

FIFTIES (1951-1960) H-L
All reviews by Michael J. Weldon

HELL SHIP MUTINY (Foothill, 57) D Lee Sholem, Elmo Williams, S DeVallon Scott, Wells Root

Like Republic's THE INVISIBLE AVENGER (58), this (66 min long) feature seems to be three episodes of an unsold Saturday morning TV serial with interesting guest stars. Capt. Knight (executive producer Jon Hall, who narrates) is a "part Polynesian" sailing ship captain and expert diver, so each segment has time killing underwater scenes ("a giant manta ray!"). Villain Malone (John Carradine) enslaves local island natives (who worship an idol that resembles Barney the dinosaur) and forces them to dive for pearls. The second part is the "mutiny" on Malone's boat and finally a French judge (Peter Lorre) arrives to hear local cases and take the bad guys to court in a larger island. In a comic outburst, he gets furious at Salty The Chimp and some loose chickens. With Roberta Haynes as the Princess, Felix Lochner (Hall's father) as the island chief, big Mike Mazurki as a dumb brute, tubby Stanley Adams for more comic relief, and Peter Coe. Lorre and Carradine had been in a number of the same Fox films and were later both in THE PATSY (64).

HEY BOY!, HEY GIRL! (59) D David L. Rich, S Raphael Hayes, James West, Harry Romm

Louis Prima (from New Orleans) and Keely Smith (from Norfolk, VA) basically play themselves in this fictional tale of how they met, fell in love, married and became hitmaking singers together. She reluctantly auditions for his band after he agrees to do a charity show. He then has to convince her kid brother Buzz that he's a regular guy who likes to hike in the woods. It's all Hollywood nonsense, but the musical sequences with wild Louis and deadpan Keely are wonderful, especially the theme song, "A Banana Split For My Baby" and Keely singing "Fever" with a blast of sax from Sam Butera. Other tunes are "Oh Marie," "When The Saints..." and "Up The Lazy River." James Gregory is the parish priest who brings them together. Also with Henry Slate, Kim Charney, and Barbara Heller. Unfortunately, the couple divorced less than two years after this Columbia feature was released and the hits stopped. HEY was recently shown on AMC, along with an excellent new feature length doc. on Prima, whose career goes back to the 30s.

THE HOAXTERS (52) DHerman Hoffman, Victor Lasky, William Herbert, PDore Schary

A carnival barker (Sid Tomack) introduces this very slick 36 min. MGM short which effectively uses choice footage to compare WW2 fascists with Communists - but mostly concentrates on The USSR. Modern day viewers might be surprised seeing a huge American Bund rally (in 35) and a U.S. Communist one (in 46). Bits of speeches by FDR, Truman, Ike, Hoover and Churchill warn of the Communist threat and Jackie Robinson says "We don't want their help." The history of the U.S.S.R. is told in terms of the on/off/on/off "love and hate affair" with America. The Marshall Plan, NATO and The Voice of America are discussed, along with the (then current) Korean War. Narration is spoken by MGM contract stars Robert Taylor, James Whitmore, Barry Sullivan, Walter Pidgeon, future CA Senator George Murphy, and Broadway actress Marilyn Erskine. Tomack was the original Gillis on THE LIFE OF RILEY (49-50). Hoffman later directed THE INVISIBLE BOY (57). THE HOAXTERS played in newsreel theaters and opened for features, stayed in circulation for many years and even played on bills with Ron Ormond movies! We saw it on TCM.

HOT ROD GIRL (SW, 59) D Leslie Martinson, S John McGeevy, P Norman T. Herman (HOT CAR GIRL) Mechanic Jeff (John Smith, later on LARAMIE) blames himself and is put on parole after his kid brother dies drag racing. He becomes a workaholic, ignores his loyal blonde girlfriend Lisa (Lori Nelson, who also races) and is taunted by a smart ass new guy in black leather (Mark Andrews). A hot rod fan plain clothes cop (Chuck Connors, towering over the "teens") tries to help and keep the racers out of trouble. Many outdoor locations are used (the action highlight is a head-on chicken race) and unintentional humor is provided by an (obvious) midget as a hit and run victim kid. With Frank Gorshin (who does a Cagney impression) as Flat Top and funny, sexy Roxanne Arlen (from the BEAT THE CLOCK show!) as LP. The jazz soundtrack features Bud Shank (sax), Barney Kessel (guitar), and Maynard Ferguson (trumpet) and the editing is especially good. It's a Johnny Legend Untamed Video release by the director of HOT ROD RUMBLE.

HOUSE IN THE WOODS (Sinister, 59) D/S Maxwell Munden, P Geoffrey Goodbart War vet writer Geoff (Michael Gough) and his wife Carol (Patricia Roc), leave their city apartment to get away from neighbors who have loud parties. They rent a large country cottage for an extremely low amount. The widower artist owner (Ronald Howard) insists that all three of them stay there for a while before he moves and wants to paint Carol. Evidence starts mounting that he had killed his wife, which inspires Geoff to write a murder novel and predict what will happen next. This 62 min. British Film Workshop production is not a ghost story (as claimed in some books), but it could almost pass as an ALFRED HITCHCOCK TV episode. Howard had been in QUEEN OF SPADES (48). Gough, now known to millions as Alfred the butler, was about to act in HORROR OF DRACULA.

INCREDIBLE PETRIFIED WORLD (SW, 57) P/D Jerry Warren, S John W. Steiner After some guy narrates a film of undersea life (with a giant squid vs. shark scene), we see how four people lowered in an experimental diving bell end up trapped in underwater caves. John Carradine, often cast as older and/or crazy characters at the time, is the sane and young looking Mr. Wyman who created the bell. Robert Clarke leads the expedition with blonde Sheila Carol (from BEAST FROM HAUNTED CAVE), former Lois Lane Phyllis Coates (as a jealous, bitchy reporter) and Allen Windsor. They wander around a lot but don't find much besides a crazed "old" man with a very fake beard and some ONE MILLION B.C. lava flow footage. Parts were filmed in actual Arizona caverns. Warren put his cut rate JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH inspired feature on a double bill with his TEENAGE ZOMBIES in 60. The trailer for TEENAGE is also on this tape along with an incredible Civil Defense short about bomb shelters for New York farmers!

THE ISLAND MONSTER (LSVideo, 53) D/S Roberto Montero, S Alberto Vecchiotti, P Fortunato Misiano

(IL MOSTRO DELL' ISOLA) Lt. Mario Andriana (Franca Marzi), an upstanding family man, is sent to an island off of Naples to go undercover and investigate a drug smuggling ring. Don Gaetano (Boris Karloff), who is known for building a home for sick babies, has drugs ("cocaine, hashish and marijuana") smuggled in the false bottoms of milk cans. He also has Mario's little girl (Patrizia Remiddi) kidnapped and held captive in a cave by the ocean. Boris (who dubbed his own voice) frequently quickly switches his expression from kindly to sinister and back. His character dumps one man in the ocean for asking for more money and he threatens the life of the kid and even her little dog. Cigarette girls sell drugs at the Dancing Siren nightclub. Sexy singer Gloria (Renata Vicario) eventually agrees to help Mario and his wife save their daughter - and has a near topless scene. Filming was done on location and in a Rome studio. Although some books claim that this only played in Italian language theaters, Romana Films released it

(dubbed) in America in '57. It's interesting to see if you don't expect a horror movie. Montero later made *THE SLASHER IS THE SEX MANIAC* (72) and *CALIGULA'S HOT NIGHTS* (77) and his son Mario carried on in the long family exploitation tradition.

JAMBOREE (Warner, 57) D Ray Lockwood, S Leonard Kanter, P Max J. Rosenberg, Milton Subotsky
 (DISC JOCKEY JAMBOREE) High production values and some classic performances make this a must for 50s music fans. Jerry Lee Lewis does "Great Balls Of Fire" (different than the record), Fats Domino does "Wait And See" and even young Frankie Avalon is decent, backed by with Rocco And The Saints. It has the best footage available of Carl Perkins, doing "Glad All Over." Buddy Knox, Jimmy Bowen and Charlie Gracie do pretty light teen appeal songs but are fun to watch and the sets are great. And how could you resist Slim Whitman! Also with Count Basie, Louis (brother of Frankie) Lyman, The Four Coins, Joe Williams and others. DJs from all over America (and Canada and Europe) show up to make intros and Dick Clark is seen hosting a TV telethon. DJs include Joe Finan and Robin Seymour (who I remember from Cleveland and Detroit), Milt Grant (an inspiration for *HAIRSPRAY*), and best of all by far, New York's Jocko Henderson who raps while wearing a space suit and helmet! The unavoidable plot concerns the new singing sensations Honey (Freda Holloway) and Pete (Paul Carr, later in *BEN*). His conniving bitch agent (Kay Medford, also in *BYE BYE BIRDIE*) used to be married to her agent (Bob Pastene). Connie Francis provided the female star's singing voice, as she had for the producers *ROCK ROCK ROCK*. This was recently released for the first time on video.

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM (SW, 57) D/edit Robert C. Dertano, S Herbert F. Nichols, P Stephen C. Apostoloff
 Apostoloff/Stephens says this Republic feature is autobiographical. Stephen (Jacques Scott) is whipped in his cell in Bulgaria. Some friends break him out and they flee to Istanbul. He plays piano in a club, but a huge guy (Tor Johnson!) says "My grandfather was whipped to death by a Bulgarian!" and beats him up. In Paris he lands a Radio Free Europe job and a girlfriend (Genevive Aumont), makes it to New York and falls for a blonde nurse (Jean Ann Lewis from *GUN GIRLS*) and finally to L.A. (where he would eventually make nudie movies). During this whole movie (by the director of *PINDOWN GIRLS* and *GIRL GANG*), the voices of Commies threaten and mock him ("Distance means nothing in this day of the guided missile and the H bomb!"). They sound like the 60's song "Mr Blue" (by Clear Light). William C. Thompson was cinematographer.

JUNGLE GIRL AND THE SLAVER (Unearthly, 57) D Herman Leitner, D Ernst Von Salomon, P Helmuth Volmer
 (*LIANE, DIE WEISSE SKLAVIN*) In the W. German/Italian sequel to *LIANE THE JUNGLE GODDESS* (PV #10), police inspector Frank (Adrian Hoven) is assigned to "break the vicious slave rings." He declares that naïve giggling teenage blonde jungle queen Liane (Marion Michael) is "our only hope." Liane dances and climbs to her tree house in her very skimpy jungle bikini. Captive slaver Frazer (Freidrich Joloff) leers as she smiles at him while eating a banana. He and the head Arab slaver Ibrahim (Rik Battaglia) fight over Liane and Frank instantly falls for her. Meanwhile most members of her (black) Woodoo tribe, including her tall laughing guard Tanga (Jean Pierre Faye) are slaughtered and members of another friendly tribe are taken away in chains. Hollywood movie blackface finally ended (more or less) in the early 50s but other countries continued with the minstrel tradition. Liane's best friend, the dancing, singing black Ku-Lala is actually a white woman ("Lei Ilima") in full body black make up. Parts take place in the desert and in a (real looking) Arab city. There's lots of animal hunting footage and some actual native footage. Some scenes were condensed with added narration for the English dubbed version (with Liane renamed Diana). Salomon also wrote the nazi era *KONGO EXPRESS* (39). Joloff was also in *THE THIRD SEX* (PV #10) and *TEENAGE WOLFPACK* (PV #19). The Medallion TV print is dark and the color is

faded. The tape includes several choice 70s trailers. JUNGLE GIRL... was released in America by DCA (owned by AMOS 'N ANDY producer Hal Roach Jr.) as NATURE GIRL AND THE SLAVER, then played on local TV stations. Liane movies, based on a novel by Anne-Day Helveg, were so popular in Germany that a musical (!) TV version was made in 1996.

JUVENILE JUNGLE (Fang, 58) D William Witney, S Arthur T. Horman, P Sidney Picker
The JDs in this Republic feature are more like gangsters. Hal (Corey Allen) arrives in town and starts making crime plans with the sexy, plotting jealous waitress Glory (Rebecca Welles), the leader of a gang. After a botched liquor store holdup, the nice Carolyn (Anne Whitfield) is held hostage and Hal becomes her protector against the bad couple Glory and Monte (Joe Di Reda) and the two females have a cat fight. The loser members are Tic Tac (Richard Bakalyan - PV # 25), a big mouth drunk and the not so bright Duke (Joe Conley). At a beach party Tic Tac asks Glory, "Beer, buns and sand in your bra, what more do you want?" Allen, from Cleveland, had been in REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE.

KING DINOSAUR (Sinister, 55) D Bert I. Gordon, S Tom Gries, P Gordon Zimbalist
After a very long intro (and narration by Marvin Miller), 2 men and 2 women land on the new planet Nova (the only thing we see of their spaceship is a wing). One says, "Let's get out of these suits" and they laugh at some baby honey bears. Some giant crickets fight, a gator battles a lizard, then an A bomb explodes. The end. The Lippert release (only 59 mins.) is pretty mind numbing. The stars are Bill Bryant (later in many TV movies), Douglas Henderson (INVASION OF THE SAUCER MEN, BLACK ZOO...) and Wanda Curtis and Patti Gallagher who seem to have disappeared along with planet Nova. Screenwriter Gries later directed HELTER SKELTER (76).

LOST, LONELY AND VICIOUS (Englewood, 57) D Frank Myers, S Norman Graham, P Charles M. Casinelli
This downbeat 75 min. local James Dean inspired movie is about Johnnie Dennis (Ken Clayton, promoted as a next Dean) as a bored, fast driving, bongo playing, death obsessed new Hollywood actor. Sarcastic young people and his dejected European coach Tanya (Lilyan Chauvin, also in TICKLE ME) hang out in a malt shop and talk about him. He gets into fights, falls for a nice drug store clerk (Barbara Wilson), has flashbacks in his car and thinks a painting is cursed. I liked the supporting characters best including the egotistical wise guy actor Walt and his friend Pig, and the platinum blondes: naive TV actress Darlene from New York and the "stacked dish" Pinkie. The camera closes in on the butts of the females dancing - to a concertina player (?). It was filmed in Tuscaloosa, Alabama (!), was released by Howco and is now also available from Something Weird and Sinister.

LOUISIANA HUSSY (Englewood, 59) D Lee Sholem, S Charles Lang, P Charles M. Caswell
(THE SECRET OF NINA DUPREZ) Nanette (Nan Peterson), the sexy, shameless hussy of the title, has two Cajun trapper/fisherman brothers at each others throats. They even fight while gathering moss from trees. Pierre (Robert Richards) marries the nice Lily (Betty Lynn, later Thelma Lou on THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW), but spends his wedding day with Nanette, who then moves in with angry jealous Jacques (Peter Coe, from several Universal horror movies). Eventually, the black servant of a rich drunk (Harry Lauter from many 50s sci fi movies) tells a

flashback revealing that “Nanette” was a servant who had ruined his life too. Peterson (from THE HIDEOUS SUN DEMON and SHOTGUN WEDDING - PV #23) does the twist in her bra and (her double) takes a nude swim. It’s a pretty good swamp drama and even has an old gris gris woman. Director William Rowland (PSYCHO LOVER) added scenes to the Howco release. There are no end credits.

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