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BLADE RUNNER
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by Paul M. Sammon

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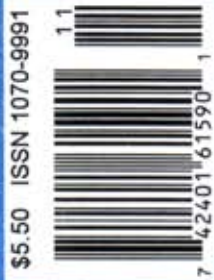
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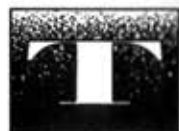




DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF UNICORNS?

The 7 Faces of BLADE RUNNER

By Paul M. Sammon



THROUGHOUT 1981 and most of 1982, I witnessed the birth pangs of a seminal motion picture: **BLADE RUNNER**.

This good fortune arose from purely professional circumstances. Early in 1981, I was assigned by OMNI to cover the making of **BLADE RUNNER** in a series of articles, and the filmmakers behind this \$25 million film gave me unlimited access to their dauntingly ambitious production. I was on-site throughout much of the film's preproduction period, personally examining script rewrites and conceptual art. In short, I was **BLADE RUNNER**'s Boswell, able to both observe the intricate postproduction special effects work of Douglas

Trumbull's then-existing EEG company and to attend special sneak previews of the film.

BLADE RUNNER was directed by British hyperdetailist Ridley Scott, fresh off the success of his gothic science fiction hit **ALIEN** (1979). It starred Harrison Ford, a hot property via **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK** (1980) and **RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK** (1981), and its storyline was adapted from the 1968 novel **DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?**, a complex rumination on the effects of dehumanization by that master of paranoid alternate realities, noted science fiction author Philip K. Dick.

Unfortunately, and despite these stellar talents, when **BLADE RUNNER** was finally released on

June 25, 1982, the film grossed only \$14 million; it was a boxoffice flop. Many reasons were put forth for this failure. Perhaps it was the fact that this darkly-visionsed film was released during the feel-good summer of **E.T.: THE EXTRA TERRESTRIAL**. Perhaps it was **BLADE RUNNER**'s downbeat, morally ambiguous plot, which concerned 21st century cop Rick Deckard (Ford)'s attempts to "retire" four murderous "replicants" (Rutger Hauer, Joanna Cassidy, Daryl Hannah, Brion James), synthetic

*Rick Deckard "remembers" this outtake footage from Ridley Scott's **LEGEND** in Ridley Scott's **BLADE RUNNER: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT**.*

Excerpts from the Screenplay
by Hampton Fancher and David Peoples
©1982 Blade Runner Partnership



Harrison Ford as 2019 bounty hunter Deckard.



Rutger Hauer as Nexus 6 ringleader, Roy Batty.



Daryl Hannah as Nexus 6 pleasure model, Pris.



Sean Young as the experimental replicant, Rachael.

beings whose primary crime is simply aspiring to be human. Or perhaps the film's failure could be simply laid at the feet of an audience unwilling to embrace a melancholy performance from a leading star whose previous triumphs had mostly been in upbeat entertainments.

Whatever the reasons, I soon became fascinated by the manner in which the film's dystopian subtexts of alienation, rebellion and humiliation, uncomfortably reflected the day-to-day realities of those straining to bring them to the screen. It wasn't a pretty sight. There were neverending script rewrites. Feuds between performers. Clashes between director and crew. So many myriad tensions, in fact, that the film's intensive atmosphere of anxiety and exhaustion led many of those connected with the project to sarcastically dub it "Blood Runner."

The physical/psychological tortures endured by the **BLADE RUNNER** crew have been amply documented, most recently by Lance Loud in the October 1992 issue of *DETAILS* magazine. However, what has not been so well detailed is the fact that **BLADE RUNNER** wears many faces. Despite the recent home video release of **BLADE RUNNER**:

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT—a version that removes Ford's controversial voice-over narration while adding a mystifying "unicorn" shot—one shouldn't surmise that only two versions of the film exist. In fact, there are actually seven different cuts of **BLADE RUNNER**. And all have been shown to the general public.

Some of these alternate versions are still available. Others hover in cinematic limbo.

It all began, for me, in San Diego...

FACE #1 THE SAN DIEGO PREVIEW CUT

115m

In early June 1982, after spending nearly 18 months covering the making of the film, I settled into a plush seat at San Diego's Cinema 21 theater to watch what would be the last sneak preview of **BLADE RUNNER** before its official theatrical release.

Two other **BLADE RUNNER** sneaks had been held a few weeks earlier—in Dallas, Texas and Denver, Colorado. Both had gone badly; audiences had not expected the adventurous star of **RAIDERS**

OF THE LOST ARK to appear in such a dour project. Still, the San Diego audience would essentially see the same Dallas/Denver preview print.

With one notable exception.

The previous preview crowds had expressed confusion with Scott's original ending (the elevator doors at Deckard's apartment slamming shut in Rachael and Deckard's faces), so a decision had been made to reshoot the film's climax. Now, for the first time, viewers would see Deckard and Rachael (Sean Young) driving through a lush countryside (utilizing discarded aerial footage from Kubrick's **THE SHINING**) as Deckard mused on the fact that his companion was a special replicant who did not have a built-in four year lifespan.

The 115m San Diego Preview Cut (timed by me on a stopwatch) was quite similar to what would be eventually released as the official theatrical version of the film. However, two extra bits of footage beside the new climax were included in the San Diego Cut, which were subsequently dropped before the film's release; they have never been seen since. Although both were minor moments, this deleted footage contributed some additional seasoning to Scott's exotic stew.

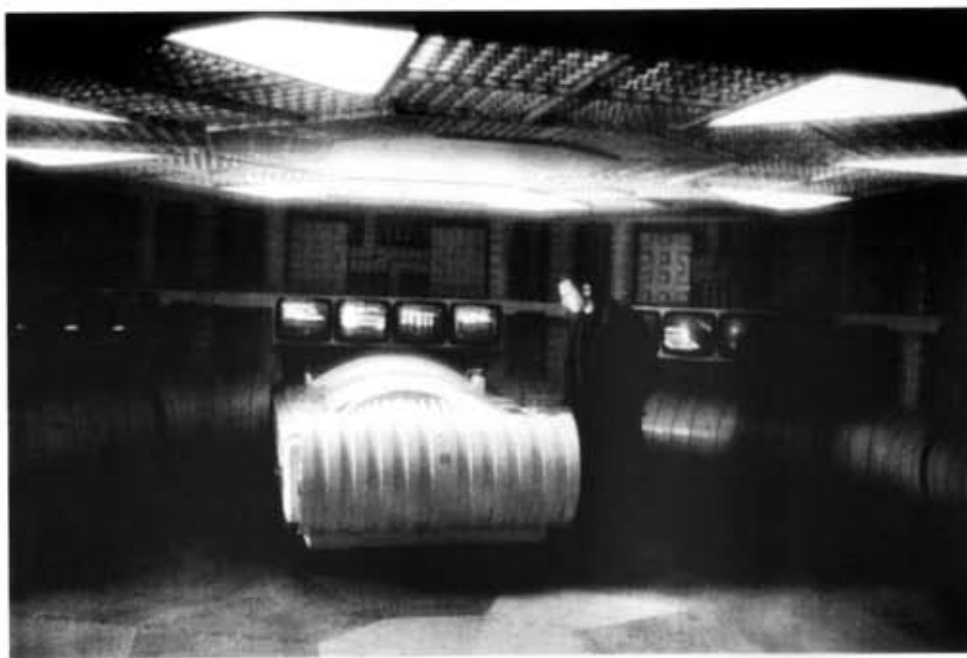
In order to pinpoint the exact moments when these missing elements occurred in **BLADE RUNNER**'s storyline, I will now refer to Warner Home Video's **DIRECTOR'S CUT** laserdisc, indicating those chapters where this deleted footage would have appeared:

Side 1: Chapter 9 Chew's Visitors

In the Director's Cut (and all other versions of the film), Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) is first introduced through a closeup of his spasming hand, a subtle indication that his life span is nearing its end. A moment later, Batty steps out of a large glass capsule to confer with fellow replicant Leon (Brion James) about the loss of some incriminating photographs.

But what *is* that capsule? The San Diego Preview Cut answered that question by showing that Batty was placing a call in a glass-encased VidPhon booth. Batty had placed a call to Chew (James Hong), the Tyrell Corporation's designer of replicant eyes, and as soon as Chew came on line, Batty hung up, satisfied that his target was at work in the Eye World laboratory.

This sequence was then followed by the closeup



Two views of Deckard visiting Holden (Morgan Pauli) in the deleted hospital scene.

of Batty's convulsing hand, and the scene played out as usual.

4:3 "Proud of Yourself, Little Man?"

During the final showdown between Deckard and Batty in replicant designer J.F. Sebastian (William Sanderson)'s apartment, the Blade Runner is shown standing against a decaying wall streaming with rainwater. Batty suddenly punches through that wall, grabs Deckard's hand, and breaks two of his fingers.

One bit of visual information was added to this sequence in the San Diego Cut—just before Batty punches through the wall, Deckard was shown *reloading* his large-gauge handgun (in actuality, a redressed German flare pistol). This was a logical action since Deckard had previously squeezed off a number of shots, ones that killed Pris (Daryl Hannah) and missed Batty in a doorway of Sebastian's decaying flat.

Presumably, this "reloading shot" was dropped to tighten the overall tension of the scene.

These two shots were the only footage edited out of the print between its San Diego sneak and **BLADE RUNNER**'s theatrical premiere.

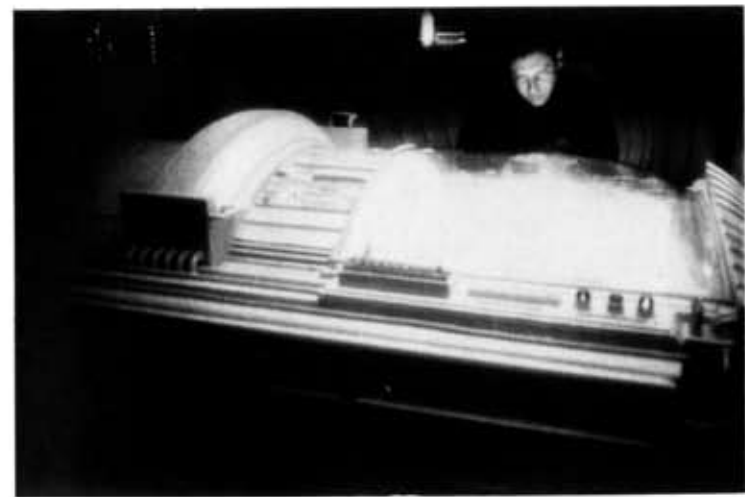
However, in the interest of film history, it is interesting to note that *two other complete se-*

quences—which I had previously witnessed on a Movieola in the Warner Bros. editing department—were dropped from the San Diego preview altogether. These sequences have never been included in any version of the film.

The lost **BLADE RUNNER** scenes concerned two visits made by Deckard to a character named Holden (Morgan Pauli), the Blade Runner who is shot by Leon during the dim-witted replicant's Voight-Kampff test (an empathic procedure to detect replicants) in the Tyrell Pyramid. Both sequences took place in a futuristic hospital ward, where the wounded Holden was seen recuperating in an encapsulated iron lung.

The first deleted "Hospital Scene" occurred just before Deckard visits the Tyrell pyramid to run a Voight-Kampff test on Rachael. Referred to as Scene 13 in the "February 1981 — Revised Through May 1981" draft of the script, this first Hospital Scene was, intriguingly, quite a long one.

What follows is an excerpt from that Feb/May '81 draft, a screenplay which (for all intents and purposes) became **BLADE RUNNER**'s shooting script:



INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Small green letterforms skim soundlessly across a dark glass panel. Beneath the panel a sick, white face reads excerpts from TREASURE ISLAND, mouthing the words as they appear in front of him. It's Holden.

HOLDEN: (READING)

Holden is flat on his back in a breather, an iron-lung-type device covered with indicator lights and exotic paraphernalia. The hospital room is in complete darkness. Holden's breath comes in dark rasps as he reads. We become aware of Deckard standing in the shadows.

DECKARD: Whatcha reading?

Holden is startled, has to look in a mirror angled over his head, rolling his eyes way back to see who it is.

HOLDEN: Deckard, TREASURE ISLAND! Good to see ya, buddy. Old favourite.

Deckard looks down at Holden and doesn't say anything.

Pretty awful, huh?

DECKARD: Naw, you look great! Absolutely terrific! Never saw you look better. Jesus, you look good. Deckard pinches Holden's cheek.

Great complexion! Suit looks really nice. Who's your tailor?

Deckard is making a joke, mocking hospital good cheer, but the touch of bitterness in his voice reveals his sympathy for Holden. Tears wet Holden's eyes.

HOLDEN: A big fucking skin job put the smash on me, wrecked me up! Looka me, for Chrissake! Deckard works at being hard.

DECKARD: You blew it, huh?

Holden recovers from his tears and whines.

HOLDEN: It ain't like it used to be, Deck. It's tough now. These replicants aren't just a bunch of muscle

miners anymore, they're no goddamn different than you or me...

Deckard lights up and sits down, resting his elbows in the glass.

DECKARD: So what happened?

HOLDEN: Ten days ago Security at the Tyrell Corp. finds three intruders in the records room. Kills one, two get away, okay? Deckard nods.

They do a routine autopsy on the one that got aired and... whaddya know? A skin job, one of the ones that busted out! Top drawer replicant... combat type... Nexus 6.

DECKARD: Pretty sexy, the sixes.

HOLDEN: Sexy! Three hours into the autopsy they still think they're cutting up a human. No marks, nothing. Deckard looks impressed. Satisfied, Holden continues.

I decided to check out all new employees at Tyrell. I test 26 boring jerks until in comes this guy Leon Somebody, nothing special but very big... (pause) Anyway...

DECKARD: You Voight-Kampff him?

Holden's eyes flutter a moment. Deckard waits. The breathing changes rhythm.

HOLDEN: Yeah! I thought maybe I was getting something... Maybe it doesn't work on these ones, Deck. Deckard gets up and gives Holden phony good cheer.

(continuing) It's all over, it's a wipe out, they're almost us, Deck, they're a disease, they're...

DECKARD: Take it easy, take it easy... Tyrell Corp's got one. I'm gonna Vee Kay it tomorrow.

HOLDEN: Push it! Push that button!

Deckard pushes.

DECKARD: What's it for?

HOLDEN: Pain!



Joanna Cassidy as Zhora, running for dear life—what's left of it.

One supposes that the first Hospital Scene was cut because of its redundancy. After all, Deckard's boss Bryant (M. Emmet Walsh) had already briefed Deckard on the Nexus 6 infiltration of the Tyrell headquarters, and the Rachael/Voight-Kampff scene shows us what Deckard is only referencing here.

Deckard's second hospital visit, identified as Scene 88 (pp. 92-94) of the February '81 script, began with Holden laughing hysterically at the thought of Deckard almost being killed by the murderous Zhora (Joanna Cassidy) before "retiring" her. However, the reason Deckard has come to visit is to inform Holden that he has also "retired" Leon:

INT. HOSPITAL (DAY)

Holden's eyes change mood immediately at the thought of Leon but the laughter has to continue like a wind-up toy running down. Finally he can talk again.

HOLDEN: You aired him... what's funny about that?

DECKARD: Revenge. I thought you'd...

Holden interrupts, no longer amused.

HOLDEN: You don't revenge a machine, asshole! Your slicer cuts your finger, whaddya do? Punish it? Holden looks at Deckard and lets his wisdom sink in.

You can't make a 'thing' feel sorry, Deck.

DECKARD: They're different, the new ones. That big one... he... it had feelings.

This scene then ended with Holden angrily accusing Deckard of making love to Zhora before shooting her, an action which Holden feels has prompted Deckard's new-found conscience against killing replicants.

This second Hospital Scene is also redundant, since the viewer has already witnessed Deckard's anguish over shooting Zhora in the back. However, one bit of information—Deckard's realization that Leon had feelings—is an important moment of character development, signaling a dawning spiritual crisis.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of my experience at the San Diego Preview Cut—missing and added sequences notwithstanding—concerned Deckard's narration.

At the time, I felt Ford's voiceover both slowed down the plot and forced me to interpret the film through Deckard's eyes, a type of narrative bullying which subsequently became the most criticized factor in the film. Still, **BLADE RUNNER's** use of



Deckard takes dead aim at Zhora on a crowded street.

narration did not come as any personal surprise—virtually every draft of the screenplay I had read prior to the San Diego sneak had incorporated the voiceover.

This fact immediately calls into question the assertions by **BLADE RUNNER's** makers that the narration was a last minute corporate decision, one forced upon Ridley Scott and company by Warner Bros. after the negatively received *Denver/Dallas* sneaks. Ample evidence exists to dispute this allegation; in fact, I would go so far as to suggest that Deckard's narration was *always* part and parcel of the filmmaker's original intent.

To begin, the use of a weary voiceover for a cynical *film noir*—and **BLADE RUNNER** is nothing if not a futuristic *film noir*—is a time-honored cinematic device. More specifically, in an interview I conducted with author Philip K. Dick for *CINEFANTASTIQUE* (shortly before his sudden death on March 2, 1982), Dick had negative comments to make about Deckard's voiceover before **BLADE RUNNER** was even in the can!

"I wasn't angered by what had been cut from my novel," Dick told me, "because I know you can't transfer everything to the screen. What was

bad was the execution of the script. Fancher [Hampton Fancher, original **BLADE RUNNER** screenwriter and a co-Executive Producer on the film] had over-relied on the cliché-ridden Chandleresque figure, and his script opened with a hoary voiceover, like: *It was a dirty town. It was a dirty job. Somebody had to do it. I was that somebody. My name's Deckard.*"

Other scripts besides Fancher's first draft (a total of eight rewrites were ultimately done on the film) also retained Deckard's narration. For example, on page 5 of the **BLADE RUNNER** draft marked July 24, 1980, the reader is introduced to Deckard through the following words:

DECKARD (V.O.):

It was 97 degrees in the city and no hope of improvement. Not bad if you're a lizard. But two hours earlier I was drinking Aquavit with an Eskimo lady in North East Alaska. That's a tough change to make. It was so good, I didn't want to leave, so I left a day early.

Deckard's narration was also evident as late as **BLADE RUNNER's** February/May 1981 draft (on

page 10), a screenplay coauthored by David (UNFORGIVEN) Peoples, and finished only three weeks prior to the March 9, 1981 start of principal photography:

DECKARD (V.O.):

For all practical purposes, they [replicants] were people. Except they had inhibited life spans. They were genetically designed to last only about four years. And they were illegal on earth except by special permit.

Clearly then, any assertion that Deckard's narration was a last-minute decision—as well as the rumor that Harrison Ford was so peeved at having to deliver this eleventh hour voiceover that the actor purposefully read his lines in a flat, colorless monotone—must be viewed with a skeptical eye.

FACE #2 THE THEATRICAL (DOMESTIC) CUT

Embassy Home Entertainment #13805, LD/OP, 114m

When **BLADE RUNNER** received its official theatrical release, gone were Batty's VidPhon conversation and the reloading of Deckard's gun. Otherwise, the print was essentially the same one I'd seen in San Diego.

This R-Rated version has never been available on tape, but it was shown on pay and cable television outlets and issued on laserdisc by Embassy in a panEscan transfer (though the sleeve implied that the disc contained the so-called "International Cut").

Leading us to the **BLADE RUNNER** variant most responsible for the film's growing reputation...

FACE #3 THE INTERNATIONAL CUT

Embassy Home Entertainment (#1380, OP)
Nelson Entertainment (\$19.95), 116m 59s

The version of **BLADE RUNNER** which most people have seen—indeed, the version upon which its current reputation primarily rests—is, as previously stated, not the original Theatrical Cut.

BLADE RUNNER was originally released on videotape by Embassy Home Entertainment, a division of the defunct Avco-Entertainment group, in 1983. The Embassy tape (as well as the subsequent video release by Nelson Entertainment, a company which acquired **BLADE RUNNER** from Embassy and, in 1992, issued a special "Tenth Anniversary Edition" video of the film... which was exactly like any other

tape version of the movie!), did not use the domestic version of **BLADE RUNNER** for their source print.

Instead, a somewhat longer, slightly more violent "International Cut" was utilized, one that played only outside the United States. Rather than leave video consumers unaware of this fact, Embassy added this explanation to their **BLADE RUNNER** video box covers: "WARNING: This film contains never before released sequences of graphic violence which were edited out of the theatrical release in an attempt to soften the very adult tone of the picture. See more of the future in the year 2019... if you dare!" This caveat (which was repeated on the Nelson Entertainment cassettes) was followed by a listed running time of 119m, suggesting that *five extra minutes* of footage had been grafted onto the film.

Well—yes and no. A quick check of the running time of the International Cut shows that this **BLADE RUNNER** clocks in at just under 117m, which is barely 3m longer than the original release.

On the matter of added violence, however, the video box hyperbole made good. The Embassy/Nelson **BLADE RUNNER** does offer scenes of physical and spiritual cruelty which Scott himself had edited out for the United States release.

In the spirit of expediency, I have decided to cite the differences between the Domestic/International Cuts—not by utilizing the videotape but, instead, by comparing the Warner Home Video **DIRECTOR'S CUT** laserdisc (which features the *domestic* version of the film) with the Voyager Company's special "Criterion Collection" disc (which features the International Cut). I have chosen this technique simply because Warner and Voyager's use of chapter stops makes accessing the violent moments found only in the International Cut that much easier to access.

In any event, there are three sequences in the International Cut which contain material not found in the Domestic Cut. They are:

Tyrell's Death:

In all versions of **BLADE RUNNER**, Roy Batty kisses his "maker" Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel) before taking the man's head between his hands and literally squeezing the life out of him.

However, in both the Domestic/Director's Cuts this sequence is markedly less visceral than the one found in the International Cut. The domestic version of Tyrell's death (Warner Side 3, Chapter Nine, frames 40555 to 41205) is edited like this:

Batty kisses Tyrell. Begins squeezing Tyrell's head. *Cut to a closeup of Batty's thumbs just beginning to press into Tyrell's eye sockets. Cut to a long closeup shot of Batty's straining face,*



Director Ridley Scott rehearses Tyrell's death scene with Rutger Hauer and a prop dummy.

over which can be heard the sound of Tyrell's cracking skull. *Cut to Sebastian's expression of revulsion. Cut to a medium shot of Batty holding Tyrell's bloodied head and letting it drop out of frame.*

Now, compare this sequence to the events found in the International Cut (Voyager Side 3, Chapter 17, frames 37645 to 38284):

Batty kisses Tyrell. Begins squeezing Tyrell's head. *Cut to Batty's thumbs pushing into Tyrell's eyes. Cut to Batty's straining face. Cut to Batty's thumbs gouging deep into Tyrell's eyes, with blood squirting from both sockets. Cut to Batty, straining. Cut to a horrified reaction shot of Sebastian. Cut back to Batty's face. Cut to a closeup of Batty's thumb pulling out of Tyrell's gory sockets. Cut to a two-shot of Batty releasing Tyrell's head, which drops out of frame.*

A quick comparison of the differing frame counts between these two versions reveals that the International Cut is actually 11 frames shorter than the Domestic/Director's Cuts, whose longer running time is taken up by the long take held on Batty's face.

Pris Attacks Deckard:

Further differences appear between the two variants in the scene where Deckard battles and ultimately kills Pris. For instance, the Domestic Cut (Warner Side 4, Chapter 2, frames 7931-9177), which begins with Pris kicking Deckard across the room is edited thusly:

Deckard's head is pinned between Pris' thighs, who is astride him riding Deckard's shoulders. Pris forces Deckard's head around 180 degrees, giving the unnerving impression that she has broken his neck. Pris then slaps Deckard three times across the sides of his head with her open palms. *Cut to a closeup of Pris' watching face. Cut to Deckard's head falling backwards, to bounce off the floor.*

At this point, the Domestic/Director's Cuts includes a clearly heard audio effect of Deckard's nose breaking, just before his head hits the floor—yet we have not seen Pris touch Deckard's nose!

Compare this moment to the Voyager **BLADE RUNNER** (Side 4, Chapter 18, frames 5723-7226. Note: The Voyager dust jacket incorrectly lists this chapter as occurring at the end of Side 3):



Pris flirts with genetic designer J.F. Sebastian (William Sanderson) amid his toy menagerie.

Deckard is kicked by Pris. Has his head turned around. But now there are only two slaps to the side of his head. *Cut to Pris looking down. Cut to a side shot of Deckard's head between Pris' legs, as she inserts two fingers into his nose and begins pulling it backwards. Cut to another shot of Pris' watching face. Cut to a different angle of Deckard's head between Pris' legs, with her fingers pulling his nose even farther back. Cut to a closeup of Pris' face straining with effort. Cut to the same last shot seen in the Warner disc—Deckard's head falling back onto the ground—and the same "nose-crunching" sound effect.*

This time, however, the inclusion of this effect punctuates the fact that Pris has broken Deckard's nose. Another segment of Pris' death scene also plays differently between the International/Domestic Cuts. In the Domestic/Director' Cuts:

Pris begins to cartwheel towards Deckard; he shoots her, once. She crashes against the wall and falls to the floor. *Cut to Deckard rolling over. Cut to Pris thrashing on the floor.*

Cut to Deckard getting to his feet. Cut to Pris, still thrashing. Cut to Deckard, looking at her. Cut to Pris, still thrashing. Cut to Deckard, aiming his gun and firing for the second time. Cut to Pris' body, spasming upwards in a slow-motion death throes.

The female replicant's death in the Voyager/International versions, though, is more graphic.

Pris cartwheels towards Deckard. He shoots her, once. Pris hits the wall and floor. *Cut to Deckard, looking. Cut to Pris, thrashing. Cut to Deckard, getting up. Cut to the thrashing Pris. Cut to Deckard, looking. Cut to Pris' third thrashing.*

So far, the International Cut's continuity is the same as that of the Domestic Cut. However, at this point in the International version:

Deckard raises his gun and fires it for a second time. Cut to a fourth shot of Pris thrashing and screaming. Cut to Deckard firing his gun a third time. Cut to Pris' body rising up off the floor in slow motion.



Deckard is chased along the façade of the Bradbury Apartment Building by Batty.

All told, then, the International Cut includes three extra shots in this sequence; Deckard raising his gun, Pris thrashing a fourth time, Deckard firing a third round into the female replicant.

Nail Punctures Batty's Hand:

Two additional closeups were used in the International Cut, which show the nail Batty pushes through his palm popping out the back of his hand. These shots occur in Voyager's **BLADE RUNNER** on Side 4, Chapter 19, at frames 16530 to 16555 and 16611 to 16646.

FACE #4 THE CRITERION (Special Edition) CUT

Voyager CC1120L, \$89.95 CAV

Voyager CC1169L, \$49.95 CLV

116m, Includes Supplements

As previously noted, Voyager's 1987 "Criterion Collection" laserdisc of **BLADE RUNNER** takes the expanded International Cut as its source print. This, in and of itself, would not seem to warrant its singling out as a fourth, distinctly separate version of the film; indeed, Voyager's use of the International Cut would

seem to pigeonhole this disc as only a much higher-priced reprise of **BLADE RUNNER**'s third face.

However, Voyager's generous (2.50:1) letter-boxing—as well as the significant addition of extensive behind-the-scenes materials to their two-disc CAV edition—immediately set this "special edition" apart from all other versions of **BLADE RUNNER**—particularly since these features are not available on any other disc or tape format. (Of course, all other versions of the International Cut are in the panEscan format.)

Therefore, the Criterion disc may, *de facto*, be viewed as a fourth version of the film.

In any event, "The **BLADE RUNNER** Supplement" begins on Side 4, Chapter 21. Produced by Isaac Mizrahi, the supplementary material breaks down into these respective components:

4:21 The Syd Mead Gallery

This still-frame portfolio begins with the words, "A collection of original gouache illustrations, preliminary sketches, and pen and marker renderings produced by Syd Mead, as the 'visual futurist' for **BLADE RUNNER**. What follows are text explanations and visual examples of how noted industrial designer Mead (who also worked on such films as



Syd Mead's pre-production art of a Spinner cockpit interior.

TRON and STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE) produced his own unique contributions to **BLADE RUNNER**'s cityscapes, interior sets and vehicles, particularly the airborne police "Spinner."

4:22 A Fan's Notes

Prepared by William M. Kolb—who, at the time of this disc's pressing, was a communications system design consultant with ARINC Research Corporation—this section of Voyager's **BLADE RUNNER** contains a useful, detailed overview on many different aspects of the film.

Sample excerpt: "Animated Coca-Cola advertisement on side of building changes to Wakamoto, a traditional Japanese digestive aid which is probably older than Coke."

4:23 The **BLADE RUNNER** Trivia Test

Self-explanatory. Written by Kolb, this chapter begins with the question "What is Leon's last name?" Answers to Kolb's quiz, however, are not included.

4:24 Annotated Bibliography

Another self-explanatory chapter. This one includes an exhaustive list of all books, magazines, and newspaper articles devoted to **BLADE RUNNER** (through the year 1987).

4:25 Syd Mead Reprise

Yet another collection of Mead's preproduction art, most of which was previously seen in Chapter 21. However, in this chapter, instead of pushing the usual still/step button to move through the illustrations on a frame-by-frame basis, the viewer can push "Play" and watch the artwork advance in a carousel-type slideshow.

FACE #5 THE WORKPRINT CUT

112m

Despite the enthusiasm with which **BLADE RUNNER**'s Director's Cut was recently received, the most radically different version of this important film has yet to be released on either tape or disc!

On Friday, September 27, 1991, Santa Monica's NuArt Theater and San Francisco's Castro Theatre began a two week limited run of what was then called "The **BLADE RUNNER** Director's Cut." Audience response to this version was unprecedented; the NuArt's first week run set a house record while the second week bested that. In fact, after extensive local media coverage and enthusiastic word of mouth, the NuArt engagement was ultimately extended to four

weeks (exactly 27 days), during which time the film grossed \$230,059 in Los Angeles alone.

The origins of this so-called "Director's Cut"—not to be confused with the version now available on Warner Home Video—are confused and hazy. A great deal of contradictory information has been generated on the nature, exhibition and discovery of this print, as well.

Actually, a 70mm **BLADE RUNNER** "Director's Cut" had been screened at a number of Los Angeles venues prior to the NuArt/Castro engagements. To further complicate matters, the print which premiered at the NuArt/Castro was not this 70mm version; it was actually a completely different version, a *workprint*—and a radically different one at that (for more details on the so-called "70mm Director's Cut," please refer to Face #6).

The **BLADE RUNNER** Workprint had been discovered by film preservationists Ron Haver and Robert A. Harris in 1991. This version had previously been screened only in Great Britain, in 1982, at a sneak preview for English audiences. Of all the versions of **BLADE RUNNER**, it is the shortest—only 112m long.

Still, the **BLADE RUNNER** Workprint is by far the most "different" of the seven variants of this

film. By using the chapter stops and disc numbers of the Warner Home Video Director's Cut laserdisc for comparison, we find many visual and aural departures from all other versions of **BLADE RUNNER**—differences which began with the credits of the Workprint itself.

1:1 Credits and Foreword

Unlike the numerous credits which introduce all other versions, the **BLADE RUNNER** Workprint simply started with the words "Harrison Ford" (colored red) sliding sideways onto the screen, accompanied by the sound of two knives being scraped together. This credit was then quickly pushed aside by the words "Blade Runner" (also in red, also to the sound of clashing steel). Film proper then began.

The Workprint also dispensed with the explanatory text that defines the terms "replicant," "blade runner" and "retirement" in all other versions of the film. Instead, the Workprint opened with a concise excerpt from a 21st century dictionary defining a "Replicant" as being the end result of a series of artificially created humans, a progression listed in the Workprint dictionary as "Robot, android, nexus."

Mead's futuristic designs brought to life by production designer Lawrence G. Paul.





Deckard grabs a quick meal at the sushi bar.

1:2 Eye on the City

During the introductory flight over the hellish, flame-belching "Hades" landscape, the Workprint omitted full-screen closeups of a gigantic blue eye (a literal "iris in") which appear in all other versions of the film.

1:3 Leon's Emotional Response

After Leon shoots Holden, all previous versions showed the wounded policeman crashing through an office wall from the impact of Leon's weapon. But the Workprint then included a shot of Holden slumped over a computer, face resting on the keyboard. A smoking hole was clearly shown in Holden's back, over which turned a slowly-rotating ceiling fan.

1:4 Street Scene; Interrupted Sushi

The Workprint omitted Deckard's first voiceover as he waits for a space at an open-air sushi bar. And like Warner's Director's Cut, the *BLADE RUNNER* Workprint then completely dropped all the rest of Ford's narration for the remainder of the film—with one key exception, which occurred much later.

The Workprint here also included a heretofore unseen closeup of Deckard's noodle bar dinner; what viewers saw was a closeup of two jellied shrimp.

Moments later, after Deckard has been commandeered by Gaff (Edward James Olmos) and taken for a ride in the airborne spinner, the Workprint extended the duration of this flight over L.A. by about 10s, making the entire flyover seem longer and moodier.

1:5 The Old Blade Runner Magic

Although no significant visual additions or deletions were inserted here in the Workprint, the lack of Deckard's narrative description of his former boss Bryant as a bigot had two unexpected benefits:

First, the entire scene seems more compact, plays more quickly. Secondly, after Bryant threatens Deckard for refusing the job of pursuing the rogue Nexus 6 replicants ("You know the score, pal—if you're not a cop, you're little people"), the closeup of Gaff's first origami sculpture more clearly conveys the shot's ironic visual counterpoint: Gaff's origami is a *chicken*. A moment later, when Deckard capitulates to Bryant's demand, we realize this sculpture is a wry visual allusion to the fact that Ford's character has, in effect, turned "chicken."

1:6 The Replicants in Question

During Bryant's video briefing about Deckard's replicant quarry, the Workprint added an expository



Deckard discusses the results of Rachael's Voight-Kampff test with Eldon Tyrell (Joe Turkel) at the wealthy recluse's pyramidal penthouse.

line of dialog concerning Leon, with Bryant stating that Leon can "lift 4000 pound loads all day long."

During Gaff and Deckard's later flight towards the Tyrell Pyramid, the Workprint also inserted three brief shots of other spinners passing behind, to the side and in front of the duo's own airborne vehicle.

1:7 Rachael; The Voight-Kampff Test

The Workprint included an extra audio track during Gaff and Deckard's descent towards the Tyrell Pyramid. What was heard was a "Tower Control Voice" (with a Chuck Yeager/NASA Mission Control-type accent) guiding the spinner toward its landing.

Other Workprint changes in this section included a different Vangelis musical cue for the moment when Tyrell's office window darkens to filter out the sunlight. Also, Ford's dialog was more audible during his Voight-Kampff interrogation of Rachael, perhaps reflecting the Workprint's as yet unsweetened sound mix.

1:8 Leon's Apartment

When Gaff and Deckard are being shown into Leon's hotel room by a man who opens Leon's

door, the Workprint gave this heretofore mute character a single word of dialog: "Kowalski." Furthermore, this line called attention to the fact that the hotel attendant is wearing a strange breathing apparatus, an appliance consisting of a plastic facemask and tubes. (While on location, I was told that this character was the hotel's night manager, and that the apparatus was a futuristic solution to the man's breathing problems.)

The rain effects in this section of the Workprint also seemed more noticeable. In fact, throughout the *BLADE RUNNER* Workprint there was a much more visceral "feel" for the wet, soggy climate which pervades the film (a result of the rain not yet being optically treated in post-production?).

1:9 Chew's Visitors

2:1 "If Only You Could See..."

No changes.

2:2 A Visitor with Someone Else's Memories

In the Workprint, after Deckard reveals that Rachael's memories are artificial implants, the scene of her psychological devastation lasts longer, primarily through the addition of a few extra seconds



Sebastian suffers quietly in Pris' potentially deadly embrace.

of Rachael crying. The end result is that we more deeply feel Rachael's humiliation and Deckard's embarrassment.

With the loss of Deckard's narration as the shadows in a falsified snapshot of Rachael and her "mother" mysteriously move, the Workprint also called attention to a subtle sound effect—the faint laughter of distant children. This effect, which is present in all other versions of the film, here gained added notice by the fact that it was not stepped on by Ford's voiceover ("Replicants weren't supposed to have feelings").

2:3 Pris Meets Sebastian

When Pris accidentally loses her footing and breaks the window in the side of Sebastian's van, the Workprint substituted a louder, different "shattering glass" sound effect.

2:4 Deckard's Dream

As Deckard plays a desultory tune on the piano in his apartment, the Workprint substituted different Vangelis music throughout this scene. Also, no moody saxophone was heard playing on the soundtrack.

It is at this point that the Director's Cut shows Deckard musing on a unicorn galloping through a

forest. However, no such shot appeared in the Workprint.

2:5 Computer Photo Scan

In the Workprint, when Deckard scanned Leon's photograph with his Esper computer and discovered Roy Batty sitting at a table, he said, "Hi, Roy." This dialog can be found in no other version of the film.

Later, when the Esper revealed a turbaned Zhora reclining on a couch, the Workprint had Deckard asking, "Zhora or Pris?" This line also did not appear in any prior prints.

2:6 Manufactured Skin

I cannot verify this impression without a handy copy of the Workprint (which, alas, remains unavailable), but I recall that the voice of the elderly Chinese woman who scans Deckard's snake scale under an electron microscope was not the same voice as used in all other prints.

What I am sure of, is that the dialog between Deckard and the replicant snake dealer was different in the Workprint. However—and even though I saw this Workprint three times—I neglected to write down the exact lines in this scene.

You'll have to take my word for it.

2:7 Miss Salome's Dressing Room

Just before Deckard enters the nightclub where Zhora works as an exotic dancer, the Workprint included a shot of two-near nude women wearing hockey masks and gyrating in a clear plastic capsule attached above the club's entrance. Obviously a form of living advertisement, this "barker shot" was just as obviously dropped for technical reasons; clumsily framed and harshly overlit, it appeared to have been hurriedly filmed, and would have been jarringly out of place with Jordan Cronenweth's otherwise impeccable cinematography.

The scene where Zhora strangles Deckard with his necktie also ran a bit longer in the Workprint; more urgent gurgling noises issuing from Deckard's throat were dubbed onto the soundtrack as well.

2:8 Pursuing Zhora

3:1 Retirement...Witnessed

No changes.

3:2 How Many to Go?

The audio mix on the Workprint boosted the amplification of the Mills Brothers' "If I Didn't Care" (a tune prominently featured in the film's original theatrical trailer) during the scene where Bryant informs Deckard that he must now also retire run-away replicant Rachael. Since this old standard was

more noticeable on the Workprint, one must assume that this was yet another instance of an early, unsatisfactory sound mix.

3:3 "Wake up. Time to Die."

Leon's death scene was somewhat truncated here. The Workprint did not include the shot of Leon's lifeless body falling forward to cover Deckard, nor was the shot of Rachael stepping forward holding Deckard's gun (à la all previous prints) included.

3:4 "I Am the Business;" "I Owe You One."

The Workprint scene in Deckard's apartment after Rachael has saved Deckard's life gained added gravity by the fact that Vangelis' music score did not intrude until much later in this sequence.

Parenthetically, the one surviving shot in all prints which suggests that Deckard might be a replicant (an out-of-focus Harrison Ford hovering over Rachael's shoulder and saying "But somebody would," as his eyes exhibit the replicant's telltale golden glow) also appeared in the Workprint.

3:5 The Real Thing?

The shot of Rachael letting down her hair while sitting at Deckard's piano was a bit shorter here. Vangelis' Workprint score was at this point also

"Snakes? I hate snakes!" Deckard shows more intestinal fortitude than Indiana Jones when he learns that he's trailing a snake dancer.





Deckard bullies an emotional response from Rachael.

noticeably different from the music used in the final cut, particularly during the moment when Deckard orders Rachael to say "Kiss me."

3:6 "There's Only Two of Us Now"

An extra shot (specifically, a wide/master shot) showing the interior of Sebastian's flat in the Bradbury Apartments, with a particular emphasis on the many dolls and automatons that share his living space, was included in the Workprint.

3:7 "We Need You, Sebastian"

3:8 The Right Moves

No Changes.

3:9 The Prodigal Son Brings Death

Tyrell's death scene underwent significant changes in the Workprint. To begin, Batty's vehement demand to his maker—"I want more life, fucker"—was altered to "I want more life, father", giving the line an added emotional complexity.

Tyrell's headcrushing also reverted to the less graphic editing of the original Theatrical Cut, with Batty's thumbs gouging into Tyrell's eyes only once. No bloody sockets were seen. Further, an extra shot of Tyrell's replicant owl was inserted in the Workprint following the closeup of Batty's straining face (this

"owl shot" occurs in the Director's Cut, as well.)

Finally, when Batty begins to move towards the terrified Sebastian after the replicant has murdered Tyrell, the Workprint inserted a few extra lines of dialog. "Sorry, Sebastian," Batty soothingly said. "Come, come." The Workprint version of Tyrell's death then ended with an audibly whimpering Sebastian turning to run from Tyrell's apartment.

The Workprint also reshuffled a subsequent dialog track. In all other versions of the film, a number of different dispatcher voices are heard emanating from Deckard's police scanner as he drives through a street-tunnel underpass after Tyrell's death. However, in the Workprint, Deckard hears a radio dispatch from Bryant while driving through the tunnel, telling the Blade Runner to investigate one J.F. Sebastian, age 25, at the Bradbury Apartments. This same radio dispatch can be heard in all other versions of *BLADE RUNNER*, but it occurs a few moments later in the film, as Deckard sits in his parked car before being hailed by a curious police spinner.

4:1 "No Way to Treat a Friend"

As previously noted, the Workprint did not contain Bryant's radio message while Deckard sits in his parked car. Random dispatches occurred on the audio track instead.



"There's only two of us now..."

4:2 Death Among the Menagerie

At the point where Deckard enters the Bradbury Apartments, Vangelis' score was dropped altogether from this version of the film. Instead, various temp tracks were added (although the Workprint did include Vangelis' pounding "Blade Runner" theme over the end credits). This temporary musical score was, incidentally, quite annoying—composed of generic suspense music, loud and grating, with blaring horns and swirling violins.

Pris' death scene in the Workprint also demonstrated some curious inconsistencies. While the shots of her breaking Deckard's nose *à la* the International Cut were included in the Workprint—with the sound of Deckard's crunching nose brought up loud on the Workprint soundtrack—Deckard himself only fired two shots to kill Pris, not the three seen in the International Cut. Yet Pris' screams as she thrashes around on Sebastian's floor were much louder in the Workprint, giving her death throes an unnerving intensity absent from any other version of the film.

4:3 "Proud of Yourself, Little Man?"

An extra closeup of Batty breaking Deckard's finger, accompanied by a much louder *snap!*, was inserted in the Workprint.

4:4 Wounded Animals

Just before Batty begins to pursue Deckard through the abandoned upper floors of the Bradbury building, the Workprint had Roy yelling out, "I'm coming to get you!" Hauer affected a deep, melodramatic "horror show host" voice for this line reading, giving it an unintentionally comic spin.

During the ensuing chase and battle on the rooftop, the Workprint then dropped its previous temp music for tracks lifted from Jerry Goldsmith's score for *ALIEN*.

Additionally, the Workprint did not include the closeups of the nail pushing out through the back of Batty's hand (a deletion which occurs in the Director's Cut as well). Instead, the Workprint held on Batty's tortured face.

4:5 The Building Ledge

No changes, except the continuing (irritating) presence of the *ALIEN* temp track.

4:6 The Roof

More of the *ALIEN* temp track, but no other changes.

4:7 To Live in Fear

Still more *ALIEN*; otherwise, no changes.



4:8 Like Tears in Rain; "But Then Again, Who Does?"

Mercifully, the **ALIEN** score ended with Batty and Deckard sitting opposite one another on the rain-drenched rooftop. However, immediately after the dying replicant murmured "All those moments will be lost, in time... like tears in rain" (a line improvised by Hauer on-set) and "Time to die," the Workprint then added the *only* instance of voice-over narration heard in this version. This narration was spoken by Deckard. His exact words: "I watched him die all night. It was a long, slow thing, and he fought it all the way."

In all other versions of the film, an out-of-focus police spinner, facing head-on into the camera, can be seen rising in the background behind Batty's shoulder. However, the Workprint substituted a totally different shot—a wide master shot of a complete spinner as seen from the rear, rising up from the left of frame. Concurrently, one could also see the full-figure seated bodies of Batty and Deckard in this shot, occupying, respectively, screen center and screen right.

4:9 Souvenir of Dreams

The Workprint now picked up the **ALIEN** temp music again as Deckard searched for Rachael in his

apartment. This track ended as Deckard uncovered the sleeping form of Rachael on his bed.

Moreover, Deckard's worried queries of "Rachael? Rachael?" were omitted from the Workprint. Instead, the Workprint's last lines of dialog are Gaff's: "It's too bad she won't live. But then again who does?" which resonate as Deckard fingers the tinfoil origami unicorn Gaff has left behind.

Like the Director's Cut, the Workprint then concluded with Deckard and Rachael boarding the elevator and the doors slamming shut. However, the Workprint's sound mix of the closing doors was much louder than in any other version.

Finally, the Workprint omitted the upbeat "happy ending" of the San Diego/Domestic/International Cuts.

4:10 End Credits

The final credit in the Workprint included the text "This version copyright 1991 the Blade Runner partnership. All rights reserved." This text also (and only) appears at the end of the Director's Cut.

Although grainy, unmixed and unfinished, the **BLADE RUNNER** Workprint afforded film scholars a rare opportunity to assess the film's evolutionary progress; serious cinephiles were now given a unique opportunity to study what could be called, in literary terms, a rough draft of a modern classic.

Another appealing aspect of the Workprint was the manner in which it allowed one to reevaluate Harrison Ford's performance. This fine, subtle portrayal had been completely flattened in the other versions (except the Director's Cut) by **BLADE RUNNER**'s deadpan narration.

Finally—and perversely—the Workprint's extreme raggedness worked to its advantage. **BLADE RUNNER**'s theatrical release was slick and seamless, its various components smoothed out by tight editing, moody music, and perfectly color-balanced prints. Although the **BLADE RUNNER** Workprint bristles with such technical imperfections as inappropriate library music, contrasty lighting, and awkward edits, these blemishes did not throw the viewer out of the frame. On the contrary, they somehow made Scott's sullen, depressive mood piece that much more quirkily alive.



Opposite: Deckard climbs to the roof of the Bradbury Apartments.

Left: Behind the scenes: Filming Deckard dangling from the "rooftop."



Ridley Scott with producer Michael Deeley and matte artist Richard Yuricich.

FACE #6 THE FAIRFAX CUT

According to a quote attributed (in Lance Loud's **BLADE RUNNER** article for *DETAILS* magazine) to Barry Reardon, President of Warner Bros. Domestic distribution, "[In the fall of 1991] 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 (in the spring of '92). The old ending's out and **BLADE RUNNER** is sensational."

Interesting as Reardon's comments may be, they do not hold up to careful scrutiny. According to my own investigations (and an extensive article written by respected critic Kenneth Turan for the *LOS ANGELES TIMES MAGAZINE* [September 13, 1992]), the 70mm print was actually "discovered" in October of 1989 by one Michael Arick, then

Director of Asset Management, a responsibility which involved recovering and restoring the studio's films.

Then, in May 1990, during a 70mm film festival at the Cineplex Odeon Fairfax Theatre, a 10 AM screening of the newly discovered **BLADE RUNNER** print was held. I attended that screening, and it seemed to me that the print being shown was, in all probability, the rough cut used at the 1982 previews in Dallas and Denver.

This version was very similar to the one Warner would ultimately release as **BLADE RUNNER: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT**, although it still featured the temp music tracks subsequently heard in the Workprint. This "Fairfax Cut" was also shorn of the voiceover narration, deleted the extra 1.5m of violence seen in the International Cut, and ended with Scott's original "elevator climax." However, the Fairfax Cut did not include the controversial unicorn shot. Also missing were the two "iris in" shots of the huge staring eye seen at the film's beginning (an omission shared with the Workprint).

Special visual effects designer Douglas Trumbull poses behind the Tyrell Pyramid.



In any event, audience reaction to this screening was quite positive. Seemingly inspired by excellent word of mouth, UCLA's Los Angeles Perspectives multimedia festival, an event held at the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences in early 1991 (not at the UCLA campus, as Reardon contends), then booked the "Fairfax Cut." This second screening generated even more interest in a restored version of the film, leading writer Shawn Levy to report on the UCLA event in an article titled "Ridley Scissorhands," published in the August 1991 *FILM COMMENT*.

FACE #7 THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

Warner Home Video #12682, \$39.99, 115m 33s

Despite widespread enthusiasm, Ridley Scott was not happy with this newly revived print. In fact, in a recent telephone interview, Scott told me that "I came to Los Angeles to meet with Michael Arick and to see the 70mm print screened at the Fairfax. It had been some years, frankly, since I'd given thought to the film, and I wanted to refresh my memory. And after I saw it, I notified Arick and Warners that this was not the final cut of my film, pointing out the lack of my unicorn scene and the fact that the final flight between Deckard and Batty was using a temporary music track. Warner then agreed to pay for a sort of post-postproduction process, where I could go back to the editing room and put the picture into the shape I'd originally wanted it."

Scott's editing schedule probably explains why it was the *Workprint*, and not the Fairfax Cut, which was subsequently released to both the NuArt and Castro theaters, since the director was still *laboring* on his final cut at this time, using the 70mm Fairfax Cut as a working guide.

In any event, it was not until September 11, 1992 that *BLADE RUNNER: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT* finally reached audiences. On this date, a number of theaters around the United States showed 70mm prints of the film as a sort of promotional preview for its eventual tape/laserdisc release, which occurred in early Summer 1993.

It was at this time that viewers were introduced to the seventh and final face of *BLADE RUNNER*, one which, like the San Diego Preview Cut, closely resembles the original Theatrical Cut. For most audiences, the most significant change in the Director's Cut would have been the dropping of Deckard's voiceover, an omission which, up until now, had only been witnessed by those fortunate

enough to attend the film's NuArt, Castro, Fairfax or Academy screenings.

However, other changes were also visible in the Director's Cut. These can be found in the following chapter stops of Warner's BR:TDC laserdisc:

1:4 Street Scene; Interrupted Sushi

After the introduction of Deckard at the sushi stand, there is no narration. No other voiceovers occur throughout the remainder of the film.

2:4 Deckard's Dream

Herein occurs the fabled unicorn shot, as Deckard leans dreamily on his piano and mentally "sees" a snow-white unicorn galloping through a misty woods.

The unicorn shot has achieved its own peculiar mythology. Mentioned by Scott in numerous interviews after the film's release, the unicorn was supposed to signify Deckard's true status as a replicant. This vision implied that Deckard's reverie was actually an (impossible) artificial memory implanted by the Tyrell Corporation—one to which Gaff is also apparently privy, since he leaves behind an origami unicorn outside Deckard's apartment.

However, the unicorn scene was apparently never filmed; why else would Scott lift a shot from his own *LEGEND* (1985) for the inclusion of this beast in the Director's Cut? When pressed on the topic, Scott would not directly answer my query on this topic, simply replying that "I used what I had to work with."

Still, the unicorn shot seems a maddeningly vague way of suggesting Scott's androld status. It demands that the audience pull together the most tenuous plot threads connecting Deckard's reverie, his barely seen glowing eyes, and Gaff's origami unicorn.

"But I always thought it was apparent Deckard was a replicant," Scott told me. Perhaps the director's feelings on this topic were clouded by fact that varying drafts of the screenplay had already spelled this out.

For example, on the last page (133) of the February '81 script, there appears this final bit of voiceover narrative. It is uttered by Deckard as he flies away with Rachael in his Spinner, with Gaff in hot pursuit:

DECKARD (V.O.):

I knew it on the roof that night. We were brothers, Roy Batty and I. Combat models of the highest order. We had fought in wars not yet dreamed of... in vast nightmares still unnamed. We were the new people... Roy and me and Rachael! We were made for this world. It was ours!



Deckard administers the Voigt-Kampff Test—but on which side of the machine is he really sitting?

Leading *BLADE RUNNER* script readers, at least, to realize that Rick Deckard had been a replicant all along.

Whatever the history behind the unicorn shot as now seen, it is equally clear that its inclusion in the Director's Cut may have done more to cloud the Deckard-as-replicant issue than to confirm it.

3:9 The Prodigal Son Brings Death

The Director's Cut does not show Batty explicitly gouging out Tyrell's eyes, unlike the International Cut's shots of Batty's thumbs sinking into Tyrell's sockets.

4:2 Death Among the Menagerie

Pris' death scene is shortened; she is only shot twice.

4:4 Wounded Animals

The shots of the nail penetrating the back of Batty's hand, and then being shown embedded there, have been dropped.

4:9 Souvenir of Dreams

The film ends with the closing elevator doors; there is no coda of Deckard and Rachael driving in the country, no *SHINING* landscapes.

Thus, with the conclusion of the Director's Cut, all seven faces of *BLADE RUNNER* are finally revealed. But one question remains: What, finally, caused the pains associated with *BLADE RUNNER*'s birth?

"Basically, the problems came about through it being my first time in Hollywood," explains Ridley Scott. "Although I wasn't a first time filmmaker by any means, I was totally unprepared for the stringent hierarchy of the studio system, one I'd never come across in England. I had to explain every inch of what I wanted, on literally every shot. Plus, I'd always been used to operating my own camera back in England, or at least personally using it, in ways disallowed by Hollywood unions. And Hollywood took that particular tool away from me."

"Primarily, though, I had to go through this whole process of explanation, which became very irritating and also made us work much more slowly. That, quite simply, was a murderous situation. So in the final analysis, although making *BLADE RUNNER* was a wonderful experience, it was also a battle. A war, actually."

A conflict from which, thankfully, arose a masterpiece.

All seven versions of it.



Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) watches as his world disappears "like tears in rain" in *BLADE RUNNER: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT*.

BLADE RUNNER: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

1982/91, Warner #12682,
D/CC/S/SS/LB, 115m 33s, \$49.95

The phrase "director's cut" implies a version of a film that its director has declared as his own, as opposed to a compromised version more familiar to the movie-going public. This definition does not really apply to Ridley Scott's 1991 "director's cut" of his 1982 film *BLADE RUNNER*, which was made with the active and sympathetic collaboration of the current Warner Bros. regime, and might therefore be more accurately described as a "revised draft." Scott encountered considerable studio interference during the filming of this picture, and this is the movie he might have made if he'd had the contractual right to "final cut." Since Warner has pronounced the original version "out" in favor of this modern revision, perhaps that's what it should be called: *BLADE RUNNER: THE FINAL CUT*.

While reviewing this film in a previous issue [VW 18:14-15], I found it difficult to isolate my impressions of the new version from the ghosts of the original. It may take a couple of viewings for the new version to assert its independence, but the old flaws are undeniably gone, and the improvements are undeniable and substantial. *BLADE RUNNER*'s visual magnificence is now complemented with a complex, multi-tiered narrative that truly does reflect the full range of dramatic possibilities available to science fiction. It is not only Scott's masterpiece, it is a milestone of its genre.

Warner's disc features the same transfer as their *DIRECTOR'S CUT* cassette, but shorn of its Macrovision veneer, Jordan Cronenweth's Panavision images unfold under a glass that doesn't

resemble the steamed windows of a car at the drive-in. The 2.40:1 screen ratio is not as severe as the letterboxing of Voyager's "Criterion Collection" editions (about 2.50:1), revealing additional slivers of information at the top and bottom. The image texture remains a bit grainy. The CAV formatting is frame-perfect and this film is easily one of the most seductive and rewarding in terms of frame-by-frame analysis. For instance, the film titles on the Million Dollar Movie Theater marquee, opposite the Bradbury Apartments, actually change between the instances of Pris' and J.F. Sebastian's respective arrivals (which are mere seconds apart), that the bullet squibs are visible under Daryl Hannah's leopard as she cartwheels toward Deckard (Ford), and other incidental amusements besides.

The surround audio also experiences a significant improvement in the jump from tape to disc; with Ford's narration removed, we are not only forced to focus more on the film's dramatic performances, but our ears become more intent on its aural landscapes—the ambient sounds of rain, passing spinners, overhead advertising and, of course, Vangelis' exotic (still unreleased) score—in a way that increases the piece's prevalent sense of melancholy ten-fold. It's interesting to note that the original narration reduced the entire story to one of Deckard's memories, a result that worked against the film's basic intentions (not to mention Ford's onscreen performance). Of all musical formats, jazz ballads are the most evocative of memory—old loves, regrets, and roads not taken—and left on its own, Vangelis' score underlines many scenes with a powerful atmosphere of nostalgia, sadness, and introspection, while the more ethnic passages

enhance its sense of cultural confusion and placelessness. The music seems to express the yearning of souls unable to remember.

Curiously, the back of the single-sleeve disc jacket accompanies the film's MPAA R rating with the unusual explanation "Rated R for Violence" (in fact, it includes female nudity and strong language as well). An incorrect running time of 117m is also cited. The discs are thoroughly TOC-encoded with 36 chapters, which are not sequentially numbered, but begin again at Chapter 1 with each side change. Speaking of side breaks, the CAV formatting of the film has imposed some unusually disruptive side breaks on this presentation; the breaks on Voyager's 1987 CAV "Criterion Collection" disc were more considerate, and that was a longer version of the film! One side break on the Warner set requires an actual disc change just after Deckard fires his gun at Zhora (Joanna Cassidy); the first thing on Side 3 is her climactic crash through a series of arcade windows. For many viewers, this is the most suspenseful sequence in the film, and Warner's ill-timed interruptions may represent the best possible endorsement for their cassette release.

Those who also own Voyager's "international cut" disc may be amused to compare its jacket painting to the seemingly identical artwork that adorns the Warner sleeve. Harrison Ford's face has been extensively reworked to make it sweeter, fleshier, and more defined. In other words, while Scott's "Director's Cut" makes Deckard seem less human, the sleeve makes him look moreso; on the other hand, the face on Voyager's sleeve looks like it just rolled off the Tyrell assembly line. Shouldn't it be the other way around?