We've lost too many talented people this summer already, and now comes word that longtime special FX master Carlo Rambaldi has died.

According to Salon.com and The Associated Press, Rambaldi passed away in the Calabrian city of Lamezia Terme in southern Italy after a long illness, at age 86. He's best known for creating a pair of indelible screen space beings: the xenomorph in Ridley Scott's ALIEN, and the lost creature of E.T. THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL, both of which won him Oscars. He also received a Special Achievement Academy Award for his contributions to John Guillermin's 1976 remake of KING KONG.

But before those big-ticket features, Rambaldi worked on numerous notable European genre films, among them Mario Bava's PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES and BAY OF BLOOD/TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE, Massimo Pupillo's BLOODY PIT OF HORROR, Lucio Fulci's A LIZARD IN A WOMAN'S SKIN, Paul Morrissey's FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN and BLOOD FOR DRACULA, Dario Argento's DEEP RED and Andrzej Zulawski's POSSESSION. After being tapped by producer Dino De Laurentiis to create the full-scale Kong seen in the '76 picture, Rambaldi did FX for a number of subsequent De Laurentiis productions, including Richard Fleischer's CONAN THE DESTROYER, David Lynch's DUNE, Guillermin's sequel KING KONG LIVES and two Stephen King adaptations: Lewis Teague's CAT'S EYE and Daniel Attias' SILVER BULLET. His last credits were a pair of 1988 features: Armand Mastroianni's CAMERON'S CLOSET and PRIMAL RAGE, directed by his son Vittorio. Calabria's top culture official, Mario Caligiuri, called Rambaldi "a magician of special effects" and "an indisputable example of Italian creativity."