

# A TALE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

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Once upon a time, in the golden years of Hollywood scarlets, uninvited guests loomed amongst the dressing rooms of the historical Warner Brothers movie sets. Little dirty creatures, eating away at their costumes that hung innocently behind closed doors and gnawing at electrical wires in production areas. What the inhabitants had feared, came true. The wrath of the rat had descended upon them.

Imagine ... sexy drama queens, running in fear at the sight of scurrying rodents. Shrieking in terror as their heart races with excitement, eager to try on their personally designed outfit, only to find the holiest of holes spread throughout the precious garment. Sound engineers, hearing the screeching in the distance and wondering why ... until they step into a pile of disassembled wires. They scream like girls and hide in the shadows, ashamed of what they have become.

The legend says that in 1931, during the filming of *Public Enemy Number One*, James Cagney discovered his favorite wool cap, chewed up by rats. Cagney told Jack Warner, "Everyone in the world knows the best exterminator of rats is the cat! You ain't seeing me back here 'til I hear some meowing."

The modern day superhero arrived — the CAT. Donned in their birthday suits, the cats were ready to kick some serious rat booty. Warner immediately paid a visit to the local shelter and returned to the shelter in a limo, packed to the rim with his newfound feline friends. Warner and others also scrambled through the city streets, searching high and low within the dark corners of alleys across Los Angeles, collecting cats and releasing them on studio grounds. The beady-eyed menaces didn't stand a chance!

Sooner than later, the "problem"



was solved at the Burbank Studio lot and the cat became a precious commodity. This newfound treasure was now placed on a pedestal for their achievement in winning the war against the evil pests. A woman by the name of Elyse Mayberry, fed and cared for them with honor. However, everyone realized that now they must curtail the uprising population of cats. Advised by a fellow employee, Mayberry took the cats from the studio to the local vet to spay and neuter them, thus forming the non-profit organization, "Cats at the Studio, Inc."

The group grew, with the idea of caring for the cats who scurried across the studio grounds. Five individuals initiated an organized system of feeding, spaying and neutering, and medicated the sick. Small kittens were caught, fed and "taught to trust the human hand." New mothers and their kittens were cared for on an individual basis. In one six-month period, Cats at

the Studio, Inc. had adopted out 125 cats into safe homes. Twenty-nine adults were neutered or spayed and released back onto the lot to finish their business — keeping their workplace rat free!

Mayberry, a resident of Northridge, continues to utilize this focus — making the community aware of the rat problem and the cat solution. She stated that one major studio on the west side began the elimination of its resident Studio Cats ... which has caused rats to run rampant throughout the studio. The management of this studio has now backed down, giving the Studio Cats full reign to feed and neuter the cats, which in turn creates an elimination of rats with no pesticides.

Businesses in the North Valley and other areas are concerned with the rat problem, and they should be. Take a look at the facts:

The rat can ...

- ... gnaw through lead pipes, cinder-blocks and camera cables, with chisel teeth that exert an incredible 24,000 pounds of pressure per square inch.
- ... carry Bubonic Plague with a bite capable of killing a 200 pound man.
- multiply so rapidly that one pair may breed 15,000 rats a year.
- ... wriggle through a hole no larger than a quarter.
- ... survive an atomic blast.

Cats at the Studios was the first group of volunteers to recognize the value and protect the life of the feral studio cat. Since 1979, they have been focused on nurturing, neutering and finding homes for the forgotten, abandoned cats who keep studios and industrial workplaces free of rats and bubonic plague. To help, call (818) 341-8936 for the group's founder and North Valley resident, Elyse Mayberry. Their Web site is [www.catsatthestudios.org](http://www.catsatthestudios.org).

Cats at the Studios says — There is no reason to have unaltered pets! Spaying and neutering is not only for eliminating unwanted litters, but it also gets rid of unwanted behaviors and possible health problems. (ie. cancer, pyometra, etc.). The amount of vouchers we have is now more limited, as we only have one small booklet allotted to us per month. If we run out, or you would like to get them elsewhere ... your council person now has them. If you don't know your council person, call CITY HALL and give them your address and they will tell you your district and your council person and number. [CITY HALL: (213) 485-2121]. Other numbers to call for help with spay neuter costs: (LA and other cities/counties).

Actors and Others: (818) 755-6045  
Pet Assistance: (818) 709-0900  
Mercy Crusade: (818) 887-7312  
Pet Orphans Fund: (818) 901-0190  
Rescue Me Pet: (310) 787-7411  
Neighborhood Animal Group: (213) 664-3424