



**SCI-FI FILM
FIESTA**

**VOLUME 6:
ALIEN
INVASION!**

Chris Christopoulos

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Dedications

Dedicated in loving memory of my wonderful parents:-

Konstantinos (Dino) Christopoulos who took me to see my very first science fiction film in the early 1960s, *The Man With The X-Ray Eyes* (1963)

Rosemary Christopoulos who sat with me after school as I watched on TV episodes the first two doctors of the *Doctor Who* series and insisted on asking me interminable questions about who was who and what was going on! Thanks mum and dad!

The SCI-FI FILM FIESTA eBook series is intended as a salute to the pioneering work of science fiction film makers. May future generations have the privilege of enjoying your work and never stop wondering....*What if?*

Dedicated also to *you*, the reader who appreciates these classic gems from the golden age of sci-fi film-making. It is you who help to keep such films alive for future generations to enjoy

Other eBooks in the Sci-Fi Film Fiesta series:

Volume 1: “Here Be Monsters”

Volume 2: “Into Space”

Volume 3: “Other Worlds”

Volume 4: “Journeys Within”

Volume 5: “Alien Contact”

Sci-Fi Film Fiesta
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Alien Invasion

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Introduction

I'd like to share with you my own enjoyment of many individual classic films from the 1950s, the golden age of science fiction with this volume of the *Sci-Fi Film Fiesta* series: *Volume 6 – Invasion*. Fear and paranoia was often the order of the day during the Cold War period and sci-films tended to reflect and play on these fears as will be commented on in the films featured below.

What if our planet was to be actually subjected to an alien invasion, incursion of infestation? Could it happen? We often assume that advanced intelligent alien life-forms would be motivated by a sense of altruism and benevolence, by curiosity and by the need to know what is unknown as they make contact with other life-forms throughout the universe. Considering the effort and immense distances involved with undertaking interplanetary excursions many people believe that the notion of our planet being subject to an alien invasion is best left in the realm of science fiction.

Then again, take a moment to consider Alexander the Great and his army doing battle with Indian forces so far from Macedonia; The Mongols at the gates of Europe; the Vikings in Russia, England, Ireland, France and elsewhere; the Spanish Conquistadors in central and South America and so and so on throughout history. Such ventures so long ago were almost the equivalent of embarking on an interstellar enterprise considering the time, effort and distances involved. The victims of these invasions may not have imagined in their wildest dreams such a thing happening to disrupt their way of life. Perhaps some speculation would have occurred to them as to why such a destructive event should have befallen them.

If an alien invasion were to occur then *why*? What would be the motive?

Greed & avarice? Our planet may possess something (resources?) which an alien civilization needs and wants.

Lebensraum? An alien civilization may believe that our planet constitutes a scarce and almost unique habitable territory which it requires for its own natural development. Perhaps its own home world might have been rendered uninhabitable.

Aggression & hatred based on belief in racial / species superiority? An alien species may be unable to abide the existence of and possible contamination from another potential competitor rival species.

Genetic imperative / survival instinct? An alien species could feel impelled to rid the universe of any other species that may pose a threat to its own survival.

Or perhaps will it all come down to complete disinterest or at best, suspicion on the part of the extra-terrestrials who instead of launching an invasion or establishing contact, will instead simply avoid us?

As we continue to announce our own presence to the rest of the universe with our transmissions leaking out some 70 or 80 light years from earth, we have to come to terms with the inevitability of our establishing contact with an extra-terrestrial intelligence. It would be foolish of us to assume to know what their motives would be for being willing to make contact with us and how events would be likely to transpire between our species. It would, however be safe to say that we ought to assume nothing but should expect anything.



Invasion USA (1952)

*Entertaining Propaganda.
You'll never be able to look away
From the horror of "Invasion USA!"*

1952: A Taste Of The Times:

In Washington, D.C., Senator Joseph McCarthy, continued his campaign to expose communists in government and throughout society. "McCarthyism," in the form of a wave of anti-communist paranoia swept the country with devastating effects on many people's lives, reputations and careers.

Meanwhile.....

- The hydrogen bomb was detonated for the first time
- The polio vaccine was developed
- Transistors were first produced commercially by the American company Raytheon
- Reports were made of UFOs flying over Washington, D.C. for six hours

Director: Alfred E. Green

Producer: Albert Zugsmith, Robert Smith

Writers: Robert Smith, Franz Schulz

Music: Albert Glasser

Distributor: Columbia Pictures

Running time: 74 minutes

Budget: \$127,000

Cast

Gerald Mohr: (Vince Potter)

Peggie Castle: (Carla Sanford)

Dan O'Herlihy: (Mr. Ohman)

Robert Bice: (George Sylvester)

Tom Kennedy: (Tim the Bartender)

Wade Crosby: (Illinois Congressman Arthur V. Harroway)

Erik Blythe: (Ed Mulfory)

Phyllis Coates: (Mrs. Mulfory)

Aram Katcher: (Factory Window Washer)

Knox Manning: (Himself)

Edward G. Robinson Jr: (Radio Dispatcher)

Noel Neill: (Second Airline Ticket Agent)

Clarence A. Shoop: (Army Major)

Synopsis

(Spoilers follow below....)

The opening credits to “Invasion USA” feature a picture of the New York skyline containing sky-scrappers standing proud and strong. The film then starts off in a New York City bar where several people are gathered drinking and talking while a news reporter, on a very modern-looking (for 1952) flat panel TV reports on world tensions and the “possibility of all-out war.” However, this group of Americans do not want to hear such things and the TV set is switched off.

The group includes:

Vince Potter, a television/radio news reporter who asks those at the bar if they are for or against a “universal draft.”

George Sylvester, a tractor manufacturer from San Francisco, who is opposed to the government directing him to make tanks (“Draft factories? That’s Communism”) and is faced with threats that his plant could be taken over by the government.

Carla Sanford, a beautiful woman who is accompanied by George Sylvester. She states that she worked in a factory during the last war, but had to stop because it was damaging her hands.

Ed Mulfory, a cattle rancher from Boulder Hill, Colorado.

Arthur V. Harroway, an effusive and boisterous Illinois congressman visiting New York who praises Vince for being 'the voice of the people.' The people, according to him, are against Communism, war and high taxes.

The mysterious Mr. Ohman, a “fortune-teller” or forecaster who believes that “America wants new leadership.”

Tim, the Bartender who’ll do what he’s always done come what may: mixing drinks and bar-tending.

A discussion ensues between Mr. Ohman and the others where we learn that they all oppose Communism and enjoy the material wealth they derive from the current system. Not surprisingly they support lower taxes and don’t see the point of private industry’s support of government. Mr. Ohman does not think their views make any sense. Ohman claims that America wants new leadership, but would prefer someone else to worry about its problems. In other words, “Everyone wants George to do it.” Its citizens would prefer a “wizard who could wish communism away.”

Suddenly tensions on the world stage explode as an unnamed but obvious ‘enemy’ conducts air attacks over Seal Point, Alaska and Nome followed by paratroops landing on Alaskan airfields. The plan of attack involves the capture of civilian airfields as

staging areas and A-bombing of military airfields. The United States retaliates attacking the obvious enemy's homeland with B-36 bombing missions. Despite this, the obvious enemy advances into Washington and Oregon while the shipyards in Puget Sound are A-bombed.

With things falling apart and faced with imminent disaster, the group at the bar rush off to do their bit against the obvious enemy. With a peculiar sense of timing, Potter and Sanford fall in love with each other. After all, "War or no war, people have to eat and drink ... and make love." After attempting to enlist to help for the war effort, Potter is denied several times. He resumes his broadcasting role, while Sanford volunteers to help run a blood donation drive. The industrialist, Sylvester attempts to quickly turn his tractor-manufacturing business around to produce tanks but he soon becomes a casualty in the battle for San Francisco. The rancher, Ed Mulfory returns home and perishes with his family in the destruction of Boulder Dam by a nuclear missile strike. The President tries to rally the morale of his citizens with exaggerated claims of counter-attacks.

With a red-alert being issued that New York is about to be attacked, will the United States of America be consumed by this "enemy" and exist only as part of its wider empire?

And what of this strange man, Mr. Ohman sitting at the end of the bar with his huge brandy glass and his terrible (Ohmans) omens for the future?

Propaganda

The film, "Invasion USA" essentially serves as a splendid piece of cold war propaganda that is delivered in an entertaining manner. It is designed to both persuade and entertain and in fact, the film fulfills the main criteria that constitute a piece of propaganda, namely;

- The promotion of a particular idea.
- Informing its audience with a series of half-truths.
- Deceiving its audience with outright misinformation.
- Influencing the attitude of the audience toward acceptance of a particular position.
- Presenting mainly one side of a situation or argument.
- Partisan in nature.
- Relying on manipulation of emotions rather than fostering critical thinking.
- Demonizing those individuals and groups it is aimed against.

Let's take a look at some of the specific instances from the film that demonstrate the above elements of propaganda.

The enemy in the film is portrayed as being brutal and sub-human. After the take-over of New York, one of the enemy soldiers demands that they celebrate the victory with whisky. As the soldier advances menacingly towards Carla ("Now you MY woman!"),

Vince tries to stop him, but is shot for trying to help her. Fearing the fate that is to befall her, Carla jumps out of a window screaming and plummets to the ground to her death.

The film, "Invasion USA," serves as a warning against complacency on the part of citizens which can lead to the kind of invasion and occupation as depicted in the film. As things stand, the American public is too materialistic and selfish, whereby the college boy "wants a stronger army AND a deferment for himself," "Labor wants new consumer products AND a 30 hour week," the businessman "wants a bigger air-force AND a new Cadillac" and the housewife "wants security AND an electric dishwasher."

Such notions serve to reinforce the importance of having a strong military that must be supported by the public and by industry. However, Industry hasn't done its patriotic duty by supplying sufficient hardware for the military. According to the film, it is these kinds of attitudes that will undermine US preparedness to tackle threats to its security. It may go some way to explaining why in the film so few guards appear to be posted to defend the center of US government in Washington during a time of national emergency. As the invasion progresses, a scorched earth policy is put into effect in order to deny the enemy the resources it will need. This act of desperation is explained as being the result of not being prepared to "provide a strong enough army to protect ourselves."

Ironically, it also encourages the idea that in order to combat the threat posed by Communism, it is necessary that the needs of the State supersede the needs and desires of the individual! Supposedly, freedom and democracy comes with a price. How similar this notion and Ohman's vision for a stronger America seems to be to the 'Enemy's' declaration over the airwaves:

"The People's Government of America will take the wealth from the greedy, the speculators, and the capitalistic bourgeoisie and distribute it among the workers whose labor will never again be exploited for the benefit of the war mongers of Wall Street. The People's Government brings the citizens of New York a new freedom. A freedom based on order. A freedom based on loyalty to the leaders of the Party, your Party..."

Hatred toward the "enemy" for its brutality and sympathy for the poor victims of that brutality are meant to bubble to the surface as the audience witnesses the image of the child's doll floating forlornly in the flood waters from the bombing of the Boulder dam.

The audience's emotions are further stirred by referencing past historical events such as when the President states to the nation that "another day of infamy has arrived." People are being encouraged to direct their memories back to that time when a sneak attack on Pearl Harbour by Japan ushered America's entry into the Second World War. Think about how audiences today might feel when confronted with references to the 9/11 attack and you will begin to see how powerful such emotional manipulation can be.

Similar kinds of propagandist ideas such as the need for constant vigilance would not have been new to audiences who would have had vivid memories of World War Two and constant exhortations to beware of what they say and to whom. After all, “Loose lips, sink ships!”

Despite the fact that American defense spending was rapidly increasing at the time, the film exaggerates the enemy’s capabilities while creating the impression that America is idly sitting by and is ripe for another Pearl Harbor “day of infamy” scenario which would still be fresh in the audience’s minds. There is also the blatant misinformation concerning the US’s technical and military capabilities. Notice how slow the American radar stations seem to be when locating the invader’s aircraft. With the state of the US’s radar and other technology even at that time, it would have been unlikely that detection would have occurred not until the enemy aircraft were directly over their targets.

The film does its best to simplify quite complex geopolitical factors to a basic ‘Us versus Them.’ theme. The ‘Us’ being the freedom-loving United States divinely ordained to take on the role of combating the ‘Them,’ the Soviets and their Communist expansion. The ‘Them’ enemy is never clearly identified but it is obvious that it is the Communist Soviet Union from their initial invasion via Alaska and of course, the terrible accents!

Points Of Interest

A substantial proportion of the film is taken up by rather inaccurate stock military and combat footage. The audience is presented with a miss-mash of scenes depicting the destruction of New York using footage from the London Blitz; a jumble of WWII and Korean War stock footage; Communist forces fitted out in American military attire; Soviet pilots flying B-29s and B36s, along with Nazi-German Luftwaffe and Japanese aircraft!. At least there were some brief shots of Soviet MIGS. I guess budget constraints and the belief that the audience would not know what they’re looking at might have been a determining factor in all of this? After all, the film was shot in seven days in April of 1952 on a budget of \$127,000.00. Despite all of this, it did make a return of close to \$1,000,000. At least the relentless presentation of the invasion and battle scenes along with the music score do serve to create a rising sense of excitement, panic and hysteria in the audience.

I couldn’t help but wonder at the “Enemy’s” profligate use of nuclear weapons. It seems to reflect the kind of military tactical thinking that was a product of World War 2 rather than what would be appropriate for modern warfare. These days we are probably more aware of the results of nuclear detonations in terms of radiation, fallout and sheer destruction. In “Invasion USA,” nuclear weapons are thrown about like confetti blowing up airfields, dams, battleships, one-horse towns, and cities. One would have to ask if there’d actually be anything left to invade and occupy. However, in more recent times, just after the era of MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) which was

supposed to act as deterrence to nuclear warfare, a change of thinking occurred. Some people in government and the military started to propose using tactical battlefield nuclear weapons in the event of war erupting between the West / NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries. Suddenly it was believed that nuclear weapons could become a viable battlefield option in a winnable war. Now that would be MAD!

There are some very silly but very funny occurrences in the film which rather than deserve criticism, actually add to the film's entertainment value. For instance, when the "Enemy" sends its troops disguised as American soldiers to infiltrate Washington, DC, one of them who claims to be from a Chicago unit is challenged by an American guard, "Ever see the Cubs play?" He actually replies with, "Cubs? A cub is a young animal, a bear..." A "Yes" or "No" might have given him a 50/50 chance of avoiding a bullet!

What could be better than succinctly summing up the entire invasion with a metaphor that's as American as apple pie, such as when the rancher declares, "This is it, the final game of the World Series...and we're the home team!"

And then there is the exchange between Vince and Carla after the invasion is underway and atom bombs start raining down. Carla declares, "It's a nightmare, this can't be happening!" Vince replies with, "It was a cinch to happen. The last time I met a girl I really liked, they bombed Pearl Harbour." You gotta love it!

Although most of the characters are meant to represent various sections of the community and are largely forgettable, one character who does stand out is Mr. Ohman. His brief performance sets up that menacingly dangerous and eerie atmosphere that is to hang over the heads of the group at the bar and the nation as whole. It seems as if he can really hypnotize his listeners and that he has knowledge of the shape of things to come.

And so dear reader, maybe it is time for us to wake up from our individual and collective trances and realize that "tomorrow springs from today." We must think about what we can do now to avoid future disasters or calamities that may be visited upon our way of life and recognize that threats to our existence can be of our own making and come in many forms, both expected and unexpected. We just need to....."concentrate"



Invaders from Mars (1953)

*Adjust your point of view
and enjoy!*

1953: Taste Of The Times

- President Harry S. Truman announces the United States has developed a hydrogen bomb.
- The CIA-sponsored Robertson Panel meets to discuss the UFO phenomenon.
- The United States conducts its only nuclear artillery test.
- The Korean War ends with the signing of an armistice agreement. The north remains totalitarian and communist, while the south remains Western oriented and capitalist.
- The Soviet Union announces it has a hydrogen bomb.
- The CIA helps to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran, and retain Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi on the throne.
- The United Nations rejects acceptance of China as a member.
- The Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea is concluded in Washington D.C.
- US. President Dwight D. Eisenhower approves the top secret document of the United States National Security Council that states that the United States' arsenal of nuclear weapons must be maintained and expanded to counter the communist threat.
- U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower delivers his Atoms for Peace address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City.

A wonderful series of sci-fi films were produced in the year 1953, some of which have become classics. These films often continued to serve as metaphors for the American fear of Communist invasion and infiltration, with the recurring theme of the threat of take-over by seemingly benign beings possessing a hidden hostile agenda.

Director: William Cameron Menzies
Producer: Edward L. Alperson Jr.
Writer: John Tucker Battle, Richard Blake
Music: Raoul Kraushaar
Cinematography: John F. Seitz
Editor: Arthur Roberts
Distributor: Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.
Running time: 77 minutes
Budget: \$290,000 approx.

Cast

Jimmy Hunt (David Maclean)
Helena Carter (Dr. Pat Blake, MD)
Arthur Franz (Dr. Stuart Kelston)
Morris Ankrum (Col. Fielding)
Leif Erickson (George MacLean)
Hillary Brooke (Mary MacLean)
Max Wagner (Sgt. Rinaldi)
Milburn Stone (Capt. Roth)
Janine Perreau as Kathy Wilson
Barbara Billingsley (Secretary)
Bert Freed (Police Chief)
Robert Shayne (Professor Wilson)
Luce Potter (Martian Intelligence)
Clifford Dove (Martian Mutant)

Synopsis

(Spoilers Follow Below.....)

“Invaders from Mars” begins with strident, serious martial music and a backdrop consisting of planets and stars. A narrator asks us to ponder what kinds of life forms inhabit these planets and states that such matters have been the concern of “scientists of all ages.”

The story of “Invaders from Mars” is told from the point of view of a boy, young astronomy buff David MacLean who is awakened at 4.40am by a thunderstorm and is stunned to witness from his bedroom window a large flying saucer descend and disappear into a sand pit not far from his parents’ home.

Just prior to this incident, David’s parents are awakened by his alarm clock going off at 4.00am because David wishes to be up to view a particular nebula. Interestingly enough, David’s mother, Mary says to her husband, “you’ve been dreaming” when he decides to get up and check on his son. Is the viewer being set up for something here?

When David’s scientist father, George goes to check on his son, he tries to reassure him by stating, “you were dreaming” and “this is all your imagination.” This reinforces what George’s wife has just said to him and sets the viewer up with what the nature of the film’s story might be. At any rate, George gives his son the benefit of the doubt and proceeds to investigate David’s claim about seeing a saucer land. After all, we learn that George works at a “plant” that conducts activities which are “secret,” that there are “rumors” and that he “can’t talk about it.””

George goes to investigate David's claim the next morning and mysteriously disappears. While George is missing, David's mother calls the police. The two

policemen who arrive begin to investigate and are soon swallowed up by the sand in the backyard.

When George and the policemen return much later in the morning, he seems to have acquired a red puncture mark on the back of his neck and he is behaving in an oddly cold and uncharacteristically hostile manner. Note the close-up on George's face. We immediately know something is wrong just by his expression, coupled with his savage tone of voice and his abrupt and rude manner. When he strikes his son, it is like a bolt out of the blue and we almost feel it as much as David does.

Notice too, how the return of the two policemen immediately confirms what has happened to George merely by their stance and facial expressions. To highlight what has taken place, George says to wife just before they are about to leave the house, "Your son said he's going to Andy's." Not "David" or "our son!"

David quickly realizes that something is very wrong and eventually goes to the police station for help after he notices that other townsfolk are acting in the same way and after witnessing his young neighbor, Kathy Wilson walking in the sandpit near where the saucer landed and disappearing underground.

David is finally placed under the protection of the city health-department physician, Dr. Pat Blake who he comes to trust as she gradually believes his story. She gains David's trust by telling him, "Doctors are like ministers" and that people can tell them anything. However, as she goes to find out more information she has to lock David in the cell as she has to "obey the rules."

In addition to the help from Dr. Blake, David receives assistance from local astronomer, Dr. Stuart Kelston. It is conjectured that the flying saucer is probably the beginning of an imminent invasion from the planet Mars which is now in close orbital proximity to Earth. At the moment, "Mars is closest to us in its particular orbit." Kelston goes on to state that the Martians make use of "mu-tants" to sustain their way of life in space and that they are taking action now due to a perceived threat from rockets being shot into space from Earth. It turns out that David's father is working at a plant that produces the motor assembly for an atomic powered rocket.

The army is eventually called in to investigate and troops and tanks under the command of Colonel Fielding are sent in. The invading Martians' sabotage plot at an important nearby government rocket research plant is soon uncovered. The secondary "baddies" (the two police officers, General Mayberry and the police chief) who have had controlling devices implanted in their brains, are dispatched with lightning speed. The army organizes its forces and surrounds the saucer landing site.

Meanwhile, Dr. Blake and David wind up underground and are captured by two tall green humanoids and are taken to the Martian and its flying saucer.

Army troops eventually blow open an entrance to the tunnels, and Colonel Fielding's small detachment manage to reach the saucer entrance where they confront the Martian, a green humanoid face encased in a transparent sphere served by the tall,

green and mute "mu-tants." The face is apparently "mankind developed up to its ultimate intelligence" and the "mu-tants" are "slaves existing only to do his will."

Under the Martian's mental control, the "mu-tants" have implanted mind-control crystals at the base of the skulls of the kidnapped humans, thereby forcing them to participate in the plot to sabotage an atomic rocket project at a military plant near the town. If the human victims fail and are captured, the mind control devices are designed to implode, causing a fatal cerebral haemorrhage.....

Will the troops, Colonel Fielding, Dr Blake and young David be able to escape the clutches of the Martian invader and his "mu-tants?"

Will the Martian sabotage plan eventually succeed, paving the way for an ultimate invasion of Earth?

Will the army have the necessary clout to defeat the Martian menace of the mind-controlling alien Mastermind?

The Dream World Of David MacLean

Not long after the start of the film, "Invaders From Mars," you might balk at the idea of having a kid as the central character and wonder where the heck you are with one foot seemingly lodged in a more or less familiar on-screen world with the other foot being immersed in a more than usual bizarro-world of movie sci-fi consisting of illogical ("surreal" – sorry!) plots and characters. True, if you approach the film with a purely rational and adult mindset. But be careful where you do step because with this film you are not in control!

In "Invaders From Mars," David's dream is in fact a nightmare or alternate reality reflecting the various pressures being faced by a young boy. It is filled with threatening doppelgangers of significant people he knows in real life. It is a world where, as in a dream, logic takes a back seat and people and events become representations of something else. We get to see and experience things from David's point of view with only his world, his fears and his perceptions forming our frame of reference.

For a young person such as David growing up, the world can be an insecure and threatening place with remote authority figures who cannot always be trusted, but who seem instead to be bent on controlling and circumscribing their lives. How to approach such people and make them take notice of what you say, how you feel and what you think?? A difficult task indeed when the adults in your world are worried about possible annihilation from atom bombs and foreign conspiracies destroying their way of life! Such fears are all too easily projected onto young people and it is easy to overlook the effect this has on them.

David's dream world reflects a large part of his real world experience. He lives a largely protected and sheltered life and it is his youth and limited experiences which have

caused him to construct such a loopy scenario as expressed by the character, Dr. Stuart Kelston whereby the Martians have come to the Earth in Mother ships, that they live underground on Mars and have bred a race of synthetic humans called Mutants as their slaves! In David's world, events are reduced to shades of comic book black and white with no subtle shades of gray. Even the characters of his dream world are identified stereotypically by the colors they wear: His mother dressed in black and Pat dressed in white.

David lacks credibility and power by virtue of his age and nobody is going to take his predicament seriously. His parents have become distant and unfeeling monsters who have become part of an alien conspiracy to conquer the Earth. His parents appear like evil villains straight out of comic books or TV serials with their conspiratorial whispered asides. So, who will listen to him? He is just a kid.

However, this is David's dream and by virtue of this fact he does have some measure of power. After all, in his world adults can be made to look ridiculous such as Colonels and scientists finding themselves looking silly being perched up on a roof, a place that David would be forbidden to go by those very same adults! Take that!

There are adults in this dream world that David can call on for help. Take Dr. Pat Blake, from the city Health Department. (Where on earth did they find all these stunningly beautiful women for these 1950s sci-fi films?) David's subconscious has come up with someone who is tender like a mother who takes him seriously, accepts him and stands by him. She can even lie for him such as when she tells David's parents that he has "every symptom of polio" in order to keep him out of their clutches. (Just like David has probably told his parents a few white lies in order to avoid getting into trouble) For his part, David's young mind has transformed Pat, who he probably has a crush on, into a kind of screen heroine. It is extremely difficult for the viewer to take their eyes off Pat, particularly with the red adornment placed above her left breast which stands out starkly from the white background of her 'uniform.'

It is with no surprise that we discover Pat lying helplessly on a glass operating table, with one shoulder bared and with a pulsing penetrating device slowly moving toward the back of her neck ready to violate this older woman that young David is on some level attracted to and who he must rescue from the clutches of these alien "rivals." Not much different to the heroine tied to the railway tracks with the train looming closer! Kelston can hold and comfort Pat though since he has become an ideal representation of a future and older David. Go back to the shot of David and Kelston side-by-side at the telescope!

David's dream logic gives him the power to act and be the hero for the world and his heroine, such as his inexplicable ability to leap into action, take charge, identify and operate the Infrared tunneling Ray gun, despite the fact no one has seen or used one before! What an action hero!

In David's dream world, there are also other heroes he can draw on for support such as US. Troops: Men who represent and personify the American ideal of decency and exist only to protect and serve.

So, by what means are we being invited into this distorted dream-like representation of David's reality?

Clever Camera Angles

"Invaders from Mars" makes effective use of low and high camera angles to emphasize the dramatic and visual impact of key scenes. For instance, in the police station, the long entrance way combined with high and low camera angles emphasize David's smallness in the face of officialdom and authority.

Set Designs & Props

The Hill seems to be a stylized dream image, giving it the quality of an alternate world that one enters at one's own peril. It is a living sinister place where characters are led up a curved path that winds up the hill between leafless black tree trunks and a broad blackened plank fence. At the top of the hill the fence dips out of sight where characters are then fed into the sinking sand of the Pit and downward into the bowels of the hill. The hill set deceives us with an optical illusion despite its flat painted picture-like perspective design. Notice, however, that when a character walks up the path, they seem to diminish in size. The optical illusion makes it seem as if they are shrinking as they walk and reach the top of the hill.

The use of glass paintings helps to create similar illusions such as the view being given down the glass tube above the Martian operating table.

The police station set design consists of strangely elongated features and stark, unadorned walls, making it appear like a dreamlike surrealist painting. It is as strange and unreal as the lab that Kathy's father works in. Once again we have high ceilings and long entrance ways leading directly to an over sized focal point, in this case extremely tall test tubes. Both places are pretty much David's own personal constructs gleaned from movies and comics. So, it is no surprise that we find Kathy's father busy at work in the lab just after his daughter has died! All part of David's youthful lack of life experiences.

Lines and angles on the sets are frequently used to draw our notice to particular people and objects. Take the blackened plank fence on the hill. As foolhardy Sergeant Rinaldi advances up the hill toward the pit, the fence line serves to both frame his body and trace his direction of movement up the hill and down into the pit itself. Notice how in the spaceship, lines in the form of support pylons set at an angle lead our eyes directly to the soldiers placing explosives on the floor or Pat lying on the floor where she was initially placed.

Clocks: Time and its importance is emphasized in "Invaders from Mars" as it either seems to be running out or as in a dream it has elasticity as it not only advances implacably forward toward ultimate disaster, but also seems to almost stop and move backward. There are images of time-pieces that are focused on in the film, from the clock in David's bedroom to the lone clock on the police station wall.

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