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BILLY THORPE

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Patrick hates actors getting big "build-ups"

By British show business writer Iain Sproat

PATRICK McGOOHAN doesn't like being called a star.

"There are more stars in films and television than there are in the heavens—if you listen to the publicity men," he told me.

Patrick also doesn't like being treated with more deference than any other actor on the set. And he has no illusions about acting, either.

"What is an actor?" he asked. "An entertainer, a rogue, a vagabond, a clown — a man who plays at living and gets paid for it."

NO STARS

Nevertheless, he is a master of his craft. He directs **Danger Man** as well as playing the lead role (notice I didn't say "star"), agent John Drake. There are few actors more knowledgeable of the technicalities of filming.

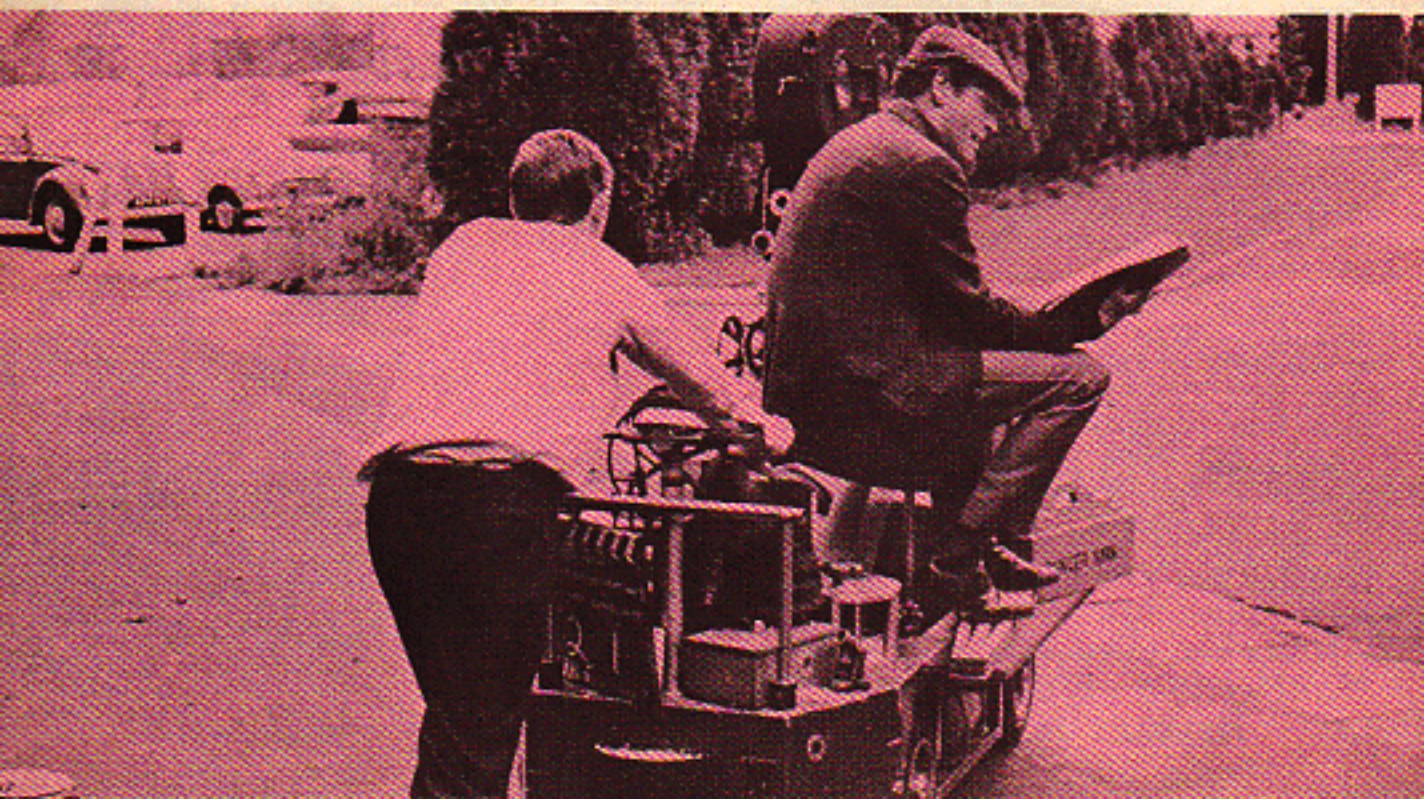
Patrick is such a perfectionist that when he had to play a jazz drummer in **All The Night Long** he would lock himself in a garage with a drum for hours on end, practising until he became an expert.

Patrick's TV self, John Drake, is surrounded by beautiful women, but he's always the gentleman. An actress who played opposite Patrick in the series said of Patrick: "He's a man's man who appeals to women."

His appeal comes from his wild, romantic Celtic charm, mixed with the stiff-upper lip traditions of his adopted home, Britain.

Patrick said of his approach to **Danger Man**: "I enjoy the work I am doing now."

- **PATRICK** hitches a lift on a camera buggy and has a last look at the script on his way to a **Danger Man** location. He gets annoyed when actors forget their lines.



IN HIS EYES



I make a good living. I'm lucky to be working at all.

"It's easy for things to go sour in this business. Very easy. But if they did, I wouldn't be concerned. My life is not just acting. To get into the really big time you have to dedicate yourself exclusively to the job and I'm not prepared to do that; it's not worth it.

"What's the incentive? Financial? At the very top you have to get a million dollars a picture to pay the tax on the last million.

"In any case, the values are out of proportion. It's ridiculous to pay anyone that kind of money. And, anyway, if you are not careful, when you do get to the top you just join the glorious galaxy of alimony payers."

For his money, Patrick works very hard, usually rising between 5.30 and 6 am and not leaving the studio until after 6.30 pm. Then there are the next day's scripts to learn.

The first thing you realise when you watch McGeehan filming is that he really can act.

He was nominated best television actor of the year in 1958 for his role in *The Greatest Man In The World* and in 1959 best theatre actor of the year for his performance in *Brand*.

He is fortunate in having a good memory for a script, though after 16 months without a break "your memory gets like a sponge."

Bad scripts are harder to learn. If he gets a really bad line, his custom, which you can hear for yourself on television, is to say it very slowly, each word separately, to give the line more apparent meaning.

He is a firm believer in discipline in acting. For example, he believes "it is unforgiveable not to know your lines." Outside acting, however, "I just react to circumstances. I have few constant habits there."

Patrick detests people arriving late for a scene. To him, acting is just like any other job. He refuses to think of what

PART TWO

THAT
MAN
McGOOHAN

he does in any high-flown terms of art: it is just entertainment; a therapy.

This down-to-earth attitude makes him easy to work with in some ways, difficult in others.

Patrick is a man of strong likes and dislikes.

He likes to watch a fine craftsman at work "whether he's an actor or a bricklayer." His favorite TV programs are "spontaneous documentaries" such as space ship launchings.

His dislikes?

He said: "I don't like people who obtrude on my privacy or anyone else's.

"I don't like the trend of being able to go up to anyone in the street and demand a public answer on, for example, 'What do you think of Harold Wilson?'"

Patrick is also against trends to categorise people.

"You know, I fear by AD 2000 we'll all have numbers, no names," he said.

An idea that has caught Patrick's imagination is to make a film of life in the year 2000.

"By then workmen will be able to operate their lathes by push-button from their beds," Patrick said. "How are we going to educate people for an abundance of leisure like that?" #

THE END

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