughing. It was an ironical laugh. 'Tell him we're deeply grateful for the use of his uniform but I'm afraid he'll never see it again.'

Tarrant looked puzzled. 'What's Vila's uniform got to do with that explosion we just felt?'

Avon rose to his feet. 'Put it like this, Vila just happened to have something in his pockets which he thought would make him rich. Unfortunately, thanks to Orac, we discovered that energised Nevo crystals and charged laser beams don't mix. I'm afraid Vila's new-found wealth has just gone up in smoke. But I think I'd better break the news to him. I owe him that much for trying to turn Scorpio into a plague ship!'

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