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# FILM

**MONTHLY**

**PATRICK McGOOHAN**  
exclusive interview  
**CHRISTOPHER  
PLUMMER**  
in  
**THE ROYAL HUNT  
OF THE SUN**

**THE  
GREGORY  
PECK  
LIFE STORY**





*"I must have individuality in everything I do," says McGoohan.*





In his first Hollywood film, *Ice Station Zebra*, McGooohan steals the acting honours



As John Drake in "Danger Man," McGooohan built up a tremendous following on TV

## Mike Tomkies reports

●Patrick McGooohan came off the set of his first Hollywood film, *Ice Station Zebra*, his bright blue eyes glaring about him in that oddly disconcerting way he has.

He'd just done a scene with Rock Hudson and Ernest Borgnine—just about stolen it in fact which was no small achievement—and he was still edgy and tense. He shook hands, took me to his dressing-room. We wouldn't have long, he warned. What trivialities did I wish to know?

Why was he making this film after turning down Hollywood offers for years? That was a trivial question. Well, because he admired its director John Sturges. Would I care to ask him something less trivial?

McGooohan is always a tough interview. All right, I thought. "Danger Man" on TV made him a star name and earned him some £2,000 a week. All right.

"I think you're basically an idealistic man," I said. "Don't you now long to do something purposeful—without having to worry about big profits or commerciality?"

His eyebrows raised and he looked at me intently. To my surprise he wasn't annoyed.

"Yes," he said. "I am an idealistic man—so I shouldn't really be talking to a journalist. By talking on this level I'm betraying that idealism."

He stopped and glared at the floor. I toyed with the idea of leaving. It was an awkward moment. Suddenly McGooohan clapped his hands. "Look, if you want to ask some intelligent questions come back another day. Right now we don't really have time."

I went back another day. He had set an hour aside. (Continued overleaf)

# THIS MAN MCGOOHAN





The scenes on these pages show Patrick McGoochan with co-stars in Ice Station Zebra

(Continued) He wore horn-rimmed glasses and looked oddly donnish. His mood had changed. He was affable. He poured two glasses of iced water. "Shoot!" he said.

"You said you took this role in Ice Station Zebra because you admired the director's work. Is it a new challenge in any way and wasn't it dangerous to play yet another secret agent?"

"No, not at all dangerous. I have admired Sturges' work a long time. When he rang me up about it I liked the way he talked and I accepted the film even though there wasn't a script at the time. Then I read the book and I had no qualms whatever about playing it because it was a completely different type of secret agent from the one I'd played for years in 'Danger Man'. A first class part.

"I don't feel it's taken a long time for me to get recognition enough to be asked to film in Hollywood. It took me a long time to actually come here, yes. I was under contract to Rank for two years but I got axed along with many other actors when the financial crisis hit British films in the late Fifties. I have been offered Hollywood parts on and off for many years since but it's never worked out before mainly because I was so busy in England. I didn't want to pick up my roots and put them down somewhere else without very good reason. I'm not particularly ambitious to be a 'film star' or to earn millions. Being a film star is probably one of the most confining occupations in the world. The

last word I would associate with it is 'freedom'. And freedom in my work and in my private life is something I have always wanted."

McGoochan is an unusual actor in that stardom and just acting are not enough for him. Towards the end of his 49 episodes of "Danger Man" he became involved in the scripting and production sides of the series. Later he produced his own series, "The Prisoner" and wrote and directed some of the episodes. Even though "The Prisoner" was not the commercial success that "Danger Man" was, McGoochan proved he possesses exceptional technical, inventive and original abilities.

"I must have individuality in everything I do," he told me. "It's not easy to find it always. I am an actor first although I'm now going into the fields of production, directing and writing, too. I find all these challenges, this total involvement in everything I do, the most exciting way to live.

"A man must create pressure in his working life, something to which he can respond and must overcome. I question everything. I don't accept anything on face value. I argue because by arguing something good often results.

"I've sometimes been accused of being difficult and edgy and complicated but only because I want the end product to be as perfect as possible. I haven't always endeared myself to some people perhaps.

"But we all worked very hard on 'Danger Man' and it became the first ever British made series to break through into the American market. It paved the way for many other British shows that have since followed. (Like 'The Avengers' for example.)

"In 'The Prisoner' I tried to create a first class piece of entertainment but I hoped it had truth too because here also I was concerned with the preservation of the individual and his liberty. The stories were all about one man, one scientist's





great unflinching battle for survival as an individual in a macabre world in which every move was watched by electronic eyes and all his neighbours were suspect. He had to live under wraps all the time. His individuality was constantly threatened, even his sanity.

"It was a heightened form, of course, but in a sense we today are all having our individuality threatened. We face an onslaught of trivial standards don't we? Whether from advertising slogans or from a concern for pop standards, fashion, how people and things look rather than how they really are. It's all a kind of thought conditioning and perhaps in some ways almost as bad as the brain washing in the East. How can a person be truly individual today? It's a big question."

Are you, in fact, a sort of prisoner yourself from the fame 'Danger Man' brought you?

McGoohan laughed. "A good question. I don't think so but I do have this permanent threat—that constant recognition and being 'in demand' can destroy one's perspective. But as long as you regard what you're doing just as work and the fact of people recognising, lionising you and asking for your autograph just as a social part of the business, you are all right. You have to put it all into its proper context."

"But today this exposure doesn't only belong to actors. TV has opened the world up and everyone is more exposed to everyone else. TV has changed the face of all our lives. Even a minor politician who is aligned to a small noisy Parliamentary group can be suddenly splashed all over TV for something he says. He may represent only about two per cent of Parliament yet suddenly he's a celebrity. This sort of fame comes to people in so many TV shows too. Ordinary people become gimmick 'stars' overnight, enhance a show for a while, then are sent

back to where they came from. It must be a strain too for those people laughed at in 'Candid Camera', even if they did give permission for their shots to be used."

"At least as an actor I'm attuned to this but it must hit ordinary folk very hard indeed."

Why do you like to work at such a high pitch? Is this because you're afraid if you stand still all you've built up might vanish?

McGoohan smiled briefly. "I like working under pressure. I, unluckily, only have two gears. Very low and very high. I wish I could cultivate the middle gear but I can't. At MGM, Elstree, where my offices are, I allow my desk to get cluttered up for three days. I look at my 'IN' tray till it won't hold any more, descend upon it and clean it right up. It's a bad way to work but it's the way I'm made."

What do you do if you don't create pressure in your working life? Sit waiting for someone to ring up with a part?

"Acting alone just isn't enough for me. Oh, if you're playing Macbeth or King Lear you have no time for anything else, that's for sure. But if you're playing a character in a TV series as long as I have you know so much about him your reactions on reading the script, your insights, how you play him in this or that scene, are automatic. So eighty per cent of your energy lies dormant. But—if you involve yourself with production, directing and writing—it helps the acting too."

That's all very well for a man who is

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## THIS MAN McGOOHAN

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capable of doing all four things. But surely such ability is rather extraordinary?

"Not really. When you've done 49 one hour shows and 39 half-hour shows and are interested in the results, you must become involved in the techniques of shooting film. It's a natural process to participate in the writing and direction."

Don't all these long hours disrupt your home life with your wife and three daughters?

"No. I live at Mill Hill and the studio is at Elstree. I take a run and a jump from my home and I'm right in my dressing-room! There's no problem that way."

In "Danger Man" you were always outwardly calm yet were capable of erupting into great violence. But in private life you're known to control your temper. With such a volatile nature as your's is this at the price of ulcers?

He laughed. "I should never have thought of John Drake as a calm man but one with a constant potential of eruption. This is essential to any part. The audience must be aware of a man wanting to erupt into action. In my real life even, as well as in the case of that character, it's not so much temper. It is anger as opposed to temper. Temper can be inconsequential or the result of hysteria. Anger at injustice perhaps is nearer the mark than temper. Anger should imply something colder with a good reason behind it."

In private life I've been known to lose my temper anyway! But if it was the result of working too hard I always try to go back to what caused it and put it right. I'm not ashamed to admit that I do have a temper. It's essential sometimes."

I asked Patrick if he had had enough of TV for a while.

"I think I've had enough of TV series for a good while, but one must have a perspective about TV. It's entering a new era today. Two hour TV 'premieres' are the new thing—they will be top shows with top stars in them and with budgets of around £350,000. These shows will be networked on TV first then released in the regular movie theatres like films are now. TV almost killed Hollywood, people said, but now the biggest boom of all time in film-making is coming up. In a few years you won't be able to get on a film stage in Hollywood because it's just not possible to keep the TV screens filled with enough original material. Look how many repeat shows there are on TV today."

"I intend to go into producing some of these shows myself. With a million dollars spent on them, actors will no longer have to do the hop, skip and a jump type of TV exposure. And big stars who now shy away from TV will be drawn in too. I own several properties myself and I intend to go into this sort of deal in a big way."

Have riches changed your way of life?

"I wouldn't say so. I still have the same home (where he lives with his actress wife, Joan Drummond, and daughters Catherine 16, Anne 9, and Frances 6). I still drink the same beer. I still use the same pubs in London—usually the public bars because that's where the action is. And I think I still have the same friends from my broke days—those that were real friends that is."

"As I said, I only want to be a true individual, to organise my working life so I do what I believe in."

"I like to think of myself as a man of hope. I try never to allow myself to become engulfed by outside pressures, though I might sometimes be by my own. In fact, we must resist to the last my boy—and die laughing!"

McGoohan is a serious man—but interestingly so.

And he is a wonderful actor. ☐ END

"I like to think of myself as a man of hope," says McGoohan.



## RING OF BRIGHT WATER

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separations which are so often disastrous in actor's lives. In this way, we aren't exposed to the danger of complications arising from one being on one side of the world while the other is left behind. Also if we're in the same film it allows us to keep the whole family intact by being able to take the children with us on location."

Ring Of Bright Water is one of those rare films today with tremendous family appeal, and good, clean wholesome entertainment. Personally, I only wish there were more like them. The screen is being swamped with stories about sexual matters and violence. Seeing this film was like a breath of wonderful fresh air.

As for otters, what wonderful little creatures they are. I wouldn't mind having one for a pet myself!

KEN JOHNS

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