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Another true story in our occasional series, BRUSH WITH DEATH. This week "Danger Man"

Patrick McGoohan

talks to

Mike Tomkies...



and Vacuum Cleaners.

BER AL IN MY POCKET!

THE deadly cobra dropped out of a tree into the back of the jeep I was driving through the jungle. I could not repress a shudder.

Although it was a stunt deliberately arranged for a spectacular scene in a wild life film I was making in Africa, I have always been terrified of snakes.

But I was younger then, at the beginning of my career, and inexperienced in filming. I thought that to make the shot more dramatic, I would volunteer to do the stunt myself.

Just how dramatic it was to turn out, none of us knew.

The snake was supposed to land behind me and rear up. Then I would catch sight of it in the driving mirror and knock it away with one hand while driving with the other.

We prepared to shoot the scene.

I got into the jeep and started her up. The camera was mounted in front of me on the bonnet.

Ahead I could see the tree under which I was to drive and from which the cobra was to be dropped on to the tarpaulin covering the open back of the jeep.

The snake-handler was in position, his deadly charge shut away in a tin canister.

He removed the lid.

Somebody said: "Action!"

Already I was wishing desperately that I was a mile away, thinking how my sisters used to chase me for miles with an ordinary garden worm. And how all members of the reptile family send shivers down my spine.

Suppose he missed and the thing landed on me instead of on the tarpaulin?

He didn't.

I drove underneath the tree and heard the plop behind me. Through the driving mirror I saw the snake land and then disappear.

Somebody should have wised us up on the fact that snakes hate being exposed to direct sunlight. We were working in a temperature of 110 degrees and as soon as the cobra hit the red hot tarpaulin, it immediately tried to get underneath it into some shade.

I was terrified.

The fact that the snake had been milked of its poison did little to reassure me. I was sure you could never get it all out, and it takes only a drop or two of cobra venom to paralyse or kill a man.

I drove on, thinking that if I kept the jeep

moving, at least it might not feel secure enough to attack me.

Suddenly there was a hullabaloo of shouting from people in the unit and I felt something moving, struggling in my pocket.

I looked down and saw that the cobraabout 5 ft. of it—had burrowed down under the tarpaulin. And it's head was in my

I yelled with terror, grabbed the thing behind the head and leaped out of the moving jeep in one split second of panic.

Then I was running and trying to pull the thing away. But its fangs were fastened deep into the material of the pocket.

Today I feel sorry for that cobra. It was probably more terrified than I was, and only looking for some shade and a quiet time. But right then I was more concerned with my own problem.

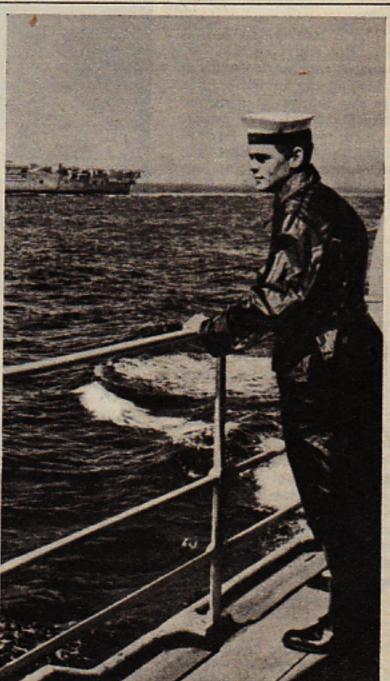
I wrenched it free, with a substantial part of the pocket, threw it as far as I could and did the next 100 yards in what must have been world record time.

It was sheer lunacy on my part to have attempted the stunt.

Every time I reach for small change I remember that cobra.

In Danger Man, my series on ITV, I enjoy working my own stunts when I can, but I make sure that they are human beings I'm fighting and that there are no snakes among them!

Danger Man McGoohan is back in Africa in Saturday's Adventure



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