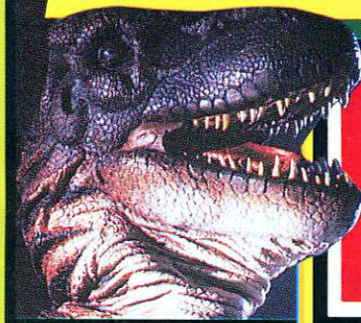


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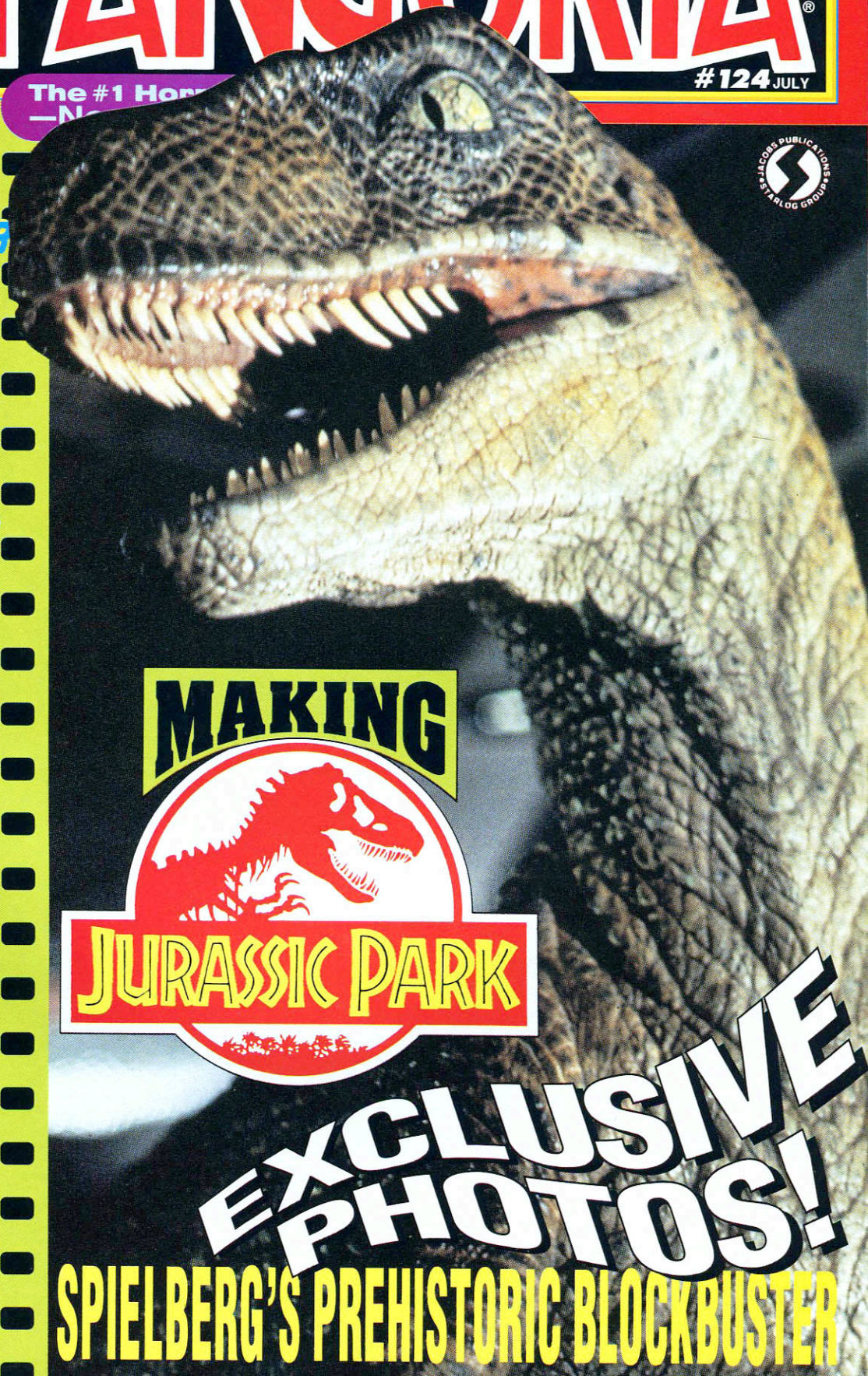
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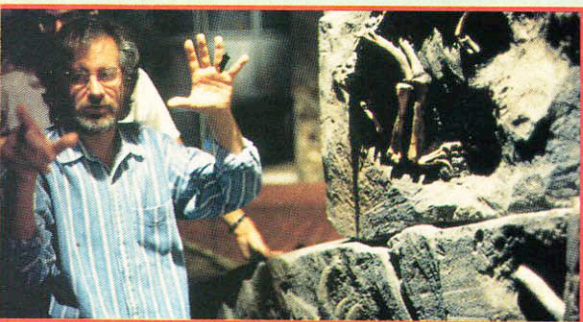
JURASSIC PARK

EXCLUSIVE PHOTOS!

SPIELBERG'S PREHISTORIC BLOCKBUSTER



A TERRIFYING TICKET



Steven Spielberg attempts to reanimate some old dinosaur bones—and his post-*Hook* career—with the megabudget *Jurassic Park*.

Can Steven Spielberg's new film do for dinosaurs what "Jaws" did for sharks? A host of top behind-the-scenes talent are betting it can.

By MARC SHAPIRO

When Steven Spielberg was growing up, the smart kids in his neighborhood always knew that he was the kid with the best toys. And years later, he still is. "Yeah, I'm still playing with toys," says the director, whose screen creations have included the shark in *Jaws* and the title extraterrestrial of *E.T.* Now, in *Jurassic Park*, he's playing with toys with names like *Tyrannosaurus rex*, *Brachiosaurus* and *Velociraptor*, some of the biggest playthings that ever walked the earth.

Based on the Michael Crichton novel, with a script by Crichton and David Koepp, *Jurassic Park* promises to be scary stuff despite the PG-13 rating that the filmmakers are pressing for. As in the book, the story concerns a billionaire industrialist who creates an island amusement park and populates it with a mammoth science project: living dinosaurs cloned from ancient DNA. Shortly after a group of scientists and business associates arrive for a pre-opening tour, the prehistoric behemoths break out—and that's when the chomping starts.

The book's dinosaurian mayhem (which has likely been toned down for the film) includes a *Dilophosaurus* spitting poison in a helpless victim's eyes, blinding him before the creature rips his chest open. In another intense scene, a vicious group of *Velociraptors* (this year's hip monster) stalk two small children, with lunch on their minds. And then there's the encounter between a landrover and a *Tyrannosaurus rex*...

Jurassic Park's cast includes Sam Neill, Laura Dern, Jeff Goldblum, Sir Richard Attenborough, Samuel Jackson, Joseph Mazzello and Ariana Richards. But its real stars are its dinosaurs, whose appearance has until recently been kept top secret from both the press and the public. Unlike the stop-motion beasts created by the likes of Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen, these dinosaurs have been brought to cinematic life through a seamless mixture of full-sized puppets and computer imaging.

In presenting his prehistoric



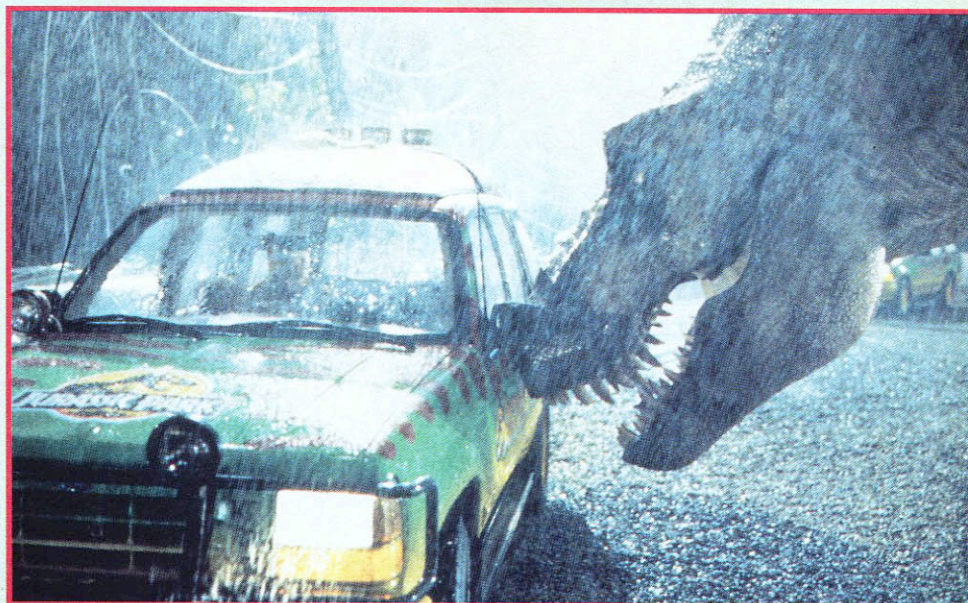
Jurassic Park's deadliest dinosaur holds its victims in *Velociraptor* attention.

TO JURASSIC PARK

menagerie, Spielberg brought paleontologist Dr. John R. Horner and dinosaur expert Don Lessem on board to monitor the scientific accuracy of the script. The bottom line, according to the director, was making the dozen dinosaurs that populate *Jurassic Park* very real. "I've insisted on calling the dinosaurs 'animals' and not 'creatures,' which is the way they've always been referred to in other science fiction movies," Spielberg told the press. "I wanted the dinosaurs in this film to act like prehistoric animals rather than monsters."

Crichton penned the *Jurassic Park* novel under a veil of secrecy, but according to Michael Bakis, an FX man who contributed to the film's computer-generated images, the plot took some strange turns on its way to publication. "At one point, *Jurassic Park's* storyline involved dinosaurs and child abuse," he reports, "and that did not make his publishers too happy. Finally, Michael decided on the more linear storyline. One thing that was always certain in his mind was that this was going to make a great movie."

So did many other people. In fact, in its prepublication galley stage, *Jurassic Park* was the subject of a rather unusual bidding war between a number of studios and such diverse filmmakers as Tim Burton,

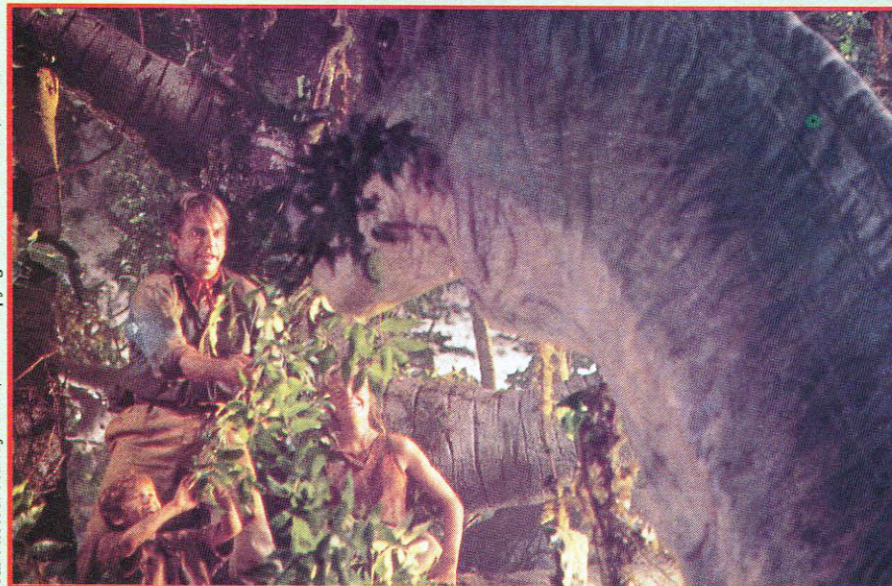


Dr. Grant (Sam Neill) sits tight while Tyrannosaurus wrecks.

Richard Donner and Joel Silver. What made the situation unique was the fact that the money wasn't as important to Crichton as the qualifications of the filmmaker and studio who would tackle the film. Universal and Spielberg ultimately won the battle, and purchased the movie rights to *Jurassic Park* in May 1990.

The director and his *Jurassic Park* team didn't waste a moment of what ultimately turned out to be

nearly two years of preproduction time. Production designer Rick Carter was brought in to create the titular attraction and its scientific facilities. Author Crichton began work on a first draft of the script that was ultimately whipped into shape by Koepp. A budget (\$56 million) and a shooting schedule (70 days) were ironed out, even as Spielberg was putting the finishing touches on *Hook*. "Then," recalls associate producer Lata Ryan, "it was time to start thinking about the creatures."



Dr. Grant and the kids are just happy this dino isn't interested in eating them.

"This is the first time in motion picture history that we are going to see full-sized, scary, killing dinosaurs."

—Stan Winston, creature FX designer

This was a pretty tall order, considering that the *Jurassic Park* envisioned by Spielberg was a quite literal translation of Crichton's book, complete with heavy dinosaur action. The numerous challenges in-



cluded a herd of apatosaurs crossing a road, a Tyrannosaurus rex actively stalking its human prey and the deadly Velociraptors rending and tearing their human snacks.

The filmmakers' initial approach was to create the dinosaurs through a combination of stop-motion and go-motion mixed with full-sized robotics and puppetry. For the former, they went to dimensional animation expert Phil Tippett, who got the process going by creating a "bible" of dinosaur character traits and some early stop-motion tests. These helped Spielberg and the rest of the design team, which also included Stan Winston and Industrial Light & Magic's Dennis Muren, visualize how the dinosaurs would look and perform.

"How did the dinosaurs work?" says Winston, who was in charge of the full-scale props. "We trained them. We brought a whip and a chair onto the set and forced them to do what we wanted," he laughs.

Clearly, Winston is not big on spoiling the magic he's creating for audiences by explaining the nuts and bolts of his full-sized models (the T. rex weighed in at 9,000 pounds and measured 40 feet in length) and puppets. When pressed, however, he does provide a few glimpses of how his team pulled off the *Jurassic Park* FX.

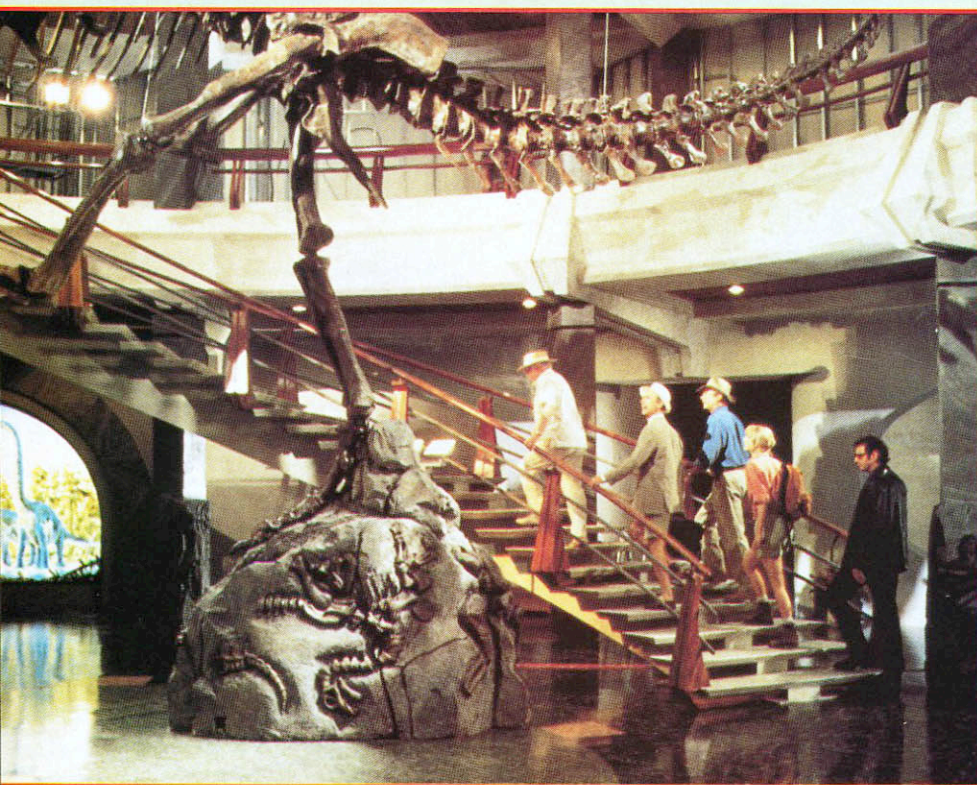
"We've developed a system of action-animation in which a smaller version of the full-sized model is held and maneuvered by puppeteers," he explains. "Each individual movement is then

directed onto the larger mockup. For the computer-generated shots, we supplied Industrial Light & Magic with our models and artwork, and they turned them into computer images."

But Winston, with no small measure of pride, points out, "What you are going to see on the screen is the real thing. Until now, it's all been stop-motion. This is the first time in motion picture history that we are going to see full-sized, scary, killing dinosaurs." Originally, the computer-generated visuals were going to be limited to the single scene in which the apatosaur herd crosses the road, but this changed while the film was in preproduction. "When ILM came up with some computerized images that were particularly



Perplexed Drs. Sattler (Laura Dern) and Grant wonder what's ailing the park's Triceratops.



Dr. Hammond's guests can't wait to see what the dinosaurs look like with flesh on their bones.

striking," Tippett explains, "Steven decided to take the film more in that direction."

According to Tippett, the ongoing goal of the seemingly endless series of meetings between the director and the FX people was to guarantee that the world of *Jurassic Park* seemed cohesive. "That was my main job: to insure that the animals behaved naturally, and that their surroundings were consistent with the way prehistoric environments would be."

Much of Tippett's research was carried out through trips to the zoo to examine modern reptiles, as well as rewatching several past dinosaur movies. "When the design team was getting together, we found that a lot of the animators had never done anything like this before, so we felt it would be a good idea to look at some of the better examples," he reports. "We reviewed quite a few films—*King Kong*, the dinosaur sequence from *Fantasia* and a lot of Harryhausen's work. The main reason for looking at these movies was to get some background, but it was also to become familiar with things we wanted to stay away from."

Beyond coming up with an origi-

nal look for his dinosaurs, Tippett and company were also challenged by a number of difficult scenes requested by Spielberg, as well as others lifted straight from the book. "At one point, Steven had this vision of a Tyrannosaurus rex running," he recalls. "So we brainstormed it for a while, and came up with the idea of building the sets up on scaffolds, and having the puppeteers down below rodding the legs.

"In the book," he continues, "there's a scene where the T. rex picks up a car in its mouth and throws it into a stream. We blocked out that scene, and realized that this thing would have to be as big as Godzilla to do that. So we had to come up with action that would work within that scene's context."

Of no small assistance for this end and other action moments was Michael Lantieri, in charge of mechanical FX. He knew that his job would not be easy the moment he read Crichton's book, and subsequent conversations with Spielberg confirmed it.

"He clearly wanted to take the idea of a dinosaur film to lengths it had not been taken to before, or he would not make the movie," says Lantieri. "He didn't want miniatures or puppets. He wanted interaction between computer-generated images and full-sized models. When I heard that, I knew that my job would be to help create sets that would be dinosaur-friendly, would allow us to get them in and out of the sets and yet make them believable in terms of the overall scale."

After numerous conversations with the director and his special FX team, Lantieri developed the machines and devices to help the denizens of *Jurassic Park* stride realistically across the screen. "We came up with a series of sets designed above floor level that would leave space underneath for puppeteers," he says. "We also set up a series of overhead winches and cranes that would be used for pulling the full-sized dinosaurs in and out of a scene, and for turning them around. There was also a series of movement devices that were designed to work from below the floor, and would allow us to help with the dinosaurs' big, broad movements.

"All of these devices were based on the idea that none of what we would do on this film would be simple," he continues. "When Steven said, 'OK, turn the T. rex around,' we knew it was going to be a big deal and that it would have to move very smoothly."

The FX technician reports that once filming began, it became evi-

(continued on page 71)



Something tells us this baby carnivore will grow up to act most ungrateful toward the man responsible for its birth.

"I wanted the dinosaurs in this film to act like prehistoric animals rather than monsters."

—Steven Spielberg



If we were the dinosaurs, we'd eat Laura Dern first.

PARK

(continued from page 45)

dent that the film's jungle sequences would be less problematic than the lab scenes, since the vegetation gave his crew ample places to hide their equipment. According to Lantieri, two sequences in particular posed difficulties to the *Jurassic* team.

"The scenes in which the Velociraptors are chasing the children in the kitchen were a real challenge, because anytime you look down an aisle, you see the floor," he says. "There were few places to hide things. What we came up with were countertops that had slots in them for rods. We also designed off-camera rods that would come up through the floor, and a harness system attached to the Raptors that would allow for movement. Below the floor, we designed a set of tracks with a dolly system which carried puppeteers and monitors, and would allow us to move back and forth underneath the set and make the animals move."

Another difficulty involved the aforementioned scene in the novel, in which the Tyrannosaurus snatches the landrover up in its jaws and effortlessly flings it aside. Lantieri echoes Tippet's remarks when he says that the action couldn't realistically be filmed as written in the book.

"Steven finally came up with a variation on a scene from the movie *Hatari!* where a rhino butts a jeep, and replaced the rhino with the T. rex. We designed a jeep that, using pneumatics and soft lead panels, would indent itself and knock itself up in the air while moving."

Lantieri goes on to describe another portion of the action, in which the vehicle's roof is sliced off by a tree limb prior to the tyrannosaur head butt. The landrover keeps going as the dinosaur runs through the branch, shattering it.

"The tree limb was pivotal to the scene; it had to be strong enough to shear off the jeep roof and then break itself open so the camera would back into the action and the T. rex could be added on a second pass of the camera," he reveals. "Of course, Steven wanted to do this scene in one continuous shot. It was a real timing thing. We had marks on the ground where the T. rex would walk and eight or nine effects guys all timed out on cues. Steven gave the signal, and we set it all running."

The key to his job, according to Lantieri, was "making very large things that weigh a lot move fluidly. And it was all done with horsepower

and hydraulics."

While all the FX problems were being ironed out, casting *Jurassic Park's* human performers was also nearing completion. The filmmakers were aiming for actors who, both physically and in their demeanor, reflected the characters in Crichton's book, as opposed to megastars commensurate with the big budget. According to Lessem, the results were impressive. "I realize that certain compromises had to be made in terms of getting box office-type names but, overall, I believe they did a good job," he says. "Richard Attenborough is John Hammond, and Sam Neill as a Michael Novacek type is perfect."

Principal photography on *Jurassic Park* began on August 24, 1992 and, much in the manner of *Hook*, became conspicuous by the cloak of secrecy that immediately surrounded it. In fact, the closed set/few visitors edict was so tight that the first many people heard of the film's production was the news that Hurricane Iniki had closed down the company's last day of location shooting on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. The production subsequently moved to soundstages on the Universal lot, where much of the FX magic was completed.

Throughout and after the production, Spielberg's team had nothing but praise for the director. "Working with Steven was definitely an enjoyable process," reports Winston. "He has an incredible mind and is a great person to work with." Tippet adds, "I didn't realize how together he is on every aspect of filmmaking. He has a real eye for things and a strong vision. He sees things nobody else sees."

Following the completion of principal photography, reportedly 12 days ahead of schedule, Spielberg left for Poland and the start of production on *Schindler's List*, leaving *Jurassic's* postproduction to George Lucas and ILM. At presstime, the film was on the final leg of a seven-day-a-week surge to the finish line and the June 11 release date.

The ultimate test of *Jurassic Park*, of course, is whether audiences, especially dinosaur lovers, will go for it. Regarding questions of authenticity, Spielberg claims to have ultimately taken few liberties with Crichton's book, and even fewer liberties with scientific fact. And because of that, the director feels that his movie is more than a mere flight of fancy. "I don't see *Jurassic Park* as being science fiction," he announced to the media in all seriousness. "I see it more as science eventuality."

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