"You know something, Tony," Tom Savini said to me. "We've known each other for 30 years, and this is the first time we've ever actually socialized."

Savini mentioned this to me after we had just come out of the Cirque du Soleil Beatles show LOVE in 2009. Fango's Las Vegas convention had just ended, and Savini, his buddy Rob and Rob's then-girlfriend Cristie, plus my wife Marguerite, decided to invade the Strip for some entertainment.

Savini's comment wasn't entirely true, however; I do recall us hitting the indoor pool together at a Ritz Carlton Hotel after an '80s Fango con in Dearborn, Michigan, his young daughter Lia in tow. But for the most part, Tom and I have only fraternized on either film sets (his troubled NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD remake, which he directed), conventions (he's the king of them), doing TV interviews (Bravo's 100 SCARIEST MOVIE MOMENTS), or at other guest appearances (Orlando's Universal Halloween Horror Nights, when we broadcast FANGORIA RADIO live down there).

As Savini and I strolled and ate ice cream in that Vegas mall, enjoying each other's company, I

thought, "Yeah, too bad we didn't get to hang out more." Hopefully that will change next month at Montreal's Fantasia film festival, where Savini will be one of several great genre directors unveiling their anthology horror film THE THEATRE BIZARRE (see announcement here). I first met Savini in 1980 at a Creation genre convention in NYC, where he, director Bill Lustig and star Joe Spinell took the stage to promote a little splatter film called MANIAC. A junior in high school, I approached Savini for an interview (I also recounted that fateful meeting here), and he agreed, thus launching my career in genre journalism. In my first week at FANGORIA in July 1985, one of my initial tasks was typing up the old "free subscriber ads," the majority of which read "Savini is God." (The makeup guru later confided to me that he would peruse that section of the mag religiously to gauge his popularity!).

Now, 32 years after Fango #1 debuted with a Savini/DAWN OF THE DEAD spread, the Pittsburgh institution again appears in FANGORIA—and on the cover, no less, in a gorgeous painting by Nick Percival (see here). Plus there's Thom Carnell's brand-new comprehensive interview with the man himself and managing editor Michael Gingold's amazing set visit to THEATRE BIZARRE. So as we celebrate the Summer of Savini, I thought I'd share with you my first-ever interview—with Savini—previously published in Archbishop Molloy High School's Science Fiction Club fanzine FANTAZINE in February 1981. In the interest of historical accuracy, I've left the article largely intact. Back then, I dubbed the piece "The Great Savini," playing off the Robert Duvall film THE GREAT SANTINI in theaters at the time. Enjoy!

"The Great Savini" or How a "Famous Monsters of Filmland" Reader Made Good

By Anthony Timpone

Tom Savini has a license to kill, but he isn't a secret agent, and his victims aren't real. Savini is a modern master of makeup special FX, and is best known for his startling realistic gore FX which saturate his exciting film successes: DAWN OF THE DEAD, FRIDAY THE 13TH and now MANIAC, his current film.

Savini, though more than worthy to be ranked with such makeup legends as Jack Pierce, Rick Baker and his personal idol, Dick Smith, doesn't consider special makeup FX as his only true love in the film business. Savini is also a qualified actor, stuntman (Tom is the victim in FRIDAY THE 13TH who is thrown through a window) and even a still photographer. It was his groundbreaking special makeup FX in George Romero's DAWN OF THE DEAD that catapulted

him into the film industry and his later work on FRIDAY THE 13TH. Savini has now completed close to a dozen horror films, furthering his craft and the recent boom in horror films.

Currently, Savini is looking forward to more acting roles. He has already appeared in DAWN OF THE DEAD, MARTIN and his upcoming film, KNIGHTRIDERS, which Savini has a major role in. An extreme opposite of the type of person you would expect after viewing his macabre work, Savini is an extremely kind, generous and down-to-earth person. In the following interview, he discusses his early background, his interest in horror films, some of his makeup techniques and a rationalization of extreme screen violence.

ANTHONY TIMPONE: As clichéd as this first question may be, how did you first become interested in movie makeup?

TOM SAVINI: When I was 13 years old, my father took me to see the Lon Chaney Sr. biography film THE MAN OF A THOUSAND FACES. The film was a major influence on me as a kid, and I soon started spending a lot of time in front of the mirror experimenting with makeup. While Chaney was my idol then, today I practically worship Dick Smith, who helped improve my work by more than 100 percent.

I soon bought my first issue of FAMOUS MONSTERS. It was issue #4. I quickly sent away for the back issues I needed, and I have been collecting it ever since. I used to study the monster pictures in FM and try to duplicate them.

TIMPONE: What was your first professional experience with makeup?

SAVINI: When I was 14, I got a job doing makeup for a traveling horror theater show. At the time I had a makeup kit and was already into Dracula. For me it was a great adventure. We even rode around in a hearse!

TIMPONE: Where did you go from there?

SAVINI: I became the makeup director for three theaters in North Carolina after I got back from Vietnam. I was stationed in the South and stayed there for six years because of the theater. I played lead roles besides doing makeup; this was a big ego trip for me.

I left to audition at Carnegie Tech [a drama school]. I was accepted and received a full fellowship and I got to teach makeup there. I was lucky in those days. I managed to be in the right place at the right time.

TIMPONE: What was the first film you worked on?

SAVINI: I was a still photographer on Bob Clark's DEATH DREAM [1974]. The film has had several titles including DEAD OF NIGHT. John Marley was in it. I also worked on Clark's next film, DERANGED. In the film, Roberts Blossom plays Ed Gein, the real-life killer that PSYCHO was based on. The film didn't receive a wide release.

TIMPONE: When did you first meet George Romero?

SAVINI: I first met George when he came to my high school to cast young leads in a film he was preparing called WHINE OF THE FAWN. Another guy and myself were picked to do a screen-test reading, but the film never went anywhere. Then, when I was in college, I heard that George was preparing NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, so I went back to his office seeking work, and I was surprised that he still remembered my name. I told him that I do makeup now, and he told me he'd see what he could do. But I had already enlisted in the Army under the Hold program, and they called me in. I was in Vietnam when George Romero made NIGHT OF

THE LIVING DEAD.

TO BE CONTINUED