

# Blob, monsters, Dracula this week

## The Glassy Eye By Dave Meile

Friday, 8 p.m. Ch. 17:  
"Of Unknown Origin" (1983)  
Actors of unknown origin, a giant rat.

A yuppie guy and his wife (a former Playboy playmate) are harassed by a giant rat. It's in the woodwork! It's inside Junior's birthday cake. Ooh, that's scary. Shades of Willard.

Friday, midnight. KMTV, ch. 3:  
"The Night Stalker" (1974) TV series

Remember "The Night Stalker?" A great made-for-TV movie with Darrin McGavin as Carl Kolchak, a wisecrack reporter who stumbles upon Janos Skorzeny, a 200-year-old vampire living in Las Vegas. The follow-up, a '73 TV movie entitled "The Night Strangler," was less successful and featured a Jack-the-Ripper killer living in the smelly underground of Seattle. In 1974, ABC decided to try a series. Each week Kolchak (aided by some decent scripts by renowned sci-fi/horror writer Richard Matheson) tracks down mummies, zombies, mud monsters, naked mannequins and vampires. There was just one major problem. Sooner or later, say after about 20 weeks, you run out of monsters to chase.

A great idea just hit me. For the second season they could've renamed it "The Nightclub Stalker." Kolchak could haunt old bars and clubs tracking down hideous nightclub comics. Think of the possibilities! Tonight, Kolchak battles with Larry Storch! At the Aku-Tiki lounge, Kolchak locks horns with Shecky Greene, still doing the same jokes from 15 years ago. Other enemies could include Ronnie Schell, Slappy White, Rip Taylor, Joey Bishop and Art Metrano.

In the series, obviously nobody was paying attention because Kolchak went through a series of jobs at every major newspaper in the country, and the series bit the dust after one season. "The Night Stalker" remains a scary, if somewhat far-fetched, little series.

Friday, 11:30 p.m. WGN, ch. 2:  
"The Blob" (1958) Steve McQueen, Aneta Corseaut.

Despite the fact that this isn't really great sci-fi, it remains a well-known late-night favorite. You know the story. Steve McQueen (still wet behind the ears) and Helen Crump from "Andy Griffith" help fight off a hideous, rustic



The original movie poster for "House of Dracula."

munching blob from outer space. The blob slithers into the town movie house and inhales a projectionist. Local kids are watching "Daughter of Horror," an incredible 1955 noir-type horror film with no dialogue except for the narration by Ed McMahon!

Groove to awesome theme song "Beware of the Blob," written by schlockster Burt Bacharach and performed by The Five Blobs.

Next stop for Steve McQueen: a double-barreled shotgun/pistol totin' bounty hunter on the "Wanted Dead or Alive" TV series.

Friday, midnight and 4 a.m. Ch. 17:  
"Black Dragons" (1942) Bela Lugosi, Clayton "Lone Ranger" Moore.

I don't admit this to just anybody, but it took me about four viewings to figure out exactly what happens in this film. In this Monogram Studios cheapie (for which Lugosi was reportedly paid only

\$500 a flick) Bela is an insane Nazi plastic surgeon who turns Japanese guys into American businessmen. Featuring the Lone Ranger sans mask, the same music used in 8 million other monogram films and an award to I. Stanford Jolley for the worst Japanese dialect in a cheap horror film. Sixty-five minutes of pure bliss. A prerequisite for your "history of scary guys in film" course.

Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Ch. 2:  
"Charlie Chan in Egypt" (1935) Warner Oland, Pat Pater-son.

Oland is considered about the best interpreter of the Chan character. Look for Rita Hayworth (still using her real name, Rita Cansino) as Nayda. It was only her third film role.

Saturday, 4:45 a.m. WOWT, ch. 6:  
"House of Dracula" (1945) Lon Chaney Jr., John Carradine.

Within minutes of each other, Count Dracula and lycanthrope Larry Talbot arrive at the castle of

Dr. Edelmann seeking cures for their afflictions. Edelmann is assisted by his nurse with a heart of gold and a pillow stuffed down the back of her smock. The Frankenstein monster (Sam the bartender from "Gunsmoke") is found in a cave. Great screen villain and porn enthusiast Lionel Atwill is the police inspector. The oily-skinned villager with the beady eyes and Cockney accent is the one and only Skelton Knaggs, once one of several people billed as "the ugliest man in pictures." Other Knaggs credits include "Dick Tracy meets Gruesome," "Bedlam" and "Ghost Ship."

"House of Dracula" boasts the usual great Universal Studios production with great sets, haunting music and fine performances throughout. Erle C. Kentons' direction is imaginative, and the script actually tries to explain the creatures in honest-to-goodness scientific terms. Dr. Edelmann even gets wacky when he scores a contaminated blood transfusion from the count.

The Frankenstein monster is

wasted and lies around for the duration only to pummel stray villagers at the fiery finale. Not quite as good as its counterpart, "House of Frankenstein," but essential viewing nonetheless. Stoke up that VCR; these movies will not be on TV forever y'know.

Next Week Dept.:  
Wednesday, 1:30 a.m. Ch. 4:  
"The Explosive Generation" (1961) Captain Kirk, The Bad Seed.

Long before "Star Trek" and "T.J. Hairpiece," Bill Shatner worked his way up doing low-budget films (like Corman's anti-racist "The Intruder") and TV shows like "Twilight Zone" and "Outer Limits." Here, the big guy is a hip teacher who tries to teach our kids about sex! The parents get all bent out of shape, the kids protest, and there's a basketball game(?). With Patty McCormack, the bad little girl in "The Bad Seed," and Billy Gray (Bud on "Father Knows Best"), who became persona non grata in Hollywood after a pot bust and a problem with heroin.