

On *Lady Terminator*

Interview with Barbara Anne Constable

Andrew Leavold

“First she mates . . . then she terminates!” the posters screamed outside New York City’s fleapits back in 1988, and for once it wasn’t just some Z film producer’s huckster hyperbole. One can only imagine the 42nd Street crowd’s reaction to bizarre Indonesian splatter-sci-fi *Lady Terminator*—known as *Pembalasan Ratu Laut Selatan* (Soraya & TDjalil, 1988)—with the plot of Arnold Schwarzenegger’s first *The Terminator* (Hurd & Cameron, 1984) grafted onto a supernatural horror tale of a South Sea Queen possessing an ‘American’ anthropologist, who then embarks on a manic revenge spree.

Gorgeous, big-haired Barbara Anne Constable plays both Tania Wilson and the Queen’s unstoppable killing machine, busting into police stations and mowing down hundreds of innocent bystanders with her AK-



Barbara Constable, Andrew Leavold, and *Lady Terminator* poster for Cinema Overdrive event, 9 December 2009 in Colony Theater, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA.

47, all the while—in an unexpected riff on the original *The Terminator*—fornicating uncontrollably, snapping off penises mid-coitus. Breathtakingly surreal, hyper-sleazy and violent in equal doses, and crammed with one over-the-top action set-piece after another, the film is about as loopy as Asian exploitation gets.

Over the years, the legend of *Lady Terminator* grew among tape-trading film nerds. Meanwhile its American star was tucked away safely in her suburban home in Brisbane, Australia, raising two kids, blissfully unaware of her B Queen status. One day a bored Barbara Googled her name, and BAM! DVD re-releases, film festival screenings, dress-up parties... Welcome back, Lady T!

Below is the transcript of the interview by the author with Barbara Ann Constable:

Andrew Leavold (AL): Let's talk about the journey from Toowong to Hong Kong...

Barbara Anne Constable (BAC): I danced from the time I was about five, so that's kinda what I focussed on or what I did, and then I went to QDSE (Queensland Dance School of Excellence)—which is now part of QUT (Queensland University of Technology-EIJ). For three years, we were like the guinea pigs, but we were the first intake. So I finished that, and then I went to Sydney, did some more study for about six months, then got into a show on the Gold Coast. Do you remember *Starz*?

AL: Yes!

BAC: So I was in that for about a year, and then I had an injury to my right ankle, sued the casino—I snapped all the ligaments in my right ankle, so that made it impossible to ever go back to classical, 'cause I couldn't go "on point" anymore. I had a lot of problems with it, and I saw everybody, and basically the specialists were like, "Well, we can take part of the muscle out of your thigh and we can put it in your ankle." And this is before keyhole surgery, now even with the... it's in your knee they can do it all through keyhole and fix it up. But back then they couldn't.

AL: Major butchery!

BAC: Yeah! So I was like "I'm not going to do that" because then they were saying I was going to have trouble even going on "demi point" which I wouldn't be able to dance anymore. So I thought I'd just let it heal and

strap it. My boyfriend said to me, “We can go to Japan for six months,” so we put together this adagio trio—adagio is basically acrobatics, it’s like pas de deux in ballet, but it’s acrobatics and lots of lifting. We did an adagio trio and we worked the show around my ankle, what I could do and couldn’t do. So I went off to Japan in the highlands—Arkiwonsing it was, way up in the mountains, beautiful—went there for six months, the injury was healing. On the way back, went through Hong Kong and when I was there, I was really excited about the city, it was really vibrant and colorful . . .

AL: This is mid eighties?

BAC: Yeah, and I thought, you know what, I’m not ready to go back to Australia. So then I went to a couple of modelling agencies, and they said we’ll give you a twelve-month contract. So I thought that’s what I’m going to do. So I went back to Australia for six weeks, when the contract started flew back to Hong Kong and started modelling. And did well, got lots of work, really good money. And it was during that contract that I went for a casting for this film *Lady Terminator* . . .

AL: This wasn’t the Chinese film then?

BAC: I did that before. There were heaps and heaps of things that I did before—I don’t know how many jobs that I did but there were hundreds... we’d be here all day if I had to piece them together! The Chinese film was through Irene’s Models, the same agency that got me the casting for the Indonesian film. I was a dancer in it, there was no dialogue. I was just used for all these dance scenes. These were pretty intense. So I flew down to Shanghai, and back then it was trams and bikes everywhere and it was really polluted. I stayed in a relatively nice hotel and I had an interpreter who stayed in the next room – she was constantly explaining the bit to me. I don’t even remember what the name of the film was, ‘cause it was all in Chinese, everybody spoke Chinese, it was just a job, paid well . . .

AL: Was it an action film, a drama ...?

BAC: It was definitely a drama. I did all these scenes in a great hall for about a week, there was mainly ballet really. So I just had to learn the choreography and do the scenes. No one spoke English except for the interpreter; she would just be with me all the time and tell me what I

was supposed to do. She used to cry to me how bad it was there, and she begged me to take her to Hong Kong and somehow sponsor her, which I felt really bad about, I had no idea how I could do that. When I did arrive back in Hong Kong, within a week or something, Tiananmen Square happened. But you could feel it there, that suppression was in the air. I really felt unsafe because when I arrived at the airport there were these men in uniforms with machine guns—I thought, “What have I come to here?” I really didn’t feel safe. And out of all of the travels that I’ve done in my life, China back then, that was one of the only places where I felt really unsafe.

AL: More than Beirut?

BAC: More than Beirut [laughs]! And it wasn’t long before I was back in Hong Kong—within a couple of months, I suppose—and then I got this casting for *Lady Terminator*. They didn’t say it was the lead role, they just said they were casting this film, go along, I went, “Yeah alright.” When they said we want YOU, it was like, OK, what is it?

AL: They want you but you’re not a trained actress—are alarm bells going off?

BAC: Yeah they were [laughs]! They said it’s going to be filmed in Indonesia, Jakarta, and basically it’s a rip off of *The Terminator*, but you’re the Lady! And you’re going to have to learn to shoot guns. You’re in great shape so you should be fine. I thought about it for a bit and I wasn’t quite sure, and then I thought why not?

The script, there was hardly anything in there, most of it was just running and killing people. There was nothing in the beginning about...

AL: Castles and ...

BAC: ... nothing, it was just about this woman who was an anthropologist, she got possessed by this South Sea Queen, and then went on this killing spree. I thought, “I can do that!” Not much dialogue—sure! Just shoot a gun! And that’s pretty much what I did when I got there, except for that scene where I fell onto a bed...

AL: And they filmed from a couple of angles?

BAC: . . . but I'm in a bikini; it's not like I was in the nude. And the nude scenes, they were from the back, nothing really graphic in it. So I can't understand why that got banned.

AL: Banned where?

BAC: It was banned in Indonesia. Apparently 100,000 people saw it in nine days, and then it got banned, because American film producers were saying that it's pornographic. This is what Mondo Macabro's Pete Tombs was telling me last night. The director was really annoyed, because it was his "masterpiece"! That was the biggest budgeted film they'd done in Indonesia! (laughs)

AL: It's certainly one of the craziest, in terms of crazy ideas and outrageous action and horror set-pieces. And that's saying a lot, because Indonesian films can be insane!

BAC: To be honest with you, I haven't seen any other Indonesian films so I don't know. Like I said to you, I stuck that tape in a box and it stayed in a vault somewhere for twenty years and forgot about it. I can guarantee you, I was told it was made for the local market, and I'm still dirty about that.

AL: That's the reason you did it, it would never be seen outside of Indonesia?

BAC: Yeah, that's it. If this is just fodder for the local market, and it gives them some fun, good for them. I made money out of it, I had fun. But to get screened in New York, I was like, "You're kidding me?" I was mortified. I was really angry because I thought, "Right! You have lied—that's got to be a breach of contract!" I would never have signed away any rights for an international film release.

AL: What else do you remember about the producer?

BAC: Ram Soraya? He's Indian to start with. Tall, with the old Indian accent. Met me at the airport and held up a big wad of cash in US dollars to the customs officials when I arrived. So that set the scene... Righty-oh! And it was corruption everywhere. But they treated me really well. I stayed in

a really nice hotel and worked really long hours. It wasn't like they were running to me with a three-course meal, I just ate with everybody, but they fed me well at night, I could have whatever I wanted. Every night I laid down and these two women used to come in and massage me. One used to start at my head and one would start at my feet, and they'd work their way up. Two-hour massage every night! Then I'd pass out. So apart from the cinematographers coming in with joints and getting me stoned (laughs) . . . I was whacked off my head half the time! We used to party every night in my hotel room. So we had a great time. Back to Ram Soraya—he came to me about a month into shooting...

AL: How long were you there for?

BAC: Three months. Actually four months, because of the accident I had four weeks off, just to do one scene. You think they could've changed it; what did they really need that scene for? So three full months of shooting every day, there were no days off. So Ram Soraya comes to me and says, "Did you want me to pay you? Get rid of the agent." And I said, "What does that mean for me?" He said, "I don't have to pay her. This way you get another \$1000 US a week more." I went, "alright!"—which was a bit naughty... Anyway, she went bankrupt (laughs), maybe it was because of me! I made another US \$15,000 on top. But he was obviously saving himself a lot more money, and it was just all about the money. I felt like I was a multimillionaire, because the crew were all so poor. I worked sixteen hours a day, they were working God knows, twenty hours? So he was a real taskmaster with the crew. And the director, he was a really lovely man, very gentle.

AL: This is H. Tjut Djalil, who also plays Uncle Apu?

BAC: That's him, the shaman guy. The skinny, strange man who looked like he was dying! (Laughs) So he was the director! So that to me was very bizarre: "This is really lowdown local Indonesian filmmaking at its best!"

AL: With a poverty row Orson Welles—you were in the Citizen Kane of Indo splatter sci-fi!

BAC: He treated me well, and he always paid me. If I wanted something I only had to ask.

AL: So Mr. Djalil was a really nice old guy?

BAC: He was really lovely, and he was with everybody else. Everybody in the crew seemed to respect him and like him. I know that by the time I left Indonesia I'd gone down with all these clothes and went back to Hong Kong with nothing really. I gave all my clothes to my makeup artist. I felt terrible, they didn't have Anything. "I'd like that." I'd go, "Here you go, you can have it."

AL: What kind of direction was he giving you?

BAC: Depends however the scene was set up. We'd go through the scene, rehearse it, and if he didn't say "you have to look mean" or anything, it was up to me.

AL: When you're possessed ... ?

BAC: He didn't really give me that much direction to be honest with you. I really had to work it out myself. And seeing *The Terminator*—the stark face, not much expression seemed to go, not many lines (laughs).

AL: But you got such choice dialogue towards the start, like "I'm not a lady, I'm an anthropologist ... HUH!"

BAC: "HUH!" (laughs) And I don't know if I did the "HUH!" thing? I think the "HUH!" was done in the overdubbing. That wasn't me!

AL: That was clearly editorial—they'd forgotten to switch the dubber's microphone off!

BAC: The director did give me directions, 'cause Pete Tombs asked me about this last night. He said he loved that scene — where I've totally annihilated, shot 120 bullets through some guy's chest, and then I kicked him in the balls—he said it looked so off the cuff, like I'd improvised, but it wasn't. [Djalil] actually said to me, "And then I want you to kick him in the balls!" I was like, "Oh alright! I can do that." So I quite enjoyed doing that. I don't think the guy on the ground liked it very much!

AL: I don't know if you've seen any of Russ Meyer's films like *Faster Pussycat Kill! Kill!* But these are films with cartoon super heroines

who do the most outrageous stuff to men, and the audience goes nuts. They're like feminist cartoons of empowerment and revenge.

BAC: That's how I felt back then, to be honest with you. There are a few men in my life that if I could actually have done that to and got away with it...! So in a way I think it may have been a bit cathartic for me—I got to run around, kill all these men, and basically control everything. Everybody thought I was fantastic on the set... I had a great time.

AL: Well, you were bulletproof, weren't you? Literally?

BAC: Apart from getting burnt by squibs, and falling down a well. Early in the shooting we were out on a yacht, it was at the beginning and I had to do a mini course on scuba diving. In between takes we were sailing around. It was off the coast of Indonesia somewhere, there were beautiful crystal clear waters. I had my hair up, it was hot, and my elastic had fallen on the deck. All I did was bend down to pick up my hair band from the deck—he must have fallen down, BANG, an inch from my head. If I hadn't gone to get my hair band I would've been dead! That was the first...

AL: It was a portent!

BAC: Then they had to get it out, it was a big scene. I had so many near misses, like half car bodies flying and missing me by two centimetres! I nearly got killed so many times during that film. When Ram Soraya called me a couple of years later and said, "We want you to do a comedy," I said no. "I'll pay you double?" "No, I'm not coming back. I'll never get out otherwise!" I thought I'm not tempting fate.

AL: You've had your nine lives, surely.

BAC: That's it, I really did during that film.

AL: God knows where that comedy would have ended up.

BAC: Exactly. It was tempting...

AL: If it WAS a comedy ... the sleazy prick! Tell me about your impressions of Indonesia outside the film set; it would have been unknown territory, quite unlike Hong Kong.

BAC: It is. But by that stage I'd travelled to quite a few countries, so I was used to that, getting off a plane in a totally different world and adjusting quickly. And what made it easy was that the crew were really friendly and hospitable. It was bizarre in the sense that, extremely crowded, a lot of poverty, although that was back when Suharto was in rule and there was a lot of wealth too. Just that . . .

AL: Uneven distribution?

BAC: Exactly. That was really weird, because the poverty and the wealth were so intense. I remember feeling pretty freaked out because if I walked down the street I'd have 200 people following me, and the men and women would come up and start touching my skin and my hair.

AL: You would have been one of the most exotic things they'd ever seen!

BAC: Yes! And I got around in *tuk-tuks* (Baiai-EI), those little buggies, like in Thailand. There's a crazy driver in the front, you get in the back, and they drive all over the bloody road, and by the time you get there you feel like you're about to have a nervous breakdown! Just a crazy place. I don't know what it's like now. It's 22 years later, so I dare say that it's a lot more commercial maybe? But it was very grassroots, there was a lot of poverty. There were two makeup artists, but I did my own makeup, 'cause when they did my makeup I was like, "God, I look shocking!" I used to take it all off and do my own makeup again.

AL: So that's why you're credited as Makeup Artist?

BAC: They used to come along, sit with me and have a good laugh and stuff, smoke cigarettes, and I'd do my own makeup! If there were any special effects work done on my face it was the special effects makeup artist who did that. There was Teddy Farrell and this other makeup artist who was her assistant, and he was a transvestite. He'd come to work in a dress with high heels on, he'd be talking like, "Hi Baaaaarbara!" And he'd do the craziest things. We were sitting around between takes, and he'd rip his pants down and show his genitals—really strange stuff! The whole experience was very bizarre. Everybody [was] smoking joints on the set, people were off their nuts! I don't know how we got anything done.

AL: That explains the three-month shoot . . .

BAC: The dealers used to come up to one of the cinematographers every night with a massive bale of *ganja*, he was constantly off his dial. He was really nice though, I really liked him. Max Ulysses was his name. In the end he took my cat. I found this little orange cat—I called Yuku, which means “go” in Japanese on one of the locations. It was really sick, I couldn’t bear to leave it there. So I holed it up in the hotel with me and used to give tips to all the people in the hotel who’d come up and clean, to feed it and look after it—it wasn’t supposed to be there. After so many months I had to leave. I didn’t want to leave it there, so Max got some doctor in for me into the hotel and he gave me some Valium to give to the cat. It was still a kitten. My parents sent me over a beautiful leather jacket for my twenty-first, and it had a really high neck on it so you could button it all the way up. When I left, they’d reckoned half a Valium was supposed to knock this kitten out. The bloody thing would not go down! I ended up giving it about two Valium[s], and the thing was knocked out. I put it in my leather jacket and walked through Customs. Just as I walked through, the cat’s gone “mrow mrow”—it’s come out of the top!

AL: Like a second head?

BAC: And they’ve nabbed me, and Max Ulysses was saying goodbye. I burst into tears—“I don’t want to leave the cat!” I could get into huge trouble. But they all knew who I was. Max said, “I’ll take it,” so I gave him US\$500 on the spot and said, “Can you feed it for me?” I don’t know if he’d fed it or not. He might’ve just chopped it up and ate it (laughs). But I gave him enough money to feed the cat for ten years! You never know, he was a really nice man.

AL: The other *gwallos* on the film, like the guy who plays Max, did you end up making friends with them?

BAC: Yeah, his wife was there. He was an expat working in Indonesia. I think he was an engineer. He was a fairly good looking guy but had the real heavy American accent.

AL: I wonder if he did his own voice?

BAC: No, all of the voices are all different. His wife was around quite a lot, but he was a bit of a naughty boy because he tried to get into the old

pants while his wife was there... it was like, “Yeah, you sleazebag...” And he tried hard too, but I was a good girl. I was! You might not believe it! I had a lot to do with him, used to talk a lot. I did like him—he seemed a fairly nice sort of bloke.

AL: But not an actor?

BAC: Nobody was an actor, I don’t think!

AL: Then there are a bunch of guys who turn up at the end of the film. There’s one with a first-class mullet screaming, “Fkin’ A!” as he’s driving a tank. Where did these guys come from?**

BAC: I don’t know. I think they were all expats working in Indonesia. They might have been in the army, who knows?

AL: And the chick who plays Jasmine—obviously she was “something”?

BAC: I think she was an actress. I thought she was quite weird though. She just didn’t have any personality whatsoever. I didn’t have much to do with her just because she was like a rag. She was very strange. I didn’t like her very much, to be honest with you.

AL: You didn’t have to!

BAC: She was a real sap! She wasn’t much fun. She spoke fluent English, but you couldn’t have much of a conversation with her. She was really quiet and would sit in the corner, not talk to anybody.

AL: It wasn’t the pretence of being a “star”?

BAC: Maybe she wasn’t, who knows?

AL: Wait till she’s interviewed for the Blu-Ray edition ...

BAC: “That Barbara Constable is a crazy cow!”

AL: Stoned all the time and smuggling kittens!

BAC: Well I wasn’t stoned all the time, I never got stoned while I was

working. I did partake with the crew at night. I wouldn't have been able to function otherwise!

AL: Let's face it, you had a LOT of action sequences. It's just relentless action from the time you leave the water . . .

BAC: And there were months of shooting, and that's all I was doing, jumping on the fronts of cars, doing massive car chases . . .

AL: Without a stunt double?

BAC: There was a stunt double that was used at the end, but I did all my own stunts. Hence the reason why I nearly got killed so many times, I think! It was because I've always been such a physical person and because I was a dancer that I wanted to do it. But it did get a bit hairy when you're doing 100 km an hour down a crowded main street in Indonesia, and I'm holding onto the bonnet of a car and getting flung around!

AL: And of course things are going to go wrong, so let's talk about the moments when you do suffer quite serious injuries.

BAC: You know the scenes in the nightclub where I come down and start gunning everybody down, then I fall down? Inside the jacket, there were hundreds of squibs, and they're like fine explosives. You've got some sort of heavy duty material between you and the outside of the jacket. There are explosives inside. So when I got shot, there are guys to the side with little machines making them all happen so you get that effect of getting shot, but quite a number of them burnt me. Serious, second-degree burns! I had all of these burns all over my stomach and chest for weeks from those squibs. I don't know whose fault that was but it was someone's fault, I wasn't really impressed. Then on the last day of shooting, for the last scene—this had to be my luck! What I remember is there were double doors, and instead of running up and opening the door, I ran up and kicked through the door. So I've got the AK47 and I'm running, and I had to kick—I'd done a couple of scenes like it. The glass should have shattered into small pieces – they call it candy glass. It was a real pane of effin glass! And as I kicked it, the whole thing just went “whoosh!” And it happened so quickly, I just went “f**k!” and I pulled my leg out. There was a big piece [of glass] and it went crack, straight on it. See? [She shows the scar on her ankle.] It went through and came up out this side of the . . .

AL: You got skewered! Like a *satay* stick!

BAC: I got skewered. It went through the pants, and then there was blood everywhere, it was pouring out of my leg. I was screaming, and people were screaming ... it was awful! I couldn't look, but when I did look it was like all the insides of my leg were hanging out. That's when Max came in, my mate, gave me a joint (laughs). It did help I tell ya, it calmed me down. All these ambulances turned up and they took me to a military hospital, and they sewed me up there...

AL: You didn't want to go to a local hospital...

BAC: Yeah! So it was a military hospital that I got sewed up at, and they did a good job with it. But I couldn't even put my foot on the ground for four weeks. I was really lucky because where it came through, it was millimetres from my Achilles tendon, otherwise I would have sliced that and then I would've been in serious trouble. I didn't really know what to do at the time, I wanted to sue them. How am I going to do this; my boyfriend was down at the time. Ram Soraya said, "We need the scene, we'll pay you until you're better." Basically I was holed up at the hotel, I put on half a stone I think! I couldn't walk! But thank God the boyfriend was there because he was also a dancer and an acrobat, and he was great, he used to massage it, and he was the one who said after two weeks, "You've got to get up on it and start getting it moving." Then I shot that last scene again, and the candy glass broke the way it was supposed to, and we finished the movie and we wrapped.

AL: Then there are those other scenes—I guess the most infamous for you is where you're spread-eagled on the bed. How did they explain away the bed scene?

BAC: Seriously I don't exactly remember, but they wanted me in my black bikini, and they wanted me to fall onto this bed. I was tied up, and they wanted me to look like I was possessed. That was the scene. They didn't say, "Afterwards we're going to put this friggin' snake thing that goes up your vagina . . . !" [laughs] When I saw that a couple of years later when they sent the Beta [tape], I felt like killing someone. Over the top! No one said we're filming this scene so that later on, when we send this movie to LA, we're going to superimpose a snake or an eel going up your tush. The scene was supposed to be falling onto a bed that was underwater, and that's where I got possessed. The whole thing was so weird.

AL: It's quite a surreal scene. Where does the bed come from? It's underwater!

BAC: That's what I mean, nothing makes sense. The only thing that really makes sense to me were the shooting scenes, because I was running around killing people. At least I could make sense of that! I didn't even think the movie was going to be in English. I thought it was all going to be in Indonesian.

AL: You were mouthing the dialogue in English?

BAC: They were going to overdub it later.

AL: The most bizarre scenes are where you live up to the film's tagline: "First she mates then she terminates." You have this . . . um . . . snapping eel vagina...

BAC: That was never explained to me either. Basically I just had sex with these men and they died.

AL: The blood was spraying over their faces, and this made sense?

BAC: "I'm having sex with you, and you're dying." [laughs] Somehow I had these powers...

AL: I remember reading the phrase "donkey dick"—was there a severed donkey penis used in any of the scenes?

BAC: No, not that I know of. We didn't see any dicks. In fact in all of the scenes, everybody was fully clothed from there [points at her waist] down. They'd put some sort of blood pack in them, and they die, and I move onto the next one! Actually the scene I found the most uncomfortable was the scene on the beach, I came up nude—the nude thing was fine, didn't bother me—and there are those guys on the beach. . .

AL: "I really wanna chick tonight!" The guy's having a slash on the beach—"Yeah, I'm gonna get lucky tonight!"—with the sound of pissing! [laughs]

BAC: The scene after that, I actually had to kiss the guy, and that I found distasteful, and I didn't have to kiss anybody else in the whole movie.

But kissing this Indonesian guy, I just remember the back seat with him. Watching it, I was like “eww!” If he’d been Brad Pitt I would’ve gladly done it. Might’ve even done something else.

AL: Instead you get Gilbert Gottlieb!

BAC: Yeah, that’s it!

AL: Then there’s that crazy scene that’s out of the first *Terminator*, where you get a scalpel and cut out your eye.

BAC: That was a goat’s eye.

AL: Ew!

BAC: I actually had to hold up this goat’s eye up in one of the shots—they were shooting from the side, so my hand had done this thing, cutting my eye, and then I had this goat’s eye pushed in, and then it had to drop into the sink. So that was yucky, but I think the kissing scene was much more gross! [laughs] For that scene, you’ll see some shots where it wasn’t my head—it was actually a head they’d made up. To make my head up they’d put this latex all over my face, cast my face, and the only place I could breathe from out of my nose, they put two straws up my nose as they were doing it. It was really hot. Actually that was the most uncomfortable thing because I had a massive panic attack. I couldn’t breathe and I started getting claustrophobic, and I started freaking out. “You’ve got to keep it on half an hour till it sets!” Then they cracked it in half and took it off me. That was frightening, I thought I was going to suffocate.

AL: In a weird country while making a dummy head!

BAC: My head! Another head!

AL: It sounds like a quite elaborate effect—you wouldn’t think for an Indonesian B film that they would’ve gone to such incredible lengths.

BAC: They did, and even the special effects. I was quite surprised, because there were a lot of explosions. And when I was on set, when we were

doing those scenes, they were huge explosions. It was all really well organized. For safety reasons obviously.

AL: The action scenes really are elaborate.

BAC: Yes, I think they did a good job with that. It was all the other stuff that was really weird. Like with the opening of the film—why the hell, what’s the castle?

AL: There’s a whole genre of Indonesian films, the Snake Queen movies. What they’re doing in *Lady Terminator* is riffing on the Snake Queen idea — a supernatural being who consumes males.

BAC: Snaps off their dicks . . .

AL: That kind of thing! That tradition of horror films was then grafted onto the plot of *The Terminator*, and they’ve tried to meld the two. Make sense?

BAC: Yeah, I’ve heard it does. For the local market. But how did they think they could sell it overseas?

AL: *The Terminator* angle.

BAC: That bit at the end—I’m mutilated, I’m exploded upon, everything happens to me, and then I come out of the flames—that’s not me, that was a man, which is the reason he had floppy arms. And you can see it’s not me! The hips, it’s strange. That really ruined it for me at the end. I was like, “What the hell? Couldn’t you have done a better job with that?”

AL: He was watching the rushes of you and thought, “I’ve got Barbara now . . .” [flaps arms around] “ . . . I’m a lady!”

BAC: “I’m a lady!” [laughs] I can remember the guy that actually did that, because he was always doing anything really dangerous.

AL: You said at one point stunts were going horribly wrong—people were dying?

BAC: Well, this wasn't actually a stunt. This was just crew being overtired, working extraordinary hours. There were a heap of scenes... you know there are offices? I'm running through hallways, kicking doors open and shooting people? It was a set that was built in an old airport on the tarmac, and there were all these old planes that were broken down and rusting away, and we were there for two or three weeks. I don't know how many times I kicked doors and shot people! We did a lot of kicking, shooting One of the guys who was in the crew, he was so tired he'd fallen asleep on the tarmac. Because it was so dim, someone got into one of the big loading trucks that they had the equipment in, and they ran over his head.

AL: No!

BAC: So I saw that. His head was run over. That was horrific. I don't think I could work for a couple of days after that, 'cause I was really upset. I thought, "That's f***d! What are you going to do about that?" He had four or five kids! All the crew were devastated. That was the worst thing that happened when I was there. I know in a lot of the explosion scenes there were a number of times we were hiding behind cars, things were exploding, and things were flying over our heads, and fires, and we'd be like, "S**t! That was a close call!" When it was re-released on DVD I went, "I didn't know about this—why don't I know anything about this?" So I started researching. Then I started thinking, hold on a second, it's like a cult. What is a cult film? So I started researching what a cult film is. I wonder how many copies it actually sold? I started thinking, hold on a second, I got really duded, didn't I?

AL: Financially? Probably like anyone else who ever starred in a B film in Asia!

BAC: It's weird because I started seeing all these theaters in London were having *Lady Terminator* nights, people were dressing up, and I'm like, "what?"

AL: Think of how many hundreds of thousands of films that have been released; only a certain number of films have that aura around them.

BAC: It's weird I first thought, "That's a really tragic film," hey? That's bad!

AL: If you use mundane standards to judge the film, then yes, the dubbing is terrible, the action scenes are ridiculous

BAC: It doesn't make any sense. Why do you have to kill someone 150 times?
[laughs]

AL: Then if you look at it through a different set of eyes, it's played incredibly straight, no one's acknowledging the absurdity of the situations, and that's refreshing in an age of arch-awareness.

BAC: I've seen it since with friends with a few drinks and joint, and just laughed all the way through it. It's a crack-up! People were like, "That's YOU? That's weird!" I know!



Barbara Constable,
Andrew Leavold with the
family.

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