

## PHANTOM BOOKSHELF

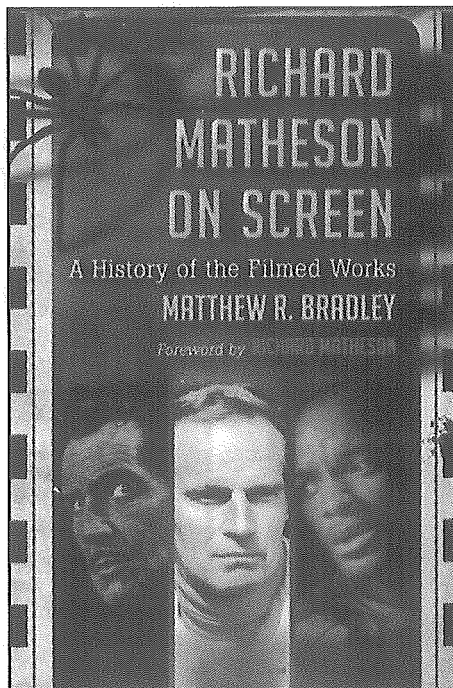
**RICHARD MATHESON ON SCREEN: A HISTORY OF THE FILMED WORKS**  
By Matthew R. Bradley. Foreword by Richard Matheson. Softcover. Photo Illustrated. McFarland & Co., Inc. 315 pages. \$45

Matheson maven Matthew R. Bradley, co-author/editor (with Paul Stuve and Stanley Wiater) of the worthy 2009 omnibus **The Twilight and Other Zones: The Dark Worlds of Richard Matheson** (Kensington/Citadel), lends his entertaining style and vast expertise to this addictive exploration of the prolific author's extensive cinematic oeuvre. Bradley generously devotes a chapter to each title, whether an adaptation of a Matheson novel (e.g., **The Incredible Shrinking Man**—just the plain old **The Shrinking Man** in print—and **The Omega Man**, based on **The Last Man on Earth**), an original RM screenplay (Steven Spielberg's **Duel**), a bizarre mutilation (producer Albert Zugsmith's infamous Mamie Van Doren vehicle **The Beat Generation**, based on a considerably different Matheson script) or an uncredited bastardization (poverty row remake maestro Larry Buchanan's **It's Alive!**, drawn from Matheson's **Being**). Amazingly, Matheson's screen credits span over 60 years in all, from the aforementioned **Shrinking Man** in 1957 to 2007's Will Smith showcase **I Am Legend**, with more likely on the way. Still active today, Matheson contributes the tome's foreword, bestowing his official blessing on the book. A deft assortment of vintage movie stills and poster reproductions illustrate the text, which blends Bradley's own critical insights with interview excerpts and archival comments from a wide range of other experts, including much valuable input from Matheson himself. Withal, **Richard Matheson on Screen** arrives as the definitive word on one of the genre screen's most influential, enduring and inventive scribes.

—*The Phantom*

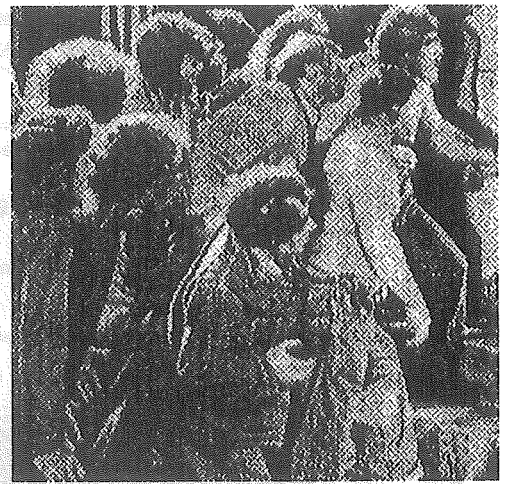
**UNDEAD** By John Russo. Softcover. Kensington Books. 305 pages. \$14.95

Riding the crest of the current zombie craze (**Pride and Prejudice and Zombies**, **Survival of the Dead**, AMC's **The Walking Dead**, et al), Kensington re-releases John Russo's novelizations of 1968's **Night of the Living Dead** and his original concept for **Return of the Living Dead**. Russo co-wrote the screenplay for **NOTLD** with director George A. Romero, but his novelization wasn't published until 1973, by Warner Books. While a fairly straightforward literary adaptation of the film, the dialogue isn't always



exact and certain scenes play out a bit longer. Russo has a simple style that verges on the florid at times, but the novel is true enough to the film to satisfy most fans. His **ROTLD** is a whole different matter. Russo and fellow Image Ten partners Rudy Ricci and Russ Streiner began working on the story for a sequel to **NOTLD** not long after the film's release. As the film remained in development hell for several years, Russo eventually turned the screenplay into a novel, published prior to the making of 1985's **Return of the Living Dead**. That film, of course, ended up as a very dark comedy under the direction of Dan O'Bannon, with a story very different from Russo's original concept—although he went on to write the novelization for the film, too. Set 10 years after the original zombie plague in the same region of rural Pennsylvania, this time things are made even more dangerous by roaming criminals looking to profit from the chaos all around them. One such band descends upon the farmhouse of Bert Miller and his three daughters, including the pregnant Karen. The living prove far more dangerous than the dead, as Russo weaves a tale full of bleak cynicism and depravity. Russo has upped the ante on both violence and nudity—like a lot of B movies of the period—and the novel reads very much like a film script. While it probably would've made a watchable horror flick, it revisits too much of the same ground as **NOTLD**. Romero's **Dawn of the Dead** took the concept in a new direction, while O'Bannon's "zomedy" not only gave it a fresh twist but played fast and loose with the established "rules" of zombification. While it would've been interesting to have all three Russo novelizations in one volume, it might have made the trade paperback a bit unwieldy. For hardcore zombie fans looking to expand their libraries, this still rates as a welcome addition. ☽

—Dan Cziraky



### END CREDITS Contributing Writers

- ☽ David Annandale's latest novel **The Valedictorians** is available via [davidannandale.com](http://davidannandale.com).
- ☽ Dan Cziraky is so tired of mash-ups, he's ready to decapitate a Victorian zombie heiress with Abraham Lincoln's lightsaber!
- ☽ Terry & Tiffany Dufoe operate the Rondo Award-winning Internet radio station [cultradioagogo.com](http://cultradioagogo.com). All scares, all the time.
- ☽ Ronald C. Epstein's book reviews are quoted in [Amazon.ca](http://Amazon.ca).
- ☽ Tim Ferrante used to be somebody. And he'll be damned if he can remember who.
- ☽ Scope out the Kindle versions of Robert Freese's **Bijou of the Dead**, **The Santa Thing** and **Paranormal Journeys**.
- ☽ Joe Kane believes in excess in moderation.
- ☽ Dwight Kemper is the mastermind behind **Murder For Hire** ([murdermysterytheater.com](http://murdermysterytheater.com)) and the author of **The Vampire's Tomb Mystery** (Helm Publishing).
- ☽ Nancy Naglin is back on the chain gang.
- ☽ David Alex Nahmod invites everyone to check out the new horror webzine he contributes to: **Mystic Skull Magazine**. [www.MysticSkull.net](http://www.MysticSkull.net).
- ☽ More of Joe Pettit Jr. writings can be found at [journalofweirdstudies.blogspot.com](http://journalofweirdstudies.blogspot.com).
- ☽ John Seal wishes Dana Andrews had lived long enough to portray Yasser Arafat.
- ☽ Roy Stevenson is a freelance writer based in Seattle. To see some of his stories, please go to [www.Roy-Stevenson.com](http://www.Roy-Stevenson.com).
- ☽ Don Vaughan's latest book, **500 Things To Do Before You Kick The Bucket**, is in bookstores now.
- ☽ Scott Voisin's book **Character Kings** is available at [CharacterKingsBook.com](http://CharacterKingsBook.com).
- ☽ Calum Waddell's latest book, **Jack Hill: The Exploitation and Blaxploitation Master, Film by Film**, is available at a bookstore or online site near you.

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