



### **An American Werewolf in London**

*Directed by:* John Landis  
©: American Werewolf Inc  
*Production Company:* Lycanthrope Films Limited  
*Presented by:* PolyGram Pictures  
*Executive Producers:* Peter Guber, Jon Peters  
*Produced by:* George Folsey Jr  
*Production Manager:* Joyce Herlihy  
*Financial Administrator:* Sam Williams  
*Location Manager:* Ray Freeborn  
*Production Assistant:* Jennie Raglan  
*1st Assistant Director:* David Tringham  
*2nd Assistant Director:* Mike Murray  
*3rd Assistant Director:* Russell Lodge  
*Continuity:* Pamela Mann  
*Casting:* Debbie McWilliams  
*NY Casting:* Dee Dee Wehle  
*LA Casting:* Michael Chinich  
*Written by:* John Landis  
*Director of Photography:* Robert Paynter  
*Camera Operator:* David Garfath  
*Steadicam Operators:* Robin McDonald, Malcolm McIntosh  
*Focus:* Jeff Paynter  
*Clapper/Loader:* Michael Anderson  
*Gaffer:* Maurice Gillett  
*Grip:* Dennis Fraser  
*Stills:* Barry Peake  
*Special Effects:* Effects Associates Ltd.  
*Edited by:* Malcolm Campbell  
*Associate Editor:* Simon Battersby  
*Assistant Editors:* Steve Maguire, Clive Hartley, Anna Ksiezopolska  
*Art Director:* Leslie Dilley  
*Set Dresser:* Simon Wakefield  
*Prop Buyer:* Sidney Palmer  
*Property Master:* Dave Jordan  
*Construction Manager:* Len Furey  
*Costumes Designed by:* Deborah Nadoolman  
*Wardrobe Master:* Ian Hickinbotham  
*Men's Wardrobe:* Keith Morton  
*Women's Wardrobe:* Sue Wain  
*Make-up:* Robin Grantham, Beryl Lerman  
*Special Make-Up Effects Designed and Created by:* Rick Baker  
*Special Make-up Effects Crew:* Elaine Baker, Doug Beswick, Kevin Brennan, Tom Hester, Steve Johnson, Sean McEnrow, Joe Ross, Bill Sturgeon  
*Hairdresser:* Barry Richardson  
*Opticals & Titles:* Camera Effects  
*Original Music by:* Elmer Bernstein  
*Music Played by:* The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra  
*Conducted by:* Elmer Bernstein  
*Music Editor:* Michael Clifford  
*Sound Mixer:* Ivan Sharrock  
*Sound Assistant:* Don Banks  
*Boom Operator:* Ken Weston  
*Dubbing Mixer:* Gerry Humphreys  
*Sound Editors:* John Poyner, Don Sharpe  
*Foley:* Tony Lenny  
*Stunt Gaffer:* Alf Joint  
*Action Vehicle Co-ordinator:* Dave Bickers  
*For:* Jim O'Rourke  
*Cast:*  
David Naughton (*David Kessler*)  
Jenny Agutter (*Nurse Alex Price*)  
Griffin Dunne (*Jack Goodman*)  
John Woodvine (*Doctor J.S. Hirsch*)  
Brian Glover (*chess player*)

### **Moviedrome: Bringing the Cult TV Series to the Big Screen**

# **An American Werewolf in London**

'What is a cult film? A cult film is one which has a passionate following but does not appeal to everybody. Just because a movie is a cult movie does not automatically guarantee quality. Some cult films are very bad. Others are very, very good. Some make an awful lot of money at the box office. Others make no money at all. Some are considered quality films. Others are exploitation.' From 1988 to 2000 *Moviedrome* was presented by Alex Cox and then Mark Cousins. Across that time, more than 200 features were shown, and generations of movie fans and filmmakers would be informed and inspired by the selection, alongside the wit and wisdom of the introductions that preceded each screening. *Moviedrome* was a portal into the world of weird and wonderful cinema. This two-month season features some of the most notable titles screened and wherever possible they are preceded by the original televised introduction.

Nick Freand Jones, season curator and producer of *Moviedrome*

**Alex Cox:** *An American Werewolf in London* is part of a very honourable cult genre: the werewolf/vampire film. The rules of these films are standardised. Vampires are blood-drinking, living corpses whose mere bite can make you one of their number. Werewolves are people who turn into wolves, or wolf-like humanoids, at every full moon, and their bite turns other humans into werewolves. Vampires can only be killed by fire, removal of the head or a stake through the heart. Werewolves can only be killed by a silver bullet or the SAS.

*An American Werewolf in London* was directed by John Landis, an American whose most notable cult feature is *The Blues Brothers*. *An American Werewolf in London* was influenced by *Dead of Night*, the classic 1945 British horror film, and it contains every conceivable song in which the word 'moon' appears. It features a nice cameo by Mr Frank Oz – Muppets genius and director of the very funny *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* – as Mr Collins, the man from the US Embassy. You can also spot Rik Mayall playing chess in a pub called The Slaughtered Lamb, and Brian Glover, who is a very good actor.

It's a weird mixture of naive comedy and apocalyptic violence with an abrupt ending. If you sit through all the credits, you will see that the film is dedicated to 'Their Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales on the occasion of their marriage'. Only an American could be that patriotic.

Alex Cox's original introduction for *Moviedrome*. Also published in *Moviedrome: The Guide* (BBC, 1990). With thanks to [moviedromer.tumblr.com](http://moviedromer.tumblr.com)

A meeting or a lunch or a phone conversation with John Landis is an effective way of appreciating how self-confidence in Hollywood inevitably leads to success. Landis sports an old Beatle-style haircut and a thick beard and fires rapid, well-formed sentences at his interviewers, invariably before the question has been fully articulated. But Landis, who had to wait eleven years to make *An American Werewolf in London*, doesn't strike one as an impatient man; he's simply buoyed up with enthusiasm and it makes one wonder if a box-office catastrophe might prove too unsettling.

At 31, he's slightly younger than Lucas, Spielberg and the generation of 'movie brats' and is quick to point out that, unlike them, he didn't attend the UCLA Film School: 'I just attended movies and then became a gofer – go for this, go

Lila Kaye (*barmaid*)  
 David Schofield (*dart player*)  
 Paul Kember (*Sergeant McManus*)  
 Frank Oz (*Mr Collins, US Embassy official*)  
 Don McKillop (*Inspector Villiers*)  
 Joe Belcher (*truck driver*)  
 Rik Mayall (*2nd chess player*)  
 Sean Baker (*2nd dart player*)  
 Paddy Ryan (*1st werewolf*)  
 Anne-Marie Davies (*Nurse Susan Gallagher*)  
 Colin Fernandes (*Benjamin, little boy*)  
 Albert Moses (*hospital porter*)  
 Kermit the Frog (*himself*)  
 Miss Piggy (*herself*)  
 Michele Brisigotti (*Rachel Kessler*)  
 Mark Fisher (*Max Kessler*)  
 Gordon Sterne (*Mr Kessler*)  
 Paula Jacobs (*Mrs Kessler*)  
 Claudine Bowyer, Johanna Crayden (*creepy little girls*)  
 Nina Carter (*Naughty Nina*)  
 Geoffrey Burridge (*Harry Berman*)  
 Brenda Cavendish (*Judith Browns*)  
 Christopher Scoular (*Sean*)  
 Mary Tempest (*Sean's wife*)  
 Cynthia Powell (*Sister Hobbs*)  
 Sydney Bromley (*Alf*)  
 Frank Singineau (*Ted*)  
 Will Leighton (*Joseph*)  
 Michael Carter (*Gerald Bringsley*)  
 Elizabeth Bradley (*woman in zoo*)  
 Rufus Deakin (*little boy with balloons*)  
 Vic Armstrong (*bus driver*)  
 Lesley Ward (*little boy's mother*)  
 George Hilsdon (*newsvendor*)  
 Gerry Lewis (*man in bus queue*)  
 Dennis Fraser (*2nd man in bus queue*)  
 Alan Ford (*taxi driver*)  
 Peter Ellis (*bobby in Trafalgar Square*)  
 Denise Stephens (*girl in Trafalgar Square*)  
 Christine Hargreaves (*ticket lady*)  
 Linzi Drew  
 (*Brenda Bristols, 'See You Next Wednesday'*)  
 Lucienne Morgan  
 (*Lance Boyle, 'See You Next Wednesday'*)  
 Gypsy Dave Cooper  
 (*Chris Bailey, 'See You Next Wednesday'*)  
 Susan Spencer  
 (*Georgia Bailey, 'See You Next Wednesday'*)  
 Bob Babenia (*usher*)  
 Ken Sicklen, John Salthouse (*bobbies at cinema*)  
 John Altman, Keith Hodiak, John Owens,  
 Roger Rowland (*assorted police*)  
 USA-UK 1981©  
 97 mins  
 Digital 4K

Moviedrome transmission date: 22 July 1990

#### With thanks to

Bob Cummins and Sharon Maitland

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for that – at 20th Century-Fox. Then I was a stuntman and an uncredited writer.'

Landis, who in a very short time has become one of the most bankable directors in Hollywood, acknowledges that studios and producers haven't much idea of what audiences want to see. 'You go to them with your idea, which might be really unusual, and all they care about is your track record. If you made money for someone else you can do the same for them.' His first film, *Schlock*, which he describes as the cheapest and most self-indulgent movie ever made, turned a healthy profit though it remains unshown in Britain. His two campus comedies, *Kentucky Fried Movie* and *National Lampoon's Animal House*, were big successes in America. Of *The Blues Brothers* Landis says, 'I've grown tired of correcting journalists about the cost of the picture, but the fact is that it made a great deal of money and producers don't seem scared of hiring me.'

*An American Werewolf in London* has also proved a success with audiences in America and Europe. 'In the States we benefited from two advertising campaigns. I wanted something classy, not the usual monster movie campaign, so we had the two American backpackers on the poster looking rather anxiously behind them. The film did poor business in New York and Detroit but did well in white, middle-class areas. It seems the Black audience stayed away because there were two ordinary white guys on the posters. Then we changed the design to the monster with his fangs and the Black audience poured in.'

Landis is understandably aggrieved by the sudden presence on the screen of full moons and hairy monsters stalking the city streets. One suspects that the current lycanthropic revival has more to do with the advances in special effects technology which dispense with lap-dissolves and other optical effects than any sociological causes or mythical yearnings. Landis is at pains to stress that he wrote the script when he was working on *Kelly's Heroes* and has hardly changed a thing, 'except some of the dialogue people don't say "groovy" any more.' He was traumatised when he saw Ken Russell's *Altered States*, which has a virtually identical sequence in which the hero returns to physical normality in a zoo, but he eventually decided to stick to the original, 11-year-old idea. As for the werewolf revival, Landis says, 'It's kind of alarming. I wonder what it means ... '

Landis is full of praise for Rick Baker's special effects wizardry (and indeed the metamorphosis is a remarkable piece of engineering) and for the British crew who made the film. But he insists that making movies today is no different from what it was in the heyday of the studio system. 'Although individual people like Cedric Gibbons and Hans Dreier might have vanished from the huge studio art departments, the organisation and infrastructure has survived. In Hollywood, whatever you might need for a scene, from a 1961 lilac Studebaker to a trained animal, it's there the next morning ready for work. The city authorities are very co-operative for location work. In England the situation is different. We had to be extremely persistent to shoot in Piccadilly Circus, where you literally have to rely on the goodwill of the bobby on the beat, and even things like trained animals are difficult to get. You end up using one of the crew's pets and waste hours until it barks on cue. There is a myth, though, that you can achieve better special effects in Britain than you can in Hollywood. The truth is that you can get them cheaper in Britain, which is why *Star Wars* and *Superman* were based here.'

Adrian Turner, *Sight and Sound*, Winter 1981-82