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FILM MONTHLY

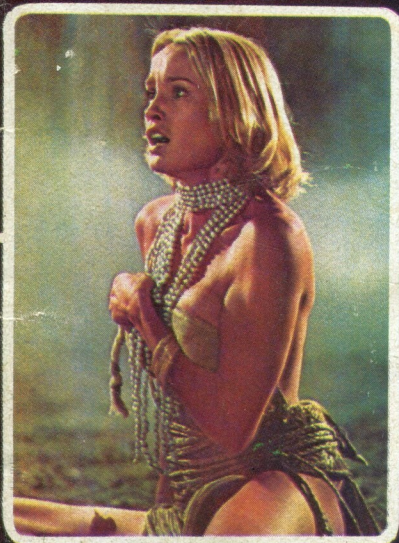
FEBRUARY 1977
40p

**THE LOVES OF
ELIZABETH TAYLOR**

**MOVIE FEATURES
ON:**

JOSEPH ANDREWS
THE DEEP
MARCH OR DIE

Joanne Woodward
THE IDENTITY
PROBLEMS OF BEING
MRS PAUL NEWMAN



**BEAUTY
AND
THE
BEAST**

KING KONG

**COLOUR
SOUVENIR
INSIDE!**

PLUS A SPECIAL FEATURE ON THE MAKING OF THE MOVIE

**Roy Pickard takes
you behind the
scenes of the new
£17 million version**

● LAST year it was the wide yawning jaws of a shark. This year it's the hairy paws and claws of the biggest monster the screen has ever known. Yes, the one and only King Kong is back.

Kong, 40ft high — and loud with it — is roaring his head off again but this time in wide-screen and Technicolor.

Can a film like the new *King Kong* be better than the original? For years it has looked like being one of those films that would be permanently safe from a remake. It will now be left to us to decide which version is best.

One thing's certain about the new one. It cost more — a mighty £17 million, a huge amount by anybody's standards, even those of producer Dino De Laurentiis whose past movies have included the massive *War And Peace* and the more recent blockbusters *Serpico* and *Death Wish*.

Anyone not familiar with the story of the monster ape who is found by a group of explorers (led this time by Charles Grodin and Jeff Bridges) on the mysterious Skull Island off the coast of Africa, must have been living like a hermit for the last forty or so years.

The new film follows the original reasonably faithfully. Once again the monster is intrigued, and then infatuated, by a beautiful white woman (played by Jessica Lange); once again he delights in carrying her around in his furry paw; once again he is captured and taken back to America to be exploited as a circus freak; and once again he escapes and runs

(Continued on page 31)

KING KONG



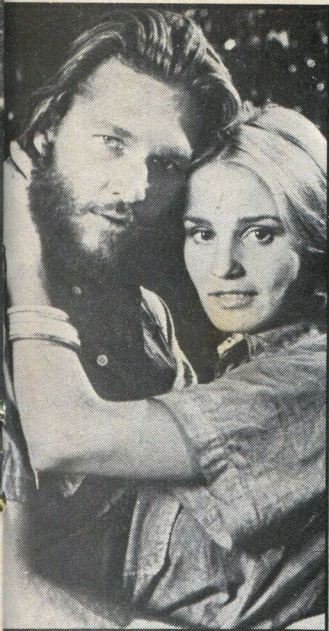
*Dwan (Jessica Lange)
is grasped in the hand
of the mighty King Kong*

*Jessica Lange awaits
her fate*



*Kong is captured and taken to
America where he breaks loose
from his chains and goes on
the rampage causing panic
among the crowds who have
come to see him*





Jeff Bridges, who plays Prescott, in a romantic clinch with Jessica Lange

KING KONG (Continued)

amok in the streets causing havoc and destruction.

Not surprisingly there are some updatings and changes. The initial reason for exploring the island in the first place is that there are rich oil deposits in the area. The huge reptile with which Kong does battle in the original is now a huge snake. The Empire State Building where Kong fought the American airforce has now been replaced by the World Trade Centre with Kong straddling its two mighty towers.

Says producer De Laurentiis: "It's really a picture about beauty and the beast. It is a straight, romantic adventure picture with some humour. It is a picture for everyone, the whole family. Well, perhaps not quite the whole family," he adds with a grin. "There is a relationship between beauty and the beast."

The new *King Kong* took eight months to film on locations which ranged from remote valleys in Hawaii to the streets of New York where 30,000 sightseers turned up to watch the shooting of the mighty Kong's death plunge.

In fact, the details of the making of the film bring back memories of the great days of Hollywood when the movie capital used to pour out statistics like bath water.

The building of the great wall

(to which Jessica Lange is tied as a sacrifice to Kong) was described as the biggest thing since Selznick burned Atlanta in *Gone With The Wind*. The wall is 47ft high and 500 yards wide. Two long, winding ramps wend their way to its top where there is a parapet, long enough to take 300 extras carrying torches and chanting 'Kong! Kong!'

The entire magnificent set was designed by Dale Hennesy. He was responsible for those imaginative designs of the inside of the human body in *Fantastic Voyage*.

What of mighty Kong himself? Built on a Hollywood backlot he was, at first, no more than a pile of aluminium and wires. When finished he stood 40 ft high and weighed 6½ tons. His skeleton was made of metal, mostly aluminium. His insides contained 3,100ft. of hydraulic hose and 4,500ft. of electrical circuiting. His chest was 20ft. wide, his arm span 20ft.

His fur was made up of 4,000lbs. of horse tails imported from Argentina. A hundred people worked for months weaving the strands of hair into four kinds of netting. When the hair was secured into hundreds of panels each panel was then glued on to huge pieces of latex which in turn were glued on a plastic mould that covered the metal frame.

When eventually completed

Kong was fully functional. His arms could move into 16 different positions and he could walk and turn at the waist.

Say Glen Robinson and Carlo Rambaldi, the American and Italian designers of the huge monster: "Our Kong is fully functional. He wiggles his arms, rolls his neck, twitches his ears, rolls his eyes, bends both legs, pulls his mouth back to show his gums, rotates on his hips, thrusts out his legs, and when he has to, smiles."

For some scenes Kong went to pieces and not always over the delectable Miss Lange. A hand was used for one scene, a leg for another, the massive head for several others. And some scenes were filmed which had actor Rick Baker performing on miniature sets in a gorilla suit.

My hunch is that audiences are going to go for the new Kong. There was a race between two studios to see who would make the new *King Kong*. It was a race De Laurentiis won.

Later this year there could be a race of another kind, a titanic struggle between the all-time box office champion *Jaws* and *Kong* as to which will be the highest grossing film of all time.

One squeeze of Kong's mighty palm and that fearsome shark's record might be snapped clean in two! □ END

TURN THE PAGE FOR A DOUBLE PAGE COLOUR SOUVENIR OF KING KONG →

Jeff Bridges
as Prescott

Charles Grodin
as Wilson

Ed Lauter
as Carnaban

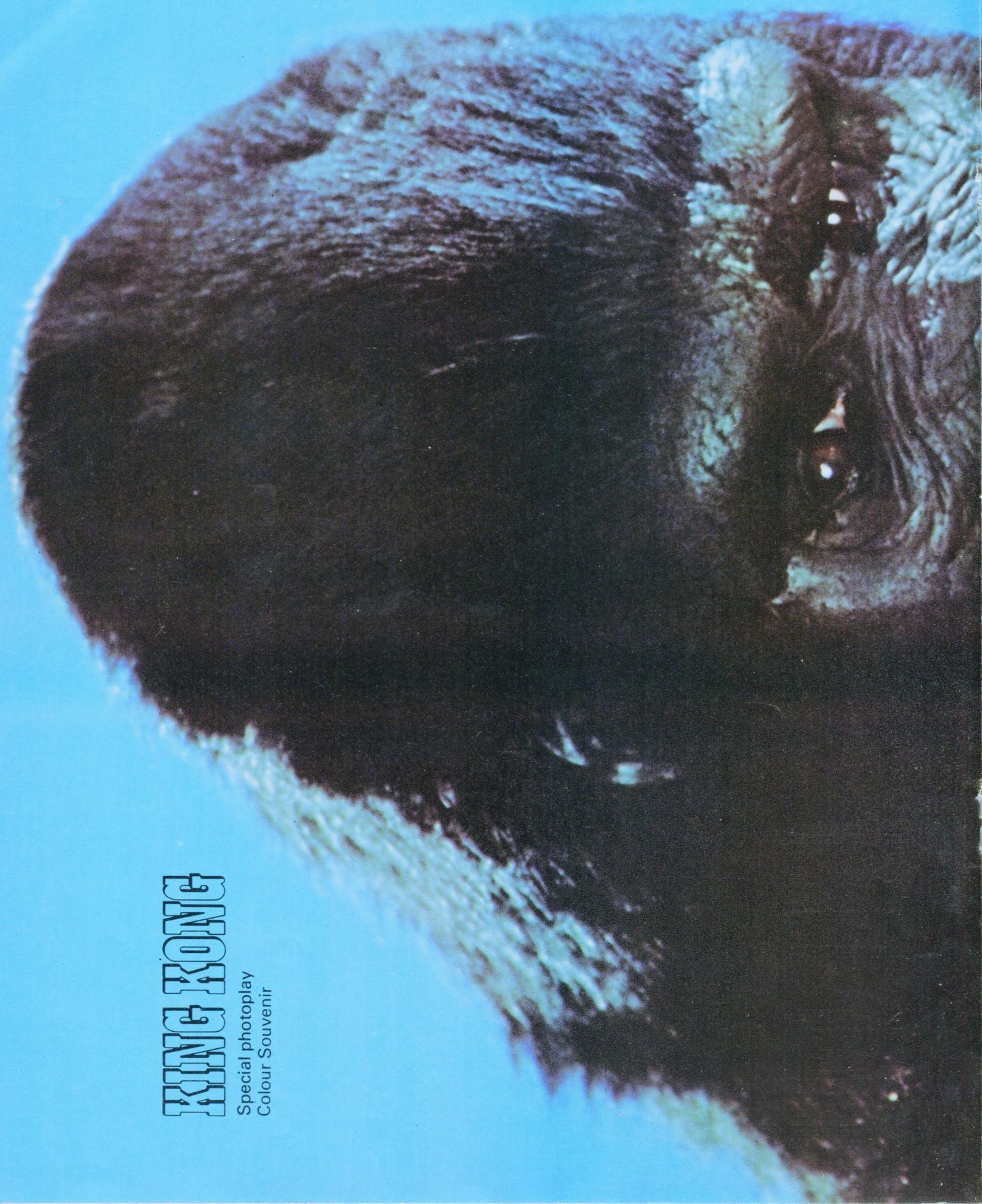
Jessica Lange
as Dwan

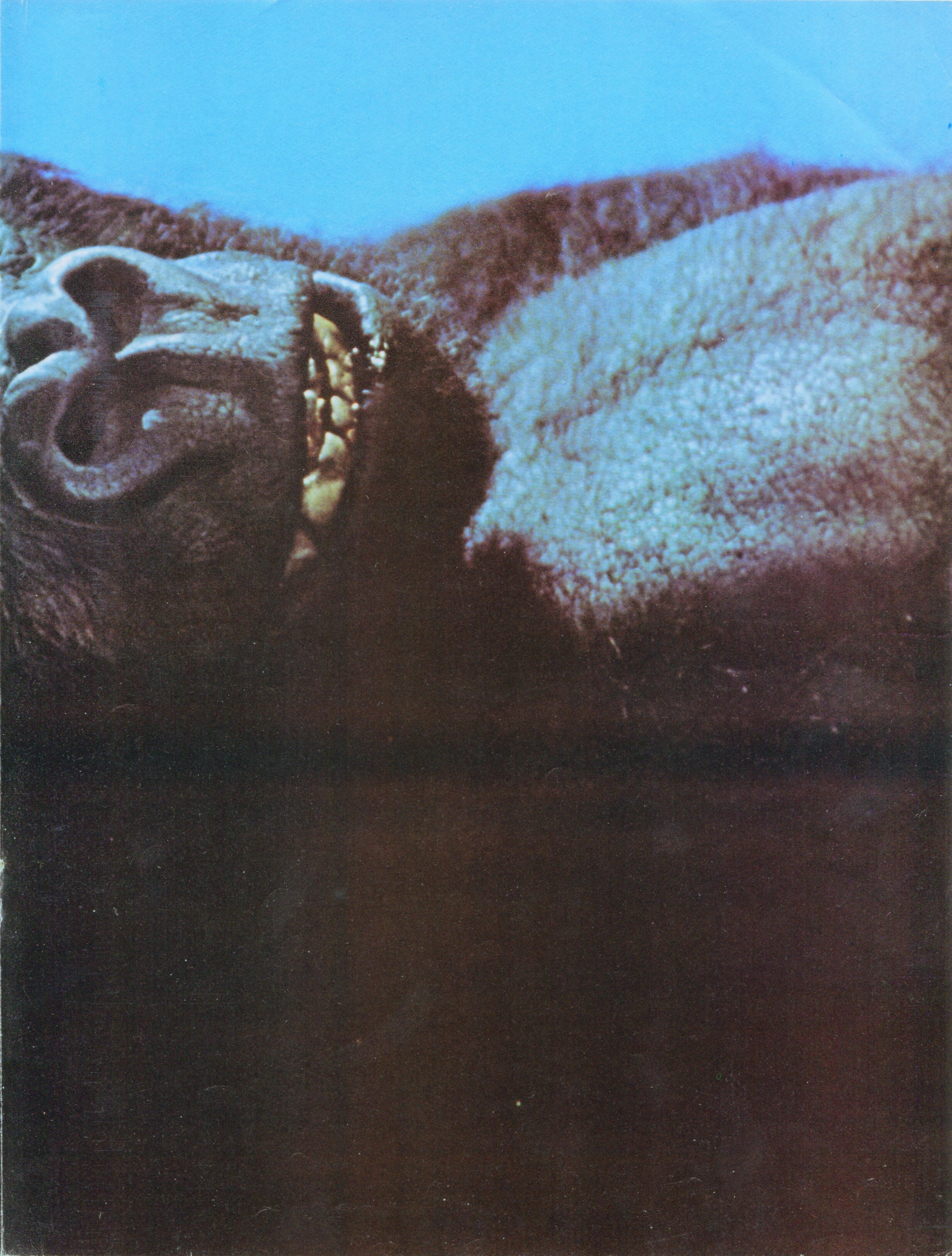
Rene Auberjono
as Bagley



KING KONG

Special photoplay
Colour Souvenir





KING KONG

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