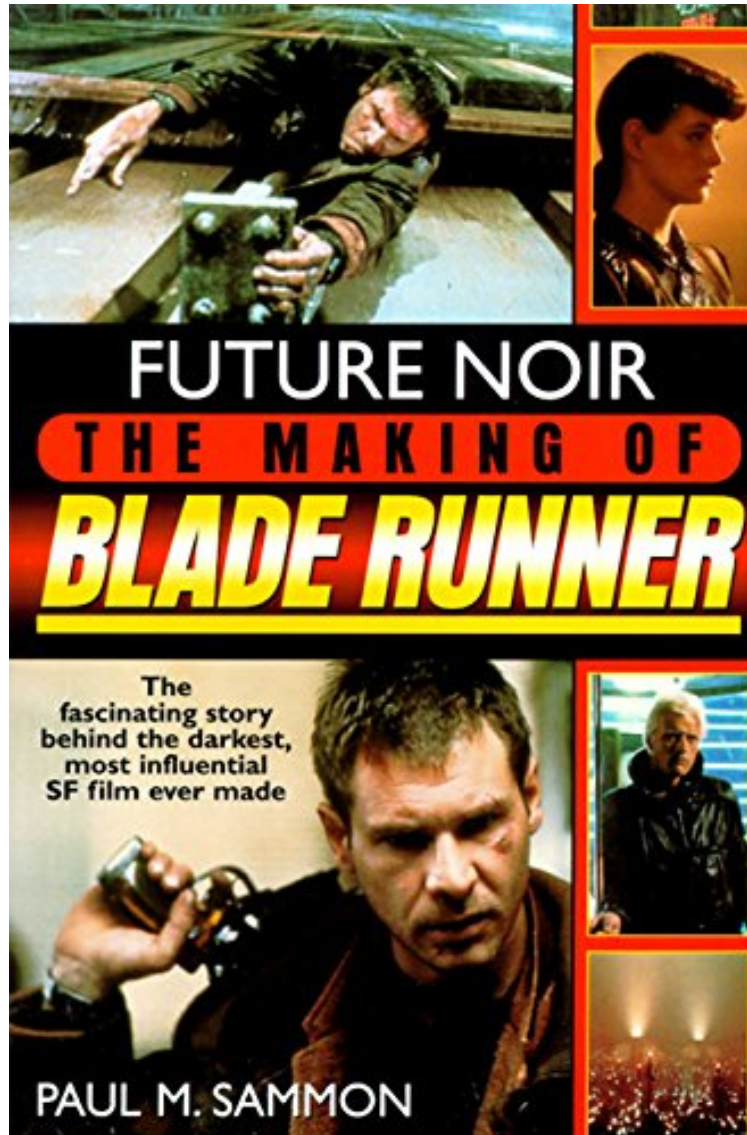


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## Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner

*Paul M. Sammon*

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**Paul M. Sammon : Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The ultimate background book for any Blade Runner fanBy Whitt Patrick Pond(Note: this review is of the 2007 Orion edition, updated and revised for the 25th anniversary of the release of the film)Paul M. Sammon's Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner is not merely a must-have book for any fan of the film - it is the must-have book, both for Blade Runner fans and for anyone interested in thorough and quite

readable account of how a film comes to be made and the incredible number of things that influence the evolution of a film as it goes from original idea to finished product. Future Noir is clearly a labor of love for Sammon, who started following the project from its early inception and has continued to follow it through its evolution and ultimate release - and its later re-release and multiple revised cuts - and the long-term impact it has had on the scifi film genre. First published in 1996 - some fourteen years after the film's original release - he has gone back and updated it to coincide with the film's 25th anniversary and the release of Ridley Scott's Blade Runner: The Final Cut which is supposedly the director's ultimate and last word on the film. The revised edition of the book does in fact contain a great deal of new material which makes it worth finding and reading over the original edition. In reading Future Noir, one quickly becomes aware of just how thorough Sammon has been, having interviewed seemingly everyone who had any involvement in the making of the film, from Philip K. Dick, the author of Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, the novel on which Blade Runner was based, to Charles Lauzirika, the DVD producer who was instrumental not only in the production of the Special Edition DVD set for the Final Cut of the film but also in locating an enormous trove of "lost" film from the original production without which the Final Cut would never have happened. And in between of course are quotes from extensive interviews with director Ridley Scott; screenwriters Hampton Fancher and David Peoples; all of the actors, from the major ones (Harrison Ford, Sean Young, Rutger Hauer, Darryl Hannah, Brion James, Joanna Cassidy, Edward James Olmos, William Sanderson, Joe Turkel) to the minor ones (M. Emmet Walsh, James Hong, Hy Pike, Morgan Paull and others), and dozens upon dozens of people involved in the more technical aspects of the film. Sammon's prose is both wonderfully descriptive and engaging, as can be seen in this bit on what makes Blade Runner so significant as a film: "Blade Runner presents one of the most elaborately visualized fictional environments ever constructed for an American film; each frame is bursting with an obsessive accretion of detail. Still, it's not a pretty sight. Ridley Scott's twenty-first century is a decayed, jaded, mutated place, a cheerless landscape whose meager humanity is being ground down by the microchipped jackboot of a ruthless technological zeitgeist. Its mean streets teem with hundreds of oddly dressed citizens (mostly Asians, some punks, street gangs, Hare Krishnas, and the ever-present police). All scurrying ratlike through concrete canyons whose confines are constantly bombarded by ubiquitous neon advertising, by the blare of unctuous announcers hawking pristine 'Off-world colonies,' from huge, insanely graphic-heavy blimps, and by the sodden, perpetual downpour of a numbing acid rain.--It is exactly this deluge of details -- the striking costumes, the fantastic flying cars, the atmospheric ethnicity, the moody music, the lavish, lived-in sets -- which makes Blade Runner such addictive eye-candy. And it is to this bewitching visual surface which most viewers repeatedly return. Like its industrial counterparts in the worlds of high fashion and architecture, Blade Runner is a form of ultrasophisticated 'designer cinema', one whose astonishingly complex visual field has, despite a subsequent decade's worth of futuristic/alternate world spectacles like Time Burton's Batman tilogy or Judge Dredd, remained the high-water mark against which all other big-buget SF entertainments are measured." In addition to Sammon's narrative attention to detail, Future Noir is also lavishly illustrated with hundreds of production shots taken during the making of the film giving the reader an intimate feeling of what it must have been like to witness the making of Blade Runner. My only quibble with the book (at least the 2007 edition that I read) is that it lacks an index. It's still a great read, but the lack of an index makes it hard to look up particular points of interest if you're trying to do research or answer a specific question. Highly, highly recommended for anyone with an interest in Blade Runner as a film or in how the film-making industry works in general.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The genesis and journey of this iconic movie is worth ...By W. GrieveThe genesis and journey of this iconic movie is worth every hour of reading..the winners and losers and ' Batty's ' time to die monologue make this a must for perveyors of Alien..Gattaca..Brazil..12 Monkeys..the whole Sci-fi milleau

70 of 74 people found the following review helpful. Minute Production Details, No Proof of the Film's InfluenceBy Sir Charles PantherThis is a fantastic book and reference tool, and a must-have for any hard-core Blade Runner (BR) fanatic. It's packed with names, places, dates, fascinating factoids throughout, a trivia cornucopia. But, you've gotta be a serious BR fan to stick with author Paul Sammon all the way through this densely detailed, thorough, and clearly personally meaningful work. The book does have one major flaw: Sammon's failure to prove his subtitle promise that Blade Runner is the most influential sci-fi film of all time. The book reads easily and well, Sammon's style informal. He writes as one BR fan to another, a great approach. The production details are thorough, insightful, and wonderful to read, 441 pages in 18 chapters, with nine appendices containing interviews, production details, the cast list, etc. Sammon is a total BR devotee, I compliment and commend him on his achievement and the recognition of those who worked so hard to make BR. There is vast information throughout from all members of the cast and crew, all of them supportive of Sammon's effort to tell their story. There is surprisingly liberal information from the movie's principals, Ridley Scott, Harrison Ford, Sean Young, Michael Deeley, Syd Mead, Hampton Fancher and David Peoples. One disappointment is the absence of direct input and comment from the soundtrack maestro, Vangelis. Sammon nevertheless gives him thorough justice. Wonderful esoteric tidbits abound through the book, such as the revelation that the original lead was not Harrison Ford, but Dustin Hoffman. Edward James Olmos provides great background on his preparation for his role as Gaff and his detailed construction of his Cityspeak dialog (most of it sadly unused). We learn of fantastic special effects scenes never realized, and that in the background in one of the aerial city shots is a painted Millennium Falcon model. We

learn that the process of creating this movie was a years-long, highly personal effort, first by Hampton Fancher to secure rights and create a screenplay, then later by Ridley Scott and other members of the team who continued to craft the film even after they were fired by the production company. It is a story of dedication to craft and art from a group of artists looking to raise diverse artistic, social, moral, and ethical issues with this genre-transcending film. I often was reminded of *Hearts of Darkness*, the story of Francis Ford Coppola's unending dedication to and struggles making *Apocalypse Now*. Highlighted superbly in the book is the true key to BR's success, Ridley Scott's intense attention to detail, his relentless questioning of the larger context and physical placement of the story. For example, Scott insisted on instructions painted on the futuristic parking meters in the street scenes. Absolutely illegible in the finished film, this sort of detail nonetheless set a compelling, even subconscious tone for the set and those who worked within it. Particularly entertaining is Chapter 8, the scene by scene account of the shoot, with comment from the actors, producers, specialists, crew, and Scott. Also very useful for the true BR fanatic are the appendices listing all of the various BR versions, their formats, availability, and catalog information. Sammon does the same for the various soundtracks and musical compositions heard throughout the film, even the music and lyrics from the advertisements sported on the ad-blimps. Especially enjoyable is Appendix C's detailed list of "blunders," a compendium of the film's both obvious and subtle continuity errors, dubbing flaws, and inserted footage. There are dozens of illustrations throughout the book, and Sammon gives due credit to BR's still photographer for the hundreds of stills that BR fans know and collect. The main problem is that the ONLY color photos in the entire book are on the front and back covers. The B/W photos in the book are small, grainy, poorly reproduced, and do not reflect Sammon's praise. These sorry photos do not allow the reader, who hasn't seen many of these never-before-published stills and production drawings, to revel in the details. Sammon is overly obsessed with cataloging ALL of the different versions of the film, and detailing the most minute differences. We have chapter after repetitive chapter discussing the differences between the Workprint, the pre-release revisions, the theatrical release, the various video, broadcast, and satellite releases, as well as the competing director's cuts. The fascinating core tale of the political, economic, and artistic fights over all of these versions of the film is lost as Sammon loses track and focuses too closely on the details of the different versions, obsessing to the point of irrelevance on miniscule details. For the BR fanatic this is invaluable, but for most readers this makes the narrative tedious and repetitive, given this technical information is available in Appendix B. Sammon's promised discussion of BR's influence on sci-fi film is absent. His subtitle, "The Fascinating Story Behind the...Most Influential SF Film Ever Made" promises a discussion of BR's influence on filmdom. His discussion is poorly introduced, disorganized, and sorrowfully weak on supporting facts and testimonials, leading ultimately to the conclusion that BR simply is NOT the most influential sci-fi film of all time. In fact, the paltry six-page discussion of BR's influence is one of the most shallow, most poorly researched and organized parts of the entire book. Nowhere in the book does he cite any filmmaker, actor, editor, producer, or special effects artist describing BR as an influence. Sammon's strength and enthusiasm clearly lie in the film's production details. This book is an invaluable acquisition for any die-hard BR fan, and a great memoir for any student of filmmaking. It's not for the casual BR or film fan; it's a cult book, just as *Blade Runner* is a cult film. Disappointingly, Sammon fails to deliver a crucial element of his work, a thorough and convincing discussion of BR's influence on cinema and its place in greater filmdom.

The 1992 release of the "Director's Cut" only confirmed what the international film cognoscenti have known all along: Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, based on Philip K. Dick's brilliant and troubling SF novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, still rules as the most visually dense, thematically challenging, and influential SF film ever made. *Future Noir* is the story of that triumph. The making of *Blade Runner* was a seven-year odyssey that would test the stamina and the imagination of writers, producers, special effects wizards, and the most innovative art directors and set designers in the industry. A fascinating look at the ever-shifting interface between commerce and the art that is modern Hollywood, *Future Noir* is the intense, intimate, anything-but-glamorous inside account of how the work of SF's most uncompromising author was transformed into a critical sensation, a commercial success, and a cult classic.

About the Author Paul M. Sammon's distinctive career can best be described by the film industry expression "hyphenate." As a writer, Sammon has published numerous articles, short stories and books. His many film journalism pieces have seen print in *The American Cinematographer*, *Cahiers du Cinema*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Omni*, *Cinefex*, and *Cinefantastique*. Sammon's fiction has appeared in Peter Straub's *Ghosts* (1995), and he recently edited both the 1994 "dead Elvis" anthology *The King Is Dead* plus the "no limits" anthologies *Splatterpunks: Extreme Horror* and *Splatterpunks II: Over the Edge* (1995). But Paul M. Sammon does not only write about movies--he works in them as well. He first entered the industry as a publicist in the late 1970s, before moving on as a second-unit director, special effects coordinator, still photographer, electronic press kit producer, and Vice President of Special Promotions. Some of the scores of motion pictures on which Sammon has labored include *RoboCop*, *Platoon*, *Blue Velvet*, *Conan the Barbarian*, and *The Silence of the Lambs*. By the late 1980s, Sammon was working in Japanese television, where he coproduced popular entertainment programs like *Hello! Movies* for the TV Asahi network. By the 1990s, Sammon had served as Computer Graphics Supervisor for *RoboCop 2*; he recently was Digital and Optical

Effects Supervisor for 1995's *XTRO: Watch the Skies*. Despite this background, however, Sammon still likes nothing better than sitting down with a good movie. And *Blade Runner* remains one of his favorite films.