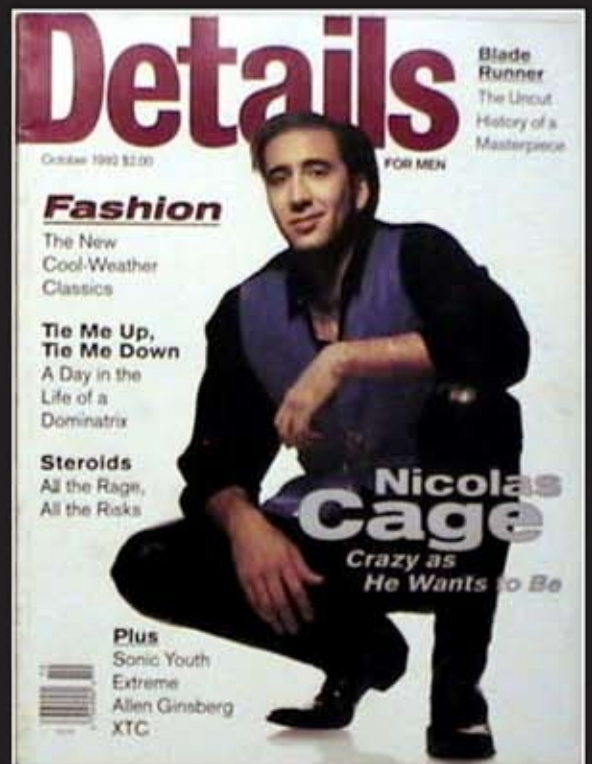


THE
BLADE RUNNER
PRINT ARCHIVE



notes:

October 1992

by Lance Loud

Blade Runner

TEN YEARS AGO, RIDLEY SCOTT SET OUT TO TELL THE STORY OF A GROUP OF EXPIRING ANDROIDS BENT ON STAYING ALIVE. NOW WITH THE DIRECTOR'S ORIGINAL VERSION BEING RELEASED, THE CAST AND CREW RECALL THE FILM THAT NEARLY KILLED THEM.



By Lance Loud



Above: The entrance to the Latin-Asian bazaar. The set, meant to show the rotting, decrepit future, cost over \$1 million to construct.

HAMPTON FANCHER: In June of 1982, I went to the premiere of *Blade Runner* expecting to hate it. Even though I wrote the first screenplay and had a producer's credit on the film, I left during preproduction—I had already gone through too many rewrites and had just disengaged from the project. I knew *Blade Runner* was over budget and behind schedule, and that toward the end of postproduction Ridley Scott had lost his power over the picture and the people who owned it had added a voice-over narration and tagged on a happily-ever-after ending. But the night of the premiere, as soon as the screen flashed LOS ANGELES 2019 and the Vangelis score went "thump!" and you saw that futuristic Hieronymus Bosch landscape, people just started screaming, and my heart came into my throat. The movie's immense quality outweighed its blemishes. But there's always a price to pay for greatness and we definitely paid it.

ALAN RAYMOND: *Blade Runner* was a big-budget film—it had originally been budgeted for \$20 million, which today would be about three times as much. And it promised to be a genre film that bent the genre. It was made at the time of *Heaven's Gate*, and directors who pursued unorthodox visions were in danger because the moneymen were scared of budgets going awry. I was on the *Blade Runner* set working on a documentary for ABC News, and the whiff of *Heaven's Gate* was strong, as Scott was basically an obsessive director who would probably take forever. He told

LEFT PAGE, BOTTOM: STEPHEN VAUGHAN/SYGMA; CENTER: COURTESY WARNER BROS.; RIGHT PAGE, FROM TOP: COURTESY SYD MEAD; COURTESY DAVID SHYDER

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

HAMPTON FANCHER:

Original screenwriter

ALAN RAYMOND: Filmmaker who documented the making of *Blade Runner* for ABC News

RIDLEY SCOTT: Director of *Blade Runner* as well as *Alien*, *Thelma & Louise*, and *1492*

LAWRENCE PAULL:

Production designer

KATE HABER: Partner of *Blade Runner*'s producer Michael Deeley

DAVID SNYDER: Art director

JORDAN CRONENWETH: Director of photography

SYD MEAD: Industrial designer; credited as the film's "visual futurist"

DOUGLAS TRUMBULL:

Special-effects supervisor

DARYL HANNAH: Actress; plays Pris, an escaped replicant

MARVIN WESTMORE:

Makeup artist

RUTGER HAUER: Actor; plays Batty, leader of the outlaw replicants

PAUL ROESSLER: Musician; plays a punk extra

SHIRLEY DOLLE:

Hairdresser

SEAN YOUNG: Actress; plays Rachael, the replicant love interest

MICHAEL KAPLAN:

Costume designer (under Charles Knode)

HARRISON FORD: Actor; plays Deckard, a retired cop tracking down the outlaw replicants

JOANNA CASSIDY:

Actress; plays Zhora, the snake-dancing replicant

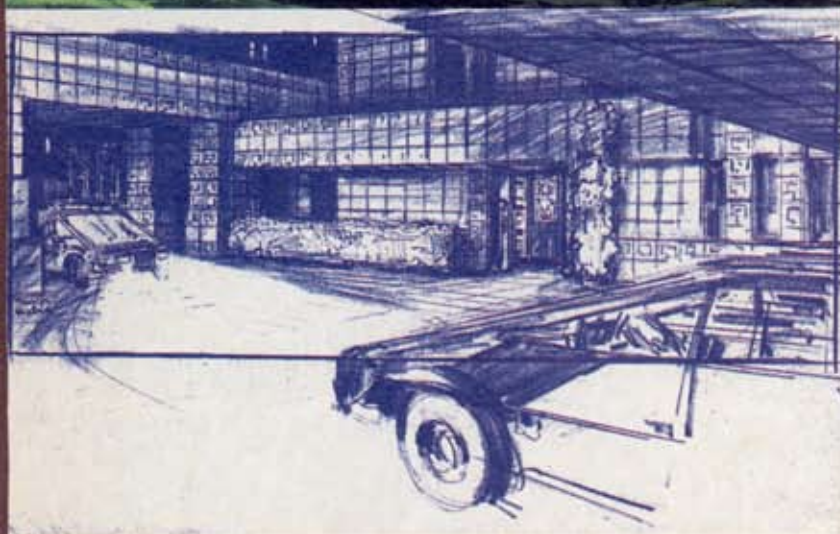
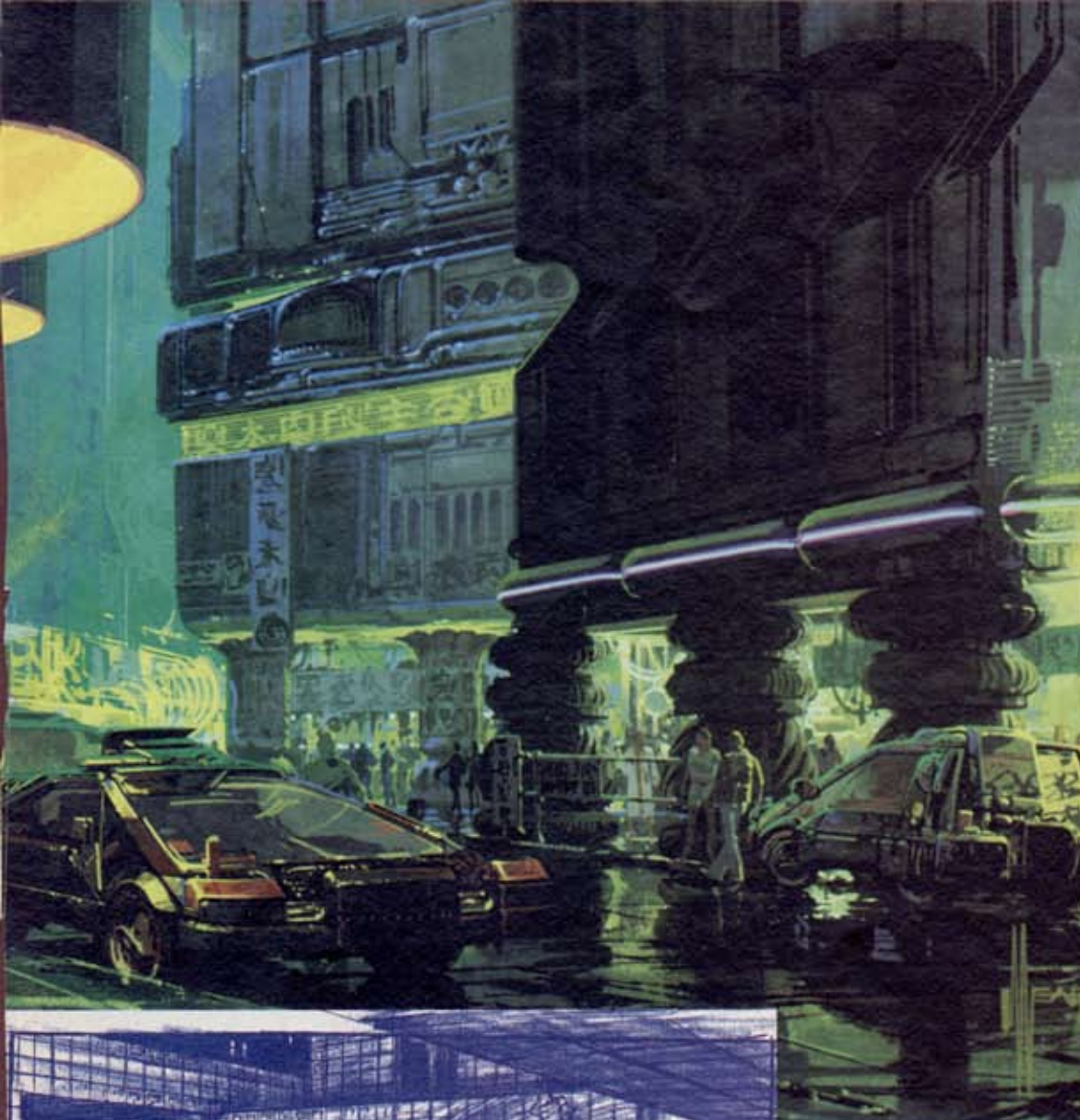
DAVID PEOPLES:

Screenwriter

WILLIAM GIBSON: Author of cyberpunk classic *Neuromancer*

BARRY REARDON:

President, Warner Bros. domestic distribution



Far left: Harrison Ford, as Deckard, chases a replicant on the loose. This scene was shot on a "retrofitted" New York City-street set on a Warner Bros. Burbank lot. Above: One of Syd Mead's paintings of Los Angeles, 2019. Note the go-go girls in the bubble above the acid-rain-drenched streets. Left: Rendering of a vehicle pulling into Deckard's apartment building.

us he wanted to make a sort of anti-science fiction film, something that would deal with the world of ideas as opposed to exploding rocket ships. His producer Michael Deeley, however, seemed concerned about the movie's commercial viability—he wanted a sort of "Flash Gordon Meets Film Noir." I sensed worry. **RIDLEY SCOTT:** I accepted the film for two reasons. First, I knew Michael Deeley well and I knew I could work with him. Second was the screenplay. I hadn't been able to get it out of my head—even though I initially passed on the idea. Rereading it, I decided that it was an extraordinary piece of work and it seemed to lend itself to some marvelous design possibilities.

LAWRENCE PAULL: I was one of the first on board during pre-production, and when I arrived, Ridley's associate producer told

me, "You're going to take a lot of abuse, but you'll never have a chance to do anything like this again." And he was right. Ridley brought out the best in everybody, but he was difficult. I'd say 40 percent of those in relationships who worked on *Blade Runner* got separated or divorced during the production. The pressure was incredible.

KATE HABER: In the Philip K. Dick novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, which *Blade Runner* is based on, the city is San Francisco. But Ridley wanted to make the film's world far darker, destroyed, and overrun. For that, L.A. was perfect.

DAVID SNYDER: Most of the earth's population—the rich ones at least—had already moved off-planet to colonies in space. So we envisioned Los Angeles in 2019 as the ultimate melting pot of the economically underprivileged. Everything in the city blared at you—the signs, the noises—and acid rain was always falling.

JORDAN CRONENWETH: Ridley wanted to permeate *Blade Runner* with shafts of light. Not since *Citizen Kane* had light like that been used so extensively. It seeped into every scene, poked through every set—even in Deckard's apartment. Ridley was very insistent about this—the light was a subtle reminder to the viewer that in this future world privacy was almost extinct.

LAWRENCE PAULL: In the street scenes, we used lots of Japanese and Chinese extras to show that the influx of foreign cultures had overtaken L.A. The noodle bar where Harrison eats was our updated version of a White Castle. Eddie Olmos plays a character who is part Japanese and part Spanish and speaks a language that is both—we called it “streetpeak.” Eddie developed it.

KATE HABER: Obviously, the design work was enormous. To get Ridley's vision of the future, it took two storyboard artists, a production designer and art director, plus Syd Mead.

SYD MEAD: I had a job with no title, so I had to invent one. “Visual futurist” was what my lawyer and I came up with. I was hired to design the vehicles, but my job evolved out of the fact that I never do renderings on blank backgrounds. I always put them in a setting. I started to surround my vehicle sketches with street scenes and architecture—Ridley loved them.

DOUGLAS TRUMBULL: Syd was essential in bringing together the design. The set was constructed according to his drawings.

Lance Loud is a frequent contributor to Details.

Below: Punk musicians dressed as futuristic street punks wait for trouble on the set. Top right: The “Spinner,” a flying police car, is hoisted in the air with cables. When the vehicle was first constructed, it was so new-looking that Scott



ordered it painted with grime and rust. Bottom right: Ridley Scott with Rutger Hauer during the last three days of shooting.



RIDLEY SCOTT: Designing *Blade Runner* was more of a challenge than *Alien* [which he directed in 1979] simply because it's easier to create an environment for a space film than a film that details life on Earth in the future. I insisted that *Blade Runner's* look be authentic, not just speculative. We were determined to avoid shiny buildings, underpopulated streets, and silver suits with diagonal zippers.

LAWRENCE PAULL: Everything on the screen in *Blade Runner* was created especially for the movie: neon signs, electrical sockets, telephones, furniture, black-light tattoos, newspapers. Nothing was brought in. And every design had a twist—not a futuristic twist, a more eclectic one. The key element was a concept Ridley and I devised called “retrofitting.”

DAVID SNYDER: The producers hated that name—they thought, If you're doing a futuristic film, retro-anything isn't what it should be known as. But we based the concept on the idea that in the future of *Blade Runner*, utilities systems have broken down because everyone has left the planet. Instead of building anything new, everything was patched and repaired. We put pipes on the outsides of buildings, fans on the tops of the roofs. At the base were the structures from the '20s, over which we put a layer done in the '50s, and over that a layer from the '70s, and over that, one to look like the year 2000.

RIDLEY SCOTT: To me, a film is like a seven-hundred-layer cake. **DAVID SNYDER:** We worked like hell for months to get the street set right. We must've bought every piece of pipe—plastic, steel, and wooden—in a five-thousand-mile radius. The day came to show it to Ridley. Larry and I were standing there—shaking, of course—when Ridley drove up to the back lot. The set was already way over budget and cost over \$1 million. He got out of the car, looked around, took the cigar out of his mouth, and said,

LEFT PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: STEPHEN VAUGHAN/SYGMA; GAMMA/LIAISON; COURTESY KATHERINE HABER; RIGHT PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: FOTO FANTASIES; COURTESY SYD MEAD (3)

"This is a great start!" Then he got in his car and drove off. Larry and I stood there in complete silence for five minutes and then said, "What the fuck are we going to do now?"

DARYL HANNAH: *Blade Runner* was the movie I most enjoyed working on because it was what I imagined moviemaking to be. I've been on sets that have been friendlier, but everything was so rich—the art direction, the lighting, the design. You'd walk out onto the set and be transported into this totally imaginary world.

MARVIN WESTMORE: Ridley was definitely a genius—but he was also very hard work. You would have a meeting with him about some aspect of the production and come up with a concept. Then you'd go off and execute that concept. But by the time you brought the realized version back to him, he would have already evolved it into something else. Working that way was like being caught on a merry-go-round—you tried to catch up if you could.

KATE HABER: Ridley had Vangelis do the music. But during production, Ridley would send Vangelis—who lived in Europe—completed scenes of the film to score. Every time Vangelis would finish scoring a scene, Ridley would change something in the scene, knocking off the timing for the music. Vangelis would have to redo everything. That pissed him off so much, he eventually refused to release the soundtrack commercially as an album.

DAVID SNYDER: You'd design or build something the way Ridley had discussed it with you and then he'd change everything. There wasn't one set that was shot as it had been planned.

LAWRENCE PAULL: For Tyrell's office, I designed a pair of free-

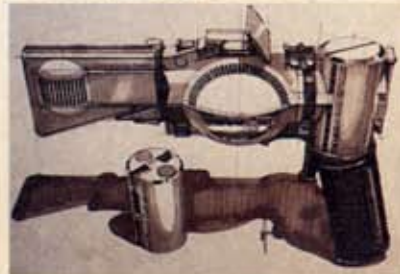
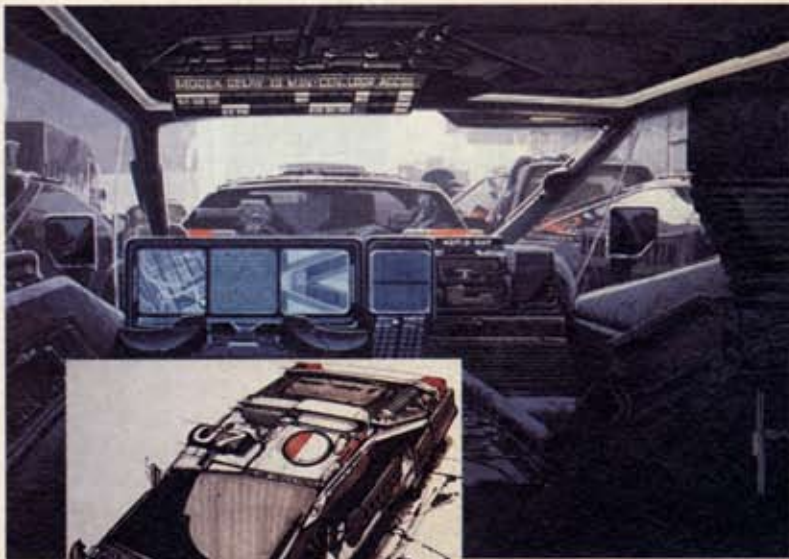
standing pyramid-shaped columns, eight feet square at the bottom. Each was covered with intricate designs and finished in concrete. The day we were ready to shoot, the columns looked gorgeous. Ridley looked at them and said, "Turn the columns upside down!" We had to pull out one of the walls, and it took two cranes to do it. That was Ridley putting his stamp on it.

DAVID SNYDER: But it was also a great idea! It was a lot of work and it hurt some feelings, but after we'd done it, the inverted columns gave the room that extra something.

RUTGER HAUSER: The finer details—that's where *Blade Runner* sort of gets you. The script was just words; Ridley made it into a visual celebration.

PAUL ROESSLER: *Blade Runner* was one of the first movies to ever use punk rockers as extras. On the set, we punks would watch Harrison Ford. He usually looked pissed off. I heard him once say to Ridley something like, "What are we doing here? This is ridiculous! You're going overboard!" But everybody was getting on everybody's nerves during those crowd scenes at night. They wanted to blend real downtrodden Orientals with violent street gangs for the city shots. We'd be getting stoned and running around and inflicting agony on anybody we could. I remember a production assistant telling us that if we didn't calm down, they'd throw us out. But I think they didn't because they *wanted* tension and misery. One A.D. told me, "The way Ridley works is an accumulation of details, and I think he wants everybody here to feel sick and tired." After ten days of shooting from seven P.M. till dawn, we did.

ALAN RAYMOND: We were shooting the sequence in which Deckard chases and shoots the girl replicant. We shot at night for one week and got to view Ridley in action. Unlike some directors who let their assistants put everyone on the set through their paces,



Far left: Original poster art. Above and left: Mead's view of the cockpit and exterior of Deckard's sedan. Bottom left: Mead's drawing of a gun that was never constructed, as Scott deemed its look too futuristic.

Ridley was out there in the middle of the chaos, with all the smoke, rain, space vehicles, and crowds in weird clothes and hairdos. He would be placing extras in the street, blocking shots, looking though the viewfinder. He exuded very little attitude.

SHIRLEY DOLLE: Ridley was very difficult to approach and very difficult to know. He always treated us with the utmost respect, but he threw a lot of curves. There was a theory that Ridley kept people uncomfortable to enhance their performances. He and Harrison were very tough on Sean Young her first day of shooting.

SEAN YOUNG: The first scene I shot was the one in which Rachael meets Deckard. My first line was, "Do you like our owl?" But Ridley told me I was saying "ow-el," not "owl." He made me reshoot that line twenty-six times. But *Blade Runner* was a good experience—everything, except my leading man. What happened? I could dish for days but I have a rough enough reputation as it is. Suffice it to say I wouldn't call Harrison Ford generous.

MICHAEL KAPLAN: Sean was fun and down-to-earth—she used to hang around wardrobe and tap-dance and do shtick. Nobody disliked Harrison either; he was very professional and had a wonderful, dry sense of humor. But between them, something didn't work. Whenever Harrison would come onto the set he wouldn't speak to her. Totally ignored her.

KATE HABER: Harrison just disliked her. Through most of the film, Harrison stayed in his trailer.

MICHAEL KAPLAN: Just before their love scene, Sean freaked out—how was she going to kiss this man who never even gave her the time of day? The whole crew was waiting to see what would happen. When they shot the scene, Harrison threw her against the venetian blinds so hard she later said he'd hurt her. Then he grabbed her, kissed her, and tears started running down her face. At that point in her career, I don't think she was a good enough actress to fake that; besides, she was still crying in our dressing trailer afterward.

SEAN YOUNG: That was the worst day. Harrison had to be unshaven for that scene. What a beard that guy has!

MICHAEL KAPLAN: Years later, Sean ran into Harrison at a party. She went up to him and shook his hand. "I'm Sean Young," she said. "We were once in a film together." Finally, she got a laugh out of him.

HARRISON FORD: *Blade Runner* was not one of my favorite films. I tangled with Ridley. The biggest problem was that at the end, he wanted the audience to find out that Deckard was a replicant. I fought that because I felt the audience needed somebody to cheer for. I have no interest in seeing the director's cut. Making the movie was an unpleasant experience I do not wish to relive.

KATE HABER: You must remember, Ridley came out of commercials. Communicating how an actor should feel was not in his experience at the time. Therefore, he let his actors create their own roles to some extent. Rutger loved it; Harrison hated it because he wanted guidance.

ALAN RAYMOND: On the set, Harrison sat off to the side and pretty much kept to himself. I never once saw him talk to Ridley. He said he respected Ridley because he was willing to go over budget and do extra takes and all that. Later, when I saw the film, I thought it was interesting that he was used in the way he was. Before that, I had only thought of him in terms of George Lucas films. Suddenly, he was dark, sinister.

HAMPTON FANCHER: I was amazed by Harrison's performance. He was so good. You see, Ridley has a really interesting effect on actors. Some actors might say, "Ridley didn't talk much about the motivation for the role," but Ridley's approach is intelligent, not intellectual. There are performances in *Blade Runner* by ac-

Right: Batty (Rutger Hauer) meets Sebastian, the designer of the replicants. Below: One of Mead's early preproduction sketches for Sebastian's lab.



tors who haven't been as good since.

JOANNA CASSIDY: I remember coming out of my dressing room and onto the city-street set at night. The signs were up and the streets were wet and there were people in funny haircuts and weird makeup. How could you not get into your role when Ridley literally surrounded you with the feeling for it?

RUTGER HAUER: I immediately got along with Ridley. He's smart. There wasn't a lot of rehearsal—Ridley would work through a scene giving us room to play around in front of the camera, then he'd take what he wanted for the film. When we were discussing the climax, where Harrison and I confront each other, Ridley kept saying to me, "I see a Bruce Lee fight in a gym." I told him, "Look at me! There's no way I could do that convincingly. Batty is a replicant, a sophisticated dishwasher, who's about to run out of batteries. Shouldn't that last confrontation be his last dance—a dance of death?" So in the movie, you'll notice that we never really fight. I just chase Deckard, and when he is hanging on the ledge of the building, I save his life. As we were shooting, I had the idea that Batty knows he's losing juice, so he sticks a nail into his hand to spike himself a little longer. And later, when Harrison and I run through some birdcages on the roof, I said to Ridley, "Wouldn't it be nice if Batty, in his last moments of life, grabs a dove to sort of hold onto life, and at the moment of death it flies away?" Ultimately it wound up in the film. But what I'm most proud of is Batty's last speech.

DAVID PEOPLES: When Batty dies on the roof, he has a speech that I wrote. But as they were shooting it, Rutger changed it.

RUTGER HAUER: It wasn't right; it was too much, too thick. I asked Ridley if I could cut a couple lines. He said, "Go ahead."

DAVID PEOPLES: The front part of the speech is mine but then Rutger added . . .

RUTGER HAUER: ". . . all these moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain. . . ." I made it up. . . .

DARYL HANNAH: At one point, after my character dies, Rutger wanted to take my outfit and my wig and wear it, so he would do the last fight scene with Harrison in drag as me. That was the one thing Ridley nixed.

KATE HABER: One morning, the unit publicist brought a copy of a newspaper from Manchester, England, into Ridley's trailer. In it, there was an interview in which Ridley was quoted as saying that English crews were better than American crews because he could

LEFT PAGE, TOP: PHOTO FANTASIES; BOTTOM: COURTESY SYD MEAD; RIGHT PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: GAMMA/LIAISON; COURTESY SYD MEAD; GAMMA/LIAISON; COURTESY KATHERINE HABER



Left: Street sleaze of the future. Below: Mead's drawing of Zhora's club, the Snake Pit, was one of the many set concepts that were never constructed.



Above: The replicant Zhora, played by Joanna Cassidy, "airs out" after her fatal chase scene with Deckard. Right: Harrison Ford, Kate Haber, and Ridley Scott amicably discuss the script on the set.



speak to them in shorthand. They would then know exactly what he wanted and say "Yes, Gov'nor!" and go off and do it. Ridley left the newspaper in his trailer and his driver found it. The next morning there were 150 photocopies beside the coffee machine.

JORDAN CRONENWETH: The crew was very upset. They had T-shirts printed up. . . .

KATE HABER: On the front they said YES GOV'NOR—MY ASS! . . .

JORDAN CRONENWETH: . . . on the back [taking off on the famous quote, Will Rogers never met a man he didn't like] they had printed WILL ROGERS NEVER MET RIDLEY SCOTT. Ridley didn't understand it, so we had to explain it to him.

KATE HABER: Micheal Deeley, Ridley, and I had T-shirts made up too. They said XENOPHOBIA SUCKS. Most people had to ask what it meant. You see, people here didn't understand Ridley—

he is a deeply controlled, deeply focused director. All he could see was what he wanted. When he left at the end of the day, he wasn't used to the American way of patting people on the back and saying, "That was great, let's go get drunk!" When Ridley left, he just left everyone standing there with dirt on their faces and water dripping on their heads.

RIDLEY SCOTT: *Blade Runner* was the first film I'd shot in the United States. I must say, I encountered a certain amount of frustration in dealing with certain Hollywood union regulations. One rule, which has no equivalent in Britain, is that an American
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director cannot operate his own camera. Even more than being a director, I am a camera operator. Having my camera taken away from me is illogical, like taking Arnold Palmer's golf clubs away from him. It's also inefficient.

DAVID SNYDER: The last day of shooting was the most murderous. There was a lot of pressure from the producers because we were way behind schedule.

KATE HABER: We were doing the final chase scene between Rutger and Harrison. All the rain and smoke effects made it totally hellish.

DAVID SNYDER: It was an outdoor set that had taken three weeks to build. All night we shot. Then, all of a sudden, the sun started coming up and everyone said, "At last! Now we can go home and get some rest!" But Ridley said, "We're not finished yet," and he made the crew dismantle the entire set and take it over to Stage 25 and set it up. It took three hours. But just when we got it up, someone from the studio came over and said, "You can't shoot here, you already ruined Stage 24 with all your rain!" So we had the crew dismantle it again and rebuild it on another stage. It was beyond grueling.

RIDLEY SCOTT: That's total bull—I was never shut out of anywhere, and the last three days were as *normal* as they could be after such a harrowing schedule.

KATE HABER: When Harrison's lying on the rooftop at the end of the film, you can tell he really is half-asleep.

DAVID SNYDER: As soon as Rutger finished his beautiful soliloquy, everyone just wept. I mean, I can hardly talk about it now, almost twelve years later. It was the combined effect of his words and the strain and struggle of working on this masterpiece.

KATE HABER: After another six months of postproduction, putting in the visual effects, *Blade Runner* was previewed twice in Dallas and Denver. Both times the film was shown without Harrison's narration, and both times the audience complained that they had difficulty understanding the story. Ridley went to England to oversee the sound dubbing. It was after he'd gone that Bud Yorkin [who by that time owned what was essentially the completion bond] wrote Ridley a very curt letter that said I've had enough. Yorkin then instigated the happy ending and the voice-over narration as it appeared in the film.

HAMPTON FANCHER: But it turned out that neither David nor I had written the script that made its way into the movie.

HARRISON FORD: It was in my contract that I do the voice-overs, but I hated them. Ridley hated them as well, but when the film went

over budget, they made me do it. I went kicking and screaming to the studio to record it.

KATE HABER: I was there the day Harrison recorded the voice-over. I think he purposefully did it badly hoping it wouldn't be used.

WILLIAM GIBSON: About ten minutes into *Blade Runner*, I reeled out of the theater in complete despair over its visual brilliance and its similarity to the "look" of *Neuromancer*, my [then] largely unwritten first novel. Not only had I been beaten to the semiotic punch, but this damned movie looked better than the images in my head! With time, as I got over that, I started to take a certain delight in the way the film began to affect the way the world looked. Club fashions, at first, then rock videos, finally even architecture. Amazing! A science fiction movie affecting reality! Years later, I was having lunch with Ridley, and when the conversation turned to inspiration, we were both very clear about our debt to the *Métal Hurlant* [the original *Heavy Metal*] school of the '70s—Moebius and the others. But it was also obvious that Scott understood the importance of information density to perceptual overload. When *Blade Runner* works best, it induces a lyrical sort of information sickness, that quintessentially postmodern cocktail of ecstasy and dread. It was what cyberpunk was supposed to be all about.

KATE HABER: *Blade Runner* was before its time. It came out at the height of the Reagan era, when everyone was rich and having a good time and there was light in the future. People said, Who needs to think that the future is going to be like this?

BARRY REARDON: Last fall, we were cleaning out our Warner Bros. archives and discovered Ridley's 70mm print of *Blade Runner* and ascertained that it was his original cut. We played it one night at a theater in L.A. and it sold out; then it played at UCLA and a thousand kids showed up. I told Ridley I was trying out this version. He was surprised. He wanted to remix the sound and change and put in a few scenes—a unicorn dream sequence, a hospital scene. He did so this spring. The old ending's out and *Blade Runner* is sensational.

RIDLEY SCOTT: *Blade Runner* depicts a road we're heading down now—class separation, the growing gulf between rich and poor, the population explosion—and it offers no solutions. When we shot in front of the Bradbury Building in downtown L.A., we dressed the street by trashing it. Recently, I went down there again, and the real street looks as I wanted it to look for the film in 1982.

The director's cut of Blade Runner opens across the country on September 11.

Additional interviews by Kristian Hoffman and Paul M. Sammon.