

DR TERROR

NB: To get around our lack of budget for supporting cast, I'm suggesting that we draft in cast, crew and friends of the family to sit in as stooge guests (ordinary people), and when a format calls for some sort of celebrity we cut in tiny clips from the films being introduced, eg: when Dr Terror opens a door on his Hearse Party, we have a snippet from POLTERGEIST of the midget medium coming through a door. This'll take a bit of editing and selection, but should be a funny effect. One consequence of this, though, is that the scripts are rougher than usual, and may have to be fiddled with to fit the excerpts we pick. Naturally, I'll make myself available to do this. As usual, Guy may want to interject, and I'll be around to keep the filmographic stuff correct.

POLTERGEIST

DR TERROR'S HEARSE PARTY

Dr T runs onto the set in that irritating Noeledmondsy way, as if desperately needing a piss but knowing he's on live television for the next fifty minutes.

DR T

Oh I'm so excited, so excited. I can hardly contain my straining bladder. Welcome to DR TERROR'S HEARSE PARTY. We've got so much in store in the Great Mausoleum here at Ragged Rectum. We're going to haul ordinary members of the public on camera and make them humiliate themselves for a truly pathetic amount of money, occasionally pouring corrosive gunk on their party frocks. And ... (door-bell) let's see who that is.

Clip from POLTERGEIST (midget comes through door, say something ominous). Dr T slams door on her.

DR T

I said no midgets. I won't work with midgets. And where would HEARSE PARTY be without a Splatcha! In whose jacuzzi is Mr Bloody going to be this week?

MR BLOODY, an inflatable blood-red fool with a Leatherface mask and a chainsaw, jumps up and down, revving, shouting 'bloody, bloody, bloody'.

DR T

But first, you'll never believe the hilarious humiliation we've inflicted on an average family. Tee-hee. Yes, Steve and Diane Freeling, we mean you.

Clip: the Freelings watching television. Dr T waves at them. Clip: the little girl saying 'they're heere'.

DR T

This is wonderful, because we're going to do something terrible to the Freelings but they have to pretend they think it's funny just so they can be on the telly. We're such jolly japesters here at Ragged Rectum. You see, what we did was build the Freelings' new home on a graveyard without moving the corpses, disturbing angry spirits from the beyond who will pour gunk all over them, kidnap their daughter and generally wreck their lives.

Clip: the Freelings looking upset.

DR T

And what's more, we told director Tobe Hooper and stars Craig T. Nelson and JoBeth Williams that doing in a Steven Spielberg film would be good for their careers. Actually, Big Steve grabbed all the credit for POLTERGEIST. The director and stars wound up doing made-for-TV movies nobody watches and direct-to-video drek nobody rents. And most of the supporting cast mysteriously died. Titter.

Clip: the Freelings looking devastated. Mr Bloody jumps up and down behind Dr T,

suggestively waving his chainsaw.

DR T

Careful with that thing, Mr Bloody. You could do someone an injury. Now, let's go through the television set into our victims' home ...

Perfect segue to the first shot of POLTERGEIST (a TV screen).

THE BEAST IN THE CELLAR

THE NATIONAL SLAUGHTERY

DR T

Hello, gentlefolk, and welcome to this week's draw for the NATIONAL SLAUGHTERY. Last week, the big winners were Mark and Nikki Deitch of Shepherd's Bush. And we all know what happened to them.

Clip: site of a horrible murder.

DR T

This week, who will come up? Which fortunate souls will be elevated from pathetic and hopeless obscurity to a feeding frenzy of tabloid publicity as we allow them to murder their neighbours and seize all their worldly goods? It's over to our resident seer, Eldritch Elsie? So, Eldritch, what's looming in your crystal balls tonight?

Clip of Beryl Reid saying something ominous.

DR T

It could be you. The hand of fate could single you out and squash you flat. I have to tell you that the thing I love most about the National Slaughtery, gentle viewers, is that it's so monstrously unfair. You give us enormous amounts of money in the futile hope that a big win will make you happy. And we give all the cash to rich, disgusting people who don't need it. Let's see who's benefited last week.

Clip of melodramatic shouting.

DR T

This week's machine is Morgan le Faye. It's been a few weeks since Modred showed up. And to pluck the balls is Dame Flora Robson.

Clip of Flora in full maniac rant.

DR T

Let's visit some previous pathetic winners now. Let's see how unlimited carnage has changed the lives of a pair of lovably dotty spinsters with a highly unusual pet.

Segue into THE BEAST IN THE CELLAR

A hapless victim is strapped in an electric chair. Dr T sits with his question cards. By his side is a huge lever.

DR T

Welcome to MASTERFIEND. The show's been running for fifty years and everybody knows the rules, but we'll repeat them anyway. You have one minute to answer questions on your specialist subject. If you pass or give a wrong answer, we shoot a thousand volts through you. If you give a right answer, we shoot a thousand volts through you. If you hesitate or deviate, we shoot a thousand volts through you. In case you were wondering, yes it does hurt. But we still have no shortage of volunteers. After all, it's a less painful way of getting on television than presenting THE WORD. Our first contestant is Nick Jones from London. And what's your specialist subject?

NICK

Tonight's film, INCENSE FOR THE DAMNED.

DR T (hand on lever)

Very well. Good luck. What was the title of the distinguished Simon Raven novel on which the frankly shoddy INCENSE FOR THE DAMNED is based. (pulls lever before Nick has a chance to answer, causing pain) Doctors Wear Scarlet, published in 1959. What is the improbable premise of the story? (pulls lever before Nick has a chance to answer, causing pain) That an impotent academic on a Greek holiday can cure his sexual problems by turning to vampirism. And which 1970s TV star with a terrible haircut takes part in a psychedelic orgy? (pulls lever before Nick has a chance to answer, causing pain) Patrick Mower. And (beep) ... I've started so I'll finish. After all, you're nearly finished ... what was the name of the writer-director of the film. It's a hard one, since he tried to take his credit off when the movie was taken away from him and re-edited in the futile hope that the result would make some sense. No? I'll have to hurry you. (pulls lever, leaving the juice on) It was Robert Hartford-Davis.

NICK is fried to a frazzle and dragged off.

DR T

Our next contestants will have a hard time matching the achievements of our first corpse. Next in the hot seat, Mr Peter Cushing of Whitstable, specialist subject sneering (clip), Mr Patrick Macnee of Crete, specialist subject whining (clip) and Mr Edward Woodward of Oxford, specialist subject cringing (clip). Who will come out unfried, nobody knows ...

Segue into INCENSE FOR THE DAMNED.

GHOST STORY

BLINDED DATE

DR T shows up in a miniskirt and red wig (?). Jumps up and down and raves like a clod.

DR T

We've got a lorra lorra laffs tonoight on BLINDED DATE. I've got the best legs in the business, you know. I sawed them off myself. The lovely lady looking for her ideal fella is a cute little ghost from Milburn, Connecticut, Alma Mobley.

Clip of Alice Krige, looking evil.

DR T

Alma's been off fellas since four of them drowned her in the lake.

Clip of the car going under.

DR T

But now she's ready to take her pick of the handsome hunksome selection we have for her. Whoooooo! Will she choose the naked man plunging to his death?

Clip of Craig Wasson falling out a window.

DR T

Wurrrr! Or will she go for one of the old-time doddery actors who slow down the film as they try to get their lines out without falling asleep?

Clips of Fred Astaire, John Houseman, Douglas Fairbanks Jr and Melvyn Douglas.

DR T

Alma, what would you like to ask our lovely fellas?

Clip: Alice Krige looking like a monster.

DR T

Ey-ooop! Fellas?

Clips of Fred Astaire, John Houseman, Douglas Fairbanks Jr and Melvyn Douglas screaming.

DR T

So you've picked all of them. Fantaaaaastick. On your blinded date, you're entitled to persecute them at the end of their lives, luring them to horrible deaths, sometimes appearing as a rotted monster. Doesn't that sound lovely? Yurrrrr!

Clip of Alice, looking contemptuous.

DR T

Let's look at what happened next ...

Segue into GHOST STORY.

VIDEODROME

VIDDYADDICTS

Clumps of couch potatoes on the sofas. DR T in a cardigan hops up and down between them.

DR T

Welcome to Viddyaddicts. Yes, Noel, we're doing you over twice in this series. The best thing about it is because you make your career out of humiliating other people, you have to pretend you think it's funny and take it like a good sport. Now, our two teams tonight are the Exploding Cancerous Growths ...

Clip of exploding cancer victim.

DR T

... and the Pulsating Vaginal Stomach Openings.

Clip of James Woods' stomach wound accepting video cassette.

DR T

So, Growths, we ask ourselves, does watching too much telly really turn your brain to mush?

Clip: ominous dialogue about how Videodrome is scary 'because it's got a philosophy'.

DR T

And, Openings, how do you feel about these images?

Clip: character saying 'it's not tacky enough to turn me on'.

DR T

Videodrome was made by Canadian director David Cronenberg in 1983, from his own original screenplay. Since then, he has always adapted stories from other people's work, so this was his last undiluted Cronenberg film. What was the general audience reaction at the time?

Clip: character saying 'I don't like the freaky/scary stuff'.

DR T

Only now is the sharpness of Cronenberg's insight into the way television works and will work in the near future becoming more apparent.

Clip: Professor O'Blivion soundbite.

DR T

If anyone could have predicted the success of NOEL'S HOUSE PARTY, it would have been David Cronenberg.

Clip: 'it's just torture and killing, no plot, very realistic.'

DR T

He was also the first person truly to be worried about it.

Clip: Deborah Harry saying 'I was made for that show.'

DR T

Long live the new flesh.

Segue into VIDEODROME.

DEVILS OF DARKNESS

WHAT'S MY SLIME?

A black and white 1960s-style quiz show. DR T mimics the wooden style of the times. Devils of Darkness is in colour, but the clips should be black and white.

DR T

Hello, my friends, and welcome to What's My Slime, the panel show in which minor celebrities who can't get work anywhere else quiz unusual individuals. This week's panel consists of novelist and critic Kim Newman, giggly actress ?????????? and crusty pundit ????????

Each of the panel - me and whoever else we can rope in - grins as introduced.

DR T

And our first Mystery Guest is ... Count Sinestre.

Clip of the Count looking evil.

DR T

Who's going to start the ball rolling?

KIM

Your name suggests you might be a somewhat *sinister* individual. Is this, in fact, the case?

Clip of the Count saying something sinister.

KIM

I don't mind saying I'm baffled.

CRUSTY

Are you, perhaps, a murderer?

Clip of the Count saying something ambiguous ('what of it?', 'that is so', 'of course not', etc).

DR T

No, you're way off the target there, old fellow.

GIGGLY

I know, you're the head of a Satanic cult, aren't you?

Clip of Satanic ritual.

DR T

You're so close, but you're not quite there. As the Bishop said to the Actress, ho ho ho.

GIGGLY

Fnarr fnarr fnarr. Oooh, you are a one and no mistake, Dr T.

CRUSTY

Do you have supernatural powers?

Clip of evil wind attacking victim.

KIM

I think I've got it. Count Sinestre, Devil of Darkness, you're a werewolf aren't you?

Clip of Count looking disgusted.

DR T

Completely wrong there, foolish people. Count Sinestre, Devil of Darkness, head of a Satanic cult is, in fact, a vampire.

KIM

Oh, I knew it.

CRUSTY

Then why didn't you say so, you damned fool.

GIGGLY

Fnarr fnarr fnarr.

DR T

And so, DEVILS OF DARKNESS.

Segue to DEVILS OF DARKNESS.

MIDNIGHT'S CHILD

HAVE I GOT BAD NEWS FOR YOU?

Lights up on DR T as Angus Deayton, sat between teams of minor celebs (ie: the lot we saw on WHAT'S MY SLIME but in colour and Nick from MASTERFIEND).

DR T

In another week of atrocities too appalling to make public school jokes about, here's an edition of the topical quiz, HAVE I GOT BAD NEWS FOR YOU? On Paul Pudgy's team this week is a politician whose spin doctors told her she needed a more humorous image because she's best known for closing down hospitals and yanking pensioners off kidney machines. And with Ian Balding is a currently overexposed stand-up comedian who has consented to play stooge to Ian's enormous smugness on the off-chance it might line him up for a late-night low-ratings series on Channel 4.

Shots of them all grinning and scratching themselves.

DR T

Without further ado, and with the maximum of patronising monotone, let's hie ourselves hastily to Round One, the Plot Round. If I were to say this was a film about an evil nanny who moves in with a middle-class American family as part of a Satanic scheme, makes evil eyes at the husband, wins over her charge for diabolical purpose and plans on killing the wife, which film would you think we were watching?

We have a freeze-frame from MIDNIGHT'S CHILD.

COMEDIAN

The Hand That Rocks the Cradle?

IAN

No, you fool, that's about a psychopathic nanny avenging herself on the woman, not a Satanic nanny sacrificing the child. The film is The Guardian, shown on last year's Dr Terror's Vault of Horrors, and I claim my point, thrusting me firmly ahead of Pudgy there.

DR T

That would be all very well and wonderful if The Guardian were, in fact the right answer, but it's not. I'll throw it open to Paul and give a further hint, otherwise known as a blatant giveaway. The film is about a troubled marriage in which the wife is convinced her husband has become successful by joining a coven of witches, then realises he is willing to dedicate their child's life to diabolical evil.

Another still.

PAUL

Oh, it's Rosemary's Baby, you silly old presenter with horns. Any clod would know that. It's Rosemary's Baby.

DR T

... utterly and completely the wrong answer. In fact, it's MIDNIGHT'S CHILD.

PAUL

Midnight's Child. Never heard of it. It doesn't exist.

DR T

In fact it does. It's a TV movie from 1992.

PAUL

Oo's in it, then?

DR T

Well you might ask. Olivia d'Abo, Marcy Walker and Cotter Smith.

IAN

Oh, an all-star cast?

DR T

That's as may be. Think of your amusing closing remarks as we glide gracefully across the frozen lake of sewage that is our studio set from the hackneyed and dried-up yesterday's news that was Round One to the fresh, up-to-date and cuttingly satirical remark that is Round Two. Let's look at some film.

Segue to MIDNIGHT'S CHILD.

THE ASPHYX

THIS WAS YOUR CAREER

DR T (holds big video cassette)

Hush now, this week, we've a surprise for some of our most distinguished. You all know Robert Powell for his depictions of sensitive young men on 1970s television, most notably Jesus of Nazareth. And, of course, he has won a whole new legion of admirers in his '90s comedy teaming with Jasper Carrot. Tonight, we're going to be taking Robert Powell back to 1972, when he co-starred with Robert Stephens in a low-budget, high-ridiculousness horror movie called THE ASPHYX, also known as HORROR OF DEATH. Tonight, we pounce on Powell and loudly announce THIS WAS YOUR CAREER.

Clip: Powell looking frightened.

DR T

Yes, even actors have to eat or get bored. And because of that, they sometimes take stooge roles. Powell didn't even have the excuse of top-billing and a couple of ham scenes to excuse his appearance here. However, between theatrical triumphs, the late Sir Robert Stephens was clearly tempted by the opportunity to chew scenery ...

Clip: Stephens hamming like mad.

DR T

And who is that strapped to the guillotine in a period frock? Why, yes, it's erstwhile leading lady of quality drama Jane Lapotaire, losing her head.

Clip: Jane suffering.

DR T

And so, Robert, looking back on your curriculum vitae, how do you view this early triumph.

Clip: Powell makes a speech about needing to atone.

DR T

THE ASPHYX may not make much sense - as an incidental plot point, Stephens invents the cinema fifteen years before anyone else - but you have to admit that it tackles big, ambitious subjects like the nature of life and death, while putting forward the revolutionary theory that death is caused by a superimposed muppet goblin.

Clip: the silly monster.

DR T

And how many other 1970s horror films feature an immortal guinea pig. Robert Powell, Robert Stephens, Jane Lapotaire, THIS WAS YOUR CAREER!

Clip: explosion. DR T grins and shakes his head in glee.

Segue into THE ASPHYX.

A CHILD FOR SATAN

THE GREED IS GREAT

DR T comes down a staircase in excitement.

DR T

Ladies, gentlemen and sad people with nothing else to do on a Friday night, welcome to Dr Terror's new format quiz show, THE GREED IS GREAT. This is the show where contestants are rewarded for outrageous expressions of greed, avarice, envy and several other deadly sins. The more you want something, the more you are willing to humiliate yourself to get it. Sad but true, and don't we just love every greed-glutted one of you for it. Remember, it's just a bit of fun, no matter what yawning chasms of despair it might open up under those of you who still yearn for something approaching moral value. You're all spoilsports anyway. Of course, this is about crass acquisitiveness. We wouldn't love it so much if it weren't. Tonight's contestant is A CHILD FOR SATAN.

Clip: scary bit.

DR T

What tonight's little film would love most of all in the world is to grow up and become a great big television series. You see, in American television, series are not commissioned until after a pilot film has been made, introducing the characters and the plot. If studio executives like the pilot, then money falls out of the skies and producers get to spend it on their swimming pools and episodes of the show. If, sadly, studio executives don't like the pilot, then it has its name changed and turns up from time to time on late-night television. A CHILD FOR SATAN was made under the title THE CRAFT and has also been called TO SAVE A CHILD. Did it grow up to be a TV series? Well, no. Which means that once you've twigged that the plot is ROSEMARY'S BABY meets THE INVADERS, with bits of THE FUGITIVE and RACE WITH THE DEVIL thrown in, you're stuck with the dreadful realisation that the heroine and you will be left hanging up in the air by an ending that resolves nothing and sets up plots which will never be developed and characters you'll never meet. Yes, again, American greed has triumphed. Thanks to those studio executives, all you'll win for tonight is an hour and a half of TV movie. Happy viewing, kidlets.

Segue into A CHILD FOR SATAN

DR GIGGLES

GOING FOR GORE

DR T

Hello and welcome to GOING FOR GORE, the quiz in which film-makers get out of answering questions by throwing in a gratuitously violent murder whenever the audience spots a hole in the plot. Playing the game tonight is DR GIGGLES, which came out a good ten years too late to be part of the early 1980s slasher movie trend it so desperately tries to resurrect. On our panel are a selection of ordinary people who won't be allowed to say anything at all.

We see panel of bewildered contestants.

DR T

Let's face it, you're not interested in them. They're ordinary. Some of them have really bad haircuts. And they're not trained to be entertaining. Personally, I think we could do without them, but if we had actors we'd have to pay all three of them the Equity minimum. We can haul in this lot for a tray of green room sandwiches and the forlorn hope of winning a 1992 fridge-freezer the Director General doesn't want any more. Oh, and a holiday to small town America where everybody's happy ...

Clip: screaming victim running down street.

DR T

So, the first question is, how come the victims run away at top speed and the mad killer ambles slowly after them but still manages to catch up?

Clip: running victim, walking killer.

DR T

No ideas. Well, there is no answer. Just another gory murder.

Clip: violence.

DR T

Second question, what exactly is it that enables movie psychopaths to survive point blank gunshots and repeated blows to head?

Clip: Dr Giggles suffering.

DR T

The answer, of course, is sloppy script-writing, and a slasher sub-genre where all plot points and character consistencies, not to mention the laws of physics, are sacrificed to keep the film on course for its next - you've guessed it - gory murder.

Clip: Violence. Dr G giggling.

DR T

And why is it called Dr Giggles. Let's just look at this brief hour and a half of horror film and think about that one, shall we?

Segue into DR GIGGLES

THE HOUSE OF SEVEN CORPSES

THE DEGENERATION GAME

DR T

Nice to see ya, to see ya

Silence.

DR T

Please yourselves, you miserable bastards. Dr Terror here with another episode of THE DEGENERATION GAME, the show that takes ordinary people off the street, humiliates them to the point of torture and lets them have at each other in a frothing frenzy of embarrassing violence.

Clip: gore death.

DR T

Incidentally, for those of you who have written in and complained, these are my own horns and how could anyone have the temerity to suggest that they are stuck-on cardboard. Without further distraction, let's thrust ourselves over the conveyer belt to examine this week's star prize, THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN CORPSES, a horror film financed by Mormons.

MARK DEITCH sits by a table along which articles pass.

DR T

For those of you too stupid to remember the rules from last week, we will be passing in front of Mark here an assortment of prizes which will then be thrown together to make this week's film. So, roll the belt ...

Clips and still images.

DR T (deeper voice)

Tonight's prizes include a derivative script, John Carradine as a hammy caretaker, has-been stars John Ireland and Faith Domergue, seven gruesome murders before the credits, a teasmade, seven more gruesome murders after the credits, an old dark house, gruesome 1970s fashions, a grave in the garden, a rotting zombie, a family curse, cuddly toy, a stack of cliches ...

Gong. MARK is regretting it.

DR T

You'll kick yourself when you learn what you missed. Decent direction, outstanding special effects, a plot that makes sense and attractive performers. Well, at least you're not going home empty-handed.

MARK

Thank you, Dr T.

DR T

No, you're going home no-handed.

Axe falls. Rubber hands bounce on floor.

DR T

And now for the movie ...

Segue into HOUSE OF THE SEVEN CORPSES.

THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS

SUPERMARKET SPLAT

DR T

Welcome to SUPERMARKET SPLAT, the game show in which we select average film directors from Beverly Hills and let them loose in a studio. If they run about quickly enough with their trolleys collecting pages from old horror movie scripts, they can win enough money to finance their next project.

Clip: money falling from the skies.

DR T

Tonight's contestant is Wes Craven, the man who gave you A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET and THE HILLS HAVE EYES, but who occasionally forgets himself and turns out SWAMP THING, DEADLY FRIEND or VAMPIRE IN BROOKLYN. Let's see if, in just one minute, he can pull together enough elements to make THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS, tonight's film.

Montage of active clips: running, screaming, chasing, stabbing, etc ...

DR T (rapidly)

So Wes has hit the studio supermarket and taken the whole plot of HANSEL AND GRETEL, throwing in spurious social realism by setting it in a modern American ghetto. Now, he steals his lead monster actors, Everett McGill and Wendy Robie, from TWIN PEAKS, but it's all right since Quentin Tarantino then goes on to steal the idea of Ving Rhames being tortured by a guy in an all-over leather fetish suit from here for PULP FICTION. To hot things up, Wes has thrown in elements from FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC, which he was once going to make, and in case there's ever going to be a theme park based on his films, here are some exciting booby trap rides. Top it up with some editorialising about Reagan Era economic unfairness and cast with affordably non-star performances, and maybe Wes has done it, maybe Wes has won SUPERMARKET SPLAT. Maybe his film is a surprisingly effective combination of disparate elements, carried off by the cinematic brio sporadically evident in his oeuvre. You, ladies and gentlemen, can be the judge ...

Segue into THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS

DR T

Welcome to PUKE BOX JURY, the celebrity panel game in which our guests try to decide whether a given horror film will be a HIT or a MISS, voting on whether elements of its storyline are frightening or just stupid. Tonight, we are very happy to have with us a giggly actress who doesn't know anything, a crusty expert who wouldn't be caught dead in the cinema, and novelist and critic Kim Newman, who's desperate for any exposure at all. First up is PHANTASM, selected as one of the worst films of 1979 by Barry Norman. And why not? Because he's wrong, that's why.

Clip: flying ball, alien dwarves, evil undertaker.

DR T

This is the one about the sinister undertaker who murders victims with flying silver spheres, then shrinks the corpses to dwarf-size, brings them back to life as monk-robed zombies and ships them off to another dimension where they are used as slave labour. It may sound far-fetched, but I can guarantee that the only other films to feature such a premise are PHANTASM 2 and PHANTASM 3. Director Don Coscarelli realised five years before A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET that the it's-all-a-dream or rubber reality premise could be used to string together a series of wild images, campy characters and knee-jerk shocks without the need to resort to anything like logic. It may not make sense, but it's funny and it's scary and that, Mr Norman, is its job. So, jury?

The jury press buzzers. Clip: violent deaths.

DR T

I think it's a hit.

Segue into PHANTASM.

A CHILD FOR SATAN

THE GOLDEN SPLAT

DR T comes down a staircase in excitement. He has with him his sidekicks DARREN THE DIRK and SALLY STARLET.

DR T

Ladies, gentlemen and sad people with nothing else to do on a Friday night, welcome to THE GOLDEN SPLAT, the show where contestants help scriptwriters put together horror films with the help of carefully flung daggers. To help me with the edged weapons is my assistant Darren the Dirk, and also this young lady, who used to be a model, would like to be an actress but is resting at the moment. That's right isn't it?

SALLY

Um, yes.

DR T

Thank you, Sally. Would you bring on our first contestant.

SALLY

Contestant?

DR T

That man there.

SALLY

Um, yes.

DR T

Sally is available for pantomimes and regional tours of the lesser works of Agatha Christie. She hopes to marry a Tory MP, but she'll probably end up a call girl.

SALLY brings on CONTESTANT.

DR T

As you all know, the purpose of the game is to hit that bullseye and come up with tonight's film presentation, A CHILD FOR SATAN.

Clip: scary bit.

DR T

What tonight's little film would love most of all in the world is to grow up and become a great big television series. You see, in American television, series are not commissioned until after a pilot film has been made, introducing the characters and the plot. If studio executives like the pilot, then money falls out of the skies and producers get to spend it on their swimming pools and episodes of the show. If, sadly, studio executives don't like the pilot, then it has its name changed and turns up from time to time on late-night

television. A CHILD FOR SATAN was made under the title THE CRAFT and has also been called TO SAVE A CHILD. So, Darren the Dirk.

DARREN, blindfolded, raises dagger. CONTESTANT looks bewildered.

DR T

Up a bit, left a bit, up a bit, down a bit, stop. Stab.

DARREN stabs the contestant in the back.

DR T

Yes, you've been stabbed in the back. Did A CHILD FOR SATAN grow up to be a TV series? No. Which means that once you've twigged that the plot is ROSEMARY'S BABY meets THE INVADERS, with bits of THE FUGITIVE and RACE WITH THE DEVIL thrown in, you're stuck with the dreadful realisation that you've been left hanging up in the air by an ending that resolves nothing and sets up plots which will never be developed and characters you'll never meet. Yet again American greed has triumphed. Thanks to those studio executives, all you'll win for tonight is an hour and a half of TV movie with no ending. Thank you, Darren, Sally, whoever you were. Now, Franklin the Film

Segue into A CHILD FOR SATAN

By the way, here is the line for HAVE I GOT BAD NEWS FOR YOU?

DR T

The expressions 'circumlocution' and 'redundant' come to mind, not to mention the words 'catch-phrase' and 'wearing a bit thin'.