



EN GARDE

"AN EYE ON THE WORLD OF POPULAR CULTURE"

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--- NUMERO 5 ---

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"Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay"

"That personal-opinionizing and patterizing with quite a number of opinions on quite a number of subjects. Particularly about that most watchable of Telly programs and its most elegant personalities, of THE AVENGERS.

Patrick MacNee and
Diana Rigg"

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TACKLING...



.. an editorial
of sorts ..

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU OUT THERE IN ALPHAVILLE,

As you can see, EN-GARDE continues to grow and grow, not unlike a cancerous tumour of the mind.

In order to keep this bloated thing somewhere near half-decent size, this editorial will be cut to a minimum.

As usual Policy remains as before. EN GARDE is a matter and opinion and commentzine, remaining duly infatuated with Diana Rigg, Patrick MacNee and others of THE AVENGERS, that most elegant program. The Final Programme?

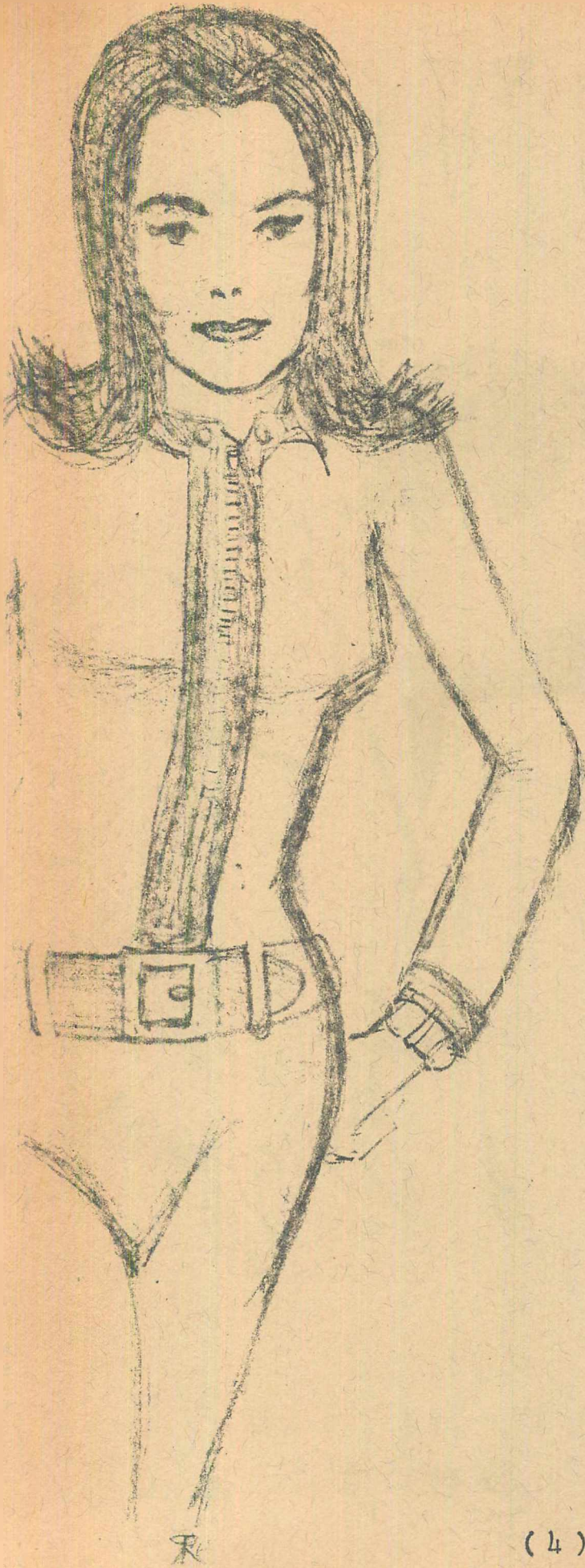
The list price of #6 will be pegged at least at \$1.25. If cover price is raised, subscriptions at the old rate will (of course) be honoured. Page count will be in the neighbourhood of 115, material will range (if everything comes in as per schedule) from a 20-page report on THE PRISONER from a Canadian, Mr. Currie, who saw them all. As is obvious 17 shows will not be seen here in the states. Also on the way is a 45,000 (apx.) Novel on the only pair of Secret Agents we ealy do recognize as The Avengers. companion to this issue's DEAD MAN'S TREASURE, but much more complete. Mr. Kawicki has promised to perform a word by word, and blow by blow rendition of "FORGET-ME-KNOT" for #6. Accompanying the text will be five photo-pages of pix off of the telly, as per this issue's rendition of DEAD MANTIS TREASURE.

As well, alas, as the usual makeshifts and Editorial and News & Notes and that cancerous lettercol... About the Novel.... It is really a joy and a beauty to behold, a delight to the mind, a paean of praise for the senses. It's pretty good.

More than that I shan't say, other than that every Star Trekkie around will absolutely have to have that issue.

Also there will be Art. Foster, Miller, and maybe people like Doug Lovenstein, Alicia Austin, Derek Carter and Others.

However, it will not be ready in time for the BayCon. Alas. The Editor will, however, be there and taking subs for #6 and generally spreading good cheer amongst the gladsome ensemble. I'll be seeing you.



It will still be The Annish, however. It will be coming out at the beginning of October (Breathes There Hardly A Man Today Who Can Remember RIGGER DIGGER ONE). I wonder what ever happened to the old custom of Annish's? Maybe it was not a Darwinian Survival Characteristic. The one's who pubbed large Annish's did not long survive the issuance of their child.

Believe me, the material just keeps pouring in.... Which brings me to another point.

I am not a number! I am a free man!

FICTION Of late there has been a small but steady stream of fiction wending its torturous way to Festung Schultzhaus. This mag was never initially conceived of as a vehicle for bad fiction, or fiction of any kind, just because it happens to deal with The Avengers. Good resolutions, like Panzer divisions on the Russian Front, are quickly eaten away.....

EN GARDE was supposed to be merely a few thin in-depth treatments of Diana Rigg, Patrick MacNee and THE AVENGERS. It has not only developed roots in various other spectra of the entertainment world, it has developed the ~~mn~~various appetite of a Frankenstein.

And this fiction keeps arriving.... And some of it is quite good.

Apart from The Novel, and chunks of a number of stories, most of it however suffers from a few deficiencies. This is neither a slur on THE AVENGERS and the material possible from such a restricted formula, nor on the caliber of the enthusiastic if untrained authors themselves. It is a simple statement of life. As most any professional writer will tell you, building a good readable (and saleable) story requires a lot of back-breaking background work. Day-in and day-out writing and re-writing, until the day comes when you receive ~~for~~ for that brain-child of yours. The typical EN GARDE fan lacks that background, unfortunately, though not all.

Discipline, naturally, is what most of these stories lack. Order, comprehensive plot, continuity, credibility, character development, etc.

Ideas, strangely enough, are the least of my worries. Ideas there are aplenty. Treatment is oft-times crude,

alas. And character continuity is very often unsound.

We have here two in-depth personalities already created for us, Mrs. Peel and John Steed. The perfect gentleman and the perfect woman (if not necessarily the perfect Lady). To pass the EN GARDE test, these two must either stay in the characters created for them in the telly show, or reason must be given for observable deviation.

Or Tara and John, or Cathy and John, if you care to try....

This is the really essential point. To write otherwise would to violate the premises of The Avengers characters we have all come to know and love so well. I mean, after all, can you imagine John Steed...at least in public...giving Mrs. Peel a more than casual pat on the rump?

Which brings us to another point about much of the fiction. It tends towards the erotic.

Nothing wrong in that, by itself. No prudery involved. Both Steed and Mrs. Peel are fully functioning adult mature people. And Diana Rigg has certainly created one of the most impudently provocative females ever. Certainly.

But when writing, remember that the characters must stay in character, the stories the main thing, and all that.

In fact, if I'm still sitting on a tidbit of fiction of yours, you can very nearly rest assured that there is at least something in the story that I very much liked. When time permits, most of these will be going back with suggestions to the author for alteration, character or dialogue re-handling, etc.

As mentioned above, however, some it has been somewhat erotic. One hurriedly returned gem must have singed the mails both ways.

It has made entertaining reading, however.

Working on that principle, I'm at present contemplating large amounts of sheer fiction in future issues, or an all-fiction issue. At worst, I'm sure many of you will have had a ball writing and working out your own AVENGERS welpicture. At best, it might be pubbed.

Hopefully this fiction will be neither an insult to the mind of the reader nor to the kooky kinky characters we hard-core types admire so well. And if ABC objects, I'll very happy to bootleg your material.

I'll Be Seeing You.

John T. Mansfield Lives!
Viva Pablo!

DON'T BOTHER Sending any scripts to England, by the way. The scripting for The Avengers is wrapped up very, very tight by the Guild or whatever of Scripters. No non-British need apply. Considering the difficulty most Yanks have in visualizing a really British yarn, and the quality of the material we have producing over here, perhaps it is not a completely unmixed disaster.

YES, VIRGINIA, THERE IS A R. SCHULTZ

Despite whatever you may think, I do exist. I just don't answer every missive and those that I should answer don't always get the necessary priority and even then answers are hellishly slow.

Do any of you have any conception of the sort of mail I get for EN GARDE? The perishing thing has a circulation of 600 and....growing.... Every day there hoves into the box at least one to two fanzines and from one to six letters.

Not only that, but Yho Hble & Obt Srvt To Cmnd has to go out there and make a living. Ghod knows EN GARDE doesn't pay for itself.

There's envelopes, postage to mail them out (the USPOD is very bad on credit cards), paper, ink, even an occasional ink pad, staples, the new stapler I did finally buy recently, stencils, corflu, stencil cement, electro-stencils for the lovely art I'm finally beginning to get, photo-pages and photo-covers, absolutely necessary contributor-connected postage, I mean, the Internal Revenue Department just loves to read my 1401 Long Forms....

But I really do each day get up saying that I will answer quickly all the mail sitting around. I really do. Honest. But it keeps coming in and the flesh is weak.

Circumstances just do not permit response to every letter nor necessarily for a quick response. ("My Ghod, don't any of you Out There own a tripewriter? My eyes are going under this handwriting that keeps arriving!")

Lack of response does not mean disinterest or dislike. Just lack of time and initiative and energy and maybe the bad luck of getting lost in one of the every growing letter piles. (If my fire Insurance man was to come up here....)

ENVOY! THE NEW IMPROVED MIND-SCRUB!

Old hard-line fans might recall that this was once the title of a duo-edited and published fanzine that Ken Cheslin and Schultz, Esq., once put out for OMPA (the Off-trail Magazing Publishers Association). Them were, I suppose, The Good Old Days.

But the ENVOY that lurks about at this moment is an entirely different pot of tea altogether.

This ones warps minds better than an Asimovian hyper-drive. It should quite definitely Blow The Mind of any one of you out there who considers him or herself a hard-core D. Rigg fan.

Imagine if you will....

A color cover, bedsheet size mag, featuring the evocative Diana with red English tea rose. Five interior pages in full bloom'n' colour, three more in crystal-clear blackandwhite. An article by Lork Birkett, on his and Peter Hall's filming of "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" with the Royal Shakespeare Company in the wilds of Warwickshire. All photography by Bob Robinson who is one of the fab photographers (mostly fashion) of this generation. Shots include Michael Dyston as Demetrius, Helen Mirren as Hermia, David Warner as Lysander, Ian Holm as Puck....and Judi Dench, the incomparable Judi Herself as Queen Titania and I'm waiting for the day for some nit to Discover her. Oh, she is really good.

Oh, I'm telling you, it will really blow your mind.

Write for the May 1968 issue of ENVOY, price 5 shillings or \$1.00. The English write to: Logan Gourlay Publications, Ltd., 17, Curzon Street, London W.1. Yanks write to: Eastern News Distributors Inc., 155 West 15th Street, N.Y.C., N.Y., 10011.

If living in a large well-booked metropolitan area, try the more completely stocked magazine-paperback-book outfits, ask for ENVOY, a British mag on the Arts and Entertainment, bedsheet size (same as Ladies Home Comp, etc.).

If you don't get yourself a copy very soon you're going to regret it when you see someone else's copy.

If "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" comes to the reserved seat movie houses by Christmas, I really will believe in Santa Claus. That creaking sound you hear is my over-stuffed and badly-compartmentalized mind bending....

CURSES! FOILED AGAIN! To a number of stalwarts out there, the following will be quite tragic news. The Diana Rigg poster in the raffale is gone.

My co-editor drew #20 over the 4th of July week-end, thereby cutting the threads of hope for many others. The lucky chap who won (and Gary didn't know who was holding #20 until he phoned me that day) was Hank Davis of Kentucky. The unfortunate losers were: ~~Robert Firebaugh~~, Bill Brown, Don Miller, Mike Lalor, Bob McNish, Norm Grenzke, and John Mansfield. Sorry about that, chief.

CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN A few people have griped about not receiving their copies of CoF #12, the one with the two-pager on The Avengers. CoF is a shoe-string outfit, unfortunately, financed by the distributor, almost all work done by the Editor and his mother. He is notorious for being slow to mail back-issues and for oft-times not having any of the other back-issues he advertises in the mag. He is notorious for a lot of other things, and if you want any sort of reply, I should have warned you not to mention my name. As he might still Remember My Name.

We exchanged pleasantries once, ye might say.

THEY'RE OUT Movie

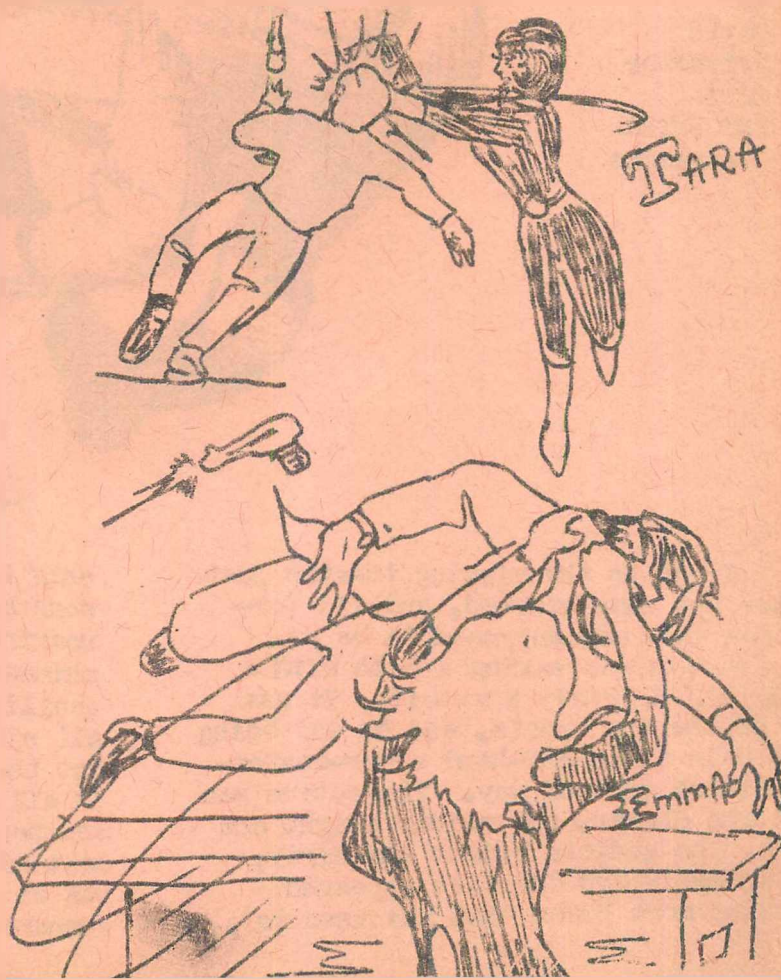
Star News is very definitely out of the posters mentioned in #4. No more "Dianna Riggs" (sic) posters there at any price. However..... I still have for sale copies of two types of very, very large posters. $3\frac{1}{2}$ by 5 feet, 2000 sq. inches and all that. One features D.R. in an EmmaPeeler, the one pictured on the cover of "THE FLOATING GAME" pocketbook by Garforth and Berkely pocketbook pubbers. She is holding brolly and bowler and giving us that ol' sexy smile. The other is a real portrait shot of her holding a gold-plated

Webley .32 revolver on us. Remember the frontis sequence where she appears from behind a Regency chair and points a revolver at us? That's the scene. The price, however, remains an astounding \$12 per. Too High, admittedly, but still the best game in town.

Also still available are the Corgi "AVENGERS" Gift Set #40, a set of toy cars. The two cars...with two figures...are naturally a red '27 Bentley convertible ~~1 1/2~~ Litre Le Mans with John Steed Driving. And a white (rather than powder-blue) Lotus Elan S/2 with a Emma-Peel-ish figurine in white sailor suit and beetle cap standing alongside. And three little black, malacca handled furled umbrellas...oops! Brolly's.

New Addition to the group. Sets of photos off the telly, 10 to a set, \$2.00 to the set, eight shows covered. RETURN OF THE CYBERNAUTS (camera malfunction reduced me to just the first half of the show): two sets. YOU HAVE JUST BEEN MURDERED, DEATH'S DOOR, 3 sets apiece. THE 350,000 BREAKFAST, ESCAPE IN TIME, four sets. DEAD MAN'S TREASURE and FORGET-ME-KNOT two sets apiece. Could make it four easy for F-M-K, but am using most of the best for the forthcoming photo pages. \$9.00 for five sets or 10% off on over \$10.

I'll Be Seeing You,



TASSELS and other Gadgets

by
David
Sylvester
from
ENCOUNTER
magazine



DEREK CARTER
'68

I got to the viewing theatre just after the show started, and I'd forgotten what was supposed to be on. Dean Martin was taking a bath with a girl called Lovely Kravetz. It was one of the spy spoofs, and he was being Matt Helm in an off-hand elder-statesmanshipish sort of way. The action was fast and clever, the colour bright and clean, the gadgets bright and dirty, and suddenly Cyd Charisse appeared (looking more human than she used to), (9)

only to be shot dead whilst doing a song and dance in a night club, wearing a golden leotard hung with shimmering tassels, one of them dangling from her mount of Venus and all of them shimmering as she moved. But the most elating thing was how it all moved from one episode to another, cutting from each to the next without ceremony or sense. It was as snappy as THE WASTE LAND compared to PARADISE LOSE, as bright

as a TV commercial. I couldn't strictly follow what was happening, how the hero had got to wherever he was or became involved with whoever he was with, but the message was coming across subliminally and anyway there was the heady joy of yielding to that cool transcendence of continuity. I only wondered, since every sparkling idea seemed so expendable, how such invention could possibly be sustained for a couple of hours. Suddenly, after twenty minutes, a titled flashed on to the screen: "THE SILENCERS". My God, I thought, if they've put all that before the credits, what can be coming after? And then the screen went blank. It had been a trailer assembled for the Press.... But a few days later I saw a whole picture that was almost as inconsequential: Louis Malle's "VIVA MARIA", with Bardot and Moreau.

Summit-meeting movies, contrived in order to bring together rival super-stars, usually disappoint (by rivals I do mean stars of the same sex). Perhaps the way to make them work is not to conceal the point of the exercise - to make the real story of the film the showbiz story behind it. Certainly VIVA MARIA makes no pretence of being a film that might have been made with other stars. It's a kind of party in honour of France's leading ladies. So Malle as host does his bit by taking off some of the mannerisms of France's most honored directors, Renoir, Clair and Vigo. The whole stance of the film is celebratory. It takes a Hollywood genre, the musical Western - a hybrid, indeed, of the two essentially Hollywood genres - and makes a Frenchified version of it, with nodules of co-la-la and anticlerical satire. Besides celebrating French culture, it celebrates the movies. See, it says, this bridge being blown up by a bomb; see how it has both verisimilitude and ideal beauty when rendered in Panavision and Eastman colour. See, it says, how two prima donnas are actually having fun working together. See what goodies a single film can offer; women, wine, song, revolution, travel, torture, glamour, laughter, period flavour, love, death, dancing.

Maller has described the film as a "Western in skirts". Its heroines are its heroes, proving their virility not only by winning a revolution but

by steering clear of permanent entanglements, with the help of a destiny that kills Moreau's true love as it has killed many a woman for whom a Western hero's passion might have deflected him from the needless trail he has to pursue alone or beside his buddy. But this female virility is well in line with the conventions of the Hollywood musical Western.

In the straight Western, virility is only permitted to the nice attractive girl the hero never quite falls for, or to off-beat - and usually doomed - heroines played by Barbara Stanwyck, Jean Crawford, Marlene Dietrich, or Jane Russell. In the musical Western, however, a woman may be virile and the heroine and considered wholesome: as in, say "ANNIE GET YOUR GUN", where "Anything you can do I can do better" is the theme of a love duet. It was obligatory that in "THE PLAINSMAN" Jean Arthur should play Calamity Jane, that hairy-chested heroine of the Wild West, as if she were the girl next door; in the musical "CALAMITY JANE", the still more wholesome Doris Day could do the same part at least boyishly; Dietrich herself is a more feminine sort of tough character in "RANCHO NOTORIOUS" than she is in "DESTINY RIDES AGAIN". The ritualistic framework of the musical - like that of opera or verse drama - admits what is unacceptable in more naturalistic contexts.

Usually the virility of Western heroines involves the wearing of male clothes - a natural enough thing to do anyway in the circumstances. Malle, however, gives an added piquancy to the super-mannishness of the Marias by having them wipe out numbers of uniformed men while clothed in exquisitely feminine fashions. But in her early scenes, Bardot is dressed like Jackie Coogan in "THE KID" (the uniform which Moreau put on for her transvestite turn in "Jules et Jim"). It is because Bardot is not used to wearing dresses that the two Marias come to invent the art of strip-tease (Moreau now returns that compliment by wearing Bardot's customary undress). Bardot discovers her femininity through uncovering it for others.

Still, the Marias' sexual attitudes are predominantly male. Moreau falls for George Hamilton only when able to assume the man's role; on first meeting him, she ignores his advances.

She's not interested so long as he's active, only when he's captive. When he's imprisoned, legs shackled, arms bound to a yoke, she enters his cell and makes love to him, closing in as if she were Perseus and he Andromeda. (Given the anti-clerical mood of the film, this Maria is also presumably Mary Magdalene, seducing Christ on the cross). And Bardot enjoys the loss of virginity in a style that refutes her femininity: when the time has come for initiation, she leaves a party together with three men and is returned to her caravan next morning. "L'Amour," she tells Moreau, "c'est merveilleux!" Male psychology is attributed to the female, as it is in pornography. The paradigm could be the deflowering of Eugenie in Sade's "La Philosophie dans le Boudoir", where the lovely initiate, innocent as a daisy, avid of experience, infinitely responsive, is successfully and simultaneously pleased by a beautiful woman, a handsome young gentleman and novleman, an aging roue and a monstrously well-equipped gardener. Subsequently Eugenie brutalises her interfering mother: you could say that Bardot does as much in vanquishing the Church.

Pornography brings me back to the current spy pictures - or rather to the majority which are peculiarly different from earlier films about espionage or detection and can fairly be called "Bondian", since the genre came into being, in 1962, in the first of the James Bond series. An interesting feature of their rampant sexuality is the relatively secondary role sadism plays; in English-speaking films of the 1950's sadism was by a long way the most passionate form of sexual outlet (with the Mickey Spillaine cycle its most extreme expression). The greater permissiveness towards sportive sex now current in the English-speaking world gives today's films more licence to show that sex can be pleasurable as well as damaging.

Nevertheless, the new permissiveness is less wholeheartedly indulgent towards sexual intercourse than towards occasions for voyeurism and other vicarious or fantasied activities - strip shows, girlie mags, bunny clubs, dirty books. And this is reflected in the Bondian films, which are not simply occasions for voyeurism but actively advertise its delights - insistently though rather covertly in "OUR MAN FLINT", more flagrantly in "THE SILENCERS" (in the (10)

daring, quite dazzling, and wholly gratuitous strip-tease show superimposed on the credits), most explicitly in "FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE", in a scene which the novel describes in these words:

"Above them, and unknown to both of them, behind the gold-framed, false mirror on the wall over the bed, two photographers from SMERSH sat close together in the cramped 'cabinet de voyeur', as, before them, so many friends of the proprietor had sat on a honeymoon night in the stateroom of the Kristal Palas.

And the view-finders gazed coldly down on the passionate arabesques the two bodies formed and broke and formed again, and the clockwork mechanism of the cine-cameras whirled softly on and on as the breath rasped out of the open mouths of the two men and the sweat of excitement trickled down their bulging faces into their cheap collars."

Voyeurism is not only done but is seen to be done.

Kinkiness gets by in Bondian films precisely as it does in musicals - because the context is anti-realistic. The Bondian film, indeed, has all the musical's traditional ingredients: the extravagant sets, the luxurious living, the glorious colour, the bevvies of beauties, the mistaken identities, even songs and dances. And the fights are a form of dance - here a duet in a hotel bedroom, there a big production number at the palace or the fiesta. The movie musical itself is a dormant form: the major musicals that have been made in recent years have been adaptations of old theatrical successes. The Bondian film has moved into that void, as an extension of the "virile" picaresque musical such as "ON THE TOWN".

The pornographic aspect of the Bondian films is not, I think, confined to their treatment of sex. I want to suggest that their treatment of espionage itself is curiously analogous to pornography's treatment of sex, and that this is what gives these films their special flavour.

Bondian films are uninterested in building up suspense. They relish perfunctory tensions, as when the hero enters an empty room and assumes that an enemy is concealed behind an arras -

- or is on the point of intruding - a disquiet usually resolved with violence, in a couple of minutes. But Bondian films never have the patience to sustain suspense over a long period as it is sustained in earlier spy films as different as "The Manchurian Candidate" and "The Thief", Hitchcock's "North by Northwest" and "The Lady Vanishes", the Grahame Greene-based "Ministry Of Fear" and "Our Man In Havana" (or in the contemporary neo-Greenian piece, "The Spy Who Came In From The Cold").

Pornography, similarly, has no time for suspense that is more than perfunctory (except, of course, when, as with "L'Histoire d'O" and "L'Histoire de l'Oeil", it is also literature). It ignores the excitement uncertainty can bring to sexuality in the real world, prefers to make it a foregone conclusion that something will happen and give satisfaction all round. The Bondian film, like pornography, is greedy for action.

Bondian films are obsessed with gadgets. This is hardly surprising in view of the quantity and subtlety of the gadgets nowadays used in real-life espionage (or for that matter in the real life of the audience). So the gadgets both arouse boyish curiosity and, being seen masterfully used, allay womanish anxiety. They are symbols of up-to-dateness, and they provide surprises which can either tickle the audience's rib or kick it in the stomach. For TV series especially, with their rapid turnover of story material, the operating of gadgets can fill out a slender plot with meticulous detail that will hold the viewer as if hypnotized by the sight of men digging a hole in the road. They provide the hero who uses them coolly and efficiently with the means to demonstrate how at home he is in a highly sophisticated world, rather as he shows it by knowing how to order an epicurean dinner. And beyond that they provide the hero who questions his need of them with the means to demonstrate his self-sufficiency - as when Bond in "Thunderball" ribs the department's gadget expert about his latest baubles, or when Our Man Flint, on the point of going off to save the human race, declines the offer of an attache case containing 64 secret weapons, fetches a lighter out of his own pocket and says, "This has 82 functions - 83 if you want to light a cigar."

Since there are so many above-board reasons why gadgets should be prominent in Bondian films, it may not be significant that they have their counterparts in pornography. But, for what it's worth, it is a fact that pornography tends to regard the genitals as gadgets - detachable battery-driven toys, ingenious in design, dependable in performance.

Bondian films are marked by an ambivalence - or a hedging of bets - by which they aim to be thrillers and spoofs at one and the same time. They are packed with convulsive action luxurious sights; they glorify the physical prowess, the nerve, the wit, the sex-appeal, the drive, the appetite for risk, the boyish charm and brutality of the hero, they impel the audience to admire, envy and identify. At the same time they are shamelessly preposterous to the point of farce, and full of irony and in-jokes at their own expense. This is not at all the ambivalence of a Hitchcock comedy-thriller. (It does, however, resemble the teasing atmosphere of "The Alfred Hitchcock Hour" on TV, in which the films are neither by nor in the manner of Hitchcock, but are only sponsored and compered by him, in a throw-away style that simultaneously conspires with and disdains us.) In a Hitchcock film the comedy is the reverse side of the terror and arises cruelly from the dramatic situation as if it were the laughter of the gods at man's ridiculous efforts to disentangle himself from his destiny. In the Bondian films the comedy is a comment from outside the situation - is most obviously this in Bond's sardonic asides about death or bed - a nudge in the ribs to assure you that the whole thing is a lark.

Only one other form of art or entertainment appeals to its audience in this two-faced way. Pornography transmits excitement to the point of provoking feelings which precisely match the feelings it describes. It arouses identification and compels envy: of the prowess and the opportunity. At the same time, the impossible deeds render the actors absurd, arousing a derision that dispels both envy and shame. In pornography and the Bondian film alike, the ambivalence relates to a sense of tacit conspiracy between

manufacturer and consumer.

When a new kind of film comes in, it is usually started with a bang, fades to a whimper through over-exploitation. The Bondian film has been fairly decrepit since birth. The trouble has partly been that the creative energy which begat the idea wasn't operating in the movie medium: it went into the Fleming novels, and from the first the films were an exploitation of something else's success.

Even so, it might have been expected that the stories would gain through realization on the screen, considering that they seem constructed as if the author were thinking in cinematic terms, and that their merits lie in their action, not (as with Chandler say, or Hammett) in sharpness of insight or stylish writing. In the event, the films have subtracted far more than they've added. In "Thunderball", the most recent and most lamentable, all that is added is the elegant shooting of the underwater sequences. The biggest minus is the adaptation of the novel, which turns the plot into a chaos resembling a fitful, meandering, unmemorable, dyspeptic dream.

The problem of making a Bondian product work is largely one of getting the excitement and the amusement operating together, playing them off against each other in a kind of counterpoint, making now one, now the other dominate, never entirely letting go of either. One reason why the Fleming books bring this off is that the author always keeps a straight face, neither laughing at his own jokes nor breathing too heavily over the hero's exertions (though he does tend to droll a bit over his menus). In the "Thunderball" film, the thrills are produced with the air of a triumphant conjurer and the laughs with the air of donning a funny hat.

It is as if the manufacturers, having bought the formula of an effective drug, thought it enough to serve up separate doses of each component ingredient. They presume, rather as the Bond of the films presumes in his way with women. The novels recognize that the successful lecher is one who knows he can get almost any woman and makes a woman realize that he knows it, but not by saying that he

knows it, and least of all by saying that he knows she knows he knows it. But the screen Bond does let on, and by the same token his producers haven't the tact to keep it quiet that they take our complicity for granted.

Sad to say, they've so far been right: while they can rig their Bond's successes with women, they can't rig success at the box-office, yet the returns have justified their cocksureness. So feverishly do the public hunger for the Bondian ingredients that they have even enthusiastically swallowed the U.N.C.L.E. series - a lot of stale doughnuts coated with itry. What is remarkable is that they haven't only swallowed them on television but even in the cinema where they have to pay to get in, where it's painfully obvious that the colour wasn't designed for the cinema but for colour TV, and where there are no commercials to hold up the stories and bring in a little suspense, as well as entertainment.

The best of the recent crop of Bondian films has been "The Silencers". The film in its entirety, when I finally saw it, was of course decidedly less gripping than the trailer. But that, after all, is generally the case; trailers, beyond having pace and only the best parts, acquire, by limiting information, the poetic suggestiveness of the fragment. "The Silencers", which Phil Karlson directed, has a nice battle, with automobiles ramming one another to the death, and an inspired gadget - a pistol which, when in your adversary's hands, fires backwards. It even provides, in Stella Stevens, an interesting heroine. This has not been done, it seems to me, by any other Bondian film for the cinema (including "Blindfold" - a blend of the Bondian with the old-fashioned romantic comedy - for which they hired Claudia Cardinale).

The British TV series, "The Avengers", has supplied the most intriguing Bondian heroines yet. Honor Blackman's Mrs. Gale had the mystery of a tolerant woman of long and wide experiences; her successor - Diana Rigg's Mrs. Peel - had the mystery of a woman the extent of whose experiences is mysterious. It has helped, of course, that neither has been seen to be or to have been involved with the hero, yet their conspiratorial

relationship with him has seemed more than professional. Mrs. Gale was a remarkably attractive character; if one liked Mrs. Peel almost as much, it was partly out of sympathy with Miss Rigg's efforts to fill Miss Blackman's place. One felt especially protective when she was trying to emulate the judo bit, not gliding into it like a leopard the way Miss Blackman used to do, but having to take a deep breath first, like a small girl about to go in off the high board.

One of the things that differentiates Bondian from earlier spy stories is playing patriotism fairly cool. Bond himself from time to time, when tempted to chase a girl instead of the enemy, gets his priorities right by remembering Her Majesty. But shameless jingoism is out. Some of the Bondian spies are employed by imaginary international organizations such as U.N.C.L.E. Again, the enemy is rarely identified with a particular foreign state, is usually an international combine of ambitious crooks or maniacs. Partly this is a reflection of the new Soviet-American "reapprochement", partly a reflection of nostalgia for free enterprise: in the delightful "Thunderbirds" (a British TV series of SF-espionage puppet-films), the earth is preserved from Martian invasion by "International Rescue," an organisation run by an American and his five sons -- a nice family business.

A new British film, "Where The Spies Are", reverts to traditional patterns -- to traditional cold war policies (a Russian airliner on an international peace mission is a front for top-level espionage) and to the glorification of the traditional British virtues of amateurism and muddling-through against the odds. The Secret Service, short-handed in the Middle East, persuade a country doctor (David Niven), who as a wartime officer once did a job for Intelligence, to do temporary duty. The film goes rather well while it's working out how an unschooled novice might behave, especially towards a sexy lady spy. The story runs out of steam and plausibility . . . half-way through, but in any case the film is doomed by taking itself seriously, especially for a story so riddled with cliches.

The most ideological of the Bondian films is the one which presents itself

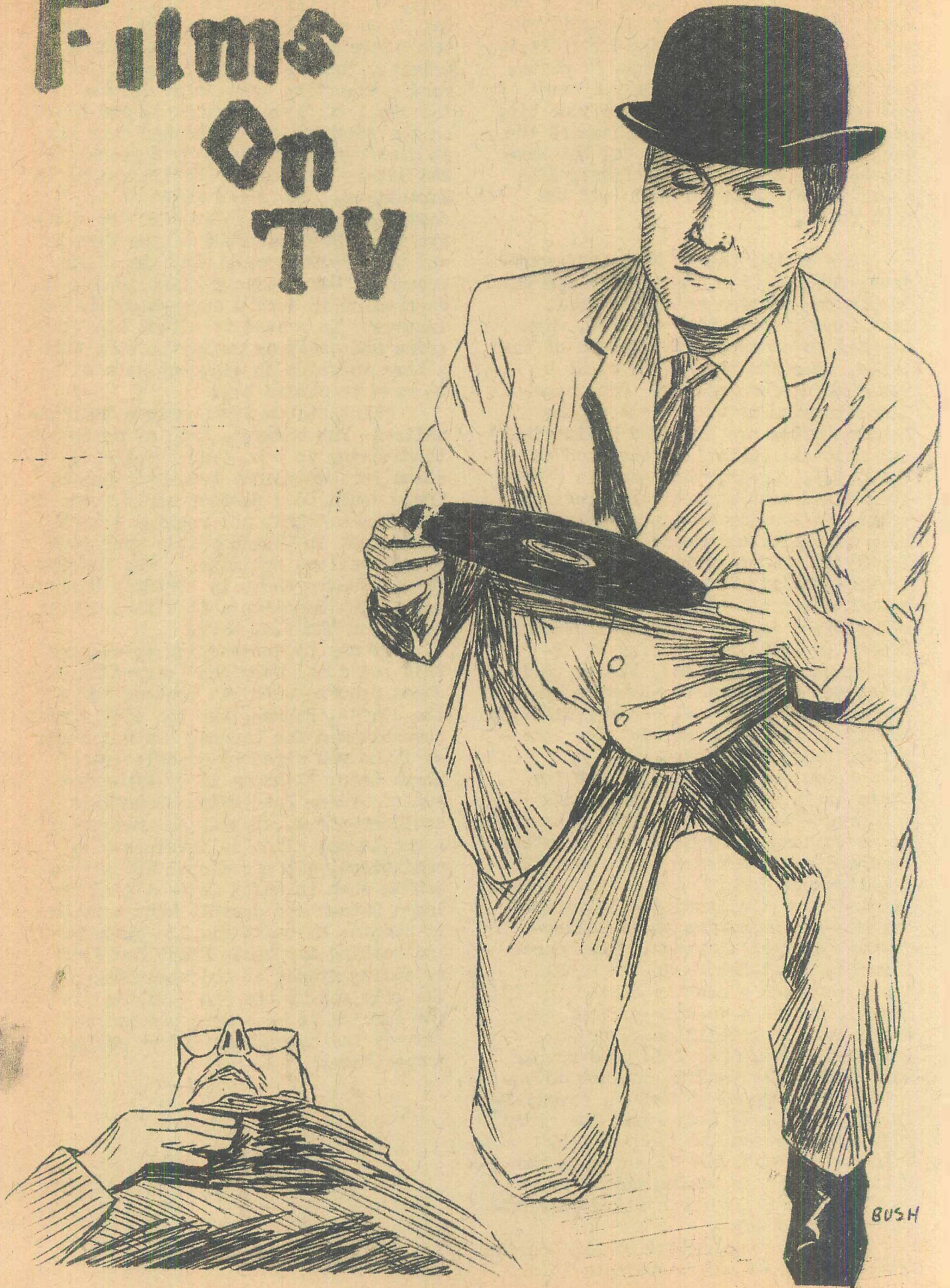
as the biggest spoof: "Our Man Flint". It's as much a science-fiction as a spy film, and it follows the custom of using SF as a medium for political allegory. Some of its wheezes are extremely bright. There's a pretty send-up of Bond's expertise when Flint deduces from the smell of garlic, saffron, and fennel on the feathers of a poisoned dart that it must have been fired by someone who had lately been eating bouillabaisse in Marseilles. There's a fight to the death in a w.c. which attains the elusive ideal Bondian blend of the vicious and the preposterous. But the films becomes a bore because Flint is such a super-mind in such a super-body that no ingenuity is needed to effect his victories and escapes; we may be sure that a hero is going to win, but we want to be made to wonder how.

Flint stands for American individualism. The enemy, a trio of scientists threatening to take over the world, stand for benevolent totalitarianism. "Ours would be a perfect world," one of them tells Flint, who replies that he must fight it "because it's your idea of perfection, not mine." The budding Utopia we are shown is strongly Huxleyan. Flint demolishes it with a little help from the U.S. Navy.

It may be interesting to compare this new ideal American (played by James Coburn) with his predecessor of the 1940's, Batman, who has lately been resuscitated for laughs. Batman looks as if he was sired by Dracula out of Momma Bear; Flint as if by Pinkerton out of Madame Butterfly. Batman is accident-prone, stupid, an amateur and a gentleman; Flint is invulnerable, omniscient, a professional and a cad. Batman when in mufti loves a girl who loves Batman and doesn't know that he is Batman; he can't divulge his secret and nothing happens. Flint has four attending nymphs at the beginning of the film and by the end a fifth. In the forties to be a hero was its own reward; in the sixties it's a paying proposition."

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Films On TV



by Jack Edmund Nolan
THIS IS REVIEW
October, 1966

Summertime television usually doesn't have filmed-series that are first-runs, but this summer there were two significant ones; "The Avengers" and "Court Martial". They were importations from Britain, of hour-length, and were purchased for the US market by ABC.

The growing use of imported tv product on US networks has gone almost unnoticed even though it began in earnest three years ago and filmed-series from Britain have made significant inroads into prime time. Among others, "The Saint" (BC) broke into the US first run pattern in '63 and has been running/re-running ever since. "Secret Agent", first-run here under that title between April '65 and April '66 has been dropped by CBS for its network but is being continued in first-run by many local stations. It has also run, as a half-hour show, under its British title ("Danger Man") in NBC and other market areas since '62. Fifteen episodes of "The Baron" (ABC), of hour-length, first-ran in the US this year.

What factors have made this British assault on US-tv successful?

First, US capital has been financing more-and-more English tv-features, and the US backers see to it that they see these tv films exhibited here. Second, the costs of sets and their decoration are 10-20% under those in the US. Third, Britain's best theatre-movie producers, scripters and directors work regularly in British tv. Only occasionally does the best behind-camera talent of our movies work in TV, and when it does it usually "panders". The British counterparts do not.

"The Avengers" and "Court Martial" are based somewhat on US prototypes, but "The Avengers" format owes more to the James Bond films and the British spy-features which followed them. Its basic premise, according to the narration under the credits: "Extraordinary crimes against the people and the State must be avenged by agents extraordinary...avengers. Two such people are Emma Peel, talented amateur, and John Steed, top professional." Also under the credits runs the show's thrashing, parodying and fine musical theme, which is

based on chord changes of "Why Can't You Behave?" from "Kiss Me Kate."

When "The Avengers" was first-run in Britain in '63 Patrick MacNee played the dandified Steed and Honor Blackman was Cathy Gale, his leather-swathed judo-expert assistant (her role of "Pussy Galore" and the girls in her "flying circus" in "Goldfinger" owed much to the Cathy Gale image she had established on tv). With the "Town Of No Return" film episode (British release, 9/28/65), Diana Rigg took over the chore of playing Steed's new assistant, Mrs. Emma Peel. Rigg is made up approximately like the young Linda Darnell, but her pronunciation of English makes her incomprehensible to many Americans (she sounds fine in my ears). Rigg's "Town Of No Return" premiere was the final episode of "The Avengers" first-run in the US, since ABC didn't renew it.

There was much that was instructive in the 22 episodes of it which were televised here last spring and summer. They were the work of producer Julian Wintle; Albert Fennell (in charge of production; art director Harry Pottle); composer Laurie Johnson; and Ray Austin (second-unit director of fights, mechanical contrivances and miniatures).

"The Cybernauts" has a Dr. Armstrong (Michael Cough) use his foppish robot "Roger" to try to prevent the purchase of Japanese automated devices by British industrialists. It was written by Philip Levene, and well-directed by that good, all-round artisan, Sidney Hayers. "Death At Bargain Prices", classily directed by Charles Crichton, is an excellent illustration of British production values in "mere" tv-films. Most of its action takes place in a large department store, the luxurious appointments of which are partially demolished at the film's finale. This segment was expertly scripted by one of the show's regular producers (Brian Clemens).

"The Girl From Auntie" contained most of the elements which made "The Avengers" so popular in England: outlandish plot, fantastic costumes and sets, little actual violence. In it

Mrs. Peel, dressed and caged like a bird, is auctioned off in a London warehouse to the highest bidder, who, ostensibly, will acquire her scientific know-how. Among the competing bidders depicted by director Roy Baker: a Red Chinese type, a Soviet Russian, and poor Englishman Steed, who has only Her Majesty's limited budget to play with, but who wins Mrs. Peel back anyway. (Scotland Yard and London bobbies are seldom seen on this show.) "The House That Jack Built" has Mrs. Peel be imprisoned in a fully automated house, the rooms of which rise, circle slide as though airborne. "How To Succeed At Murder" updated an old chestnut by adding the lesbian elements which are all too frequent in British film product. Mme. Henrietta, a 3-foot high puppet, is the dummy of her ventriloquist "husband" and induces beautiful young British girls to effect the "ruination of all men.... and put men out of the way." Steed, of course, puts the dummy and ventriloquist out of the way.

"The Avengers" most enjoyable segment: "The Gravediggers", which despite its title, was mostly an inventive reprise of a silent-serial train-chase. Before the chase director Quentin Lawrence indulges in a tongue-in-cheek sequence in surgeons operate on a robot ("forceps, nurse....scalpel...blowtorch"). The chase itself, with Steed battling villains atop a small fair-ground train in order to stop it before it runs over the trussed-up Mrs. Peel, has just the right mixture of parody and thrills.

Lawrence worked on British tv's "Maigret" series and its Edgar Wallace feature cycle. He's fairly young, and like many of the directors who've worked this show - Gerry O'Hara, James Hill, Peter Graham Scott and Bill Bains - bears watching more than do many of the older hacks who churn out the fare proffered in British theatres.

* * *

No such cinematic expertise was lavished on "Court Martial", which is still first-running in the US. "Court Martial" is more serious, and more "american" than "The Avengers", but also more confused and "committed". It's modelled on at least four older US and/or British series. From "Espionage" the men behind "Court Martial" took the subversive theme that

patriotic efforts on behalf of one's country are hollow and ultimately meaningless. From "Arrest And Trial" and "The Defenders" they adopted the socially disintegrating pose that guilt and innocence can be equated. From "Combat" they took the image of the heroic but tarnished American.

"Court Martial" is a product of MCA-TV, Ltd., and of producers Robert Douglas and Bill Hill. Its basic "weenie": two American Army lawyers from the Judge Advocate General's Office, Major Frank Whitaker (Peter Graves) and Captain David Young (Bradford Dillman) getting more serious each week, defend, or help prosecute, Allied servicemen, often non-Americans, accused of service-connected crimes. "Causes" are usually offered as excuses for the crimes (e.g., the maquisards, the partisans, the Irish Republican Army). In one peculiar episode, "Let Slip The Dogs Of War", the attorneys investigate an accused British war-correspondent and apparent homosexual (Dennis Price) who was "really" involved in Italian politics - Left and Right. This episode was produced by Douglas, who usually knows better, and directed by the best Director "Court Martial" has used so far (Harvey Hart, who's worked shows on both sides of the Atlantic).

The director of more "Court Martial" hours than any other, Alvin Rakoff, long since settled for the easy way. He is kiddingly referred to as the youngest director of features simultaneously shot in different languages (he actually worked on such items in the '60's) and typifies what French critics call a "tacheron" (a man paid on a piece-work basis). The ambivalence of the themes prevailing on "Court Martial" seem to be Rakoff's dish.

He directed the "Let No Man Speak" segment, wherein a fascist British colonel (Michael Hodern) is made to seem responsible for messing up an American-Dutch resistant group; "Logistics of Survival", in which a seeming Nazi singer (Nadia Gray) seems to have murdered an American GI in self-defense; "The Liberators", in which a lieutenant Pinelli (Lee Montague) appears to have murdered a Sicilian partisan. Rakoff's most derivative effort, "Achilles' Heel", has weak-sister Captain Merrill (Neil McCallum) hoaxed by British Intelligence into

breaking down (by witnessing Nazis torture a girl) and revealing the wrong landing point for the Anzio invasion. This chestnut was roasted better before, notably by director Jack Lee in the British feature "Circle of Deception", and by Stuart Rosenberg in a '63 "Espionage" episode starring Patricia Neal called "The Weakling". In my opinion Rosenberg is US-tv's best director of dramatic tv-films.

Via international casts, multi-linguists like Rakoff, and anti-nationalist plotting, MCA-TV, Ltd. thinks it can sell "Court Martial" worldwide. But Graves and Dillman don't have what it takes to keep such a show going, and some of the series' directors have done uneven work (e.g., Peter Maxwell and Jeremy Summers).

Apparently it was Hill who thought the series needed Sam Wanamaker as a director. Wanamaker acted in "The Outer Limits" series of '64 and directed some segments of "The Defenders" and other recent US tv-series, but aside from these few essays, plus

appearances in Losey's "The Criminal" and Ritt's "The Spy Who Came In From The Cold", Wanamaker hasn't had much exposure in these parts since about '49. Wanamakers "Bitter Wind" segment had a stupid American GI be sand-bagged by two battling factions in Ireland. The most believable thing about it was actress Moira Lister's appearance as a colleen.

"Court Martial" writers have added little of meaning or enjoyment to the series. Instead, they've tried their darndest to insert currently applicable political symbols and action words into shows set in the past. These worthies include Gerry Day, John T. Dugan, S.S. Schweitzer, Edmund Morris, John McGreevey, Julian Bond (a man of some talent), and Mark Rodgers (also a pro).

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-Jack E. Nolan-

Mrs. Peel, where are you?

editorial, from the Greensboro,
North Carolina, DAILY NEWS
March 26, 1968

Mrs. Emma Peel has gone out of John Steed's life, and ours. That is to say, actress Diana Rigg has left the British television series "The Avengers" and co-star Patrick MacNee to resume her career in Shakespearean drama. Last Wednesday night she gracefully departed, and we may never get over it.

During the three years that ABC-TV has imported "The Avengers" Mrs. Peel, a beautiful and brilliant young widow, had joined secret agent Steed in the series' delightfully preposterous adventures. Meanwhile she captivated several million American men. She was auburn, lissome, elegant, witty, worldly - and altogether sexy. Whether she was subduing thugs with judo, extracting secrets at a cocktail party, or climbing a tree in her miniskirt, she was a woman of remarkable style.

Mrs. Peel's bowing out was the most lamentable television event since the (17)

final episode of "The Fugitive". For the male audience it was very nearly traumatic. Not only was it learned that Mr. Peel had survived his plane crash in the Amazonian jungle, but also Emma and Steed farewell revealed a passion which was subtly understated in those three cavalier years. Even our television set protested by humming and sputtering through the maudlin scene.

But Mrs. Peel regained her sophistication. As she left to join her husband (who bore an uncanny resemblance to Steed himself) she passed her replacement on the stair. "Ah," said Mrs. Peel, "he likes his tea stirred anticlockwise." Now there's a woman for you!

Buck up now, Steed. Your new assistant, Miss Tara King, is quite attractive in her own way - and you do have other things to think about. If somehow you can overcome the loss of Emma Peel then, perhaps, so can we. Carry on.*

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COMEDY OF ERRORS

-A Commentary Of Sorts
-A Review Of Uncertain Quality
-by Ye Ed, R. Schultz-

It transpired that upon the 20th day of October, 1967, and again, upon the 22nd Day of October, '67, there was presented upon the Idiot Box (otherwise known as the telly) A Most Raucous And Delightful Comedy, A Most Jolly Sport, hereafter known as: A COMEDY OF ERRORS.

It was presented both evenings by UHF Channel 56, the local affiliate of the N.E.T. - National Educational Television - network.

This was no mere production of the Bard's early comedy, no mere taped showing by some spirited group of players.

This production boasted the talents of no less august a group than the Royal Shakespeare Company, playing the same COMEDY OF ERRORS that brought them rave reviews in New York and Moscow. This particularly splendid production was caught in the eye of the camera by the staff of BEC-1, during the year Of Our Lord, 1963, and this was its first showing in this country.

It was filmed in its entirety, not a word cut, upon the stage of the Aldwych Theatre in London, the London branch of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the winter home of the entire Company.

We were able to view this spectacle because N.E.T. had bought some 56 plays and specials from BEC for what amounted to peanuts, some \$560,000 for over 75 hours of mixed material ranging from merely intelligent to outstandingly brilliant: Ibsen, Chekhov, the Negro in Britain, "CULLODEN", The Weiding Of A Welsh Miner, many, many others.

(18)

Shining in this treasure chest was a pearl of exceptional quality...this production of A COMEDY OF ERRORS.

All the fire and life and determination explicit in a Royal Shakespeare Company production of the Bard's material was there. The fine-grained broad understanding of what can be gained from Shakespeare was broadly expressed in every dulcet tone, every expressive and sometimes exaggerated movement.

Lord Birkett has stated that these are people with very explicit and quite definite ideas on how Shakespeare should be played.

Certainly they must stay in the RSC because of their love for their work. Once proved, each of them could move on to more profitable work than the meagre pay of the RS Company. In fact many of them do. And oftimes return to their first love, the RSC.

Who are these people, the ones of fire and definite notions as to how the Bard should be portrayed? TV Guide did not list the players, but let me correct that error at this time.

"A COMEDY OF ERRORS"

Presented by the Governors of the Royal Shakespeare Company, upon the stage of the Aldwych Theatre, for the BBC. Staged by Clifford Williams, and David Drierley.

Soliman, Duke of Ephesus

.. Michael Murray

Aegeon, a merchant of Syracuse

• • • • • Tony Church
Antipholus, presently of Syracuse and
also a merchant and brother to the
other Antipholus. • Alec McCowen
Dromio, of Syracuse, manservant and the
twin to Dromio of Epheseus, all
brothers all unknowing.....

• • • • • Barry McGregor
Antipholus, of Epheseus, husband to
Adriana. • • • • • Ian Richardson
Dromio, of Epheseus, manservant for
Antipholus of Epheseus and well-
beaten • • • • • Clifford Rose
Balthazar, a goldsmith of Epheseus and
bosom buddy of Antipholus of Eph-
eseus. • • • • • Michael Burrell
First Merchant, also a friend of Antiph-
olus of Epheseus. • • Ian Lindsay
Second Merchant, simply a man to whom
Balthazar happens to owe a great
deal of money. • • • John Harwood
Adriana, wife of Antipholus of Epheseus,
and somewhat jealous. • Diana Rigg
Luciana, sister to Adriana and single
and living at the house of Antiph-
olus of Epheseus. • Julie Christie
Aemeillia, at present Abbess at Epheseus,
but all unknowing also wife to the
sorrowful Aegeon and mother to the
twin Antipholi. • Pauline Jameson
Schoolmaster Pinch, who fancies himself
an exorciser of mental demons and
attempts to try out his unique
notions of psychotherapy upon a
most unwilling Antipholus of Syr-
acuse. • • • • • Michael Williams
Nell, kitchen maid to the household of
Antipholus of Epheseus and bethro-
thed of Dromio of Epheseus, who is
Well Described. • • Caroline Maud
Gaoler, the jailer for the Duke of Eph-
eseus. • • • • • Brian Osborne
The Courtesan, who wants a diamond
ring. • • • • • Elizabeth Spriggs
plus many others, guards, players of
the square, attendants and officers.

- * -

Picture if you will, an almost ab-
solutely bare stage. Built on that
stage is another smaller stage a foot or
two above it, and another upon it and
another upon it.

Standing upon these stages as the
curtains sweep to the sides are the play-
ers, all in black. The women in low-
cut, tight-waisted simple, very simple
ankle-length dresses. The men in pants
and wrist-length sweater-shirts, all in
black as well. (19)

They are just standing there.

Then, as the music begins, they perform
an elaborately formal dance, a beginn-
ing of the choreographed slapstick
which was the heart of the production.

They dance, they bow, they curtsy,
they leap off into the wings, others
join them. A bench appears, a chair,
a fellow brings out two jackets, each
of a pair putting them on as he himself
shrugs into a long Oriental coat. An-
other adjusts his collar, one slips
into breastplate and helmet and two
such give the other his spear, a bodice
is tightened by another, a hair-piece
is put together by a lass crossing the
stage, an old man but moments ago a
young man struts upon the stage, a
scroll in hand, guards stiffen to
attention, a box is put upon the stage,
the ladies leave, an aging man with a
crown enters and sits himself upon the
single chair, and the official looking
person begins to speak....

And we suddenly realize that the
play has begun. There are no others
upon the stage but the Duke, his guards
and officers and officials, an aging
Aegeon, merchant of Syracuse and victim
of the new strife between Epheseus and
Syracuse, and the pitiful chest contain-
ing all that he owned. It has come to
us in that deceitful manner, for after
all...in this play, it is proved that
you cannot really trust your eyes!

I trust that you are somewhat
familiar with this oft-told tale of
confusion. That you know that both
sets of twins shall create strife and
hilarity at the other's expense, all
unbeknownst to the other. A shallow
comedy perhaps, not having in it the
great depth of many others of Shake-
speare's plays. This one practically
has to be played strictly for laughs
or not at all, making it hilarious in
the hands of a gifted crew or painful
in the claws of amateurs.

Also, thanks to the character of
the RSC, there is no "Star" system in
evidence. Indeed, it took the magni-
tude of a Scofield to displace the at-
tentions of the audiences even in such
plays as LEAR and HENRY V. Indeed, the
"Star" system is one of the major
faults in any Hollywood production of
Shakespeare. It detracts, and distract-
s from the production.

Still, if one must say that so-
and-so were "Stars" of that production,
you must begin the list with the fan-
tastic drollery of Barry McGregor.

Certainly the lines of this very confused Dromio of Ephesus are amongst the most hilarious in the play. Even a clod could excite some laughter with a punch-line or two. But McGregor had the gift of exaggerated speech and timing and exaggerated facial mugging and willingness to exert himself in any manner to put an extra ounce of punch into any phrase. Indeed this exaggerated sense of knowledge of mobility of face and body is something that must characterize the RSC. For not only did both Dromio and both Antipholus have it in some degree - and turned their lines into gems with the beauty of it - but it is this fine lovely and complete facial and body control which has so characterized the way Diana Rigg has made Mrs. Emma Peel come alive. One reviewer once accurately stated that she could say more in one raised eyebrow than most actresses could in forty lines of dialogue.

This sort of exaggeration for effect is natural for the live theatre, of course, and it is no wonder that anyone who could master it would become a lead player in the RSC. But still I wonder how much was brought to the RSC and how much was brought to the players by their tenure with the RSC?

But if the four twins shone like diamonds, the light for their diamonds came from the brilliance of their supports. Adriana, played by our own very, very fair Diana Rigg must be counted as being at least a sparkle in that cluster.

As the anxious and yet would-be haughty wife of Antipholus of Ephesus she brought her own especial flavour to the role most often cast as nagging.

Rarely, as a matter of fact, does Shakespeare ever present to us a picture of a couple already long married. Usually they are courting or being wed, the couples just starting out together. This couple is rather old married hands, and the first allure has long gone. Yet the wife - Adriana/Rigg - would not live without this man of hers, no matter the circumstances. Thinking her husband mad, she implores the Abbess of Ephesus to release Antipholus, the one of Syracuse she believes to be the one of Ephesus be.

Adriana: "I will attend my husband,
be his nurse./Diet his
sickness, for it is my office./ And
will have no attorney but myself./
And therefore let me have him home
with me."

Rebuked by the Abbess, she continues:

"I will not hence, and leave my
husband here;/And ill it doth be-
seem your holiness/ To separate
the husband and the wife."

Talking about her husband to her sister, Luciana/Christie, her feelings seem quite shrewish. She berates him bitterly at one point, thinking that it be her own husband who has made a pass at Luciana, acclaiming his love for her:

"I cannot, nor I will not, hold me
still;/ My tongue, though not his
heart, shall have his will;/ He
is deformed, crooked, old and
sere;/ Ill-faced, worse-bodied,
shapeless everywhere;/ Vicious,
ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind;/
Stigmatical in making, worse in
mind!"

Luciana asks then: "Who would be jealous then of such a one?/No evil lost is wailed when it is gone!"

"Ah, but I think him better than I say."

This then is the heart of her relationship with Antipholus. Berate him she might, but she would not do without him. Put in Gaol, she unhesitatingly gives up a purse of gold. Alone, she seeks him out. Thinking him ill, she tries Schoolmaster Pinch in an effort to cure him. And in the end, confronted by two Antipholus, her very truest nature comes to the fore. The scene is before the Abbey. Aegon has found his wife, the gentle Abbess, they both have found their lost twin sons, and the lost twin servant-lads. The Duke and company is much still confused by these circumstances and Adriana is becoming very fidgety off to one side. In a break in the dialogue, she laughs an exceedingly uncomfortable and nervous little laugh, chewing on a handkerchief and squirming upon the stage. She turns and addresses each of the two Antipholus and shakily asks of them:

"Which of you two did dine with me today?"

S. Antipholus: "I, gentle mistress,"
Adriana (drawing near, fearfully): And are you not my husband?"

E. Antipholus (A pause...and with a chill, frosty tone): "No. I say nay to that."

Then, while the matter of the gold chain and the bail money and whose servant which Dromio is is settled, this very crestfallen Adriana sort of roundaboutly comes nearer the frosty visaged man she now realizes is her own Antipholus of Ephesus.

In the course of the dialogue, she kneels before him, placing her face upon his knee. And here the essence of her husband's love for her is renewed. He warms, a single fleeting smile runs quickly across his face, and he raises her up and embraces her softly. Even in his anger earlier, when Adriana unwittingly turn away the rightful Antipholus and his merchant friends, his primary thought is about his home and wife.

"Since my own doors refuse to entertain me, / I'll knock elsewhere to see if they'll disdain me!"

The very picture of shocked husbandhood, and thus he goes off with The Boys to other doors.

But mayhaps never anywhere else is such a love as Adriana's cast upon such shallow love as in the first meeting between her and the "false" Antipholus.

Searching for him, she spies him and hands on hips, glares at him. He looks uncomfortably around for the source of this uncommon nonverbal wrath and Luciana cringes before the expected outbursts. In a perfect double-take, he again looks for the other she is looking at, knowing himself to be innocent in all respects. In exaggerated pantomime, she presents to Antipholus the route homewards. Again Antipholus looks about for whomever she beckons to. This strange fiery wench then draws closer, and raising one arm in self-protection, begins to realize that this utter stranger might be mad at him!

Breaking into ominously soft speech, Adriana requests the return home of her erring master, coyly promising pleasures of home and board between reminders of his husbandly duties. Backing off, Antipholus finds his retreat blocked off by Luciana in determined guise. He leans back onto Luciana for support as Adriana kneels before him in the end of her imploring supplication. He gently and astonishingly mimes to the audience the thunderstruck words, "Me?????????"

Then, trying to put a note of humor into his voice, but voice cracking under the effort, he asks, "Plead...you.. to me, fair dame?????"

In answer to which, Adriana turns her face away and cries a long and hilar-

ous; "WWAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!"

Adriana/Rigg cries her heart out and then both her and Luciana take turns scolding him for his neglects and cutting jibes. They really socked it to him.

At the end of this tirade, Rigg turns on that famous smile and in a smoothly coy manner, sinuously slides up to Antipholus/McCowan. She caresses him, his shoulder, his arm, his hand and fingers, talking to him all the while...and places the limp hand of Antipholus upon her heaving bosom, on the skin itself, and leaves the hand there. A rather strange looks comes upon Antipholus.

Adriana then utters her heartfelt last lines: "Thou art an elm, my husband, and I...a vine."

The Elm gets a very strange series of running expressions across his shocked face, and sotto voice, states to the audience, examining the fateful hand closely, that he might as well go along with this strange woman and see what lies ahead.

Indeed, one might say that the entire play was highlighted by these changes of expression. The role of Balthazar especially comes to mind.

Played by Michael Burrell, he presents a slightly inept and unctuous Oriental, well-greased and prideful moustache, bejewelled turban-affair, the overly-gracious manners of a used-car salesman sniffing a ripe sucker.

In companionship with Antipholus of Ephesus, he tries to invent a reason for Adriana locking her husband out, he tries to make peace, he reasons with him to go elsewhere. After all, Antipholus has ordered an elaborate and costly gold chain from him for that very wife. The little wheels turning in his mind try to salvage this bit of profit at any cost.

Finally he is able to deliver the chain to Antipholus....the wrong one. Then, a merchant having to leave town very soon confronts him with his own debts and Balthazar greasily requests his monies from Antipholus....the one who never got the chain.

As confusion mounts, the faces of gaoler and Second Merchant set themselves, and in shocked pantomime, fingers to lips, the first inkling dawns on Balthazar that he isn't going to get his money. He weakly laughs, he coyly suggests that Antipholus is jollyng him along. But Antipholus is

adamant. He doesn't owe Balthazar a single ducat. Balthazar tries again to coax the monies out; and as voices rise higher and higher, the other merchant asking rather frostily if this is the source from which Balthazar is to obtain the money to pay his debt, all of it builds to a crescendo of righteous indignation. Both Balthazar are unknowingly quite innocent and Antipholus. And Antipholus winds up, surprise and indignant reeking from every syllable, in the hands of the Gaoler...for non-payment of debts!

In such a manner the lesser roles presented an in-depth treatment of the essentially minor characterizations. The astonished gaze, the searching look, the stutter, the pause, the unctuous pronunciation, the barely-surpressed laugh or shout, all present us with a complexity of action and characterization that I have rarely seen presented upon the stage in any form.

It was slapstick, sure. But slapstick that made the average "brilliant" comedy seem like shallow hints of what might have been.

Perhaps the BBC cameras helped some, with their close-ups and maybe the precise timing of each character and his words owed part of its perfection to the editing of their tapes. But besides all that, here was a group that was quite literally having a ball.

A quite swinging ball.

No matter that with a few character changes, this same group had already performed this same play eighty-dozen times. No line was delivered with merely adequacy. No hint of boredom or lack of passion or bewilderment was evident in the production.

Each player brought to this production something new each time they played their parts. Indeed, one must hesitate to use the phrase playing a part.

Like most of his material, Willy Shakespeare used freely the works of his predecessors. He was, after all, a commercial artist, and had few if any compunctions about using ideas of the classicist playwrights. He would have been the only one with such scruples in his time if he had been. But even while worrying about the commercial applications of his works, he built in each case an entirely new story. And in doing so, proved that little conception was realized by the original playwright of the potentialities of the idea. For Shakespeare was truly a genius playwright, (22)

by natural talent lifting each idea out of the purely mundane and presenting it to us in a new and novel form. Even deliberately dreary ones like CORIOLANUS was never mere hackwork.

Every player can tell you from experience that there is always something more to be gotten out of a Shakespearean play or role than is obvious at first rehearsal. Indeed, of all the "classic" artists, Shakespeare comes closest to fulfilling the "New Wave" ideal of a play wherein each actor and actress cannot really "firm up" an interpretation of a particular character. There is always something new to be found in each line, every role. Indeed, if the player really realizes this, he or she can find something new to say as effectively on the 300th night as on the first. Each production can, ideally, become a test of the limits of each director's and producer's imaginations. And each actress or actor can mold so very, very much of themselves into each character that is presented by them.

This is really probably why the works of the Bard has survived so very well the centuries that have turned the classics and contemporaries into dreary antiques. That he gave each player so very much room into which he could, if he or she desired, insert so much of their own abilities.

For some understanding of this phenomena of "room", we need look no further than the past generation and the role of RICHARD III. Within our lifetimes, in 1944 to be precise, a part that had been done, oftentimes fantastically, was re-created anew. Laurence Olivier, feeling a need to create a really new image of the title role, took upon the stage the evil, malformed mind we all today conceive of as the Richard III, the only right interpretation.

And indeed, most of the changes by Olivier were relatively minor...those previously mentioned nuances of pause, searching look, lifted finger, wink of eye, and tone and shading of voice.

And our own Diana Rigg elbowed her way into the Shakespearean heritage by not merely her majestically humorous interpretations of Viola (TWELFTH NIGHT) and this very Adriana of COMEDY OF ERRORS but in the field of Drama as well. She took the usually mild, soft-spoken and withdrawing Olivia of KING LEAR and turned her into a hornet, an amazon with spear and shield. She created such a new image of Olivia that

in two recent (two years) productions of KING LEAR in the area, the change has now built itself into the role. No more does Olivia hesitatingly enter into battle for her father's sake. Now she is a strong woman...and in both cases either the tallest or next to tallest woman in the entire company.

Thus the power of a really unique performance and interpretation present itself.

As an aside, the play Shakespeare borrowed freely from was "MENAECHEMUS", by one Titus Maccius Plautus. Plautus' work by itself, particularly his comedy on the mix-up caused by two pairs of twins unknowingly appearing in the same town, was the base upon which "A FUNNY THING HAPPENED TO ME ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM" was built. And Shakespeare's COMEDY OF ERRORS itself gave birth to Redgers and Hart's "THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE".

And Shakespeare apparently thought much of the notion of twins causing endless confusion in their wakes. He used the same notion again in his later "TWELFTH NIGHT" and in barer form in a few other plays.

And if Plautus plays upon present-day readings seem to telegraph their punch lines and oftentimes drab remember their age and the other fact that since then the ideas Plautus and a few others presented have been used hundreds of thousands of times. Literally! Especially (and not nearly as well, usually) on the idiot box.

Plautus was indeed a great Originator, and Shakespeare could have done much worse than steal such brilliant notions. Indeed, his re-working amounts to re-creation, a way of saying that "Here Is The Way It Should Have Been Said The First Time Around".

And he did all this commercially. He had at all times kept in his mind the notions of how his words and players actions would be received by not only the ungodly and ungentlemanly pits but by the equally coarse and only by designation ladies and gentlemen of the boxes. To throw a rotten fruit at a poorly delivered line was as common there as in the standing-room only pits. And if the pits comments to the actors were usually ribald, dirty and oftentimes hilarious, those given to the same actors by the higher classes were just as common, as freely given and often more hilariously spiced.

Nowadays if the audience does not

engage its own psyche into understanding some obscure theme of the playwright's, it seems to be the audience's fault. I wonder what the pits would have had to say about Harold Pinter, for all the fact that personally I both loathe and adore equal portions of his work.....

But I wonder how long Pinter will live on, as something more than a notation in a history? I'm sure Willy the Shake, for all the irreverence I sometimes throw his way, will still be presented "live" somewhere in the Universe for many centuries to come if Man himself survives. Even in 2001:

Certainly I myself will now never forget him, and COMEDY OF ERRORS. The loathesome possessiveness of Nell, all gloriously hilarious.

The cabalistic signs and motions of Schoolmaster Pinch, trying in his own inept fashion to exorcise the unwilling Antipholus of Syracuse of his non-existent daemons. The great cardboard sign the cast oooohed and aaaahed over, containing tic-tac-toe symbols, 23 skiddoo, oh you kid as well as Alpha, Omega and many cabalistic signs and scrawls. In a tremendous theatre presence, he exploded pots of fire and coughed over the resulting smoke and cried in cracking voice. No, Michael Williams will live with me.

The lines will live with me for the years to come. And their Ringling Brothers Circus delivery, hilarity constantly dipping close to sheer buffonery.

Those lines....

"Thou Art An Elm, my husband, and I a vine."

"Tis dinnertime," quoth I. "My Gold!" quoth he! "Your meat doth burn," quoth I. "My Gold!" quoth he!

"Marry, sir, she's the kitchen wench, and all grease, and I know not what use to put her to, but to make a lamp of her, and run from her by her own light. I warrant her rags and the tallow in them will burn a Poland winter. If she lives till doomsday, she'll burn a week longer than the whole world."

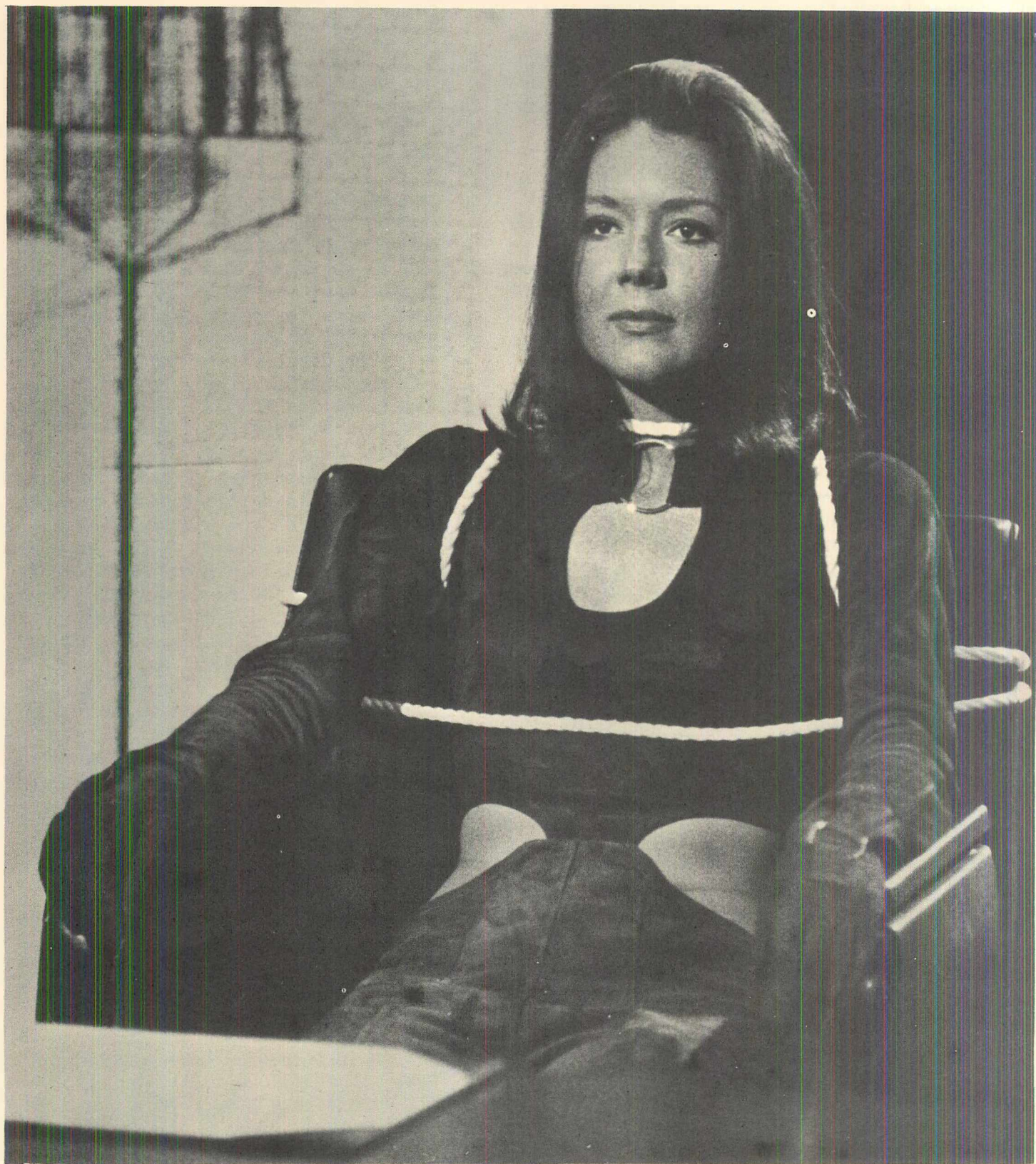
"Ah, but I think him better than I say."

"You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither, / If I last in this service, you must case me in leather!"

Those lines and that delivery....

-Richard Schultze-

WILL SUCCESS SPOIL



MRS. EMMA PEEL ?

"Who has 'Americanized' the English show THE AVENGERS? The first two shows of this season have been so far below the quality of original shows that it's unbelievable. We want THE AVENGERS back, but only in the same form as before. Who wants second-rate when first-rate has been proved available?"

This letter, appearing in TV Guide a few weeks after the second season of THE AVENGERS had begun, undoubtedly expressed the feelings of many AVENGERS fans to the second series of the show seen in this country. It wasn't that the overall quality of the show had dropped drastically, but there was a general feeling of disappointment with the second season as compared to the first. After briefly considering the history of the series as seen in this country, I'd like to outline what were, at least for me, some of the reasons for this disappointment.

After enormous success in Britain and many other countries around the world, THE AVENGERS finally made their first appearance on U.S. TV in 1966 as a summer replacement and immediately won the unswerving admiration of thousands of stateside viewers. Before the summer was over, a sizable adult cult had grown up around the show and when it was announced that the series would not be returning in the Fall, ABC was literally swamped with indignant letters demanding that the show be returned. In light of this response (and taking into consideration the fact that the show only cost them \$70-\$80,000 per episode, or about half of what a Hollywood series would cost), ABC agreed to return the show at the half-way point of the new season (referred to by the network as their "second season" or, as we know it, the wave of replacements for their Fall flops). ABC announced that they would be "going all out to help build an audience for THE AVENGERS." One executive admitted, "I hope we can keep it. It's my favorite."

So, from what looked like certain defeat, we suddenly won the opportunity to see a brand new series (a pattern we were to see repeated the following year). The starting date for the new series was announced as just after the new year and (big time at last!) the

show was to be in colour this time around. AVENGERS fandom readied itself for what promised to be the best series yet.

Right from the first episode ("From Venus With Love") however, it was obvious that there had been some changes made. The keynote for our response to many of the changes came with the shock at seeing the subtitles in the pre-credits sequence (Do you remember them? "Steed is shot full of holes. Emma Sees Stars". Shades of BATMAN!).

Shortly thereafter we were subjected to the cloying cuteness of the "Mrs. Peel - We're Needed" epigraph (the AVENGERS answer to the batsignal?). Personally, I got sick of seeing "Mrs. Peel - We're Needed" after about three weeks; it certainly in no way compared to the variety of clever ways in which the team arrived on the scene of the crime in the first season. And then there was the disproportionate amount of footage given over to big close-ups of Emma (as if one had to be forced to notice that Diana Rigg was a beautiful woman). Well, it was pretty obvious that the powers-that-be at ABC didn't feel they could rely on the cult to pull them through another season. They had a success on their hands and they were determined to consolidate that success by attempting to widen the appeal of the show.

Of the number of reasons for our disappointment with the second season, this was perhaps the most distressing to many fans - to think that our show would have to resort to this ploy used by so many TV series in this country. Not that THE AVENGERS wasn't already commercially concocted but there was a certain integrity in a show that took a popular contemporary dramatic form (i.e. - the spy meller-thriller) and decided to spoof the whole concept in its own very distinctive and

stylish manner. There was no need to abandon all hope however - the denominator still wasn't that low.

The obvious visible change in the new series, of course, was that it was in colour. With the increasing demand for colour programming on U.S. TV, the series was literally forced to adopt production in colour in order to make the stateside sale. This is not the place to go into a detailed technical discussion on the differences of the techniques of filming in colour as opposed to black and white, but suffice it to say that there are differences.

While many of these differences in the visual quality would not be consciously noticed by the general audience, other are plainly obvious. For one thing, the light levels required for colour photography are much higher than those necessary for black and white. Also, while unrelieved, bright, high-key lighting and glossy colours may be fine for musicals, comedies and so on, they can work against the mood required for suspenseers, crime tellers and that ilk. Consequently, when new directors of photography joined the show to handle the requirements of filming for colour, much of the stylization of the first black and white series gave way to a conventionality of photographic approach. The images became brighter, slick and glossy (i.e. - the episodes photographed by Wilkie Cooper and Ernest Steward) and were only occasionally relieved by the "pizzazz" of Alan Hume's visuals (he photographed only six of last season's sixteen episodes). Hume was not afraid to sacrifice bright, high-key colours for suspenseful, low-key lighting, and, not surprisingly, the episodes Alan Hume photographed were amongst the very best ("The Living Dead", "The Winged Avenger", "The Correct Way To Kill", "Epic", and perhaps the best of last season's episodes, "The Joker"). If we're going to get old school studio lighting, then use it melodramatically, I say.

And whilst some viewers may have enjoyed seeing Emma's fashions and all the action in colour, I have always been rather repulsed by the quality of colour emanating from TV

on Mondays. And as for colour

fidelity.... Well, all this is a result of the present undeveloped state of colour TV and, this, is the fault of your receiver and not our show.

While the first season's shows had scripts by a wide variety of writers including Roger Marshall, Tony Williamson, Robert Banks Stewart, Malcolm Hulke, Philip Levene, John Lucarotti and Brian Clemens, the second season saw half of its scripts coming from one writer, Philip Levene, whose only distinguishing characteristic seems to be a predilection for word-plays (in "The See-Through Man", for instance, we get lines like "I see through that" or "I'll disappear now" or "He hasn't been seen.") which evoke groans as often as laughs. Of the remaining eight episodes, six of the scripts were written by Associate Producer and Story Editor, Brian Clemens. Predictably, these shows were among the very best - the aforementioned "The Living Dead", "The Correct Way To Kill", "Epic", and "The Joker" were all written by Clemens. Being either originals or short story adaptations. The diversity of writers working on the first series provided for a weekly invigoration of THE AVENGERS formula that was sadly lacking in the second series.

There were also small structural differences in the second season's episodes that worked against the show. For instance, the first season's episodes always ended with our triumphant hero and heroine joking about the dangers they had just blithely sailed through and, as the theme music rose, they would travel (one way or another) off into the sunset, the end credits following. This provided a neat little coda (visually as well as aurally) for each episode. The second season, however, would see each episode conclude something like this: Steed and Mrs. Peel, at show's end, finally had the villain at their mercy and would proceed to thrash him soundly for his evildeings - fade to commercial - return to see our triumphant duo make some witty comment on their recently finished exploits and, at the end of this segment, we would leave them both laughing (this was painfully close to a pattern set by too many of our own situation comedies) - fade to another commercial - then return again for the final

credits. Besides dropping the whole idea of the "off-into-the-sunset" ending, it was terribly disjointed structurally and provided none of the kinetic culmination of the first season's endings.

Likewise, the stylized animated credits of the first season were replaced by somewhat more conventional live action and pixilation (i.e. - animation of live actors) techniques in a main title sequence that was obviously designed for color (cf., the big close-up of the red rose in Steed's lapel).

Another factor contributing to the distinguishable drop in quality and one that I think most viewers were unaware of was the fact that the series was running so close to its delivery date that two episodes were shot simultaneously throughout most of the second season. Since each one-hour show takes two weeks to shoot, a "double-production line" was put into effect to meet the weekly delivery date. And this hectic state of affairs often threatened to become worse as a result of contractual negotiations with the Writers Guild of Great Britain at one time; at another time, the entire production crew at ABFC's Elstree Studios threatened to strike. Luckily, things were ironed out so that both the writing and the production continued.

These production necessities, however, undoubtedly accounted for the fact that the second series was much more "studio-bound" than the first. The second season saw the first use of process photography (i.e. - rear screen projection, etc.) and more than

one simulated outdoor set (these are always dead give-aways by sound quality alone). In this sense, the phony look of the process photography and the studio artificiality of the second season compared very unfavourably with the greater realism of the first season's on-location shooting.

Besides all this, can you imagine some of the stories MacNee and Rigg would be able to tell about shooting two episodes simultaneously?

So, it seems that it was a combination of front office decisions to widen the appeal of the show combined with the necessity of the "double production line" and the photographic requirements for filming in colour that contributed to the slight drop in quality from the first season to the second.

For me, the original black and white series remains the "Golden Age" of THE AVENGERS.

-gary crowdus-

PICTURE IF YOU WILL.....

On this side, a photo of Pat MacNee & his latest femme cohort, Linda Thorson. On the other side, read:

NEW LEADING LADY, the lovely Linda Thorson replaces Diana Rigg on The Avengers beginning Wednesday at 7:30, p.m. on Channels 7, 11, 13 in color. Patrick MacNee is still on hand, of course, as John Peel.

-San Francisco Examiner
TV section; page 13
March 21st, 1968-

A white sports car careens down the dirt road, it turns off its lights and speeds off a side road. A dark car speeds past, its two drivers peering intently ahead. The white car pulls up before a stately manor house. In minutes, a badly wounded man has jimmied the french windows open. Inside, he places a packet of papers inside a red treasure chest, places the money back on top and picks up an invitation from the desk.

Meanwhile, the two in the dark car have realized their mistake and return on the route they had taken.

In the manor house, the wounded man has re-closed the treasure chest and signed Steed's name and address on one of the invitations. For this is....

-DEAD MAN'S TREASURE-

-A very edited rendition of the original show, transcribed from tape by - Dennis Kawicki-

(Scene: Steed's apartment. The doorbell rings and Steed, in smoking jacket and tie, opens it and finds a lovely surprise on his doorstep).

Mrs. Peel: "Good Evening, Steed!"

Steed: "It's 3:30 in the morning."

Mrs. Peel: "Good Morning, Steed. I thought we'd have a party (She enters).

Steed: (Looking out the window) "I'm expecting visitors."

Mrs. Peel: (Beginning to open a bottle of bubbly after inspecting the label) "Ooooh. Perhaps I'm intruding...?"

Steed: (Smiling) "You're not intruding." (Looks worriedly out the window again).

Mrs. Peel: "I've just come from an Embassy junket."

Steed: "The rattle of Ambassadorial decorations."

Mrs. Peel: "The drone of speeches. All proceeding at the pace of an infirm gravely debilitated, very old snail."

(The bubbly is open, and seating herself, she allows Steed to pour her a glass).

Mrs. Peel: "Why the midnight vigil?"

Steed: "I'm expecting Bobby Danvers."

Mrs. Peel: "Here? What's he cour-
iering?"

Steed: "Some very top secret papers from you know where."

Mrs. Peel: "Hot stuff?"

Steed: "I've laid out my asbestos gloves." (Checking the scene outside once more). "He should have been here two hours ago -"

(Outside the white car spits to a stop, and the wounded man staggers towards it. Behind him the dark car pulls up and one of the men takes aim with his gun. But his companion stops him.)

Alex: "Wait! He hasn't got the box. He must have ditched it on the way here!"

Carl: "And now he's going into Steed's place!"

Alex: "We've got to know what's going on in there, Carl! We've got to know what's being said!"

Mrs. Peel: "But if it were an ordinary delay he would have telephoned, surely?"

Steed: "Not necessarily. Personal contact only. That's one of the rules of the game. Now if Danvers - - -"

(A ringing of the bell. Steed answers it and Bobby Danvers (Rio Fanning) stumbles in. Steed eases him into an easy chair. Mrs. Peel goes for a first aid kit. Gasping for his last breaths, Danvers speaks.)

Danvers: "ooooh.... They didn't... get the box .. I .. Steed.hid it. I hid it closely on the trailhid it....treasure chest....Red treasure chest!" (Danvers expires and Steed shakes his head negatively at Mrs. Peel. Unbeknownst to them there is a contact mike attached to one of the glass panels of the door's sides now....)

Carl (Neil McCarthy): "Got it. Should be loud and clear -"

(Alex turns up the gain on a portable radio set.)

Steed: "It doesn't make sense! He hid it in the Red Treasure Chest!"

Mrs. Peel: "That doesn't tell us much." (Cut back to the apartment).

(Next morning the both of them are poring over maps and charts.)

Mrs. Peel: "How did he arrive in the country?" (Doorbell rings).

(Steed answers the doorbell and an anonymous voice asks:) "Mr. Steed? There's a registered parcel for you, Sir."

Steed: (Shaking the parcel) "How are we doing?"

Peel: "Not very well. Even if he came here direct it still means 35 miles of country road." (Steed throws the parcel behind him onto the easy chair). "Aren't you going to open it?"

Steed: "I know what it is."

Mrs. Peel: "Lead weights for your diving boots?"

Steed: "Rock cakes from my auntie penelope." (He picks up a letter and opens it. Inspecting it closely, he begins to read it aloud). "George Benstead requests the presence of Mr. John Steed at his annual car rally. Annual car rally...." (Steed looks thoughtful).

Mrs. Peel: George Benstead. Who's he?" (Steed inspects the dirtied envelope carefully).

Steed: "I've no idea, but there's a key." (Noticing the bloodstains).

Mrs. Peel: "For the treasure chest?"

Steed: (Crossing to the bloodied portal of his apartment) "And here's Denver's fingerprints!" (They compare the fingerprints to those on the envelope, then cross back to the maps.) "The start is at High Pines, Edington."

Mrs. Peel: (Poking a spot on the map). "That's about fifteen miles from here."

* * *

(Steed and Mrs. Peel arrive at the stately manor house we saw before at night and knock. They are greeted by a short, fat, balding butler who accepts Steed's invitational card and gives them entrance.)

Bates (Ivor Dean): "This way -- sir -- madame. Mr. Benstead is waiting for you." (He escorts them to a remarkable room. Maps of famous racing courses line the walls, a giant movie screen occupies the entire far wall and the center of the room is dominated by a giant stationary racing car. The din is terrific, as the man in the cockpit makes his driving match the film being shown on the screen -- that of some one of the racing courses in England, probably Broome. He completes another lap and then Bates brings the dial back to zero, and helps unstrap the driver. He emerges, shedding helmet and lowering goggles to his chest. Taking off his gloves to shake hands, a small balding gentleman is thus presented.)

Bates: "A Mr. Steed and Guest."

George Benstead (Arthur Lowe): "Steed -- how good of you to come. Forgive me, but I can remember just where it was we met, (Shaking hands.)

Steed: "May I introduce Mrs. Peel." (Shaking hands with Mrs. Peel.)

Mrs. Peel: "How do you do?"

Benstead: "How do you do, my dear." (Steed begins examining the stationary racing car and Benstead admires other objects of beauty in the area.)

Steed: "What a beauty!"

Benstead: "Oh, I do agree!"

Steed: "Marvellous chassis."

Benstead: "Well, I wouldn't be quite so bold as to say that."

Steed: "Her suspension's pretty complex, too!"

Benstead: "Eh? Oh. Oh, that. That's a simulator. All controls are geared to the film. One mistake and a bell rings."

Mrs. Peel: "You mean you've cracked up."

Benstead: "Metaphorically speaking, yes." (Looking eagerly at Mrs. Peel). "Would you care for a run?"

Mrs. Peel: "Oh, no, thank you very much. Steed's the one who likes the big toys." (Benstead rubs his hands.)

Benstead: "Oh, capital! Splendid!"

Steed: (Letting himself be coaxed).

"Well, I" (Easing himself towards the auto.)

Benstead: (As Steed eases himself into the cockpit and begins to fasten in). "Ah-hah-hah!"

Steed: "Fits me like a glove!"

Benstead: (Beginning to turn on the speed dial on the board) "I'll adjust the lap speed at about half-way. Shall we say -- eighty miles an hour -- until you get used to it?"

Steed: (Above the roar of the motor). "I think Bobby'd enjoy this."

Benstead: "Bobby?"

Steed: "Bobby Danvers.....He obviously was a friend of yours...."

Benstead: (Becoming excited) "Watch that corner. It's very tricky. You get into a four wheel drift there and you've had it!" (As he says that, Steed makes a skid and he surprisedly yelps with sudden and unexpected pain.)

Steed: "There's something wrong with your electric!"

Benstead: "Oh, no, it's no Jimmy. I forgot to warn you. When you make a mistake, you also get a very mild electric shock."

Steed: "Oh, I see."

Benstead: "Gingers are up no end, eh?" (Mrs. Peel barely controls her laughter as Steed jumps again at the sound of the bell.)

Steed: "End is right!"

Benstead: "Quite an experience, eh?"

Steed: "Electrifying!"

(Steed eventually extricates himself from the entrails of the shocking device, and is invited to a "pit stop" by Benstead. They leave the simulator room, and on the way Steed barely nods to Mrs. Peel to leave the group. Looking very casual about the whole thing, Mrs. Peel separates after looking around, and goes for a likely looking door. She enters - and finds more than a mere room. A tall man, face covered with a nylon -hose mask, is going through Benstead's desk. He freezes for a moment, then races for the open French windows. Mrs. Peel literally tackles him and in what amounts to a throwing match - throwing each other about the room - the burglar manages to throw Mrs. Peel onto a couch which tips and momentarily pins her underneath. Squirming out from under, Mrs. Peel observes the villain put a grab on one of the invitations to the car rally and run out the windows. Sic Transit Opportunitas, says the expression on Mrs. Peel's face. Outside, the burglar - Carl - whips off the hose and meets Alex (who is played by Edwin Richfield).

Alex: "Did you get them?"

Carl: "Only just. Mrs. Peel jumped me." (Alex laughs at this.)

Alex: Mrs. Peel jumped you?"

Carl: "Yeah, you didn't see her. She really and truly is emancipated, is that one!" (Inside the house, a crowd is beginning to gather in the "pit stop" room. Mrs. Peel sidles in and off-handedly mentions:)

Mrs. Peel: "Well, there's no sign of the famous treasure chest, but we're in the right place. I ran into trouble. Someone was ransacking Benstead's study?"

Steed: "They get anything?"

Mrs. Peel: "Not so far as I could make out. A couple of invitations. Blank ones." (Steed looks around at the crowd in a new way).

Alex: "It'll be easy enough to hide out in this crowd. It provides a perfect cover." (Alex and Carl are already inside the "pit stop" trying hard to look inconspicuous.) "Helps to confuse things. Besides, we hold the ace. We know the opposition." (Bates enters the room and stands on the running board of the antique Rolls Royce in the center.)

Bates: All right, ladies and gentlemen, if you will give me your attention, please." (The crowd hushes a bit). "It is now time to draw for partners."

Steed: (Stepping forward) "Partners?"

Bates: "Certainly, Sir, driving (31)

partners." (Outside a scene of some forboding takes place; a man just parking his auto is slugged from behind - and his invitation is taken.)

Bates: "Mr. George Townsend...Miss Margaret Brady." (Two people pair off). Miss Penelope Blaine... Miss Penelope Blaine??? (A blond thing runs into the room at this point.)

Penelope Blaine(Valerie Van Ost): "Here! Terribly sorry, I'm late, darling, I had such terrible trouble with my clutch control."

Bates: "Miss Blaine...you'll be accompanying Mr. John Steed."

Penny: "Oh? Who's John Steed."

Steed: (Stepping forward). "Here."

Penny: (Brightening) "Oh? Darling! You're with me!" (She enthuses over Steed and Mrs. Peel gives them both a pair of very funny and vastly amused looks as this interchange takes place). "I'm so glad. Because you remind me so much of dear David."

Steed: "David?"

Penny: "My fiancée."

Steed: (Eagerly) "Oh, in that case perhaps I should step aside and let you and your fiancée be partners."

Penny: (Laughing) "Oh, don't be silly! David's dead! Poor dear fell into a buzz-saw. He was terribly fond of carpentry." (Steed wiggles uncomfortably, like an unhappy worm on a hook and Mrs. Peel is enjoying this whole scene intensely). "Oh, darling...." (And Penny runs off to talk to some other friends she espied).

Steed: "I've got to wriggle out of this somehow."

Mrs. Peel: "Hm... We can't be chasing off around the countryside."

Steed: "No, you'd better stay here and search." (At this point a moderately handsome sort comes over to the pair and asks:)

Mike Clovin (Neil McCarthy): "Mrs. Peel...? It seems they've laid us off together. (Shaking hands). Oh. I'm Clovin. Major Mike Clovin."

Mrs. Peel: "How do you do."

Clovin: "You look a keen navigating type."

Mrs. Peel: "I do?"

Clovin: "Yes. And I mean to make it clear right now, I mean to win this treasure hunt."

Steed: "Treasure hunt?"

Penny: "Well, of course! You mean to tell me you don't know? It's a car rally combined with a treasure hunt. Splendid fun. Clues scattered all along

the route and each one leading you to the treasure."

Mrs. Peel: "Prize?"

Clovin: "...Yes, the big prize. And it's worth a thousand guineas this year." (Steed and Mrs. Peel exchange Significant Looks and he begins towards the door.)

Steed: "I must check my motor."

Clovin: "And I'll get each of you ladies a drink." (Mrs. Peel grabs hold of Penelope Blaine and steers her aside.)

Mrs. Peel: "And you must tell me about your clutch control." (The roar of motors once more fills the air... Steed is standing in front of the screen in the simulator room and Benstead is once more in the cockpit.)

Benstead: (Over the infernal roar of the engines) "Really My dear chap, I'm shocked!" (Bell rings and Benstead jerks in his seat.) "Deeply shocked!"

Steed: (Backing back and forth) "You do know where the treasure's hidden..."

Benstead: "Naturally. I'm the only one who does. I hid it myself. But to come right out and ask me where I'd hidden it... And you'd all the appearance of a gentleman, too."

Steed: (Exasperated) "Look! I'm not interested in the thousand guineas, Mr. Benstead."

Benstead: "No, no, oh no, of course not! Just want to know where it's hidden, that's all!"

Steed: "This is important! A friend of mine has hidden something in your treasure chest. More than that I can't tell you. You'll just have to trust me. Look, as a gesture of good faith, I'll double the prize money if you'll just tell me where it's hidden!"

Benstead: "Double it?"

Steed: "More than that I'm willing to... Look out!" (The car "skids" and the bell clangs furiously... for Benstead doesn't pull out of it. Smoke fills the cockpit as Benstead slumps over to the side. Steed leaps to the switches and throws them to off. He observes that George Benstead is dead, and he throws open a pair of doors leading towards the "pit stop" room. Inside a startled Bates turns around).

Steed: "What are you doing?"

Bates: "The switches... I was throwing the switches, sir!"

Steed: "So I saw."

Bates: "Some one had altered them to full voltage, sir. Very dangerous, Sir. Very dangerous. There could have been a nasty accident."

Steed: "There already has." (Scene

returns to the simulator room. Carl, one of the Other Side villains is fearfully inspecting the slightly scorched body of Benstead. Hearing the voices of Steed and Bates, he runs for the other door.)

Steed: "...just come and look in here." (Scene is now the pit stop room. Alex and Carl have a hurried discussion.)

Alex: "Benstead! Dead!"

Carl: "Yes...."

Alex: "But I didn't touch him! But if you didn't...."

Carl: "And I didn't!"

Alex: "Yeah."

Carl: "Who did?" (Steed persuades Bates to go on with the Car Rally, being the only way to find the treasure chest now. Bates starts the race, giving each pair a sealed envelope, stating in the ensemble that Mr. Benstead was ill and would be watching the start from his bedroom window. Outside, on signal, each pair sprints for their autos, Steed with Penny Blaine, Mrs. Peel with Mike Clovin and the pair of villains.... ditching the partners assigned to them and riding off together. We are now treated to some very new and very nice background music for the race, something different from the taped segments of Laurie Johnson musical score that has lately been the usual thing for "The Avengers". Steed is driving, Penny is at his side...)

Penny: "You know, there's something very Paul about you." (Steed looks at her questioningly.) "Paul. My second fiancée. Poor Love, insisted on surveying mountains. By air. Popped up in his helicopter, and that whirling thing, whatever you call it, bounced against a glacier!"

Steed: "Did he come down again?"

Penny: "Very rapidly." (Alex and Carl read their clues whilst driving.)

Alex: "Hahahahahaha! What was the first clue?"

Carl: "The vaults at Mithering?" (Quick cut back to Steed and Penny).

Steed: "The vaults at Mithering?"

Penny: "That's what it says. *sigh* My third fiancée had a car like this. *sigh* Poor Harold."

Steed: "Harold?"

Penny: "My third fiancée. A divine man. Cross channel swimmer. And one day he had this really super idea! Swim it both ways.... underwater! *sigh* Poor Harold. He simply had no sense of direction." (At this point Steed accidentally bounced off the road, and taking the course offered, continued across it. He also managed to notice Penny's skirt.)

Steed: "It's a short skirt.... I mean it's a short cut." (Alex and Carl skid onto the road, Carl looking behind them for any pursuing cars.)

Alex: "Short cut. Should put us a good ten minutes of the others." (To punctuate his words, Clovin's Mercedes and Steed's Bentley appear in front of them and other cars appear in the distance behind.)

Carl: "Any more good ideas?"

Mrs. Peel: (Observing the pack behind them) "So much for the short cut." (In quick succession the cars pull up at a deserted-looking pub. The pub is the "Vaults" and the village is Mithering.) "Well, this is the vaults at Mithering."

Penny: "The bank vaults, do you think?" (Everyone is searching high and low for the next clue.) "Now that wouldn't be a problem if we had Dear Albert here."

Steed: "Fiancee number....?"

Penny: "Four... Or was it number five. Anyway, Albert was always blowing things up. Went all over the world just demolishing things."

Steed: "Is that so?"

Alex: "It must mean something!"

Carl: "Let's try over here."

Penny: The last thing he blew up was a bridge. Only he was so absent-minded, poor thing. Poor Albert..... He set the charges and then.... Forgot to get off." (Steed points up at the pub sign and tells Penny:)

Steed: "See what's on that sign." (She does, and obviously finds something. Beckoning Steed over, Mrs. Peel also races over. Seeing this, Alex tells his partner, Carl...)

Alex: "Get into the car!" (He himself races over to the sign as well. Steed and Clovin start sooner, but Carl cuts off their exits until Alex is able to jump back into their own auto. Then they speed off, the others following very quickly after.)

Carl: "We're ahead now."

Alex: "And I'm going to make sure that we stay ahead." (He exhibits very proudly a number of chunks of wood... & studded through the wood are nails!) "I shall make sure.... the next fast stretch." (They reach a long stretch of road and Alex begins throwing out the logs of nails, shoving them by the dozens behind them.) "Well, this is it! Bombs away! Hahahahahahaha!" (Clovin's big Mercedes rears up and somehow or other manages to avoid most of the clods of booby-trapped wood, bumping the rest

harmlessly aside....)

Mrs. Peel: "Look Out!... Lucky!"

Clovin: "I doubt if anyone else will."

Mrs. Peel: "Yes, but don't you think we should...."

Clovin: "We haven't got time!" (And following right behind them is...)

Penny: "Look out!" (Steed manages to run the gauntlet as well, steering and skidding down the stretch.) "Well, that reminds me of the bobsled run I did with Henry the Fifth."

Steed: "Henry the Fifth????"

Penny: "My fifth. I was thrown clear... But poor Henry... But he really should have been wearing a crash helmet, don't you think?" (Looking behind her when they hear the sounds of a car crashing behind them.) "I say... Someone's awfully keen on winning, aren't they?" (And in the car ahead...)

Mrs. Peel: "Another short cut?"

Clovin: "This one's more reliable. It should put us about five minutes ahead of anyone else." (Looking up at a sign up ahead...) "By the time I'm finished it may be more than five minutes." (He stops the car just past a cross-roads and runs back... and then we see the sign pointing to Swingingdale moved so that it points instead down the other direction. The "Vaults" clue, by the way was: "Swingingdale, Get A Move On.")

Mrs. Peel: "Winner's tactics?"

Clovin: "By hook...."

Mrs. Peel: "...Or by crook!" (behind them the infamous pair of Carl and Alex make their presence known. They also come to the crossroads...)

Carl: "Anything?"

Alex: "Not a thing."

Carl: "Then we're still ahead...." (Spotting the sign) "Hold it!" (He quickly jumps out... and we once more see the sign to Swingingdale being moved... so that it now points in the correct direction!) "Right! That should upset somebody." (And onward breezes the '27 Bentley... through the crossroads and on down the road to Swingingdale! And on the road away from Swingingdale.... Alex and Carl find another sign... pointing the other way towards Swingingdale!)

Alex: "Fool!"

Carl: "Well... some must have changed that other sign before we got there! (Stunned look on face.) "Somebody's cheating! Well, it's not my...."

Alex: (Exasperated) "No, no, take that road!" (And at Swingingdale...)

Clovin: "Well, this is Swingingdale."
Mrs. Peel: "Right. Not very swing-
ing...." (Looking around).

Clovin: "Get a move on...."

Mrs. Peel: "Get a move on.... (And she spies a moving van and points at it. In seconds they're over there and pulling down the tail-gate of the truck. Inscribed on it..)

Mrs. Peel: "Galding."

Clovin: "The village of Galding. Right! Get a move on." (Behind them...)

Steed: "The village of Galding!"

Penny: "Mr. Smith's Hammer!" (They continue to rush down the roads and byways, always followed by the mysterious Bates, cross-country-cutting in his land rover, keeping an eye on all the contestants in the rally.)

Penny: "Yes, I've always been fascinated by men of action. Men with get up and go."

Steed: "Sounds as though most of them have gone up and went!"

Penny: "Yes, well, I've had rather a run of bad luck. There was that parachutist who was desperate to break the record for delayed drops."

Steed: "And did he?"

Penny: "Oh, he broke it all right. But unfortunately his neck as well.... Mr. Smith's hammer...." (They arrive at a small (and again deserted) village.) "What do you think it means?"

Steed: "Smith. Hammer. Smith and Hammer. Just what does that conjure up to you?"

Penny: "A blacksmith's. (Mrs. Peel and Clovin leave, having discovered the hammers in a row in the blacksmith's. But before Steed finds the smithy, Alex and Carl arrive and also find the hammers. And decide on a little skull-duggery of their own.)

Alex: "Look, Sparrow! Barrels of Fun At Tree-Top Farm!"

Carl: "Right." (and makes to leave.)

Alex: "Stop!"

Carl: "But Mrs. Peel's ahead of us!"

Alex: "And Steed is right behind of us." (So saying, they secrete themselves about the interior as Steed and Penny finally drive up.)

Steed: "Can't be too far behind."

(He goes into the smithy, but Penny stops for a moment by the Other Side's auto... and finds one of the nail-studded logs. Inside Steed finds himself covered by a pair of pistols.)

Alex: "Well, this will narrow down the opposition."

Penny: "Steed???"

Alex: "Not a word! Quick! Over there!" (Penny enters and is covered.)

Penny: "Steed? Look what I've found. It's supposed to...be...lucky." (Penny looks around at the guns and with a fine sense of timing immediately conks one of the bad guys with the horse-shoe. Steed takes that opportunity to engage in a bit of fisticuffs. But after placing a horse-collar on one unlucky villain, Steed is accidentally conked by Penelope Blaine with the horse-shoe. The two immediately escape from Steed and Penny while the getting is good.)

Alex: "Get this fool thing off me! Quickly! Careful, you fool!"

Penny: (Massaging Steed's head). "Well, it's supposed to be lucky." (They roar off in the Bentley in hot pursuit.) "They can't be far ahead."

Steed: "Now if only we could... find the treasure."

Penny: "Well, they can't get far. I sugared their petrol."

Steed: "You what?"

Penny: "Well, it isn't exactly that I wanted to cheat... But that thousand Guineas would buy a lot of hats! But I'm so very used to giving sugar lumps to horses and cars are sort of like horses, aren't they? And when I saw that lonely little car standing there, sugarless... I just naturally!" (Sure enough, they soon roar up on the broken-down auto, and Steed gasses the Bentley and narrowly avoids hitting the two thunderstruck foreign agents by dint of their own agility in leaping out of the way.)

Steed: "Well, that's paid to the opposition. From now on it's plain sailing."

Penny: "Plain sailing?" (And with a nerve-shattering crash, the wind-screen suddenly turns into a lovely pattern of surrealistic design. The window was hit with a bullet or two.)

Steed: "They tell me this wind-screen was bulletproof!" (And in the field off to the side stands a land rover...and Bates the Butler is watching Steed drive on towards Tree-Top Farm and the next clew.)

(Mrs. Peel is waiting by the side of the Mercedes, and a panting Clovin stumbles down the cow-path back towards her and the car.)

Clovin: "It's a farm all right. Just over the top of this hill."

Mrs. Peel: "Did you see any of the others?"

Glovin: "No. Not a thing in sight. We're way ahead of the field. All over the road." (They ride off and are soon at the farm.)

Mrs. Peel: "Where do we start?"

Clovin: "I don't know. Your guess is as good as mine." (They spot a few barrels painted with arrows on top, the arrows pointing to a barn structure. They get inside, and the place is stuffed to the top with barrels.) "Barrels of fun. I'll start here. You try the other routes. (Mrs. Peel is rumaging along the barrels when she notices an antique and useless shotgun nailed to the wall.)

Mrs. Peel: "Barrels of fun...."

(What she doesn't know is that Bates the Butler had arrived. As she removed a slip of paper from the barrels of the scattergun, Bates came into the barn, armed with a very usable scattergun, and was mugged from behind!)

Mrs. Peel: (Reading) "Back at my place. What a shocking place...To hide the treasure!" (Turning back to the center of the barn, yelling for Mike, she comes across a pair of shoes...attached to the prostrate Bates.) "Mike! Mike! Mike! Mike....."

(The badly battered Bates managed to convey to Mrs. Peel the facts that he had been slugged by Mike Clovin. And more than that, that Bates had seen Clovin shoot at Steed but moments ago. He begged her to get the treasure, to prevent Clovin from getting it. She agreed to do so. Driving furiously, she soon arrived at the manor house in Mike Clovin's Mercedes. Dashing out and up the front steps she is halted short... The trunk has lifted up and there is the phony Major Clovin...pistol in hand, and pointed right at Mrs. Peel.)

"Nice bit of driving, Mrs. Peel. Bates wouldn't tell me where the treasure was. Maybe you will."

Penny: (They too had discovered the prone Bates back at Tree-Top Farm. He had directed them back to the manor house, and they were on their way now.) "You're such a splendid driver. Almost as good as Edward."

Steed: "Another fiancée?"

Penny: "He went off on safari. He went to bag a rhinoceros. It...bagged...him! Heeheeheehee..." (Back at the House, things are getting a little bit sticky. Mrs. Peel has been handcuffed to the steering wheel of the simulator car. Clovin turns to the speed indicator dial and turns the machine on.)

Clovin: "You are being stubborn, Mrs. Peel. (He turns the speed up a bit.) Unfortunate. You see, I haven't much time. No time for finesse, or gentle persuasion. The final clue, Mrs. Peel. You will tell me the final clue!" (The unfamiliar auto careens off the "road" of the film, Mrs. Peel reels with the electric shock transmitted to her. Clovin comes back to the machine and leans over the cockpit of the auto.) "Better concentrate on the road, Mrs. Peel!" (He deliberately jerks the wheel to the side, producing another shock, whipping the head of Mrs. Peel down with the shock.) "Just a mild shock, Mrs. Peel! Nothing to worry about." (He returns to the speed dial.) "Let's push the speed up, shall we?" (He does so, and crosses to the other cubbyhole, and twists the dial there to a higher number.) "And increase the voltage! The next shock won't be so pleasant!"

(Cut back to the Bentley, as Penny and Steed race back towards the manor house. Penny looks behind them and...)

Penny: "I hate to tell you, but that opposition that you lost..." (Behind them speeds the two heavies, Alex and Carl, in hot pursuit.)

Mr. Peel: "I keep telling you! There's nothing here to interest you!" (Clovin is grimacing at Mrs. Peel, his face but inches from her, the rear of the simulator filling the room.)

Clovin: "Oh, come on now, Mrs. Peel! I have no loyalties. I sell to the highest bidder. I keep my ears to the ground. My eyes open. When I saw you and Steed go off on a treasure hunt with two of the opposition in pursuit tailing you... Then there's got to be something in it for me!" (For a brief second Mrs. Peel makes a grab for the gun with her free hand. But as she grabs the pistol, the simulator swerves off the track and throws her into a literal spasm, tearing her away from her almost achieved prize. Clovin gets a very dirty look on his face and strides back to the speed board.) "It's obviously not going fast enough! The final clue, Mrs. Peel! What is it!" (Back on the road where Steed and Penny are being followed closely....)

Penny: "They're gaining!" (As the two cars swerve down the road, we cut back to the simulator room. The film rushes by at appalling speeds, her every fibre must now go into reacting to the scene on the screen. By the dial...)





Clovin: "Talk!" (He menaces her once more with the pistol.)

Mrs. Peel: "What about?" The weather?" (The film blurs and whines, the roar becomes subsonic in intensity as she desperately maneuvers the simulator.)

Clovin: "This is going to very unpleasant for you very soon now, Mrs. Peel!" (And back on the road...)

Alex: (As their car comes nearer and nearer the Bentley, he pulls a gun and prepares to aim it.) "Now on the right! Get up alongside them! On the side! On the side!" (And despite desperate maneuvering by Steed, the bronze auto finally makes it alongside them. The pistol is raised....)

Penny: "Road hogs!" (And now begins a turn-about. As Steed tries to stay on the road and maybe push Alex and Carl off, Penny reaches behind into the back seat and comes up with a broom! She reaches out with the broom and starts swatting Carl...who is driving...and the pistol-wielding Alex. A swat... Another swat! Then... A shot! An astounded look on Alex's face as Carl's sort of turns to parridge and he slumps forward. Alex had shot Carl by mistake! The auto careens out of control, Alex trying desperately to control the machine as it races off the road....)

A crash, shattering glass, Steed stops the Bentley and reverses back to the scene of the accident. He leaps out of the car, motioning Penny to stay where she is, and reaches the prostrate forms of Carl and Alex. The car is upside down by a tree, Alex is clear of the car, another hand droops from underneath. A quick check, and Steed slowly shakes his head over both of them. Back at the house...)

Clovin: "Where is it?" (He goes to the other room and boosts the voltage control all the way over to the other way...it is now very definitely in the lethal zone.) "My patience is wearing thin, Mrs. Peel! It's all or nothing now!

Mrs. Peel: (Clinging desperately to the wheel, she has no room for mistakes now, none at all. One sound of the bell, one skid into the grass and she'll be better basted than a southern fried chicken.) "It will be nothing if you kill me!"

Clovin: "I'm a gambler. I play the long odds! (Breathing in her face once more, he comments loudly over the deafening vibrations of the engine...) "No room for error now. You can't afford one (37)

slip. One mistake! Tell me where it is and you're free!" (Outside, the badly battered Bentley arrives finally at the door of the manor house. Steed lithely leaps out of the Bentley, and he tells Penny...)

Steed: "You stay here!" (He runs into the house.)

Penny: "Oh! Be careful! I don't want to lose you too!"

Steed: (Turning a moment at the door). "You're right. Let's just stay good friends!" (But she cannot just sit in the car, and so she leaves it also and heads for the door. Inside Steed approaches the noise of the simulator room. He very easily opens it and peeks inside, viewing the entire scene...the simulator, the pistol, the obvious double danger of electrification and bullet...)

Clovin: (Unknowing of the new threat to him behind...) "Mrs. Peel! You do realize that in a few moments you will likely have died?"

(At which moment Steed throws himself upon Clovin. They wrestle for the gun, it goes spinning into the voltage control room. They run for it, it is kicked into the pit stop room. It is lost somewhere in the room. Now Clovin and Steed get down to the fist-cuffs in dead earnest. Whoever wins this fight wins more than a moment's peace! Inside the simulator room the dear Penny finally manages to find the macabre scene and goes over to talk to the very busy Mrs. Peel!)

Penny: "I say, you're awfully good at it."

Mrs. Peel: "Switch it off! Switch it off!" (Penny goes over to the dial and begins to turn it down, the speed of the film and the roar of the engine slowly dropping down the wall of noise it had created, leaving the subsonics until it nears a stop...)

Penny: "I warn you. I'm simply hopeless at mechanical things!" (And indeed it seems that she has. The car begins to come to a stop. When Penny leaves the dial and nears Mrs. Peel she cries a warning.)

"Don't touch me!" (But now an entirely new and unexpected danger presents itself. The dial has gone all the way around and now the beginning becomes the end...the film is in reverse! The roar slowly climbs once more, the film races backwards, the roar of the auto fills the room, Mrs. Peel twists desperately anew at the steering

wheel, for the danger is now even greater than it was before! Penny runs back to the dial and tries turning it, but the result is nil as the speed and the roar builds and builds. The dial turns as a broken beast, the auto simulator bearing Mrs. Peel closer and closer to her (gasp!) final ending....?)

Penny: "It's no good. It just keeps going round and round." (And in the "pit stop" room the fight continues. A slammer blow to the head, a kick to the body and Steed slides underneath the automobile there. Clovin pulls him out desperately, intending to finish the job and make his getaway...but Steed has been faking! A single powerful blow and Clovin flies back and back...into the "petrol tanks" of alcoholic types. They topple over and Clovin drops...and stays dropped. Steed very happily grins at the sight. Inside the simulator room....)

The film races, the roar fills the air, Penny is frantic, not knowing what to do and Mrs. Peel just simply has no time to lose her cool. In walks the jaunty Steed, unperturbed by the unnatural scene, a bottle of wine in his hand, a casual pace to his feet....)

Steed: "I've just been introduced to a new variety from Rheims."

Mrs. Peel: "Steed! The voltage control...!"

Steed: "The voltage control?"

Mrs. Peel: "Yes, the voltage control!"

Steed: "Oh. That. I've disconnected it."

Mrs. Peel: (So shocked she lets go the wheel). "You've WHAT???" (As she says this, the wheel spins over and the bell rings and keeps ringing, and no very singed Mrs. Emma Peel results, so she very disgustedly spins the wheel from side to side again.) "Hah!"

Steed: "Each grape individually crushed." (He reaches behind the dial board and turns something. The roar and the film very quickly drops to next to nothing and disappears altogether.)

Penny: "So that's how you do it!" (Steed then easily opens the handcuffs with a key produced from the prone body of Clovin and helps the Peel of Steel to her feet.)

Steed: "The custom I believe is to toast the glorious victor." (So saying he pops the cork and liberally wets with the two glasses he has had in the same hand.)

Penny: "But where's the treasure?"

Mrs. Peel: (Sitting herself on the bonnet of the auto.) "Well, the final clue was, "What a shocking place, to hid the treasure."" (Steed pokes about the auto.)

Steed: "What a shocking place... to hide...the treasure..."

Mrs. Peel: "You're warm. (Steed moves towards the bonnet.) "Very cold."

(Back towards the cockpit.) "Getting warmer. Warmer. Sizzling hot!" (And Steed leaps onto the seat of the cockpit, lifts it out and pulls out the small red treasure chest. He puts it upon Mrs. Peel's lap and bends to the task of opening it.)

Steed: "Open sesame!"

Penny: "Oh!"

Steed: "Hah! Treasure chest!" (A quick leap by Penny, and oooing to herself, she grabs the thousand guineas and leaps for the door. She kisses Steed on the cheek on the way out and Steed and Mrs. Peel have to laugh at her.)

Steed: "Finders keepers!" (He pulls out the envelopes Danvers had not so long ago secreted there.)

Mrs. Peel: "Consolation prize!"

- * - * -

(Scene: once more Steed's apartment. Mrs. Peel leaps through the door, clad in a fetching green silk thing.)

Mrs. Peel: "Steeded? Steed???"

(The roar is back! In heart-rending full-volume sound, the roar of the simulator once more fills the room with it's presence. Mrs. Peel cringes back against the portal in instant alarm.... and Steed enters, shaving himself with an electric razor, which is the object giving off the roar.)

Steed: "Latest thing. An exceptionally powerful motor."

Mrs. Peel: "Exceptionally. Do you have to pass a test to use it? Bit noisy isn't it?" (She is unheard over the roar of the engine.) "I said... it's a bit...(cut out) NOISY, ISN'T IT?"

"Steed: "You can't have economy and silence. 5000 shaves to the gallon, one million whisker service, only once a year, fast on the straights, nippy on the curves, four forward speeds and a reverse." Mrs. Peel: "Reverse? What on earth does reverse do?" Steed: "Well now that you've come to mention it, I haven't the faintest idea...." Mrs. Peel: "...Reverse..." (And she applies the razor to her face. Steed returns.)

Steed: "Are you ready then, Mrs. Peel?"

Mrs. Peel has a moustache....

ADDENDUM
AND
CORRECTION
TO -
TWO
SEASONS
AND A
HALF:



- Being a continuation of sorts of a rather splotchy listing in #3 of the Avengers shows seen on the American networks. Though far from completely corrected or filled out, the listings of shows I learn about continue to grow and grow. Rather than attempt to perform the near-impossible feat of a Truly Complete Listing of All The Avengers Shows or somesuch, I am performing the unmemorable service of simply bringing the listing up to date. First, a partial listing of the old Honor Blackman-Cathy Gale shows seen in Canada. No dates or order of appearance is given, and in most cases only the most rudimentary mention of additional character actors and actresses. Much less that important matter of who was the Director, script writer, film editor and so forth.

Alas. Nonetheless, here is the partial listing.

"CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE"

Steed has been marked for death by the Mafia. Cathy joins a circus to find out why. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. Carlo Robert Rietty
Rickie Sandra Dorne
Terry John Church
James Artro Morris

Sigi George Little
Julie Gwendolyn Watts
Dr. Terrance
Geoffrey Palmer
Miss Quist Anne Godfrey
- * -

"INTERCRIME"

Cathy joins the international organization "Intercrime" to uncover the crime cartel's top-level leadership. Steed: Patrick MacNee.

Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Felder Kenneth J. Warren
Moss Alan Browning
Palmer Donald Webster
Manning Patrick Holt
Hilda Stern Julie Arnall

"THE NUTSHELL"

Steed and Cathy search for a thief who stole a top-secret code. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

"THE GOLDEN FLEECE"

Steed searches for the "Golden Fleece" and a modern Jason with some very questionable associates. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)
Captain Jason Warren Mitchell

"DEATH DISPATCH"

Steed and Cathy travel to Argentina to find how an apparently innocent diplomatic pouch has triggered a murder. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)
Miquel Roas Richard Warner

"THE MAN WITH TWO SHADOWS"

..is Steed, who is trying to uncover a gang specializing in producing "doubles" of men with security clearances. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Gordon Daniel Moynihan
Cummings Philip Anthony
Borowski Terence Lodge
Charles Paul Whitsun-Jones
Rudi: Douglas Robinson

"BRIEF FOR MURDER"

Steed asks two talented attorneys to plan a perfect crime - - - the murder of Mrs. Cathy Gale. ((Editor - this was the one where, for a fee, these two attorneys would provide you with the perfect defense for a crime you wished to commit...if you followed their instructions implicitly when you actually performed the foul deed you wished to commit.)) Steed:

Patrick MacNee, Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)
 Wescott Alec Rose

Liza Denham Ellen Intosh
 Mrs. Ross Annette Kerr
 Sid Douglas Robinson
 Mrs. Daniels Naomi Chance

"CONCERTO"

Steed and Cathy investigate a plot to use a visiting pianist to create an international incident. Steed: Patrick MacNee, Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Stefan Veliko Sander Elie
 Burns Geoffrey Colville
 Peterson Bernard Brown
 Darleen Dorinda Stevens
 Zalenko Nigel Steak
 Polly White Valerie Bell
 Robins Leslie Glazer
 Receptionist Carole Ward

"BOX OF TRICKS"

Steed uses magic to track down the source of NATO security leaks. Steed: Patrick MacNee, Venus Smith: Julie Stevens. ((Editor - This will probably surprise most of you, but Honor Blackman did not appear in all the so-called Honor Blackman series of "Avengers". A lady, mentioned briefly in the lettercol, named Julie Stevens was a once-in-a-while fill-in for Cathy/Honor. She played the part of Venus Smith, a night-club singer of some connections and some skills. Presumably she never really caught on, or the producers of the show would have continued her as the co-partner for Steed when Honor went elsewhere. Instead, we gained Miss Diana Rigg, for which propitiations be to the Gods.)) (60 min.)

"DEATH ON THE ROCKS"

Steed and Cathy go into the diamond business to snare a ring of smugglers. Steed: Patrick MacNee, Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Fenton Gerald Cross
 Max Daniels Hamilton Dyce
 Samuel Ross Toni Gilpin
 Van Berg Richard Clark
 Micky David Sumner

"THE DEATH OF A GREAT DAME"

...is all part of a plot to liquidate the assets of a multi-millionaire financier. ((Editor - and any resemblance between this story and that of the "£50,000 POUND BREAKFAST in this past mini-season is a good deal more than merely accidental.)) Steed: Patrick MacNee, Cathy: Honor Blackman.

Gats Frederick Jaeger
 Sir James Arnall John Laurie
 Gregory Leslie French
 Miller Frank Peters
 Mrs. Miller Clare Kelly
 Minister Billy Milton
 Gravedigger Herbert Nelson
 Policeman Michael Moyer

"MR. TEDDY BEAR"

Steed and Cathy are on the trail of "Mr. Teddy Bear", a professional assassin with a thousand tricks up his sleeve - - and Steed is offered up for bait. Steed: Patrick MacNee, Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Mr. Teddy Bear Bernard Goldman
 Col. Wayne Gilley Kenneth Kealing
 One-Ten Douglas Muir

"SCHOOL FOR TRAITORS"

Venus Smith and Steed become involved in blackmail and murder during a university celebration. Steed: Patrick MacNee, Venus Smith: Julie Stevens.

Roberts Richard Thorp

"IMMORTAL GLAY"

Steed uncovers murder and mayhem at a pottery plant while investigating a new unbreakable ceramic.

Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy:
Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

- * -

"DEATH A' LA CARTE"

In an attempt to prevent the murder of a visiting Middle Eastern ruler, Steed becomes a chef in a Hotel. Steed: Patrick MacNee.

Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Emir Abdulla Akaba. . . Henry Soskin
Mellor. Robert James
Lucien. Gordon Rollings
Dr. Spencer. Paul Dawkins
Umberto. David Nettheim
Arbuthrot. Ken Parry

- * -

"PROPELLANT 23"

The man delivering a new rocket fuel from China is murdered and his fuel sample stolen. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Jules Meyer. . . Frederick Schiller

- * -

"WHITE DWARF"

Steed and Cathy search for the murderer of a famous astronomer. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Maxwell Barker. . . George A. Cooper
Cartwright. Philip Latham
Henry Barker. Peter Copley
Johnson. Bill Nagy
Rahin. Paul Anil
Prof. Richter. . . . Keith Pyott
Minister. . . . Daniel Thorndike

- * -

"DON'T LOOK BEHIND"

Cathy's week-end in the country turns into a nightmare. ((Ed. - Though the basic idea is the same, I understand the treatment between this and "The Jokers" was quite a good deal different. It is also the story referred to in NEWS & NOTES, the "As We See It" column from TV Guide I reprinted there.)) Steed: Patrick MacNee.

(40)

Cathy: Honor Blackman.
Ola. Janine Gray
Young Man. Kenneth Colley

- * -

"THE GRANDEUR THAT WAS ROME"

Steed and Cathy uncover the bizarre plot of a latter-day Caesar - - complete with olive leaves and toga - - who plans to rebuild the Roman Empire. He's going to poison the world through his fertilizer factory and rebuild with his cohorts.

Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy:
Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Bruno. Hugh Burden
Marcus. John Flint
Octavia. Colette Wilde

- * -

"THE UNDERTAKERS"

Steed and Cathy go underground to investigate a mysterious rest home for aging millionaires. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Madden. Patrick Holt

- * -

"THE DEATH OF A BATMAN"

...draws Steed and Cathy into some dangerous high finance. ((Editor - I might add here that the batman referred to above is the British colloquialism for personal servant rather than that inept "Caped Crusader" we all got so tired of so very quickly.)) Steed: Patrick

MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman.
John Wrightson. . . . David Burke
Eric van Doren. . . . Philip Madoc
Lady Cynthia. . . . Katy Greenwood

- * -

"THE SELL-OUT"

There's an informer in the organization - - and Steed is the prime suspect. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. ((Editor - this is the one where Cathy Gale brainwashes Steed to convince him that he isn't a traitor.))

Dr. Martin King. . . . Jon Rollason

Fraser. Michael Mellinger
 Harvey. Frank Gatliff
 One-Twelve. Arthur Hewlett
 Monsieur Roland. Carleton Hobbs
 Gunman. Storm Durr
 Lillian Harvey. Anne Godfrey
 Judy. Gillian Muir
 Workman. Richard Klee
 Policeman. Anthony Blackshaw

- * -

"BUILD A BETTER MOUSETRAP"

Someone is mysteriously jamming the mechanical and electrical equipment near an atomic research plant.

Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Colonel Wesker. John Tate
 Ermyntrode. Nora Nicholson
 Cynthia. Athene Seyler

- * -

"THE MAURITIUS PENNY"

A rare stamp leads Steed and Cathy to a band of conspirators. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Lord Matterley. Richard Vernon
 Goodchild. Philip Guard
 Gerald Shelley. David Langton
 Brown. Alfred Burke
 Lorry Driver. Edwin Brown
 Maitland. Edward Jewesbury
 Burke. Alan Rolfe
 Miss Power. Delia Corrie
 Sheila Gray. Sylvia Langova

- * -

"KILLER WHALE"

Cathy takes over the management of a boxer. Steed: Patrick MacNee.

Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Joey Frazer. Kenneth Farrington
 Pancho. Patrick Magee

- * -

"NOVEMBER FIVE"

Steed investigates the murder of a newly-elected member of Parliament, who had threatened to expose a security scandal. Cathy runs for the now vacant seat in Parliament.

Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)
 Michael Dyter. Gary Hope

- * -

"SECOND SIGHT"

While Steed gropes around in the dark, Cathy brings to light a millionaire's secret. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Cathy: Honor Blackman. (60 min.)

Dr. Vilner. Steven Scott

- * -

And that, my friends and compatriots in mellow grouping, is the listing thus far. As is obvious, twenty-seven shows doesn't nohow noways make three years worth of Cathy Gale episodes. But, for what it is worth, this is just what it purports to be. A partial listing. As a base upon which to build, it is to be hoped that I will in time be able to pub a complete listing.

Anyone out there in England care to duck down to the local main library and go through their back issues of TV TIMES or whatever?

I'm waiting.

All the above, by the way, is courtesy of Philip J. Currie, a kind Canadian soul of great warmth and intelligence (he reads EN GARDE, therefore QED.). He also provided some of the following addendum to last season's black-and-white shows.

As you all know we only saw 22 out of 26 black-and-white filmed episodes. Herewith the following.

- * -

"SILENT DUST"

Steed investigates crop failures in an English county and learns that a mysterious helicopter is spreading a very strange kind of fertilizer over the farm lands. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Emma: Diana Rigg. ((Editor - this is the one where Mrs. Peel got whipped by Mellors, one of the baddies, and it was a bit too raw for the British censors, so they cut the whipping scene out of the final product.)) (60 min.)

Ourod. William Franklyn

Juggins. Jack Watson
 Mellors. Conrad Phillips
 Croft. Norman Bird

- * -

"HONEY FOR THE PRINCE"

To protect an oil rich Arabian prince from assassination, Emma disguises herself as an exotic dancing girl. Emma: Diana Rigg. Steed: Patrick MacNee. (60min.)

Ponsonby-Hopkirk. . . . Ron Moody
 Prince Ali. Zia Mohyeddin
 Arkadi. George Pastell
 Vincent. Roland Curram

- * -

"A TOUCH OF BRIMSTONE"

Steed and Emma attempt to foil a plot to assassinate three prime ministers in England for diplomatic reasons. -In which Steed Joins the Hellfire Club - and Emma becomes a Queen of Sin.

Script by Brian Clemens,
 Directed by James Hill. Emma: Diana Rigg. Steed: Patrick MacNee. (60 min.)

John Cartney. . . . Peter Wyngarde
 Lord Darcy. Colin Jeavons
 Sara. Carol Cleveland
 Horace. Robert Cawdron
 Roger Winthrop. . . Michael Latimer
 Willy Frant. Jeremy Young
 Tubby Bunn. Bill Wallis
 Kartovski. Steve Plytas
 Pierre. Art Thomas
 Big Man. Alf Joint
 Huge Man. Bill Reed

- * -

-this one is untitled-
 -anyone out there have the title?-

Steed and Emma investigate a series of murders which have occurred in freak rainstorms. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Emma: Diana Rigg. (60 min.)

Jonah. Noel Purcell
 Dr. Sturm. Albert Lieven

- * -

So much for the info regarding the first season. As mentioned in the last

of NEWS & NOTES, I have some hopes of obtaining a really complete listing of each and every show with all credits. If such becomes possible, it might be printed up as a "Special", available for money or the usual, and will become (of course) a sort of "Bible" for those viewing re-runs. But to continue into the Second Season of Mrs. Peel and Steed.

If you'll recall, "ESCAPE IN TIME" was never listed in the telly credits. ABC saw fit to review and correct that error the date of July 17, 1968 by re-running it. Why they re-run that particular episode and no other from the second season's shows, and why they did that and why they stopped from showing us some of the unviewed episodes from last year, all of this remains a mystery. Presumably ABC has been inflicted with the now standard contract which states that purchase of a "Season" still means a premium in \$\$\$\$ must be paid for each original show run through the network mill. That is, a down payment is made on a certain number of series shows. Then, an additional payment must be coughed up for each show from that season. As well as guaranteeing to air thus-and-thus many of the shows from each contract unit (season). Thus, to air any of the yet-unaired Emma Peelers would cost ABC money. To air old ones practically nothing at all.

But why one from last season? If the Diana Rigg are ever so much popular than the Linda Thorson shows (and I presume they are), they could have run the rest of the summer with re-runs from last year and ending in September with the "FORGET-ME-KNOT" episode, and the next show would be the Fall Premiere of the all-Tara King season.

Probably some bright lad finally persuaded the Powers That Be in ABC to air Linda Thorson/Tara King as much as possible before the beginning of the September Premiere, to "break her in" before the viewing public.

But with the Convention Season now upon us, the airwaves are quite cluttered up with political brainwaves and very few of the six Tara King shows will be aired before the Premiere. In that case the question comes, why run an Emma Peel show from last season at all? Rather, they should have had the re-run of the "FORGET-ME-KNOT" a week earlier, and put that week to use boosting Tara King.

The minds of TV Execs passeth all understanding. Viva Pablo!

Strength Through Chaos! Viva Pablo!

But let us list "ESCAPE IN TIME".

ESCAPE IN TIME

Steed and Emma fear that quite a number of wealthy criminals are escaping through time. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Emma: Diana Rigg. (60 min.)

Thyssen.	. . . . .	Peter Bowles
Clapham.	. . . . .	Geoffrey Bayldon
Vesta.	. . . . .	Judy Parfitt
Anjali.	. . . . .	Imogene Hassell
Sweeney.	. . . . .	Edward Caddick
Parker.	. . . . .	Nicholas Smith
Tubby Vincent.	. . . . .	Roger Booth
Josino.	. . . . .	Richard Montez
Paxton.	. . . . .	Clifford Earl
Mitchell.	. . . . .	Rocky Taylor

And now... The Third Season. Most of the Diana Rigg/Emma Peel shows have already been listed in EN GARDE #3. So, unless additional information has come my way I shall simply list name, any new info, and date of re-run. For the last two Diana Rigg/Emma Peel shows, and for the Linda Thorson/Tara King shows (never listed in EG #3), as complete a listing as possible will be made. Please bear with me, the fault is not with your receiver....

"MISSION: HIGHLY IMPROBABLE"

Corrections: Bob Jones is Supervisor, not Supervising Film Editor.

Supervising Editor is Peter Tanner, Film Editor is Lionel Selwyn. (And have any of you been noticing any of Lionel Selwyn's work on THE PRISONER?)

Premiere: January 10, 1968

Rerun: May 15th, 1968

THE POSITIVE-NEGATIVE MAN

Again, Bob Jones is Supervisor of Production, rather than Supervising Film Editor. Film Editor this time was Tony Palk.

January 17, 1968 -
Rerun: May 29th, 1968

"YOU HAVE JUST BEEN MURDERED"

Camera Operator was Tony White.

January 24, 1968

Rerun: June 12, 1968.

(Originally scheduled for June 5, this program was pulled by ABC and replaced with "Dead Man's Treasure" for airing that night. Why? Bob Kennedy had just been shot very early that morning and someone in ABC thought it would be in somewhat poor taste to show that particular show after such a sad event. "FBI" pulled a show that Sunday on snipers and a few other shows pulled scheduled programs that week, for which one wit noted that toning down violence on the telly then was somewhat analogous to locking the barn door after the equine specimen had already vacated the premises.)

"DEATH'S DOOR"

Addition: Camera Operator was James Bowden. (A few people have asked how some of the "dream" photography was accomplished. It is really very simple...you just rub some vaseline around the edges of your camera lens, and Presto! Instant hazy-on-the-edges photography.)

January 31st, 1968

Rerun: July 10, 1968

"MURDERSVILLE"

Correction: As before, Bob Jones is Supervisor of Production, not Film Editor or Supervisor. Film Editor this time was Lionel Selwyn. Special Effects was by Peter Tanner.

February 7, 1968

Rerun: June 19, 1968

(A number of people have commented on the re-use of the same village scenes on both the above and "Treasure".)

"RETURN OF THE CYBERNAUTS"

Four scientists, kidnapped by a cybernaut (robot) are forced to create a device of revenge, that destroys the will. Steed and Emma investigate, only to find that they're the intended victims of a man bent on revenging the death of his brother.

Directed by Robert Day,
Scripted by Philip Levene, Bob Jones was Production Supervisor, Photography was by Ernest Steward, Film Editor was Lionel Selwyn, Camera Operator was James Bowden. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Emma: Diana Rigg. (60 min.)

Beresford. Peter Cushing
Benson. Frederick Jaeger
Cybernaut. Terry Richards
also: Charles Tingwell and Fulton Mackay as two of the scientists.

February 21st, 1968
Rerun: July 3, 1968

* - *

"THE \$50,000 BREAKFAST"

Directed by Robert Day, Script by Robert Marshall from a short story by Jeremy Scott and Robert Marshall. Photography by Ernest Steward, Special Effects by Peter Tanner.

Glover. Cecil Parker
Miss Pegrum. Yolande Turner
Sir James Arnall. David Langton
Mrs. Rhodes. Pauline Delany
Judy. Anneke Wills
Minister. Cardew Robinson
First Assistant. Eric Woofe

February 28, 1968
Rerun: June 26, 1968

- * -

"DEAD MAN'S TREASURE"

The Avengers race across the English countryside in a treasure hunt for high stakes. The treasure contains top-secret papers hidden there by a dying agent. Now the Avengers must win the car rally in order to reach the hiding place of the papers before the Other Side

does. But who is the third party?

Directed by Sidney Hayers, Script by Michael Winder, Photography by Ernest Steward. Film Editor is Tony Palk. Camera Operator is James Bowden. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Emma: Diana Rigg. (60 min.)

Mike. Norman Bowler
Penny. Valerie Van Ost
Alex. Edwin Richfield
Carl. Neil McCarthy
George Benstead. Arthur Lowe
Bates. Ivor Dean
Bobby Danvers. Rio Fanning
Miss Peabody. Penny Bird

March 13, 1968

Rerun: June 5, 1968

(Though Laurie Johnson's musical scores for most recent AVENGERS have tended to be just bits of general taped music - (i.e., a "chase sequence," a "fight sequence", etc.) - she produced some very appropriate and lovely music for the cross-country rides in this show and made it very nearly my most well-loved show of this season. A really original script by Michael Winder and large segments of outdoor location photography helped immensely, though it made the "process" shots - (i.e., - Steed and Penny riding in the Bentley, on screen behind them the obviousness of the photographed background was rather painful) - look even more awkward.)

- * -

"FORGET-ME-KNOT"

This episode shapes up as the hail-and-farewell effort. Viewers kiss Emma Peel goodbye and welcome Tara King, who replaces her as Steed's crime-fighting partner. The action centers around an amnesia-inducing drug which can be shot from a gun - and is resulting in a growing number of agents who don't know who they are. Unfortunately the drug is in the wrong hands.

Directed by James ("Born Free") Hill. Script by Brian Clemens. Photography by Gilbert Taylor. Film Editor was Lionel Selwyn.

Making his first appearance in the show is the character of

"Mother", played by Patrick Newell.
(60 min.)

Sean Mortimer. . . . Patrick Kavanagh
Simon Filson. . . . Jeremy Burnham
George Burton. . . . Jeremy Young
Karl. . . . Alan Lake

March 20th, 1968

Rerun: July 24, '68

(Jeremy Young was the equally Maaad Professor Asssistant to Christopher Lee in the "NEVER, NEVER SAY DIE" episode last year. Patrick Newell played Sir George Collins in "SOMETHING NASTY IN THE NURSERY", where he got zapped by a drug-treated Baby Bouncer Ball.)

- * -

"INVASION OF THE EARTHMEN"

Steed and his new crime-fighting partner Tara King investigate the ominous Alpha Academy, where a fanatical Headmaster is training youths for the future domination of space.

Directed by Don Sharp. Script by Terry Nation. Executive In Charge of Production, Gordon L. T. Scott, Consultant to the Series, Julian Wintle. Photography by Gilbert Taylor. Film Editor is Lionel Selwyn. Miss Thorson's costumes by Harvey Gould. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Tara: Linda Thorson. (60 min.)

General Brett. . . . William Lucas
Huxton. . . . Christian Roberts
Emily. . . . Lucy Fleming
Bassin. . . . Christopher Chittell

March 27, 1968

Rerun: July 31st, 1968

- * -

"THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE COUNTLESS CLUES"

Steed comes to the aid of Sir Arthur Doyle, a detective but not quite in the mold of Sherlock Holmes. Sir Doyle is investigating a peculiar double murder and has turned up a series of clues - dozens of them. Clues in profusion that breed more confusion.

Directed by Don Sharp. Script,

n

by Philip Jevens. Photography by Gilbert Taylor. Film Editor is Lionel Selwyn.

Steed: Patrick MacNee. Tara: Linda Thorson. (60 min.)

Earle. . . . Anthony Bate
Gardiner. . . . Kenneth Cope
Doyle. . . . Peter Jones
Flanders. . . . Edward De Souza
Burgess. . . . George A. Cooper
Janice. . . . Tracy Reed

April 3rd, 1968

(Not yet rerun. Due to the political conventions some of the Tara Kings shows will not be rerun. Hopefully this one and "HAVE GUNS - WILL HAGGLE" will be seen again. Though diffuse, "CLUES" and "GUNS" are quite easily the best Tara/Thorson shows to date.)

- * -

"SPLIT!"

Excuse Britain's secret agents if they're feeling slightly insecure. A traitor has penetrated the Ministry of Top Secret Information. Steed and Tara's investigation leads them to a peculiar suspect - a mild mannered agent who has the handwriting of a cold-blooded killer. The handwriting of an enemy agent that Steed killed in Berlin in '58.

Directed by Roy Baker. Script by Brian Clemens. Photography by Gilbert Taylor. 2nd Unit Photography by Jimmy Harvey. Film Editor is Lionel Selwyn.

Steed: Patrick MacNee. Tara: Linda Thorson. (60 min.)

Harry Mercer. . . . Maurice Good
Lord Barnes. . . . Nigel Davenport
Peter Rooke. . . . Julian Glover
Dr. Constantine. . . . Bernard Archer
Hinnell. . . . George G. Heller
Swindin. . . . Christopher Benjamin
Petra. . . . Jayne Sofiano
Kartovski. . . . Steven Scott

April 10, 1968

- * -

"GET-A-WAY"

Getaway is precisely what two enemy

agents have done - from an escape-proof prison operated as a monastery. How they did it is literally out of sight; Steed and Tara discover that the pair had - and currently still have - the uncanny ability to make themselves invisible. And what is Alligator Vodka? Steed: Patrick MacNee. Tara: Linda Thorson. (60 min.)

Directed by Don Sharp, Script by Philip Levene. Photography by Gilbert Taylor.

Colonel James.	Andrew Keir
Exdorf.	Peter Bowles
Baxter.	William Wilde
Lieutenant Edwards.	Michael Elwyn
Dodge.	Peter Bayliss
Bryant.	James Belchamber
Magnus.	Barry Linehan
George Neville.	Terence Longdon
Lubin.	Robert Russell
Rostov.	Vincent Harding

(Peter Bowles, who played Exdorf here is also the one (sans moustache) who played Thyssen in "ESCAPE IN TIME", by the way.)

* * *

"HAVE GUNS - WILL HAGGLE"

The Avengers become involved in a unique auction of top-secret automatic rifles. Rifles just stolen from the British Army Experimental Station. Steed enters the rifle raffle to head off the ambitious official of a new African nation, who needs guns for a coup d'etat. Tara becomes a secondary prize for the highest bidder. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Tara: Linda Thorson.

Directed by Ray Austin. Story and Script by Donald James. Photography by Jimmy Harvey, B.S.C.

Colonel Nsonga.	Johnny Sekka
Adriana.	Nicola Padgett
Conrad.	Jonathan Burn
Giles.	Roy Stewart

* * *

"LOOK - (STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE -) - IT'S ABOUT THESE TWO FELLOWS.."

The directors of a construction firm are being bizarrely murdered one after the other. Among the confusing

clues: an oversize footprint, a clown mask and a note left in a pile of thousands of scribbled jokes, and a magic wand. Steed and Tara race through Clown Copyright Offices and Gag Writers to find the murderers before there's no one left to run the vital construction firm. Steed: Patrick MacNee. Tara: Linda Thorson. (60 min.)

Directed by James Hill. Script by Dennis Spooner. Photography by Gilbert Taylor.

Merry Maxie Martin.	Jimmy Jewel
Jennings.	Julian Chagrin
Marcus.	Mohn Cleese
Marier.	Bernard Cribbins
Dessington.	William Kendall
Seagrave.	John Woodvine

* * *

Though no news has been received as yet as to just what the next season's scripts will be, it is to be hoped that there will be more original scripts - by a larger selection of writers. James Hill, the director, has strangely enough infused a certain amount of originality back into the photography itself, despite the rather obviousness of the studio sets they are working with.

There will be some difference also in that at least a few of the episodes will be partially shot "on location" in Europe. Probably all interiors will continue to be shot a' la Studio interiors.

It will be the first time abroad for "The Avengers" as a telly show.

Also, I did mention in my listing of the Second Series (167) that Frank Bellamy (a cartoonist of some note in Jolly Blighty) did the cartoon work for "The Winged Avenger" episode.

Also, "The Avengers" remains slotted for 7:30 Monday evenings, up against NBC and it's "Rowan And Martin Laugh-In", a rather blue-oriented (but really very tame and purile) comedy variety show. Since "Rowan And Martin" are aiming (according to the Neilsen's) for the teenagers and young adults, that means that essentially both shows are aiming for the same audience. Unless "Rowan And Martin" become passe this year, "The Avengers" could suffer from being lined up against a block-buster show, STAR TREK being up against a first-run TV movie being in somewhat a similar situation. Watch the Neilsen's folks...for trouble. Down With Neilsen Ratings. Viva Pablo!

SECTION * NEWS



MIKE SYMES '68

Being as usual various clippings, comments, notices and latest information. Let us begin with a few of the notices I left out of last issue's NEWS & NOTES concerning the changeover in femme leads.

As usual, most of the reviewers all seemed to have a most unusual notion of what "The Avengers" was all about.

"SURPRISE ON 'AVENGERS'" - AP

Wednesday night on "The Avengers of ABC, a surprise came in the very final moments of the weekly adventure of John Steed and Mrs. Emma Peel. Through all these seasons of summer replacements, it was understood that the swinging Mrs. Peel was a footloose if not exactly fancy free widow.

Thursday night, her husband turned up.

Instead of being dead in a plane crash, he was lost all these years in the jungle. So, Mrs. Peel, a little regretfully, went obediently off to the joys of housewifery -- and Miss Bianna ((sic)) Riggs, who played the part, was on her way back to the stage and movies.

The episode was concerned mostly with shooting people with a drug pellet that produced amnesia and with lots of fights, but it did introduce the new girl in Steed's life.

She is a very pretty, wide-eyed brunette named Linda Thorsen and plays an agent named Tara King. She demonstrated at the outset that she is almost as good at hand-to-hand fighting as Mrs. Peel.

Fans of the droll series undoubtedly will take the switch-over in stride. The show is remarkable in the way it makes the most vicious evil-doing and prolonged slug fests seem part of a sprightly little comedy."

- * -

Dianna Riggs indeed. Humph.

As for the "going obediently back to the joys of housewifery"... I am afraid that I cannot under any circumstances of any sort conceive of Mrs. Peel or "Miss Dianna Riggs" doing anything but just exactly what they want to do. Mrs. Peel became Mrs. Peel because she must have had quite a Thing for the chap. If he re-appears she is also going to go quite gleefully back, no matter what sort of ties she might have with John Steed. She would go back not because she was Peter Peel's

wife, but because she wanted him. Mrs. Peel and Miss Rigg quite obviously have too good an understanding of priorities of value in life to do anything just because of convention or custom.

Also Miss Tara King (Linda Thorson) is another dark auburn rather than brunette, by the way. And as for being as good at hand-to-hand fighting as Mrs. Peel.... Well, let me say that Mrs. Peel wasn't really all that much of a hand-to-hand fighter.

But here's another idiot....

COLOR HER BLACK-AND-BLUE

by Terrence
O'Flaherty

"Pow! Splat! Crunch!

Two sneering young bullies in leather are beating a young girl with pistols, branding irons, fists and blow guns. Down she goes.

Five minutes later the sadists play a return engagement . . . Pow! Splat! Crunch! . . . Despite a few karate blows, the lady falls off again and is hauled off by the neck.

What's this -- guerilla warfare on The Planet Of The Apes? Nope. Just the usual Wednesday night children's hour entertainment provided by the American Broadcasting Company at 7:30 p.m., called "The Avengers," in black-and-blue series in the adventure-crime category -- any episode of which would make a fine training film for the Marquis de Sade.

This week's installment was a special occasion. They're changing lady agents. Emma went out and Tara came in -- and my goodness it took a lot of brawling to make the trade.

With the possible exception of Schweppes' Quinine Water, Yardley's Soap and The Beatles, this London-made series has been the best known English import for the past two seasons. It has co-starred Diana Rigg and Patrick MacNee as two secret agents working for "Mother", the pudgy, wet-lipped autocrat who runs a crime-fighting organization from a wheel-chair. Presumably they're on Our Side.

* * *

Miss Rigg plays the departing Emma. It seems that all the while she was being tossed around the studio and

shoved through plate glass windows, Miss Rigg felt unfulfilled as an actress. Her karate skill was increasing at a faster rate than her acting technique and there is no one quite so restless as an unfulfilled karate expert.

"If I have to toss one more villain over my shoulder I think I'll scream," she told me in England last year.

I believe her. But I must admit I have a tendency to believe anyone who is as attractive, intelligent and articulate as Miss Rigg, but I would hate to Indian-wrestle with her.

When Rigg wanted out, the problem arose of how to dispose of her character, Mrs. Emma Peel. This is an old soap opera problem which "The Avengers" had faced once before when Honor Blackman decided to pull out as MacNee's original assistant, Cathy Gale.

* * *

As this week's episode pulled into the home-stretch I feared they might do-in Emma just before the final commercial, but, instead, her pilot husband returned to life miraculously after being forced down in the Amazon jungle.

Until this episode she had been known as Mrs. Emma Peel, a few-wheeling secret agent, whose relationship with co-agent Steed was always pictured as platonic. They fought together, had dinner together and occasionally shared a bottle of champagne together, but still she called him "Mr. Steed" and until this week's show he never called her anything but "Mrs. Peel". However, we all know this doesn't mean anything amongst the English who are very stuffy about first names.

They spent a lot of time in each other's digs of course, but who has the energy for romance at night after fighting crime all day?

* * *

No sooner had Emma motored away to domesticity, than her replacement came up the stairs wearing long black stockings, white drawers and a fur coat.

"Hello, Mrs. Steed. Mother sent me," she said. "How about a cup of tea?"

Miss Tara King is the new girl's name. She does not have a missing husband in the Amazon Valley - yet. She's played by red-haired, blue-eyed Linda Thorson, a 28-year-old Canadian who has been studying at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She will be

more feminine and warm than the indomitable Emma.

Instead of always wrestling with the villains she will occasionally scream for help.

It's the new English way."

-San Francisco Examiner
March 19, 1968-

I might state that I do not much recall branding irons in the "Forget-Me-Knot" show. I recall air pistols and a bit of fancy slugging (including one fine blow by Tara King with a 20-pound lead brick in her purse) but no branding irons.

And they weren't exactly beating the young girl, most like the young woman was clubbing them until one was able to zap her with the amnesic drug.

Mrs. Peel karate skill, so called, is of course laughable. But it looked good, I must admit. But for all the karate skills, I can think of few people who exuded sheer femininity more strongly than Mrs. Peel/Miss Rigg. Linda Thorson, unfortunately, has a long way to go yet because she's "more feminine" than Diana Rigg.

Also, F-M-N was the first time ever that "Mother" and "The Organization" was ever mentioned on the show. And for "The Organization" to termed a "crime-fighting organization" seems a little inaccurate considering their obvious security connections.

I wonder if it was Mother who sent Patrick McGoonan to the Village?

It's hard to imagine...

Not hard to imagine is the friendly attitude at least one newspaper writer must have for the very feminine Miss Rigg and our elegant telly show.

"'AVENGERS' SHAKES UP ITS SPY TEAM"

-James Doussard
Louisville, Ky.
Courier-Journal
March 22nd, 1968-

"And you see, chaps, Emma Peel's husband, the celebrated air hero, pops up from Amazonia. So Emma busses Steed on the cheek and drives away. Then, in walks this other..."

The transition that occurred

Wednesday night in the British-made spy adventure series "The Avengers" (ABC-channel 32), Louisville might thus have been kissed off in some most proper London club.

But we Americans are a nosy bunch and require more details. Emma, of course, is Diana Rigg, the vis-a-vis to John Steed (Patrick MacNee) in the series that ABC has imported at mid-season three years in a row and at last has thought enough of to chalk in as a starter for next fall. Good show!

QUIT FOR SHAKESPEARE, MOVIE

But Emma, in the person of the lean, graceful, boyishly-figured and mod-out-fitted Miss Rigg, won't be around. Pity!

She's quit to go back to Shakespeare and to do an English movie called "The Assassination Bureau".

And so it was Wednesday night, in the "Forget-Me-Knot" episode - the one in which we bade Emma goodbye. And she bades Steed goodbye, with a platonic kiss and a whisper. Steed, erudit and imperturbable, managed somehow to take it all veddy, veddy well.

Meanwhile, back at the spy school, as they say in American versions of this sort of thriller, a replacement loomed in the wings - a girl called Tara King. Lovely, energetic, winsome and all that. The girl's real name is Linda Thorson. Her previous acting experience is nonexistent.

TWO PRODUCERS QUIT

After Miss Rigg said she was bowing out, two producers in a row quit during quarrels over what direction the show should take next.

The third producer's description of Miss Thorson is probably as good as anybody's. Says Brian Clemens (who also writes many of the shows): "She's

sexier, more pneumatic in build, with a bosom and hips."

Well, all right, whatever pneumatic as regards build, means.

Toronto-born Miss Thorson didn't really get a chance to show whether her term or so at England's prestigious Royal Academy of Dramatic Art endowed her with sufficient acting credentials to fill Miss Rigg's shoes.

Both wore sweaters Wednesday - and therein Miss Thorson filled sufficiently enough. But Diana Rigg, as show business people supposedly say, is a tough act to follow. Since "The Avengers" has a somewhat more sophisticated following than usual, one doubts that Miss Thorson can gain acceptance merely by the size of her clothes.

Linda Thorson came off in first viewing as just another pretty girl. Diana Rigg, on the other hand, has become something special, a girl whose appeal and femininity one doesn't express in words or measurements but in wistfully vicarious smiles.

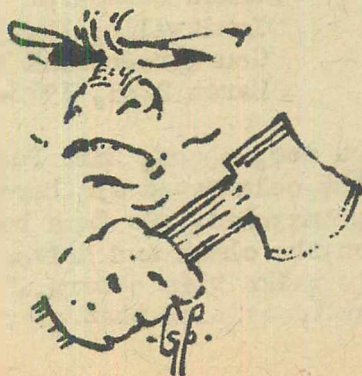
Once long ago, a fellow named DiMaggio vacated center field at a place called Yankee Stadium. And many said knowingly, "There'll never be another DiMag." They were quite right, of course. But rather quickly there came a different fellow named Mantle, who's still around.

Someday, maybe, they'll be saying, "There'll never be another Linda Thorson." Maybe. Just maybe.

* * *

Alas, one person pointed out that the biggest lack in Linda Thorson is that she does not yet have a particularly personal style, an esprit of her own, which she could impress on the image of Tara King.

When Diana Rigg took over from Honor Blackman, for instance, it is very obvious from the first black and white season that some forces in the production group tried to "Cathy Gale-ize" her, complete with the leather suits and all. But she was able to mold Mrs. Peel into her own image, so to speak. After surviving amongst the Stratford Company of the Royal Shakespeare Company for years, Diana Rigg had to be able to enforce her own views on a role. But Linda Thorson just hasn't had that sort of hard-knocks schooling.



Personally I think Miss Thorson is a very good actress and has a lot of potential....but as yet unrealized. To drop this unformed personality into a slot filled twice now by essentially fully formed and complete personalities was nothing less than sad.

I'm betting, though, that if the production doesn't make "The Avengers" into a complete farce of itself and its own format-formula, we'll see a much more likeable and individualistic Tara King than we have seen to date. Shoddy editing (due to the forced production schedule) and all.

Robert Musel, one of the few Brit article writers who seem to be able to get to see the major entertainment personalities in Britain, has a few words written with a Canadian audience in mind.

THE CANADIAN AVENGER

"Just 20, Toronto's Linda Thorson has hit the big-time as co-star in a TV series that's shown in 62 countries."

-Robert Musel
Toronto Star
Weekend Magazine
March, 1968-

Everybody else on the set of "The Avengers" was sitting at ease, but Patrick MacNee, paying the penalty of stardom, stood hour after weary hour to protect the immaculate crease in his trousers. "Mustn't wrinkle them, old boy," he sighed, and to take his mind off the tedious procedure of shooting new titles sequences for the series, he recalled his debt to Canada.

MacNee is a rarity among actors, a fellow with a minimum of ego and a strange penchant for giving credit where it is due. As the star of one of the most successful of all television series - it is shown in 62 countries - he might be forgiven a bit of preening but he is more apt to mention that he was once a bum in California and returning there as a celebrity appeals to his sense of humor.

On this morning at the studios MacNee had good reason for concentrating on Canada. The new titles were intended to mark the debut of Linda Thorson (Tara King), 20, of Toronto,

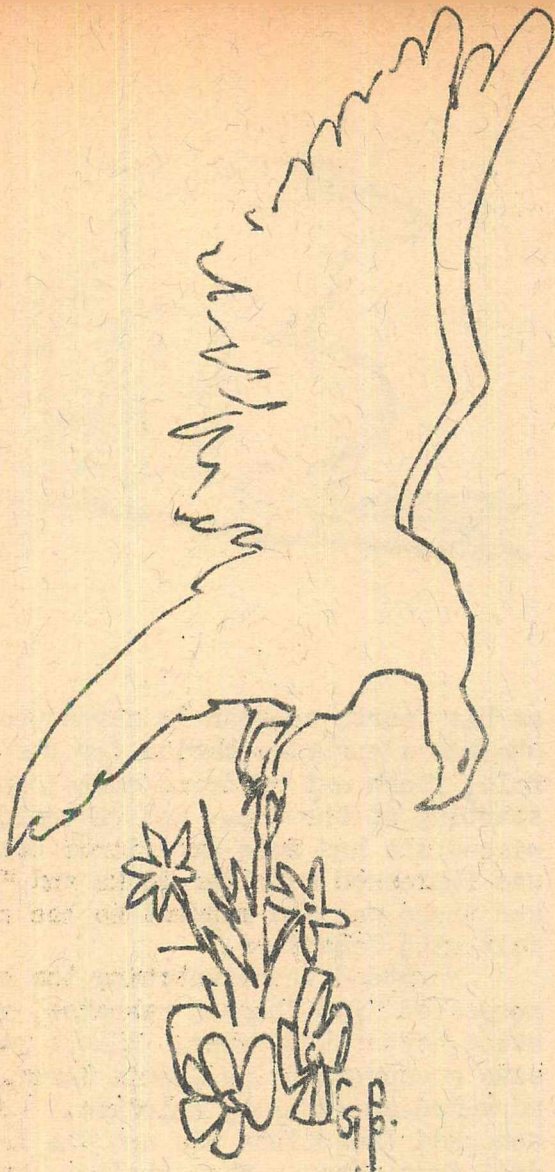


as his fourth co-star in seven years. She was a surprise choice for the plum role, fresh out of drama school and starting at the top. MacNee could have wished she had more experience but he was impressed with her looks and "guts" and there was the rapport he has always felt with Canadians.

We stood there watching the self-possessed Miss Thorson rehearse, undulating across the scene. "She's got the same measurements as Sophia Loren," murmured an admiring onlooker. Another remarked that Linda was not the least delirious about a show business break of the first magnitude. To step from the classroom to certain international fame, if the talent is there, happens only rarely even in the better story books.

Yet instead of exulting, Miss Thorson was mildly regretful that the series had cost her a chance to play in a revival of the musical Guys And Dolls, at a provincial repertory theatre! "Such great songs," she said, humming "I've Never Been In Love Before". Then she moved off again with the flowing walk of a trained dancer and MacNee studied her with a curiously speculative look in his eyes.

"I don't know enough about her yet," he explained, "so I watch her. I want us to have the same easy, friendly relations I had with Ian Hendry, with whom I started the series, and then with Honor Blackman and Diana Rigg who succeeded him. We're going to have to spend a large part of our working lives together and I'd like it to be happy for both our sakes."



He said he had been worried for a while about a screen romance of sorts, even a light-hearted and kissless one, with a girl in the same age bracket as his daughter, but he had been out dancing the night before with his new co-star and now he felt her youth would be contagious. "She dances divinely, old boy, divinely." I took his word for it; the girl has prizes for that very thing.

MacNee, a handsome 46-year old, is a cousin of David Niven and a descendant on his mother's side from the Earls of Huntington - who claim Robin Hood as an ancestor. He achieved success late in his career and values it the more. And he said it might never have come to pass if he had not had a share in "the golden age" of TV in Canada.

"I was a tight English actor," he said, "getting fair roles but nothing

spectacular after the war (he was a torpedo boat commander and the only night he was away from his boat it was blown up with heavy casualties). I played in about 30 or 40 TV plays and a few films and then I got a call from an old friend, David Greene, who was a TV director in Canada.

"He asked me to come over to star in a TV series. The Moonstone. It was the first real break of my career. The years 1952 to 1955 were a wonderful time for TV in Canada. We opened the station in Toronto and did practically everything. So the tight English actor evolved into a reasonably good actor.

"Sidney Newman was head of the studio. Silvio Narizzano, who made the film "Georgy Girl", was there. So was Norman Jewison who later filmed "In The Heat Of The Night", Arthur Hiller who did "The Americanization of Emily" and others.

"I played in radio all day to pay the rent and I was in the first play at the Crest Theatre, "Richard Of Bordeaux." In retrospect, I was a very bad actor before Canada, very insular, very English. Radio helped my voice production and the roles I got on TV broadened my technique. I played with Lorne Greene and Christopher Plummer in Othello and with Lloyd Bochner in Hamlet.

"Sidney Newman later became a TV executive here and in 1960 when they were planning The Avengers he remembered me. -And only just in time. I hadn't been able to get a role for nine months and I was working as a producer on the London end of the Winston Churchill TV series. In the first episode of The Avengers I wore a raincoat and was bareheaded and Newman said: "This is terrible, we must do something about those clothes." We went back to the 18th century - flowery language and flowery clothes, an up-dated version of Sir Percy Blakeney in The Scarlet Pimpernel."

The idea was that MacNee would help Hendry track down the slayers of his wife. The role of the wife was played by Catherine Woodville who, although she was killed in the opening episode, lived on in MacNee's real life affections. She became his second wife in 1965. Miss Woodville spends most of her time in American TV, based at MacNee's home in Malibu Beach, Cal.

After the first season Hendry checked out of the series and MacNee got the first of his trio of highly publicized co-stars, Honor Blackman, a leading lady who had never quite reached film stardom. Miss Blackman became a TV star, decked out in black leather, judoing her male opponents without disturbing a hair of her blonde head. MacNee adores her.

"Honor," he said, "is one of the most feminine women I know and we are still the closest of friends four years after she left the show. She is 40 now but still one of the most beautiful women in films."

Miss Blackman ascended to a James Bond film and was followed by Diana Rigg, 29, one of the most talented actresses of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Her lanky, loose-limbed good looks and acting ability made her a great favourite before she, too, moved on to feature films.

"I never got on the same close basis with Diana," MacNee said, "but she has the best sense of humour I have ever known in a woman and in my opinion she is the best comedienne we've had in Britain since the late Kay Kendall."

Miss Rigg used to disable the villains with a ballet version of judo, very graceful and effective on the screen; where the stunt men have their orders, but not recommended against a thug in a dark alley.

Miss Thorson now made her reappearance for another shot and, taking a deep breath, remarked unnecessarily that speech training at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts had expanded her ribs three inches. "They taught me to breathe in England," she revealed. They also taught her to diet and she is now 114 pounds under what she considers her best weight.

"The girls get most of the attention and that's fine with me," MacNee said. "You can't blame an audience for wanting to see a girl in a bikini instead of Patrick MacNee, but some people must tune in just for me."

This is modesty. Some time ago MacNee threatened to quit over salary and a production executive, since departed, said that was all right with him - they would simply find a replacement. They couldn't and didn't and a quick reading of the industry pulse revealed the show would not have the

same acceptance without MacNee. He got the raise.

"MacNee is the only indispensable character in The Avengers," said producer Brian Clemens. "We can't change him but we can change the girls - we've done it."

MacNee was delighted when this conversation was reported to him.

"I used to be a terrible masochist," he said, "always telling myself 'I can't do it'. I spent a year in analysis and since then I've had much more confidence. Linda has an amazing amount for a girl just starting out."

Despite a broken marriage Linda is well-adjusted, indeed, professionally. She credits the solid groundwork she got at the Royal Academy.

"Everybody seems to have a good word to say for Canada," she remarked. "After I left school I was auditioned by John Huston for a film. I was too tall for his leading man (she is five foot nine) but when he heard I was a Canadian he said Toronto was his favourite city. He went on and on about it. I thought he was pulling my leg but he meant it. Definitely."

-robert musel-

* * *

As a bit of erratta, I herewith present a little bit of erratta that came my way. Anyarticle on Diana Rigg and her culinary arts.

HOME STYLE WITH DIANA RIGG

-roy cummings

LIMELIGHT

Vol. 2, #3, 1968-

"When Emma Peel asks co-partner John Steed of 'The Avengers' to dinner, she's likely to offer him a bottle of Cote de Beaune with quails.

But when Diana Rigg invites Patrick MacNee to her swinging new pad in St. John's Wood, she'll more likely give him roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, or a garlicky leg of lamb.

Diana is a Yorkshire gal - "Typically Yorkshire," she says. And her Yorkshire pudding is something special.

"People always ask me as a joke if I can make Yorkshire pudding. I'm always surprised that anyone finds it

difficult.

"My secret is to whip it, let it stand for an hour and then pour it into very hot fat. It rises beautifully."

And if she is waiting for something to boil, she has only to look out of her kitchen window to gaze on the perfect setting for a typical Avengers climax.

In a deep dark ravine, which bisects the garden and disappears under the house, roar the coaches of the Metropolitan Railway, from Baker Street London, to all points west.

"It sometimes sounds as if the train is thundering through the kitchen," says Diana. "Marvellous."

The kitchen is in a house once inhabited by Thomas Hood, the poet. Artists Augustus John and Dame Laura Knight lived there too.

In those days, the kitchen was a small scullery. When Diana moved in, the only piece of electric equipment was an old wooden refrigerator which used to belong to Queen Mary. Next door was the room where the artists mixed their paints.

Now the wall between the two rooms has been knocked down. The result is one beautiful, large cook-n-dine room, with all the kitchen equipment on one side and a big pine dining table on the other.

The Rigg kitchen is chock-a-block with gadgets. You name 'em, she's got them.

At first I felt completely gadget-ridden," she told me. "Now I find things like the electric carving knife and the food mixer fabulous time-savers."

"At the moment I only really cook about three times a week and then I usually entertain. I arrive home from the studio and have to get cracking immediately."

"Tonight we are starting the meal with fish croquettes, using a plain white sauce and smoked haddock."

"I toss the mixture in the blender and its a smooth puree in no time at all."

Then there will be boned leg of lamb in pastry stuffed with walnuts. Chopping up walnuts takes ages. The mincer does the job in minutes."

"A coffee mill gives me freshly ground coffee after dinner and theres the dishwasher to cope with the washing up and a waste disposal unit to get rid of the rubbish."

"But after my very first dinner

party I discovered the only snag in cooking and dining in the same room."

"By the time dinner is finished everyone is feeling rather spporific - and as there is no break when everyone has to get up and go into another room, dinner tends to end about 2:30 in the morning."

"A mixed blessing if I have to be at the studio early!"

-roy cummings-

* * * *

Shaun Usher, for the English DAILY SKETCH had a short piece on the change-over in femme leads and whilst generally short and unimaginative had a few things to say nonetheless.

- * -

"Why have the exploits of "The Avengers" ...managed to conquer 75 countries?

...The answer to the popularity question is INCREDIBILITY.

"We always try to keep the characters in a world of their own," explains Brian Clemens, co-producer of the series.

"It is a classless world - because only one set of people really come into it: the upper class.

"For the same reason we fight shy of real social problems - no agonised drug addicts, etc. And in a way, our characters are sexless.

"In America, strait-laced matrons thought Steed and Emma Peel were the sweetest, most clean-living pair of all.

"Over here, fans speculate more about what they get up to when they aren't crime-busting."

A problem for the series is the difficulty of keeping it fresh and interesting.

A new heroine every few years does wonders.

...And when "The Avengers", now almost 100 episodes old, return to ITV this year, another change will be in the wind.

For the first time, they will go abroad occasionally, although no farther than Europe."

-brian usher

DAILY SKETCH, 3/30/68

Another article, from the Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine, 4/14/68 had a few uporiginal things to say. Another obviously press-release written thing purporting to be an actual interview with the Star in question. But she did "mention" some of her role in the upcoming "The Assassination Bureau" whilst sipping on some noon-lunch-time champagne.

"Now don't tell me I look like Mary Poppins," she says, tucking her legs under her and turning on the same cold water smile she used as the cool, conquering Mrs. Peel. And that, along with the way she's alternately sipping and fondling the champagne glass, does change the image.

Miss Rigg has just walked off the set of "The Assassination Bureau", a Paramount film now being shot outside London. The outfit is for an opening scene in which Diana, a proper English girl, strolls into a French brothel, thinking it's a fashionable Paris Hotel.

"A likely mistake," she explains, "and one I'm sure men make all the time."

Sip.

-ed rohrbach
Chicago Tribune-

Also, one of the "faaaaaans" of the show, is a part-time article writer and had this to say for one he did back in November on the upcoming "Second Season" shows.

"THE BRIEF RETURN OF DIANA RIGG"
-harold stern

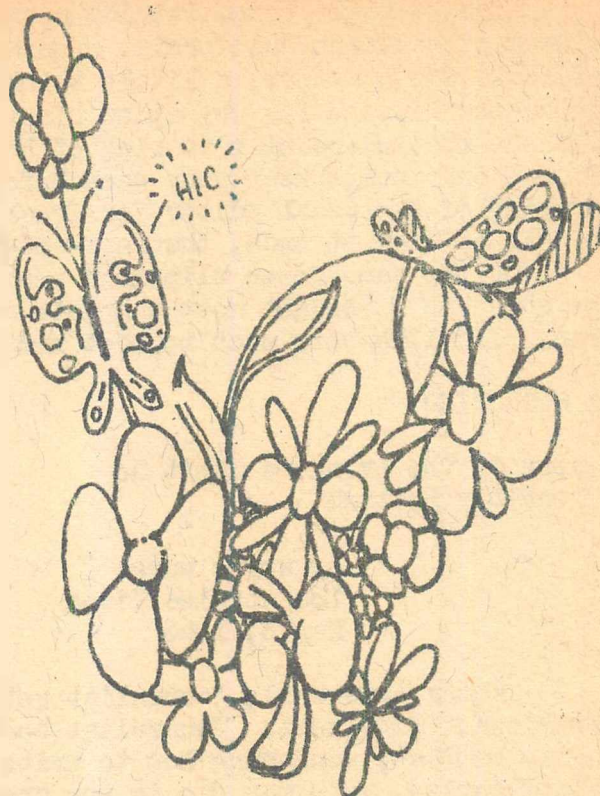
I-PFS
11/9/67

"It's shakeup time at the three TV networks and so far the only surprise is that more shows aren't being replaced. But they probably will be in the weeks ahead.

...The only show I'll regret losing is "Custer." Not that it was a good show -- it was pure junk -- but now I'll never know what happened to Custer.

....But among the early substitutes is an old friend, which I am delighted to see return.

Stepping into the breach created by the downfall of "Custer" will be



"The Avengers," by far the best of those frivolous yarns about Secret Agents. This is the third time for the series, which has become ABC's best, most permanent trouble-shooting replacement. The starting date is January 10, 1968.

But delighted though I am that the series is returning, I feel a sadness as well. Diana Rigg, probably the most impudently sexy woman on television, is leaving. She will be seen in the first nine episodes only, following which she will be replaced by Linda Thorson, a complete unknown just out of Drama school.

There is no reason to bemoan this fact of life unduly, though I take the loss of Emma Peel very personally. Miss Rigg was herself a replacement, though this was obscured in the United States because the change happened in England, before ABC acquired the series. The lady Miss Rigg replaced was Honor Blackman, who achieved worldwide notoriety as the infamous Pussy Galore of James Bond and "Goldfinger". The cries of anguish heard throughout England when this was announced would have drowned out the noise of a bad day at the Walling Wall.

But Miss Rigg went on to win her spurs in England and she captured the United States as well."..... * * *

Also, a while back, Patrick MacNee managed to make good an escape to the sunny climes of southern California. The Malibu district; to be exact. He held a party of sorts whilst there, a little thing for the Press, so that the local talent could interview him and thereby allow him a little time with Mrs. MacNee (Kate Woodville) without the incessant pestering of the gentlemen and ladies of the fourth estate. It not only helps keep your name before the public, it satisfies (usually) that craving of the usual Editor for fresh copy on public personalities. By disposing of all of them at once, the wear-and-tear is much less, also.

Of the some dozen clippings sent my way, all evidently from the same session, here is one I thought most complete and entertaining. Pat MacNee is an interesting man. I'd like very much to meet him some day, but....

A RARE FIND

Star Of The Avengers Isn't So Terribly British

by wayne warga
Los Angeles Times
May 8, 1968

Actor acts well, journalist gets curious. They meet. Journalist beats hasty retreat, wondering how to write about boring, vain man who is the creation of good directors and has nary a thought in his empty head. This problem is particularly true among television performers, because networks consume people like abbatoirs use meat.

John Steed, that witty man of daring-do on "The Avengers" has journalist very curious. Steed is portrayed by Patrick MacNee. Journalist and MacNee meet. Journalist makes rare find: an actor even more interesting than the parts he plays. But first a few facts...

The Avengers is a British TV series which ABC has for the past several seasons has used as a January replacement show. It has consistently pleased the critics, received Emmy nominations and earned respectable though not large ratings. This fall, on Monday nights, The Avengers starts its first full season on American television.

John Steed, the leading Avenger, is terribly British, extremely conservative, impossibly droll, hellishly fashionable and rather hopelessly urbane. The characterization is so strong that even in Malibu one expects to be met at the door by a man with bowler, broly and velvet collar.

Patrick MacNee, it turns out is British and there the resemblance ends.

CASUAL MANNER

"I am, at heart, a Californian. The trouble is, we British burn in the sun

rather more easily than we tan," he says immediately after opening the door and seeing a startled journalist. There stands Patrick MacNee, slightly red in the face from the sun.

He is wearing cords and a bright green polo shirt complete with scarf and beads. He is barefoot, and as casual in manner as he is in appearance. That's John Steed?

"If I had my way, Kate and I would be living on a ranch up in Santa Barbara, raising horses and only going into the city when we were working," he said as Mrs. MacNee, an attractive young British actress named Kate Woodville, passed around especially prepared natural grape juice. Steed is an epicurian, but MacNee is a health food fan right now.

"But not totally. Kate is teaching me, and since I've dieted away 25 pounds with it, I'm getting more receptive to the idea. I'm at the stage where I prefer vegetables never to be cooked."

Mrs. MacNee works primarily in Hollywood, while her husband works most of the time in London. When time permits, they prefer their small apartment in Malibu to London. There has been a good deal of commuting during their three-year marriage.

"I don't mind the commuting bit because I'm an Aquarian and I love to be near the water. I dislike London. I think, basically, I'm most of the things that Steed is not. Steed would not be fond of going barefoot and being near the ocean."

No indeed. What made all this so surprising is that MacNee, a consummate actor-craftsman, also invented the character of Steed. Imagination and talent MacNee has.

"When we started the show eight years ago, Sidney Newman, who created "The Avengers", said to me, "Play it like George Sanders with a moustache." Which was very vague and exactly the

right thing for him to do as it all turned out."

LIVE FOR MOMENT

"I opted out on the moustache and Steed on the Scarlet Pimpernel books and on my father, who was a dandy. Steed is a traditionalist and my lady is futuristic. They in common the fact that they both live for the moment.

My partner (currently Linda Thorson, successor to Diana Rigg) and I never use violence unless intelligence fails to get us out of the predicament.

"I learnt fencing and judo - the violent arts - at an early age. Lately I've gone back to pure, ordinary blows, rather like boxing. As our plots become increasingly mad, I feel I must become increasingly human.

"For instance, I never came on armed and I never pretended to have superman qualities. We're all a bit mad, you know, so I feel obligated to be as human as possible. Steed is a man who likes to think, and he prefers thought to violence."

"The Avengers", according to MacNee, "is just in profit after eight years. For a British show, we have terribly high production values and a big budget - about \$150,000 per episode. Over here you spend about \$200,000 each show, so we're still inexpensive."

CONSISTENTLY GOOD

"We do it quite differently. Often we work on two shows at once, and we spend a minimum of 10 days on each one. In America, they spend at the most seven days, and never start over again. We once threw out a whole show and did it over again.

"I think the show is consistently good because they use good directors and some of the most imaginative writers in Britain. The writing and direction are terribly important in a show like ours."

MacNee, 46, intends to stay with "The Avengers" as long as it runs, a loyalty rare in television, he has purchased the film rights to "The Major", a novel by David Hughes, and will star in the project, hopefully late this year.

Dinner time was drawing near, and so was the last improbability of the day. MacNee bounded out on the balcony

over the beach and went to work at the barbecue. Steed would be amused at such a quaint native custom."

- * -

Another gentleman had a few fairly original words to say, from the same meeting, a Mr. Stan Mays. The "... results from where I've cut out unnecessary duplication of effort.

INDEED IT'S STEED - IN HOLLYWOOD!

-stan mays
Philadelphia Daily
News

June 8, 1968-

"What's this! Steed in Hollywood? Is he tracking down some missing British scientist, or perhaps investigating some international crime left unsolved by Napoleon Solo's departure?

...."Nothing like that at all!"
...."I've worked here quite often. For one lean period in my career I lived here for five years - mostly on wines and cornbeef hash."

...Eight years in a successful series have certainly made for a more pleasant circumstances than days of "wine and cornbeef hash." MacNee's producers have "been most indulgent" with his portrayal of Steed. He's permitted to change dialogue and wear what he pleases. "Being an actor 27 years," he wryly smiles, "is not unrewarding."

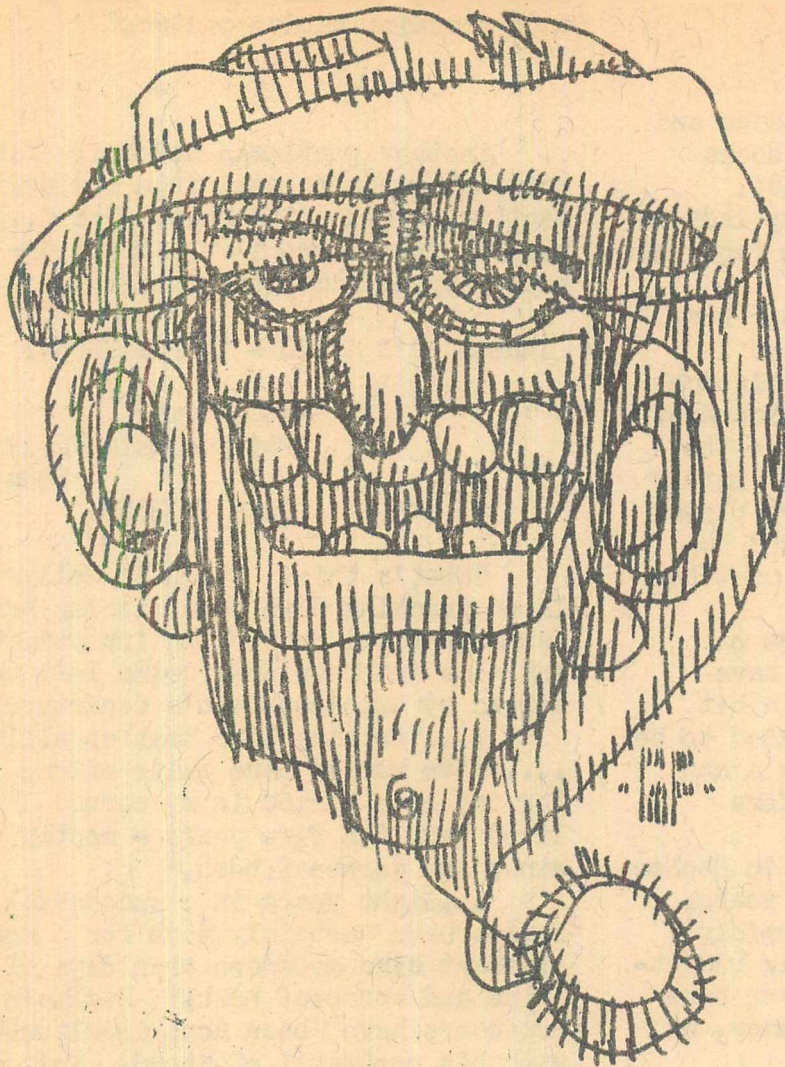
While here he bought a couple of Rajah suits to wear in the fall. They're very comfortable, I hear," he said. "Add a turtleneck and medallion and you're right in style. I rather fancy Steed in something like this around the flat, do you agree?"

In the fall, The Avengers will undergo other changes - in addition to Steed's wardrobe. It becomes the first British series to start a new season in prime time.

Linda Thorson's replacing Diana Rigg is a change that's forced MacNee to alter his appearance.

"I suddenly felt fat with a 20-year-old leading lady," MacNee grimaced. "Linda is rather a big girl, and when she saw how she looked on film she got busy and lost 16 pounds. So, with the aid of my wife, who's very diet-conscious, I've lost 26 pounds."

Regarding young Linda, who plays



Tara King, MacNee says with a younger girl in the series she will be more defenseless. "I'll be able to put my arms around her; look after her more. It'll be good for me. I'll share my experiences and point out pitfalls."

Does he miss Diana Rigg?

"Oh, indeed, yes," he winked. "She called our relationship a 'professional marriage'. An enormously intellectual person, I miss her as a friend and working partner. She has a wonderful wickedness about her."

- * -

To which we can but say that Diana Rigg certainly has something.

But not is well in the show. My co-editor commented on certain lacks in "The Avengers", and TV Guide brings up what might well be another one of them.

It is supposedly one of their editorials, "AS WE SEE IT" back in February sometime.

"AS WE SEE IT"

* About halfway through a program you get the feeling that you've seen it before. It isn't a rerun, but somehow you know exactly what's going to happen. So you sit through to the end, and sure enough, the story winds up just as you thought it would.

That experience is shared by nearly all television viewers. The explanation is simple. The program is using an old plot, changing only the locale and the supporting characters.

* Not long ago, in London, a viewer who also happens to be a newspaperman was watching an episode of "The Avengers" titled "THE JOKERS". He was sure he'd seen the plot before - Emma Peel trapped in a building by someone with a grudge against her. He checked the producer, who, in a moment of frankness, admitted that the plot had been used not just

once, but twice previously. Why?

A spokesman for the company that owns the show offered an explanation. "No cheating is involved," he said, "I know we don't tell audiences the plot is old. But more than 100 AVENGERS have been made and there are only so many basic plots. Scripts are always new and so are the supporting roles."

* What they do is learn which stories are popular with viewers and then re-write them. Often the same writer handles two - or three - versions of the same show.

Somehow this doesn't seem quite cricket. We objected, during a writer's strike several years ago, when the Warner studio seemed to be using the same stories for "77 Sunset Strip", "Bourbon Street" and "Hawaiian Eye". But even Warners didn't use the same story twice for the same show.

* Perhaps there's something to the

argument that series shouldn't run year after year after year. Indeed, some of them seem to run out of new ideas after the first 13 episodes."

- * -

The difference between a "THE JOKERS" and a "THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT" however, are quite enough for some measure of pertinency to be given to the ABPC statement as to why. But it also points out something else.

There may be only so many ideas possible in a formula show like "The Avengers" -- to one writer. But use any number of imaginative writers and the "idea barrier" comes down a bit. In a formula show like this, writing is just too very, very important for most of it to be entrusted to a few friends of the producer, no matter their qualifications. For each writer has his own limitations, and to limit the show to the ideas that this intimate clique can come up with is to limit the show in one of the few ways it can really broaden its horizons.

As Cleveland Amory can confirm, too many Yank shows are almost 90% scripted by a few of the producer's or owner's favourites. This is a sure way to kill off imaginativeness in the show, because there is not a constant supply of refreshing new blood coming in.

This is not intended as a slur at Brian Clemens or Philip Levene. It is a cold statement of the facts of life. Neither is lacking in imagination or talent. But a formula show needs more people for more deviant outlooks on "the same old show".

End of soap-box tirade.

However, at least the January ratings for "The Avengers" were pretty good, as an old Variety clip shows.

"THIEF" AND "AVENGERS" OFF TO GOOD START AS ABC JAN. REPLACEMENTS"

-Variety-
Jan. 17, '68-

The midseason premieres of "It Takes A Thief" and "The Avengers" whooshed up ABC-TV's ratings in those slots, but only time will tell if the new shows can keep up the pace.

"Thief" bowed Tuesday, Jan. 9, in the old "Invaders" period (plus an opening-night-only preemption of "N.Y. P.D.") with a 30.0 New York Nielsen

rating and a 41.0 share, against a 24.4 rating and 33.4 share for NBC-TV's Jerry Lewis and a movie ("That Touch Of Mink") with Doris Day and Cary Grant and an 8.7 rating and 11.9 share for CBS-TV's Red Skelton and "Good Morning World".

Per Trendex, "Thief" had a 21.1 rating and 35.2 share, to NBC's 18.4 and CBS' 13.1 and 21.8.

"Avengers" (Wednesday, Jan. 10, replacing "Custer"), back on the web for the third time, got a 16.8 Gotham Nielsen rating and 34.9 share, to 17.4 and 36.2 for NBC's "Virginian" and 13.9 and 28.9 for CBS' "Lost In Space". By Trendex, "Avengers" had a 16.2 rating and 31.2 share, against NBC's 14.8 and 28.5 and CBS' 12.8 and 24.6.

- * -

Naturally this initial showing, the averages for both dropped quite a good deal. But though no figures have seen my eyes yet, two rumours have reached my pearl-like ears. One, that though down somewhat, the Tara King shows have not collapsed in the ratings. Two, that The Avengers not only did not lose any steam during the summer, but did better than they had been doing.

No one in the networks really does think much of Summer ratings, considering them just statements of who is the major second-run. But I'm thinking that quite a few million steadfast Emma Peel fans are out there and they plugged all the way through all the summer re-runs just for these last glimpses of the Peel of Steel.

Also, what with Bobby Kennedy - a power-hungry type who nonetheless was no more looking for a bullet in the head than I was - there has been a public furour over a number of evils and excesses. The biggest one has been over the present gun laws. The other has been the notion that the telly and the other public media have helped "egg on" some of the more psychotic elements in our society. And with 200 million people plus, you're bound to have at least a few of the dangerous variety.

One belly-aching organization that has been complaining of the average tv fare is the National Association for Better Broadcasting, hereafter referred to as the NABB. In a number of papers their list of the most "detrimental" programs presently available to children was given wide circulation.

Their platform has been that the public should make their disapproval of these "detrimental" programs known to the sponsors of these shows rather than the networks. Smart idea. The networks will try to slough them off, but direct word to the sponsors hits the networks where it hurts - in the pocketbook.

Here is their list, in order, of the Top Ten Worst shows.

THE AVENGERS - ABC
FELONY SQUAD - ABC
GUNS OF WILL SONNETT - ABC
CIMARRON STRIP - CBS
MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. - syndicated
BATMAN - ABC
WILD, WILD WEST - CBS
THE SAINT - NBC
RAT PATROL - ABC
VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE
~~SEA~~ SEA - ABC

I could rant on and on for pages and pages about their idiocies in putting "The Avengers" at the top of their list, but I'll limit myself to one or two observations.

One is that the violence, the mayhem, the murdering, is always performed by The Other Side in "The Avengers". Unlike the (gasp!choke!) average horse opera or detective story these days, the Good Guys (and Gal) do not take judgment into their own hands. They do not make the decision as to whether this man must die or that man must escape punishment for illegalities...they do not have the Peter Gunn mystique that they are capable of taking the place of Judge and Jury and Hangman all in one. The idea that they know who should and should not be punished for breaking the law. This is one tenet of the theory of Civil Disobedience and their flaws are the same. Give the individual the notion that he and he alone may decide which laws to keep or to break and who should and should not answer the law's demands and you have not freedom but civil anarchy, all committted in the name of sweet liberty.

This is one tenet constantly expounded in most of the telly shows and one certainly more responsible for the Sirhan Bishara Sirhan's of this nation than the black-and-white defense of their society that permeates "The Avengers."

Second, I fault their selections on taste. If they cannot tell the difference between a spoof and a comedy and a

simple collection of gagage, they can hardly be termed a covey of experts.

I could go on, but why bother...

STRENGTH THROUGH CHAOS - VINA PABLO

For those who don't read Contents Pages, I have two foreign agents at the moment.

ENGLAND - Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Road, Hoddesdon, Herts., ENGLAND. Sterling subscription price is 4/6 for the .50¢ issues, 5/3 for this issue, 11 shillings for #6. Be sure to state in your missive to Alan that the enclosed, etc., is a sub for EN GARDE, as he handles quite a few other Yank fanzine pubbers.

BELGIUM - Michel Feron, 7 Grand-Place, HANNUT (Belgium). 11F for #3 and #4, 13 F for #5, 26 F for #6. That is, if my memory serves me correct and the going rate approximates 20 Belgian Francs to the dollar. If the error is too much your side, enjoy the discount. If I am charging too much, translate the subscription price into Belgian F from .55¢, .65¢ and \$1.30 respectively.

Agents for Germany and other points are requested to present their credentials to the Editor.

- * -

Still for sale, by the way, are the two previously mentioned Buttons. One, black on pink, "Mrs. Emma Peel LIVES!". The other, black on yellow, "Hands Off Emma Peel". (Unsaid is the addition that if you don't, she'll break them off).

By BayCon time I'll also have for sale, color unspecified at present, "Diana Rigg has MOXIE". Those who do not know what moxie is are invited to ask their parents as it's a '40's slang word. It means she's Got It, she's With It All The Way, She Knows The Score and a dozen additional interpretations.

Can you visualize a solid dozen or so fans marching into Lincoln Center with those proudly displayed on their best suits?

Can you imagine them all sitting in the first row? (This is sheer fantasy as the average D.R. fan can't really afford first row seats at a Lincoln Center, N.Y. presentation of the Royal Shakespeare Company, but it's a nice thought nonetheless....)

wish to continue forwarding her Yank fan mail on, and suggest writing direct to her via her agent.

Therefore, please write Miss Rigg (Help Stuff The Back Of A Green Minibus Today!) care of:

Dennis Selinger
G.A.C. Redway Ltd.
35 Davis Street
London, W.1 ENGLAND

...And please, folks, use a tripe-writer, eh? After all, we don't want to strain those big brown eyes with our lousy penmanship, now do we?

- * -

"The Avengers are evidently Big Time in Germany right now, and are doing quite well in Belgium as well. It remains to be seen what they will accomplish in France. (Entry into the European Common Market?)

A clipping showed some of the tricks being used in usual Madison Avenue style by the German distributors.

"Munich - West Germany

"AVENGER" STAR LOSES HER DRESS TO SCHOOLBOY

A helicopter dropped 1000 paper dresses in a field and hundreds of teenagers scrambled to find a prize-winning number.

The finder was 17-year-old schoolboy Dieter Kirchgeorg, who can now travel to London to choose the dress of his choice of his dreams from the collection of television actress Diana Rigg, who portrays Emma Peel on "The Avengers".
-no byline-

Similarly, in England, a magazine titled "Titbits" offered a number of prizes to lucky winners. (The contest ended in May...eat your heart out...I did). Amongst the prizes were the sword worn by "CAPT. VIRGIN OF THE SECRET SERVICE" (a turn-of-the century spy series, much spoof in it and very good from all accounts), A bowler hat worn by a Mr. Rose in an ITV crime meller series. And - - John Steed's lethal brolly from "The Avengers".

No mention was made of the "Penny-Farthing" bicycle from "THE PRISONER", but it might have been won by some lucky soul since then. Watch that "Penny-Farthing" Bicycle, watch for its appearances on the show. They're important. And why does #2 never have a seat on his? Speaking of "THE PRISONER"....

"POOR RATINGS BUT FILM PLUMS GOING FOR PAT MCGOOHAN"

-Variety, July 3, 1968-

-no byline-

Swift rise of British actor Patrick McGoochan reached a kind of culmination last week by his signing to play the title and most important role in "Tai-Pan", the filmization of the James Clavell novel which Martin Ransohoff's Filmways will be making for MGM.

McGoochan was the star of "Secret Agent", a British spy series (ATV) which was a summer replacement on American television and then was brought back mid-season the following year. Series became somewhat unique in video history in that it had relatively mediocre Nielsen ratings, but yet developed a determined coterie of fans who petitioned for its return. Much of its popularity with this "class" element of viewers centered around McGoochan, thought of as a "tough" but "serious" and "mature" hero.

The interesting thing in McGoochan's career is that he has been able to make a transition to big budget pix whereas most of his American counterparts who starred in hugely successful vidseries have found their subsequent pic careers limited to leading parts in routine production and supporting roles in larger budgeted fare. A possible explanation for McGoochan's fast climb is that the fans he developed on U.S. tv, while a minority of the tube audience, constitute that very better-educated "class" group which attends pix nowadays. It's also true that "Secret Agent" was a success on every level on British tv.

The actor's subsequent teleseries, "The Prisoner", is a current summer replacement on CBS here.

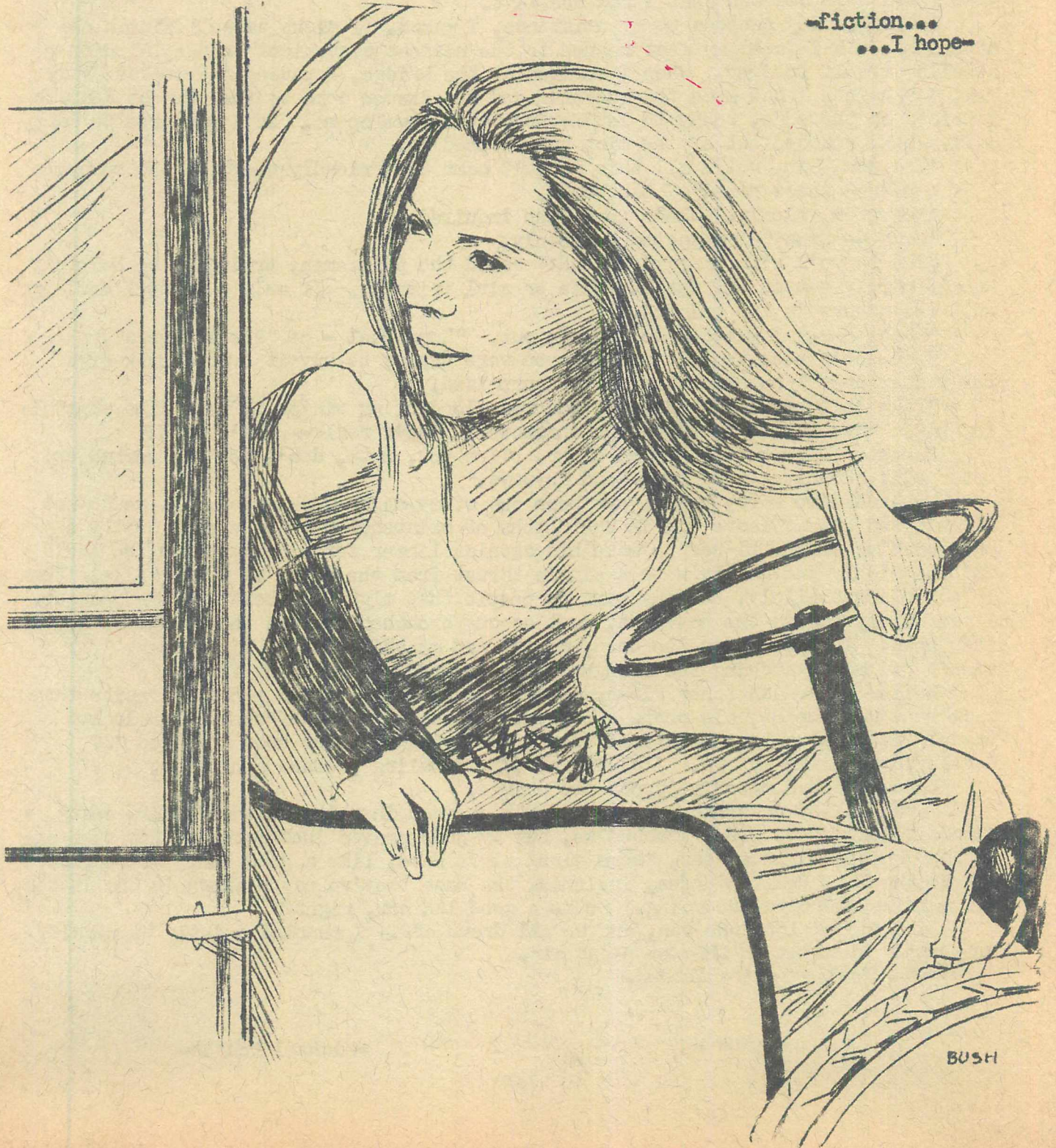
"Tai-Pan" is the first of two pix McGoochan will make for MGM and Filmways under terms of a new contract he signed with the two entities. He's already played a secondary part in "Ice Station Zebra", a Filmways-MGM roadshow which will have its first dates in November. Michael Anderson will direct "Tai-Pan", which is about the Hong Kong opium trade in the 1840's, from a script by Clavell. Though not officially designated as such, film is expected to be a hardticketer ((Editor - hardticketer means Reserved Seat Only Theatre initial showing.))

- - - - -
I Am Not A Number! I Am A Free Man!
- - - - -

REFLECTIONS ON A WORLD WITHOUT EMMA FEE.

-by
Michael Dobson-

-fiction...
...I hope-



"PETER PEEL, AVIATOR, FOUND IN JUNGLE", read the headlines of the paper. Tears obscured the rest. I stood up and walked unsteadily from the room, before I broke down completely. As I headed for the door, only habit made me grab my broom and bowler from the stand in the hall. I fumbled open the door and left quickly. I could hardly find my way down the street, the tears prevented me from seeing anything clearly. I didn't even bother to leap into my '27 4½ Litre Bentley, but walked quickly away from my television set into the foggy night.

I knew I would have to control myself quite severely to keep from crying aloud in public, but my heart was broken asunder. "Emma! Why did you leave us?" I cried out. There was no answer. I yelled again, "Emma! Where are you?" Again no answer to my lamentable cries. I was a broken man. There was no longer any purpose to life. Wednesday nights would always serve me as a reminder not only of what I had once had but what I had now lost.

No longer any purpose to my existence, I mused. I might as well finish the job off right. So I found my feet headed to the nearest convenient bridge, already steeling myself to jump. When I arrived at the bridge, I paused and looked down. Yes, I thought, I had made the question and the answer come to the correct decision. I poised on the edge, ready to let Mother Water envelop me. As I prepared to leap, a firm hand reached out of the mist and stopped me.

"Ere now, Sir, wot's all this about?" came the friendly query of the bobby.

"She's—she's gone!" I blubbered.

"Now then, slowly. Who's gone?" he inquired.

"Emma — Emma," I repeated forlornly.

"She be yo'r wife or girl friend?" asked the policeman, trying to be helpful. But it merely set me off again. Wife or girl friend... If only — but I can't go on. The memory is too painful.

"N-neither," I managed to stumble out. "Emma Peel — of 'The Avengers'."

"You don't mean to tell me that you were trying to buy it over a nark of a telly character?" he asked, evidently surprised.

"Take that back!" I screamed, the red flooding my vision, I felt like strangling him. "She is not a television character! She's real — she's real!"

He put a firm hand on my shoulder. "Ere now, mate, don't get all worked up. After all, she never were very good anyways."

My excessive mercy has always been one of my major weaknesses. It could not allow me to either leave him in the depths of existence without a soul worthy of appreciating Emma Peel nor to make his agonies linger for his blasphemy, so I did him in quickly and neatly with a single thrust from the sword in my umbrella. Then I looked about wildly, for any cars or people that might be about in this peasoup. I ran wildly across the pavement, just as one broached the fog and caught me abut it's hood. I leaped upon the hood, crying and smashing on the windscreen, "Why aren't you home watching The Avengers?" my fevered mind brought forth.

Mellow Edwardian tones floated back; "I dare say, I could probably recite them back to you by heart, old chap. No need, you see." The lady beside him looked vaguely familiar. Then I noticed that I was lying upon the hood of a red '27 Bentley, much like my own. I clattered off, mumbling profuse apologies.

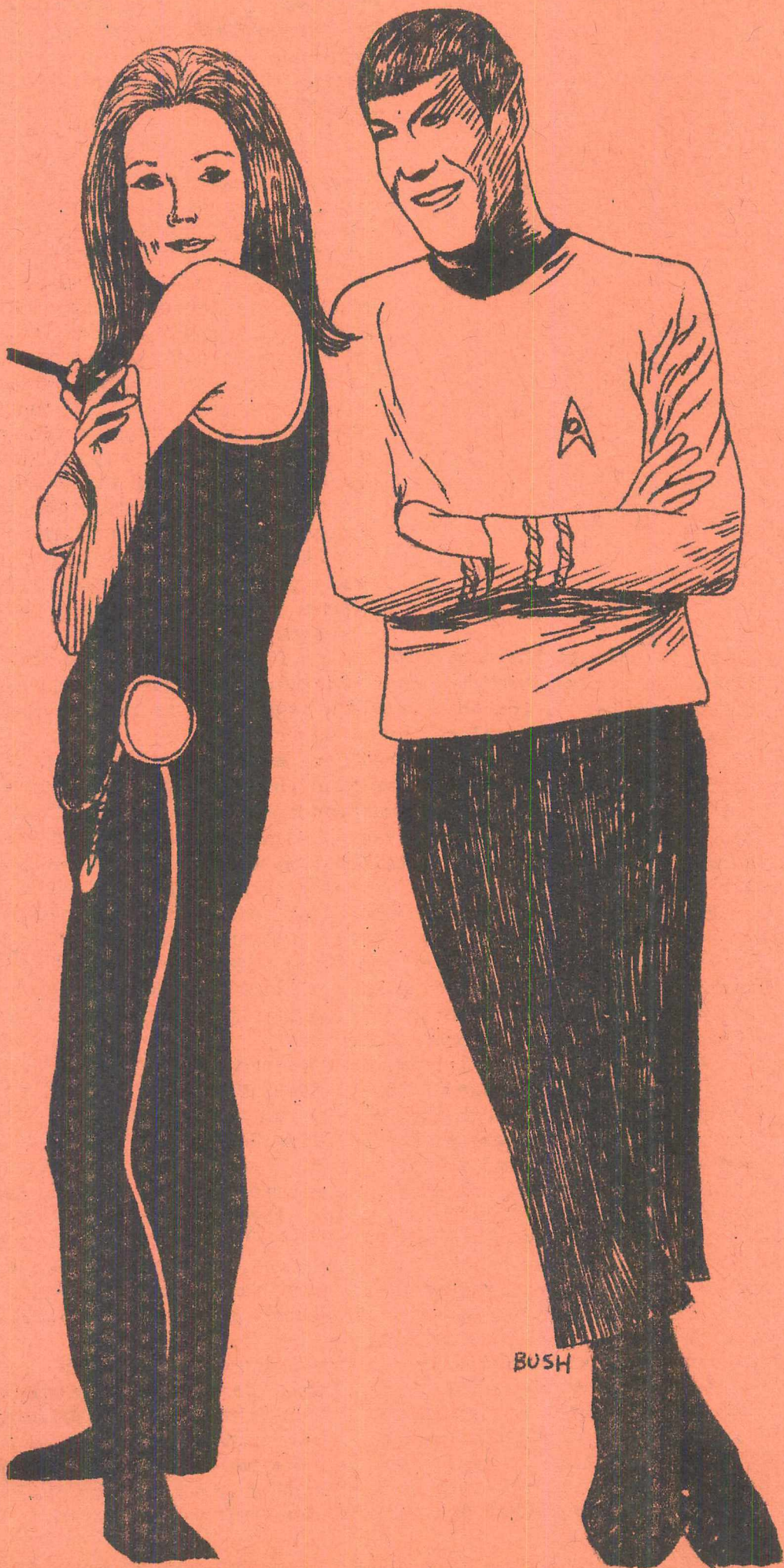
Then I walked dazedly across the bridge.

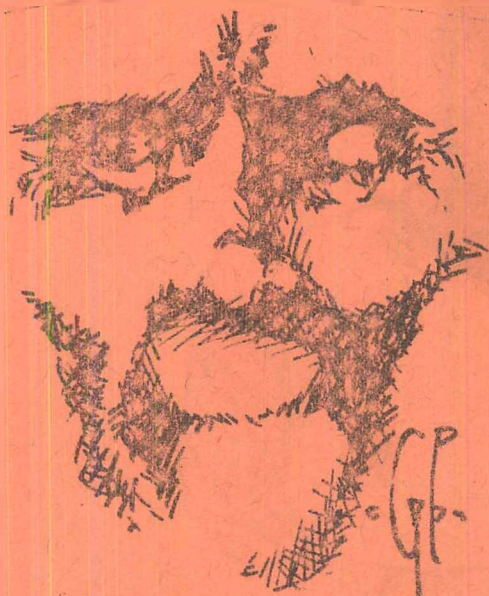
A van pulled up beside me and two men dressed in white butcher's-like coats jumped quickly out. They grabbed me, but my judo proved ineffectual. But then one of them whispered in my ear, "Come along there Mate, like a good 'un. We've got all of the Mrs. Peel episodes, including the ones they've never shown in the States, all waiting where you're going. So be a good lad now, right?"

So I jumped into the van, and we all drove off. I mumbled quietly to myself, the words floating in the wet night air.

"Mrs. Peel — You're Needed."

-Michael Dobson-





Alan Dodd
77 Stanstead Rd.
Hoddesdon
Herts.
ENGLAND

I was oddly
enough thinking
of you a few
weeks ago when
~~the~~ Bonnie &
Clyde and St.
Valentine's Day

Massacre gangster film cult started. And they dug up all the old gangster pictures. AL CAPONE coupled with DILLINGER. THE BONNIE PARKER STORY with MACHINE GUN KELLY, and of course, Vic Morrow in DIARY OF A MOBSTER I think it was called, which of course is our old friend, "Dutch" Schultz again! Anyways - that's a roundabout way of telling you I was recalling you so well despite these many years of absence, and in what particular frame of reference.

It is nice to see such an imaginative idea as a fanzine devoted to THE AVENGERS (which have been for many years my favourite telly programme) - before it was sold to America.

I've followed it through the days when it was first just Patrick MacNee and that other fellow, Ian Hendry, then to Honor Blackman (who just has to be the BEST Avenger there ever was), and then to Diana Rigg - who is now leaving the series, as you well know, to be replaced by Linda Thorson.

The series, however, is bound to undergo some deal more of changes when it is sold to the American network for showing early in the evening. I cannot accept that it will not be watered down for the American sponsors. For the first time The Avengers girl isn't English! She's a vacuous dumb Canadian blonde wench named Linda Thorson who had to go onto a health farm here before she could even diet down enough to get the part. She is supposed to be "feminine" and won't pulverise the males in the series as the other girls did. She is married, separated from her real life husband who is a telly cameraman in New York. How bad/good she is you will see before we do for the first time, as her episodes continue on from the Diana Rigg ones you are seeing now, a "link" episode, showing Emma Peel reading of her husband found alive in the jungle, and leaving the "service" to go off and join him, and Linda Thorson takes over. I'm not looking forward to the change in either girl or (as I fear) in watered-down scripts that will inevitably follow this change because of the overseas sales.

I have, incidentally, tape recordings of all but two of the Diana Rigg telly series shown here, including the one of The Hellfire Club where Diana and a very skimpy programme - er, outfit - and a whip appear. You did not see this episode in America I think. The only two episodes I am missing (due to leaving the recording to someone else) are "The Quick, Quick Slowdeath", set in a macabre dancing school (from the first series) and THE RETURN OF THE CYBERNAUTS episode from the second series. All the others I have on tape. I also have one episode with the character Cathy Gale, played by (who else?) Honor Blackman, called "THE GLORY THAT WAS ROME", with Hugh Burden as an "Emperor" intent upon destroying all vegetation on earth in a plague which only he and his followers would survive.

Picked up a number of photographs from a friend some time ago, who got them from Teddington Studios where the series was filmed. Well, the telephone number is Teddington and the TV booths are there but I think the film studios were at Elstree, Herts., because I passed them working a few months back.

In a similar vein, to this series, there are two new ones coming out over here. "VIRGIN OF THE SECRET SERVICE", a sort of 1960's "Avengers" with Claudia Grey as Captain Virgin of the Secret Service, and the voluptuous Veronica Strong

as his female associate Mrs. Cortez. It is a similar idea to the Rigg series but set in the 1900's, versus Rasputin The Mad Monk and a few other timely chaps.

There is also coming THE CHAMPIONS with the gorgeous Alexandra Bastedo as one of the three "super-agents". VIRGIN starts week after next ((late March)), is not sold to America, but THE CHAMPIONS already is.

Diana Rigg, by the way has made a film version of TWELFTH NIGHT which will be going the art circuit rounds sometime in the future, and she still is making her "ASSASSINATION BUREAU", her first major feature film. With Oliver Reed, defeating a 1900's "Murder, Inc." organisation. Just had a look at a trade journal and they say that they're still filming at Pinewood Studios, the bigish Rank complex outside of London.

Scottish De'Eath was a Scottish castle where frogmen were getting killed in the Loch. The evil owner of the castle was naturally opposed to making a tourist attraction out of the castle as he was operating secret submarines out of the Loch under his castle. A painting of a scene from the episode is on the cover of THE AVENGERS ANNUAL, a hardcover book costing about \$1.75 from Atlas Publishing and Distributing Co., 334 Brixton Rd., London S.W. 9. It's about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, with some poorish comic strips of THE AVENGERS but roger photos, all the best of articles on the series within. I got the last issue my area sold, all the others went, don't even know if the company has more left though. Souvenir Press were the publishers. It had both colour and b/w photos of the stars.

((One of the local types explained that Messr. Dodd has a two-track tape recorder. From a two-track/band taper you can tape for a higher banded machine (i.e. - one with four tracks) but you can't track down or something like that. So you out there with fancy expensive 4-track can use Dodd's copies, as well as the standard two-track which seems to be the predominantly popular type here and in Jolly Old.

Have heard one comment to date on VIRGIN. Something about it being a cross between THE AVENGERS and BATMAN and I'm not altogether sure whether I like that.... It sort of implies that THE AVENGERS isn't that far from being Camp.....))

Graham M. Hall
79, Tavistock Rd.
London W. 11
ENGLAND

I don't catch but a dozen hours of television in a year but I used to make certain that THE AVENGERS was amongst them. Even saw the first installment of the series, when Ian Hendry's fiancée was murdered.....and it was a very different thing altogether in those days, as was Steed.

Of course, we take these things more for granted over here. I've seen Diana Rigg a few times in Royal Shakespeare Company productions and actually interviewed her once ((Graham is a newspaper man - Editor)) when she opened a church gala in the district where one of the newspapers I worked for circulated.

One thing I would point out; don't be too downhearted about the new girl, Linda Thorson. I recall that when Honor Blackman opted out, no-one expected that Diana Rigg would succeed in taking her place.....

Another thing: in spite of what ABC may think regarding the legality of umbrella-swords (they are illegal as sword-sticks or any other offensive weapon, but that doesn't stop them being sold), such weapons are openly available over here. There's a store within about three blocks of my apartment that deals exclusively in weaponry of varying types, and has a range of sword-canes and umbrella-swords. They do come mighty expensive by U.K. standards, probably for the novelty value and presumed difficulty in manufacture. The umbrellas are in the Pound Sterling 10-20 range (say 25-40 dollars), whereas you can get a fine antique dress-sword for 40 dollars, and some even better ones for not much more.

In case you're wondering about importing, I don't know wise it would be to ship weapons to an enemy country - (I was at the big London anti-Vietnam rally at the American Embassy last Sunday and got liberally battered at the fighting), - it's against the law over here.

The new McGoon series over here is the best thing on British television bar none (no, not even The Avengers). Called THE PRISONER, if there are no plans to screen it over there, start bugging the networks. This series contains all the elements that made THE AVENGERS great (except the Dynamic Duo), plus Pat McGoon, plus a writer with an I.Q. of about 200 (McGoon again), plus technical

effects beyond all comprehension. The whole thing is so weird, surreal, and brilliant that it's out of sight. A very much in-cult thing over here currently.

But I must confess that I know no reason why you over there should go for things like THE SAINT, GIDEON'S WAY and Co. - which over here are thought pretty awful.

((THE SAINT may not be the best thing in town, but compared to the garbage we do get, it's very good. As far as GIDEON'S WAY goes, from the Neilsen ratings and responses in EN GARDE, I think I must be the only person in the world who liked that thing. But then it was long, long ago and far, far away as the saying goes.... We were all ever so much younger back when we were younger.

Technically speaking, sword-umbrellas come in three main types. There is the handy sportsmen's model a' la John Steed, where you unscrew (quickly, we hope) the handle from the broolly and instant villainous shish-ke-barb. This is practically operationally fool-proof, but as hinted above, it might tend to be a teensey bit slow on the draw. (Which is the main trouble with relying on weapons anyways. Sometimes you just haven't the time to draw yours out, if the other bod already has his to hand).

The second is a gravity-feed blade, not especially long in the blade dept., but then twelve to eighteen inches should do for most any job short of resolving an argument with an enraged rhino. You hold the broolly up, press the handy little catch and presto, the blade drops out the center, catches and is locked in place. You have just extended your reach - - and made it more deadly - - by the length of the blade. The only trouble being, of course, that catches do catch on occasion....with our luck, probably whilst a razor-wielding Free-Soiler is foam-mouthedly advancing on us.

The third snappy type is much favored by Movie producers with a flair for the dramatic and for stabbing people through wooden doors. (You just put a telegraph under the door...when you see the telegraph move, you shove the blade through the door....perfect locked door mystery except for the blood on the hdlle of entrance and exit). You push the button, Zip! Instant blade. Point at a bod, say "Good Fellow...", press the button and the blade goes through him. Now you know why movie Directors favor this model. Actually it's nothing more than a super switch-blade knife, and baby, don't ever let the fuzz bust you carrying this little charmer! They'll jack up a corner of the county jail and drop you int, the cornerstone that Judge ever hears that you were carrying a twenty-inch blade switch-blade.

Apart from that, relying on a spring as it does, it would pay to have your local mechanic look at it occasionally, replace worn springs, etc.

But with all of these, the customs fuzz are very, very, very down on sword-umbrellas, sticks, canes and whatever. These are all concealed weapons, per se, and you have to be a dealer and get twenty-seven permits and prove your grandfather never even parked his horse-and-buggy overtime and get personally interviewed and on and on and on and on. Even then they won't let you import the super-switchblade model. Believe me, I've checked.

Ah, what a dream though.... Be carrying the switch-blade model and some teener pops out of an alley mouth and gives the modern version of Your Money Or Your Life! Stand & Deliver! And you say shish-ke-barb! Zip!))



John Pierce
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43206

One point of correction: there are Diana Rigg posters available. Movie Star News, 212 East 14th Street, N.Y.C., N.Y., 10003, are selling posters for \$2.50 @, plus .35¢ postage. The price went through a recent hike, the supplement catalogue I have lists them for \$1.50 but a written-in note says \$2.50. The photo

shows Miss Rigg (inaccurately labelled Diane Riggs) in her sleeveless jumpsuit (the one with the hip-holes and chain and watch that we saw on the cover of "The Floating Game" pocketbook), holding a pistol in her right hand and flashing a big toothpaste ad smile.

Aside from the Phase-4 Stereo London recording by Roland Shaw, I've seen another one which featured the theme of "The Avengers". It merely mentions the show itself in the album liner notes. This album must be older, because it refers to the show as if the American viewer were unaware of it, and refers to the star "Ian McNulty as the villainous Doctor Keel, and Patrick MacNee as the enigmatic secret agent John Steed".

"The Avengers" were mentioned on a show last summer which was filmed in London (although it generally featured American entertainers). A British comedian was doing a snit (I think the show was called SPOTLITE, by the way), all about the typical Englishman, and mentioned the new "John Steed look, as popularized by "The Avengers", or something to that effect. Quite evidently this was before Steed took to wearing paisley shirts.

You hinted at Emma Peel models. Such things are possible. Have you ever considered taking a Wonder Woman model and painting it like Emma Peel in one of her jumpsuits? Not too difficult to do. If ever I run across another WW model, I intend to do just that. I have one WW model, painted as the Black Canary, who bears a certain resemblance to the Peel of Steel.

Saw MacNee in a Twilight Zone episode not too long ago. He played the mate of a British ship during WWII. This was during a syndicated re-run, not the original network run, that I saw this. Though his part was small, he was still considered important enough to be mentioned in the TV Guide listing of the cast. Because of "THE AVENGERS" perhaps? I'd like to think so.

The story itself began with a single convoy-less ship in a dense fog. On board is a somewhat disjointed- and obviously foreign - gentleman who doesn't remember much of anything. You see the crew and passengers going about their business, talking with the foreigner, trying to sympathize with him - obviously he must be an refugee of some sort you understand. As the show progresses, he discovers more and more about himself, until finally he is staring out through the fog and sees torpedoes on their way - they hit - and chaos and death reign. In the final revelatory scenes, the foreigner watches the sub shell the freighter, and realizes that he is the U-boat skipper. Doomed forever to ride the ship he sank, and to forever go down with her, realizing he was out there...and then a hand is on his shoulder and he doesn't remember who or what he is and the ship is merely lost in the fog again..... Mobius strip in Hell.

I disagree that #Epic# was one of the best AVENGERS of its season. It was, in my opinion, one of the worst. However, we did get to see quite a good deal of Diana Rigg (as differing from the lot we saw in "The Jokers"), and this tended to compensate for a weak plot.

Ah, but I do recall with fondness one episode from the '67 season, entitled "The Living Dead", about an underground city. Remember the scene in which Steed, about to be executed, was rescued by Mrs. Peel, who machine-gunned the firing squad? Thereafter, she marched onto the field, halted, and executed a proper left turn. Of course, she used regular British R.A. movements, as contrasted to the more exaggerated style we use. But still basically the same. It's wonderful to be able to see things like this and understand them.

((John is an ROTC drill team member and they use the British style rather than the American for their exhibitions, so that little maneuver warmed the wimples and chockles of his heart, I imagine. He also liked "The Superlative Seven" for it's mystery element. Which brings up the point that those shows which have seemed to be worth remembering well were those which produced a number of premises and stuck with them, creating a logic and then following it so to speak.))

And in a later letter,
also from John....

Yes, well, my Miss Avenger character: First of all,
I ought to clarify my own background. I am a member
(though in semi-retirement at the moment) of comic-
book-adventure fandom. I mention this only because I

gather from EN GARDE that it is an offshoot of science fiction fandom. At any rate, my being a pseudo-member of this particular fandom -- as well as being interested in all forms of thrillers etc., really -- somewhat influences my views of other things. Like Mrs. Peel, for instance. Take her. ((Editor -- If I did, she might break my neck but it's a kind thought nonetheless.)) I see her not as one person, but as a sort of Clark Kent-Superman type, in that she leads a double life. This has in fact held true at least part of the time. Remember from the first season, wherein Emma disguised herself as a nurse? Or how about that ghost story ("The Jokers") wherein she was ostensibly a magazine writer? (as well as posing as one in "The Winged Avenger").

Granted this situation is overdone. Then there are the other extremes -- Artemus Gordon, the Impossible Mission Forces -- who lead many lives. (To say the least!) Nevertheless, I couldn't help but conceive of Mrs. Peel in this fashion. In that respect, she bears a good bit of resemblance to two 1940's comic book heroines, Black Cat and Black Canary, both of whom knew judo and such, and put on colorful costumes to fight crime. Black Cat disguised herself with a mask, while Black Canary used a blonde wig to cover her black hair.

This brings up another point: consider those colorful jumpsuits worn by Mrs. Emma Peel. They look astonishingly for all the world like super-hero style costumes. Hence, my analogy.

From this start, I created a character who who blend Mrs. Peel and the costumed cuties of the 1940's type into a single personality. A modern-day crime fighter, a British femme who leads a double-life. Thus was Miss Avenger born.

In the true comic book formula, naturally I had to give her a few additional powers beyond her knowledge of the fighting arts. This was something I designated as omni-vision: i.e. -- the ability to see equally well in all conditions of light and darkness. (You might see the modern Shadow paperbacks (cruddy as they are) for a similar power possessed by the Dark Avenger.)

This done, I gave her a cover, an alternate identity, that of a free-lance writer, which would give her reasons for travelling and discovery of unusual situations requiring the aid of Miss Avenger. Of course, as with Mrs. Peel, I decided that she must have some source of independent income behind her. Quite frankly, I copied from the Avengers here -- a dead father who left her a fortune.

All this accomplished, she seemed a fairly complete character. But something was missing. A partner? Perhaps. A foil? Quite not. I did know that I did not want a John Steed type. Such a thing would be going a bit too far. So I decided on a non-friendly compatriot instead. The result was Doctor D.

Doctor D is not a partner to Miss Avenger, although neither is he an enemy. He is a mysterious character who turns up occasionally in some of her adventures. She usually finds him already involved in some plot to conquer the world or just make off with somebody's treasury. As a general rule, she knows of Doctor D only as a mysterious wraith-like figure in black, who appears and disappears at will.

Quite literally at will, too. He is a man with the unusual ability of being able to force other people to totally concentrate on some other thing or person. As a result, though not invisible, he is able to enter and depart at will, with this particular form of invisibility. The perfect "Man In The Crowd".

Like Miss Avenger he is a crime fighter, though on a differing level. His work carries him all over Europe and the British Isles, occasionally to the US and Canada. He has no one secret identity but rather is a different person in each locale, each identity being privy to national secrets for various reasons. His English one is that of a photographer, at least in the beginning. Later he ditches that identity but that's an entire story in itself.

Naturally Miss Avenger suspects that Doctor D has a secret identity. And whilst trying to perform her own self-appointed mission; attempts to discern his own real identity. But here he is invulnerable, for he, like The Shadow, has had so many secret identities for so long, his own true self is apparently now lost beyond reclamation.

He considers her a rank amateur, and tries constantly to remove the moment's menace without her interference. Though the fact is that her interference usually proves to be quite an asset. But he still dislikes her appearance on a case.

As to whether he knows her secret, that is a moot question. He never admits that he does, but the fact that he seems to hold the same opinion of both Miss A and her magazine-writing alter-ego should indicate something.

There has been no mention of an origin, of course. This is because I haven't yet come up with something suitable. I want something new and different, and this will take a lot of time and thought.

I do have a few rough stories, of course. Such as one in which several British agents are discharged (in the cutback in British spending which has been advancing for some months now) and set out to gain their own particular revenge. However, the main locale of the stories is England, which is awfully hard for me to handle. I've never been there, though I certainly hope to. It's one of my great ambitions.

That's Miss Avenger, in rough, and her rival-ally, Doctor D. I do hope to do more with her some day. Perhaps next summer, when the academic pressure is off.

As for stories with the real Mrs. Peel.... Why not a tale in which all five of them get together?

Doctor Keel, Mrs. Cathy Gale, John Steed, Mrs. Emma Peel and Tara King! Even if not superbly written, I'd certainly find it interesting enough to read!

Just read "The Afrit Affair", #5 in the Avengers paperback series by Berkley. Pretty good for a change. At least it read better than the things by that idiot Garforth. He had absolutely no real feeling for the series.

-- ((Editor here. As mentioned elsewhere, "The Afrit Affair" and "The Drowned Queen", the #6 in the series, were both originally written as Mrs. Peel books. But due to the changeover, Berkley naturally wanted them both switched to Tara King. Tough luck. At least some of the plates had been made for "The Afrit Affair" already, so it was too late to change femme leads. So, though Keith Laumer is still writing "Retief" stories disguised as AVENGERS novels, it is interesting to realize that Miss King was originally a 5-foot-10-inch tall red-haired elf. The story comes through just a little bit better when substituting the one name for the other throughout....

I might also mention here again that the posters mentioned in the earlier part of Mr. Pierce's letter are sold out. No use sending money. A shame, that's what it is, a blithering shame.

Ah yes, Miss Avenger. Of late I've been receiving a small supply of fiction concerning the Peel of Steel and our 20th Century Renaissance Man, John Steed. The notion itself isn't bad. Certainly a number of people out there have the ability to write a more entertaining and tightly written story on our elegant duo.

But I do have a number of complaints to make about much of it that has been wending its way here.

It is, of course, very obvious that most of us reading this (and especially the one at the stencil-typer here) have quite a thing on Miss Rigg, Patrick MacNee and that elegant sortie on the telly "The Avengers". Granted, Miss Rigg is easily one of the cutest and kinkest things to hit the telly ever. Also granted is the premise that the character of Mrs. Peel is obviously a fully functioning adult woman, with all the drives, motivations, ambitions, etc. of most women.

But one of the most entertaining points of the entire telly series has been the very unspoken-ness of the relationship between Steed and Mrs. Peel. To write a story wherein this relationship is outspoken, or enunciated in a blatantly erotic manner, is alas, out of character. I have nothing against a bit of kinky-ness in an AVENGERS story, Ghu knows.

But explicitness and over-emphasis on this as well as over-emphasis on any other single part of the AVENGERS-story formula is out of character. Any of you out there are therefore forewarned.

I'll probably print very, very little of any I receive. But apart from the quality angle, I would appreciate it if you potential authors would analyze the AVENGERS formula a bit carefully and try to keep the Elegant Duo in character.

This is not, by the way, John, a slur on your Miss A. Quite frankly I think almost anything well written and conceived would improve the present sad state of

the comic book story. I used to like to read the things, but from what I've seen in past years, the story quality is purile beyond belief. Granted that the comic book is limited in script possibilities, but maaaaaannnn.....!

Anyways, this just happens to be a point where I got on my soap-box again. Sorry folks, but when you buys EN GARDE you buys the editorial rambling with it.))

Mike Ashley
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Sittingbourne
Kent, ENGLAND

Ye don't know how glad I am to summat British making such an impact, like LORD/RING and WAR/WORLDS and so on. THE AVENGERS is me fave tev prog, having watched errey episode, thru various repeats from the very start way back in merry 1961 (Good Ghod, 1961!) which seems ever so long ago now. I'd love to supply a list of the early Videotape eppies but unforch didn't start

keeping our TV TIMES we have over ere until after they passed on and Cathy Gale vanished off to far away places.

Our TV TIMES also has covers from THE AVENGERS on occas. The front cover of the ESCAPE IN TIME ish has darlin Diana Rigg resplendantly relaxing in an overstuffed chair in a purple cat suit with Patrick MacNee peering over.

Of course the series is in colour, but -- moan mumble -- good, solid advanced British television is ever so glad to be able to bring it to us in generous black and white which we all love and adore espech when they say this colour programme is brought to you in black and white by...sob-boo-hoo, rushes off screaming.

Anyway, I dunno if ye know much about Philip Levene, who writes, with Brian Clemens the majority of the scripts. But he's an amazing character. For tv and radio over here he has scripted some of the most amazing thrillers we've had, and it's a great shame you don't get to see or hear them -- or perhaps you do, I dunno. He's really the master of the mini-play. Several years ago our amazing cat's whisker broadcasting thing produced a series of brief 20 min plays on the old radio there leading up to midnite, and of these 88 well over half were horror and science fict, mostly by Phil Levene. Incredibly plays, they was. (He says, saying it as no more than as a means of appropriate revenge for you lot getting the show in colour).

Tony Williamson, who also does some scripts, was responsible for another videotape series called "Adam Adamant", which involved this Victorian adventurer who was frozen in a block of ice by -- "The Face" -- and thawed out again 60 yrs later in the modern day. "The Face" was also frozen, as was learnt in the second series, but the first dealt with Adamant's fight against crime in the modern day, solely with swordplay -- in many ways reminiscent of AVENGERS. Now we have a series culled VIRGIN OF THE SECRET SERVICE running, a deliberate spoof of early Edwardian army types, and amazingly funny. The two actors -- Gerald Harper who played Adam Adamant, and Clinton Greyn who plays the Virgin, are really marv for the parts, like Patrick MacNee is for Steed. I hope you get to see them over there.

Of course you have had THE PRISONER I assume (in colour again, blast your eyes samuel hall, blast them all). Was that satisfactory? BRILLIANT series, espec the final four episodes where they became increasingly fantastic and that final eppy is perhaps the most brilliant hour of pure fantasy ever on Brit tv. Have you seen it yet?

Back to THE AVENGERS... I can't see any reference to Venus Smith -- fergit actress (oh yes, hang on, it was Mitzi Rogers, I just recall she was up on a prog recently), who took over from Honor Blackman in a few eppies. For reasons unknown, but prob Honor Blackman's various committments. She was a night club singer, in the show, who often Found Things Out. This was way back in the second series. Nothin to write your MP about.

Anyways, the new series of AVENGERS with Emma's replacement should start soon, so fingers crossed that we can have more weeks of enjoyment. Meanwhile our TV channel is repeating the lot -- great, eh? So I'm off to watch one of my favourite, the fave of the lot, "The Hour That Never Was", great eppy, eh?

Eat your heart out.

((Only a person with no soul, a dead, burn-out heart, would gleefully mention that the old black&whites are being repeated over there. And colour could never replace the chance to see THE GRAVEDIGGERS or THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT. "Breathes There A Man With Soul So Dead Who Has Not To Himself Hath Said:

"Mrs. Peel - You're Needed,"))

Mike McQuown
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It would seem your
misgivings about
Linda Thorson were
somewhat in vain.
I've only seen her
thrice (Diana Rigg
is getting the ex-

posure in the re-runs), but both times
she showed herself quite as lethally
effective as Mrs. Peel. I like her
for the sake of her own character, I
must say. Still, (*SIGH*) she's not
out Diana - who will be seen in that
forthcoming release entitled "The
Assassination Bureau." It should be
out this fall.

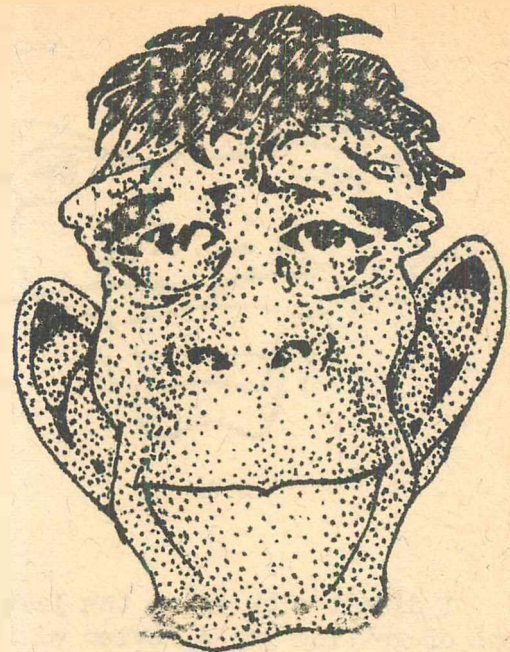
Speaking of re-runs, there is
always the consoling hope that some
of the local stations will buy the
series to run for a couple seasons.
I keep hoping some bright soul will
manage to obtain all the Avengers
episodes from the very first and run
them straight through several seasons.
I can't figure out why somebody didn't
do that after "Goldfinger" came out
and Honor Blackman was a hot star.

Posters - who needs 'em? Thanks to your thoughtful inclusion of those photos
in #2 and #3 and #4, I have some lovely photos to hang. I simply removed them from
the magazine and glued them on mounting board. If done carefully, using very spar-
ing amounts of rubber cement exactly according to instructions, they work out very
nicely indeed.

Yesterday I sat in on a live taping of the Dick Cavett Show. James Mason was
there. I had the Devil's own time of trying to understand what he was saying;
not only is he not the greatest actor in the business, he is so much less articul-
ate than MacNee I fail to understand why in hell the good Patrick hasn't overtaken
him in the business years ago. Actually, the answer is very simple. While Mason
was basking in the Star treatment and wallowing in it, MacNee was doing the harder
job of learning his trade in depth, in the really great training ground of the
English repertory theatre and the "golden age" of Canadian TV. I found out this
year just how much schooling is worth versus the process of learning by doing. At
some point, one must learn the technical fundamentals - voice, speech, movement,
etc. - to get an approach to characterization, to understand the structure of plays
and the mechanics of staging - then go out and bring to fruition what has been
implanted by doing, and doing, and doing. This is what MacNee and Miss Rigg both
have done, and even if the Avengers were the worst-written, worst-produced of
merde that ever came out of Republic Pictures in the '40's, they would make it
look good.

You see, no matter how impossible the situation, no matter how thin the plot,
Mrs. Peel and Major Steed have a real life, both for us and for Rigg and MacNee.
If you asked them, I have no doubt they could tell you what Mrs. Peel and Steed had
for breakfast, what they were doing before they entered the scene, what they will
be doing when the adventure is over.

This also, in my opinion, applies equally to Scott and Robinson and Rollin
Hand and Cinnamon Carter, Barney and the rest of the IMF - it has to do with a
thing called Artistic Integrity. The effort of creating for oneself the believe-
ability of a character and a situation. You could, if you wished, shuffle all those
people - put different characters in the other stories, or different actors in the
roles, and they would function just as believably. And here we end the scene with
Kelly Robinson having a tete-a-tete with Mrs. Peel, Alexander Scott, John Steed and





Rollin Hand discussing Oriental antiques, and Cinnamon, Barney and Tara playing some very complex electronic game with Briggs while swapping notes with the aforementioned people.

On the less artistic side, but just for fun, I always thought it would be fun to see Honey West (visiting Old Blighty) with Mrs. Peel, Tara King and Cathy Gale, left on their own in London, get jumped by this gang of motorcycle toughs, see... ..and then....

See what I mean?

Apparently The Avengers are faring well in the pb department - I just saw a new one on the stands by - Keith Laumer.

I didn't pick it up the last time I saw it, but I will try to soon, in the hope of getting you a review of it. As it is, I'm in the midst of an evening workshop (Tusenbach in the Three Sisters) and trying to find some lucrative commercial work, but, if humanly possible, I will find time. God knows I wasted several valuable hours wading through Nick Carter and Peter Winston.

Correction: Milburn Stone does not play Festus on GUNSMOKE. He plays Doc. Info: "Paint Your Wagon" is a musical, I believe.

After all you'd said about the wuality of British adventure series, someone had to go and release ITV's very bad, "THE CHAMPIONS". I can't really begin to tell you why it's bad; that's the worst of it. I've seen it thrice, now, and as far as I am concerned, Nothing Happens. The pace seems a little off, and the actors just do not seem involved. This was not true of a briefly-appearing Australian series called "HUNTER", which ran two episodes on a Sunday basis. In both of those shows, the production values were low, but in "HUNTER" they were solid. In neither were the plots terribly sophisticated, nor was there the plethora of gadgetry which tends to mar most of the newer spy stuff (excluding THE AVENGERS and THE PRISONER), but the action just wasn't there, in "CHAMPIONS". People did things, but the feeling of urgency, threat, challenge, wasn't there. I suppose the whole problem was simply that I was left with a feeling of "So What?" when it was all over. I don't particularly object to the fantasy element of their paranormal powers, either.

I strongly suspect the whole thing is a steal on Paul Tabori's "The Hunters", book series, of which I think there were two or three on the stands. This also involved the same number of people working for a private agency, but they were all highly trained specialist professionals, a la the IMF.

Speaking of the IMF (Impossible Missions Force), did you see the Johnny Carson show Monday night ((July 8, 1968))? In the past few months, Carson had done three rather funny skits on the idea of the self-destruct recordings going off while the agent was in some way unable to get clear of them. So, the Landaus came on the show Monday night and presented Carson with this big trophy making him a member of the IMF. They chatted for a few minutes, then left. A few seconds later, the trophy began to smoke. Carson threw it off the desk and it made a big bang. Quite a cute business, the whole thing.

It's going to be a bad year. "I, SPT" off, Diana Rigg out of THE AVENGERS, but we have the great consolation of THE PRISONER and MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE. So far, none of the new shows have evinced any kind of quality or interest. Let us hope the fall will bring us something more than is anticipated.

THE PRISONER, of course, is fascinating.

More actors of McGoohan's stature should be allowed to produce and direct or write. McGoohan had, of course, axed the original line of SECRET AGENT and all the womanizing and gratuitous violence, turning it into a very high-quality show.

Not that there's anything inherently wrong with sex or violence in its logical and natural place, but for its own sake, it's a bit of a nuisance, much like the old westerns where the hero did in all the bad guys, saved the ranch, rescued the heroine -- but first he sang us a little song. The THE PRISONER -- one never knows what to expect; who's who? The raising of questions here, most as yet unanswered, is exciting, and bears out the idea that it is not necessary to have everything spelled out for the house; a little intrigue can be a great spice.

It's not Duella, it's Dullea. I haven't seen "2001:" yet, but I hope to soon. Never misspell an actor's name. He'll forgive the lies and the slanders, but never, never that. I know. I have this list of people who misspelled mine, see....

((Editor -- I agree that Linda Thorson is quite a nice bit to behold and all that. Still, she doesn't yet have the fully developed style, that collection of mannerisms, habits, quirks, fears, neuroses, reactions and methods of control which constitute that indefinable totality which we think of as the elan and spirit and style of a really good 'un. She just hasn't developed one yet, and the really shame ful thing about Linda Thorson is that I don't know whether she's going to have the time to develop that personal signature of hers before THE AVENGERS goes off the air. You can watch the fascinating process taking place if you watch closely. She's going to be a fine, really fine actress very soon. But whereas Pat MacNee and Diana Rigg and Honor Blackman brought their own styles with them, and impressed the mealable formula of THE AVENGERS with it, Linda Thorson is having to whip one up right fast.

I sincerely hope the show makes it this coming year. If not, we shall probably be treated to the lamentable spectacle of Linda Thorson...and the show becoming better and better as the ratings fall. And you do need a definite, easily seen style to carry off ridiculous parodies of THE AVENGERS like "LOOK..STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE BEFORE..."

There's another AVENGERS pb out now (or soon will be), THE DROWNED QUEEN, also by Laumer. Unfortunately the quality slips a bit from THE AFRIT AFFAIR, but that is more due to Laumer than the fact that Tara King has replaced Mrs. Peel in the pb story. Laumer wrote both, obviously, as Retief stories. Then re-wrote them for quick sale as AVENGERS pocketbooks. Then had to re-write THE DROWNED QUEEN as a Tara King AVENGERS story. Just think for a moment....a submersible passenger liner. Then compare it with a spaceship passenger liner. See?

But the cover is marvellous, about the best photo of Linda Thorson I've seen to date. Now if she'd only loosen up her facial expressions, during the filming of THE AVENGERS.....

THE CHAMPIONS resembles nothing so much as an unsuccessful attempt to emulate THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. (Still very, very big over in England) and add the spice of paranormal powers as well. But instead of accepting a limited formula and trying to establish a comprehensive and entertaining show around these bones, the bones are all you get. The result is that the whole thing....from color photography unimaginatively handled to studio-bound stories to unhumorous dialogue to shoddy film editing and lousy directing of the material to hand...results in a bit zero. The whole is less than the sum of its parts, so to speak.

Correction noted on Milburn Stone playing "Doc" rather than "Festus" on the "Gunsmoke" program. Correction also noted and cringed over on Dullea's name. If anything was unexcusable, it was that. Sorry Kaer, I mean Keir.))

Harry Warner Next week, I might become the first EN GARDE reader capable of
423 Summit Ave. helping THE AVENGERS in a certain manner. For seven days, I
Hagerstown, Md. shall be a Nielsen Family. I tried to explain to the young lady
21740v that I am not a family, but just a lone individual unconnected
 in any direction. But she insisted that if I agreed to keep the
Nielsen Diary, I would become a Nielsen Family. Of course, I haven't ruled out the
possibility that a lady of the proper age and background will ring my doorbell
just before midnight at the week's start, in order to make my position as a Nielsen
Family legal. You can understand my concern, I'm sure, about THE AVENGERS status
next week, for it would be awful if it were preempted in favor of some special or
other, in the only week when my watching can have an effect on the ratings.

One fault, alas, is that I didn't make myself clear in those comments on criticizing television. There was no intention of saying that people shouldn't criticize television programs. Rather my point should have been that it's better to criticize the television offerings on the basis of your reactions while you are actually watching. It's not cricket to change your mind and decide that it was a bad program because later pondering has convinced you that you shouldn't have enjoyed it, due to certain deficiencies that your logical mind has discovered *ex post facto*. If it's a book, you can do that sort of criticizing because a book is a sitting duck for re-reading and endless leafing back and forth. If it's a movie, you can sit through it a second and a third time on the same day or go to see it later in the week. If it's a television program, you see it and that's it, unless you have one of those pioneering home video recorders or its rerun six months later. A good comparison might be the different ways in which two types of music should be compared, jazz with its improvisations and serious music. You don't take apart a jazz record and try to find ways in this flourish which was derived from the flourish eight bars earlier or complain that a riff should have ended with a staccato passage rather than legato. I know some jazz critics do, but they're the ones who don't like any jazz at all. Serious music should get that kind of intensive analysis because it lasts for centuries and the subtler nuances are all that distinguish one performance of a symphony from another.

The photo pages are, of course, splendid. But the back cover surprises and puzzles me. It looks remarkably like an unretouched picture that would not normally have been distributed for publicity purposes without some work with spotting tools and a sharp knife. I like it particularly for this very reason, but I think that someone at ABC ordered copies from the wrong negative or somehow was able to relieve his inhibitions by deliberately permitting an honest candid shot to go out.

I must agree with your one reason given in diagnosis for the TAFF apathy. Moreover, it isn't fair for the TAFF winner to be saddled with a traditional need to publish himself a big trip report. The old system of distributing the trip report in installment form in fanzines got TAFF much valuable publicity over a period of many months. If some of those serialized reports were never published complete, the loss wasn't as great as if in the case of the one-shot trip reports that never managed to get a word published. But I'd like to point out one other thing that may be causing TAFF to lose favor. There hasn't been anything to fuss about lately regarding this project. The winners have been well-liked people who have behaved beautifully and no loser has yelled foul. It could be that one monumental snafu would get fandom so upset that TAFF would be back in instant favor again.

The translations from the German were excellent, and though neoish, provide a few more interesting insights into our interesting subject's mind. The only thing I might question is at the bottom of the third page of translated text. *Erziehung* can mean education, but in this context I suspect that Miss Rigg may have used originally a different word, like rearing or upbringing or even breeding.

The small amount of Avengers-watching that my job permits me makes it impossible for me to find any other possible misstatements in this issue. Except, possibly, in one of Linda Thorson's physical attributes. Somewhere I read that the first batch of Thorson episodes have her wearing a wig that imitates her normal real hair, necessitated by the damage done to that real hair by dyeing and tinkering during the great blonde-creation process. The wig was to be discarded when the real hair had regained its normal thickness and quality.

I share your bewilderment over the time of troubles which have engulfed science fiction during its present division into various schools and cliques. If only the New Wave hadn't propagandized as such, things might be better. The New Wave writers might have made fewer efforts to shock the bourgeoisie deliberately and the New Wave readers might have been less certain that they were reading something incomprehensibly great simply because it was written by a certified New Wave School writer. Readers might have judged each story on its merits, instead of taking sides and then reacting in accordance with the party line. It's quite similar to the mess created when some fans set about to be and act as Seventh Fandom way back in '53-'54. If they'd done the same things without the war cry, life would have been less hectic and a lot of good fans might still be active.

I haven't been able to watch THE PRISONER yet, but I hope it gets lots of fanzine attention. Whatever its merits, it is almost sure to bring forth a lot of mention of Kafka and that in turn should bring to fans' attention an inexplicably neglected topic for fanzine discussion.

((Editor - When "The Assassination Bureau" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" does finally hit the movie houses, EN GARDE is determined to bring that sort of fine-edged criticism to bare on Miss Rigg and cohorts which the subject demands. For the moments, re-runs allow us to re-view the fine points - and deficiencies of the final half-season's programs. I can only say after re-viewing and reviewing the tapes at Dennis Kawicki's place, that the shoddy editing and shoddier writing of the past series of shows is much more marked than ever before. But more later...))

Not even shoddy editing and gag-line scripts can kill off an idea like The Avengers and Mrs. Peel. But if this sort of second-rate work continues, Miss Linda Thorson may never really allowed full rein in developing her obvious talents. And that is the pity.

God forbid that a real snafu should occur to TAFF. A minor one, maybe, but a big dirty mess could kill it off and give the whole notion a stench. Better to kill it off decently now, I say.

Well, when ABFC took over the "re-creation" of Linda Thorson as Tara King, some blithering nit with a bit of power decided that Bormie And Clyde and the thirties look was The Thing. Ergo, make Linda/Tara a frizzy blonde. Film two shows, someone wakes up, cries Ye Ghods! and axes the notion of a blonde Tara King. Back to natural shade. But in the meantime Linda's real hair has gone frizzy and such and they cannot nohow noways make it look natural again. So, a wig.

But they've all this money tied up in two blonde-type Tara King episodes. So, they re-shoot a few scenes, some gimmicky film editing... And presto. For two episodes - - THE INVASION OF THE EARTHMEN and THE GET-AWAY - - we have a supposedly natural auburn-haired Tara King wearing a "blonde wig", unquote.

Since all this occurred back in October-November of last year, the upcoming batch of AVENGERS will have Tara wearing her own hair eventually, and I'm wondering iff I'll be able to spot the change....))

Lohr McKinstry
668 Park Street
Bloomsburg, Penn.

17615

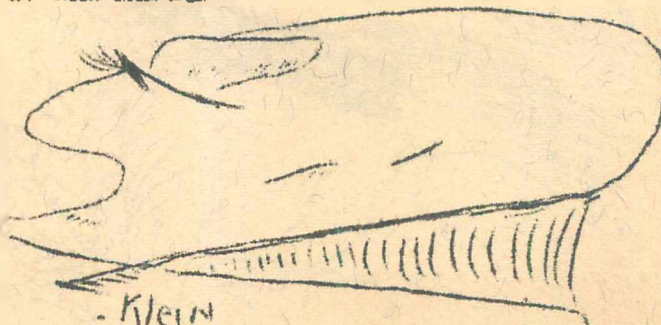
Thought that the first few Tara King episodes of THE AVENGERS were fine. Miss Thorson is a fine actress, and she did quite a lot in her initial showings.

But with GET-A-WAY, the usually high AVENGERS quality fell considerably. The idea of a chameleon-bath is very far-out anyway, but expecting anyone to believe that such a total invisibility from such a bath would be possible, is complete inanity.

Then with the very next episode, HAVE GUN, WILL HAGGLE (maybe Richard Boone's HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL is still being shown over there, and the British believe it to be a current American show?) the quality increased immeasurably, almost to what it had ever been. That was hokay. A theft of prototype British machine-rifles is entirely plausible, as well as their auction to the highest bidder.

It isn't science-fiction (an excellent form of literature), but pseudo-fantasy that is exploited next in "LOOK...SDOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE BEFORE..." The very thought that clowns could commit ridiculous, broad-daylight murders in London is beyond belief. That a gag-writer would work in a full almost to the ceiling room with rejected jokes typed on sheets of crumpled paper, or that a group of ex-vaudeville men would ruthlessly go out and murder whoever they were told to murder, just to keep old theatres from being razed, such things shatter the mind.

When I first noticed that Philip Levene hadn't scripted the episode, suspicion began to gnaw at my mind, then as the show itself unfolded, I watched in a state of growing disbelief as Steed and Tara were turned into comedy lampoons. The episode was a parody of itself.



We can only hope that future Steed-Tara episodes are not along the same non-plot line as that.

Hope you might be able to use the enclosed review.

((Editor - Look for it in NEWS AND NOTES. I hope I'll have room. Otherwise, I hope you'll re-write it for a future issue.))

Mark Schulzinger
6791 Meadow Ridge Lane
Cincinnati, Ohio
45237

Although you must realize that I've been a fakefan for many years now (which means that I still read ASTOUNDING), it was almost like a trip home to delve into the pages of a fanzine. It was a bit disconcerting, however. I like Diana Rigg as well as the next guy and I must

admit that looking at her image on the telly screen has established a direct Pavlovian link between my retina and my glands, but I really can't see writing about her for 50-60 pages. I really shouldn't kick, though. If the teenyboppers have Leonard Nimoy, why shouldn't us adults have Diana? I will take a well-formed, very feminine, adult female to a pair of pointed ears anyday.

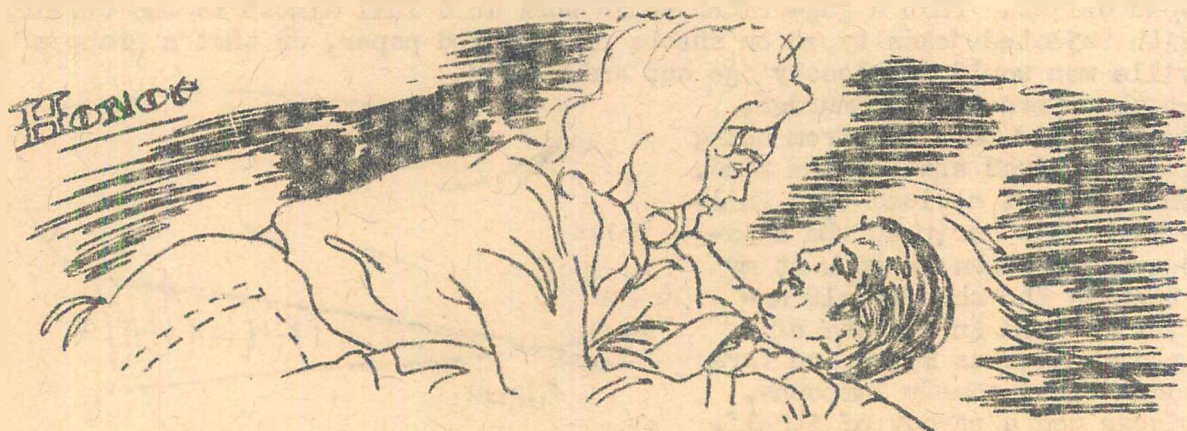
m I must take all sorts of issue with your opinions regarding "2001:". I won't explain exactly what I mean by that except to say that I feel that the film should be taken as pure science fiction - with or without the symbolism. Symbolism is fine and dandy no matter where it appears but I feel that far too many fans have become bogged down in it to the extent that they ignore the story line in the film. I even found one fanne at the MidwestCon who flatly denied that the film was even sf. Colored lights do not a Rorschach make, even if everyone insists on projection.

Part of my gripe, of course, is due to the fact that I was commissioned to do a newspaper feature article on the ending of the film. I went into the article with quite definite ideas and, while conversation with fans has modified them slightly, I still feel that I am basically correct. Anyhow, the article has now been written. If it is accepted and published, I will send you a copy - especially since your name appears in it.

It is interesting to note that non-fans have even greater difficulty in comprehending the film. Hap O'Daniel, a reviewer of sorts for the Sirfi Post-Times-Star believes that the "trip" is an entry into the Jovian atmosphere. A short trip to any encyclopedia would have shown him how impossible this is. This is, of course, one of the problems of sf - particularly the modern variety. In its 40 years, the readers have presumably picked up enough to understand the scientific premises. When I start someone off on sf I make it a point to include the older stories in the first batch of material so that the person can get some sort of scientific background to understand what is going on.

I don't know if modern fans (i.e. - those just starting to read the stuff) are getting the same dose of basic science. I suspect that they don't for a variety of reasons that have only a little to do with modern writing.

((Editor - It is interesting to note that "2001:" has become a minor cult in the student age group. Mayhaps because they know enough science so as not to be automatically thrown off in the beginning.))



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CANADA

Just to make you feel better, we were unable to get an AVENGERS film for the Toronto Triple Fan Fair. Since I never got any response from you and I now reside some 800 miles from the Fair site, that put a damper on what I could do. Therefore, nothing along the AVENGERS line was actually done. I must say that thanks to Mike Glickson,

there were some stills up in an area we had put aside for TV. Some nice ones, too.

While down at the ComicCon in New York, two Avenger type things came to notice. One was that there are now two young ladies in the Comics that just might be considered the same type as our Mrs. Peel.

One of the first people I saw while I was down at the Con was Jim Sterenko of Marvel Comics. He is the fantastic writer and artist who puts out the comic "SHIELD". Since taking over the comic, Sterenko has introduced a love interest for the hero, Nick Fury. She is tall, ~~MARKS/WHITE~~ good-looking, deadly in a fight, and a top shot. She also has this one name problem as she is only known as "The Countess". Now she is probably as close as we are going to get to having the AVENGERS in comics. A nice idea, though.

I also talked to Danny O'Neill, who has just taken over writing WONDER WOMAN. He plans on doing away with the young ladie's super powers, and giving her a crash course in judo and gung-fu. Then add "mod" (skin-tight) clothing and a private eye and away she goes. Sound familiar? This transition of hers is just starting and the comic is still available in the stands.

Together these two comics are bringing back the completely competent females as per Mrs. Peel. Maybe we should keep an eye on them.

Agree with most of your notions on "2001:". My comment was "I wanna go NOW" from the opening scene of the space platform on through. I was happy to pay \$3 just for that. I wanted so badly to be there.

((Editor - many ashes upon Editorial head for not writing sooner. And who is Mike Glickson? Somehow or other, by not writing, I have this distinct feeling that a certain amount of cross-communication is being lost.....

Nike Fury of SHIELD is in any event one of the few really readable superhero comics. Nick Fury is very nearly unique, having no special abilities other than an ability to think and fight damned fast. The thinking portion being a very unique thing to find in comic book super-heroes....

The second time I watched the "Nomad", the Pan-Am clipper approaching the Space doughnut, the strains of another song suddenly came through my mind. The tune was "I wanna Go Home", an old ridge-runner tune. Emotionally, and damn the physical torpedoes, I feel as if that is my home. No wonder I am so turned on by the flick. It shows where I ever so much want to be.))

Drew Simels
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EN GARDE keeps improving, but with each improvement, you are also faced with a new problem.

Now that you have expanded to fifty-nine pages (and probably more in future issues), you'll have to spend more time on proof-reading. I found countless typographical mistakes. Also, I cannot help but correct an error in Bob Vardeman's letter. Well,

perhaps not an error, but something close to one. He says "not once do I remember seeing any femme fatale spy (or even the upstairs maid) kiss McGoohan". Well, perhaps it would come as a surprise to know that McGoohan as Drake of SECRET AGENT has kissed a girl ("A DATE WITH DORIS", 1965, with Jane Marrow as Juana Ramero).

Has anyone noticed a certain comic book quality to the series, especially in the action sequences? This has never really been achieved on television before (BATMAN on TV can hardly be counted as a faithful adaptation of the character in the comics) and is only starting in the movies (I'm not talking about comic book dialogue, a term used by the so-called important movie critics, this is strictly a visual thing. The most recent and blatant example occurred in the recent picture "PROJECT X", which featured a combination of animation and live action). In "The Avengers" series, the best example I can call to mind is the beginning of "THE RETURN OF THE CYBERNAUTS" - that whole sequence starting with the muffled martial music and the rhythmic camera dance towards the door of the scientist.

It looked like something right out of Marvel comics. On the other hand, one defect of the show is the usage of distant camera panning of fight scenes. In "DEATH'S DOOR", the end fight sequence featured some shots with the camera across the room and looking down at MacNee punching William Lucas (playing Stapley). Only it wasn't MacNee -- it was a double. Incidentally, MacNee must be getting old or is so well off that he has included a clause in his contract which permits him a stunt man to take his place whenever he wants it. They're using one everytime he gets into his car!

However, it would be unthinkable for me to end this letter without a few words about THE PRISONER which, at the least, proves that Patrick McGeehan is an actor to be reckoned with. I'm sure I'm speaking for a lot of people in saying that it is one of the best, if not the most interesting, shows on television at the moment. The trouble is, it's so damned confusing. Deliberately!

For instance, we are told in "A., B. and C." during #6's 'real' dream at the end, that he resigned because he wanted to go on a vacation. Yet his captors evidently are still not satisfied which leads one not to be sure whether or not he was telling the truth in the first place. Which leads us to another question -- just who are his captors. A good deal of one Secret Agent episode, "Colony Three" (1964), was spent depicting an off-limits training area for Russian spies. The place was constructed brick-for-brick just like an English village. There, the Russian spies are taught in a sense to "become" British -- or as close to Britishness as is possible. In this way, they would be able to 'mingle in with the crowd'. Anyway, is it not unreasonable to accept the theory that McGeehan's keepers are graduates from Colony Three? Or maybe they speak in such perfect British accents because they are British. In "THE CHIMES OF BIG BEN", we learn that at least one regular British agent is working in collaboration with The Village. Or perhaps the whole set-up is a combinational effort with both Russian and British security personnel involved.

Another question that bothers me is whether #6 is really a character continuation of John Drake. Both are rather individualistic and are rooted in ideals. Drake, every now and then, became pretty fed up with his superiors in SPECIAL BRANCH. Number 6 resigned "as a matter of principle". Or maybe it's really unimportant. At any rate, it's nice to see some of the Secret Agent regulars -- Jane Merrow appeared in three episodes; she played the girl Allison in "THE SCHIZOID MAN". John Cazaban, of "FREE FOR ALL", showed up in one of the 1966 shows whilst Earl Cameron, who played the supervisor, in "THE SCHIZOID MAN", played various Africans and Caribbeans in perhaps five of the Secret Agent episodes. In the premiere episode, "ARRIVAL", two old faces showed up: Paul Eddington, who played the Swiss police inspector in "I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE THE WRONG NUMBER" (1964), now appeared as a fellow prisoner, and Virginia Maskeel, who played the bad girl in "THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER" (1964), portrayed the enigmatic woman with the hat. Strange to say that she died before the end of April, 1968, at the ripe old age of 31.

On the other side of the camera, Don Chaffey, who directed the first two episodes, was also responsible for at least ten of the old Secret Agent shows. Brandon Stafford, the head of photography, also lensed most of the old Drake shows.

According to TIME magazine, only 17 episodes were filmed and it wasn't made clear whether or not the viewer was to be left up in the air. By the calendar, it looks as if we won't be able to see all of them. But I'm convinced that what we will see will be enough to start an infinite amount of discussion and argument.

((Editor -- As pointed out in the Editorial, Tackings, proofreading is something I consider an expensive luxury. I try not to make mistakes in the first place. Corflu where necessary. And let the rest go on its way. To do otherwise would involve me in a great deal of fantastic extra work...and 600 plus copies of this thing involves a tremendous amount of work in production alone. If it has to become any more professional, I might very near chock the whole thing up as a loss. This is, after all, merely a hobby, not a vocation. I do this Paean of Praise for the very fair Diana as a lark. If it has to become much more of a drudge, well...))

But it's been jolly good fun to date, typographical errors and editorial idiocies and all, including mimeographing for days on end. I think.

Frank Oglesbee
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Muskogee, Oklahoma.
74401

I presume you noticed that the latest TV Guide ((May 4-10 issue)) has a 1-page blurb on MacNee's, the young Kate Woodville, including a short & inaccurate history of the show. I must find some way to get to England and do a proper book to straighten this nonsense out.

I include a sentimental poem written in the throes of seeing Mrs. Peel exeunt:

"Long have we loved you, kinky ideal.
Even the first season in perspiry leather
You were cool, witty, and beautiful with
Lotus car and lotus spell. We thrilled
To see you in danger, applauded as you
Gracefully zonked the villain, yet each longed
To be your reseruer, rewarded by a visit to
That mod apartment, perhaps even to where
Steed (we hope!) never ventured.
Lovely widow, were you so brave - - or
Too full of loneliness to have room for fear?
So we wished -- wishing to be the healing companion.
Idle dreams. Soon you will leave us for
One of those trips tv characters take,
Never to return. Well,
You have earned your rest, Mrs. Peel,
But will play on forever
In the re-runs of our minds."

Slightly inaccurate, of course, as Peter Peel showed up, but my poetic license hasn't expired yet.

((From the sound of it you should have never even received an L certificate much less a full license....

When I started this thing I promised myself in all good faith I'd automatically ly throw out all poetry, no poetry was my steadfast policy. But the flesh is weak, and the spirit has been watered or something.))

Peter J. Falina
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I would protest the use of "crapola" by B&B Blackbeard in connection with STAR TREK (although not on TIME TUNNEL, GIRL FROM U.N.C.L.E. or, as it aged ((withered - Editor)), MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. - - there I unhappily agree). Admittedly it has slipped a little this season (anyone out there care to comment printably on "A Piece Of The Action"?),

but it is nonetheless the first honest attempt at real SF that tv has ever seen. Note that I discount TWILIGHT ZONE because its shows tended more often than not to straight fantasy.

The fact that a STAR TREK episode won a Hugo award over both FANTASTIC VOYAGE and FAHRENHEIT 451 (and 2 other STAR TREK episodes) seems to bear out the supposition that it'd not 100% garbage.

The label could be much more deservingly applied to the farces perpetrated by Irwin Allen, notably LOST IN SPACE and TIME TUNNEL. I point out nauseously that TV Guide recently referred to Allen as the "King of TV SF". Jester maybe, but not king.

((Unfortunately, that something wins a Hugo doesn't necessarily mean that it was any good - the Academy Awards if nothing else have proven how fallacious this sort of thing is as a judge of caliber. Nonetheless, not only is STAR TREK "the only game in town", as far as Stf goes, it is indeed the first one to seriously attempt to week-in and week-out produce science fiction shows. At least the Monsters have generally been something different than stunt-men in rubberoid suits. Now if they could only figure out some way to keep the Bad Guys from capturing the entire command staff of the U.S.S. Enterprise every week.....

Ah, but some of those singles and occassional shows elsewhere have been nice.... If only they could produce Stf on TV some day. For real! I'm afraid that STAR TREK palls after seeing 2001.))

Hank Davis
Box 15h
Loyall, Ky.
40854

The Novel will be completed soon. Very soon.
Writing is fun. Typing is work, Hoo Mutha, is it hard work! I was, alas, loafing for a mite after arriving home from the diploma mill. Doubtless I shall pay for it by being reincarnated as a cockroach. Also, you will remember I said that I would get cracking as soon as I saw Diana the huntress in MISSION: HIGHLY IMPROBABLE. That I would derive inspiration from the sight.

It don't work that way, I found. The reverse happens. Seeing Diana Rigg's creation of Emma Peel results in an anesthetizing effect, very euphoric.

Seeing The Rigg We Dig creating Emma Peel makes me think twice, thrice, five about trying the same thing. After all, she has a far more potent tool at her command. Namely, her. All I have is words.

Sooooo, I am spending the time reading instead of writing. After about a month of procrastination, I was reading British novels with the excuse of soaking up atmosphere, and I was going through Mary Stewart's "THE GABRIEL HOUNDS" when I hit this:

HERO: "I don't see why not. And don't look at me with those great big helpless eyes, either. If any female was ever entirely capable of looking after herself, it's you."

HEROINE: "Oh sure, Black Belt of the nth degree, that's me."

Mrs. Peel, of course, would not use "Great big helpless eyes" on someone, but that did sound a bit familiar.

And here's a thought for you to chew on each Saturday night. What was Emma Peel's original maiden name?

((And it just grows and grows. Revise estimates on Novel length to apx. 60,000 words, with present rate of growth. 145 pages? It is to laugh....))

Jock Root
206 E. 25th St.
N.Y.C., N.Y.
10010

You have some of the loveliest words! (Your own inventions?) Sneary may have pioneered the spelling thing, but you are certainly the Kenneth Patchen of his Gertrude Stein by having included typography and even a little graphics into the melange. A couple of points in case you care: Keir's name is Dullea (Duella is obviously a female fencer.)

Yes: "2001:" is indeed groovy. Also neat, cool, keen, mellow and shatteringly beautiful. I have seen it three times, and am looking forward to at least half a dozen more — preferably from that spot in the front middle of the Orchestra where the screen precisely fills my entire visual field, right to the edges: I haven't found it yet, but that's obviously the place to sit. Some day soon.... Have you noticed that it's definitive, prophetic, and trail-blazing in precisely the way Destination Moon was (and before that, Fantasia)? And with an astonishing number of the same faults, perhaps in both cases caused by the concept and visual techniques far outstripping the contemporary state of the story art. Food for thought there. Also, for your consideration, an alternate view of the final sequence (you've probably heard it already, but wotthell): not that Man, in the person of Keir is defeated, but rather that Man, as an intelligent, mature entity, is at last born. One thing about a Closed System is that it is, in its own terms, infinite. Could be the trip sequence is Man (in the person of KD) shifting from closed, Terrestrial terms to ????? Galactic terms. Man is no longer confined to Einsteinian spacetime and the planet of his birth, but is now, at least in embryo, able to tread space. Each previous appearance of the black monolith has triggered Man into a critical evolutionary step upward: why not this one too? And of course Step III would be as incomprehensible to the man of Step II (us) — thus as hard to picture; and as hard to make sense of — as Step II would be to the preapemen of Step I. Or, to put it another way, what would a cave painting of the Orbiter Hilton look like? And what would a caveman make of it?

((Rick Sneary, to the uninitiate is a well-known personality of science fiction fandom who very nearly revised fannish spelling practices some decades past. Due to lack of a great deal of formal education combined with a good intellect, Sneary went ahead and started writing phonetically. By the time he realized his mistake, fandom as a group said keep it up. Between Sneary and GBSHaw, I much prefer Snearyisms.

Also, the Strauss tune as other mentioned, was "Thus Spake Zarathustra" that was heard so beautifully in the final sequences of "2001:" rather than "The Blue Danube" as I originally reported. And this is the end of another ish of EN GARDE!!!)

the avengers

by Edwin Markham
(1852-1940)

"The laws are the secret avengers,
And they rule above all lands;
They come on wool-soft sandals,
But they strike with iron hands."

