

NEW ZEALAND

TV WEEKLY

A LAYMAN'S
GUIDE TO
THE COMPLEX
STRUCTURE OF
BRITISH TV

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1/-

★ Patrick McGoochan
Exclusive story
and autographed picture inside



Dear St. Louis
To T.V. Week
Patterson
McGowan

Specially written for
New Zealand TV Weekly

"DANGER MAN"

DIES IN LONDON—

BUT McGOOHAN LIVES ON

by Ad Astra, London

"Danger Man" John Drake, special security agent, a man taking calculated risks in the cause of world peace . . . one of the most colourful heroes ever created for television . . . dead?

Yes, killed outright in London earlier this year by the skilled actor who brought him to fame, the handsome Patrick McGoohan. After completing four years as John Drake—three series of **Danger Man** containing a total of 88 episodes, Pat McGoohan (reputed to be earning £2,000 a week from his salary and royalties) decided it was time for Drake's final exit.

But the enigmatic character will not fade too quickly from the screens as **Danger Man**, now at the height of its popularity, is a programme which has been bought by television networks all around the world. In the United States, where it is

known as **Secret Agent**, it is expected to eventually earn £3 million for the producers, ATV of London.

Theme exhausted

Lew Grade, managing director of ATV, is a forward-looking man so does not mourn the decision of McGoohan. "I feel we have exhausted the theme," he said, and he is full of enthusiasm for the new series McGoohan is working on.

Pat hates publicity and he tells me that he is not yet letting anyone in the British or overseas TV press know the secrets of the new character he is creating "except that it is

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far removed from John Drake." It is a new kind of adventure programme tentatively titled **The Prisoner** and, he says, promises to be very exciting.

The series will be directed by McGoochan himself, which may be the best guarantee of another outstanding success. Certainly some of the episodes in the last series of **Danger Man** which were directed by Pat showed great imagination and probably the most gripping climaxes ever seen in any TV spy series.

Not dedicated—fascinated

McGoohan does not look upon himself as a dedicated actor, but rather as an entertainer. He is fascinated by all aspects of drama—stage, lighting, cameras, writing.

When he is directing a film he devotes himself completely to it and will not see outsiders. He then averages about three hours' sleep a night compared with his usual five hours. The nervous fidget of John Drake continues off the screen, as on, and is a sign of McGoochan's restless spirit.

Pat receives fan mail every day in almost every language under the sun. Some are simply addressed to "The Danger Man, London," but they find him.

What are the reasons for the popularity of **Danger Man**? One is the character John Drake, a man reflecting the spirit of adventure with the accent on danger, with greater integrity than other TV heroes yet with an air of mystery about himself. The other is Patrick McGoochan, an out-

standing actor with the quirkish appeal of the Irish.

Beer before champagne

Pat is a down-to-earth man preferring a beer in a pub or working-men's club to champagne in a nightclub or sophisticated haunt. Above all else he is a family man; married 15 years to former actress Joan Drummond, with three daughters, Catherine (13), Anne (6) and Frances (4), Pat regards the happiness and security of the family as all important.

Pat was brought up as a Roman Catholic and Joan became one when they married. Having a definite faith has been one of the strong foundations to their happy marriage.

But it is a question of personal morality rather than "the Catholic bit" that led to McGoochan's famous stand against allowing violence and sex into **Danger Man**.

"Prissy Pat"

He says that "a lot of old horse" has been written about this . . . the non-kissing McGoochan—"Prissy Pat"—why no broken bottles rammed in faces?

The situation simply is that McGoochan believes, rightly or wrongly, that TV is "the third parent." He believes incalculable harm can be done to children who see their heroes behaving as if they had no respect for human life or convention of any kind. He is a family man and he believes in "family entertainment."

"I'm not some kind of religious crank," he has said. "But the love life they first figured for John Drake would have made him some sort of sexual crank. Every week a different woman! And served up piping hot for high tea!"

He's been called "the non-kissing McGoochan" but his show never lacked damsels in distress.

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And the armour stays Spotless,
thank you.

Danger Man | continued

He sees *Danger Man* essentially as a knight in shining armour riding out each week to slay another dragon or rescue another woman in distress . . . and the armour stays spotless, thank you.

A hero can be tough but he must be honourable and decent, he says. "Who wants their children growing up like James Bond?"

Not monotonous

It may seem surprising that an actor who has always selected roles because of the variations they could provide should have been content to

play one character for as long as four years in a TV series, but McGough explains: "There was nothing monotonous in portraying John Drake week after week because each episode in *Danger Man* is quite different from the others. Each has a different setting. And in each one Drake has to assume a different identity in the course of his job.

"Therefore, though I am John Drake all the time, I am in actual fact playing a wide variety of different characters, some of them calling for physical disguise . . . I found it as stimulating as playing in repertory, with something fresh to tackle in every new production."

BIOGRAPHICAL AND THEATRICAL NOTES

THE LIFE AND CAREER OF **PATRICK McGOOHAN**

Patrick McGooohan: Aged 37, blue eyes, fair hair, broad shoulders, 6ft tall. Born New York of Irish parents and returned to Eire at early age—left school in Sheffield at 16—became chicken farmer after work in factory. Theatre got into his blood after taking lowly post as assistant stage manager with Sheffield Repertory—began acting and, after four years, graduated from smaller to bigger parts. Met actress Joan Drummond — they were married between a rehearsal of "The Taming of the Shrew" and a matinee of "The Rivals."

Pat widened his experience with other companies, including the Bristol Old Vic, and made West End debut in 1955, appearing in "Serious Charge" at the Garrick Theatre. In following two years he played in Orson Welles' version of "Moby Dick" and "Ring for Catty."

Bit-player in films ("Zarak," "Dark Avenger," "The Dambusters," "I Am A Camera") and won contract with Rank Organisation. Major roles: "High Tide at Noon," "Hell Drivers,"

"Gipsy and the Gentleman," "Nor the Moon by Night."

Broke away from films to become free-lance stage and TV actor. Theatrical successes: "Danton's Death" and "Brand" (for which he was nominated best actor of the year by national newspaper critics). On TV he was seen in one play after another including a production of his stage hit "Brand." Then he was cast as **Danger Man**.

There was a four-year gap between the first series of 39 half-hour episodes of the serial and the second series of 32 hour episodes. During that period, Pat played a wide variety of roles in feature films and TV productions ranging from a jazz drummer in "All Night Long" to the prison officer in Brendan Behan's "The Quare Fellow." He also played in the rip-roaring "Dr Syn" in the dual role as respected Vicar of Dymchurch and the notorious and daring smuggler "The Scarecrow." But the impact of his TV series was so great that he could never escape the **Danger Man** image he had created for himself, and this was soon made stronger with the second, then third, and final series of the John Drake adventures.