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GUYS  
GIRLS  
& GUNS  
ISSUE

SPECIAL SEVEN  
PAGE PREVIEW  
OF JAMES BOND'S  
'THUNDERBALL'

CLAUDINE AUGER





● Patrick McGoochan nearly turned down the part which won him the role of John Drake in the "Danger Man" series—the series which is shown in 61 countries and has made him an international star.

Pat told me: "I was offered a part in the television production of the play 'The Big Knife,' but I wasn't happy about accepting because the character was a film star. And the author, Clifford Odets, had used the play to say some very nasty things about Hollywood.

"I told the producer: 'The play has to be cut for television, anyway, so let's cut out all the rubbish about Hollywood—then I'll do the part.'

"The producers of the 'Danger Man' series were watching that production and decided to offer me the part of John Drake on the strength of it."

Pat broke a silence of many months when he talked to me on the set at Shepperton studios where "Danger Man" is being filmed. For a long time he refused all requests for interviews, but now he was again talking in the charming but very frank way he has about his career.

He said sadly: "I suppose most people consider that I'm a tough character, but what I really want to do is make them laugh.

"As soon as I complete this latest series of 'Danger Man' I'm going to make a feature film—and it is going to be a comedy.

"I'm sure the fans will accept the change. After all, James Garner did goodness knows how many years in 'Maverick' and it didn't take people long to accept him as a light comedian when he started making features."

Pat's blue, Irish eyes sparkled as he said: "I suppose some kids will be disappointed when I change to comedy. I had a letter from an eight-year-old boy recently. He said: 'My dad and I have had a bet. I say you dive through the window every morning on your way to work.' I had to let him down lightly, so I wrote back: 'Only when I'm late.'"

In fact, Pat does many of his own stunts for the series.

"But the insurance company won't let me do the more spectacular ones. They won't let me dive through windows. It's only toffee glass, but you never know. . . .

"Actually I often blush when I see some of the stunts I am supposed to have done as John Drake. But all the

*"All the violence in the series is boys' adventure comic stuff," says Pat*



**PATRICK  
McGOOHAN**  
TV's  
**DANGER  
MAN**  
CONFESSES  
THAT . . .

**IT'S FUN  
BEING A  
TV HERO**

*Pat performs many of the stunts himself in the series*





violence in 'Danger Man' is boys' adventure comic stuff—just good punch-ups, nothing sadistic. I insisted on that."

That was only one of the things Pat had to fight for when he first began making "Danger Man" six years ago. "At the beginning I had to battle to make sure that Drake became a believable character and that his attitudes were consistent from one scene to another. But now we've got a great team and the writers know what to put in and what to leave out of the scripts."

"Of course I can't pretend that everything about the series is wonderful. Television is done at such a pace. It means that, perhaps, only one in three of the scripts is good. The rest, well, . . ."

It is the breakneck pace of television film-making which has caused the breakdown in health and even the death of some stars.

But it is meat and drink to Pat.

He adjusted his horn-rimmed spectacles and grinned: "I have never enjoyed myself so much since I was in rep. I think of the series, in fact, as a fortnightly rep. The cast, the story and, to some extent, John Drake, change every 14 days."

"It is feature filming I hate. I once sat around for three weeks in Spain just to say three lines in a film. That's the kind of existence that would kill me."

It is obvious that the breathless pace generated by the "Danger Man" production suits Pat's particular metabolism. It gives him a chance to work off the energy and restlessness that shows itself in the heavy cigarette-smoking in which he indulges when the time comes for relaxation.

While filming "Danger Man" he carries around "in his head" three scripts—two of them for future episodes for which he often suggests lengthy changes. During his lunch "break" he has a secretary come to the studio to work on his other business activities.

And to round off a typical day (he is up at 6.45 a.m. to be at the studio by 8 and leaves again at 6.15), Pat often sits down at the typewriter to do some writing of his own.

"There is only one way to keep your brain moving—that's by using it," he said.

During the four-year break between the first and second "Danger Man" assignments, when he was making feature films like *All Night Long* and *The Three Lives Of Thomasina*, the restless Pat would often say to his manager Jimmy Miller: "Come on, Jim, let's not sit around any more."

And off they would go for a game of darts or billiards at a pub near the studio. It was one way of keeping active.

There won't be much sitting around when Pat gets down to making feature films in the future.

"I've promised myself that I will never again make a film in which I have no hand in the production side."

"I'm preparing to produce a movie—the comedy I told you about. It won't need a tremendous budget, but it won't be just for the art houses either. I don't see any future in making films which don't show a profit."

"I would probably consider making a film for another producer and just being an actor if, for instance, it was a Sam Spiegel-David Lean movie. But even then I'd probably turn it down because it would mean spending two years in the desert or somewhere like that."

Pat's love of the quiet life means that he occasionally has time to put his feet up and watch television at home. But he confessed some recent television productions have disturbed him.

"There have been some amazing things on TV recently. Some of the language has been shocking. Television producers should remember that it is the medium people watch in their living-rooms."

"I wouldn't walk into a stranger's home and start swearing and cursing—not until I got to know them better, anyway. And television producers should use the same yardstick—they are invited into people's homes and should respect that."

Pat lives a very happy home life. He is married to former actress Joan Drummond and has three daughters, Catherine, Anne and Frances. But it is also true to say he is happy at his work.

"If I can make somebody forget about the taxman and the mortgage for an hour, then I think I'm doing some little public service," he said.

K. G.

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