
DANGER MAN

THERE'S NOTHING HAPHAZARD ABOUT
THOSE "DANGER MAN" FIGHTS (D.108).

Since the day the first episode of "DANGER MAN" was filmed, Patrick McGoohan has had one fight after another, in all types of differing situations, in all of the stories.

But not one fight has repeated itself.

Two men are responsible for this achievement. One is Pat McGoohan himself. The other is fight-arranger Frank Maher.

No two fights are ever the same for the simple reason that each one is scripted with as much care as the writing of the story itself. There is nothing haphazard about a single blow in any of the fights. Apart from fists, a wide variety of instruments have been used.

"Pat", Frank Maher explains, "doesn't like action for action's sake. It's got to have a reason. And every fight has got to be as carefully planned and rehearsed as the most exacting Thespian scene."

The original script gets Danger Man John Drake into a fight scene. Then Frank Maher takes over. Pat hands the script to him, says, "Write the sequence as you see it," and Frank maps it out on paper, blow by blow, movement by movement.

The fight script is given to Pat to examine. He goes through it with as much care as he studies his dialogue, and usually injects some of his own ideas. "And," Frank comments, "ninety-nine percent of his suggestions are right."

Then they go off and rehearse it together, with Frank as the opponent (he often is, too - he frequently turns up as a crook in the episodes, and just as often doubles for the other players). Then they change places so that Pat can judge exactly what the moves should be from both sides.

"We walk through it all slowly the first time," Frank says, "taking all the moves without any force behind them so that we can get them right. We may have to do this several times so that they can be memorised, also to figure out where we want the camera, and where the cuts for close-up inserts should be.

"Then we speed up the whole action during other rehearsals until the 'take' itself, when the action has gained its full impetus."

The rehearsal time varies. But one fight scene always takes very much longer than any of the straight acting sequences. And Pat McGoohan himself scorns the use of a double, not because he thinks it may show on the screen but because of his simple philosophy: "If people think they're watching me, then it's not playing the game with them to fob them off with someone else."

It's this innate honesty which shines through everything he does, even though it may be painful when he comes to some of those "Danger Man" fights!
