

Cultivate Cinema Circle presents:

THEM! [1954]

Directed by Gordon Douglas

OCTOBER 9TH, 2021 - 1:00PM



Original Theatrical Poster

SHORT CUTS

”Dr. Edmund Gwenn’s final, slightly doleful but strictly scientific observation in *Them!* indicates that when man entered the atomic age he opened new worlds and that ‘nobody can predict’ what he will find in them. The Warner Brothers, fearlessly flouting this augury, have come up with one ominous view of a terrifyingly new world in the thriller that was exposed at the Paramount yesterday, and it is definitely a chiller. The awesome fact is that the Warner Brothers have planted ants on our planet—giant nine to twelve-footers, with mandibles like the tusks on a mammoth, and keening like all the banshees in a fevered imagination. There’s no point in making for the hills, though. It’s fascinating to watch. Since it is difficult to assign specific credit, suffice it to say that the combination of three writers, director Gordon Douglas, producer David Weisbart and a cooperative cast have helped make the proceedings tense, absorbing and, surprisingly enough, somewhat convinc-

ing. Perhaps it is the film’s unadorned and seemingly factual approach which is its top attribute.”

- A.H. Weiler, *The New York Times* (1954)

“By far the best of the ‘50s cycle of ‘creature features’, *Them!* and its story of a nest of giant radioactive ants (the result of an atomic test in the New Mexico desert) retains a good part of its power today. All the prime ingredients of the total mobilisation movie are here: massed darkened troops move through the eerie storm drains of Los Angeles, biblical prophecy is intermixed with gloomy speculation about the effect of radioactivity. Almost semi-documentary in approach, the formula is handled with more subtlety than usual, and the special effects are frequently superb.”

- David Pirie, *Time Out Film Guide*

“...women are scary. And sexy, too, just like the bomb itself. In *Paranoia*, the Bomb, and 1950s Science Fiction Films, Cynthia Hendershot has written persuasively about

the eroticization of nuclear power. ‘In post-war bomb fantasies,’ she argues, ‘sexuality becomes a means of containing the fear of the limits of meaning.’...In *Them!*, the monstrous fertility of the queen ants threatens to topple a social order dominated by men. (Joan Weldon’s gutsy scientist may be a babe, but she spends the entire movie chastely in her father’s shadow.) Hendershot proposes

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that, in a paranoid worldview, the forces for purification and progress are constantly at war with those of contamination and degeneracy. Since at least Victorian times, matriarchal societies implied a backward step in evolution. So gendered 1950s sci-fi monsters take fears of Darwinist decline, run them through a nuclear power generator, and serve them up to a viewing public already worried about—and fiercely protective of—its civilization. The effect becomes one of diffuse suspicion. Who exactly are the enemies poised to dismantle the American dream? Women? Soviets? Heedless scientists? Somehow all three converge in images of irradiated, unknowable creatures eager to reproduce throughout the United States.”

- Katy Waldman, *Slate* (2013)

CAST & CREW

Director..... Gordon Douglas
 Writer ... Ted Sherdeman and Russell S. Hughes
 Story..... George Worthing Yates

Sgt. Ben Peterson James Whitmore
 Dr. Harold Medford..... Edmund Gwenn
 Dr. Patricia Medford..... Joan Weldon
 Robert Graham..... James Arness
 Brig. Gen. Robert O'Brien..... Onslow Stevens

Maj. Kibbee Sean McClory
 Trooper Ed Blackburn Christian Drake
 The Ellinson Girl Sandy Descher
 Mrs. Lodge Mary Alan Hokanson
 Trooper Capt. Fred Edwards Don Shelton
 Alan Crotty..... Fess Parker
 Olin Howland..... Jensen

DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTED)

- Viva Knievel! (1977)
- Slaughter’s Big Rip-Off (1973)
- Barquero (1970)
- They Call Me MISTER Tibbs (1970)
- The Detective (1968)
- Lady in Cement (1968)
- In Like Flint (1967)
- Tony Rome (1967)
- Stagecoach (1966)
- Rio Conchos (1964)
- Robin and the 7 Hoods (1964)
- Call Me Bwana (1963)
- Follow That Dream (1962)
- Up Periscope (1959)
- Fort Dobbs (1958)
- Them! (1954)
- Young at Heart (1954)
- The Iron Mistress (1952)
- Mara Maru (1952)

- Only the Valiant (1951)
- Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye (1950)
- Fortunes of Captain Blood (1950)
- Walk a Crooked Mile (1948)
- The Black Arrow (1948)
- Zombies on Broadway (1945)
- Gildersleeve’s Bad Day (1943)
- Saps at Sea (1940)
- Zenobia (1939)



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UPCOMING SCHEDULE:

INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS [1956]
 Sat, October 23rd, 2021 | 1:00pm

MOROCCO [1930]
 Sat, November 6th, 2021 | 1:00pm

DISHONORED [1931]
 Sat, November 20th, 2021 | 1:00pm

SHANGHAI EXPRESS [1932]
 Sat, December 4th, 2021 | 1:00pm

THE SCARLETT EMPRESS [1934]
 Sat, December 18th, 2021 | 1:00pm