

VICTORIA

TV WEEK

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PATRICK MCGOOHAN
OF DANGER MAN

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Although Patrick is a mild-mannered hero . . .

DANGER! HE'S A MAN OF ACTION

. . . And he's surrounded by beautiful women

From Roslyn Owen in London



PATRICK McGOOHAN, adventurer hero of widely-popular British series, *Danger Man*, is always being compared to James Bond — and can't understand why.

As Special Security Agent John Drake in *Danger Man*, Patrick continually is in a James Bond setting.

But ruggedly handsome 6ft. 2in. tall Patrick, born in New York of Irish parents, told me: "James Bond and I have nothing in common. Both men are secret agents, but that's as far as it goes. Both get big audiences — of different kinds."

Patrick considers Bond amoral, while he believes John Drake is an influence for good.

John Drake, as Patrick plays him, is a mild-mannered man—who has the sting of a viper when confronted with danger. He is surrounded by beautiful women, but is not interested in romance.

John Drake keeps women at arm's length. He treats them with respect, yes. But never with romantic encouragement.

He insists that agent John Drake is not "a flashy type of character" like James Bond.

Rather, he is a calculatingly cold operator, treating danger with the caution it deserves, but never shirking a challenge or relenting in his assignments.

Although John Drake is always ready for a scrap and knows how to look after himself in a fight, Patrick McGoochan off-screen says he is a man of peace.

Over cups of tea on the set of *Danger Man* at the Shepperton studios of Britain's Associated Television company Patrick told me:

"I don't believe in fighting. I haven't fought anyone since I was a kid. There's no point in it.

"Occasionally I've been threatened with a fight—but nothing's ever happened. Fighting achieves nothing—like wars."

But don't get the idea though that Patrick is a softie. He won't allow stand-ins for the rough scenes in his series.

He told me: "I FEEL violent all the time—but so does anyone who's energetic. It's natural.

● **DANGER MAN** John Drake, played by Patrick McGoochan, with one of the many beautiful girls who appear in the series.

"But I don't feel violent towards other people or things. Only with myself. You could call it exasperation."

Did the McGoohan violence ever show, I wondered?

"I release it all on the squash court—or by singing," he told me. "I'm not what you'd call hot-tempered—temperament on the set is OUT as far as I'm concerned."

His blue eyes twinkled suddenly: "I just go home and beat my wife!"

"But seriously, there's never any need for shouting or temperament on this set—everyone in the crew's out to make things as easy as possible for everyone else."

As if to demonstrate the point, a prop man who was clearing the floor came and asked Patrick if he'd move from where he now was standing.

Patrick moved.

Patrick said the emphasis in *Danger Man* is on thrills and suspense and denies emphatically that it places too much emphasis on violence and sex.

"Television is not just for selective audiences—it's for everyone. It's an intruder in people's homes—and as a guest, should behave accordingly," he said.

"Why should people have violence and bloodshed thrust into their homes? It's not fair to children who can be watching TV at any hour—why frighten the three-year-old who's up late with toothache and being comforted by his mother in front of television?"

"No one has the right to do that." Patrick was very earnest.

"Of course, I've been in films full of sex and violence. They were very bad movies. On the other hand, where sex and violence come into a play—as very real parts of drama and life—they're completely necessary to the development of, say, a tragedy. Shakespeare is full of both elements—but in the right context, not just for their own sakes."

As John Drake, Patrick's companions are fast girls, fast cars, fast boats, fast aircraft—and fast death. But John Drake discourages affection from his glamorous co-stars.

After the first *Danger Man* series was sold to America, TV promoters flew to England and tried to persuade Patrick to have more contact with women in the show.

Patrick refused.

"The promoters wanted publicity shots

of girl's sitting on my knee and all that kind of thing," Patrick said.

"I told them what I thought of their ideas and sent them packing back to America."

"I am not having sex dragged into *Danger Man*."

"These romantic entanglements are okay for the movies, I guess."

"But with TV, children or grandmothers might by some chance see the scenes."

"That it would be a bad influence on them."

Patrick (the highest paid actor in British television, with a salary of over £2000 a week, and whose series this year held the top rating in America for three months) is determined to go back to the stage.

"I haven't sold my soul to television," he insisted.

"Right now I have a Broadway play lined up. It's going to be very big—unfortunately I can't name the play yet. Not till the contract's finally signed."

Patrick also plans to direct two feature films after the *Danger Man* series. One's a comedy, the other a heavy drama verging on farce. ("Sounds crazy, but that's what it is.")

Now Patrick, his shirt open to show his chest, strolled easily on to the bar-room set for a scene in *The Jamaica Story*—the *Danger Man* episode being filmed.

"Come and see a sexy scene," were his parting words.

For the next 10 minutes, he and actress Barbara Steele (very slinky in backless white lounging pyjamas) lounged in the bar, asking each other if they were bored.

Scene over, McGoohan wandered back.

"We're determined to keep gimmicks out of *Danger Man*," he said. "I'm anti-gimmicks for secret agents—they're unnecessary."

Patrick doesn't think James Bond's popularity is any threat to John Drake.

Neither do the rest of the *Danger Man* people. On the Shepperton set they call John Drake the "grand-daddy of the secret agents"—the one who paved the way for the Bonds and men from U.N.C.L.E. *Danger Man*, now a one-hour series, first was seen six years ago as a half-hour series.

"Nothing's as good as the original," I was told.

And *Danger Man's* long TV life seems to underline this point. #