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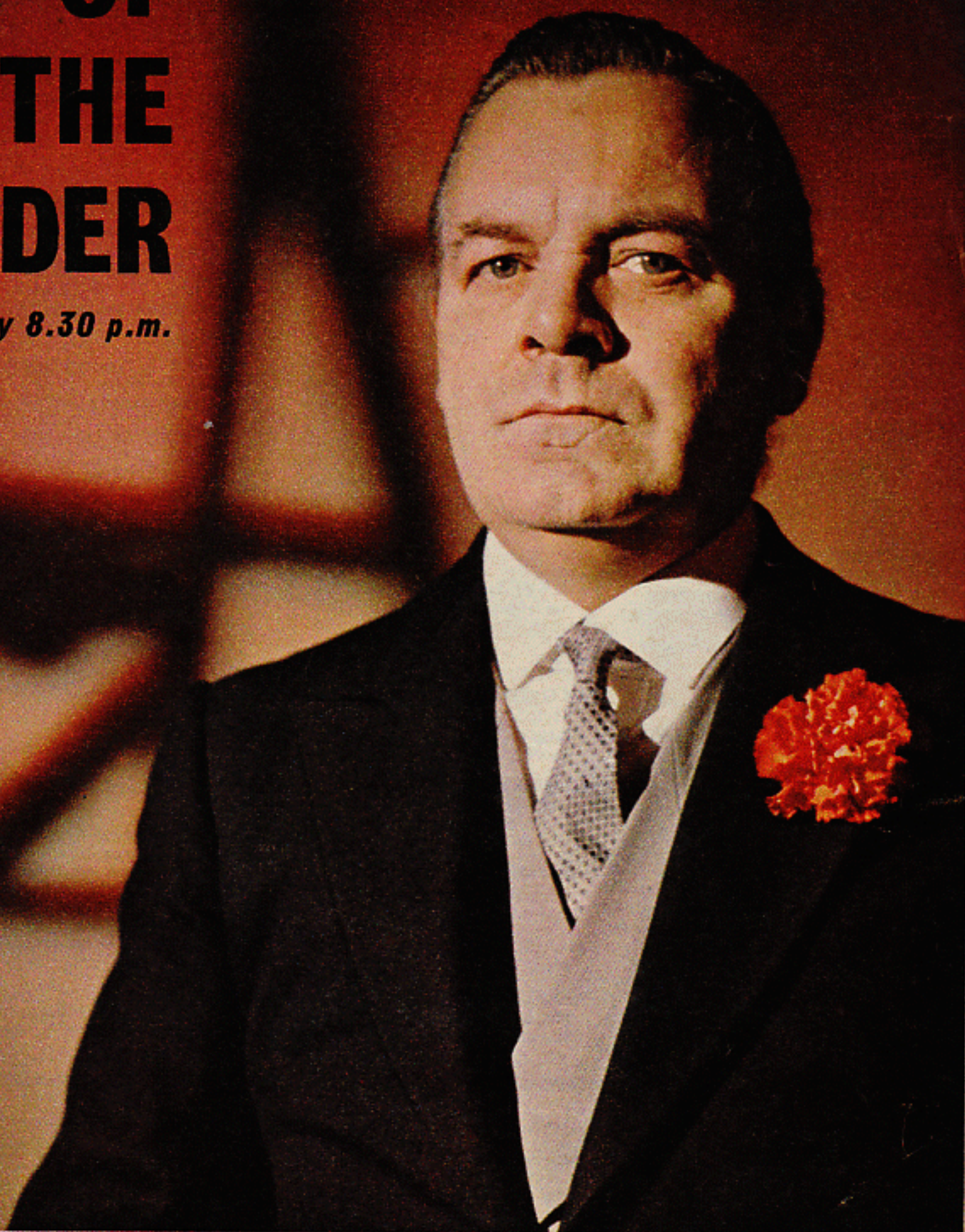
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Monday 8.30 p.m.



Perfection is McGoohan's prison

The Prisoner, Friday, 8 p.m.

by JOHN K. NEWNHAM

PATRICK MCGOOHAN was speaking about himself and *The Prisoner*. "I've worked my way through three nervous breakdowns," he said.

"First time, the doctor ordered three weeks off. Last time, he suggested three months. There was only one answer, and that was to keep on working. You can't let up when you're in charge."

Patrick McGoohan is executive producer, star, often director and screenwriter of the series, which is a challenge to McGoohan, those working with him and the viewers alike.

Until its public showing, *The Prisoner* was surrounded by mystery and gossip.

To judge by that gossip, McGoohan had become the most fearsome ogre since the

days of the Brothers Grimm.

He said: "I know what they've been saying behind my back. It's true that I have been unpredictable and impatient. You get that way when you're working at high pressure. I do, anyway. But I haven't lost a friend in the unit. Although now I've probably lost the lot through saying that!"

A dedicated man is difficult to live with, and McGoohan has flung heart and soul into *The Prisoner*. He has expected everyone around him to share his enthusiasm—with some justification—because most of those with responsible jobs had been with him since the early half-hour *Danger Man* programmes. They knew what to expect.

Assistant director Gino Marotta said: "Pat makes demands on everybody, and if

you try to raise any objections all he says is: 'Get it done!' And you get it done!"

"But I've never known a director like him because he does his homework so far in advance. He knows exactly what he is going to do well ahead and can warn you to get everything ready."

Art director Jack Shampian said much the same thing: "He has everything clearly in his mind down to the smallest detail. For one episode, he told me what 'props' he needed and just where he wanted them."

Trickiest problem for Jack Shampian was the control room with furniture popping up from nowhere and floors that opened. "Pat outlined what he had in mind and left me to work it out. I couldn't see at first how some of the things could be done."

The answer can be found in the large tank under the studio set. It's like a power-house, with activators, winches, electrically controlled hydraulic equipment and numerous other gadgets.

"What the eye can't see is even more fascinating than what is shown," said Shampian.

Lighting cameraman Brendan Stafford had his own problems. McGoohan wanted lighting techniques that had never been tried before.

There has been one tricky task after another, like having McGoohan in two places simultaneously but showing him in these two places at the same time. "The physical Prisoner," Brendan Stafford explains, "and the same man's mental processes at work elsewhere."

Casting director Rose Tobias Shaw said: "We've had a lot of battles. Pat has positive ideas about actors and he's knowledgeable about them. But he will listen to arguments, and he is always willing to see players who don't usually appear in television films. So there's a lot of off-beat casting. He has had his way most of the time because, after all, he's the executive producer. And it has worked."

Some of the actors have had a gruelling time. McGoohan may have succeeded in overcoming nervous breakdowns, but one actor, after a week of tough histrionics in which he

and the star faced each other the whole time, collapsed entirely and was unable to complete his scenes until he had recovered.

Producer David Tomblin said: "When you're making a television series, you reckon to get through from 15 to 20 set-ups a day. Pat has often averaged 33 a day, and in one two-day spell achieved 104."

It was to David Tomblin, too, that McGoohan suddenly flung the unexpected: "I want to do a Western—a full-scale Western—within *The Prisoner* frame-work." The startled David asked: "How?"

McGoohan's terse reply: "Work it out!"

So David wrote the script and directed it.

You can't help responding to a man who isn't sparing himself. McGoohan carries his crew with him because they respect his tremendous enthusiasm and energy. For every individual problem those around him might have, McGoohan has a dozen of his own.

Take one day, typical of many, when he arrived at the studios at 7 o'clock after script-writing until 2 a.m. He worked on the set until 5.30 p.m., then went into the cutting-rooms and stayed there until 10.

Two units have been at work for most of the time. When one unit went on location, Pat was needed for a day's work there. On the Friday, he spent all day in the studios, left at 7.30 in the evening, drove all night to the location, worked the whole of Saturday, left at 9.30 in the evening, arrived at the studios at 4 a.m. and did some tidying up there before he went home to Sunday breakfast.

When he went to Hollywood to complete scenes for the feature film "Ice Station Zebra" he was filming fight scenes at Elstree until 4 in the afternoon. After a shower and change of clothes, he drove to the airport, taking his secretary so he could dictate letters en route.

"I've only once seen him take a five-minute cat-nap!" said his personal assistant, Jimmy Millar, who is just as astonished as anyone else that anyone could keep up McGoohan's pace. It's certainly reflected in *The Prisoner*.



McGoohan . . . "You can't let up when you're in charge"