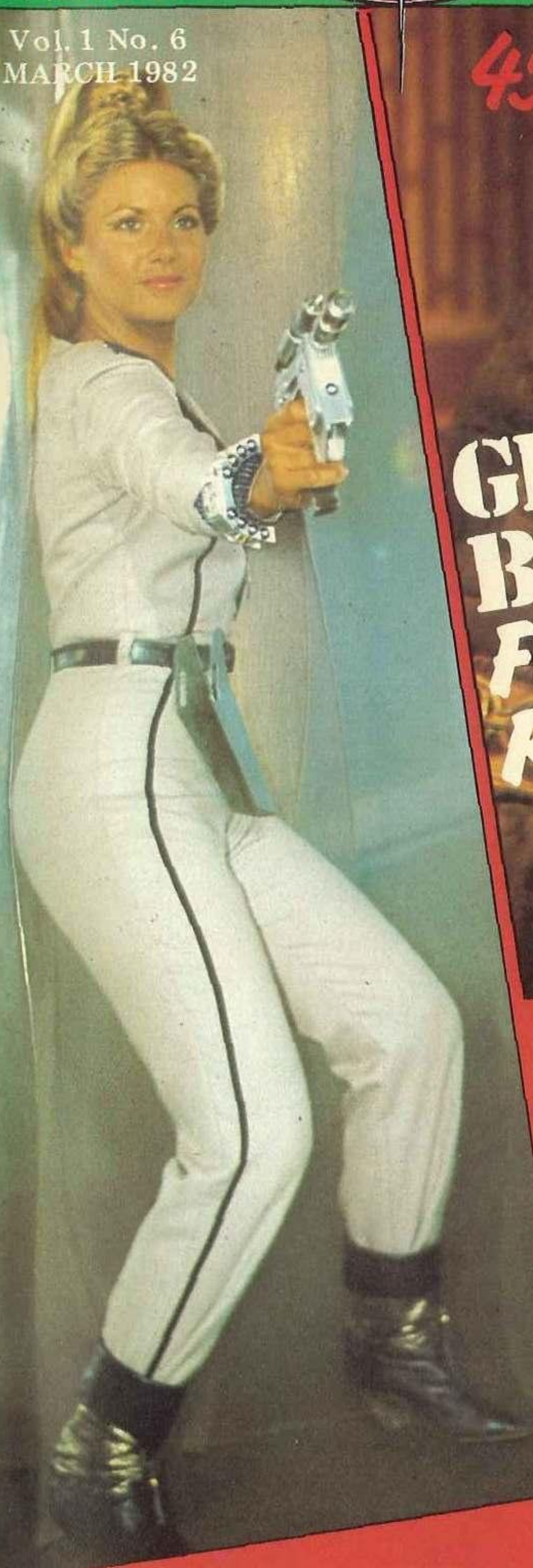


*Nerry Nation's*

# BLAKES 7

A MARVEL  
MONTHLY

Vol. 1 No. 6  
MARCH 1982



45p

**GLYNIS  
BARBER  
FULL-COLOUR  
PIN-UP**

**WHEN DEATH  
REACHED  
OUT...**

**PAUL  
DARROW**

writes  
for you...

**EXCLUSIVE!**





# BLAKES 7

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

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

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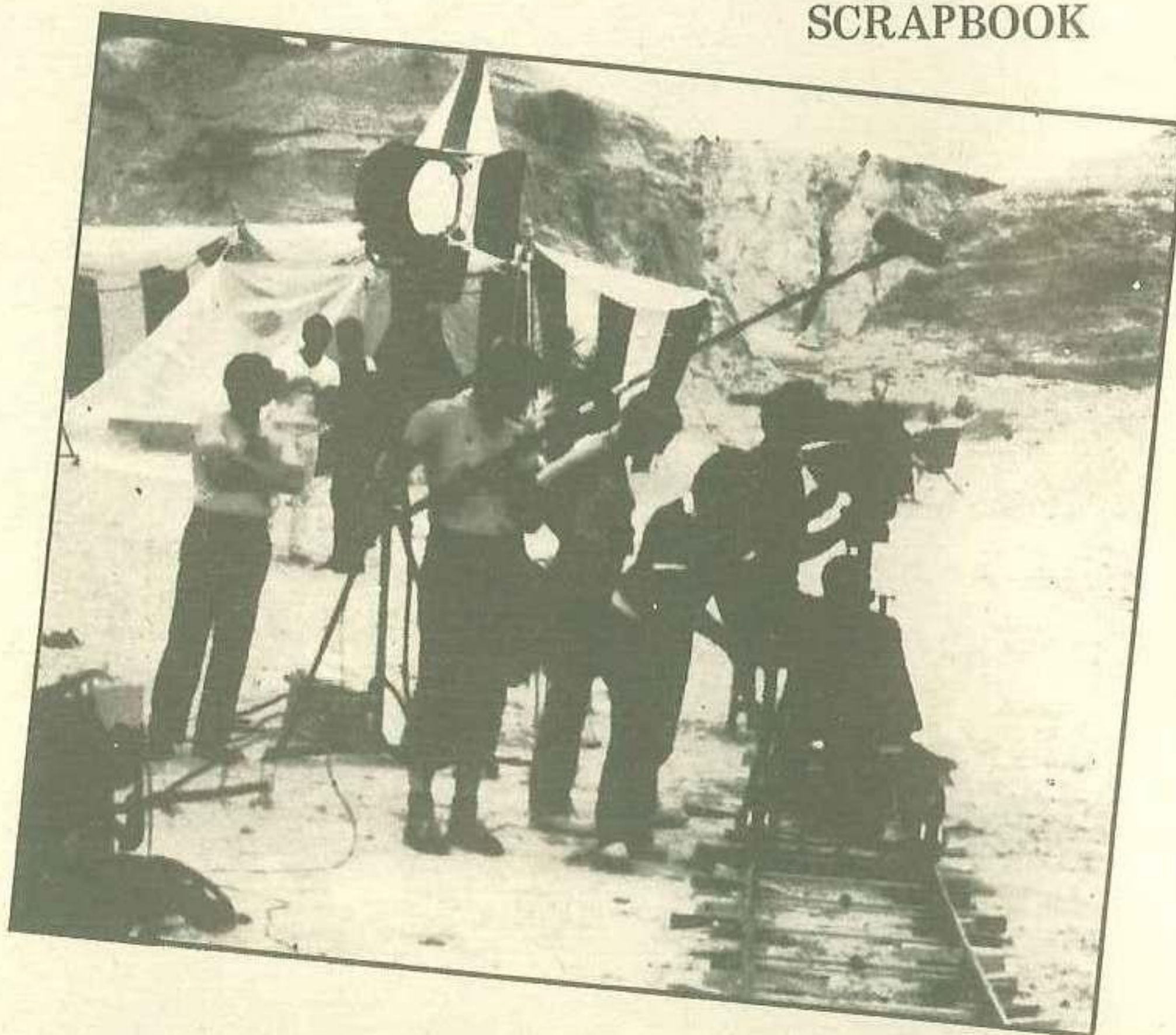
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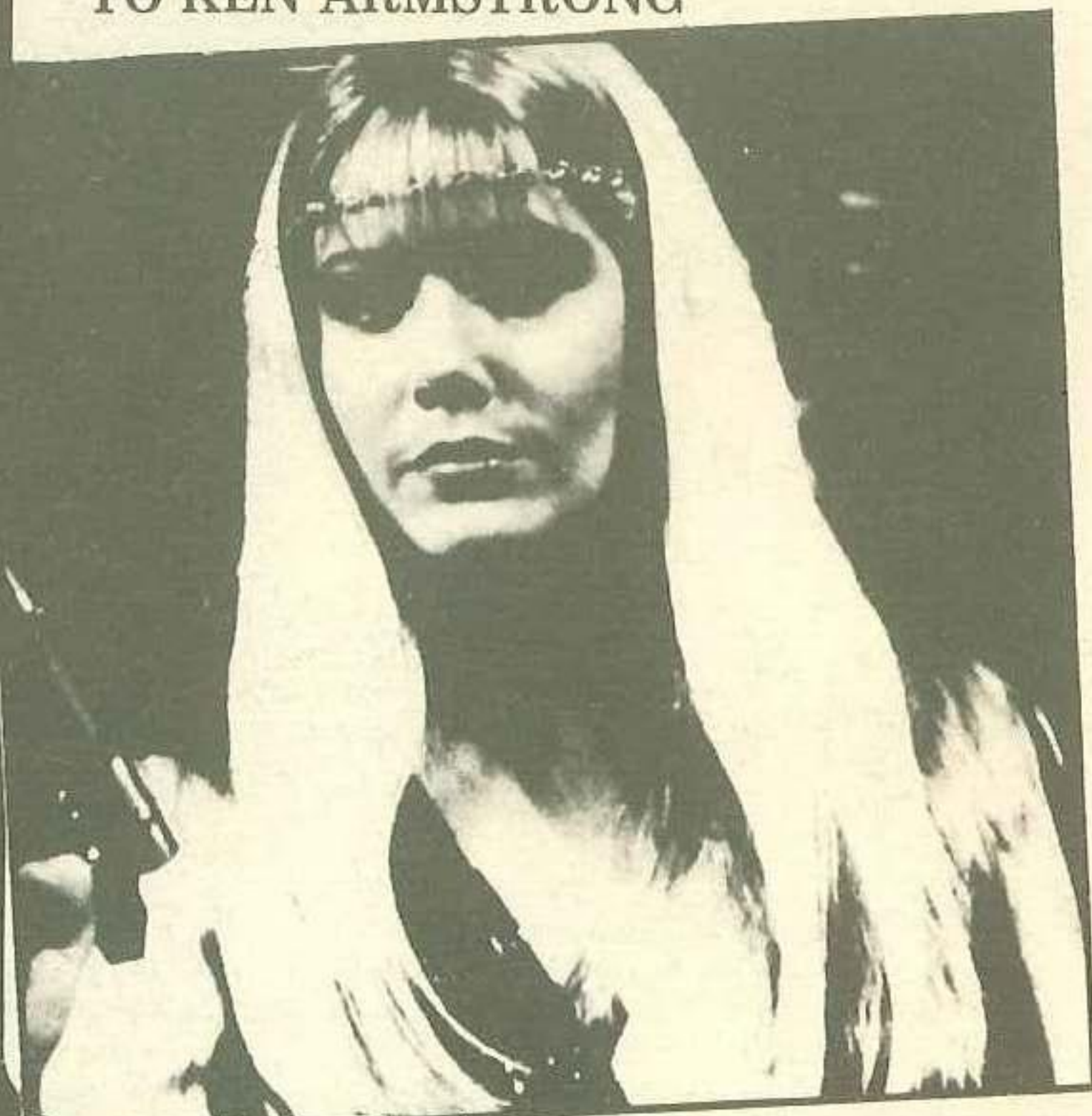
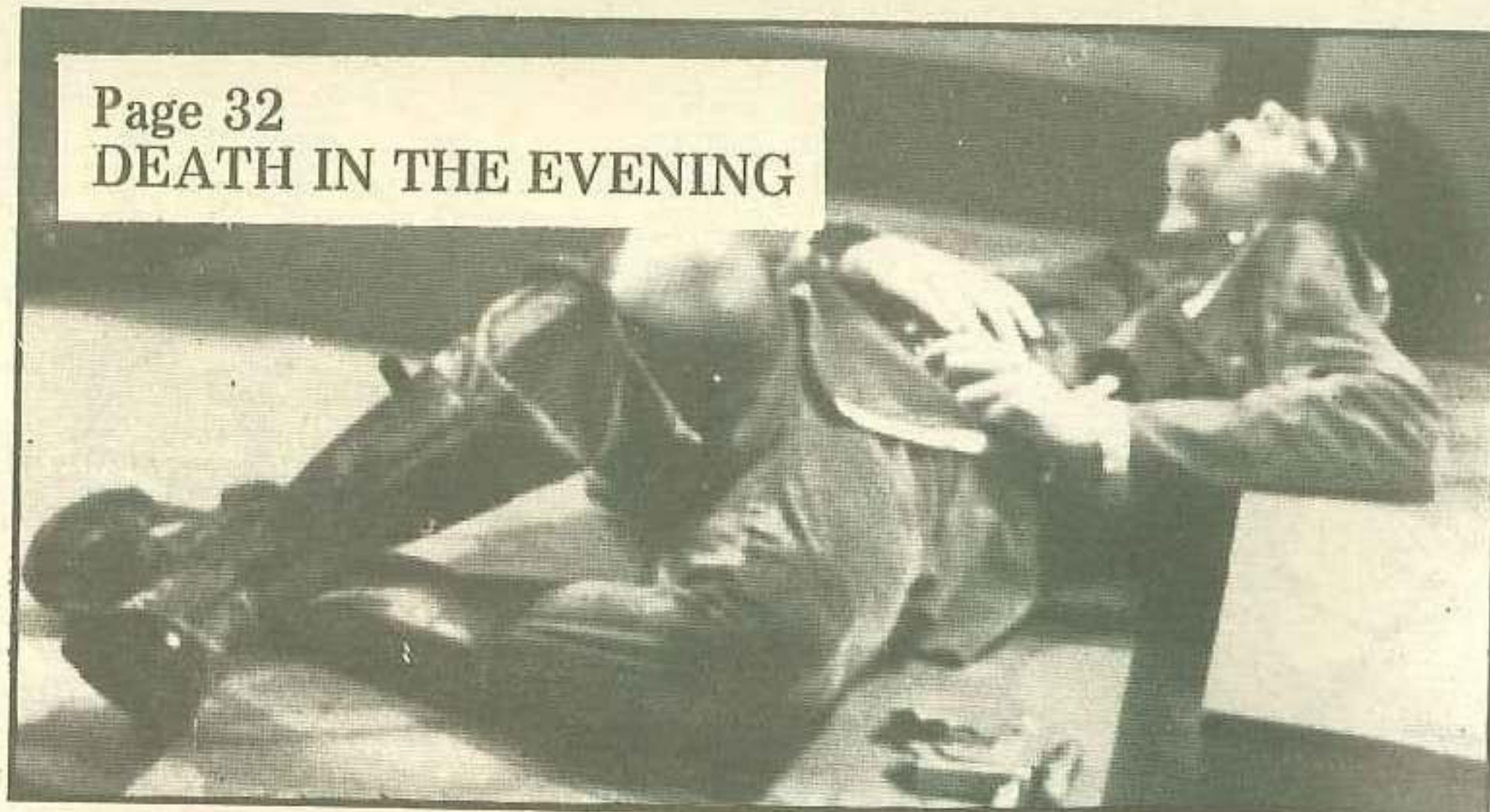
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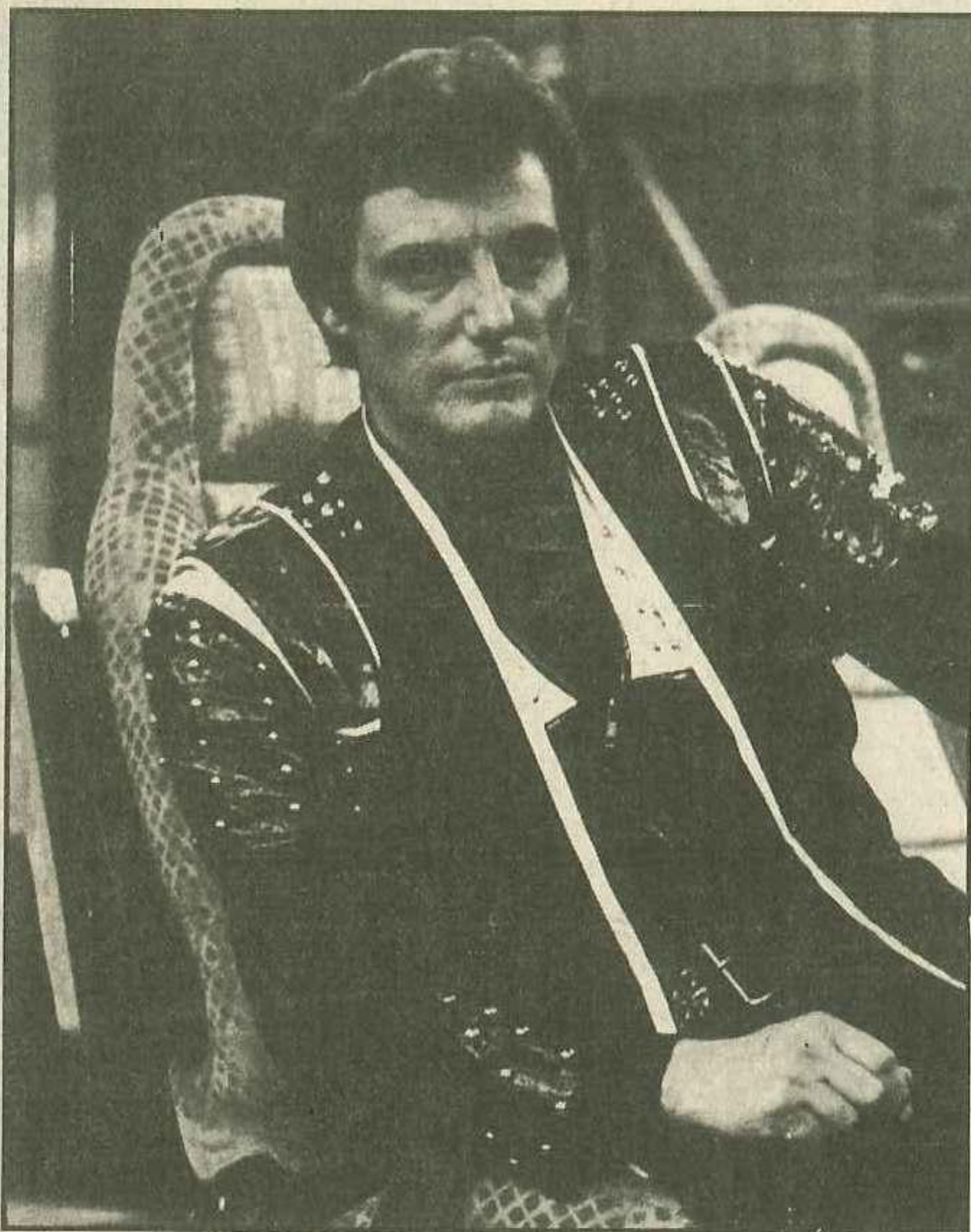
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# PAUL DARROW WRITES... FOR YOU!



**EXCLUSIVE TO BLAKE'S 7  
MAGAZINE! PAUL DARROW...  
SUPERSTAR OF THE FANTASTIC  
TV SERIES...REVIEWS THE  
PROGRAMME'S HISTORY AND  
RECALLS IMPORTANT MOMENTS  
FROM EACH EPISODE...  
STARTING AT THE BEGINNING!**

The first filmed moment of, 'Blake's Seven', that I can recall involved Blake, Avon, and Vila standing on the edge of a chalk cliff in a quarry in Surrey. Avon had to step forward to argue with Blake. At which point, I slipped down the cliff, clutched Gareth Thomas for support, we both started laughing and we had to shoot the sequence again.

**Avon Falling!**

That scene came from the fourth episode of the new series which marked the introduction of the last of the Seven — Cally.

In the beginning there was Blake. Everyone's idea of a dependable, honourable, brave man. Everyone except Avon who thought he was a crazed idealist likely to get them all killed in a hopeless cause! Avon was proved to be right.

How strange that Blake, the righter of wrongs and champion of the meek, should surround himself with a space-ship hijacker, a giant of a man who was guilty of murder, a cowardly petty thief, a tough telepathic freedom fighter and an embezzler who was not averse to betraying his friends and shooting people in the back!

Sometimes I think that the most appealing, and most human, characters were Zen, Slave and Orac. A tribute perhaps to Peter Tuddenham who was the voice of them all.

You will all know that Blake was imprisoned for a terrible crime that he did not commit. A Federation Frame-Up! But, in the first four episodes, you didn't know much about the Federation and, quite frankly, neither did we.

Servalan and Travis — Beauty and the Beast and both quite deadly — did not appear until later.

Episode one — 'The Way Back' — introduced you to Jenna and Vila and, of course, Blake.

Episode two brought Gan to your attention and — oh yes — warm and lovable Avon!

In episode three, this motley crew took over the Liberator and Zen, plus a teleport system and the most powerful hand guns in the Universe. For some reason, the powerful guns couldn't help looking like hair dryers.

In episode four, along came Cally, the moral element of the story. Cally became the conscience of the crew.

So, the scene, which was all of Outer Space, was set, transport was available and a curious mixture of odd characters took over Monday evenings on BBC1 and, four years later, they were still there.

'The Magnificent Seven of Space'. Or, from the Federation's point of view, 'The Dirty Dozen'. (Seven of them anyway).

**And we did get dirty!**

Rolling around quarries getting covered in chalk in all kinds of weather became a way of life for us all.

We were thumped by hefty stunt men, made to climb steep hills, scramble through thick undergrowth and, at the same time, try to avoid the dynamite that the Special Effects boys had dotted over the landscape.

Blake was tortured by Brian Blessed and befriended by Robert Beatty. We were all threatened with a horrid death by Glyn Owen. Cryogenic mutants tried to finish us off before we had begun our, 'Crusade against Oppression'. And Gan was kissed by Pamela Salem!

During all this we tried to establish our individual characters. The nature of these could only be



hinted at in the first four episodes, because none of us had seen any more scripts.

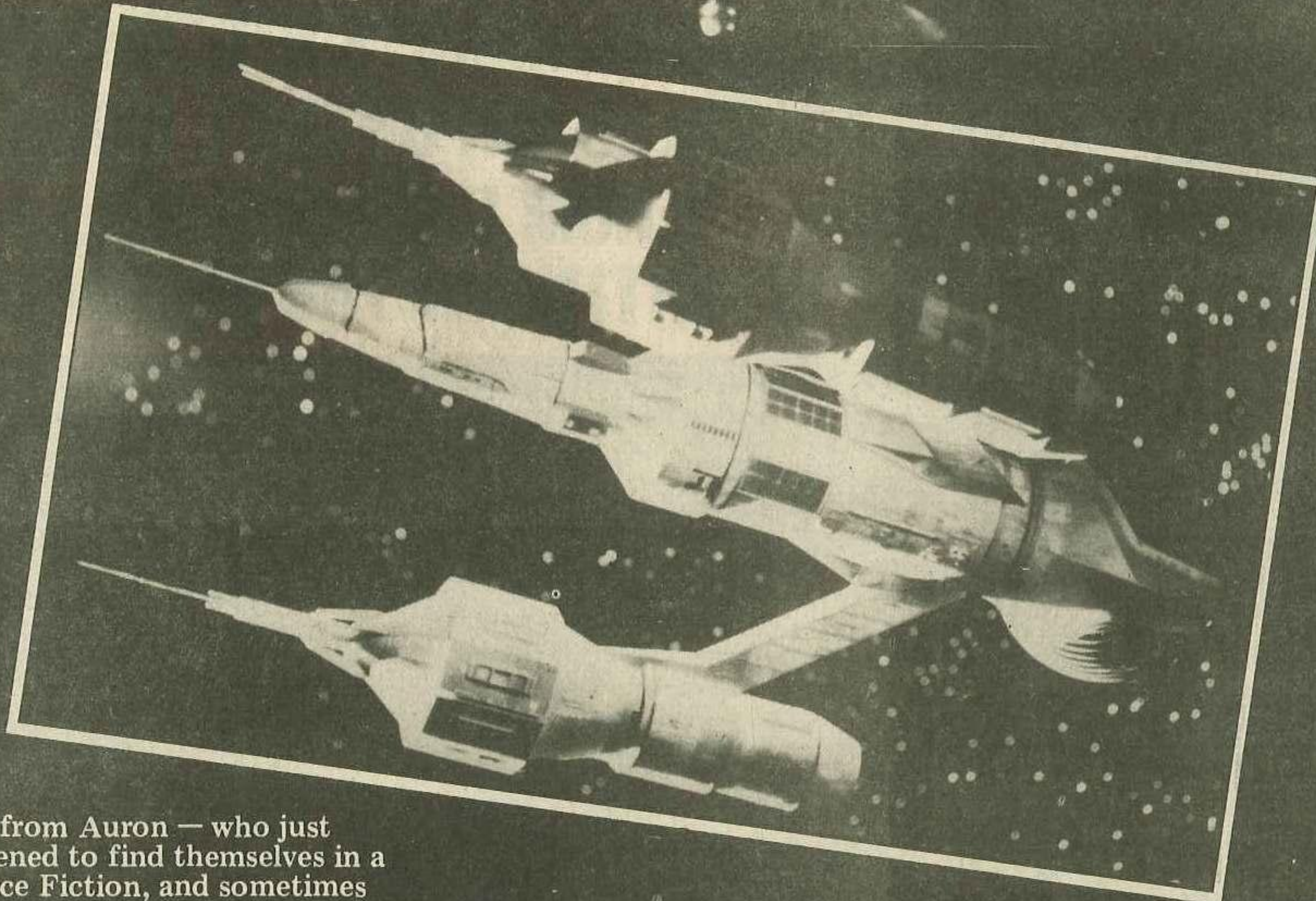
Not that, when these finally arrived, they were of much help.

Terry Nation said to me, "All I'll give you is the outline of the character and, if you like, you can flesh him out any way you want."

A shrewd move by the man who created us. Because, in the end, only I could know what Avon really thought and only Gareth could truly understand Blake.

The characters stood or fell by what we brought to them, both individually and collectively. So, we became a team of individuals.

The fascination of the programme for all of us lay in this direction. After all, none of us had, at that time, the faintest interest in Science Fiction. Our interest lay in the human beings — with the exception of Cally who was an



alien from Auron — who just happened to find themselves in a Science Fiction, and sometimes Science Fact, situation.

Our interest in Special Effects and model shots was kindled later by clever men with little money and few resources who produced magical tricks.

We were the poor man's, 'Star Trek', and we knew it.

But Terry and his Script Editor, Chris Boucher, by allowing us to develop our own personalities within and around our characters, gave us the key to the programme.

Not quite ordinary human beings in extraordinary, and extraterrestrial, circumstances!





It was the people who really counted and their relationships within the confines of the space-ship and throughout the dangers that were dreamt up for them to encounter.

Close Encounters of many different kinds!

Sometimes by accident, mostly by design, and with that little extra something we might as well call luck, Blake and his Seven were established.

As you, the viewer, began to switch on to our story, we must have given you a taste for these characters because you have stayed with us to the end. Or is it the end?

Jenna became our glamorous heroine. Loyal and loving to Blake but, sometimes dangerous and always much prettier than Tarrant who later replaced her.

Vila was a coward, but a charming one with untapped depths behind the sly smile and with extraordinary and effortless expertise in removing property from its rightful owners.

Gan was warm and kind and misunderstood and, it was revealed, had only killed because he had to and wasn't a murderer after all.

Cally was upright and determined and sometimes strange and fascinating.

The Liberator and Zen were striking to look at and always interesting in their revelations.

Blake was decent and strong.

The Dirty Dozen had changed into Robin Hood and his gang. The Good Guys!

The Good Guys save for one!

Avon was always trying to steal the Liberator while everyone's back was turned.

All this came together in four fifty minute episodes.

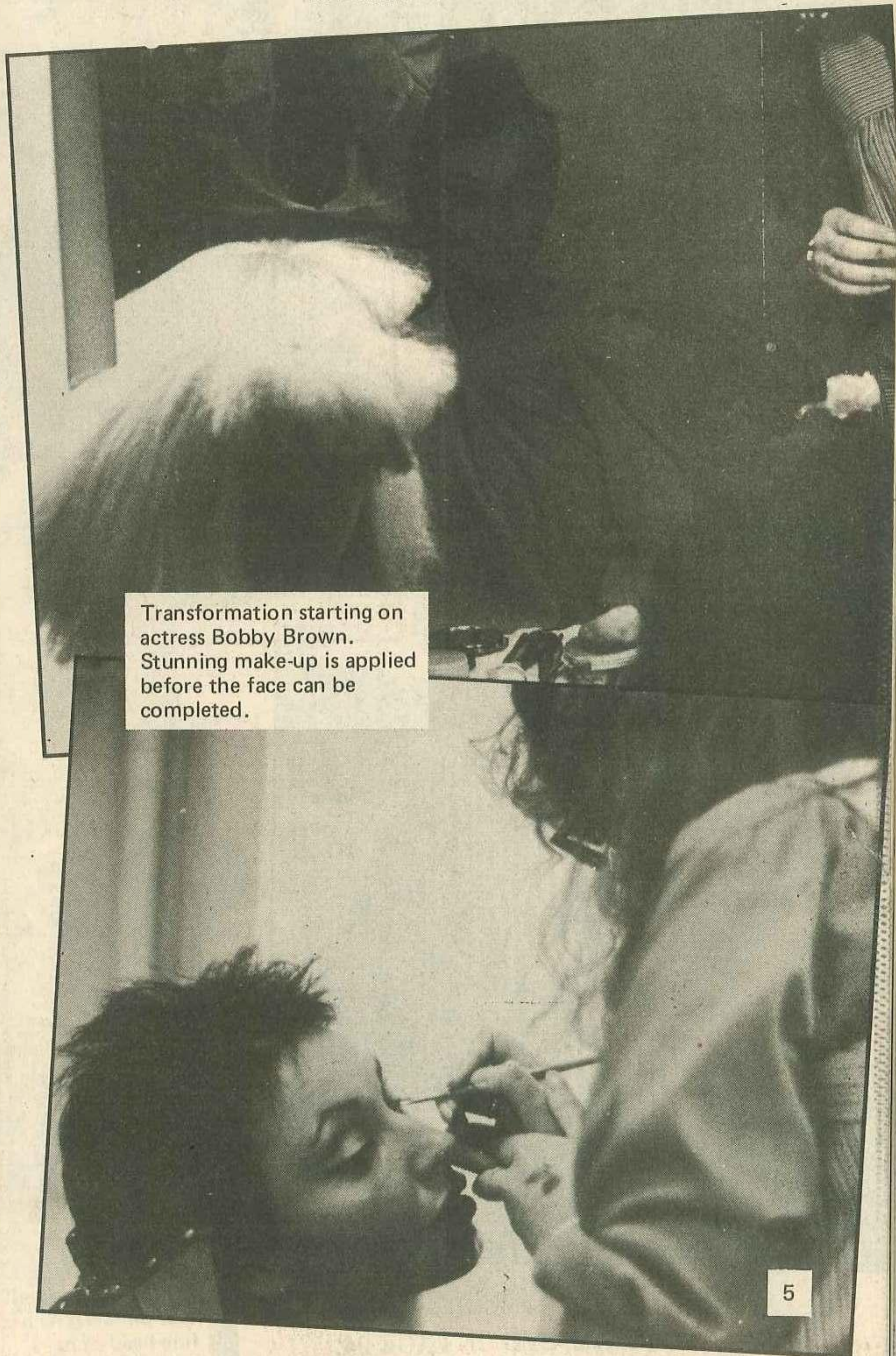
And there were still another forty eight episodes to go!

# THE UNSUNG HEROINES

From totting around buckets of blood, synthetic of course, to applying gentle brushstrokes to highlight an already perfect face, the girls of the BBC Make-Up department are craftspersons in their own right.

No face, no matter how perfect it is, looks its best in front of a camera without make-up to add just a touch more colour so the face looks to have life in it. No weird and imposing hairstyle could be shown in a series like Blake's 7 without someone there to create it. All aspects of life in the small room buried in the wall of studio 6 where Blake's 7 is recorded.

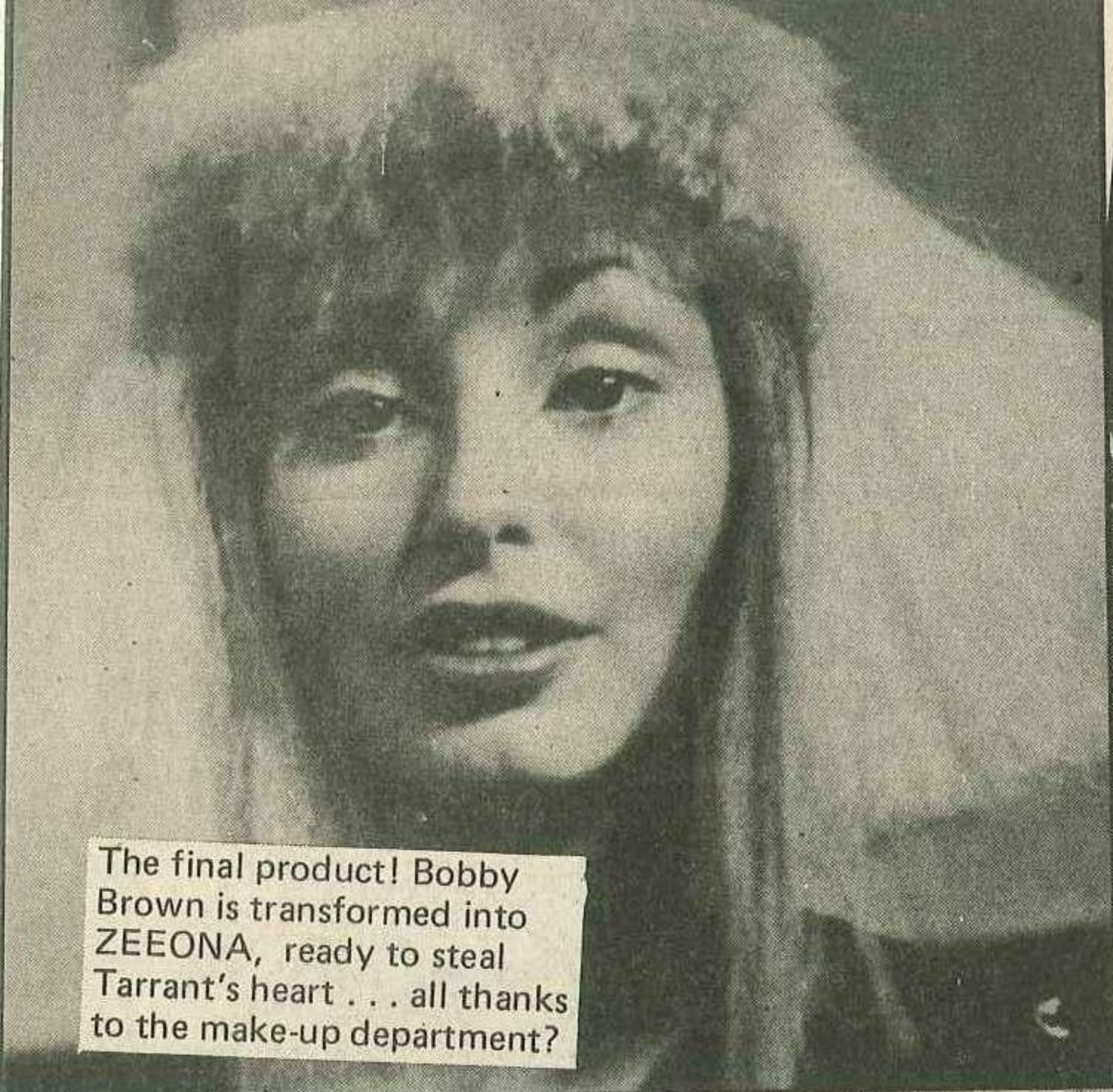
Seldom, if ever, do the girls who present the faces of the famous to your screens ever have their work recorded. Blake's 7 magazine puts that to rights. Here we show just some aspects of the work of those creative girls who are in attendance throughout each recording session. . . and even on location in the muddy depths of Terry Wogan's famous chalk pit at Dunstable!



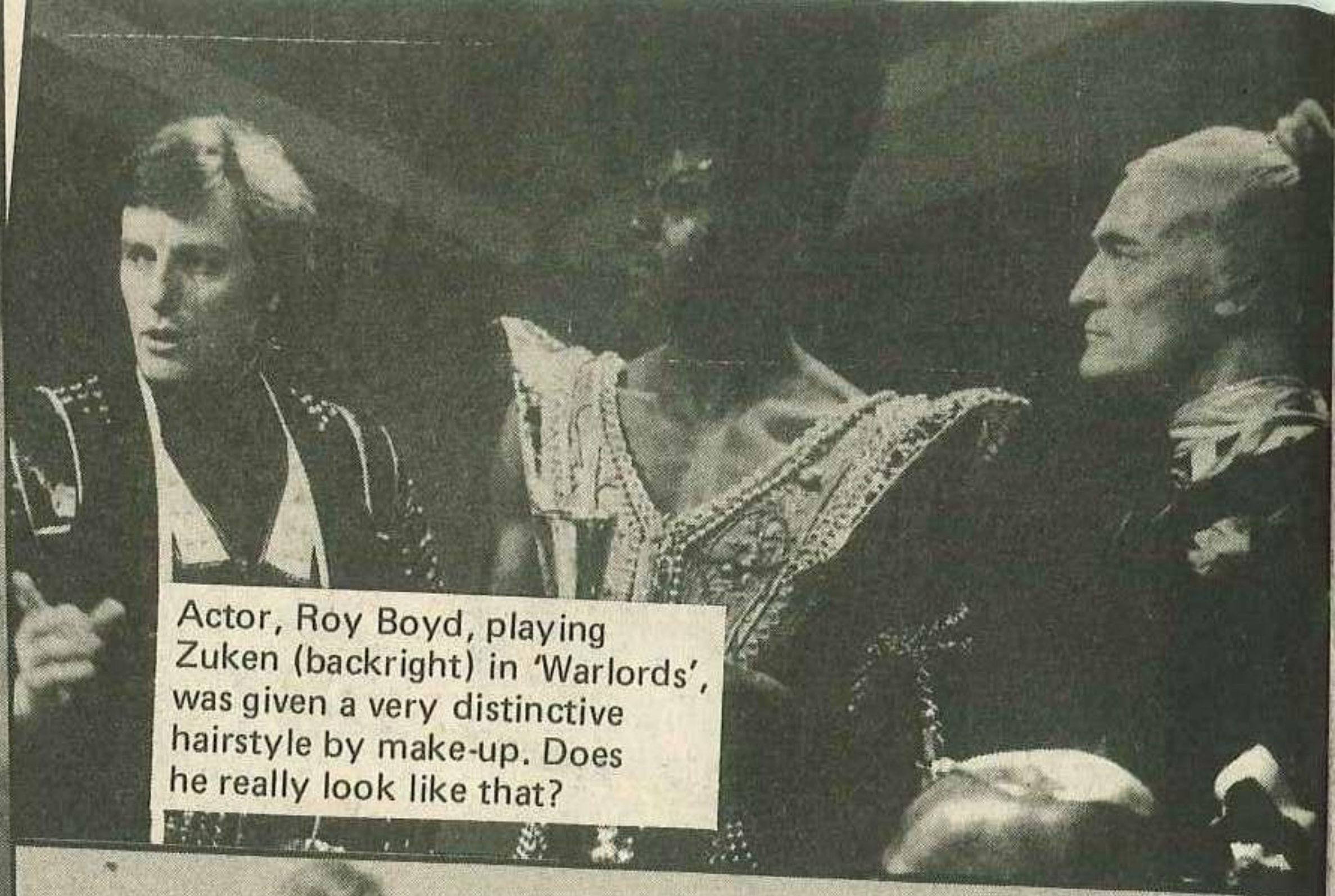
Transformation starting on actress Bobby Brown. Stunning make-up is applied before the face can be completed.

**PAUL DARROW  
CONTINUES HIS REVIEW  
OF THE SERIES NEXT  
MONTH...DON'T MISS  
IT...ORDER YOUR  
COPY TODAY!**





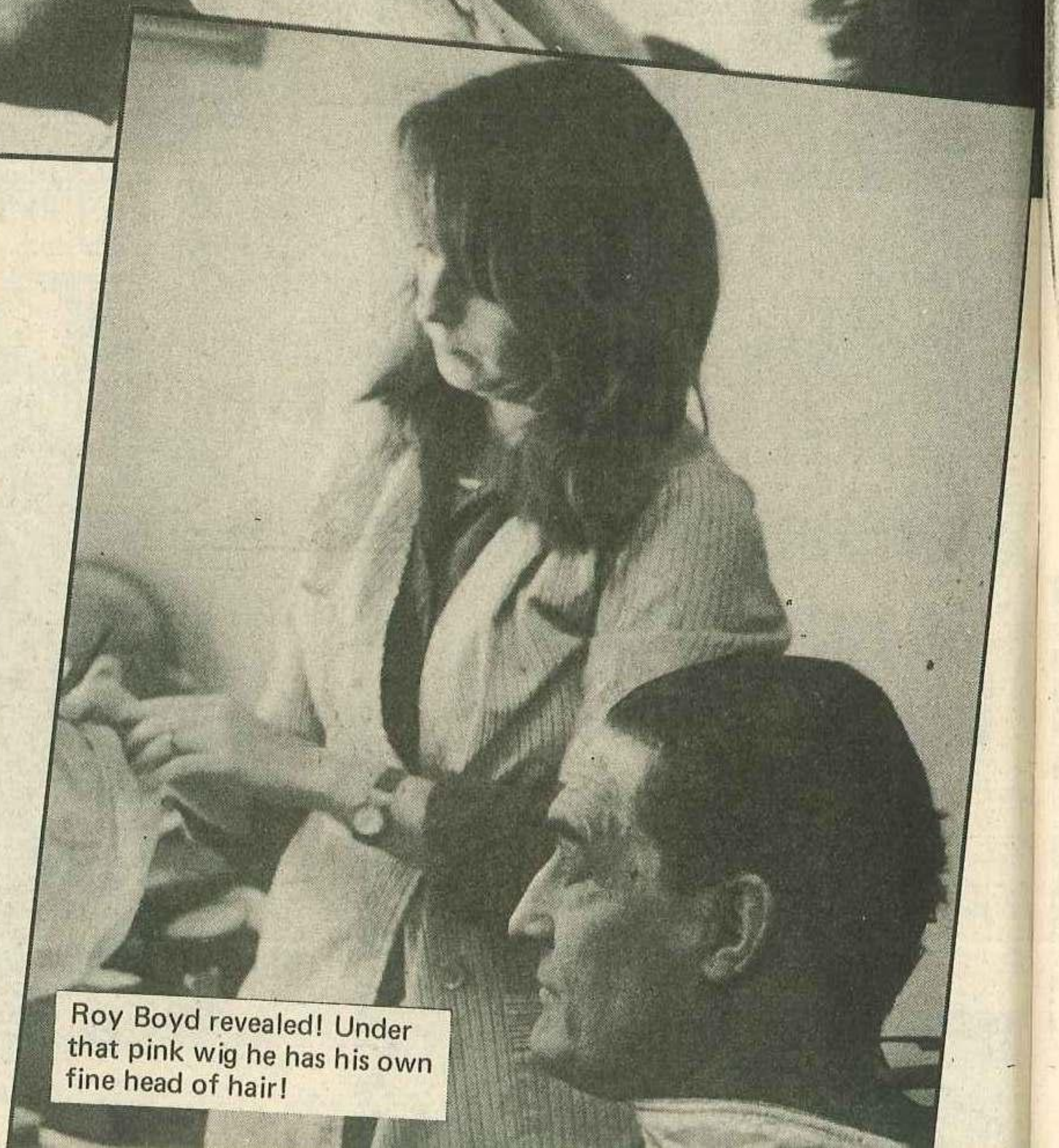
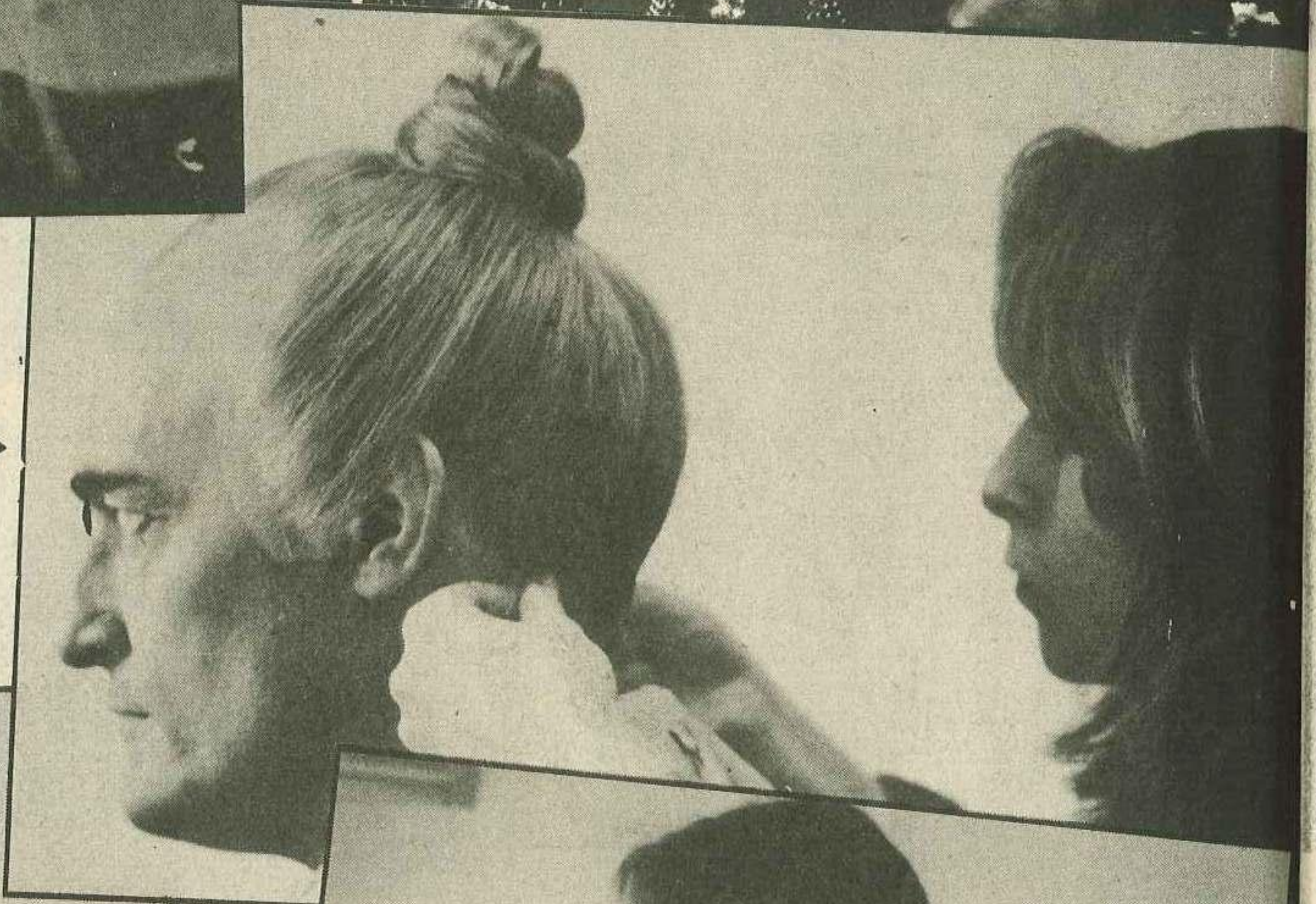
The final product! Bobby Brown is transformed into ZEEONA, ready to steal Tarrant's heart . . . all thanks to the make-up department?



Actor, Roy Boyd, playing Zuken (backright) in 'Warlords', was given a very distinctive hairstyle by make-up. Does he really look like that?

The unveiling process begins. Grips holding the wig in place are removed to reveal a 'bald' cap underneath.

Using a spirit solution, the cap is slowly removed . . . a painful process by the look of it . . .



Roy Boyd revealed! Under that pink wig he has his own fine head of hair!



# STARFIRE

DEEP UNDERGROUND IN A SUBTERRANEAN FORTRESS, THE FEDERATION'S INTELLIGENCE GATHERING NETWORK PROBES DEEP INTO SPACE, WATCHING LISTENING, TRYING TO SENSE ANYTHING UNUSUAL...

THE OPERATOR SCANNING FOR FUSION ENERGY DISCHARGE SLAMMED BACK IN HIS SEAT AS HIS MACHINE SCREAMED IN HIS EARS...

AAH! WHAT IN HELL WAS THAT?

Kennedy

MASSIVE READING FROM NEAR THE PLANET DRAL 3, SIR. RIGHT OFF THE SCALE...

CODE IT READ PRIORITY AND GET IT OFF THE COMMISSIONER SLEER. THAT'S HER AREA...

DRAL 3 WAS AN UNDISTINGUISHED WORLD, ITS ONLY CLAIM TO FAME BEING A SMALL FEDERATION BASE AND A COMMERCIAL SPACEPORT. NOW WHERE YOU FIND A SPACEPORT YOU ALSO FIND A SPACER'S BAR... AND, A FEW DAYS LATER...

THIS PLACE IS A HOLE IN THE GROUND, AVON. HOW MUCH LONGER ARE WE HERE?

UNTIL WE DISCOVER WHAT CAUSED THAT ENERGY BLAST PICKED UP BY ORAC. WHOEVER MADE IT WILL HAVE TO SHOW SOONER OR LATER. I'M BETTING THEY'LL SHOW HERE...

AT THAT MOMENT, ROWDY FEDERATION SHIP TECHNICIANS BLUDGEONED IN...

MOVE OVER, DARLIN'...

YEAH - SAY HELLO TO TWO HEROES OF THE FEDERATION...

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU COULD MAKE A LONELY SPACER VERY HAPPY, DEARIE...

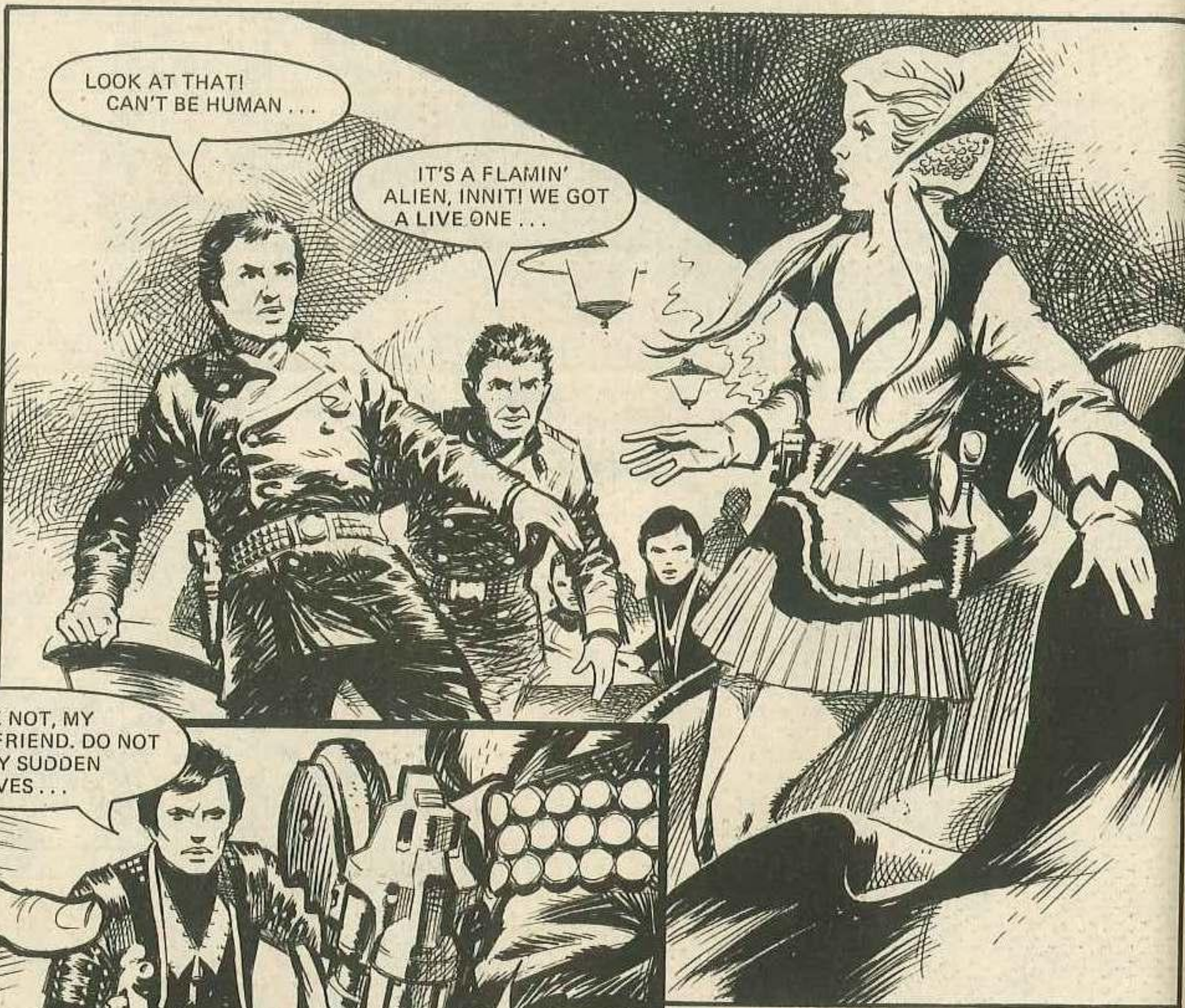
PLEASE - DO NOT TOUCH MY FLESH.





AW - C'MON. DON'T BE LIKE THAT ...

'ERE, BERN - LOOK! HER ARM, IT - IT'S BURNING!



LOOK AT THAT! CAN'T BE HUMAN ...

IT'S A FLAMIN' ALIEN, INNIT! WE GOT A LIVE ONE ...



I THINK NOT, MY UNCOOUTH FRIEND. DO NOT MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVES ...

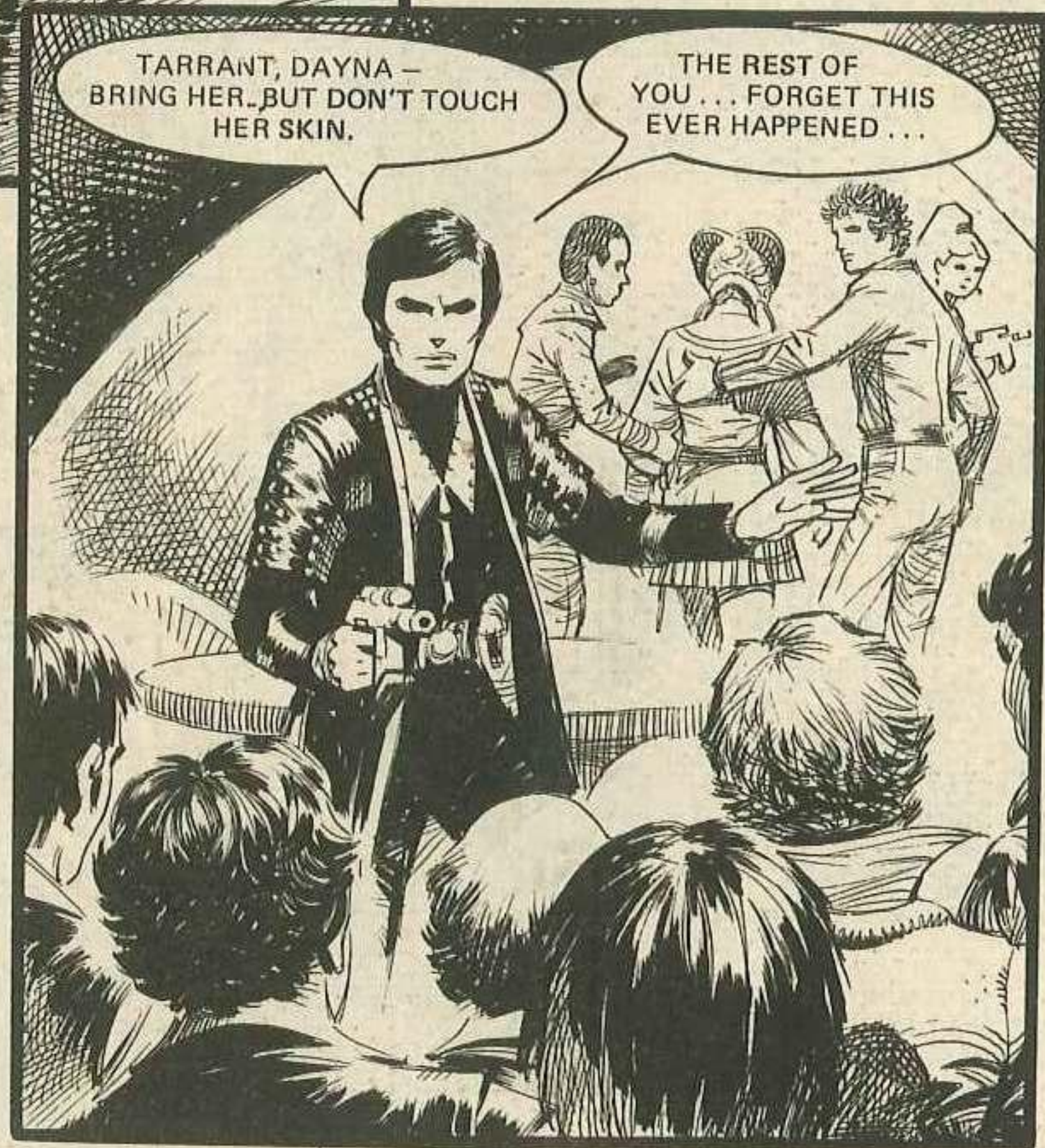
EH? UP YOURS, MATE ...



AAARGH!

HAVE IT YOUR WAY!

AIËËË!



TARRANT, DAYNA - BRING HER... BUT DON'T TOUCH HER SKIN.

THE REST OF YOU ... FORGET THIS EVER HAPPENED ...



TO THE SHIP. AVON?

CORRECT. I THINK WE MAY HAVE FOUND WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR ...



SOME HOURS LATER, COMMISSIONER SLEER, RECEIVED A REPORT OF THE INCIDENT AS HER VESSEL APPROACHED DRAL 3...



SO THERE WERE FOUR OF THEM INVOLVED, EH? AND IT IS SUSPECTED THAT THE WOMAN WAS A MUTANT... ORDER A FULL SURFACE SCAN OF DRAL 3, CAPTAIN...

AS SLEER'S VESSEL HEADED FOR THE FEDERATION BASE, SCORPIO WAS NOSING HER WAY OUT OF THE COMMERCIAL PORT...

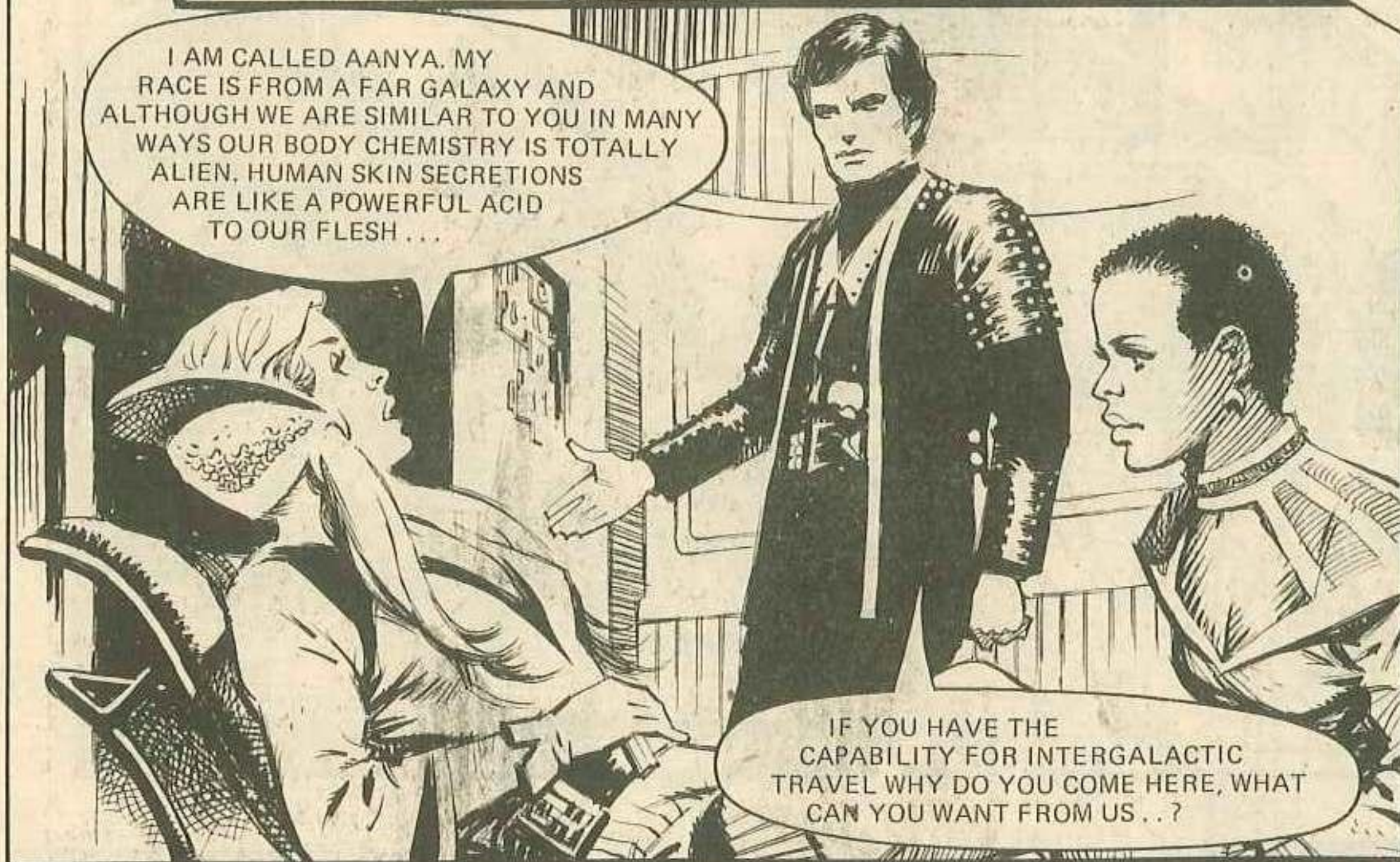


SHE'S COMING ROUND, AVON...

WHO ARE YOU, WOMAN? AND WHAT HAPPENED BACK THERE...?

WHAT IF SHE IS NOT A MUTANT AT ALL BUT AN ALIEN? THIS WHOLE AFFAIR COULD BE VERY PROMISING INDEED - FOR THE POWER OF COMMISSIONER SLEER...

I AM CALLED AANYA. MY RACE IS FROM A FAR GALAXY AND ALTHOUGH WE ARE SIMILAR TO YOU IN MANY WAYS OUR BODY CHEMISTRY IS TOTALLY ALIEN. HUMAN SKIN SECRETIONS ARE LIKE A POWERFUL ACID TO OUR FLESH...



IF YOU HAVE THE CAPABILITY FOR INTERGALACTIC TRAVEL WHY DO YOU COME HERE, WHAT CAN YOU WANT FROM US...?

MY ENTIRE RACE IS MIGRATING IN A GREAT STARSHIP. BUT OUR CENTRAL NAVIGATION SYSTEM HAS FAILED. WE HAVE HAD TO STOP IN THIS AWFUL PLACE SO THAT I CAN SEARCH FOR A STARMAP OF YOUR GALAXY. I WAS SEARCHING IN THE PORT WHEN...



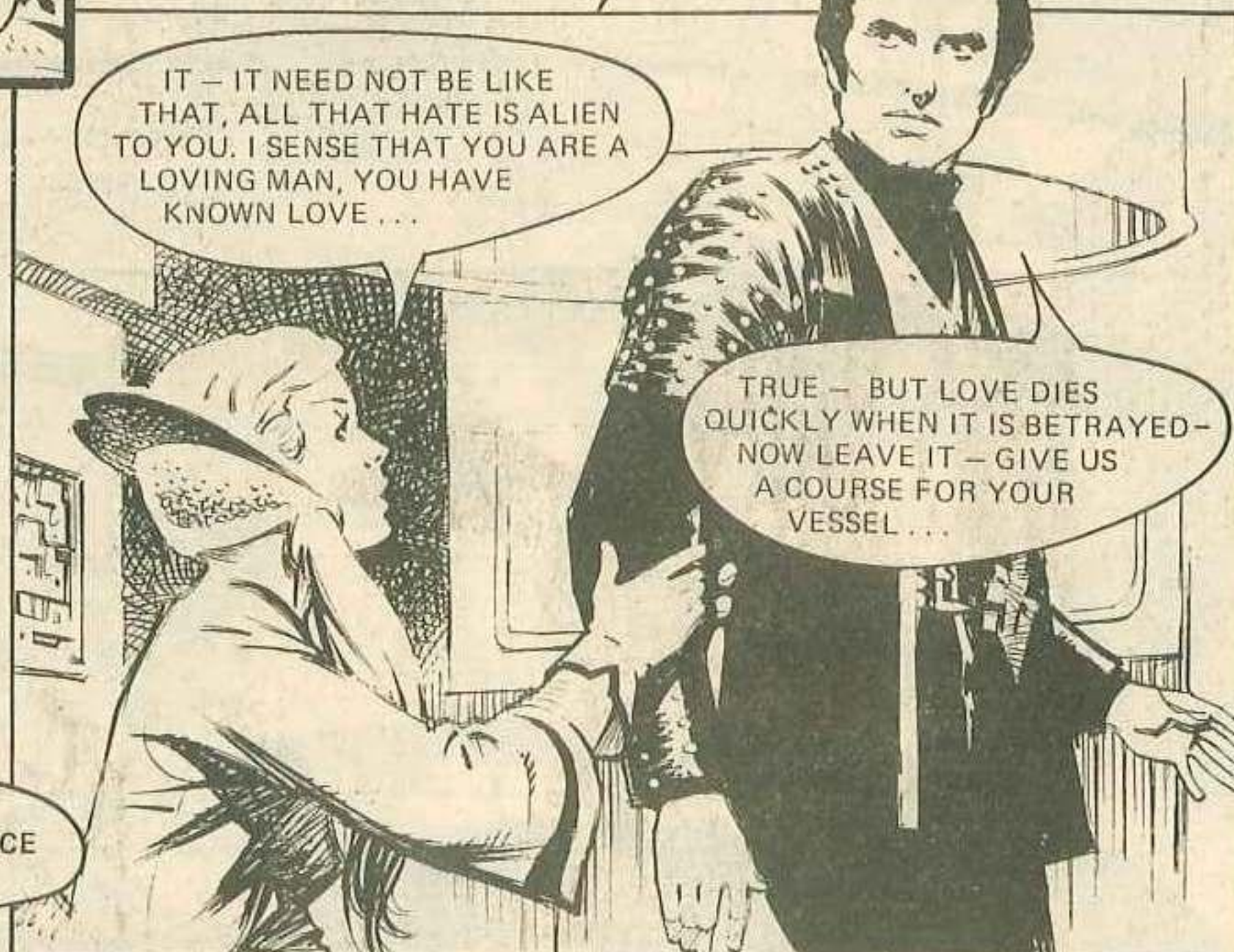
YES, WE KNOW THE REST, AANYA. YOUR STORY IS SO BIZARRE THAT I AM TEMPTED TO BELIEVE YOU...

BUT IT IS TRUE - COME I WILL LEAD YOU TO MY SHIP. WHY DOES YOUR RACE ALWAYS SEE DECEIT AND HATE IN EVERYTHING...?



BECAUSE THAT IS THE WAY TO SURVIVE, IN THIS PLACE AND AT THIS TIME...

IT - IT NEED NOT BE LIKE THAT, ALL THAT HATE IS ALIEN TO YOU. I SENSE THAT YOU ARE A LOVING MAN, YOU HAVE KNOWN LOVE...



TRUE - BUT LOVE DIES QUICKLY WHEN IT IS BETRAYED - NOW LEAVE IT - GIVE US A COURSE FOR YOUR VESSEL...



HUGGING THE CLOUD-COVERED SURFACE OF DRAL'S OCEAN, SCORPIO TRAVERSED HALF THE PLANET UNTIL...

MY GOD! IS THAT REAL? THE SIZE OF IT...

SHE HOUSES A MILLION OF MY PEOPLE IN SUS-AN CHAMBERS. HER WEIGHT IS SO GREAT THAT WE HAD TO DESIGN HER TO OPERATE FROM WATER - THAT IS THE ONLY WAY SHE WILL NOT BREAK UP.

SOON AANYA LED THEM INTO THE HEART OF THE STUNNING, CITY-SIZED VESSEL...

WHY ME, EH? I SUPPOSE I HAVE TO BRING ORAC 'COS I'M EXPENDABLE...

YOU WOULD PREFER TO STAY ON BOARD TO FIGHT OFF AN ATTACK?

OH, ER... LEAD ON, AVON...

MY PEOPLE ARE ALL CARRIED IN THESE CHAMBERS. WE ARE ONLY RECALLED FROM OUR LONG SLEEP IF WE ARE NEEDED. AS I WAS FOR THIS MISSION...

COMPUTER IS A LIVING ORGANIC MACHINE. EXTERIOR SENSORS ARE LIMITED BUT OTHERWISE IT IS FAR BEYOND ANYTHING KNOWN IN THIS GALAXY. THE DATA IT REQUIRES IS IN MY MEMORY BANKS. IF YOU SO WISH I COULD ESTABLISH A DATALINK AND RELAY IT...

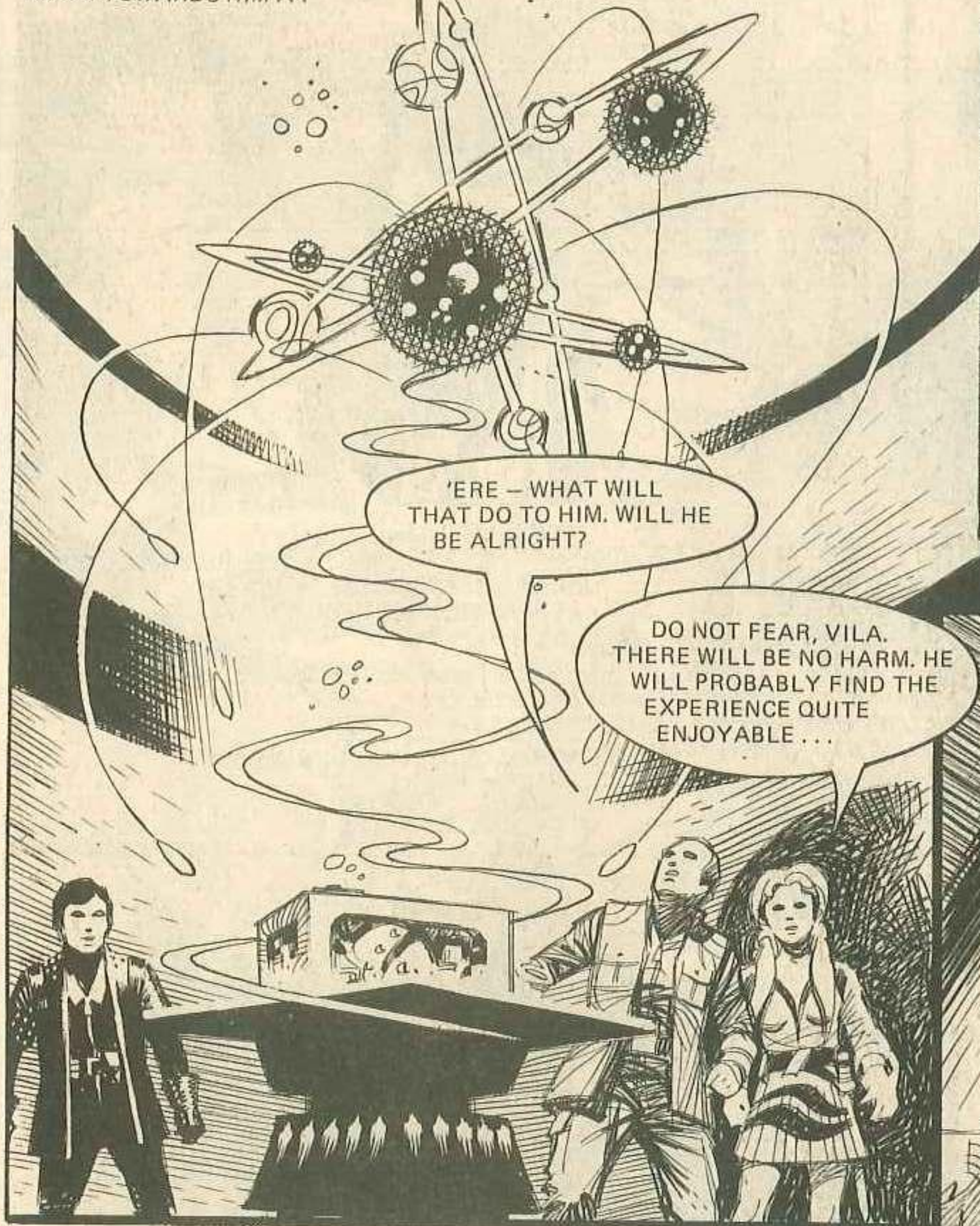
I DO - AANYA, HOW DO I CONNECT ORAC...?

AND THIS IS OUR COMPUTER - IT RUNS THE VESSEL DURING THE LONG INTERGALACTIC JUMPS...

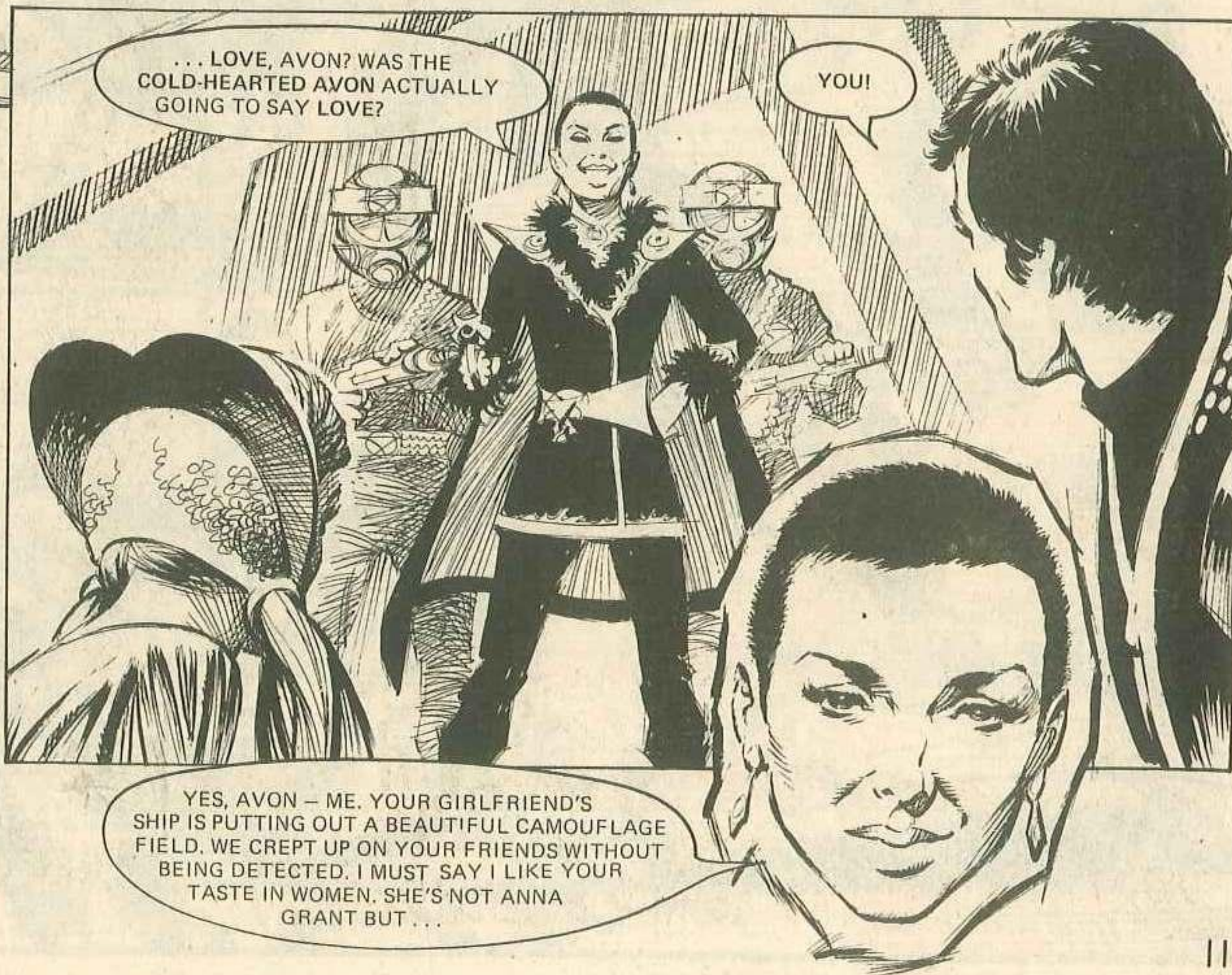
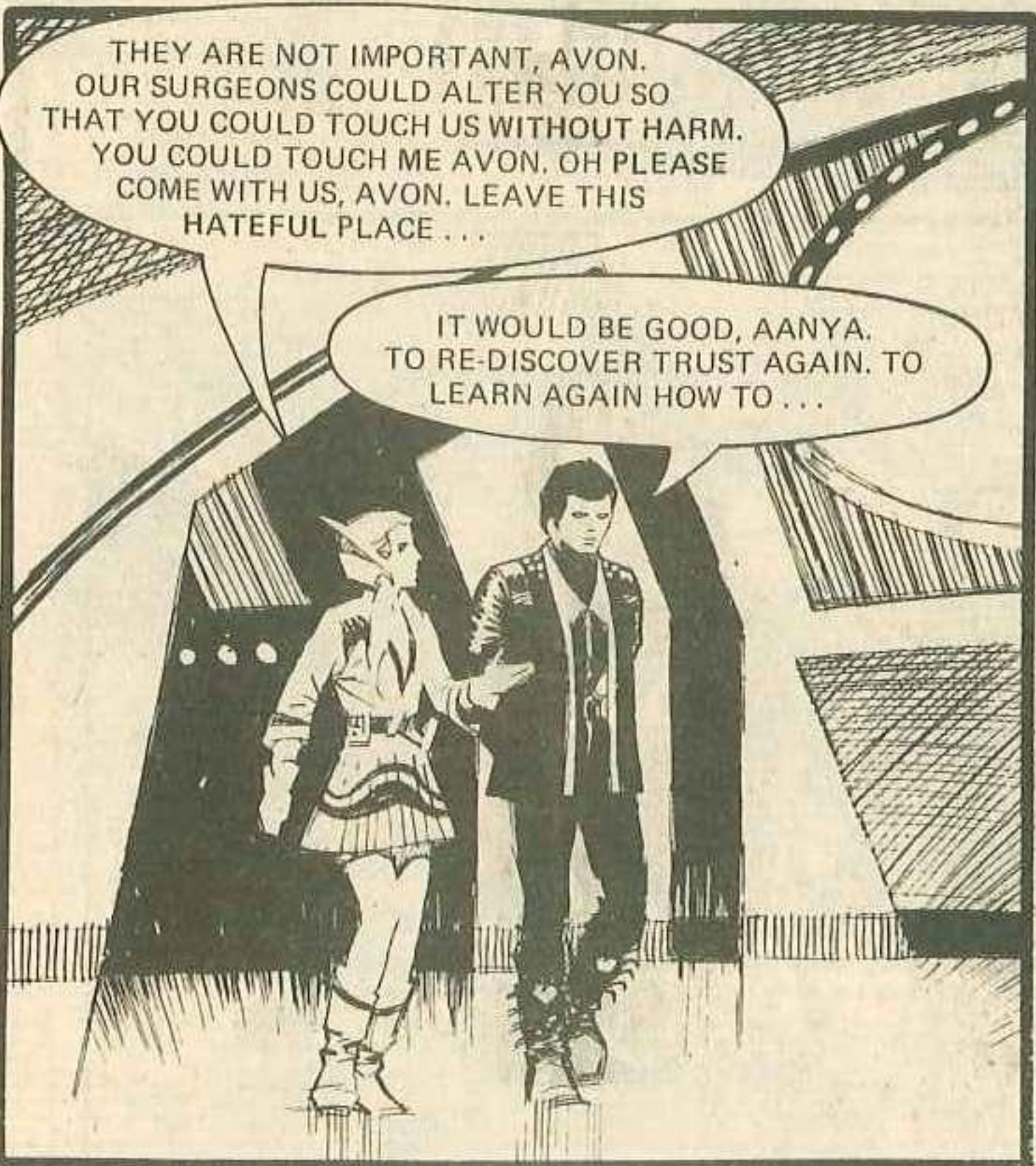
ORAC - REPORT.



ON AANYA'S INSTRUCTIONS, ORAC WAS PLACED ON THE CENTRAL PLATFORM AND A FIELD OF PURE ENERGY STARTED TO ARCH DOWN TOWARDS HIM...



SO AVON WAS ALONE WITH AANYA MOVING FURTHER INTO THE GREAT VESSEL...

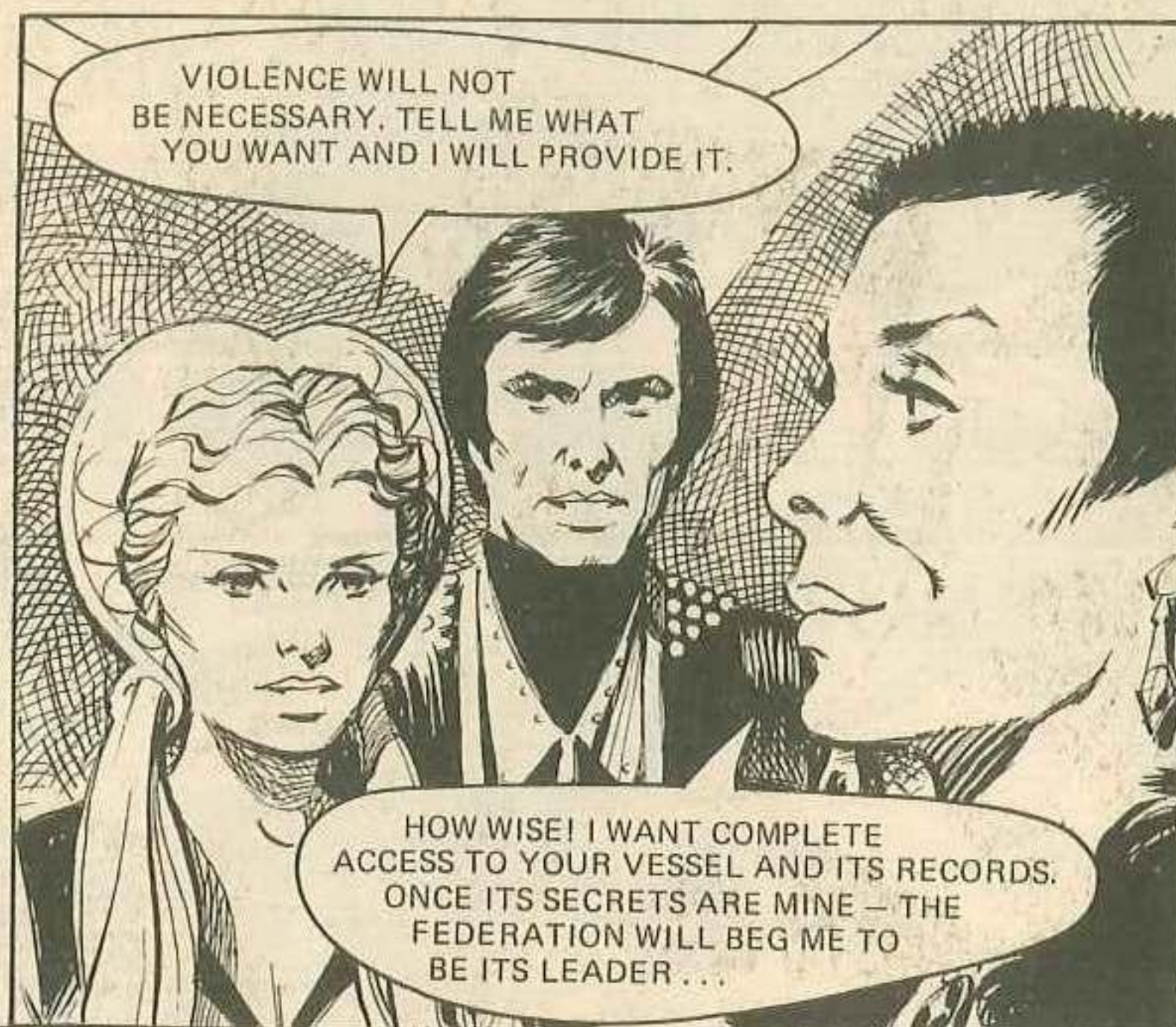






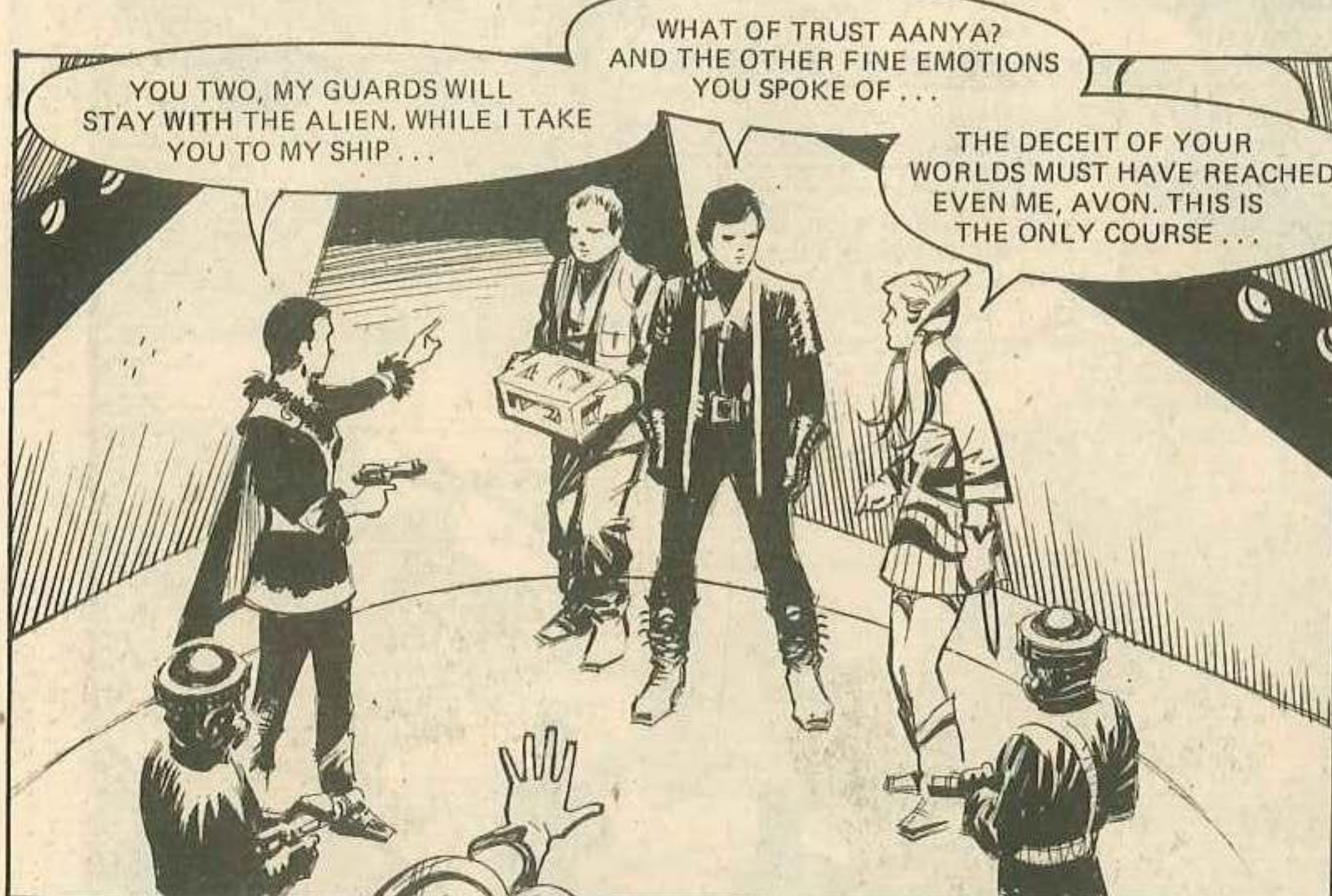
LAY ONE FINGER ON HER, SERVALAN AND I'LL ...

AH, YES - THE DEAR THING BURNS HORRIBLY IF I TOUCH HER. HOW CONVENIENT FOR ME. IT WILL BE EASY TO ENSURE HER CO-OPERATION ...



VIOLENCE WILL NOT BE NECESSARY. TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT AND I WILL PROVIDE IT.

HOW WISE! I WANT COMPLETE ACCESS TO YOUR VESSEL AND ITS RECORDS. ONCE ITS SECRETS ARE MINE - THE FEDERATION WILL BEG ME TO BE ITS LEADER ...



YOU TWO, MY GUARDS WILL STAY WITH THE ALIEN, WHILE I TAKE YOU TO MY SHIP ...

WHAT OF TRUST AANYA? AND THE OTHER FINE EMOTIONS YOU SPOKE OF ...

THE DECEIT OF YOUR WORLDS MUST HAVE REACHED EVEN ME, AVON. THIS IS THE ONLY COURSE ...



SOON, IN THE VESSEL'S COMPUTER ROOM, THE ATTENTION OF AANYA'S GUARD WAS DRAWN BY THE ASTONISHING SURROUNDINGS ...

A THOUSAND CURSES ON THIS HATEFUL VICIOUS GALAXY. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY NOW ...



THE WAY OF DEATH!



LATER, ON THE SURFACE OF THE ALIEN VESSEL ...

IT'S OVER AT LAST, AVON. WON'T YOU MISS THE THRILL AND EXCITEMENT?

THE ONLY THING I'LL MISS IS NOT KILLING YOU, SERVALAN ...



BUT JUST THEN A GREAT VIBRATION RAN THROUGH THE VAST SHIP ...

WHAT THE ...?

HER MASSIVE ENGINES STIRRED INTO LIFE



THE ALIEN BITCH. SHE'S BETRAYED ME. GUARDS K - I KILL THE PRISONERS AND GET ON THE SHIP...

NO! IT IS THEY WHO DIE...

NOW YOU, YOU HATEFUL HAG. YOU WILL FIND YOUR DEATH AT THE TIP OF THIS BLADE...

AND, AS THE VAST SHIP STARTED TO STAGGER UP TO FULL POWER THE DEADLY DUEL UNFOLDED.

UNTIL THE CUNNING SERVALAN SAW HER CHANCE...

AT FIRST, AANYA HAD THE UPPER HAND...

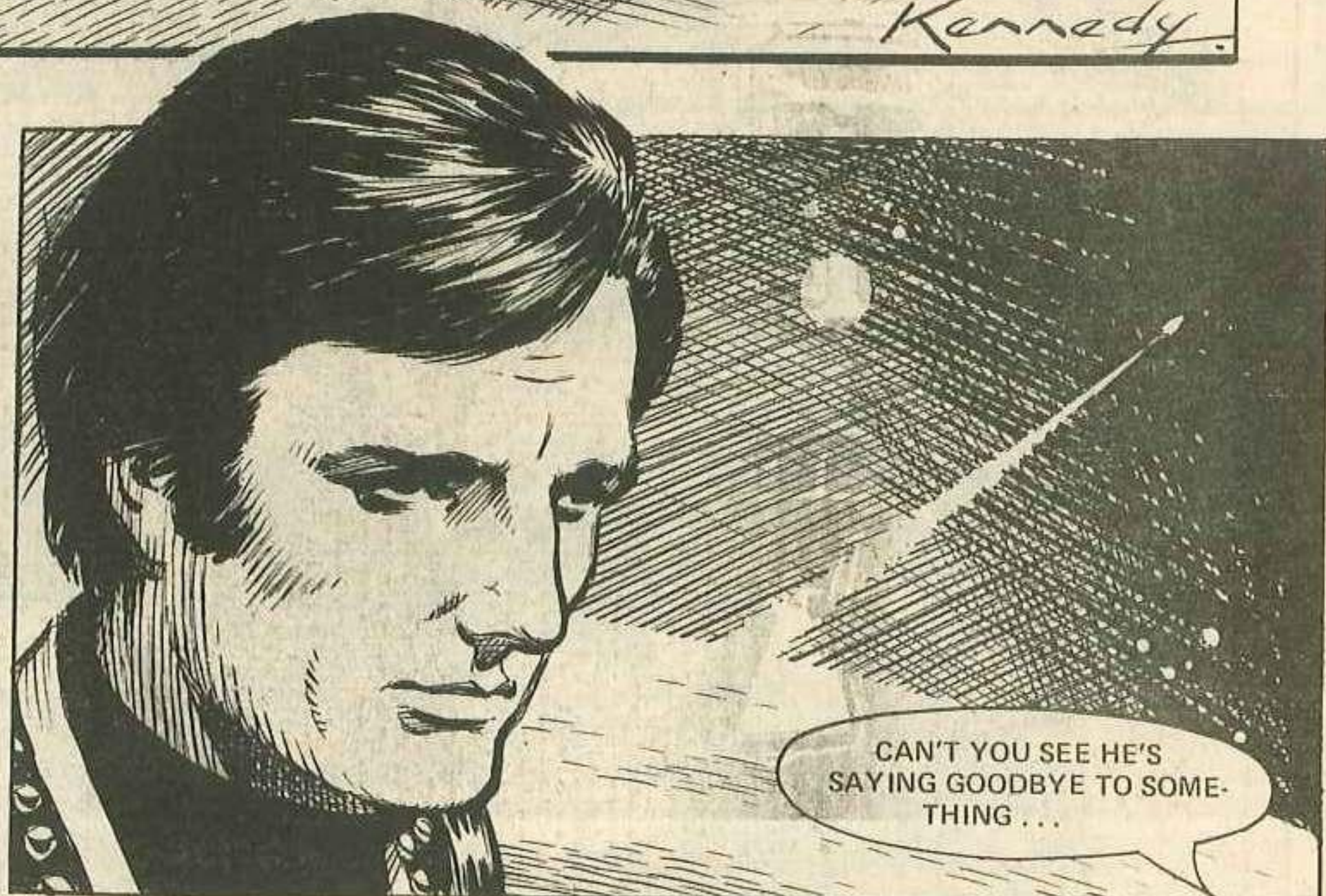
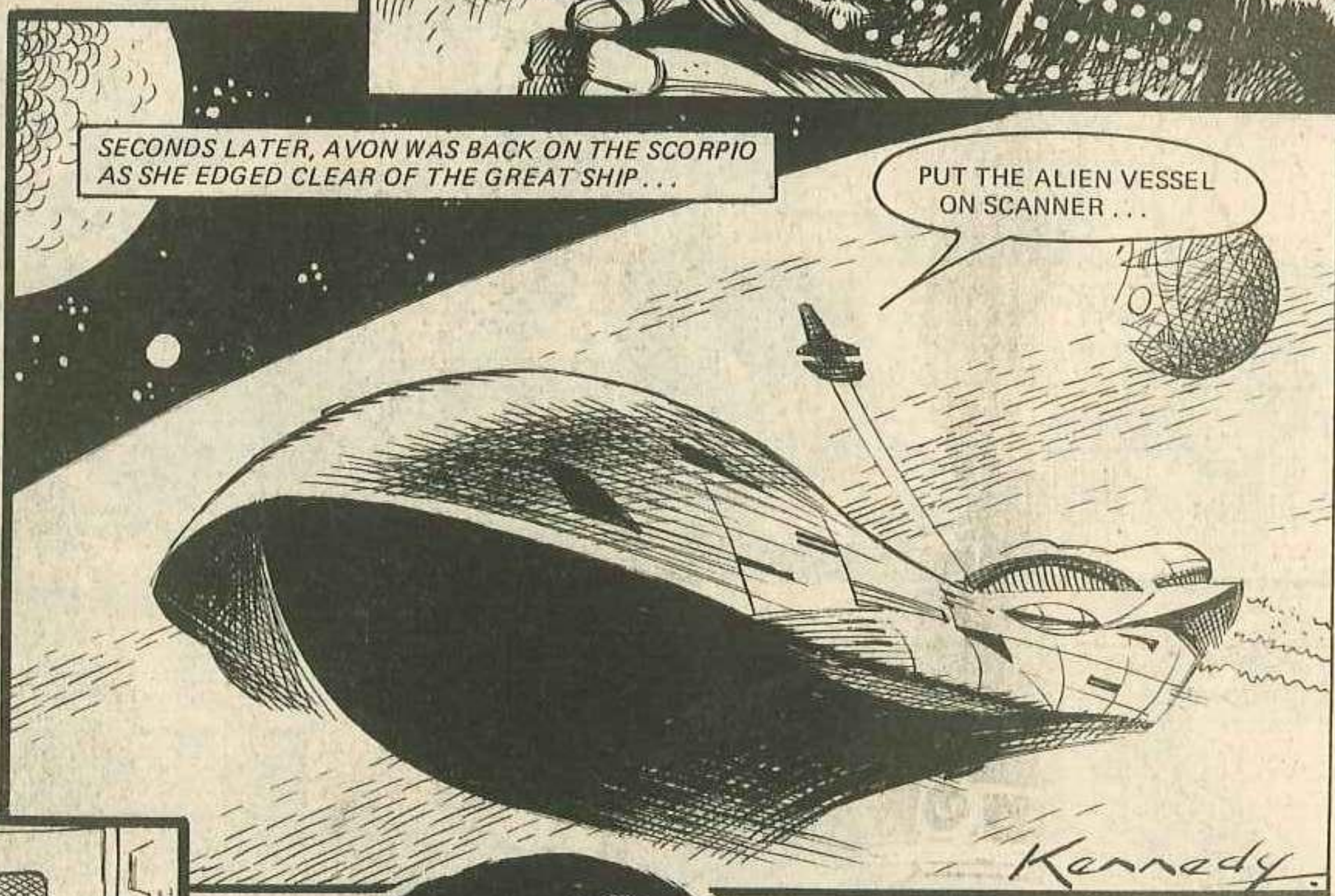
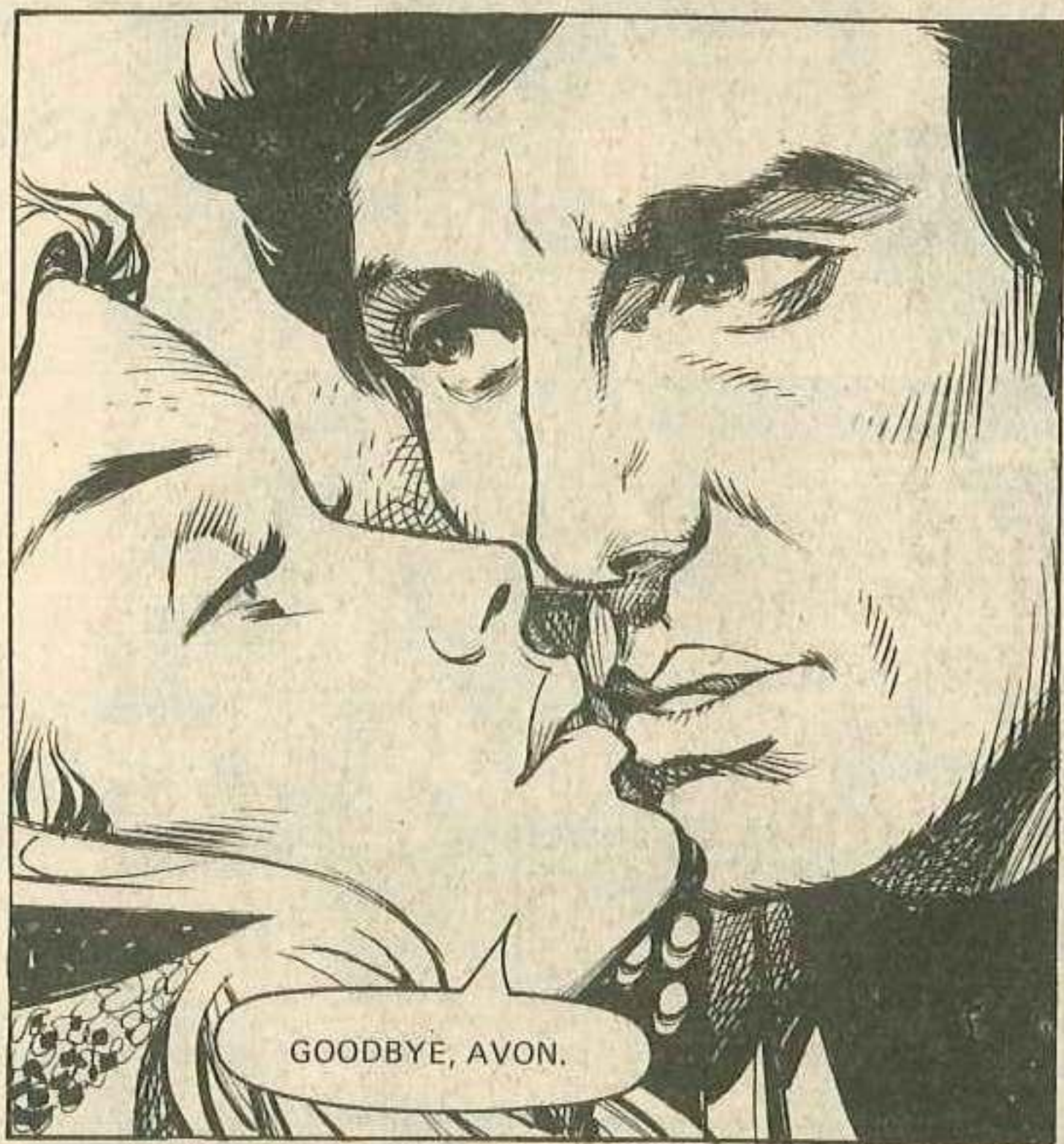
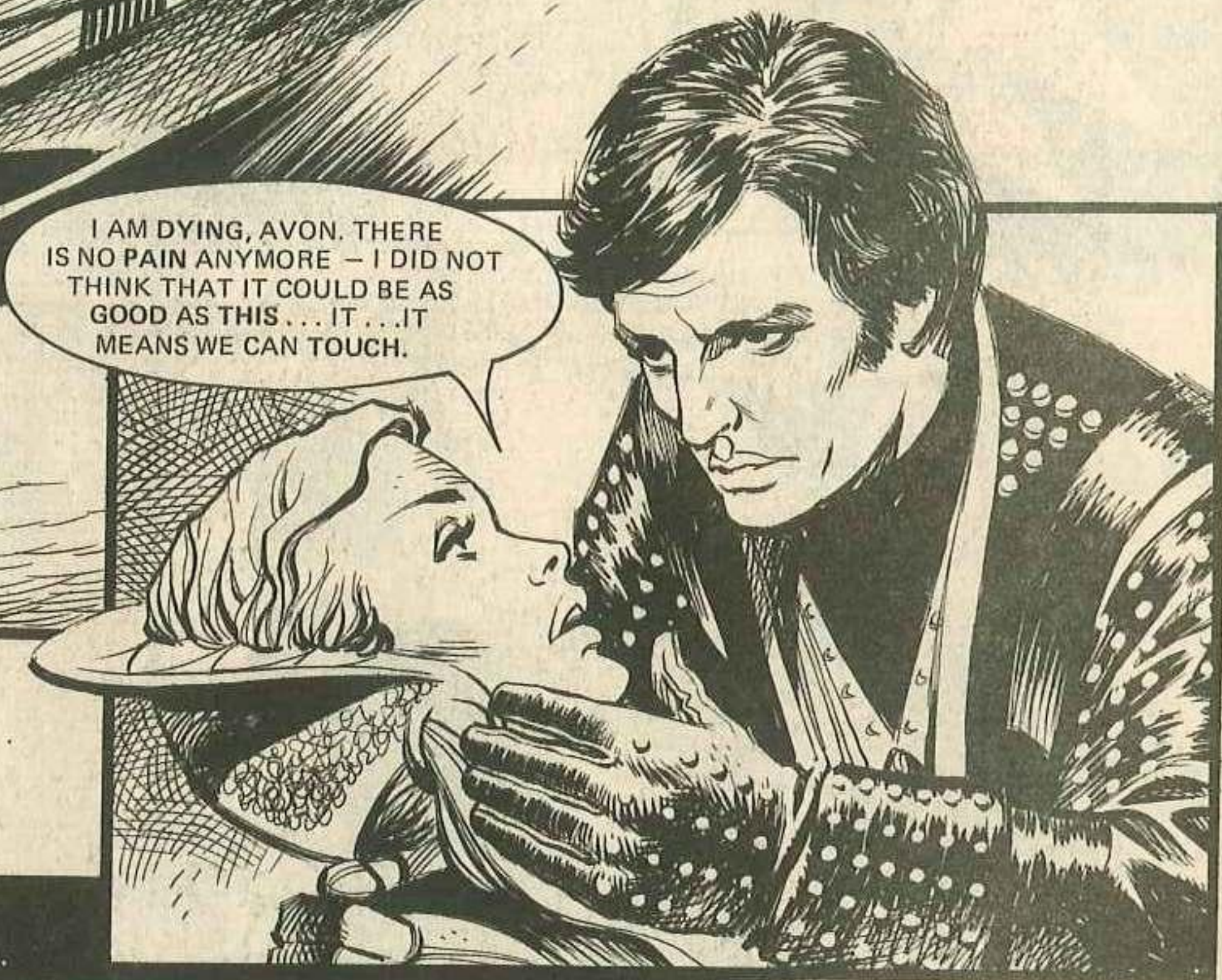
AS AANYA LAY DYING, AVON STRUGGLED TO HER SIDE...

AANYA - WHY? YOU NEVER STOOD A CHANCE...

IT WAS THE ONLY WAY. MY SHIP IS LAUNCHING ON AUTOMATIC AND I COULD NOT RESCUE YOU AND GET BACK INSIDE...

NOOOOOOO!







# WIN A CHANCE TO MEET THE STARS!



Here's a tremendous chance for you to meet the stars on the film set of the new Star Wars adventure 'Revenge of the Jedi.'

All you have to do is draw and name a new Star Wars Bounty Hunter and you could travel to Elstree Studios to watch the stars in action, talk to your heroes and maybe even your enemies.

There are also great prizes for the runners-up in the competition—100 of the exciting Star Wars Mini Rigs.

So hurry, put pen to paper. Somewhere in your imagination there's a Star Wars Bounty Hunter waiting to be discovered.

**STAR**  
—THE—  
**EMPIRE**  
**STRIKES BACK**  
**WARS**™

SEE OVER FOR COUPON.



## HOW TO ENTER.

All you have to do is design and draw a Star Wars Bounty Hunter that you think could be a match for Boba Fett™ or Dengar™ in the next Star Wars film. Give him a name and be sure to draw him in colour.

Send your drawing and the Star Wars Bounty Hunter's name to the address shown.

Also make sure you complete the coupon with your name, address and age and send it in with your entry.

## THE PRIZES.

2 boys or girls to see the filming of the new Star Wars film 'Revenge of the Jedi' at Elstree Studios, and meet some of the stars. Winners will also receive an All Terrain Armoured Transport (AT-AT)™ as featured in 'The Empire Strikes Back'. The winners will be chosen from two age groups—seven and under and over seven.

Runners up:—100 prizes of the spectacular Mini Rigs.

The 1st prize winners may be accompanied by one adult on their visit to Elstree Studios.

## RULES OF COMPETITION.

1. The competition is open to all UK residents aged 4 to 14, except children of employees of Palitoy and anyone directly concerned with the competition.

2. Entries must be received on or before 28th February 1982.

3. All entries received by the final date will be examined by a panel of judges and prizes awarded for the combination of the best drawing and most original name. The judges' decision shall be final and legally binding. No correspondence can be entered into.

4. Age of entrant will be taken into consideration when judging.

5. Winners will be notified by post. A full list of prize winners will be sent on request after 18th March 1982, if you send a stamped addressed envelope. Post your entry to "Draw a Star Wars Bounty Hunter", Palitoy Consumer Services, P.O. Box 9, Baker Street, Coalville, Leicester LE6 2DE.

6. By entering the contest, the entrant agrees that his or her entry becomes the sole property of Lucasfilm Ltd which shall own the copyright & all other rights to the entry, and will have the right to make any use of the entry including publication and promotional uses.

I have read the contest rules & regulations & understand that my entry will not be returned and will become the sole property of Lucasfilm Ltd. I expect no compensation or payment for my entry or for any use of it made by Lucasfilm or Palitoy.

Please print your name and address.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ BSI

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# POINTS OF VIEW

*We're still getting a lot of feedback from you readers . . . so keep it up! It's only by finding out what you feel about the paper, its features and stories — and what you'd like to see us put into its pages — that we can give you the monthly mag you want to read! Here are some more of the letters we've received . . .*

First of all, thanks to Marvel for bringing out a mag dealing with the best space fiction series ever (not excluding "Star Trek"). This has been missing for some time (i.e. since September 1977) and it's good to see the situation rectified. I would, however, like to make a few criticisms. They centre on the fact that the magazine is aimed at the lower teenage bracket. I don't actually think there is anything wrong with this in itself since many Blake's 7 fans fall within this category, but isn't it a bit narrow-minded? I myself am nearly 19 and many people I know who pretend not to watch Blake's 7 are 20-25 and not all of them read 2000 AD. In other words, comic-strips and puzzles do not appeal to everybody, and although I admit to reading and mildly enjoying this fictional element of B7 Monthly, I find the most interesting features so far are the interviews with the cast and I know for a fact that I am not alone in this point of view. Therefore would it be possible to expand the more 'serious' aspects of the magazine? It would be interesting to have interviews with the writers — where do they get their inspiration from?, etc. — and the technical crew who do the SFX and modelwork, etc. Also, the directors — what is involved in bringing a typical episode together?

Neil Faulkner,  
University of Stirling  
Stirling.

*Thanks for your suggestions, Neil. We always welcome constructive criticism and suggestions. You're probably not alone in your views on strip stories . . . but the overwhelming bulk of mail we get suggests that the strip stories in B7 are the most popular feature in the magazine . . . by far!*

I wish that you would make your magazine longer. I realise how hard it would be to keep up a reasonable amount of content, but a few more quizzes and a couple of competitions might help to lengthen it. I don't think that

"Vila's Gags" should be chuckled out. I realise that you are catering for a younger audience than me, but try to remember that some fans are adults, and also could you publish the addresses of some Fan Clubs? I get quite annoyed with my friends and neighbours, who hold Blake's 7 in contempt. Just because it is aimed at young teenagers, why should it immediately get a childish reputation? Nothing, except the departure of Paul Darrow or Jacqueline Pearce will stop me watching this great science fiction. I would like to congratulate the script writers and their editor Chris Boucher. I think that they do a great job, with the characters and the more or less fresh situations. I myself, as a writer, think that some of the personalities are dealt with very well. Good luck to all future episodes and issues!

Jane Holland,  
Port St Mary,  
Isle of Man.

Strange as it may seem, this is a true story that I tell. Every Wednesday, for a school project, I travel to a local electronics factory to meet a man who teaches me about his work. One week he turned up late, and when I asked him why he had been delayed, he told me this tale: The job of one of the women employees was to weld components together as they passed along a moving belt. To help her judge the exact moment when she should operate the welder, a small system had been rigged up which would flash a light at the correct time. That day however, despite her efforts for control, the light on the machine was flashing on and off and it was welding happily away on its own. She called in my teacher, yet even his efforts could do no good. So after lengthy consideration, they decided, in my teacher's words, to "call it Orac and leave it to get on with it."

Stuart Murdoch,  
Glenrothes,  
Fife.

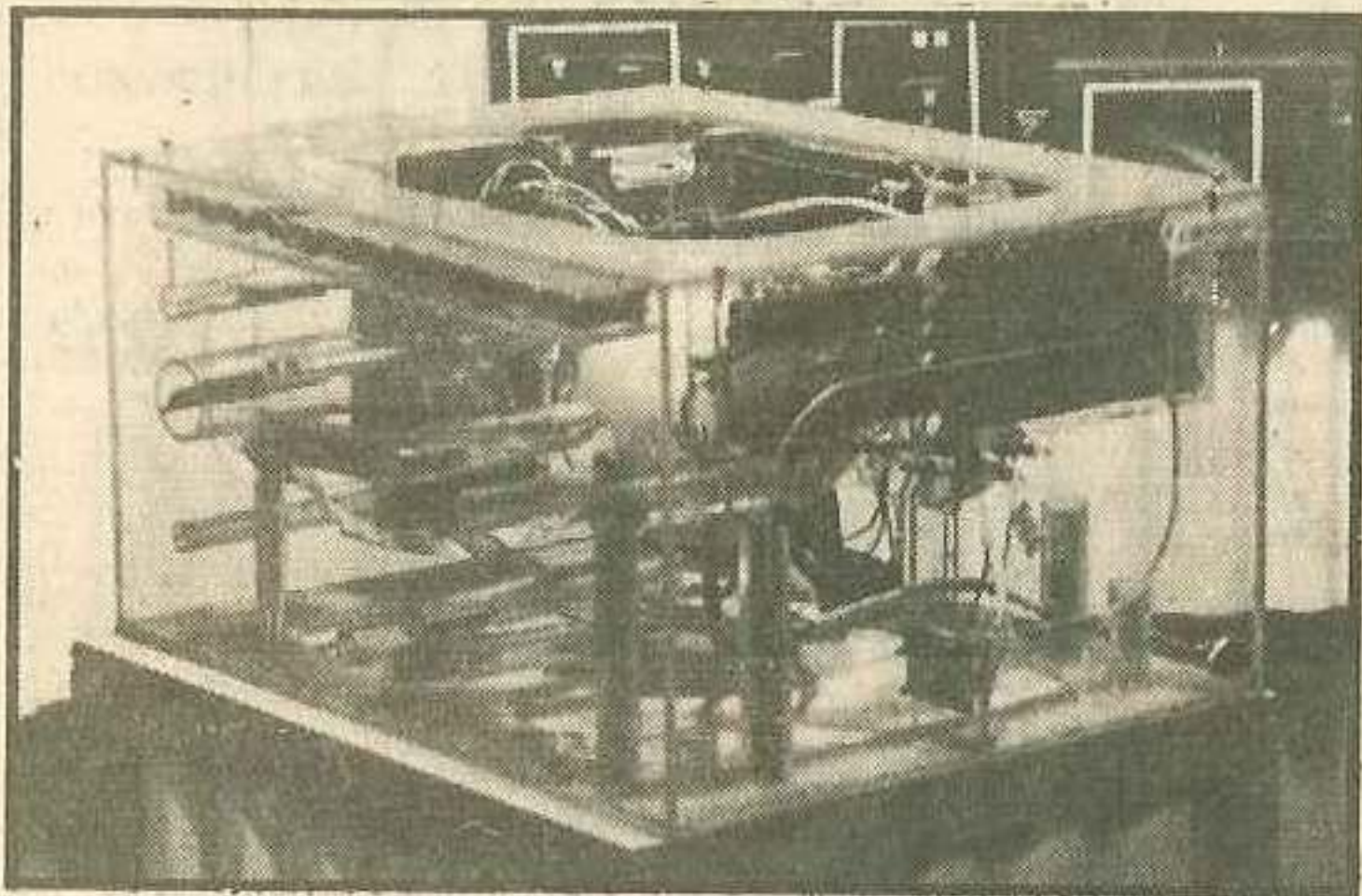
Orac says he is definitely not amused, Stuart.

If you're going to have a book/film review in B7 monthly, why don't you allow or invite the cast to do them? Surely it's as much their magazine as it is the fans? You might sometime do an interview with Tanith Lee, who not only wrote the radio play that Paul Darrow took part in, but also wrote the "Sarcophagus" episode in a Blake's 7 TV series. How about a 'build-it-yourself' Orac kit? It could have an accompanying slot-in cassette of a tetchy voice . . . (since when has Orac said 'sir'?) Oh, and you can remind Paul Darrow that Avon has said 'please' — in the "Rumours of Death" episode. And it wasn't in a cutting manner . . . more like a prying manner!

Valerie L.



# ASK



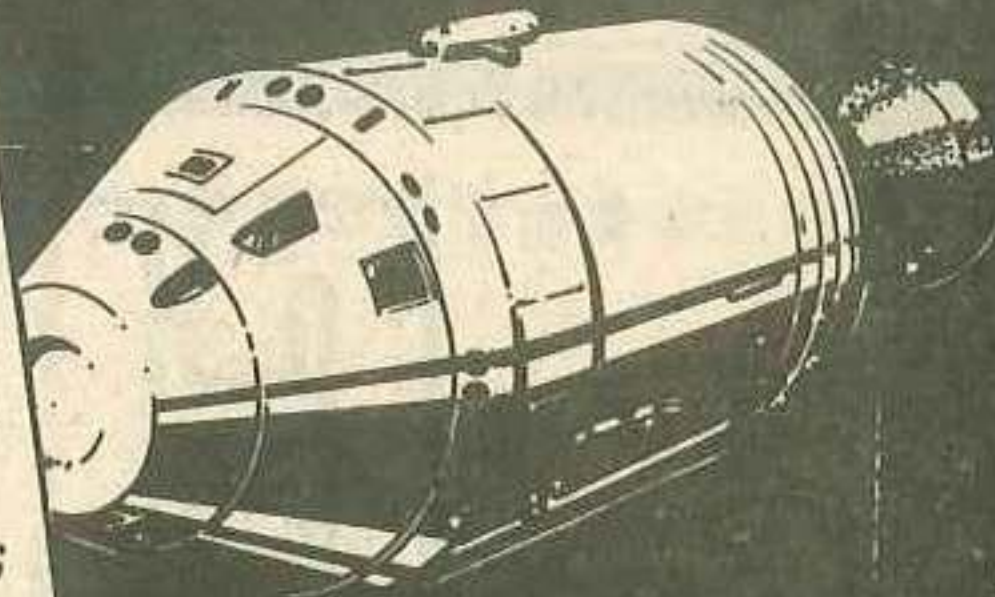
# ORAC

Your chance to put any questions you like to the super-computer. There shouldn't be too much he can't answer.

Dear Orac,  
How big is the sun? Why are Venus's rocks hotter than boiling water?

Kathryn James,  
Bexleyheath.

The sun is 864,000 miles in diameter, it weighs 1,964 million, million, million tons. The high surface temperature of Venus is caused by two factors: a. Its close proximity to the sun and b. its dense atmosphere: the thick clouds have the effect similar to that experienced inside a greenhouse — they trap and retain the sun's heat.



Dear Orac,  
Could you please estimate how long it will be before the sun blows up?

Stephen Herbert,  
Whitstable.

Stellar detonation of the sun is not expected in anything less than 10,000 million years.

Dear Orac,  
Can you please tell me how a black hole is formed?

Miss S Brook,  
Skegness.

A black hole has been called 'the ultimate state of matter' — theorists believe that it is all that is left after a star dies: as the nuclear fires which power a star begin to go out, all the matter of a star starts to collapse inwards (in some, it explodes outwards and forms a supernova). As the immense pressure builds up, even the atoms themselves become crushed and the normal laws of physics lose their meaning. Eventually, the crushed matter becomes so dense that it ceases to exist in our universe and leaves behind only the hole through which it has destroyed itself. This phenomena remains behind and is endowed with the strangest gravitational field ever recorded. Current theories point to the fact that black holes may be a gateway to other universes.

Dear Orac,  
How many stars are visible to the naked eye in the star cluster known as the Pleiades?

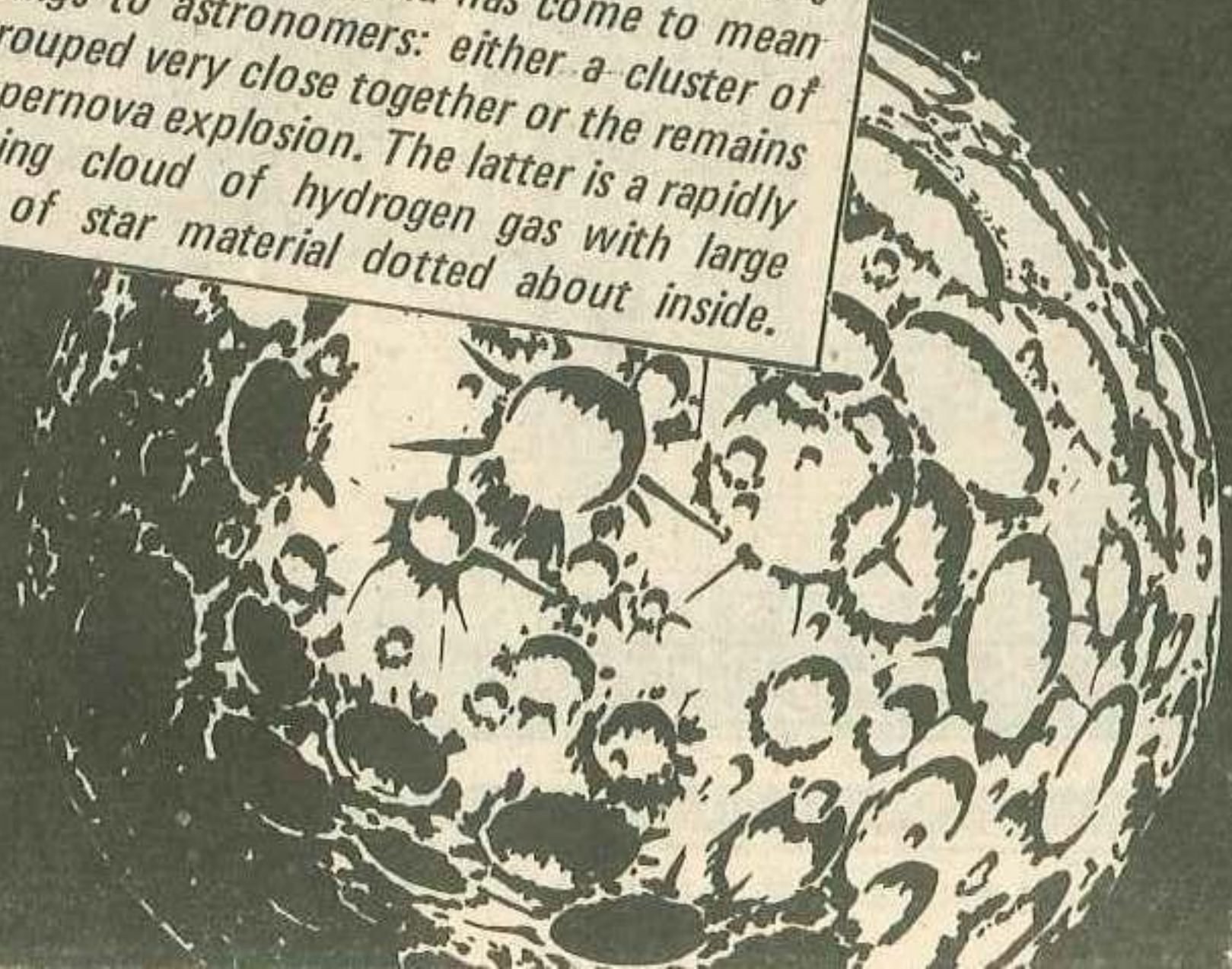
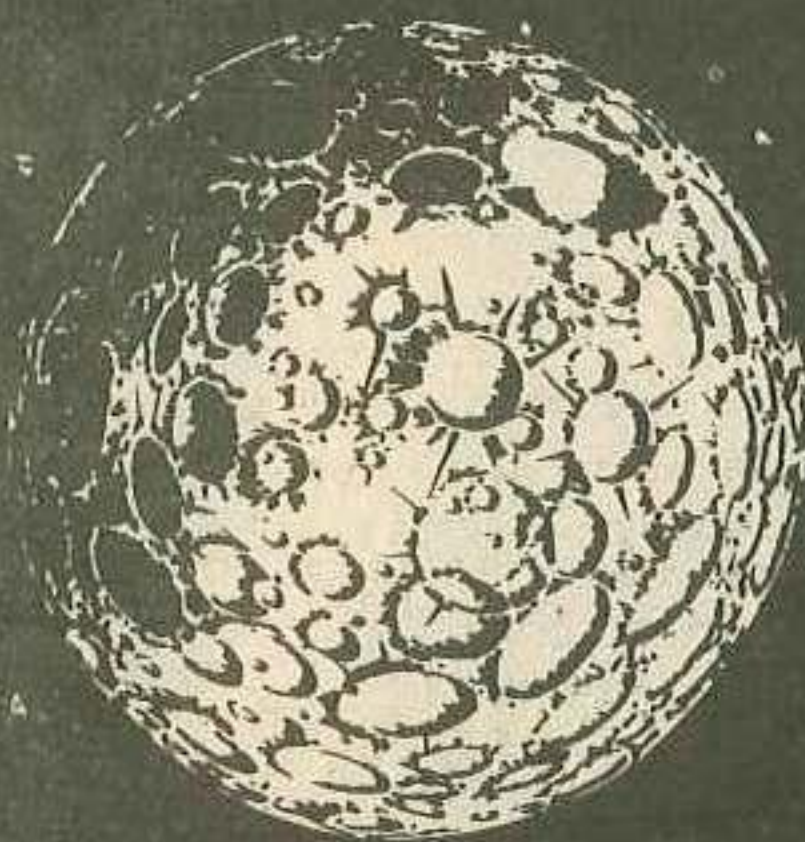
Ray Bradshaw,  
Derby.

The Pleiades cluster has been known to astronomers from very ancient times, often having supernatural qualities attributed to them. There are seven stars visible in the cluster although one of these has faded from view in recent centuries and is known as the 'phantom' star of the cluster.

Dear Orac,  
About how hot is the centre of the Earth? And my brother would like to know what is a nebula and what causes it?

Morag Ewen,  
Oxford.

The estimated temperature at the Earth's core is 6,000 F. A nebula has come to mean two things to astronomers: either a cluster of stars grouped very close together or the remains of a supernova explosion. The latter is a rapidly expanding cloud of hydrogen gas with large clumps of star material dotted about inside.





# GLYNIS BARBER

## talks to KEN ARMSTRONG



Blake lies dead on the floor with his killer, Avon, staring down at the bleeding corpse, smoking gun in hand. Vila makes a desperate bid to snatch a gun but, as he does so, a shot rings out and he slumps to the floor. Federation guards surge forward into that place of death. Tarrant and Soolin dive for their guns, Tarrant then making a break for the door. Soolin tries to cover him. Fires once — only once — then is gunned down.

So ends the character of Soolin in episode thirteen of Blake's 7 . . . or does it? But, if she does die, could there be a more fitting place for her short life to end? The action takes place on Soolin's own planet, the place of which she warned Avon before the Scorpio made its fateful journey. Soolin's parents were killed on that planet. . . now it looks as though she has fallen victim to the federation in the same way.

"When I read the script of episode thirteen," remarks Glynis Barber, Soolin of the series, "I felt very depressed. Not because of it being the last script of the series but because of the way we go down. It all happens so quickly and it's not a very heroic ending for us. It's not as though there was a great battle in the skies and we lose. We are just overwhelmed, falling victims to the federation as so many others have done throughout the series. It's a hard way to go. . . and a very upsetting one as far as I'm concerned."

As may be detected from the way Glynis discusses her part in the last episode of the series, it is not difficult to believe she has taken more than just a passing interest in her role as Soolin, but more of that later.

Born in Africa, Glynis confesses to having quite a lonely childhood.

"I have no real brothers and sisters although I have a step-brother and step-



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**BLAKES 7**

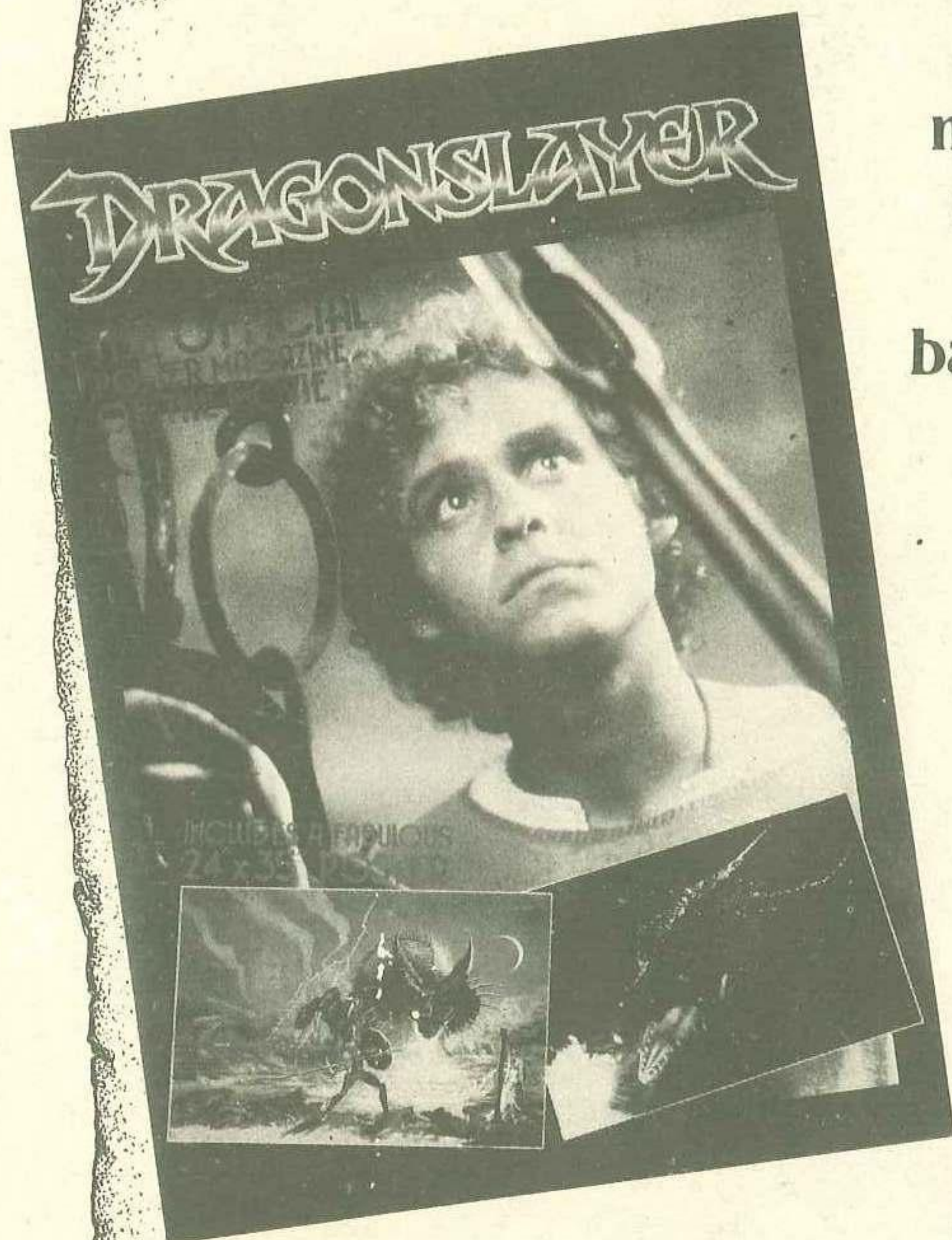
**Glynis  
Barber  
as  
SOOLIN**



Marvel Magazines Present

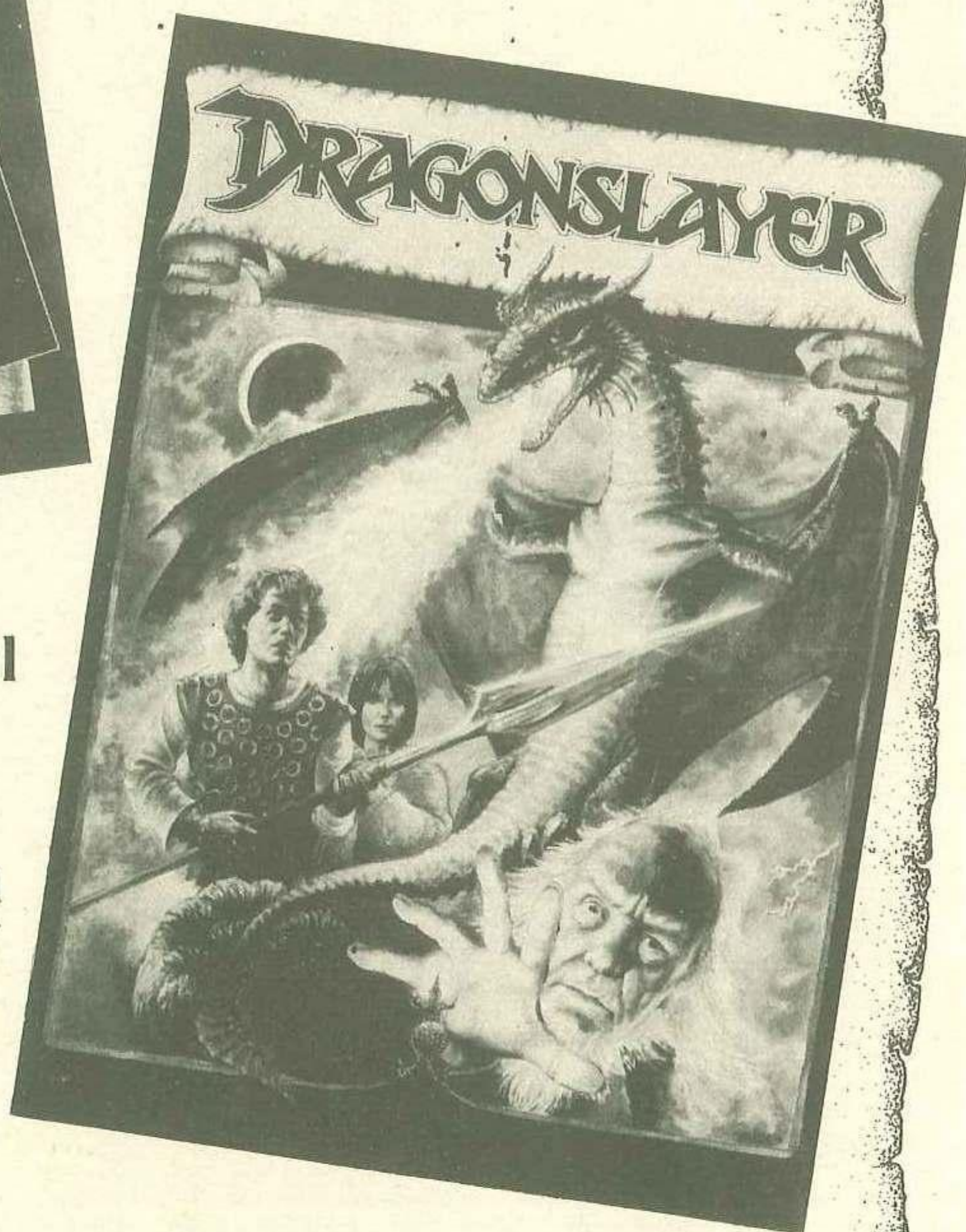
# DRAGONSLAYER

The official poster  
magazine of the movie  
featuring full colour  
photographs and  
background information,  
plus a fabulous  
24"x 35" poster.  
65p



A Marvel Super Special  
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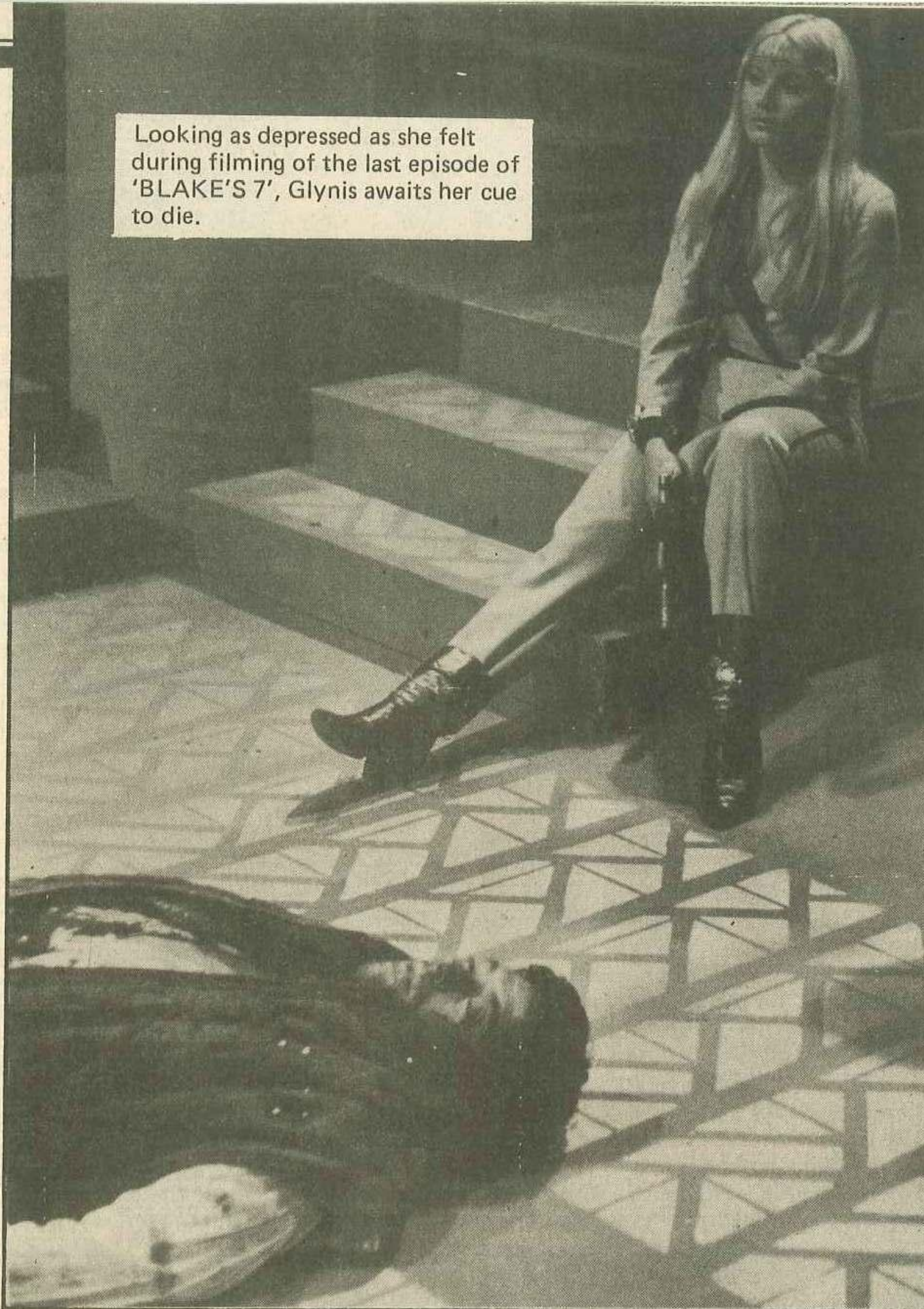
75p



Now On Sale



Looking as depressed as she felt during filming of the last episode of 'BLAKE'S 7', Glynis awaits her cue to die.



sisters and half brother and half sister, all very complicated, but in effect, I was brought up as an only child. I filled my time with dreams and watching films, wanting to become involved with the stories I saw on the screen. I think I was quite young when I decided I would eventually become an actress and play all those roles which I found so magical as a child. I liked and still like the idea of being many people in one lifetime and, for that reason, I love being an actress."

Despite having such a goal so early in life, it was some time before Glynis became involved with acting. "I did no acting at all until I was a teenager because most of my time was taken up with dancing and reading. I used to read a phenomenal amount, mostly classical and historical romance material and when I wasn't reading, I was attending ballet classes. I eventually gave up ballet at the age of sixteen because I'd reached the stage where it was becoming strenuous. One had either to carry on and aim for a

career in ballet or give up completely. I chose to give it up and took up modern dancing instead. All this against a background of school work... which I hated!"

Glynis confesses to not being the most diligent of pupils. "I hated school with a passion. I loathed being made to do something just because you were told to do it. I always wanted a reason but, when you're a child, adults are not prepared to give you an explanation for everything. I also hated having to do everything by bells. I understand the reason why life had to be so regimented at school, but it was not to my liking. I found it very difficult to conform like the other children."

Her lack of acceptance of discipline was even more apparent in class. "Although I liked subjects such as Maths and French, even history, I found the way they were taught very boring. The only thing I really excelled at was being kicked out of class. You see, I used to lose concentration during lessons and

start chatting to my classmates. This so infuriated the teachers I was forever being ordered out of the classroom. It was also because of this I was nearly expelled just before my final exams. I was only saved by the headmistress in the end because she found my humour amusing so she let me stay."

Glynis was first 'thrust' into acting when the school 'house' was about to perform a play. 'Until then I'd always refused to go on the stage because I was so nervous but a friend of mine was directing and she insisted I play a part so, eventually, I did. After that, and having found the experience very exhilarating, I was nominated by my house to do public speaking. It kindled an interest that had always been there but had never been brought out so than I started taking elocution lessons, entering contests and thoroughly enjoying myself. It was only later I realised this is the sort of thing I had always wanted to do... but it took others to force me into doing it."

### GOING TO DRAMA SCHOOL

Glynis needed no forcing when it came to deciding what career she would follow. For many years she had decided she would like to attend drama school, but it had to be in London... so London it was.

"I did have a break of one-and-a-half years between leaving school and attending drama school and, in retrospect, I'm glad I did. When I began at drama school, I found too many of the people in my same year had little or no experience of the outside world which meant their approach left a great deal to be desired. Drama school, however, seems to have that aspect under control since they attempt at the school to break you down then build you up again. Sometimes, though, they successfully break people down but do not know how to build people up again. I was lucky, though, because I believed in myself and as long as I kept reminding myself of that, I was all right."

After a three year intensive course at drama school, Glynis was ready to take on the world of theatre. "My first job came at Chelmsford when I was employed as an acting ASM (assistant stage manager) where I ended up doing everything from acting to lighting, producing sound effects and prompting as well as having seven costume changes during a performance of 'MY COUSIN RACHEL'. It was all very worthwhile... but I'll never ASM again!"

Her first professional appearance at Chelmsford was also the first time Glynis appeared in front of a proper paying audience. How did she feel?

"I was very nervous but I loved it. You see, if you're comfortable in a part it's the most terrific feeling. If you're not happy with the role, and you know





Always in the thick of the action... that's Soolin.

you're bad it is absolute torture and you can never overcome your nerves. I don't believe there are very many good directors around who can help you overcome problems by guiding you through the part. If you're uncomfortable in a role... it's hell out there on the stage when so many people are watching you not being very 'right'. It's very much up to the actor to ensure they work at their own part a little every night until it all clicks."

After Chelmsford Glynis had her very first introduction to Blake's 7. "I played a mutoid and had great fun leaping off rocks and strangling people." laughs Glynis. "I had some lines but not too many so it was very enjoyable. Little did I know I'd be back a few years later in a very different role... at least I hope it's different!"

Before Glynis was destined to return to the series, a career in the theatre and in films was to follow. "My next job was at Nottingham in Rep. for six months and there I really learned a lot. It was just like being back in drama school in many ways. However, nowadays actors can't really use repertory companies to learn their craft. They have to know their job before joining because, even in rep., professionalism nowadays is everything. I was very glad of what I'd been taught at drama school as it gave me a firm ground-

ing on which to build my career."

A part in a horror film, 'TERROR', soon followed and Glynis confesses to being really terrified by the whole thing. "I had to do a scene running through a forest at four in the morning with only the sound of the cameraman running behind me for company. Afterwards someone said I looked really frightened. I was!"

More television work followed the film and for Glynis things seemed to be going too well. They were. "I went through a very bad patch for a while. I was out of work, I became ill, I was homeless and it was the worst time of my life. It seemed as though nothing was going right for me. The phase lasted for two months then things started to improve. I was granted a mortgage, secured a part in a West End play, was cast in a big film and from then on, things have never been better. Having had a rough patch, it really makes you appreciate the good times."

### STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

One fine example of how her luck changed can be seen from another TV role Glynis secured. "I was cast in an episode of 'THE SANDBAGGERS', playing a Russian spy. All my part was location work, set in Malta. I was flown out there for a week to be told I was on 'stand-by' to be called at any moment. I looked round the luxury hotel, saw the swimming pool and told them if they wanted me... that's where I'd be... and there I stayed for a week!"

A less luxuriant location was soon to follow when Glynis was cast in an episode of SHERLOCK HOLMES which was being filmed in Warsaw. "I must confess I

found the place very depressing. It was prior to the Solidarity Campaign starting and one could feel the tension in the place. The people looked as depressed as their surroundings, the shops had very little to offer and the hotels were appalling. I was only too glad to return to England once filming was over."

Before returning to BLAKE'S 7, Glynis had a very busy year in television and films, including playing with Stuart Whitman in the film 'GREED', soon to be released. Then it was back to BLAKE'S 7.

"I was interviewed by the producer, Vere Lorrimer, who told me all about the part and the developments and plots... for a full two hours. I didn't get a chance to say a word. Then at the end, he told me how nice it had been talking to me... and that was it. A few days later I was offered the part! It made me almost ashamed that, since watching a few episodes right at the very beginning, I had not kept up with the series... until now, that is! I didn't even know that Tarrant and Dayna were in the series because I didn't know the others had left... but that's showbiz..!

"Coming back into the series, though, even if my first part was only as an extra, I really felt at home in the studio. Everything was so familiar. The only disconcerting part was right at the very beginning of this series we went on location and did little bits from six episodes, never following through one complete episode. It felt very strange since my relationship with the others was supposed to develop during that time... but no time had elapsed as far as my acting was concerned. It gave me an impression of people in the series which is

"I felt completely at home when I joined the series". Glynis, left, enjoys a joke with Steven Pacey, Mike Keating and Paul Darrow.







Always fast on the draw. . . that's Soolin's trademark.

so different to the impressions I have of them now but time, I hope, has established the character of Soolin as far as the viewers are concerned."

Speaking of viewers, Glynis is very grateful for the reaction she has had since appearing in the series. "I've had a very good response, which is nice, and I would like to thank those who have taken the time and trouble to write to me expressing their views. It's very helpful and heartwarming to know people are actually watching your performance and appreciating it. After all, television is not like the theatre. It takes time for reaction to reach you but I've been delighted with my fan mail so far."

The development of Soolin as a character has depended to a large extent on the writers of the series but Glynis admits to having modified her to a degree. "Soolin is introduced as a hard, tough character and I played her like that in episode one, but I've never played her as tough as that since then. She's mellowed as the series has progressed and I hope that comes over on the screen. Soolin has relaxed into the series just as I have. I actually find her quite a sad character now.

## DOOM AND GLOOM

"She has aligned herself with this group of people against the federation but, as the episodes progress, it becomes more and more clear that they are becoming overwhelmed. . . right up to the last episode when it happens for real. Since, also, it happens on Soolin's home planet, it is almost as though the destruction of the Scorpio and its crew were associated with Soolin and their doom charted from the moment she joined them"

The feeling of doom and gloom

extended beyond the script to the location filming for the last episode. "I remarked to the others there was a very peculiar atmosphere about when we were filming, nothing that you could put your finger on. . . but it was there. . . and not just because Gareth Thomas, Blake, was around either! It was something in the air which made me shudder, nothing I could explain but it was there."

The effect of the last episode on the viewing public has had the same kind of reaction Glynis experienced. . . but more on that in a later issue.

When not busy in front of a TV camera or a theatre audience, what does Glynis like to do with her spare time?

"I love reading whenever I get the

chance but if I'm busy, the opportunity to read seldom arises. I also love to dance and watch good performances at the theatre but life has been so hectic that work is the only thing I have time for at the moment."

As far as astrology is concerned, Glynis admits she likes to read her horoscope but places little store by some of the predictions. "There are always one or two which seem to be very appropriate but I never let them rule my life."

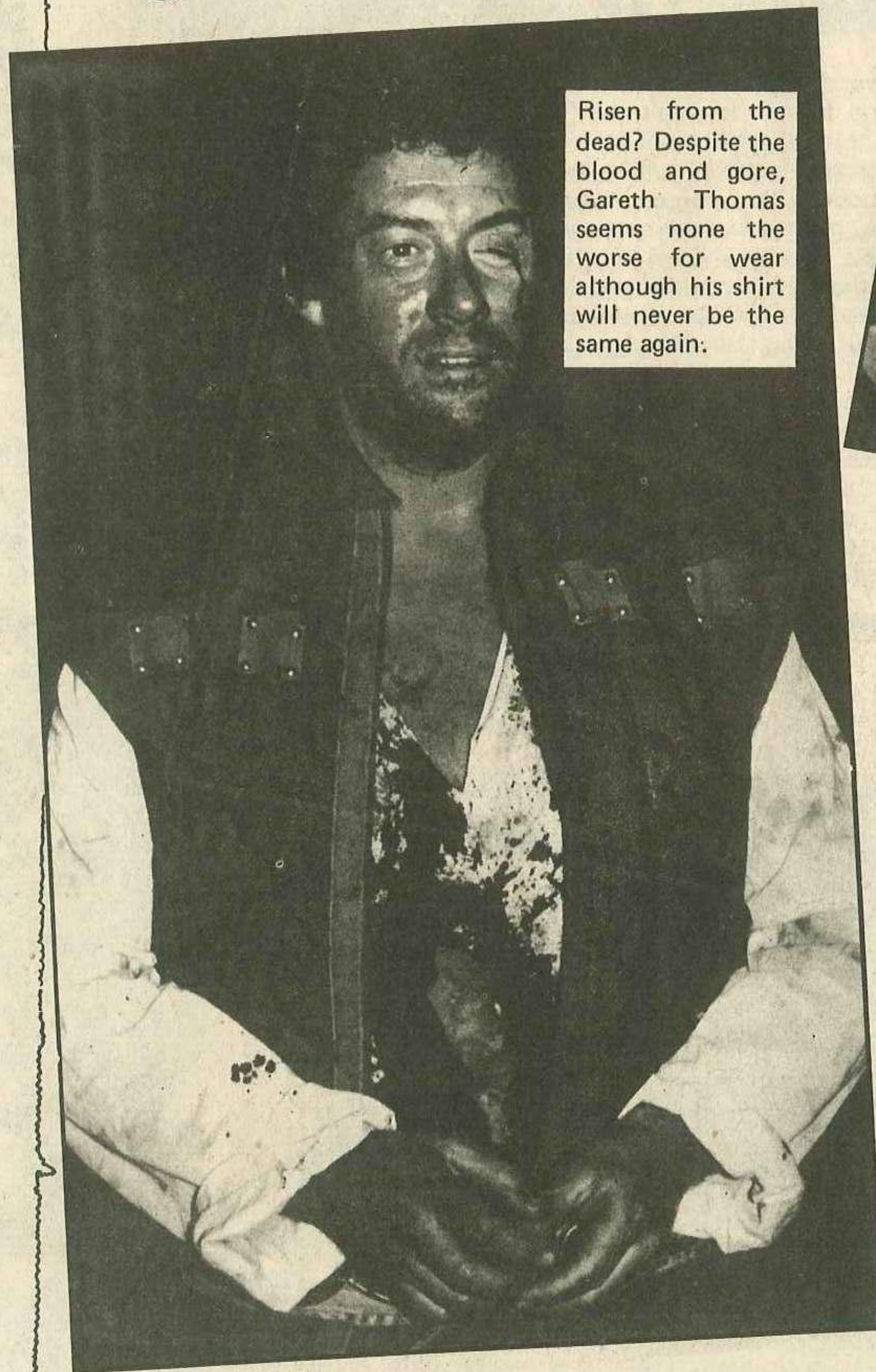
There was one prediction, despite what Glynis may say, that was indeed a glimpse into the future for her. . . and it happened the day she was born. Her 'star sign' . . . she's a SCORPIO!

Scorpio by birth. . . and Scorpio to death. Born a Scorpio, Glynis Barber as Soolin is taken to her death on board Scorpio.

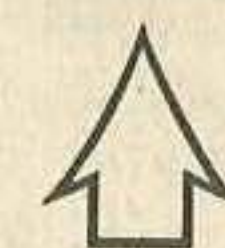
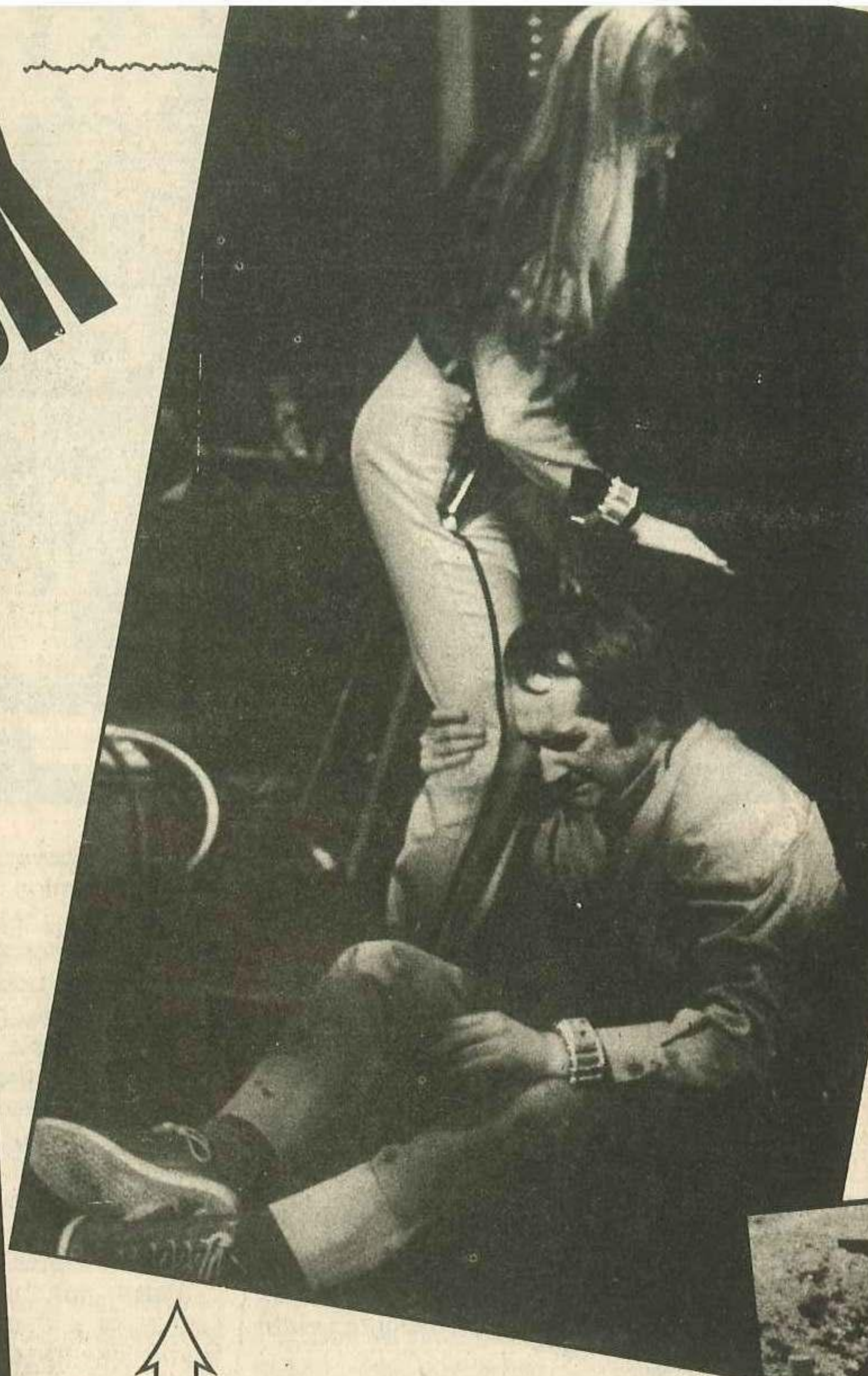




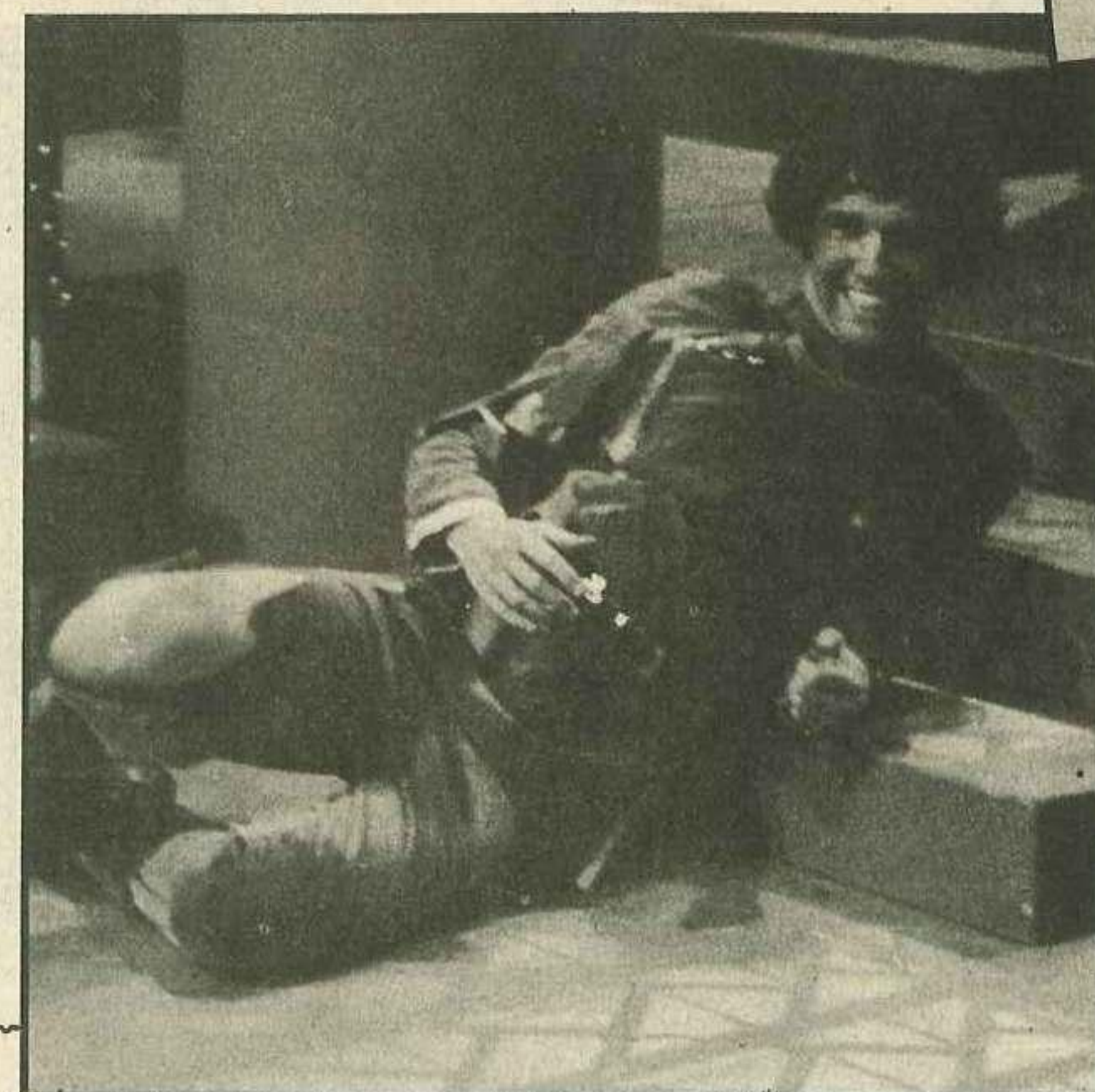
# BLAKE'S 7 SCRAPBOOK



Risen from the dead? Despite the blood and gore, Gareth Thomas seems none the worse for wear although his shirt will never be the same again.



Mike Keating as Vila seems to be seeking comfort from Glynis Barber having been knocked to the ground by bounty hunters . . . but is about to get a Karate chop for his pains.



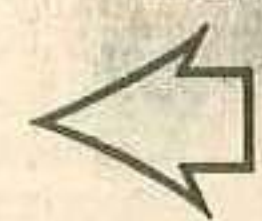
Not all locations are mud and chalk. As the 'slaves' line up for inspection, the camera crew swelter in blistering sunshine . . . somewhere in Dorset.

Who are these giants giving Scorpio a helping hand? The lads from Visual Effects line up the model Scorpio for a flying sequence.



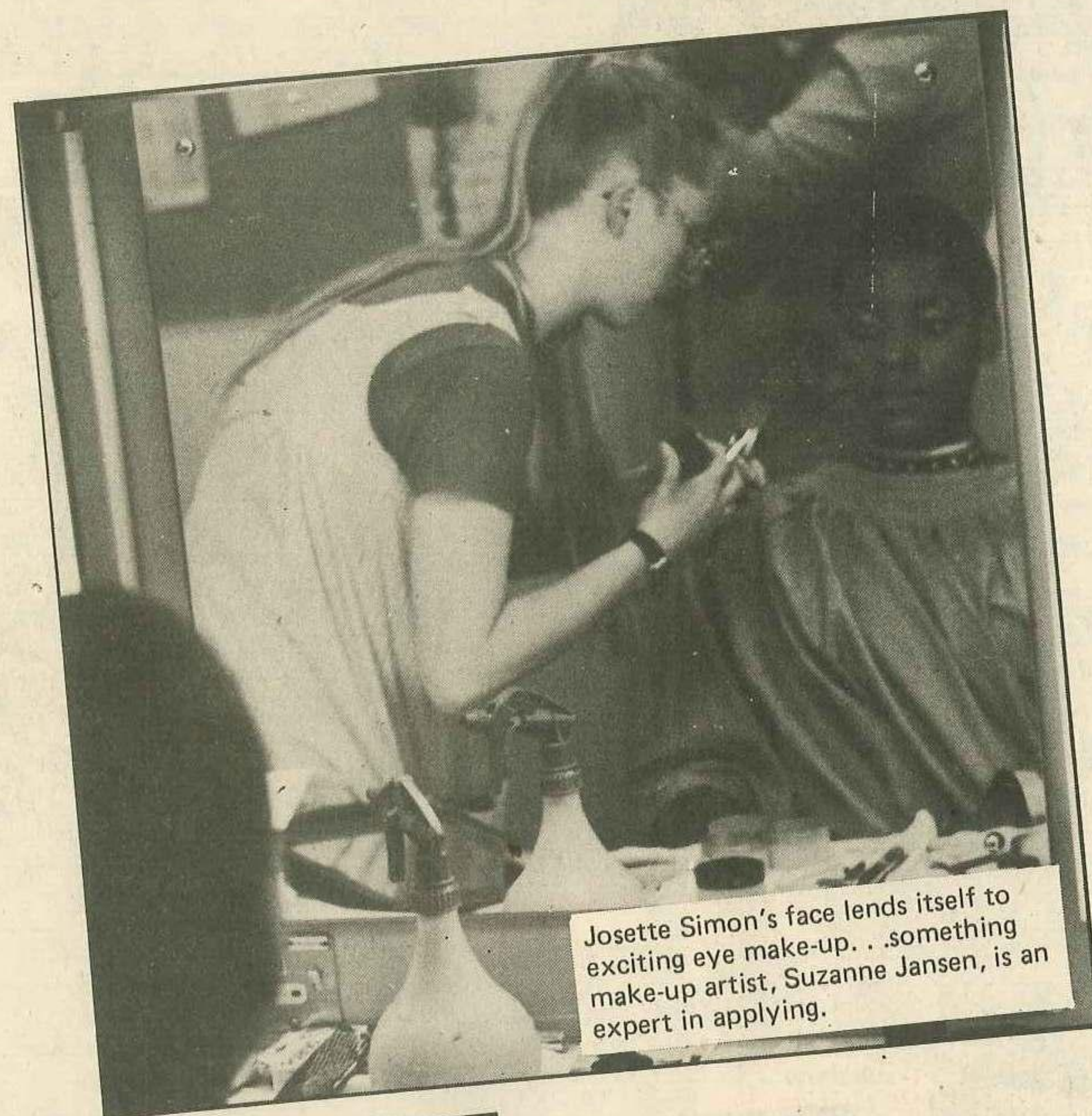
It can be dangerous work filming BLAKE'S 7 as senior cameraman Finton Sheenan finds out. Having filmed a chase sequence at high speed from the back of a Range Rover, there is still the clapperboard to register . . . regardless of the speed of the vehicle!

Even in death . . . Steven Pacey can still manage a smile.





# THE UNSUNG HEROINES CONT.



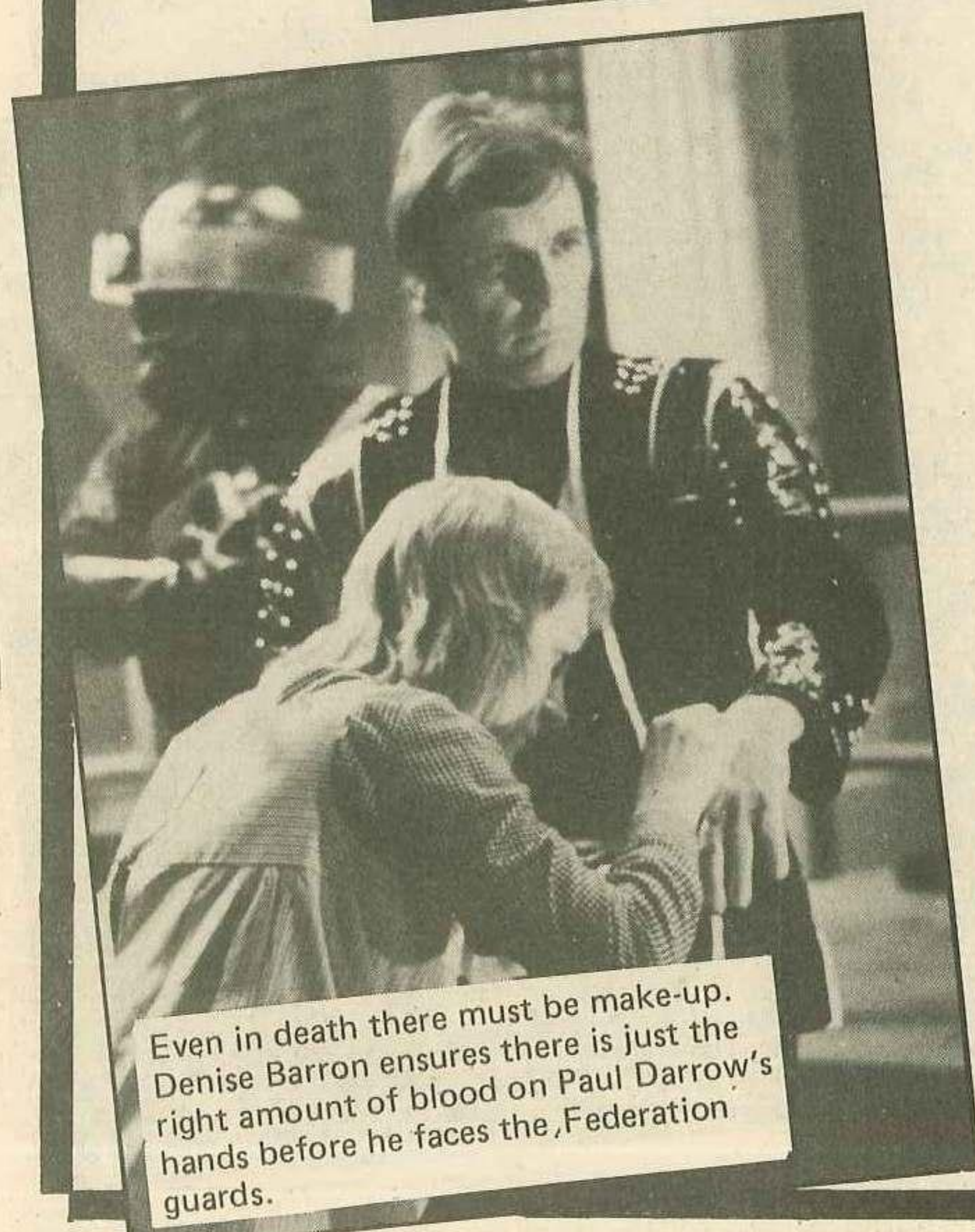
Josette Simon's face lends itself to exciting eye make-up. ...something make-up artist, Suzanne Jansen, is an expert in applying.



Even the mighty Avon needs to be made-up before appearing in front of the camera. No cracks about the brand of make-up ... please!



With a different hairstyle in each episode, the make-up department is always kept busy creating new masterpieces for Glynis Barber. Here Denise Barron sets to work designing a new Soolin-style.



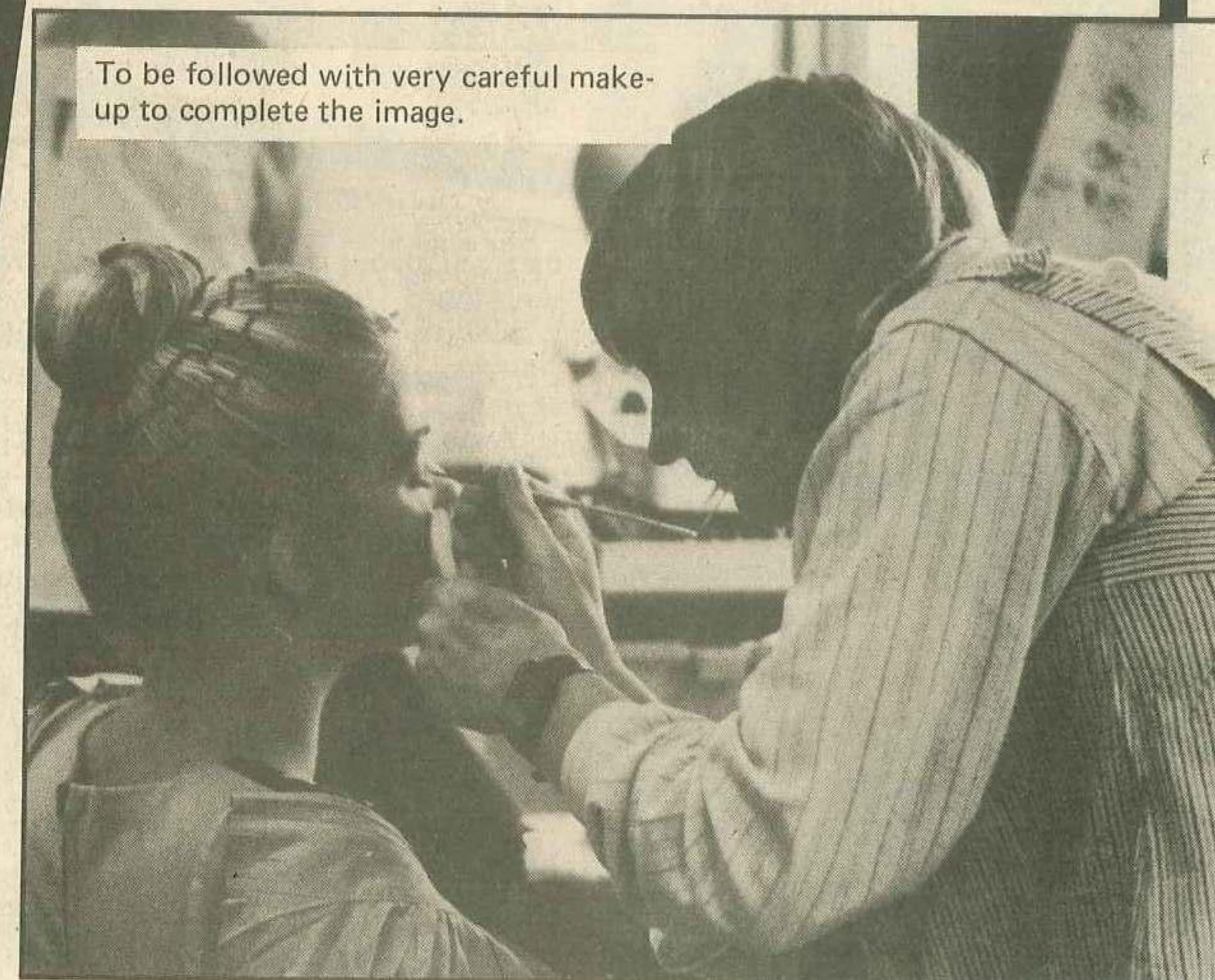
Even in death there must be make-up. Denise Barron ensures there is just the right amount of blood on Paul Darrow's hands before he faces the Federation guards.



Quick touch of make-up on your bike, mister? In the mud of Dunstable, the make-up girls still have to maintain continuity no matter how many times Terry Forrester and his fellow Space Rat hammer through the muddy puddles.

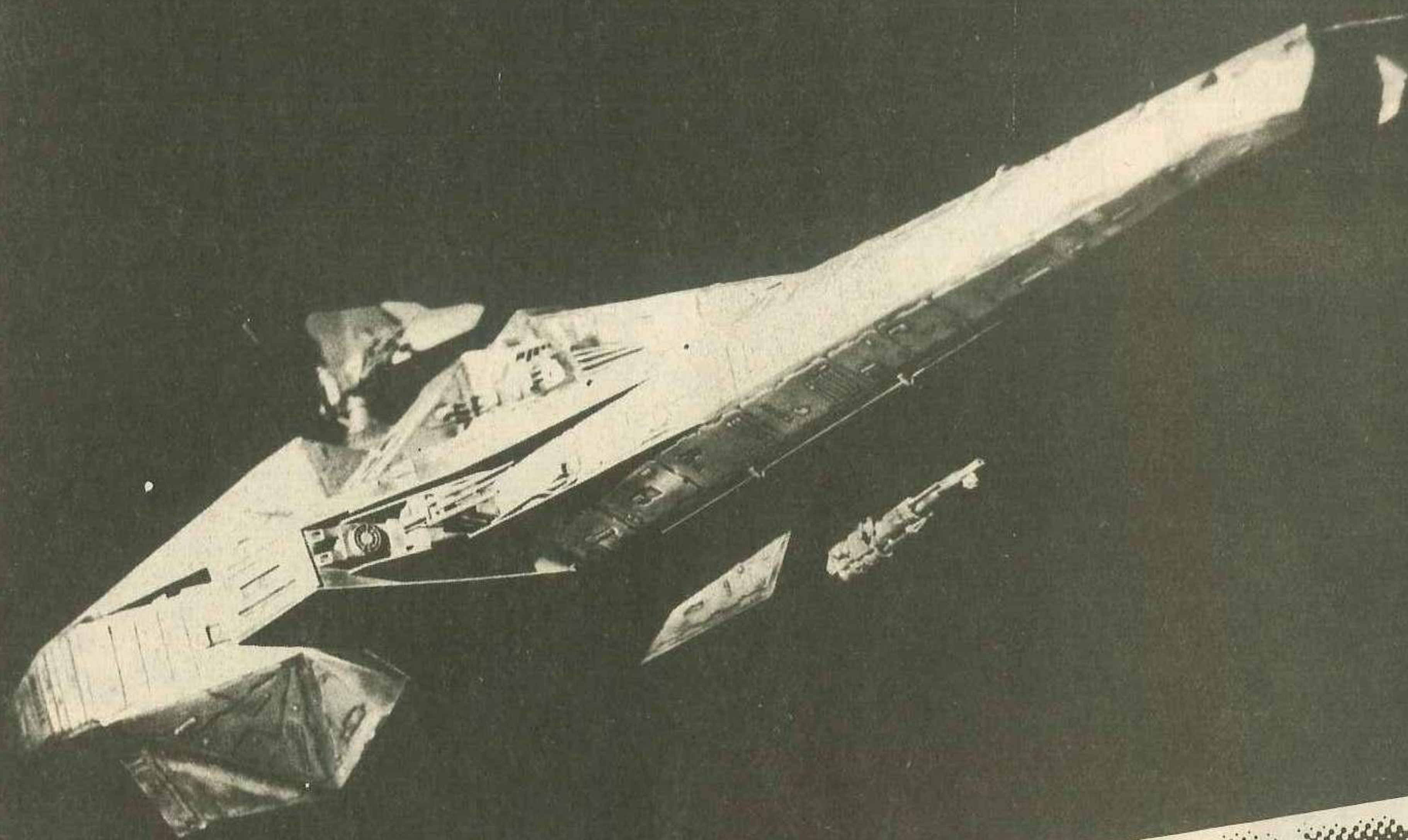


Stitching in fine cord plays a vital part.



To be followed with very careful make-up to complete the image.





# WARRIOR

'Clear of Gravitational pull of Xenon, sir. Speed, standard by eight, rising to twelve. I trust this is satisfactory, sir?'

'Thank you, Slave. Keep full monitor search in operation until clear of federation-controlled sectors.'

'I . . . I will, sir. Have no fear of that.'

Tarrant eased himself back in his seat and glanced round the flight deck of Scorpio. The crew were unbuckling their restraining straps. Avon, looking tired, made his way towards the rest section.

'There's no need for alert stations, Tarrant. I'm going to rest for a while. I suggest the others do the same.'

'I'll just stay here for a while,' said Dayna as she flicked from one scanner picture to the next. 'With federation ships around, you can't be too careful.'

Avon grunted as he walked from the

deck. 'It's your choice but you're wasting your time.'

'Oh no I'm not,' exclaimed Dayna stabbing a button in front of her. 'Look at that!'

Avon froze in his tracks, turned then peered towards the monitor.

'Slave! What is that trace? It looks like a small ship taking-off from Xenon. Confirm!' Tarrant was back in charge.

'I . . . I'm sorry, sir, but I cannot do that.'

'Why not?' Tarrant was blunt and anxious.

'I . . . I'm afraid I have been ordered not to analyse the sector to the rear, sir.'

'By whom?' demanded Tarrant, rising to his feet.

'B . . . by . . .'

'By ME!' cut in Avon. 'That object is of no significance. Now kindly resume normal course and speed.' Avon, seeing the expressions of alarm and doubt on

the faces of the others turned to Slave. 'Slave, I order you to assess the threat possible to Scorpio from that craft.'

'V . . . very well, master,' chattered Slave. There came some flashing of lights, then the computer broke the heavy silence again. 'I confirm the craft is a small, unarmed flier, master. It's course is at a tangent to ours and will in no way provide a threat to us.'

'Satisfied?' Avon fixed his steely gaze on Tarrant, knowing if Tarrant accepted the information, the others would follow.

'Er, yes. . . but I still don't understand . . .'

'You don't have to,' snapped Avon as he exited from the flight deck. The door hissing closed behind him ended any further questioning.

'Sometimes he gives me the creeps,' confessed Dayna, turning to Soolin for agreement. She got it. 'I don't understand what's going on or why we're on this voyage and I'm not in the mood for



finding out just yet. I'm going for a rest.' Soolin nodded her agreement and both girls left their seats. Only Vila and Tarrant were left to supervise the machinery.

'They may not care,' said Vila jerking his thumb towards the closing door, 'but I do. What do you make of it all, Tarrant.'

'I don't know, Vila, but some things about this voyage are worrying me!

'Like what?'

'Like the blackout at Xenon. Avon was in charge. . . on his own . . . and that flier could only have landed during that time. Correct?'

'Yes. . . but . . .'

'Hold on. Avon was away for some time shortly after the blackout. When he returned he gave us the impression he wanted to leave Xenon for a while — just for a change.'

'Yes. . . but . . .'

'And finally,' cut in Tarrant, 'he programmed Slave to ignore rear screening, yet we, thanks to Dayna, spot a craft taking-off from Xenon. Probably a small federation craft. Agreed?'

It took Vila a moment to digest the plain facts.

'That. . . that means Avon could be in league with whoever was in the flier!' Vila grasped at Tarrant's arm. 'We've got to turn back. Avon's got to be made to tell us the truth. We could be flying into a federation trap. . . set by Avon!'

'It's a very real possibility, Vila, but we can't turn back. The federation could already know about our Xenon base and be waiting for us there. No, we have to go on. . . to whatever destination Avon has programmed into Slave.'

'You mean YOU don't know where we're heading?' Vila was close to panic.

'Not a clue,' smiled Tarrant. 'Unless you know where Astum Sigma is?' Vila shook his head. 'I thought not. Nor do I. All I know is it's well outside federation operation range. So far they haven't set foot there. Perhaps Avon is on our side after all?'

'I'm not satisfied,' grumbled Vila. 'I'm going to find out the truth.'

'You mean waken him?' There was a note of caution in Tarrant's voice. 'I wouldn't if I were you. He hates being disturbed.'

'You're as bad as him!' yelled Vila. 'You're all on his side!' Vila glared at Tarrant's bemused face for an instant then left for his own bunk. He knew there would be no answer forthcoming. . . at least not for a while.

\* \* \* \* \*

Vila slept longer than he thought he would. Many hours had elapsed before, shaking his head to clear the remnants of drowsiness from his brain, he lurched onto the flight deck. In an instant he

realised everything was not well. Tarrant was hunched over the controls with Soolin at his side reading off ranges. Dayna stared at the flickering lights of the weapons system as all tubes were armed. Avon, looking grim, sat bolt-upright in his seat, staring hard at the screen to his front. Displayed there were several small shapes, threatening shapes, with the bright orb of a planet behind them.

'Twenty-eight thousand and steady,' called Soolin.

'Hold course for six minutes then decrease power evenly to zero.' Although Avon's voice was cool and clear, there was a hint of an edge to it which only Vila detected.

'What the blazes is going on?'

'Shut up and take your place, Vila.'

'I. . . I demand to know. . .'

'Sit down!' There was no mistaking the threat in Avon's tone.

## BATTLE CRUISERS

Vila staggered to his seat, hastily securing his lap belt. As he stared at the screen in front of him, the situation became all too clear.

'Federation battle cruisers!' His voice was almost a whisper.

'Correct, Vila. Ten out of ten for recognition.'

'B. . . but Tarrant said this area was outside their range. . .'

'It is, Vila.' Avon never took his eyes from the frame for an instant. 'However, these ships are not part of the perimeter squadron. Take a look at their markings more closely.' Avon pressed a key which threw one ship into sharp relief.

'They've painted out their markings,' mouthed Vila. 'They've broken away from the federation. Become renegades.' Vila turned to look at Avon's face. 'Just like us!'

'Not quite, Vila.' Avon allowed himself a smile.

'It's time you did some explaining,' said Tarrant flatly. 'It wasn't by chance we ended here. It wasn't just wanderlust, was it?'

Before Avon could reply, Slave cut in. 'I'm sorry to disturb you, Master, but we have stopped. Our position is steady in space.'

'Thank you, Slave.' Avon eased himself to his feet. 'I do think it's time you knew what we're getting into.' He turned to address the crew. 'Because once I tell you, there will be no turning back. This is something we have to do. If we don't, our deaths will be closer than you could ever imagine. So, my friends,' he smiled at them, 'this is where our own, very special skills,' he gestured to the perplexed crew watching his every move, 'come into play. . . to steal enough Braxomite to secure our future for as long as we desire.' There came a stunned silence. Only Soolin looked as perplexed

as before.

'Excuse me for asking,' she was directing her remark to Avon, 'but what the devil is Braxomite?'

'Put it like this,' cut in Tarrant, 'if you had enough Braxomite to cover your hand, always assuming you could actually hold it. . . which you can't, it would provide enough energy to keep Xenon base and Scorpio supplied for about one hundred standard years. Correct, Avon?'

'Give or take twenty standard years, Tarrant.' Avon beamed.

'But we have enough power for all our needs as it is,' protested Vila. 'Why stick our necks out to get more?'

'Because our power is not unlimited, Vila,' growled Avon, his eyes boring into Vila's. 'We have enough for another five, maybe six years but then our supply will start to degrade rapidly. Braxomite would reverse the process.'

Avon paced the deck anticipating the next barrage of questions. Tarrant was first off the mark.

'A great scheme, Avon, but how the devil are we going to steal something which kills human beings who as much as look at the stuff?'

'Simple, Tarrant, we permit those renegade federation troops to mine it for us then, once it has been safely packaged ready for delivery, we merely step in, load the ship and vanish into space never to cross their path again.'



... 'Avon could be in league with whoever was in the flier!'



'As easy as that, eh?' Vila was realising the full danger potential in such a scheme. 'And what if those guys don't want us to have some of their precious stuff? After all, they have a whole battle fleet screening the planet as it is. Do we just tell them we've come for our share and leave them to welcome us?'

'Don't be a fool, Vila!' Avon was becoming tetchy. 'Those men out there became renegades as soon as they discovered the vast wealth of Braxomite on Astum Sigma. Each one stands to become a credit millionaire when the stuff is shipped back for sale on the black market. There are star systems prepared to give almost anything to have a guaranteed power source such as Braxomite would provide. That's why the federation placed extremely tight restrictions on its sale.'

'No wonder they've decided to join the other side,' mused Tarrant. 'However, that still doesn't explain how you plan to get the stuff.'

Avon leaned over his console and flicked a small switch. Instantly, the main screen picture changed to show a convoy of five cargo craft flying in formation. Three of the ships bore a remarkable resemblance to Scorpio.

'You are watching the approach of the second convoy organised by the renegades to take containers of Braxomite to a secret dump prior to distribution throughout the galaxy. We will simply join it.'

'Won't they notice?' mocked Dayna. 'We may be a wanderer class ship as well, but there is a difference between five and six ships.'

'But there will not be six ships,' hissed Avon. 'Not by the time we've finished. Do you understand what I'm saying?' His eyes swept the flight deck. They all understood... only too well.

On the command deck of the leading freighter, the officer of the watch was puzzled as he looked at his scanner screen. For an instant, he thought he saw a blip indicating an approaching ship. He was about to signal the alarm when the screen went blank. He pressed his reset button, only to see a screen full of interference flashing before him.

'Commander,' he blurted out, 'we've got real trouble. Systems are playing up again. Lost all audio and visual contact.'

'Damn this old tub! Why couldn't they have stolen something better! Call forward the engineer and have him fix the thing. We can't afford to be out of contact for long. We're supposed to be guiding the other ships!'

### OBLITERATION!

The officer of the watch was about to leave his seat when, in the blink of an eye, the whole deck glowed, flashed bright... then vanished forever.

'Destruction complete,' called Tarrant to the planet where the battle

'Maintain interference on communication channels to the other convoy ships while we manoeuvre to take its place,' Avon showed no emotion as he disconnected the matracon. He paused to pat the device. 'I knew this would play a vital role one day.'

'I still say the whole plan is madness,' protested Vila. 'You can destroy all the

ships you like with that device you stole... but you'll never get past the renegade federation screen. They'll insist on stopping and boarding the ships prior to granting clearance to land on Astum Sigma. I know I would!'

'Quite right,' mused Avon. 'That's why you're going to send a contamination alert to the battle fleet ahead. You're to say the last cargo load sprang a leak and Braxomite poisoning has been detected on board this ship. Clear?'

'Impossible!' The resounding voice of Fleet Commander Castor boomed out over the tannoy. 'Ask them to verify the message. All containers were double checked before leaving here.'

'At once, Commander, but the operator did say the ship's captain was prepared to complete one more run before withdrawing from the convoy run for decontamination''

'Ha! I'll bet he did!' A distant, echoing laughter filled the communication's room on Astum Sigma. 'All these accursed freighter commanders are prepared to sell their soul and those of their crew for another load of Braxomite. Order them to approach. I'll speak to the captain personally when he lands.' The line went dead.

'They fell for it,' exclaimed Vila having replaced the communication set, 'right down to the distorted voice. They've ordered us in.'

'I never doubted for a moment they would refuse us,' said Avon adopting his position for landing. 'You see, the interference we are emitting is identical to a real Braxomite contaminated zone. Isn't

'Federation battle cruisers,' gasped Vila.





that correct, Orac?

'To the last rontgen, Avon, as ordered.'

'And if you look to your front, you will see another effect.' Avon indicated the large screen. Moving wide to allow the ships of the convoy to pass through to the planet were the battle fleet. Some of the ships were in such a hurry they nearly collided with the cruiser stationed next to them.

'Are you really sure this will work?' Vila was studying Avon's face very carefully.

'If I wasn't, Vila, I wouldn't be doing it. Stand-by for landing.'

'Cargo doors open and loading ramp depressed.' Tarrant was completing his landing checks. He scanned left and right. Each of the ships in the convoy had adopted the same landing procedure only they were being approached by black-suited landing parties and Scorpio was not. As the dust settled on the vast landing strip, Tarrant was able to detect a small group of men huddled beside a hover truck, only they were all dressed in white.

## BOARDING PARTY

'Avon. . .' Tarrant was getting worried. 'I think we may have blown it. They're sending a radiation control party aboard. When they discover we're as clean as a whistle, there will be awkward questions.'

Avon moved to get a closer look at the party. Six men, eh? That should be no problem. Should it, Soolin?

Soolin glared back. She knew what was expected. 'No problem,' she stated, fingering her gun as she made for the door.

'You might need help,' offered Dayna as she joined the other girl. 'Two guns are better than one.'

'What's the report from the leading freighter?' demanded Castor peering through the dust-smeared windows of the control building.

'Er, nothing yet, Commander,' stammered the operator. 'The contamination party have not yet reported back.'

'Doesn't take this long to check one blasted ship,' shouted Castor. 'Can't you raise them on audio link?'

'Th. . . they don't seem to be responding, sir.'

'That a fact? Pass me those scopes. The image magnifiers were handed to the self-appointed ruler of Astum Sigma. He pressed them to his eyes, a clear picture of the landing area becoming instantly available to him. The device cut through polluted, dust-laded air. Scorpio and its loading ramp were in sharp focus, as were the white-suited figures moving up and down the ramp wheeling small, metal bound containers of Braxomite. 'I ordered them not to load that ship until



I'd spoken to its captain! Get me a suit. I'm going out there!

'How long?' Vila was clearly sweating. 'Another eight containers should fill the main cargo section,' said Avon resuming his seat.

'What've you been doing?' Vila was studying the hazy screen showing a monitor picture immediately in front of Scorpio.

'Oh, just organising a few things.' Vila was about to question his leader further when something caught his eye. There was a vehicle moving towards the ship. He grapped Avon's elbow and pointed to the machine.

'A. . . armed party,' he stammered. 'Coming this way!'

'As I expected,' nodded Avon. 'Recall Tarrant, Dayna and Soolin. Their white suits won't fool anyone from close range. I want them at the back of the hold before those men board us. I'm going below. Meanwhile, prepare Scorpio for immediate flight.'

'Scorpio? Is that ship on our convoy list? I don't remember it.' The commander was growing worried and suspicious. He pulled his gun then indicated to his men to spread out either side of him as they approached the loading ramp of the massive ship.

There was a moment's pause, then. . . 'You're right, Commander. Scorpio is not on the list. . . but it's compulsed as a renegade craft. Piloted by a gang of rebels led by someone called Avon.'

'No!' The Commander's exclamation

hissed through his protective face mask. 'How the blazes. . .?' He tightened his finger on the trigger of his gun and indicated to his men to sweep up towards the dark cargo hold. 'Aim to wound,' came the order. 'I want them alive to tell me how they discovered our secret. They must be made to talk!'

## ACTION STATIONS

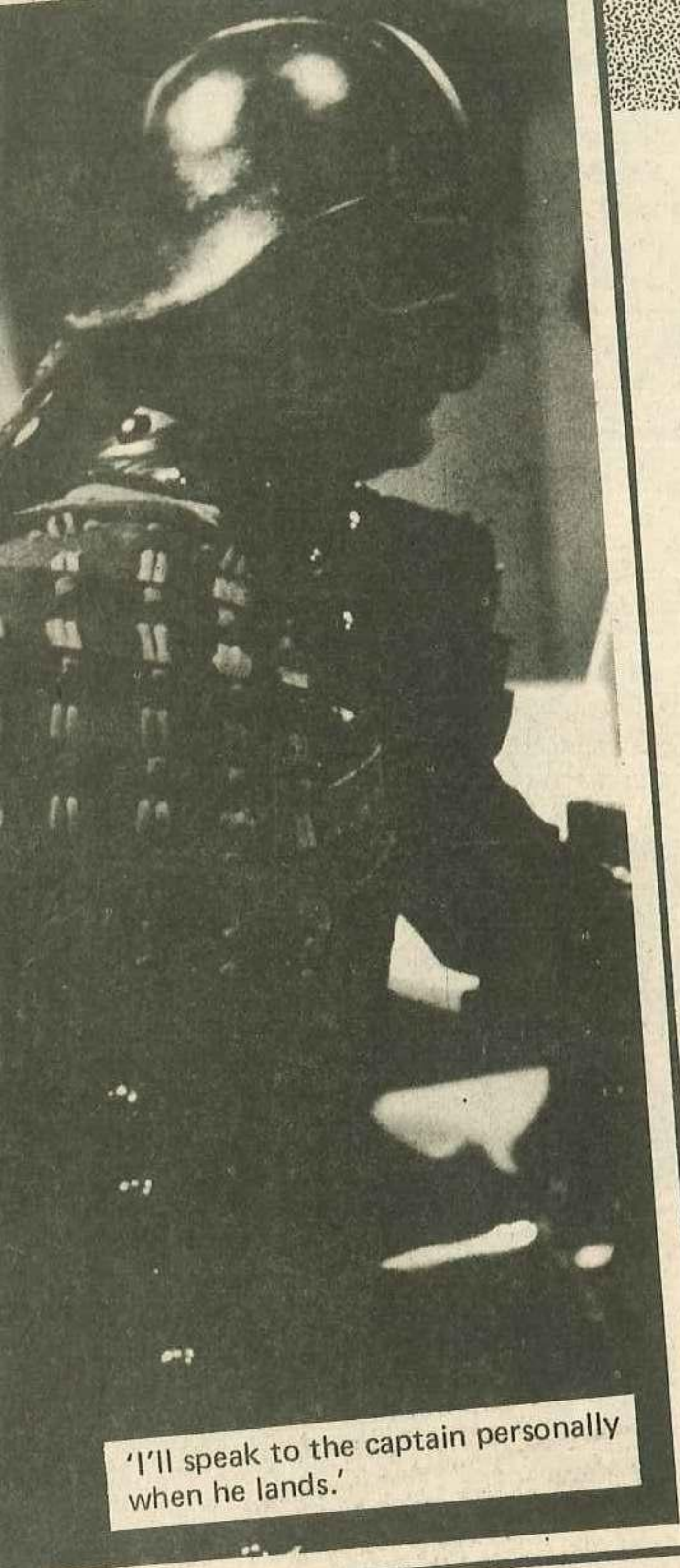
Avon pressed himself against a stack of metal containers, raising a finger to his lips to indicate silence to the others. Tarrant was to his left, Dayna and Soolin to his right. Looking down the cargo hold they could see the stealthy approach of the white-suited figures, guns at the ready. 'Just a little closer. . .' he whispered. 'Move on my signal.'

'Place seems deserted, Commander.' There was tension in the guard's voice.

'Search every corner then make your way up to the flight deck.' Fleet Commander Castor stood at the top of the ramp watching his six men split into two groups of three. One group right, the other left. They were soon lost among the piles of containers. A few seconds later, Castor heard a groan. . . at least he fancied he did. Then another. He took a pace forward, fingering his gun. 'What's going on?' he shouted. Instantly, a volley of shots rang out, more groans. . . then a scream.

'Guards!' Castor was alarmed. 'Answer me!'





'But that's up to those who buy the stuff,' protested Castor. 'We don't care what they do with it. . . as long as we get their money!'

'Typical,' sneered Avon. 'You supply the means to destroy the universe but so long as you enjoy untold wealth for a few years, you couldn't give a damn!'

'Y. . .you're sounding more like Servalan by the minute,' protested Castor.

'Oh, and speaking of Servalan, I have a message for you from that very person.' Avon raised his gun sight to centre on Castor's head.

'No. . .not you! Not working for her. . .!' Castor was almost pleading.

'Not 'for', Castor . . . WITH! This time I agree with her. Time you paid your dues!' Avon's finger tightened on the trigger. The weapon bucked, Castor screamed as he was thrown backwards . . . then his twisted form writhed on the floor for an instant. No-one saw, with his dying twitch, Castor pressing a small dial on his wrist band. From somewhere in the makeshift building complex at the end of the landing strip a klaxon sounded.

'They're on to us,' yelled Tarrant emerging from behind some containers. 'The sooner we're out of here the better!'

'I agree,' said Avon holstering his gun. 'But we have one last job to perform. He pressed his communicator button. 'Vila, raise the ramp and get us out of here. Tarrant's coming to help.'

'Alert. . . Alert!' the blaring klaxon echoed across the landing strip, through the narrow pass cut into the rock between the strip and the mine entrance beyond, and in the mine itself. Armed figures ran to their positions at amazing speed. Even as the guards were uncovering their laser cannons, Scorpio was rising into the dust-laden air.

## OFF THE GROUND

'Slave, set course, maximum speed, to clear the planet immediately.' Tarrant was busy programming the flight path when Avon's hand slammed down in front of him.

'No! Slave, ignore the last command. Switch to manual flight!'

'What?' protested Tarrant.

'Questions later, Tarrant. We have one more job to do before we take our leave of this place!' With that, Avon took up his position and control of Scorpio. The massive ship banked, engines throbbing, then eased towards the narrow pass just ahead. Even as it did so, laser beams stabbed the sky searching for their prey. 'Initiate screens,' Commanded Avon as he dipped Scorpio's nose towards the pass and opened the throttle.

'We'll never make it through there,' protested Vila staring at the seemingly too narrow cleft in the cliff face ahead.

'Just hang onto your hat, Vila,'

murmured Avon as he jerked the throttle back one more degree. The surge of power forced all back in their seats.

'W. . . we're going to crash!'

'Not until I say so,' hissed Avon throwing the bank control fully over. Scorpio rocketed forward at right-angles to the ground. Before he knew what was happening, Vila saw rock flashing past on either side. Ahead lay the brightly lit entrance to the mine smack on flight-path.

'Slave' ordered Avon in a tense voice, 'low density plasma bolt on delay setting . . . prepare to launch!'

'Standing by, master.'

'Fire!'

'Fired, master.'

Avon heaved back on the controls, causing Scorpio to peel away from the massive rock wall ahead, leaving a super-heated ball of energy to drop from its firing tube and curve towards the ground. Figures ran in all directions as the charge floated towards the mine entrance. It flashed once on contact with the ground, seemed to bounce, then disappeared inside the mine entrance. The already bright interior of the mine glowed even brighter as Scorpio powered for the stars.

## HOLOCAUST

Dayna punched up a rear scanner picture of the site. Amidst scenes of sheer panic as bodies ran about, trying to make for shelter, a whole mountain behind the building complex seemed to glow. It grew in intensity. . . then a blinding flash. The first flash was followed by several smaller ones, then it was as if the planet had been split in two by a bolt of lightning.

'Geez. . .!' gasped Vila, his mouth hanging open. 'D. . .did we do that?'

'Correction, Vila. . . I did that.' Avon was almost smug.

'And on Servalan's orders, from what I overheard below,' said Tarrant in a menacing voice.

'If I explained, you wouldn't understand,' said Avon trying to dismiss the remark.

'Servalan?' chorused the others.

'I think you'd better try explaining,' injected Tarrant, indicating to the others.

Avon frowned as he looked round. 'Very well.' He stood up, pacing the flight deck with his hands behind his back. 'I have always had, er. . . an understanding with Servalan. There are times when we have found it mutually beneficial to work together. This was one such occasion. Fleet Commander Castor threatened the stability of the universe with his sale of Braxomite through illegal channels. Servalan hatched a plan to destroy Castor and his renegades but it required the use of a cargo craft. . . exactly like Scorpio . . . and a brave crew. . . which is what you are.' Avon gestured round, then

'I'll speak to the captain personally when he lands.'

'I'm afraid they can't,' spoke the menacing voice just behind Castor. He spun round, pulling the trigger as he did. . . but the shot went wide. A powerful charge slammed into his gun hand, sending the weapon flying.

'Y. . .you. . .' hissed Castor, dropping to one knee, nursing his injured hand. 'Th. . . the one they call Avon! Enemy of my Commissioner for Security, Sleer!'

'Correct,' agreed Avon taking a pace forward, gun still aimed at Castor's head, 'or, as we call her, Servalan!'

'B. . .but why this. . .?' Castor made a weak gesture about him. 'Surely we are now on the same side? We have a common enemy in the federation. I could cut you in on some of the action . . . make you rich. People will pay a fortune. . .

'I'm well aware of what people will pay for Braxomite. I'm also aware what damage it can do in the wrong hands. Such an energy source can be used to produce weapons the like of which have not been seen since Nuclic compression charges were perfected. Only this time, there is no knowing what size of device could be produced.'



smiled as he saw Vila's worried and perplexed face. 'With the odd exception, that is.'

Avon paused for the information to sink in. 'In exchange for destroying Castor and his renegades and the main source of Braxomite known so far, we were to be permitted as much of the material as we could carry. That we have. We can return to Xenon with enough energy to supply all our needs.'

'I'm sorry to spoil your moment of glory,' cut in Dayna, 'but Castor's battle fleet has other ideas. They're approaching in attack formation from the flank!'

## UNDER ATTACK

As the first charge slammed into Scorpio's side, Tarrant threw over the controls, trying to break away from the battle cruisers. A second charge hit astern, sending shuddering vibrations throughout the craft's frame.

'The shields!' yelled Avon above the din.

'Impossible,' replied Tarrant fighting with the controls. 'We're losing too much power! We can't even make a run for it. They've got us cold!'

Avon glared into nothingness, then came his voice in a distant rasp. 'Eject cargo.'

'B. . .but. . .' Vila was trying not to believe what Avon was saying. 'Do that and we have nothing!'

'We may have our lives,' hissed Avon. 'Eject the cargo!'

Inside the hold, the hiss of depressurisation was loud even above the sounds of battle. As the cargo doors slid open, metal containers rattled against Scorpio's hull as they drifted off into space. Dayna and Avon watched them trail off into the inky blackness. . . towards the onrushing renegade ships.

'Select one,' said Avon in a distant voice.

'Target locked-on,' confirmed Dayna. 'Attacking craft in range in three seconds.'

'Fire!'

A shimmering ball of superheated energy blasted backwards from Scorpio.

'Fantastic effort,' laughed the commander of the leading battle cruiser. 'Take evasive action then press home attack!'

Those were the last words he ever spoke. The ball of energy careered into the first Braxomite container. There came a small flash, then the whole quadrant

seemed to detonate in a chain reaction. Cruisers in the immediate vicinity were atomised while Scorpio, flung forward on the blast wave, was propelled to a speed far in excess of its design capabilities. Tarrant fought with the controls for nearly ten minutes until some degree of normality was re-established.

## DEATH WISH

"Blimey", said Vila, mopping his brow. 'It was sheer madness!'

'At least you've disposed of the opposition,' mused Tarrant. 'But you've also thrown away every last container of Braxomite. The whole operation has been a waste of effort.'

'Not quite,' countered Avon. 'We have all seen another part of the galaxy which few have ever seen before. . . and which none will ever see again. I think my wanderlust has been satisfied.'

'Wanderlust?' Vila sounded incredulous. 'More like death wish! It's as close as I ever want to get to the next life. . . until I'm ready for it.'

'You are a fool, Vila,' smiled Avon. 'It's something you must always be prepared for. After all, we're all living on borrowed time.'

'In that case I'll ask for an extension of my credit,' retorted Vila as he walked from the flight deck, leaving Avon to roar with laughter.

...Servalan hatched a plan to destroy Castor and his renegades but it required the use of a cargo craft. . . exactly like Scorpio. . .



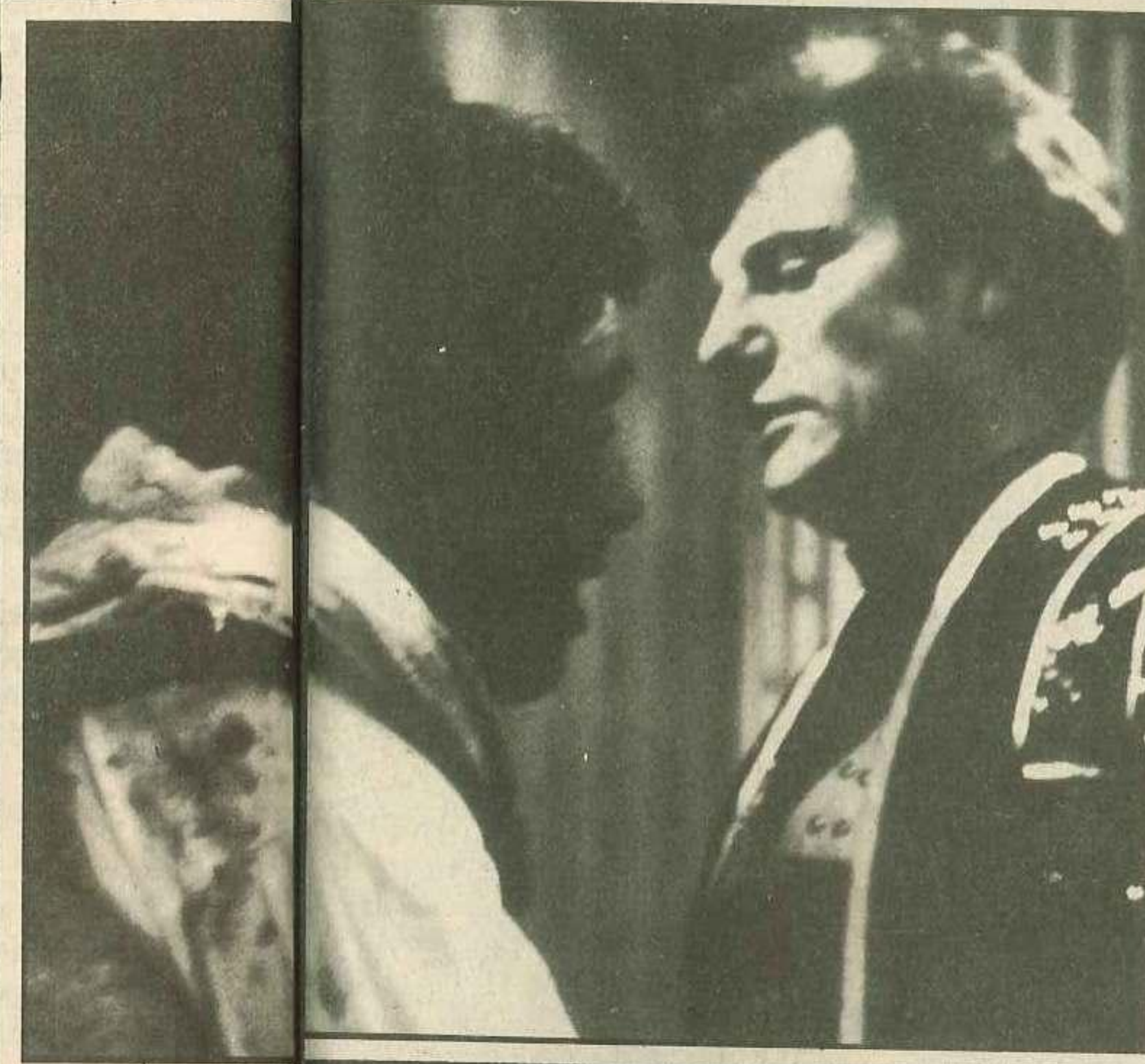


# DEATH IN

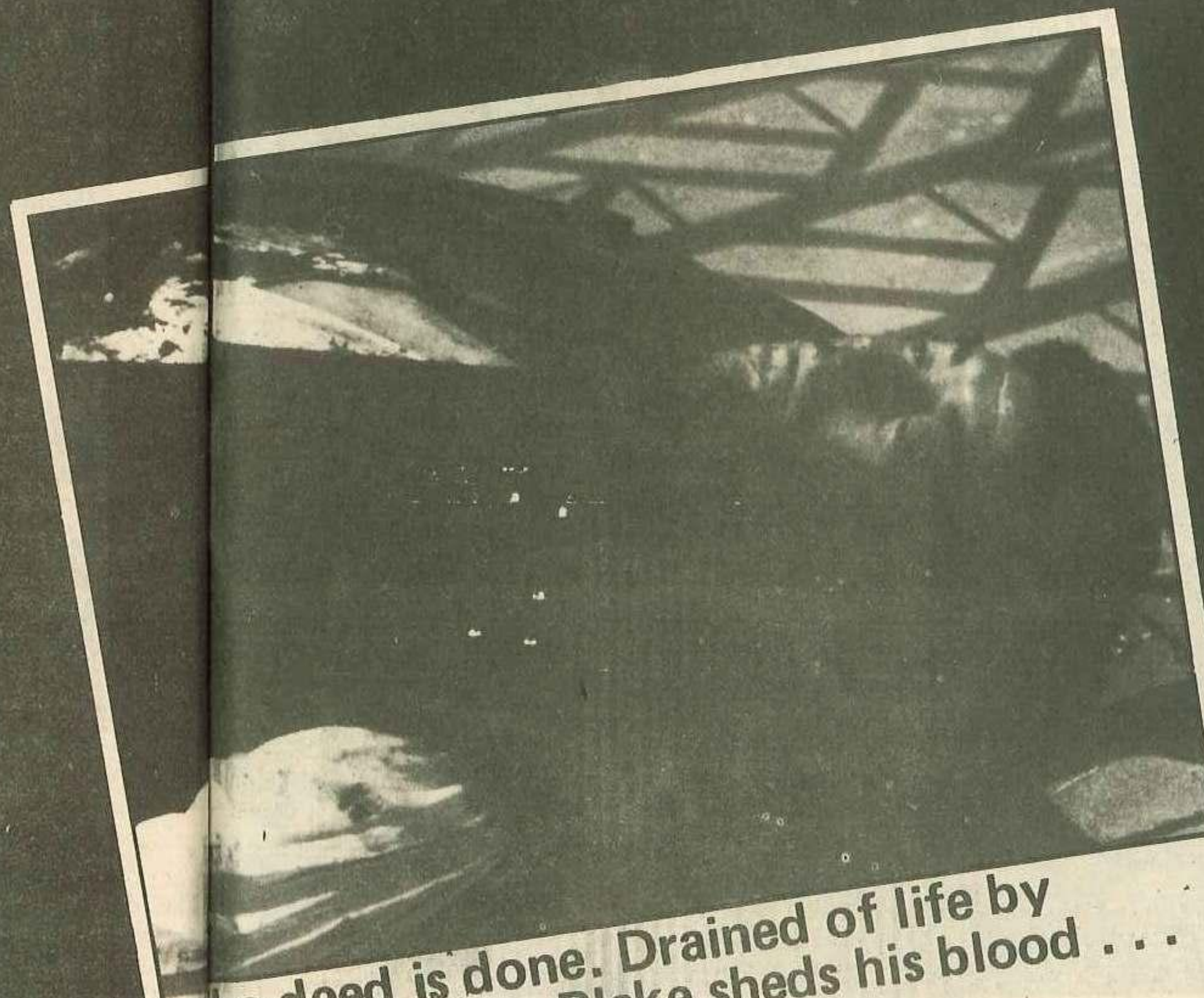
Can it really be true? Did it really happen? Surely they can't have died? All the questions thrown up after the last, shock episode of Blake's 7 hit the screens in December. It is not for us to say, nor to pass judgement, merely for us to show you in graphic detail the fate of our heroes at the hands of the Federation. Do you remember how it happened? Is the image etched in your mind forever? If not, thanks to our special photographer, Ken Armstrong, Blake's 7 Magazine brings you those terrible moments once more . . . if you can stand it!



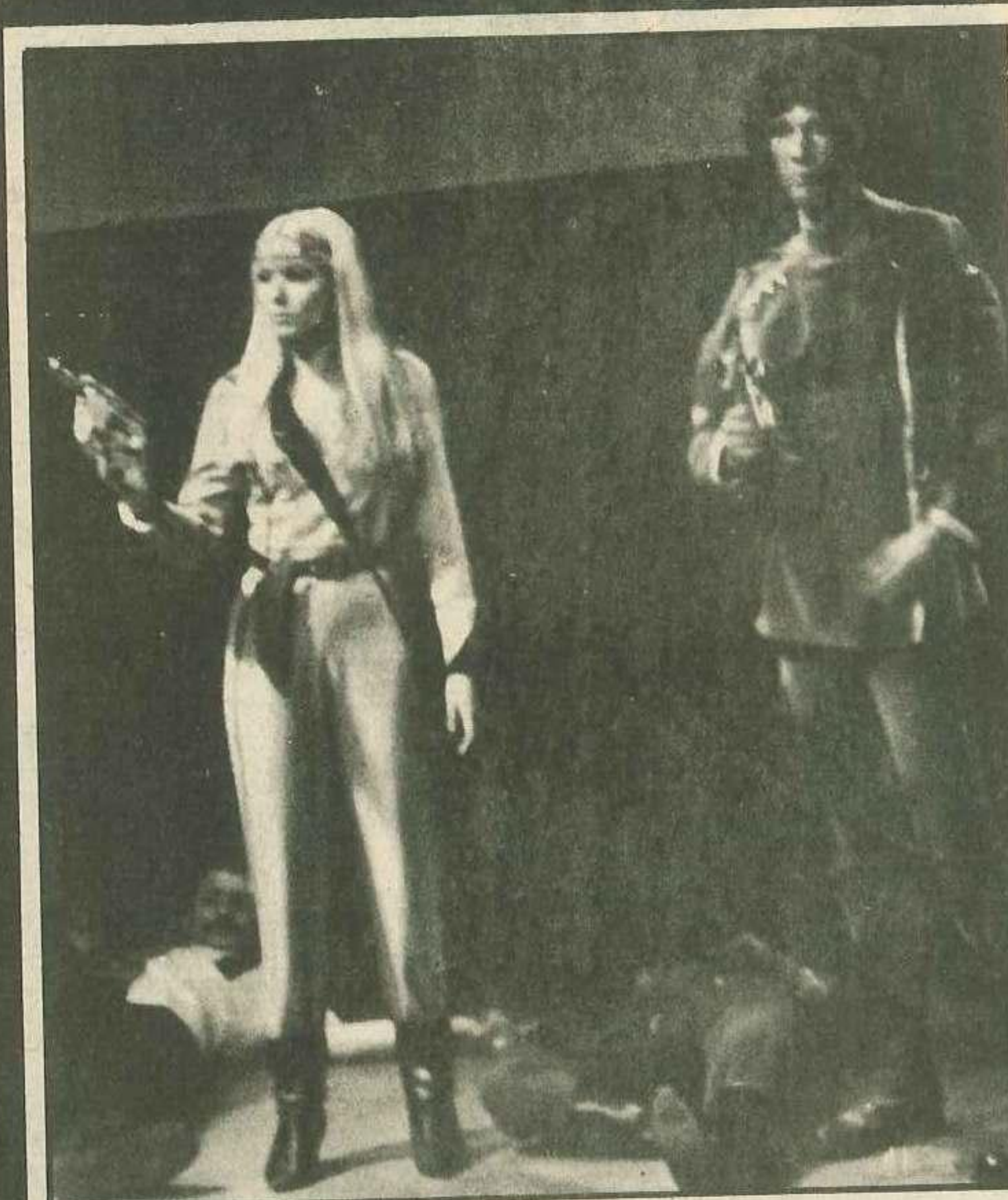
One blast . . . then another . . . and still Blake moves on . . . they are face-to-face . . . Blake and Avon.



A lurch . . . and Blake reaches for his killer . . . his one-time friend . . . Avon.



The deed is done. Drained of life by Avon's bullets, Blake sheds his blood . . . and his life.



Having lunged for her gun, Dayna falls, victim of a bullet from Arlen's gun . . .

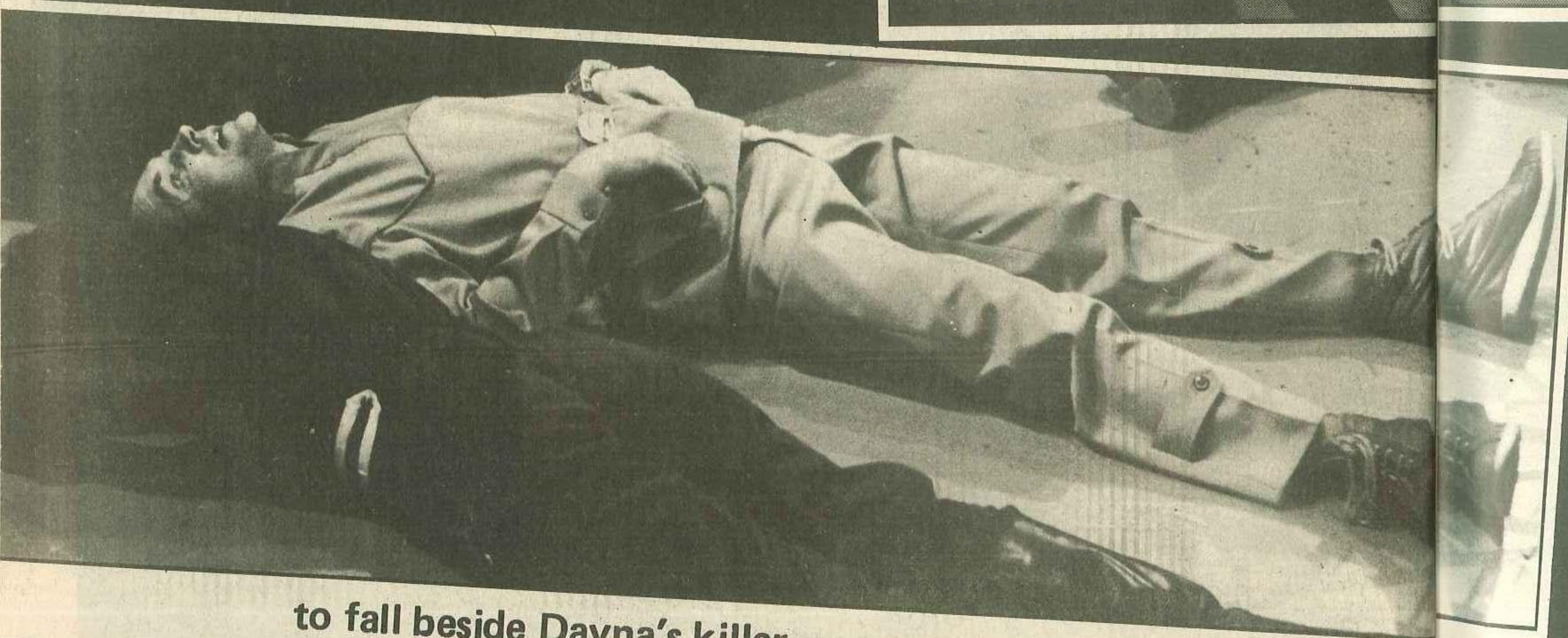




Vila makes a snatch for Arlen's gun, only to be shot from behind . . .



Tarrant and Soolin make a break for freedom, Soolin covering Tarrant's escape . . .  
 . . . only to fall victim to a federation guard.



to fall beside Dayna's killer.



Tarrant tries to move Avon . . . but a shot sends him reeling . . .



to collapse in a heap amidst the carnage.

Then . . . Avon recovers from the shock of killing Blake to see federation guards surrounding him. He has a choice. . . surrender or fire.  
 Slowly, he raises his gun . . .

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