



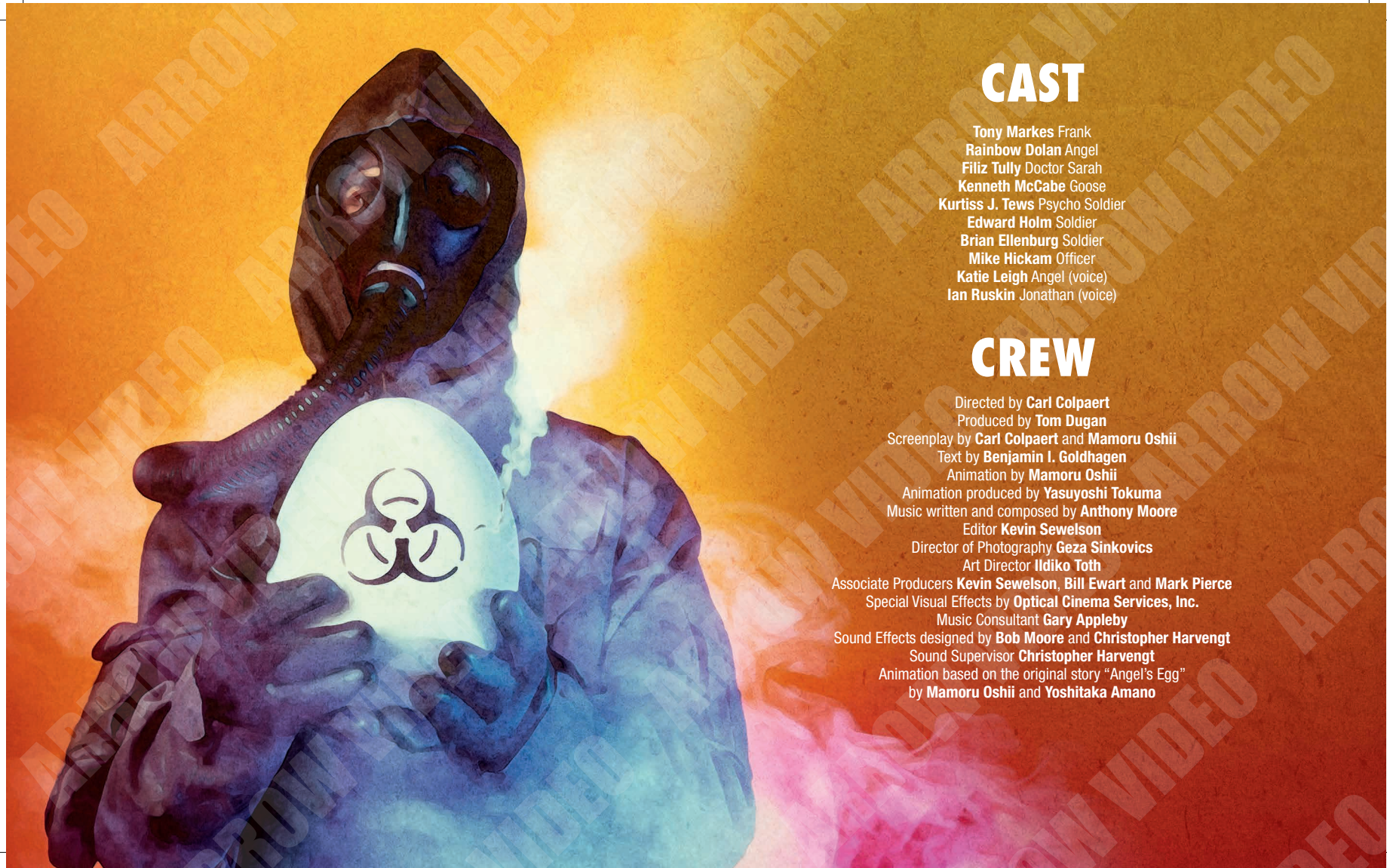


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CAST

Tony Markes Frank
Rainbow Dolan Angel
Filiz Tully Doctor Sarah
Kenneth McCabe Goose
Kurtiss J. Tews Psycho Soldier
Edward Holm Soldier
Brian Ellenburg Soldier
Mike Hickam Officer
Katie Leigh Angel (voice)
Ian Ruskin Jonathan (voice)

CREW

Directed by **Carl Colpaert**
Produced by **Tom Dugan**
Screenplay by **Carl Colpaert** and **Mamoru Oshii**
Text by **Benjamin I. Goldhagen**
Animation by **Mamoru Oshii**
Animation produced by **Yasuyoshi Tokuma**
Music written and composed by **Anthony Moore**
Editor **Kevin Sewelson**
Director of Photography **Geza Sinkovics**
Art Director **Ildiko Toth**
Associate Producers **Kevin Sewelson**, **Bill Ewart** and **Mark Pierce**
Special Visual Effects by **Optical Cinema Services, Inc.**
Music Consultant **Gary Appleby**
Sound Effects designed by **Bob Moore** and **Christopher Harvengt**
Sound Supervisor **Christopher Harvengt**
Animation based on the original story "Angel's Egg"
by **Mamoru Oshii** and **Yoshitaka Amano**

"ALONE ON A PLANET, WITH NO FISH"

by Jon Towlson

Released straight-to-video in the UK in December 1988, and barely seen elsewhere except for a limited theatrical release in Australia that same year, *In the Aftermath: Angels Never Sleep* remains an intriguing post-apocalyptic New World/anime mash-up. Comprising 30 or so minutes of material from Mamoru Oshii's early animation masterpiece *Angel's Egg* (*Tenshi No Tamago*, 1985), these are remixed with additional live action footage shot by Carl Colpaert, in his directorial debut. The result is in some ways what you might expect from the kind of magpie movie that the studio founded by Roger Corman became known for. Hollywood has, after all, been importing foreign language genre movies and re-editing, redubbing and re-shooting them since *Gojira* (1954)/*Godzilla*, *King Of The Monsters!* (1956), and the mix of animation and live action is older than Disney (and, in fact, dates back to Max Fleischer's work in the 1920s). What marks *In the Aftermath* as slightly different, though, is its 1980s context. Like *Gojira*/*Godzilla* and Corman's own early Russian sci-fi remixes, Oshii and Colpaert's film arises from nuclear anxieties, but in this case ones that come at the very end of the Cold War rather than at the beginning of it.

In the Aftermath has its foundations, then, in New World Pictures' practice of using footage from foreign genre films in creating their own low-budget product. This is something that Roger Corman had been doing since before New World, in his days as an independent producer making movies for distribution by American International Pictures. Most famously, Corman bought the rights to the 1959 Russian sci-fi epic *Nebo Zovyot* ('The Sky Calls'), removed the anti-West propaganda, hired Jack Hill and a young Francis Ford Coppola to shoot additional scenes, and re-titled the resulting mishmash *Battle Beyond the Sun*



(1962) for release in American drive-ins. What the canny Corman realized was that the high budget special effects scenes of this and other state-funded Soviet-Russian space movies could be utilized if he dubbed and/or shot additional English language dialogue scenes (on cheaply made sets) that would make the film suitable for American audiences and improve its sales potential in the West. It was a way to get an expensive-looking movie with high production value on a tiny budget, and the ploy proved profitable for Corman and New World – so much so that even after Corman sold New World Pictures in 1983 (moving on to form New Horizons), the company carried on the ethos of buying overseas genre titles and releasing them in Americanized versions.

In 1985, New World had already purchased the rights to Hayao Miyazaki's post-apocalyptic anime *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984), which they released in the States as *Warriors of the Wind*. That same year, New World picked Toho's belated kaiju *The Return of Godzilla* (1984), re-edited it, and released it as *Godzilla 1985*. Largely thanks to the impact on the public consciousness of *The Day After* (1983), atomic war and post-apocalypse movies were trending again (Corman had himself rode the first wave of these types of movies in the mid-to-late 1950s with titles like *The Day the World Ended* [1955] and *The Last Woman on Earth* [1960]). New World went back to the studio Tokuma Shoten in 1988 to license a direct-to-video anime called *Angel's Egg*, sensing that with a little 'Americanizing' it could be sold as a late-edition post-apocalypse mash-up movie.

Angel's Egg, in fact, follows a long tradition of apocalyptic fantasy that dates back to the early work of Tezuka Osamu and finds its roots in the traumatic events of World War II: in the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the fire-bombing of numerous Japanese towns and cities. Tezuka, who had personally experienced the incendiary bombings of Osaka which resulted in the deaths of 10,000 civilians, would go on, in 1951, to create the seminal robot manga *Astro Boy* through which he was to express his ideas on war and peace, destructive technology and the distrust (shared by many Japanese after WWII) of politicians and military leaders. Tezuka's successor, Miyazaki, later explored themes of war

and environmental disaster in the aforementioned *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, setting his anime in a post-nuclear holocaust world in which the titular heroine must find a way to bring peace between kingdoms and save the planet from ecological catastrophe. The conclusion of Katsuhiro Otomo's dystopian sci-fi *Akira* (1988) similarly saw Tokyo destroyed by a gravitational singularity which resembles a giant white cloud enveloping the city, while *Barefoot Gen* (1983), based on the autobiographical manga of Hiroshima survivor Keiji Nakazawa, depicts in graphic detail the real-life atomic bombing of Hiroshima and its aftermath in which the author's family perished.

While later anime served to remind a new generation of Japanese about the horrors of nuclear destruction, the intensification of hostilities of the Cold War during the Reagan era saw apocalyptic animation also produced in the West. In 1986, Jimmy T. Murakami (another Corman alumnus) directed the animated film *When the Wind Blows*, a big screen adaptation of Raymond Briggs' graphic novel depicting the effects of a Soviet ICBM attack on rural England. (Incidentally, the British Film Institute had funded Cold War animation as early as 1956, with Joan and Peter Foldes' controversial and still shocking experimental film, *A Short Vision*). The collage-film *Atomic Café*, a documentary satire of the nuclear age assembled from newsreels and other assorted archive material, had also been released in 1982, to great critical acclaim. The idea, then, of a mixed-media post-apocalyptic mash-up – as *In the Aftermath* would become – did not seem as unusual in the 1980s as it perhaps does today.

Made at a time when cash-strapped Japanese studios were generally turning to popular franchises like the *Tora-san* series rather than funding the work of new artists, *Angel's Egg* came into existence primarily thanks to the boom in direct-to-video films (OVAs) produced for young Japanese audiences brought up on manga. Oshii himself rose up through the ranks of storyboard artist (for Tatsunoko Pro and later Studio Pierrot) to director on the animated TV series *Urusei Yatsura*, an adaptation of Rumiko Takahashi's manga comedy of the same name. Two *Urusei Yatsura* films followed (*Only You* [1983]; *Beautiful Dreamer*



[1984]), and what is generally considered to be the first-ever released OVA – *Dallos* (1983), establishing Oshii as a leading light of anime and giving him the commercial clout to embark upon *Angel's Egg*.

Co-written with Yoshitaka Amano (who also did the character designs), *Angel's Egg* has been called Oshii's most personal film. The minimalist story involves an unnamed young girl who wanders a post-apocalyptic city guarding a large egg which she keeps hidden beneath her dress. There she meets a boy and the pair travel together through a petrified forest to an ancient fossilized cave – her settlement. While the girl sleeps, the boy smashes the egg and leaves. Next morning, the girl is bereft, and, wandering through the woods, falls into a deep ravine where she sees herself transformed into a grown woman before drowning. From her last breath, bubbles in the water become a multitude of eggs which wash up on the shore. The boy witnesses a giant orb rising from the water upon which the girl – apparently reborn – is seated on a throne, caressing a new egg which she holds in her lap.

Containing less than four minutes of dialogue, *Angel's Egg* has genuine cinematic sweep; it is epic, hallucinatory and visionary. Oshii relies on the enigmatic and evocative power of image and sound rather than narrative to create meaning. A brief comparison of a scene that appears in both versions, where the girl (named Angel by Colpaert) first meets the boy in an urban area of giant broken architecture, illustrates the essential difference between the two films. Colpaert uses it as a moment of dialogue exposition in which the boy (named Jonathan in *In the Aftermath*) explains his relationship to Angel and outlines her mission in the story. Oshii, by contrast, offers no dialogue whatsoever. Instead, the two characters simply gaze at each other warily, while Oshii cuts between close-ups of their faces. It's like a typical Sergio Leone scene between gunslingers silently sizing each other up to see who will make the first move. In this respect, dialogue gives way to visuals throughout *Angel's Egg*. Similarly, Oshii uses music sparingly, instead emphasizing the natural sounds of the world around the characters. The sound of dripping water in the forest, for example, is contrasted

with the noise of heavy machinery in the city. *Angel's Egg* is an intensely spiritual film, austere done, and imbued with religious symbolism. It is no surprise that Oshii was, in the early part of his career, deeply influenced by the work of the Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky, whose films had, in the 1980s, become widely distributed in countries outside the Soviet Union for the first time. Oshii has professed a particular love of *Solaris* (Solyaris, 1972), *Mirror* (Zerkalo, 1975) and *Stalker* (1979), and imagery from each can be found reflected in Oshii's vision of *Angel's Egg*. But in scenes of the girl wandering alone through the petrified forest like a war refugee, we might also detect traces of Tarkovsky's debut, *Ivan's Childhood* (1962).

Angel's Egg was initially released in Japan on VHS and LaserDisc by Animage Video, and later had releases on Japanese DVD and Blu-ray (most recently by Pony Canyon in 2013), but outside of a TV airing in Australia, has never been shown in its full original version in the West. This in itself makes *In the Aftermath* an intriguing hybrid.

Born in Belgium in 1963, Carl Colpaert started his career in the editorial department at New World, working on such titles as Roland Emmerich's psi-power fantasy *Making Contact* (a.k.a *Joey*, 1985) and Donald G. Jackson's futuristic nun-skating ninja epic *Roller Blade* (1986). Corman has always favored directors with a background in post-production, who knew how to make the most of very little. For *In the Aftermath*, Colpaert re-assembled Oshii's original material, dubbed in new dialogue and a narration for Angel (which gives her a more clearly defined quest) and sketched in a story set in a post-apocalypse world where the air is poisoned by radiation. With a meagre budget stretching to a cast of only six (and a few prop gas-masks!), Colpaert makes a major virtue of his main location, the impressive Kaiser Steel plant in Fontana, California (which sci-fi fans will recognise from *The Running Man* [1987] and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* [1991]), here standing in as the post-doomsday Earth.



Tony Markes (who would go on to a chequered career in the 1990s as a producer and director) plays a soldier called Frank, one of only a handful of survivors who searches the toxic wastelands for essential supplies. Unbeknown to him, he is being watched over from the heavens above by Angel and her brother Jonathan. In Colpaert's version, the egg that Angel carries so protectively serves a specific purpose. It is imbued with a mysterious power that can only be released by a deserving recipient. Angel's mission is to find that person and Frank, of course, seems to be the most likely candidate. Until that happens, they are, in Jonathan's words, "alone on a planet, with no fish".

Colpaert's intercutting of Angel's anime dream world with Frank's post-apocalyptic real world at times conjures up associations with films that use mixed media to contrast Earth with the afterlife, presenting them as alternate realities or parallel universes (à la portraying heaven in black-and-white and Earth in color in *A Matter of Life and Death* [1946]). Colpaert achieves some striking transitions between Oshii's material and his own live action footage, such as a graphic match cut between the animated feather that floats to the ground in Angel's world and the real-life feather that Frank retrieves in his own barren landscape.

Therein, *In the Aftermath* manages to retain much of the lyricism of *Angel's Egg*. In a striking musical interlude (in which we hear the haunting echoes of Horacio Moscovici's "Carnavalito Tango"), Colpaert renders his own footage into a negative image so as to merge it almost seamlessly with Oshii's original. It's a momentary coming together of animation and live action – of Japanese anime and New World B-movie – that makes this cult curiosity all the more intriguing.

Jon Towlson is a film critic and author whose books include Candyman (2018), The Turn to Gruesomeness in American Horror Films, 1931-1936 (2016) and Subversive Horror Cinema (2014).





ABOUT THE RESTORATION

In The Aftermath was exclusively restored by Arrow Films and is presented in its original aspect ratio of 1.85:1 with 2.0 stereo sound.

An original 35mm low-con print was scanned in 2K resolution on a Lasergraphics Director at EFILM, Burbank. The film was graded and restored at Dragon DI, Wales. Picture grading was completed on a Pablo Rio system and restoration was completed using PFClean and Revival software. The original audio mix was remastered by Lakeshore Entertainment.

Restoration supervised by James White, Arrow Films

EFILM

David Morales

Dragon DI

Mylene Bradford, Khristian Hawkes, Owain Morgan, Paul Wright

Lakeshore Entertainment

Mike Lechner

All original materials supplied for this restoration were supplied by Lakeshore Entertainment.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Disc and Booklet Produced by **James Flower, Michael Mackenzie**

Executive Producers **Kevin Lambert, Francesco Simeoni**

Technical Producer **James White**

QC **Nora Mehenni, Alan Simmons**

Production Assistant **Nick Mastrini**

Blu-ray Mastering and Subtitling **The Engine House Media Services**

Artist **Corey Brickley**

Design **Obviously Creative**

SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Jason Buckley, Carl Colpaert, Elijah Drenner, Tom Dugan, Roland Feliciano, Tony Markes, Andrew Osmond, Jon Robertson, Jon Towlson



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