artistic perfection when you read a script," Jeff has discovered. "You rarely achieve it in actual production." According to John Ford, Jeff learns his lines so well that he can forget them—in other words, they spring to his mind whenever the time comes to speak them, without any conscious effort. Jeff also brings to his career as an actor a fine ear for mimicry. When the producer who

first hired him, Sol Siegel, asked Jeff if

he could do dialects, Jeff instantly

responded with half a dozen imitations—

sounding like a Texan one minute and a

formative years and has kept up his playing. His favorite instrument, how-

ever, is the church organ. When

traveling, he likes to drop in at a church during a quiet afternoon. If there is no

one about, he is apt to wander over to the

organ and sit down to play it. He touched

the keys of an organ for the first time

when he was 14. It was at St. Mary's of

one was present when he started, but

when he finished, there was an audience

of a dozen, including the pastor of St.

first time, feel a spiritual aura about him.

Marisa Pavan was one of these. They were chatting, after being introduced,

when she suddenly asked, "Are you a

When he said no, she wasn't satisfied.

"There is something very Catholic about

She wasn't too far off. Jeff is

Episcopalian, the Protestant church

perhaps closest to the Catholic church in

ritual and belief. As a boy, Jeff was an

acolyte and once contemplated entering

the Episcopalian priesthood. Curiously,

his two favorite sports find him often in a

setting with a cathedral-like quality: he likes to ski alone amidst mountain

grandeur; and he likes to explore

who is skimming down an otherwise deserted ski-run at a place like Winter

Park, Colorado, on a crisp, shining

first time in a long time that I am wholly

"Suddenly," he says, "I realize for the

The happiest Jeffrey Hunter is the one

underwater grottoes with an aqualung.

Some people, on meeting Jeff for the

the Angels Church in Milwaukee.

played the Meditation from Thais.

Mary's, who called for an encore.

Catholic?"

morning.

you!" she insisted.

Jeff studied the piano through his early

New Englander the next.

One of Jeff's lavorite relaxations skindiving. Once, he penetrated so far into an underwater grotto that he was

His reading is on a wide scale. At the

studio, his luncheon companions report

that he can talk readily on anything from

the occult sciences to the science of

He enjoys reading scripts as much as

he does acting them. "You can imagine

afraid his oxygen would run out.

cooking.

ALONE -

and single.

is eyeing him

by LOUIS POLLOCK

about it "

but not for long

Jeff Hunter is sexy, successful

No wonder that even his ex-wife

effrey Hunter is such a good-

looking guy-extra tall, darkly

intent, with startlingly blue eyes—

that his serious air comes as a surprise.

"Jeff isn't a fellow who just lives," a

close friend says. "He's always thinking

Jeff Hunter has time both for sports-

indoor activities like reading.

individual.

(where he

actor's whole life.

Searchers,

according

wanted.

remembers,

hysterical

out.

horseback riding—and quieter

With all his introspection, however,

Jeff is not too informative about himself.

There is a saying in show business that

an actor is a guy who if you ain't talking

about him he ain't listening. This saying

doesn't apply to Jeff. He doesn't like to be

discussed in his own presence because it

makes him so conscious of himself as an

actor that it clouds up his identity as an

Orleans (where he was born), Milwaukee

(where he was raised), the U. S. Navy

communications) and Northwestern and

UCLA universities (where he majored in

speech and radio), disagrees with the romantic notion that acting should be an

"I don't know that you can become a

certainly you can end up being just a

partially developed person. When I have

a difficult role, I am not helped by acting tricks, I have to understand the motiva-

tions of the character I am playing in the

Early in one of his latest pictures, The

sequence in which Jeff, returning to his

Texas home from a hunting trip, finds that his family has been tortured and

killed and his house has been burned to

the ground by raiding Comanches. The

sight is more than he can bear and,

companion, John Wayne, knocks him

John Ford, the director, led Jeff aside to

have a talk with him about the portrayal

importance of the conference, for the whole theme of the story would be

weakened unless his performance was

convincing. What stands out in Jeff's

mind was Ford's quiet way of setting and

conveying the mood he wanted. "He used

no technical terms at all," recalls Jeff.

"He just discussed in a very simple and

touching way this tragedy of early Texas

which we were about to depict. I began

to get the feel of a man who discovers that those he loves have been taken from

him forever. Ford wasn't talking to

Jeffrey Hunter, the actor, but to Henry H.

McKinnies, Jr., the man. He wanted

Kinnies, Jr., was brought up quietly in a

home where voices were almost never

raised in anger, and he reflects it. He is

soft-spoken and he hates dissension. He

is so agreeable, as a matter of fact, that his friends think it is hurting him in

Friends think that Jeff and his ex-wife, Barbara Rush, may remarry and give little Chris, now four, a full home again.

The decisions an actor makes—about

what activities he will undertake, what

pictures he should appear in—can make or break him professionally. Since he is

his own stock in trade, as a person as

well as an artist, he must learn both to

live and to work with wisdom, knowing when to say yes and when to say no. Jeff's trouble is that no one can ever

He has never been known to turn down

any request for his help or services or to

veto any studio picture assignment. He

has never been seen to lose his temper.

Recently, he was sent on a six-week-long

publicity tour. Dozens of theater and

radio engagements, as well as perhaps

100 less formal appearances, were lined up for him, and not once did he beg off,

not once did he fail to oblige every fan

He has been this way right from his

start in Hollywood. Rita Moreno, who

thinks Jeff is just about one of the finest

persons she knows, takes issue with his cooperative professional character. "You

just can't go around agreeing with

"You're right," he replied instantly.

She clasped a hand to her forehead.

The chances are, however, that Jeff

"Good Lord!" she cried. "There you go

will become more assertive from this

point on. He has accepted almost any role

to gain experience and the confidence that comes with it, but he knows that now he must become more selective about his

work. He has also decided, he says, that

an actor must not only be able to take his

work seriously, but be able seriously to

Jeff's rugged good looks and friendly smile appeal to men and women alike. He has had top roles in seven important

"Success in Hollywood by no means

assures anyone of a good life," he

declares. "Your problems aren't lessened;

they are increased. And if you are so

busy with your career that you don't work

for your private happiness, you get back

To make sure that he doesn't live a

one-track life in Hollywood, Jeff busies himself with diversified activities. Some

of these he has kept up from his boyhood

and college days, like sports, music and

reading. One is new—business. He is a partner in a business management firm

handling the economic affairs of actors,

and he produces film documentaries and

short subjects on natural history and

primitive peoples. He also is preparing to

manufacture portable stoves, refrigerators

and the like as camp equipment.

just that much in return—and no more."

films and is on his way to stardom.

everybody, Jeff," she told him once.

again!"

leave it alone.

who bore an autograph book.

remember him saying no.

An only son, Jeff, alias Henry H. Mc-

emotion, not elocution."

Hollywood.

seemed

When the time came to film this scene,

Jeff Hunter

Continued

there is an emotional

to the script, he becomes

and runs amok until

Everyone present,

to

sense

good actor that way," he says,

light of my own experience."

Jeff, who got to Hollywood via New

started to learn

enjoying the world in which I live. I am very, very conscious of what I am experiencing; I'm not thinking myself—which is the occupational distraction of an actor. It's a pleasure to tear down the wall of self-consciousness that usually stands between myself and He has found the same sense of selfcommunion in undersea swimming, sometimes exploring a cave so deeply that he is guided back only by the shaft of sunlight from the entrance. Once, in the Mediterranean off the Isle of Gozo near Malta (where he went four years ago make Sailor of the King),

penetrated so far into an eerie underwater cavern that for a while he was lost and

barely got out before his oxygen ran out.

This episode is referred to by his friends

between Barbara and him and their 4year-old son, Chris. Neither will discuss it, but everyone knows that Jeff and Barbara's relationship has remained a friendly one. There has never been any bickering over the boy, whose legal custody is Barbara's, but who often stays in Jeff's apartment. The boy himself makes no distinction between his mother's home and his father's. If Jeff makes his way as surely

been rumor that it will be a remarriage to

Barbara Rush—although he is

as "the time Jeff didn't know which way was up." The way things have been turning out for Jeff lately, however, he hasn't had much time to run off by himself. Since a year ago last May, he has had top roles in seven important pictures. All this activity has added to his stature. But with success has come public interest in his private life which, of course, hasn't fared as happily as his professional one. The talk goes that another marriage is in the cards for Jeff, and there has even

personally as he has professionally, he may be able to give little Chris the complete home he needs. In meantime, Hollywood's new Hunter won't just live—he'll think about it. Jeff Hunter stars in 20th Century-

Fox's Jesse James.

other girls. There is a strong bond

Jeff Hunter dates Jeanne Baird and other beauties as well as ex-wife Barbara Rush.