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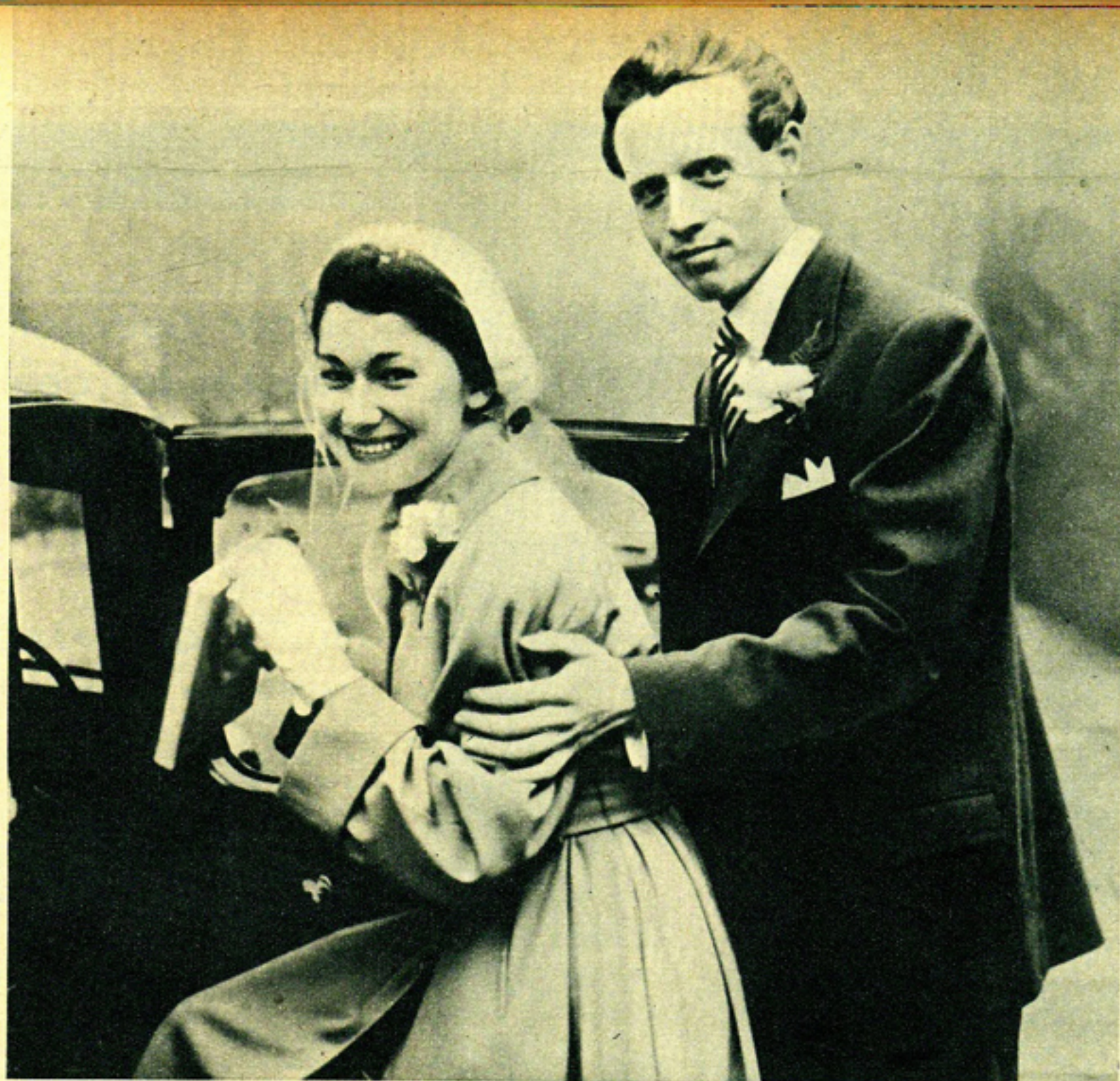
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CONTINUING DOSSIER ON DANGER MAN

THE PATRICK McGOOHAN STORY



ENTER A SUITOR-AS A 'SIMPLETON'

BY PATRICK McGOOHAN, AS TOLD TO JOAN REEDER

IN the front row, left-hand aisle, centre circle, of the Sheffield Playhouse sat the father of Joan Drummond, the nineteen year old actress I wanted to marry.

I knew exactly where his seat was. I had booked it, with great care, myself.

We had never met. When the curtain rose he was going to see me, for the first time, as an actor.

Afterwards Joan and I were going to his hotel where I would ask his permission for our marriage.

She was apprehensive—"I'm sure he will say I'm too young."

"Don't worry," I kept telling her.

For weeks I had been trying to put myself in her father's position: "London lawyer, specializing in divorce; parent of one attractive, impulsive daughter who, after only seven months in provincial repertory, now wanted to marry a twenty-two year old actor in the Company, earning the same salary as she did—by now—£8 a week."

The main disadvantage, as I envisaged it from his point of view, would be the insecurity of a livelihood in the theatre.

However, if I could prove to him that he had a potential Irving-cum-Olivier as a future son-in-law

the rest, I thought, should not be too difficult.

That fortnight we were doing *Bonaventure*. The setting was a convent. I played the odd job man, a sinister loon who had already attacked someone with an axe and, in his worst moments, was ready to lay his hands on any woman.

Joan, in the part of a young nurse, was the target of these moments. As I chased her round the stage she had to scream out her terror that I would lay my filthy paws on her.

I had spent a fortune on make-up to reproduce the most repellent characteristics of a half-demented simpleton with heavy, lowering brows, hair powdered to look straw-coloured and lifeless and combed to stand on end.

From the wardrobe I'd deliberately chosen boots three sizes too big, to achieve a gangling, disproportionate appearance.

But, behind the dressing-room door hung my best dark suit, stiff white collar and sober tie—out of mothballs for the first time since I'd given up



Patrick married Joan Drummond—they met when they were both acting in the same Sheffield Repertory Company—at St. William's Church, Sheffield, on May 19, 1951, between a rehearsal of *The Rivals* and a matinee of *The Taming Of The Shrew*

The first glimpse his prospective father-in-law got of Patrick McGooohan was as an idiot character in a play. His audible reaction from the stalls was "Oh-my-God!"

my job as a bank clerk. My plan was contrast. In the theatre my prospective father-in-law was to see an actor of compelling power.

Later, at his hotel, he was to meet Patrick McGooohan—a sane, honourable young man, suitable to be entrusted with the responsibilities of marriage. The House lights dimmed while Joan and I stood anxiously in the wings, ready to give the performance of our lives.

As the lines moved towards my cue I focused my eyes in a vacant stare, let my face fall into the slack droop of stupidity, my hands dangling at my sides.

The cue came and I lurched forward to make my shambling entrance.

Joan shrank, ready to run and scream.

Then it happened. The spotlight picked me up but, before I could lunge towards her there broke across the pin-quiet theatre one low, anguished,

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clearly audible comment: "Oh—my—God!" There was no mistaking it. The voice came from the front row, left hand aisle, centre circle.

After the curtain, as I scrubbed my face, bashed my hair down, changed into my dark suit, instinct told me that ex-bank clerk McGooohan, now shiningly reflected in the dressing-room mirror, was not going to erase that first, idiot impression easily.

Instinct was right.

AMID the depressing regimentation of hard chairs and small glass-topped tables in the hotel lounge I made my second "entrance" of the disastrous evening, and faced Joan's father.

Our preliminary conversation did not include any congratulations on my performance, and soon I plunged into my carefully planned speech: "I would like your permission, sir" He let me do the talking. I ploughed on doggedly, but with the distinct feeling that I was being heard more as a petitioner for divorce than as an applicant for marriage.

When, at last, he did speak, he was brief and discouraging. I heard something about "being cautious . . . prudent . . . only earning eight pounds a week."

"That's not important," I contested hotly, "eight pounds or eighty pounds a week, Joan wants to marry me. I will always be able to earn enough to support her. If I can't find work as an actor I can do anything—even dig ditches!"

He let that somewhat unoriginal protestation pass without comment. I knew there would have to be a fight, and it wasn't my night for winning. I asked if I could see him again in the morning.

Again he let me do most of the talking, countering my arguments with "the advantages of waiting" and other, justifiable parental doubts.

The night before I had been nervous. Now I was outraged.

With sustained composure he let me lose my temper. Gaining momentum in my purifying performance of righteous indignation I finally succeeded in arriving at the beautiful irrelevancy that it was suspicious, over-cautious minds like his that caused world wars!

IF I had not been so incensed I might have stopped to reflect that, in fact, he was taking it all very well. My spontaneous outburst of anger and determination to marry his daughter was achieving much more than my nervous, prepared encounter of the previous night.

At the end of my tirade he told me, among other things, that he had seen more of marriage—and divorce—than I.

"You may become engaged. We'll review the question of marriage in six months' time."

We then shook hands in mutual acknowledgement that, from our opposing standpoints, we were both right.

Suddenly his face relaxed. "Now let's go and meet your parents," he said.

There was never any looking back. The ground was cleared for all time for a relationship between father and son-in-law that could not be bettered. Even in the times when I was virtually on the brink of having to fulfil my promise to "dig ditches" for a living, he never questioned either my ability, or my intention to see things through.

Those times arrived more quickly

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PRETTY PARADOX

"AM I a rebel?" Blonde **Susannah York** wrinkled one of the prettiest brows in show business as we chatted in her lunch break. "I don't know. I dislike any sort of label."

She thought deeply. "But I suppose I *am* independent, and a bit unpredictable—like a goat, jumping around. I always try to do something different."

"I did a play, *The Wings Of The Dove*, just because I *felt* like it. I do TV for the same reason."

"I like to look at something and say: That's difficult, but let's risk it. Sometimes I bump my nose" (she rubbed it ruefully), "but that's good for anyone, too."

Her most recent risk? Acting in *Scruggs*, an off-beat, shoe-string movie. Most stars of twenty-four year old Susannah's international standing would run a mile from it.

But so sold is Susannah on its story of a girl who gets involved with a gangster that she agreed to be the picture's co-producer.

"I surprised myself—found I enjoyed the technical side and the extra responsibility. I'm now discovering resources in myself I didn't think were there."

But her talents have already brought world stardom since her screen debut in *Tunes Of Glory*, with **Alec Guinness**, in 1960.

She's just finished *Sands Of The Kalahari* with **Stanley Baker** and **Stuart Whitman**. Next on the agenda is *The Doctor And The Devils* with **Maximilian Schell**.

Yet Susannah has never let the star gloss stick. She's genuinely happiest in jeans and jerkin, with

windblown hair, bare feet. Her hands look tough and capable.

Her six year old marriage to actor **Michael Wells** is one of those comfortable arrangements where neither is bothered about the other's prestige—or lack of it.

"He's a fine actor," says Susannah firmly, "and his day will come."

Their first nine months of married life were spent in Michael's bed-sitter overlooking a gasworks. Later, they moved into a small house in Chelsea.

Though born a Londoner, Susannah was brought up in Ayrshire. She decided on an acting career after what I'd call monumental mis-casting: Ugly Sister in her school's *Cinderella*!

But she was a children's nurse and a tourist guide before going into drama school and repertory.

She's fiercely honest, strongly critical of all she does.

She disliked *Freud* because "it didn't turn out as it should have." And of her role as the fey "English rose" who fell for **William Holden** in *The Seventh Dawn*, she says: "I'm ashamed."

I found Susannah hard to sum up—and she agreed!

"I'm a paradox, really. One side of me is lazy, content not to give any trouble. The other is constantly nagging me with: this isn't good enough; you know you can do better."

The result—and she'll probably argue about that, too—is a special star quality. I think it's going to shine more and more brightly.

MARGARET HINXMAN

UNFAIR TO FILM STARS: they have to slim a stone more than the rest of us. Cameras add this much to any actor, hence Rod Taylor's sad expression. Director Jack Cardiff ordered him a crash reducing course for spy thriller *"The Liquidator."* "The exercises were cruel," recalls Rod, "but they worked." Otherwise, he wouldn't—as a romantic hero, anyway. For screen dishes can be dark, fair, tall or tiny, but never tubby: weight limits are often stipulated in a star's contract. But if a sudden TV call leaves no time for trimming, costumiers place portly persons in dark, single-breasted suits—they can make a man look seven pounds lighter. Added heel-lifts lengthen a silhouette, make it seem slimmer. Plumpness isn't the only problem, though. "We've one client," a top firm told us, "who's so skinny he wears a padded T-shirt all the time!"



SUSANNAH YORK . . .
"I'm a bit unpredictable"

you'll enjoy reading . . .

A really shuddery thriller: that's what lots of readers love. And they won't be disappointed in **Paul Gallico's** *"Trial By Terror"* (Penguin, 3s. 6d.). It's tense, frightening—and definitely not for the nervous. **Warm sun, country scents,** the rich slow-moving life of a small village: **D. E. Stevenson** is expert at putting these pleasant things on paper. In *"The Musgraves"* (Fontana, 3s. 6d.) she succeeds once again. **J.A.**

hearing . . .

It's a title to tempt fate and disc critics, but "The Magnificent Moodies" (Decca LK 4711) is an aptly-named LP. Though the **Moody Blues'** voices aren't exceptional, the force and drive of their self-made backings certainly are. This five-piece Birmingham pop group shows real instrumental originality; for once, claims to a "new sound" aren't exaggerated.

Mellow and eloquent music: if that's your delight, you'll find it in plenty in the "Great Cathedral Organ Series: Gloucester Cathedral" (H.M.V. CLP 1853). **Dr. Herbert Sumsion**, seated at that wonderful instrument, plays selected works by Elgar and Parry with scholarly musicianship. **J.B.**

seeing . . .

Crime and cats make an entertaining twosome in a new **Disney** film that practically says it all in the title: *"That Dam Cat!"* The light-hearted plot turns **Hayley Mills's** pet tom into an honorary cop, whose nightly jaunts get a police escort in the hopes that he'll lead detective hero **Dean Jones** to a bank-robbers' hideaway. Fun is fast and frantic, theme tune catchy, and all the cast play the game most engagingly, considering they're all out-acted by that darn cat! Highly recommended—except perhaps, to dog-lovers. **M.H.**

STAR SERVICE

Seeking information on a star, film or show? **WOMAN Star Service**, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1, has the answer —also offers you free biographies of favourite show business personalities. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope

DANGER MAN

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than Joan and I anticipated. We were married, six months later, on May 19, 1951, at St. William's Church, Sheffield, between a rehearsal of *The Rivals* and a matinee of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Between us we were now earning £18 a week and felt immensely rich but, when we knew we were starting a family, that was the end of our joint, princely salary.

The time had come for me to earn more than Rep. could pay, and that meant London.

Joan went to stay with her parents in Hampstead. I auditioned successfully for a part in my first West End production, scheduled for a month's tour and a London opening. The "Closing Notices" went up on the second week out and left me unemployed.

Acutely mindful of my "ditch digging" speech to my father-in-law, we had hunted for a flat of our own.

I went back to this "self-contained" warren which had a communal staircase to the entire house running right through it, and to a wife, who had only another three weeks to wait for her confinement.

Eventually I got another part, at the Arts theatre, which paid £10 a week, but nothing during rehearsals, so I went along to see what suggestions the Labour Exchange could offer.

Next night, after rehearsals, I was standing at a factory conveyor belt wrapping choc-ices by the thousand—and the next night.

The third night I quit. At rehearsals all the lines on my script had shot past my eyes like choc-ices, too.

An Ad. for a temporary waiter in a Fleet Street all-night café, 7 p.m. to 6 a.m., £13 a week, looked more promising.

Though hard on the feet it was easier on the eyes and I had enough black coffee to keep me awake for rehearsals.

The other advantage of night work was that I was around on the Saturday when the baby advised Joan it was time to phone the ambulance and hospital. By three-thirty that afternoon we had a daughter.

Three weeks later she was still "the baby." We couldn't make up our minds what to call her.

I'd applied for a job with the Midland Repertory Co. in Coventry and, while waiting for an interview, strolled round a local churchyard. Carefully, I read the names on every tombstone.

That evening I phoned home: "I've got the job—and a name—Catherine."

Catherine was six months old before I found an attic room I could afford to rent in Coventry for the three of us.

We were now so broke that Joan persuaded the lorry driver to include her and the baby as part of our "part-load" he was bringing in his removal van from London.

When the time at Coventry ended, we thought ourselves lucky if we managed to be together as long as a

week. I went to the Bristol Old Vic and lived in digs there. Joan became "Chief wife" of the King's four wives in *The King and I* at Drury Lane, London. We met on Sundays and parted on Mondays. From Bristol I moved first to Windsors Rep., then to the Kew theatre but it was a good two years before I got a West End chance of a really strong leading part, as a Protestant priest in the play *Serious Charge*, with Frank Lawton and Olga Lindo.

We opened at the Garrick Theatre and next morning the critics gave us good reviews.

Studio casting offices began to take some notice.

This led to a day's work, dressed in R.A.F. uniform, bending down and patting a dog, in *The Dam Busters*; two days' work, dressed as a Swedish masseur, carrying Laurence Harvey to a bath in *I Am A Camera* and five days in a costume picture with Errol Flynn.

As the knight "Sir Oswald," with two lines to say, I was entitled to Rolls Royce transport between home and studio and a place in the restaurant with the hierarchy and stars—on a peasant's pay.

Another actor, as the "Leader of the Peasants," had a huge part. But, because he was a "peasant," he had to eat with the peasants and come to work under his own steam—on a knight's salary. The whole thing was ridiculous, and I didn't take it seriously. Perhaps I should have done. It was the first glimpse of the topsy-turvy standards and protocols of the film business—Hollywood style—that later were going

to involve me. But, at that point, filming meant just a temporary way of earning money: film stars a curious breed of people to be watched with detached interest and amusement.

I still regarded the theatre as the only serious way of making a living as an actor and went to audition for a part in Orson Welles's production of *Moby Dick*, which he was staging for a limited run of three weeks.

I walked into the Duke of York's theatre one Thursday morning. A working light lit the stage, dozens of people were milling about the dim auditorium and, towering overall, was this enormous man with a big cigar and script in one hand, a megaphone in the other.

I'm six foot two myself but, with his bulk of frame and personality, Orson Welles succeeds in impressing his size on all his fellow men.

Someone shoved a script in my hand and I began to read.

Mr. Welles, in one of his bad moods that morning, glowered and said something sarcastic.

I made a couple of terse suggestions as to what he could do with his opinions and started to walk out.

A bellow of laughter and a booming shout followed me: "Come back here you. . ."

He promptly offered me the largest part (next to his), without a

please turn to next page



"Sometimes I don't know if I'm coming or going!"



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DOSSIER ON DANGER MAN

continued from previous page

reading. This began for me one of the most rewarding and exhilarating experiences I have known in the theatre.

Compressing the scope of Melville's sea-epic into confined dramatic form, with the stage set as the swaying deck of a whaler in mid-Pacific, was a challenge in itself. Working with Orson Welles was a greater challenge.

He had chosen his cast from repertory and character actors. There were no "star" names among us. We worked as a team, and Orson drove us to find the exact force of the play

much as Captain Ahab drove his crew to find the white whale which had taken off his leg.

Larger than life, blasting directions through his megaphone, he bullied, persuaded, encouraged and led us through rehearsals. We sweated, tried, failed and triumphed.

THOUGH he had a dozen different, creative ideas a minute, he wanted ours, too. Anyone could make a suggestion, from the electrician to the leading actor—"Good! That's a better idea than mine. Come on, let's try it." One three-line sequence defeated us. We had begun rehearsals at ten that morning. By quarter to eleven that night even Orson's devoted crew were near mutiny.

We looked at each other and, by common, unspoken consent, we all walked out across to the pub. So far as we were concerned, that was it for that night. We underestimated Mr.

Welles; it took him one and a half minutes to realize what had happened. Before we had time to order our drinks he was among us, ordering them himself and turning on such force of personality that, actors as we were, we became a captive audience, helpless with laughter at his anecdotes and stories.

Then, without mentioning the play, he led us back to the theatre like a flock of lambs, and kept us there until 5 a.m. on the same three-line sequence.

The production got rave notices, but the theatre was already booked for another play and we could not run beyond our scheduled three weeks.

Some time after, more than able to do with one day's money for one day's work, I went along to the film studios again.

A young actress was being given a test for a part opposite Dirk Bogarde,

and I volunteered to act as his stand-in.

In the haphazard luck of films, when the Rank casting office saw the rushes, it was to me they offered a contract, for five years, starting at £4,000 a year.

This eclipsed any guarantees my bank-clerk days had offered and, for the second and last time in my life, financial security tempted me.

I saw it providing us with all the things we had never been able to enjoy as a family: a home of our own, time together, a chance to see more of Catherine growing up.

BUT, as I soon began to discover, in a bank, or a film studio, the basic price demanded for security remains the same: conformity.

At nineteen I'd been unable to settle for the 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily routine with a pension as the golden carrot at the end of forty years.

At twenty-nine it became equally difficult to submit to the ideas the Studio had then for "grooming a potential star."

I fitted into the conventionalities of their glossy publicity schemes with about as much ease as I had embarked on my first dancing lessons at the Sheffield Youth Club—and certainly with less enthusiasm.

Getting me to take part in *The Parade of Stars* at the Cannes Film Festival, or cultivate a smooth line in cocktail party talk was an unrewarding task.

They must have felt that, in me, they'd netted an oyster with more sand than pearl.

They compensated for this by deciding to project a public image of me as a "rebel." In fact, I had never been less rebellious.

I passively accepted it all, as disinterested in the kind of films I was having to make as in the round of publicity "celebrations" I was expected to attend.

At one such party, when the champagne was flowing to launch a new picture, I found myself thinking back to my first real success in the West End, *Serious Charge*.

That play had earned me a fraction of the money I was now receiving. But the work had been challenging and absorbing, and I knew that in the two hours of the first performance alone I had gained more personal satisfaction than I would in five years of contract film-making.

On that First Night, still unaccustomed to the accepted publicity ballyhoo of "celebrating," Joan and I had shared a quiet drink in my dressing-room.

Afterwards we had gone home talking all the way about the thoughts and hopes we had put into reaching this goal, and all the things to which it could lead.

Now, when I came home after some publicity stunt, there was little to tell her about except my growing dislike of all the things I regarded as phoney nonsense and the studio called "glamour."

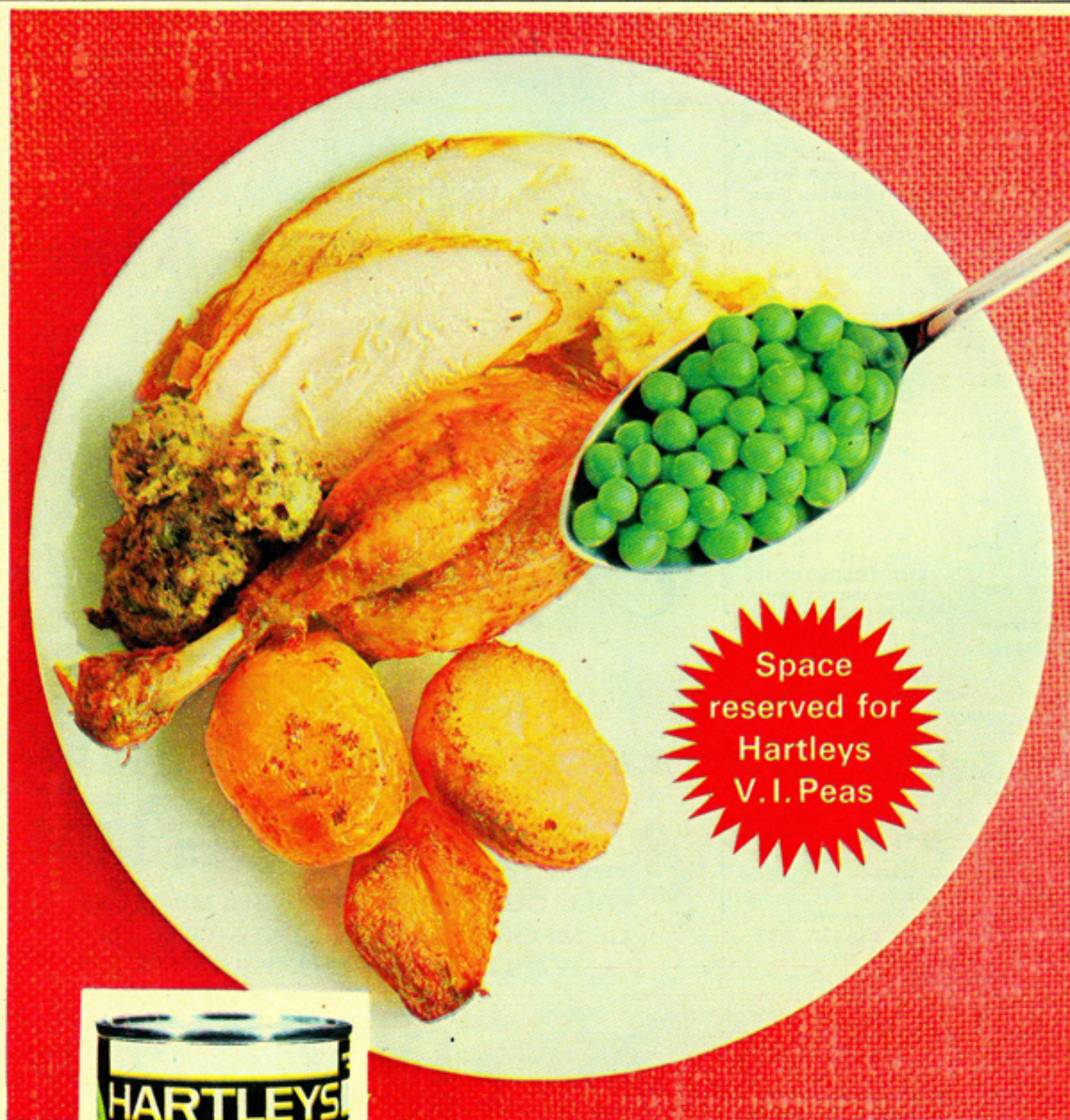
I felt I was becoming not only a puppet actor but, to some extent, a puppet human being, too.

I should have had the honesty to break the contract. Instead I thought I could see it out comfortably for five years. But, when I went to South Africa on location and came face to face with the concentrated results of too much "glamour"—I changed my mind.

NEXT WEEK:

No "girls and guns" for
Danger Man

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