

By Maritza Cosano

"The guy who would do anything to get the shot" is not now facing the fierce jaws of a shark; nor is he crunching his hat to the viewfinder

10,000 feet in the air while a hair-raising, gut-clenching helicopter dive takes him flying down and up to catch a double take of a cut-in shot. Sitting behind the new generation of the Klein throne, is Jordan Klein, Jr. This time he is not in his customary jeans and hat trademark, but in sweatpants and t-shirt, having just finished a vigorous workout to keep him in shape for another physical and dangerous stunt, no doubt.

The son of the mythical Jordan Klein, Sr., an Academy-Award winning Cinematographer/Director, who has been involved in films since the 1940's and who is now part of Hollywood's advisory council for directors such as Ron Howard (Splash), Jordan, Jr. does not seem to be intimidated by the fact that his father is a legend.

Jordan was born in Miami, then later moved to Ocala, Florida where he began his love for photography and drafting. At the early age of six, he began to accompany his father on numerous production sets, watching and learning from the crew members. It was then that he began to get the feel of the business, and soon he was earning a name of his own.



"Ron Howard was doing Splash, and he said to my father, 'Why don't we get Jordy to do the underwater shots?'"

And that's how it happened. Still, he did not consider his career in motion pictures beginning until he entered the Photographers Union (I.A.T.S.E.- Local 666) as an Assistant Cameraman. Jordan began working and climbed up the ladder to his present position as D.P. (Director of Photography). He's earned a reputation by frequently subjecting himself to physical danger or "extreme camera," as he calls it.

When asked why, he says, "Why not?" And then, in a deep soul-searching tone, "This business is so competitive you have to do extraordinary things to make people remember you." Well, I guess shooting in desolate waters surrounded by that pack of hungry sharks could come under the category of exceptional, wouldn't it?

"On one occasion Sea World wanted something that had never been done be-

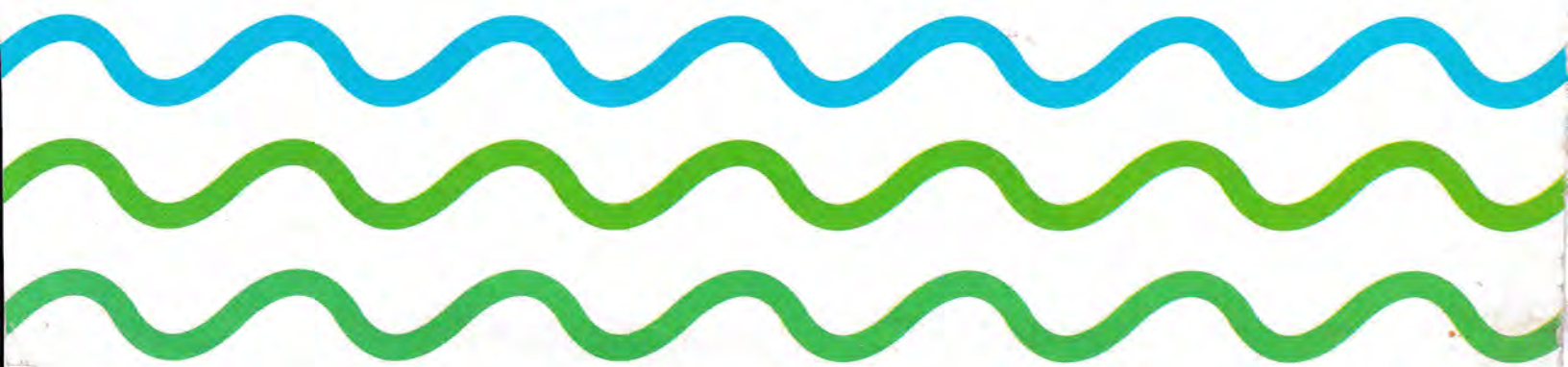
fore... so, I suggested shooting sharks at night." He laughingly remembers the client's response, "Nah! You gotta be crazy!" That was all Jordan needed. "The other cameramen would not bite on the offer, so I did it!" Jordan remembers jumping in the cold water

dressed in almost nothing. The sharks soon began to do their notorious song and dance around him, but he knew he had to



keep his cool or he could very well lose every inch of his precious flesh to those hungry

predators. "They got very, very close, sometimes taking bites at the camera, which they did not like, and then trying to bite me, which made them all the more determined!" Although he confesses none of his injuries required stitches, it doesn't take away from the fact that through every fiber of nerve navigates the capillaries of fear. "Yes..." he admits, "there were times when I was scared, but if I



had let myself stop for a second to think about it, I would have been dead meat. I finished the shots and... 'print it!'"

And printed he has, putting in the can a collection of projects such as *Splash*, starring Darrell Hannah and Tom Hanks. Hannah's double, model/actress Arlene Klein, later became Jordan's wife, herself being an accomplished swimmer, diver and stuntwo-man. Together they have been directing their company, Jordan Klein Film & Video, on a number of productions which are mainly filmed in Florida and surrounding areas, such as the Bahamas, the Keys, Virgin Islands, etc.

As a Director/Cameraman who specializes in capturing difficult moments on film, such as people swimming with sharks, high performance aircraft flying inverted just a few feet off the ground, race cars, helicopters, jet skis, off-shore power boats... Jordan has successfully put under his belt many hit releases. A few of his most famous: *Sessions*, *My Girl*, *Doc Hollywood*, *The Awakening*, *Dream Trap*, *Jaws Revenge*, *Jaws 3D*, *Cocoon*, *Cocoon II* (above the water filmed in Miami, underwater shots filmed in the Bahamas), *Never Say Never Again*, *Legend* and 1990's summer hit, *The Abyss*, a sci-fi creation. The set was built entirely by Jordan, Sr. in Ocala, and then transported to South Carolina where the film was shot manned mainly by the Klein father-son duo, with Jr. as underwater camera operator and Sr. as head underwater advisor.

"That was a very dangerous position we put ourselves in," he recalls again, this time with a higher tone of seriousness.

"There's a scene where the USS Indianapolis went off a ledge underwater when a crane attached to it crumbled into the water after being hit by a vicious rain storm. It carried the underwater vessel into the deep. The shot was supposed to be done from the viewpoint of the submarine going into the dark pit. A camera mount was placed on an underwater manned torpedo, where the operator (me) could travel with it. By the time we got the torpedo under, we were already out of control—250 to 350 feet down. That's outrageously dangerous because your ears cannot resist the extreme added pressure." During this stunt, Klein, Sr. blew out one of his ear drums. "That was a stupid thing we did, but that's why James Cameron, the film's director, called my father - because nobody else wanted to do it."

Like father, like son is a cliché we all know, but in this case one cannot but admire the complimenting combination. For Jordan it was easy, he says. "I can't imagine people having so much trouble underwater. I give diving seminars at times, and some people almost drown themselves in the process, mainly because they get too paranoid." But then realizing his edge, "I guess to me it is like second nature, like taking a shower. I never stopped to think how other people might see it."

When he's not underwater aggravating some ferocious shark, he is in the captain's seat or giving directions to a helicopter pilot he can trust to follow his demands. This ultimately brings great risks. "I've been shooting with my steadicam for the past four years, either at the helm or at the edge of the chopper capturing everything on film. I know my limitations and I hire the pilot who can take off from there. If they can't come close, then I don't work with them." The best requires the best.

Crunching his hat to the viewfinder, once again Jordan gets ready for another round of risks. "I want to seek new projects and boldly shoot what no cinematographer has shot before." And then as an afterthought, "And do easy shots too once in a while!" ■

PHOTOS

- (LEFT TO RIGHT): 1. JORDAN KLEIN WITH KELLY MCGILLIS; 2. SEA WORLD, PHOTO BY ARLENE KLEIN; 3. TEXACO COMMERCIAL, PHOTO BY ARLENE KLEIN; 4. WORLD OF SHARKS & BARRACUDA DOCUMENTARY, PHOTO BY JORDAN KLEIN; 5. WORLD OF SHARKS & BARRACUDA DOCUMENTARY, PHOTO BY JORDAN KLEIN; 6. TYPHOON LAGOON-DISNEY, PHOTO BY JORDAN KLEIN; 7. SPLASH II (JORDY & ARLENE, PHOTO BY NIGEL BOWER); 8. CONNELLY SKIS, PHOTO BY BOBBY YONGE

