

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
TEXARKANA DIVISION

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DISTRICT COURT  
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TEXAS-EASTERN  
BY *M. Melvin*

SARA J. STRATSO,  
Plaintiff,

VS.

ARTISAN ENTERTAINMENT, INC.,  
ARTISAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT,  
INC., MILLENNIUM FILMS, INC., DAVID  
DADON, Individually, GIANTS ENTERTAIN-  
MENT, INC., LAWRENCE D. RIGGINS,  
Individually, LES WELDON, individually,  
JEAN-CLAUDE VAN DAMME, individually,  
NU IMAGE, INC., REPLICANT PRO-  
DUCTIONS, INC., THE MUSICLAND GROUP,  
INC., NETFLIX, INC., AMAZON.COM,  
INC., BLOCKBUSTER ENTERTAINMENT  
CORPORATION, NBC UNIVERSAL, and  
YALETOWN ENTERTAINMENT CORP.  
Defendants.

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CIVIL ACTION  
NO. 505CV - 97

COMPLAINT AND JURY DEMAND

1. Sara J. Stratso ("Stratso" or "Plaintiff") complains of copyright infringement. Stratso is and at all times material hereto has been a resident of the Eastern District of Texas.
2. Defendant Artisan Entertainment, Inc. is located at 2700 Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica, California 90404 and may be served through its registered agent for service, CT Corporation Systems, 818 West Seventh Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017.
3. Defendant Artisan Home Entertainment, Inc. is located at 2700 Colorado Avenue, Second Floor, Santa Monica, California 90404 and may be served through its registered agent for service, CT Corporation Systems, 818 West Seventh Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017.

4. Defendant Millennium Films, Inc. is located at 6423 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90048 and may be served through its registered agent for service of process, Jason E. Frankel, at that address.

5. Defendant David Dadon is an individual who may be served at 10600 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 501, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

6. Defendant Giants Entertainment, Inc. is located at 10600 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 501, Los Angeles, CA 90024 and may be served through its registered agent for service, David Dadon, at that address.

7. Defendant Lawrence D. Riggins is an individual who may be served at 321½ Wisconsin Avenue, Long Beach, California 90814.

8. Defendant Les Weldon is an individual who may be served at 410 Cherry Street, Apartment 1, South Haven, MI 49090 or 50321 County Road 388, #291, Grand Junction, MI.

9. Defendant Jean-Claude Van Damme is a resident of California. He may be served at 10926 Owensmouth Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311-1342.

10. Defendant Nu Image, Inc. is located at 6423 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90048 and may be served through its registered agent for service of process, Jason E. Frankel, at that address.

11. Defendant Replicant Productions, Inc. is located at 6423 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90048 and may be served through its registered agent for service of process, Jason E. Frankel, at that address.

12. The Musicland Group, Inc. is a corporation which may be served by serving its registered agent for service, CT Corporation System, Inc., 405 Second Avenue S, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401.

13. Defendant Netflix, Inc. is located at 970 University Avenue, Los Gatos, CA 95032 and may be served by serving its registered agent for service of process, National Registered Agents, Inc., 1514 Sidney Baker Street, Kerrville, TX 78028.

14. Defendant Amazon.Com, Inc. is located at 1200 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Suite 1200, Seattle, WA 98144-2734, is registered as a foreign corporation and may be served by serving its registered agent for service of process, Corporation Service Company, 1010 Union Avenue, S.E., Olympia, WA 98501.

15. Defendant Blockbuster Entertainment Corporation may be served by serving its agent Corporation Service Company, 2711 Centerville Road, Suite 400, Wilmington, DE 19808.

16. Defendant NBC Universal is headquartered at 100 Universal City, Universal City, California 91608 and may be served by serving its chief executive officer, Bob Wright, at that address.

17. Defendant Yaletown Entertainment Corp., is located at 4908 Pine Crescent, Vancouver, B.C., Canada; it may be served by serving its officer, John C.R. Cummings.

#### Jurisdiction and Venue

18. Jurisdiction in this Court is conferred by 28 U.S.C., §1338 in that this is a case arising under the acts of Congress pertaining to copyright protection. Personal jurisdiction of the Defendants exists because they have committed acts of infringement by marketing and selling copies of a movie directed at consumers in Texas, as will be seen below.

19. Venue in this district is proper under 28 U.S.C., §1391(b)(2) in that a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred in this judicial district.

#### Facts

20. By way of background, Plaintiff Stratso is an independent screen writer and the sole creator of a screenplay entitled *Replicant* (the "Stratso Script"). Stratso is a long-time resident of Pilot Point, Denton County, Texas and is an American history teacher at Texas Woman's University in Denton. The script was about a man-made android, which Stratso called a "replicant" which, among other things, was used in attempting to capture or kill a serial killer. Stratso complied in all respects with the U.S. copyright laws by registering her copyright with the Register of Copyrights from which she received Certificate of Copyright Registration PAu 2-088-180, dated May 14, 1996. Stratso's Copyright was obtained prior to the commencement of the infringing acts as herein stated, pursuant to the Federal Copyright Act of 1976, as amended, 17 U.S.C., §101 et. seq.

21. Stratso made her Copyright public by entering it into the Lone Star Screenplay Competition in Texas in 1997 where it won an award. Interestingly, the judges commented that it would be a "super vehicle for Jean-Claude Van Damme". In 1997-1999, Stratso employed an agent named Bill Kerwin to "shop" the script around California and potential buyers.

22. The Artisan Defendants, Millennium, Dadon, Giants, Lawrence Riggins , Van Damme, and/or Les Weldon had access to her copyrighted script, which was then plagiarized or copied by one or more of them without permission.

23. The Artisan Defendants, in cooperation with Millennium, Dadon, Giants, Van Damme, Riggins and Weldon, reproduced and incorporated Stratso's copyright by producing a motion picture version of Stratso's original motion picture screenplay in late 2001, which was entitled "Replicant" and stars Defendant Van Damme. The two works are sufficiently similar that copying is obvious and was willful.

24. Essentially, one or more of the defendants mentioned in the immediately preceding paragraph took Stratso's story and tried to reduce it to more of an "action" movie, with greater emphasis on the criminal investigation, but the plot and the characters have strong similarities. Moreover, the name is the same. The "Replicant" in each is a man-made being who was used to help capture or kill a serial killer. The infringing film "Replicant" also has innumerable other characteristics that were derived from Stratso's copyrighted script. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. The opening was taken directly from Stratso's script.
- b. High tech figures prominently into the premise.
- c. The serial killer targets young single parent mothers.
- d. There is a policeman who is obsessively hunting a serial killer.
- e. Replicant's nurturer has to make reports about replicant every 12 hours.
- f. The motel scene is directly lifted from Stratso's script.
- g. "Flashing" of scenes back and forth between the replicant and his double are lifted from Stratso's script.
- h. The replicant has to be taken about for outside and human stimulation.
- i. He begins his life in an observation pit as in the Stratso Script, and his brain waves are shown on monitors as in Stratso's script.
- j. The computer in the serial killer's office shows pictures of the victims.
- k. A clandestine organization created him.
- l. He gets loose and wanders around the city
- m. The replicant and the serial killer battle.

- n. There is a police stand-off with the replicant involved.
- o. Mirrors are used prominently (a technique Stratso employed).
- p. Everything is new to the replicant – he is a blank slate until something is introduced
- q. He is telepathically connected to the real killer.
- r. The replicant pursues the serial killer.
- s. Sometimes the replicant is kept out too late and the nurturer is chastised for it.
- t. The policeman is no longer with the force and they try to keep him apart from the replicant.
- u. Both mention, early on in the script, that the replicant can be terminated after the experiment.
- v. The serial killer takes the ambulance near the end of the movie. In the Stratso Script, as Marielle is being carried into the ambulance, she escapes and this is the catalyst for the climax of the movie.
- w. In additional scenes which were not on the tape but only on the DVD copy, there is a scene in which the replicant refers to himself as “Number One.” This is on page 3 of the Stratso Script.
- x. The corporation has the replicant in a highly classified area where the policeman has to pass through.
- y. The replicant’s physical description and age are the same in the Stratso Script as in the movie.
- z. The policeman’s description fits description of Craig, the policeman who hunts the serial killer, in the Stratso Script.
- aa. The replicant goes home with the policeman.
- bb. The “hospital” in the movie corresponds to the hospital area at Cybergate, in the Stratso Script where the replicant was created.
- cc. Serial killer’s description also describes serial killer in the Stratso Script.
- dd. Replicant in movie can discern when murders are occurring, same with the Stratso Script.
- ee. The mother pleading for her baby’s life is directly lifted from the Stratso script.
- ff. Weapon used by the serial killer is the same as in the Stratso script.
- gg. Killer never left prints at any scene.
- hh. Replicant takes on serial killer’s personality.
- ii. Replicant constantly getting flashes of memory from double.

jj. Policeman in movie has a parallel in "Bill" in the Stratso Script, who supervised the replicant; both were on verge of retirement but wanted to stay on.

kk. Stun gun in movie is parallel to replicant terminator in the Stratso Script.

ll. In the Stratso Script, Marielle visits replicant's grave and she and her son have a scene; in the movie, the parallel is the copy is with the little boy and they see the replicant whom they believed had been killed. This is the same place in both scripts.

mm. There is a scene in each where the replicant describes how it feels to kill.

nn. Each has a sexually oriented scene where the replicant and a woman enter a room with a television which is showing an x-rated show.

oo. In both the movie and the Stratso Script, the replicant can learn primarily by copying observed actions.

pp. In both, people talk to the replicant, early on, as if he were a child.

25. The infringing film "Replicant" gives credit to a script written by Defendant Riggins (the "Riggins Script") which was further developed for movie form by Defendant Weldon. The Riggins Script is based on and is an infringement of the Stratso Script and its copyright. Riggins wrongfully secured a copyright for the Riggins Script in early 2000. The following are aspects of the Riggins Script which do not appear in the movie but which are the same or similar to the pre-existing Stratso Script:

- a. The cop is not married.
- b. Garth, the lab technician, is the parallel of Kelly, the nerdy lab technician, in the Stratso Script.
- c. Portly scientist Reisman is the direct parallel of Bill in the Stratso Script.
- d. The reporters are hounding Jake (Marielle).
- e. Jake (Marielle) are Irish.
- f. Rosas has many of the parts that Marielle played in the Stratso Script.
- g. "Simon" is the name of the Replicant in the Stratso Script; in the Riggins Script, this is the name of the creator of the clone.

- h. There are two-way mirrors employed.
- i. Crime scenes are in suburbs (yuppies).
- j. Disney films. The Stratso Script used "Cinderella" and Riggins used "Bambi"
- k. The Replicant plays with electrical appliances.
- l. Replicant takes everything extremely literally.
- m. Jake said Rosas "was his partner" - (like Marielle, she ends up having sex with Simon)
- n. After this, Garth (Kelly) teases the Replicant about it. In the Stratso Script, Kelly teases Marielle about it.
- o. Rosas (Marielle?) goes after the Replicant after he is taken back to the "lab" for questioning. Outraged, she takes him home.
- p. Serial killer uses the term, over and over, that he's going to "do" someone, meaning "kill them."
- q. There is a "montage" of family scenes in both our scripts, the Stratso Script used this term, "montage"
- r. The serial killer replicant goes to visit Rosas (Marielle). Marielle discovers that it is not Simon, she tries to be cool, but he attacks her.
- s. At the end of The Stratso Script, both replicants are dead. Same in the Riggins Script.
- t. The replicant (Simon) is killed by Reisman (Bill). Then there is a cemetery scene (in both scripts) and some sentimental discussions, these are exact parallels to the Stratso Script.

26. In the July 17-21 issue of "TNMC Movies" (copy attached), published about 15 months before the release of the movie, Defendant Van Damme was interviewed and stated:

"He [the Replicant] becomes involved with this woman and her child, the ex-wife and son of the cop..."



A slight problem with this, though, is that the replicant does, indeed, become involved with the ex-wife and son of the cop *in the Stratso Script*; however, nothing of the kind happens in the Riggins Script. Indeed, the cop's ex-wife and son *are not characters at all* in the Riggins Script. As it turned out, this relationship was not used in the movie. Why did Defendant Van Damme expect it to be used in July 2000? He did so because he and his collaborators, the Artisan Defendants, Millennium, Dadon, Giants, Riggins and/or Weldon were using the Stratso Script without permission.

27. In the Stratso Script, the cop's ex-wife, Marielle, was asked to nurture and help develop and humanize the replicant who, at the beginning, was child-like and clueless. The same thing happens in the movie except that the cop himself ("Jake") is asked to do this nurturing of the child-like replicant. In both the Stratso Script and the movie, it is expressly stated that the replicant needs "human stimulus" (using those exact words in both) for him to properly develop, and these respective nurturers were to provide it. Unfortunately, this aspect of the story is wholly absent in the Riggins Script and, in fact, is flatly contradicted by it. In the Riggins Script the replicant develops automatically – he ages much faster than a human and at an exact rate of years per days. In other words, his development is strictly a matter of clockwork in the Riggins Script. The Defendants decided not to use that aspect of the Riggins Script in the movie and to use the Stratso "human stimulus" model instead.

28. In the Stratso Script, the serial murderer's victims were young women, single moms. In the Riggins Script, they were all types – men, women, seemingly random. Later, the Riggins Script said that the victims were chosen by the killer because they reminded him of some aspect of himself at some point in his life – it was like "vicarious suicide". The movie makers decided to reject the Riggins approach

completely and use the Stratso approach instead – in the movie, his victims were all young women, single moms.

29. As already noted, Stratso decided to call her android a “replicant.” Later, the Riggins Script and the movie did the same. “Replicant,” however, is not a word that means “duplicate.” Properly used, it means “one who replies.” In other words, the use of the word “replicant” as a synonym of “duplicate” is not proper English usage. To Stratso’s knowledge, using the word in the way she did had never been done before creation of the Stratso Script. Used to mean a “duplicate”, the word was strictly an invention of Stratso. Stratso chose it because it sounds like “replica” or “duplicate”. Why did the Defendants choose to use it? Obviously, *because they copied it from Stratso.*

30. For all of these reasons, it is obvious that the script used for the infringing movie, and the movie itself, are substantially similar to the Stratso Script. There are significant differences in the movie, but the similarities are pervasive and quite fundamental. Without the Stratso Script, there would never have been the movie, “Replicant.”

31. Specifically, Defendants Amazon.com and Blockbuster have distributed the infringing movie and continue to do so. Defendant NBC Universal owns the USA Network which has repeatedly aired the infringing movie on cable television.

32. Defendants’ actions in copying, reproducing, publicly performing and/or distributing Stratso’s Copyright and in making a derivative work thereof, were wholly unauthorized and done so without her actual, or implied permission. Defendants’ use of her Copyright was done for commercial purposes, profit, and economic gain. The Defendants financially benefited from the unauthorized use of the Copyright in disregard

of Plaintiff's legal rights. All Defendants except possibly Yaletown Entertainment Corp. ("Yaletown") have infringed Stratso's copyright by copying, reproducing, publicly performing, and/or distributing the infringing movie.

33. The Defendants were placed on constructive notice by Stratso upon the registration of her Copyright. The Defendants infringed upon her Copyright pursuant to the Federal Copyright Act of 1976, as amended, 17 U.S.C., §101 et. seq.

34. The Defendants continue to infringe the Copyright to this day by having the movie, "Replicant" aired on cable television on a regular basis. Additionally, on or about February 18, 2005, Defendant Dadon announced, on behalf of Defendant Yaletown that Yaletown had purchased from Defendant Giant's Entertainment, Inc. and Dadon the "rights" to produce "the first sequel" to the film "Replicant" for \$500,000; and claiming that upon completion of the sequel, Yaletown will thereafter have the "right" to produce alternating sequential sequels. In fact, none of these parties legitimately own any interest in the film "Replicant" or any sequel thereof because any such is or would be derived from Stratso's copyrighted script, as they know.

#### Damages and Profits

35. Stratso's present damages include, but are not limited to: (1) the loss of credit for writing the motion picture screenplay; (2) the loss of opportunity to sell a license and obtain a royalty; and (3) an amount representing Defendants' profits. Stratso is entitled to recover, and hereby requests judgment for, actual damages that she suffered as a result of the infringement and violation of her legal rights, plus any profits of Defendants attributable to the infringement that were not taken into account upon computation of the actual damages. Alternatively, Stratso requests judgment for statutory damages pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §504.

Injunction

36. Stratso requests judgment for a preliminary and permanent injunction against Defendants pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §502, prohibiting them from further infringements, and particularly prohibiting them from any further releases of the film "Replicant" or any sequels thereto.

Impounding

37. Stratso, pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §503, requests the Court to order the impounding of all copies of the film "Replicant" that have been made or used in the world, inasmuch as all such were made and used in violation of the United States copyright laws.

Costs and Attorneys' Fees

38. Stratso requests judgment for her full costs and attorneys' fees in connection with the prosecution of this action.

WHEREFORE, Stratso prays that she have judgment:

- (a) for damages and profits, as requested hereinabove;
- (b) for injunctive relief, as requested hereinabove;
- (c) for impoundment, as requested hereinabove;
- (d) for costs and attorneys fees as requested hereinabove; and
- (e) such other relief whether general or special, at law or in equity, as Plaintiff may show herself to be entitled.

Respectfully submitted,

THE BOYD LAW FIRM, P.C.

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News for July 17-21, 2000

21 July, 2000

Replicant



Many years ago I was taking Tae Kwon Do and competing regularly in tournaments. About the same time the movie *Bloodsport* came out and it was a huge hit with me and everyone else at my school. It starred this guy Jean Claude Van Damme who was pretty damn cool in that movie. We eagerly turned out for his follow ups *Kickboxer* and *Cyborg* which weren't quite as good and his movies seemed to go downhill from there. I always hold out hope that he might recover.

His next movie is *Replicant*. In it Van Damme plays a serial killer who has been terrorizing a city for years. He kills a policeman who manages to shoot him before he escapes. The collect the killer's blood and use it to create a clone of the killer in the hope that the clone will think the same way and lead them to the killer. John Joyce of Impact magazine caught up with him at the American Film Market and talked to him about returning to indie films.

**John Joyce:** You're here to promote your forthcoming film *Replicant*, which sees you return to the world of independent filmmaking. Given that your last film was a Columbia Tristar release, why now, and why *Replicant*?

**Jean-Claude Van Damme:** Firstly, this industry is about relationships, and I know Avi (Lerner) for a long time. We kept meeting and saying we wanted to develop a project, but we didn't pull the deal together until this year. I found this script that I really liked, *Replicant*, and I brought it to Avi. It had a really unique premise, and it's based on DNA cloning, which is a real scientific process, now that they cloned a sheep in Scotland...

**John Joyce:** What's the story about?

**Jean-Claude Van Damme:** In the film, I play this serial killer, very strong, very smart. He goes all over the world, and can never be caught. The people hunting him manage to get a sample of his blood, and from this they clone an exact duplicate of the killer, a *Replicant*, and they plan to use the copy to track down the original. Of course, the clone is born with a clean slate and, to be effective, they need him to experience the same killer instinct as the man they're hunting, so they take me to the scenes of crime. Everyone's afraid that the copy will go crazy like the original. He becomes involved with this woman and her child, the ex-wife and son of the cop who's taking care of him. The child is the only person who's not afraid of him. He becomes their protector, and, in the end, he has to face his dark self. It's a great story!

**John Joyce:** So you'll be playing dual roles again, like in *Double Impact*?

**Jean-Claude Van Damme:** Yes, but, for the most of the film, the two characters aren't together. They only meet at the end. Also, *Double Impact* had the best effects possible at that time, but now special effects are much better, and so we can do even more things, visually, with the final showdown.

**John Joyce:** You also played dual roles in *Maximum Risk*...

**Jean-Claude Van Damme:** Right, I don't come in and insist on playing two roles. In each film, that's a key plot point. In *Double Impact*, they're two different twins separated at birth and reunited as adults. In *Maximum Risk*, my character is trying to find out why his brother was killed. *Replicant* obviously, revolves around this clone and the original killer.

**John Joyce:** Un Image is best-known for low to medium budget actioners, mostly shot overseas. This is a big jump for them in terms of budget ...

**Jean-Claude Van Damme:** *Replicant* is being made by Millennium, which is a bigger company that Avi is a partner in. It's being produced together with another American independent, Artisan, which released *Blair Witch (Project)*, which made a huge amount of money, and a film with Jet Li (*Black Mask*).

**John Joyce:** You're going to be directed by Ringo Lam, with whom you made *Maximum Risk*. What is it about his work that appeals to you?

**Jean-Claude Van Damme:** Honestly, I think he's the only director who treats me as an actor, rather than as an action star. When we made *Maximum Risk*, he told me "You're walking like a boxer. Your character is scared, he's on the run E". He really taught me a lot about the art of acting for the camera. I call him the Martin Scorsese of Asia. After Avi agreed to make *Replicant*, we went to Hong Kong to meet Ringo, and, luckily, he liked the idea, and agreed to direct. He started doing all this research into cloning, so that every detail in the film will be accurate.

**John Joyce:** You seem to enjoy working with Hong Kong directors, having made a film with John Woo, two with Tsui Hark and now a second one Ringo Lam...

**Jean-Claude Van Damme:** I just found the visual style to those action movies so unique. I was the first one, remember? When I made *Hard Target* with John Woo, no-one really knew about Hong Kong action films. Then there was *Matrix* with Jet Li and everything. I was the first. I don't really

<http://www.tnmc.org/news/news00jul17-21.html>

Box Office Top Ten

July 14-16, 2000

#		Weekend \$M	Total \$M
1	X-Men	54.5	54.5
2	Scary Movie	26.2	89.1
3	The Perfect Storm	17.1	26.2
4	The Patriot	10.6	82.8
5	Disney's The Kid	10.5	30.0
6	Chicken Run	7.9	77.0
7	Me, Myself & Irene	5.7	77.1
8	Big Momma's House	2.8	108.3
9	Gone in 60 Seconds	2.5	91.0
10	Shaft	2.4	66.0

Coming Soon

Title	Release Date
Charlie's Angels	November 3, 2000
Coyote Ugly	August 4, 2000
Godzilla 2000	August 18, 2000
Highlander 4	September 1, 2000
Urban Legend 2	September 22, 2000
Little Nicky	November 10, 2000
Jason X	April 13, 2001
Tomb Raider	Summer 2001
Josie and the Pussycats	2001
Mortal Kombat 3	?
Rush Hour 2	?

Friday, June 15, 2001

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proud that I've worked with these guys, because I believe they are the best in the world at this kind of action film.

**John Joyce:** You've been in the media a lot in recent years, but most of the coverage has been about your personal, rather than professional, life. To be blunt, what happened?

**Jean-Claude Van Damme:** Too much, too fast. Also, when I came to Hollywood, I was alone, and I fell in with the wrong people. I married this great woman, Gladys, and she gave me two lovely children, and then I got on the wrong path. I think I made every mistake a man can make and live to talk about it. But I learned, I got my family back, I got my live back on track and I'm back, stronger than ever. Wait until you see *Replicant*. I think a lot of people are going to be surprised. We're going to have a ninety day shoot, really take our time to get things right. I really believe that when I walk into Cannes Film Festival with this movie, I'll be back as the biggest action star once again.

Thanks to 'Alan.'

Can it be good? Talk about it on the Forums

19 July, 2000

### Tomb Raider

Trouble on set? Plus some casting news.

18 July, 2000

### Queen of the Damned

For some bizarre reason, following the success of *Interview with the Vampire*, Warner Bros. decided to skip the second book in the series of Anne Rice novels that the movie was based on, and go straight to the third book. Why? I'm guessing because that book contained rock music and explosions. The fact that the movie wouldn't make a lot of sense without the backstory of its main character Lestat, layed out in the second book, didn't seem to matter much. Their plan was to essentially combine the two books while focusing on the storyline of the third novel.

Now the main problem with adapting most books is that there is too much material for a movie to successfully incorporate. Considering that it would seem inconceivable to try and put two books together for a movie. Unsurprisingly that has made the movie near impossible to produce as conceived. Author Anne Rice has essentially divorced herself from the project while quietly hoping that Warner Bros. can't get the production in gear by October of this year, in which case the movie rights revert back to her.

Complicating things is the fact that Warner Bros. can't seem to get a lead actor to sign on. Lestat was originally portrayed by Tom Cruise. For the sequel they have attempted to sign Wes Bentley (*American Beauty*), Heath Ledger (*The Patriot*), Josh Hartnett (*Pearl Harbor*) and most recently Stuart Townsend.

Why is it so hard to find someone to play the role? Maybe because the script stinks. To validate that comment we turn to esteemed script reviewer Stax. He got a hold of and reviewed the draft by director Michael Rymer. This copy is at least the third rewrite.

This draft of *Queen of the Damned* aimed to be an epic horror tale, part romance and part action, that spanned from ancient Egypt to the Mediterranean islands in 1788 and, finally, to Los Angeles at the dawn of the new millennium. It tried to condense Anne Rice's book down into a two and a quarter hour-long film but was unwilling to excise characters or back stories that would make the main narrative more engaging and comprehensible. If Michael Rymer wants to center his film around Lestat and Jesse then he should excise many of these other subplots and supporting characters. Basic questions were never answered by this draft: whose story was this? Who am I supposed to care about? What the heck was all this about anyway? Hopefully, Rymer's subsequent drafts will be major improvements over this one. My gut tells me, though, that the filmmakers have simply bitten off too much to chew and could likely end up with a sprawling mess on their hands. After being an inactive project for so many years, Warner Brothers is now rushing to get this film made and it clearly showed here. (Wasn't Roger Corman's atrocious *Fantastic Four* also made in a hurry so that the producers wouldn't lose the film rights?) After reading this draft, I fear that Anne Rice was correct in assuming that *Queen of the Damned* is a film that simply wasn't meant to be. - STAX

To read the entire review, head to Stax's home at FilmForce.

Talk about it on the Forums

### Pokemon: The Movie 2000

I once sat through *Spice World*. That continues to be one of the most painful moments of my life. Because of that I've got real respect for people who suffer their way through really bad movies. The kind of movies that you would consider hacking off one of your own limbs to get out of watching. *Pokemon: The Movie 2000* is such a movie. 'Eric' over at The Reel Site, suffered through it and lived to tell the tale. In fact I highly recommend going to read it, here.

### Tomb Raider

Why Jolie took the lead role

17 July, 2000

### Rollerball

The 1975 movie *Rollerball* is being remade by producer/director John McTiernan (*Die Hard*, *Predator*). The original told the story of a future society run by mega-corporations. To keep people happy they stage the game known as rollerball, a combination of roller derby and jai lai. The game's biggest star Jonathon E is encouraged by his team's owner to retire but he stubbornly refuses, wanting to know why. In that society the last thing the corporations wanted was a star, someone to stand out from the crowd and provide a beacon of hope. Jonathon was just such a person and they wanted him out of the way.

This new version was written by Larry Ferguson with a rewrite by the duo of David Campbell Wilson and Howard

<http://www.tnmc.org/news/news00jul17-21.html>