

The Munsters' Revenge

US TV : 1981 : dir. Don Weis : Universal : 96 min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
[K.C. Martel](#)
 Fred Gwynne; Al Lewis; Yvonne De Carlo; Sid Caesar; Jo McDonnell; Bob Hastings;
 Peter Fox; Herbert Volland; Howard Morris; Ezra Stone

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Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"Fifteen years after the original series we pay another visit to the gothic house 1313 Mockingbird Lane, as the Munsters become involved with a senile scientist who has made robot copies of Herman, Lily and Grandpa. **Average.**"

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"More schlock than shock and chock full of predictable puns, this monster mash is super Saturday-morning fun. Most of the original players from the TV series are back, with outstanding guests like Sid Caesar as the curator of a wax museum. ***"

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times

Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Radio Times review:

"In this attempt to breathe life into **The Munsters** franchise, the key original TV cast members – Fred Gwynne, Yvonne De Carlo and Al Lewis – are reunited for a feature-length adventure, but they are ill-served by a misfiring script. Still, Gwynne is as winning as always and there's manic support from another TV veteran, Sid Caesar. Contains violence. **"

"Comedy spin-off with characters from the well-known sixties TV series. Monster family the Munsters must clear their name when lookalikes of Herman and Grandpa from the local wax museum seemingly come to life and terrorise the neighbourhood. **"

The Radio Times warns us the film "contains violence" (for pity's sake), but when are these TV guide nannies going to start issuing more useful warnings? How about, in this particular case, "contains no good jokes", or "contains a milksop romantic subplot"? After all, not everyone is as agitated about the Four Horrors – sex, violence, nudity and bad language – as they like to suppose.

This decrepit warm-over of an old sitcom, itself a patent rip-off of "**The Addams Family**", hasn't a novel idea in its bolted-on head. The jokes are all laboriously underlined, the acting is on the level of vaudeville, and it has none of the gleeful inversion humour of that other series and its latterday big-screen comeback. Bad acting, bad jokes, bad script – fans of "**The Munsters**" will eat it up with a spoon then.

Gwynne and Lewis seem untarnished by the passing of the years – they might have been pulled out of the Universal wardrobe department and dusted down for the camera – but not so Yvonne De Carlo. Like Uhura in the **STAR TREK** features, she does not wear her age so well. Gone of course is Butch Patrick, who played the original Eddie Munster, and gone too are his trademark corduroy short pants. In his place we have K.C. Martel (sporting corduroy *long pants*), who is given the opening line of the film as the family wend their way around the chamber of horrors at a local waxworks. After this scene, however, Eddie Munster disappears from the screen for virtually the entire film. It's true of course that even in the series, Butch Patrick played only a minor part in most episodes, as did Wednesday and Pugsley in "**The Addams Family**", but here he is all but written out of the show. The writers hit on the inspired idea of introducing a Phantom of the Opera cousin instead, visiting from Europe for Halloween, his one gag being that he shatters glass with his caterwauling.

As for the plot, well, the waxwork Universal monsters prove to be robots employed by some bad guys to plunder the vicinity. Since (for no accountable reason) the chamber of horrors prominently featured an exhibit of the Munster family itself, mistaken identity situations arise, and Herman and Grandpa must clear their names by apprehending the real culprits. It's a plotline as old as the hills, but certainly in keeping with the creative poverty of the series. And ugly duckling daughter Marilyn contrives a spot of romance with a young detective on the case, which just about puts the cherry on the cake.

It will be evident I never had much time for "**The Munsters**" first time around, so a rehash would hardly appeal to me. The film was broadcast here (by Channel 5, who else?) in a weekday early morning slot for undiscerning tots, and that about sizes up the level of entertainment on offer. Herman playing chequers with house-dragon Spot, Grandpa and Herman travelling air freight to Transylvania for a rejuvenation potion, a jackdaw cuckoo clock that utters wisecracks on the state of the story so far, and innumerable corny vampire jokes from bargain basement Bela Lugosi Al Lewis. Some slapstick humour could have been wrung from the waxwork monsters on their crime spree, but no, not in this film baby.

Not content to leave well enough alone, Lewis donned the fangs once again for "**MY GRANDPA IS A VAMPIRE**". K.C. Martel was about 12. He'd featured in the 1977 sitcom "**Mulligan's Stew**" (with Johnny Whittaker, among others) and in 1982 appeared as Greg in "**E.T. THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL**". He's not listed in *The Moving Picture Boy*.

See also "**MUNSTER, GO HOME**" (66), "**The Munsters**" and subject index under **COMEDY**.