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New Book Rediscovered Irwin Allen Disaster Movies of the 70s

SAN FRANCISCO, April, 2008: Master of Disaster was the title producer/director Irwin Allen earned after the blockbuster smash *The Poseidon Adventure* was released in 1972. Now, a new book of the same name takes a grand look back at the filmmaker and his 1970s films that make him famous.

Author John W. Law, San Francisco resident, chronicles the behind the scenes making of some of Hollywood's best-loved disaster films in *Master of Disaster: Irwin Allen – The Disaster Years* (Aplomb Publishing 2008).

“Irwin Allen really helped changed the way films are made through his work creating classics like *The Poseidon Adventure* and *The Towering Inferno*,” says Law. “He brought major studios together to bankroll expensive films that otherwise might never have been made, helped define the concept of the all-star cast and made the disaster movie genre into one of the most successful film types in history.”

Master of Disaster not only looks at the contributions of Allen to the world of filmmaking, it also takes fans behind the scenes of the making of the classic 1970s Hollywood disaster pictures. “In addition to *Poseidon Adventure* and *Towering Inferno*, Allen also produced *Swarm*, *Beyond the Poseidon Adventure* and *When Time Ran Out*, and while the films don't hold the attention is big hits did, the stories behind their productions make them fascinating tales in their own right,” say Law.

Swarm in particular has a tale far more interesting than captured on screen, according to the author. “There was a great deal of controversy around the film,” says Law. “Warner Bros found in a marketing study that killer bees were not very scary to moviegoers, but in order to try and make the picture a hit, the studio tried to convince movie theaters to bid top dollar to show what they were calling the ‘blockbuster of the summer.’ They compared it to *Poseidon Adventure*, but wouldn't allow theater owners a chance to see any of the film, so they had to bid blind on a chance to exhibit the film. That is rare and when the film failed at box office some theaters sued the studio.”

In addition to Allen's disaster movies on the big screen, the producer/director was well known in Hollywood for his television work, including a number of disaster-related TV movies. *Master of Disaster* touches on those films and also includes a look at the early years of Allen with his TV shows and films like *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Lost in Space* and more.

But it's the disaster films that are the focus of the book. "Allen owned the 1970s disaster picture and in many ways helped create the market for so many films. In some ways his success gave way to so many knock-offs, including several of his own films that the disaster picture collapsed under the weight of itself," says Law. "But the return of the disaster picture in the 1990s was due in part to the success of the films some 20 years early. Who knows if hits like *Twister* or *Titanic* would have been bankrolled and made such a splash at the box office had Irwin Allen not paved the way?"

Published in April 2008, and available in bookstores and through on-line booksellers like Amazon.com, "*Master of Disaster: Irwin Allen – The Disaster Years*" is packed with photos in a perfect-bound, 145-page paperback book that retails for \$19.95. To order a copy, visit www.aplombpublishing.com.

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