

arts/entertainment

Film has more tricks, less treats than original

By Chuck Lieurance

As far as sequels go, *Halloween II* is average to above average, ranking far below *Godfather, Part II* and far above *Jaws II*. The film's major fault is the popularity of the initial *Halloween* bloodbath, which gave creator John Carpenter more money for the sequel.

With more money, *Halloween II* is much too slick, losing the rough edges that made the original such terrifying fare. The interesting errors are missing from *Halloween II*. The idiosyncracies that would plague any other film are the very things we miss from this one.

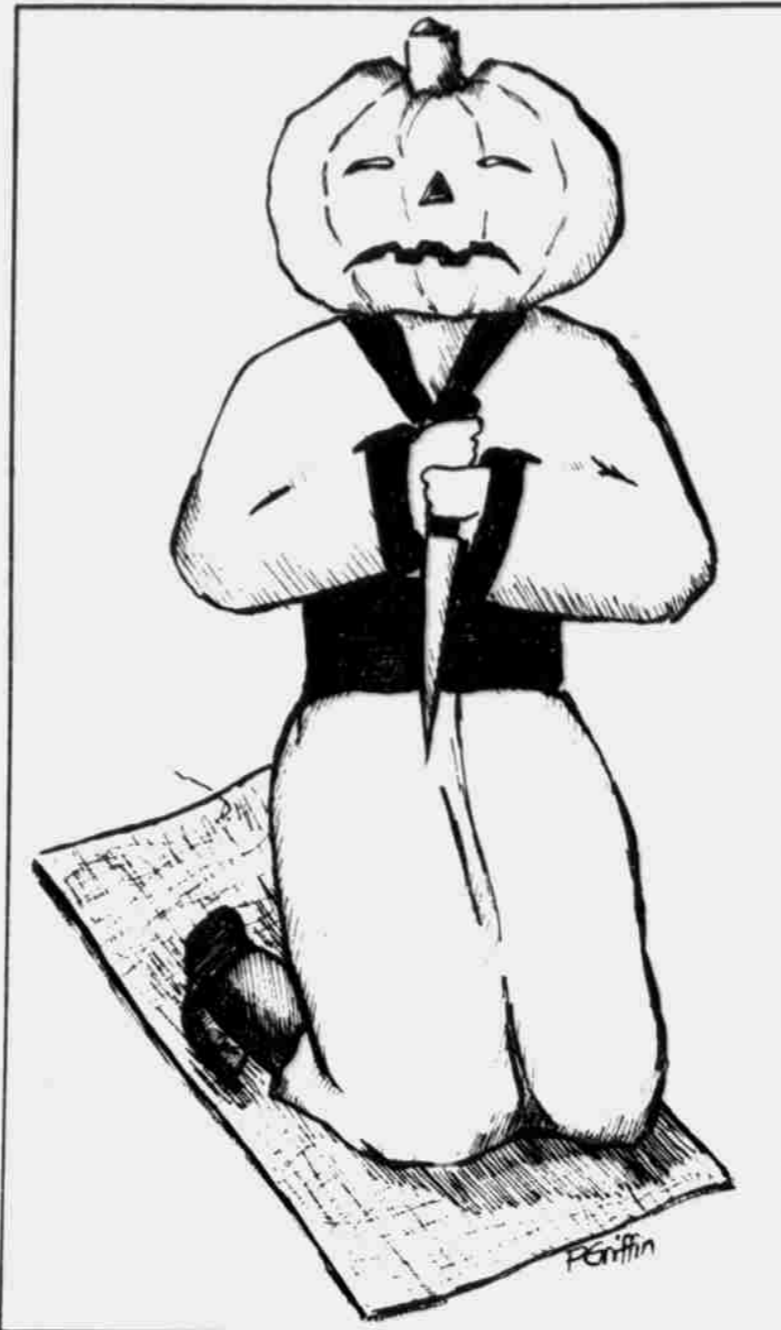
movie review

As Hitchcock once said, the anticipation of horror is much more frightening than the resulting "Boo!" and this theory was followed in *Halloween Part I*. In the sequel, the act of bloodletting seems to have taken on more importance than the set-up. If nothing else, *Halloween II* is proof that most film artists are sadists with a perfect means of release. The murders in this film are methodically planned, almost to the level of strangeness the old Vincent Price/*Dr. Phibes* films reached in the early '70s. The film staff can almost be seen sitting around saying, "What if we took surgical instruments and found various bodily parts to destroy them with?"

Killings come quickly

These sometimes humorous killings come much too quickly for there to be much anticipation, and thus the capacity for suspense is limited. This makes this year's model of *Halloween* too similar to all of the other slash ax horror films, such as *Friday the 13th*, *Happy Birthday to Me*, *Prom Night*, *Hell Night*, and *He Knows You're Alone*.

These films are very structured and too similar



for there to be much bite left in the formula. In the beginning comes the set-up, then the mass bloodletting, usually of decadent teenagers in the act of taking drugs or having sex. Then, when there is one traumatized teenager left, she (in *Halloween II* it is once again Jamie Lee Curtis, who by this time has had quite an

evening) stumbles about wounded and panting with fear, discovering body after body. This body count of course, leads to confrontation. This structure is not as overdone in *Halloween I* as it is in *Halloween II*.

Interesting theory in movie

There was also an interesting theory at play in *Halloween I* this is missing here. In the first, the plot rejects the idea that the killer needs psychological motivation. This idea became very popular in the '50s and '60s with films like *Psycho*, in which Norman was psychologically analyzed at the end of the story. The killer in *Halloween* is defined as "pure evil," just a re-incarnation of the forces of darkness and psychology is left severely wanting for an explanation.

This idea of slasher as devoid of conscience, as somehow metaphysically evil, instead of being a victim of society, a broken home or some childhood malformation of personality, is a fairly new development in the genre.

In *Halloween II* this rejection of psychological theory is not well done. Donald Pleasance's soliloquy in the first film is not elaborated upon enough in the second to raise it above the level of, say, *Friday the 13th*.

Structurally, the film did benefit in a few ways from the increase in available capital, especially in the area of cinematography. There are some very effective devices implemented, such as the slow emergence of the slashers stark iron-grey mask from the shadows.

The face seems to just fade in, as if one's eyes were naturally adjusting to the darkness. There are also some very well done tracking shots that turn hospital corridors (where most of the main slaughter occurs) into complex, inescapable mazes. But if this made the film more attractive and convincing structurally, severely drained the plotline, or bloodline in this case.

Programmers ring out the new, ring in the old

(The Scene: The corporate offices of the North American Broadcasting System. A highly-sensitive, top-level board meeting is taking place.)

"Ladies and gentlemen," begins the president of the corporation, a portly, balding man named Ratliff, "we have to decide which new hit series for this fall will be replaced by another new hit series in January."

pat clark

"Already?" says one of the lower-echelon executives, a ferret-like man named Stewart. "The new hit series for this fall have been hits for only a week."

"Well, some of them have been more popular new hits than others," says Ratliff. "On the other hand, some of our new hits are not being watched by anyone.

That doesn't mean they're not hits, of course, it just means the audience is not participating in the growth of certain programs on a primary viewer level."

A woman named Whitefield takes the floor. "Cut the crap, folks. We're not stupid, and neither are the viewers. The reason we are here is that we finally have put together a fall lineup so bad that people won't watch it. They are staying away in droves. Television has gotten so bad that America has even taken up exercising in the last few years. Hard telling what we've driven them to now. They may even be reading, for all we know. We just know they aren't watching television."

"You're absolutely right," says Ratliff. "Now what do you suggest we do about it?"

"We've got to stop copying what the other networks are doing," says Whitefield. "NBC does a miniseries, we do a miniseries. ABC does a detective drama that pulls in the ratings, we do the same drama. There are only so many people

who want to watch a detective drama, and if ABC already has one, they've got that audience. What we need to do is create a new audience with shows nobody else is doing."

"Well now, your advice is well taken," says Ratliff. "But what kinds of shows are the other networks doing now?"

"Nobody is doing *Leave it to Beaver* or *My Mother the Car* or *Dennis the Menace*. We could try these again," Stewart says.

"Nah, too obvious," says Ratliff. "We need people to think we just made these shows up."

"How about if we put new titles on them?" says Stewart, over the sound of Whitefield slapping her hand against her forehead. "It's different from what we have now, and more importantly, we can make a king's ransom from advertisers because we don't have to pay to make new shows."

"Sounds perfect," says Ratliff, lighting a cigar. "I'm glad to see we have taken a new approach to rid television of the bland drivel we see today. I'm looking forward to several new hits appearing on our network in January."

Lincoln bar turns N.Y. disco as English import 45s spin

O.G. Kelly's will be turned into a Lincoln version of a New York rock disco tonight by record collector John Baker and associates. The music that will be played is chiefly English import 45s.

"We're going to play records that are difficult to come by. It will be the exact opposite of what you hear on the radio," Baker said. "This is an educational attempt to expose people to new music."

Groups that will be played include Soft Sell, Depeche Mode and Slight Second, all part of the English post-punk experimental electronic music with political overtones.

"Before I worked at Dirt Cheap, I was into Crosby, Stills, and Nash. Then I went into music that makes you move and think. The Snakefinger show at the Drumstick (Restaurant) was a perfect example of new music because you could dance, drink or

watch the visuals. It's not head-banging music anymore," Baker said.

O.G. Kelly's has played the new music once previously, and it was accepted well, he said.

"O.G. was pleased that they made more money than they normally do on an open stage night. We'll be back here again on the 18th this month," Baker said.

During the new music night, some people complained about the lack of information on groups being played, but Baker plans on correcting that difficulty.

"We don't want to go into any big DJ trips, but we will tell everybody what is being played this time," Baker said. "We'll play a lot of things from the Rough Trade label, or the weird San Francisco bands like the Residents."

Molly Hatchet in Omaha Nov. 8



Photo courtesy of Epic Records

Southern rock 'n' roll group Molly Hatchet will perform at 8 p.m. Sunday in the Civic Auditorium Arena, at a concert sponsored by UNO's Student Programming Organization.

General admission tickets for the Nov. 8 concert cost \$8.50 and may be purchased at UNO's Student Center Business Office, the Civic Auditorium and at all Brandeis ticket outlets.