

LOOKING AROUND



JEFFREY HUNTER

MY plans for a radio and stage career suddenly evolved into a film career as the result of being spotted by Paramount's talent scout, Milton Lewis, in a University Theatre production of "All My Sons". It was during a year of post graduate work at the University of California. I had had my undergraduate training at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. However, right after the war (I served in the United States Navy) radio shows began more and more to emanate from New York and Los Angeles instead of from Chicago. Consequently, I felt that I should be where the opportunity was most plentiful. This decision brought me to Hollywood. I enrolled at the university to further my education while learning the ways of the film and radio capital. After my work was noticed in that college production at U.C.L.A. I was fortunate enough to be given a screen test by Paramount. But, strange as it may seem, I wound up with a contract at 20th Century-Fox.

With that signing my aim was altered. I began thinking in terms of motion pictures rather than following my original plan for radio and the stage. My roots were planted. I began to think of a more settled domestic life. It was not long before Barbara Rush, a young actress I met in my first film test, and I decided to plot our fate together. We were married on December 1st at St. Christopher's Church in Boulder City, a romantic spot at the site of Boulder Dam in Nevada. That was three years ago. Since then Barbara

has been made a star. Recently we bought our first house and are about to face the problems of home-making. It will be a happy-task after three years of apartment living. Our son Christopher will have a garden to play in.

The demands of my career seemed to tie me to Hollywood, but suddenly I found my horizons stretching around the world. First was a trip to England to make *Singlehanded*. This gave me a chance to observe the technique of English film making, and also to enjoy the wonderful hospitality of those Britishers with whom my work brought me in contact. I shall never forget the great understanding and help given to me by our director, Roy Boulting. An innovation to the American way of picture making was the "tea break". It might be interesting to note that this relaxing custom is being introduced to Hollywood.

Although my schedule took me to the island of Malta, with stop-overs in Paris and Rome, there was no time for sightseeing, so I will be welcoming the opportunity of returning to Europe.

Another surprising interlude in my fairly short career was a sudden call to pack my bags for a tour to the Orient. Constance Smith, with whom I had made *Red Skies of Montana* and *Lure of the Wilderness*, and I were asked by 20th Century-Fox to take greetings from Hollywood to the people of Singapore, where the beautiful new Odeon Theatre was to open its doors for the first time. We also stopped in Honolulu, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Manila to say hello from Hollywood to the film fans. It is only recently that personal appearances have been extended virtually to girdling the globe. A film actor is now in line to get first hand knowledge of other countries and races.

The Orient was a revelation, indescribable in the beauty of its ceremonies and its magnificent hospitality, but heart breaking are the problems that beset them, seemingly caused



Early morning exercise is a regular practice in the Hunter household, but Jeff looks as though he's enjoying it more than his wife, vibrant young actress Barbara Rush.



Happy holiday makers Jeff and Barbara Hunter, Rock Hudson and Gregg Palmer have fun at Lake Arrowhead, California.

The Jeff Hunters chat with friends Mary Anders and Byron Palmer at a big Hollywood preview.





Jeff Hunter and Constance Smith put on traditional Malay costume for this impromptu dance in front of the Regent of Johore's beach cottage. Jeff and Connie were on a goodwill tour of the Far East.

by over population and political uncertainties. We found Singapore a picturesque, beautifully organised community, Westernised in most respects. The Odeon Theatre, owned by Loke Wan Thoe, is architecturally modern and well-equipped. In its audience are represented many of the various Asian groups, remarkably bilingual, astute, and alert to our American humour. Connie and I presented a short stage show comprised of dramatic readings, pantomime, and dances. We went out on the stage with a certain degree of apprehension. Our audience was 'way ahead of us—they understood us and were heart-warmingly receptive. We were entertained like visiting royalty. I tasted dishes I had only read about in Somerset Maugham's tales of faraway places. We saw flowers that rivalled those of Salvador Dali's wildest imaginings.

Our trip to the mainland of Malaya revealed how overpowering the jungle could be. We realised what a nightmarish experience it must have been for men in World War II who had to fight in those impenetrable mazes of tropical growth, with their deadly reptiles and miasma.

Although Singapore was our objective, the stopovers in Manila, Hong Kong, and Tokyo all had their own particular appeal. Hong Kong, unforgettable in its magnificent setting, was decked in Coronation regalia in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. In Manila we saw a new city, risen from the devastated areas that resulted

from the Japanese invasion. An energetic film industry and up-to-date theatres for showing both their own and imported pictures were marks of Manila's modern trend.

In Tokyo we were greeted by Japanese movie stars with their arms laden with flowers, in spite of a driving rainstorm. Then we were whisked off to see a puppet show whose technique has come down from medieval days. We saw theatre street and marvelled at the number of theatres side by side. We had a quick look at the Imperial Palace grounds, and, in between sightseeing, were interviewed by a group of very thorough Japanese reporters. The architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright's much discussed Imperial Hotel impressed us.

In Honolulu we were laden with leis, the floral wreaths which are placed around the necks of all visitors as they step ashore. We thrilled to the surf riding in native catamarans and marvelled at the finesse of the surfboard experts.

With the hope of returning one day to this island paradise, we were soon at work again in the studios. I started on my first Western, *Three Young Texans*.

In retrospect, I thought, how fortunate to be in an industry that is gradually bringing the world closer together! The interchange of American and British film stars, the growing practice of making films against authentic settings, and the policy of sending goodwill tours to the ends of the earth cannot help but improve international relations—that's something I'm all for!

JEFF HUNTER

