

DRUMMER FEATURE ARTICLE

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Lex Flexes Pex for Cineplex Sex...

THE BATTERED LEX BARKER (Nobody Fucks Lex Barker Anymore, 1979) by Jack Fritscher

- This entire feature article "The Battered Lex Barker" is also available in Acrobat pdf.
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AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTRODUCTION



DRAFT VERSION



Written November 2, 1978, and published in *Drummer* 26, January 1979. With Lex Barker who in the 1970s was a camp icon from the Tarzan movies of the 1950s, as well as for Barker's cachet from his part in the Federico Fellini classic *La Dolce Vita* (1960), I continued the *Drummer* series about hunky movie stars in S&M situations that began in *Drummer* #1, June 1975, with Paul Newman, Burt Reynolds, Steve McQueen, and Jon Voight in *Deliverance*. (In *Drummer* 1, there was also an ad selling posters of shirtless stars like Jan Michael Vincent, and the Roberts Conrad and Redford, as well as Ryan O'Neal and Barbra Streisand.)

In *Drummer* 19, December 1977, I wrote a similar movie-themed piece about gay muscle-beard icon, Steve Reeves. I played this Lex Barker tribute, with ten photographs from the collection of the Los Angeles artist "Cavelo," with a fun spin. The captions are campy, ranging from cracks about "Kool-Aid at Jonestown" to snaps about "Italian extras playing Indians" in spaghetti westerns, and finally to Lex Barker dropping dead in Manhattan. I adapted the rhythmic text from a poem I had written February 20, 1969, titled, "Litany for Moom Pitchers [Moving Pictures]." To exhibit that there were many points of source material that fed into *Drummer*, that original poem follows "The Battered Lex Barker."

This article also marks the first mention of video and video cassettes in *Drummer*.
-Jack Fritscher, June 8, 2001

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THE BATTERED LEX BARKER (Nobody Fucks Lex Barker Anymore, 1979) by Jack Fritscher

IN THE GOOD OL' USTA-BE'S of Saturday matinee marquees, we mostly stuck our peckers—the whole front row of us—through holes we punched in the greasy bottoms of our buttercorn boxes. Just puttin' our prepube hands in on our own salty dogs.

All the guys said, "Ain't Jane got hardon tits!"

We'd all say, "Ugh!"

And the salt burned good like grit down among our sweltering palms.

But the hardon wasn't Jane's tits.

"Starring LEX BARKER" was what drilled the thrill through the bottom of the popcorn boxes. Just those simple headlines: "Starring LEX BARKER!"

Even today in film history books his movies still have no titles. And Lex has even less mention.

Look up all the Barrymores, a Bancroft, a Bankhead, even a Theda Bara (whose name is an anagram for *Arab Death*) and go as far as the Richards Barthelmess and Basehart and Burton. Among these Hollywood B's, unsympatico film historians ignore the movies "Starring LEX BARKER!" Even his greatest, *La Dolce Vita*, is listed not as a LEX BARKER *movie*, but as a snobby Fellini *film*!

The nerve! After all that Lex suffered: stripped bound, beaten branded, spread-eagled, humiliated. If the Indians didn't get him, the Zulus did; and the camera turned away in a blush while we turned on with a rush.

LEX HAD PEX

When Lex was a cowboy, he wore soft chamois leathers. When Lex swung as Tarzan, he wore soft chamois loincloths. In deserts and jungles, Lex's cotton clothes always rotted off from sweat faster than Ursula Un-dress in *Dr. No*. [Ursula Andress, star of the film and poster, *One Million Years B. C.*, and the first James Bond movie, *Dr. No*]

Lex, you see, had something no man else in the 50's was really allowed to exploit: A BODY!

Meanwhile, audiences had been Garboed and Gabled, Harlowed and Novarroed, Prestoned and Hestoned. We were C. B. DeBibified at Bijou's surely templefied. We were Wayned and Payned and Taylormade. We were Peter Lorred and Victor Jorry-d. We were even Myrna Loy-d.

But Lex was sex.

He was Sigmund Freud on celluloid.

So keep the obviously “Remembered Ones.”

Keep your Bogart, Brando, Jimmy Dean,

Newman, Woodward, Steve McQueen,

Tracy, Hepburn, 3-D creatures.

Even Monroe’s double features.

They were too “normal,” compared to Lex, tied to everything but the kitchen sink.

VIDEO-JERK

So I’m buying now my video cassettes “Starring LEX BARKER!”

I’ll ruin my eyes

and sallow my complexion.

I’ll grow hair on my palms,

and twist my affection.

I’ll sit still closer, and closer,

to my video screen,

till seer merges with the seen.

Larger than life, projected I’ll go

off with Lex in the pitcher show,

tying and torturing with great affection

–loving Lex with rear projection.

A reel marquee de Saturdaynite!

At least, he had the good taste to drop dead

outside Bloomingdale’s in New York City.

“Litany for Moom Pitchers; or,
Logical Chant fro the Ritual of My Final Fade”

MGMothered Warnerbrothered
Born of a Nation
(oh yes can we see)
Cineramed Techniramed
breathing seventy millimeter sighs

HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE THIS MATERIAL

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Bausched and Lombed
and Undergrounded
Cinemascope and Paramounted

Vistavision
reel eyes
multi-screened with rear projection
Technicolor Pathe News

Garboed Gabled
Harlowed Novarroed
Prestoned Hestoned
C. B. de Biblied

Wayned and Payned
and Taylormade
Peter Lorre-d Victor Jorry-d
Myrna Loy-d
Sigmund Freud on celluloid

Robert Redford Brian Bedford
SuperJulieTechniSounda
MovieAndrewsColorMusic
reel marquee de Saturdaynite
Bijou, surely templefied

Bogart Brando Jimmy Dean
Newman Woodward Steve McQueen
Tracy Hepburn
3-D creatures
Marilyn Monroe's double features

Sex and flesh without coition
justice sold with the admission
GUARANTEED

Ruin my eyes
Sallow my complexion
Grow hair on my palms
Twist my affection
Sit closer each bill
to the silver screen
till seer merges with the seen
Larger than life
projected I'll go
a Great Big Creature in the pitcher show
looking down on heads
in row on row
watching me watching them
in the pitcher show.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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