

"HOLY TELL-ALL, BATMAN!"

BOY WONDER

My Life in Tights

BURT WARD

Robin from the TV Series "Batman"

Edited by Stanley Ralph Ross

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Participating
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Underline
July 1992

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**No one under 18 should
be allowed to read this publication.**

**No one should turn these pages
who is unaccustomed to written
materials depicting sexuality, sexist
views and uncensored reality.**

WARNING! R-Rated!

**Don't read this book if you are
SEXUALLY CONSERVATIVE or
EROTICALLY DEPRIVED!**

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(Yvonne Craig)

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A Note From Batgirl

(Yvonne Craig)

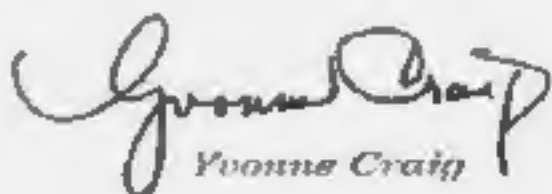


I just finished reading Burt's book and I must say it was a sizzling experience. I advise those who are planning to read it to invest in a pair of asbestos gloves for page-turning duties!

I never dreamed that the young man I worked with—the "Robin" who was always on time, knew his lines, bubbled over with enthusiasm and energy, and who, in his off time, retreated to his dressing room to play chess (knowing what I now know, is this a misspelling?) was leading such a busy if not exhausting other life. He definitely brings new meaning to the appellation **BOY WONDER!!!!**

It has always been a pleasure to see Burt periodically over the years since we did the show and to bear witness to his growth. I'm delighted each time to see that he's never lost that cleared-eyed enthusiasm and curiosity that was so much a part of him as well as his character of Robin; but now a layer of caring and maturity has been added. I'm glad to call him a friend.

But enough—I know you're anxious to get to the "good stuff" and I don't blame you. Enjoy!


Yvonne Craig

A Few Words from the #1 BatWriter



When I first met Burt Ward thirty years ago, he was an exuberant, upbeat and highly energetic teenager—skin stretched over enthusiasm. Nothing has changed. He still talks in a ninety mile-per-hour hurricane of words (with gusts up to 120), he still has the bouncy vitality of a twelve-year-old, and he remains one of my best friends from the BatDays.

I was spoiled by *Batman*. After years of writing ad copy and songs and comedy material, this was my first major-league success. I thought all of television would be as much joy as *Batman*. It wasn't. I went on to write the pilots for *Wonder Woman*, *That's My Mama*, *The Electric Company* and over 250 scripts for TV (*Columbo*, *All in the Family*, *The Bill Cosby Show*, to name a few) and countless movies, but nothing compared to the unsurpassed fun of working on *Batman*.

Burt's been working on this book for two years, and it's all his own story in his own words. Nobody told him what to write, and the result is pure (well, not *that* pure) and unexpurgated. He tells you the good, the bad, the ugly and the really ugly without holding anything back, and in more than graphic detail.

He presented me with the finished manuscript and asked me to edit it. I must have laughed aloud at least ten times while reading the first draft because he wrote it as he lived it, with joie de vivre and at warp speed. After all these years, I couldn't say no. And reading it also brought back such a warm rush of memories that I called John Astin (the second Riddler), Julie Newmar (the first Catwoman) and Yvonne Craig (the only Batgirl) just to reminisce.

January 1996 will mark thirty years since the show began on ABC. At this writing it is *still* playing all over America at least twice daily; it sired three successful but, to my mind, not very funny movies;

and it has become a billion-dollar merchandising bonanza. Would that we all had a piece of *that* action. Little did we know what we had wrought.

Read and enjoy this book, then watch a few episodes of the show and realize that the *Dynamic Duo* were even more dynamic offstage in ways that no fan could have imagined. It's a potpourri of peccadilloes, a melange of memories, a covey of comedic capers and a helluva good read.

Stanley Ralph Ross

Stanley Ralph Ross

I sat on the edge of the bed waiting. The bathroom door opened slowly and a ravishing young woman emerged. SHE WAS WEARING MY ROBIN COSTUME, EVERYTHING EXCEPT MY TRUNKS! I was stunned.

Her long brown hair flowed over the back of my cape. Her piercing blue eyes filled the openings of my mask. Her large breasts stretched my T-shirt and crimefighting vest to the limit. She put her hands on her hips and took a familiar stance. "All right, you fiend!" she purred.

I smiled and noticed she had several colorful scarves tucked into my utility belt. Even my BatBoots looked sensational on her. In fact, she looked better in the costume than I ever had.

She placed the scarves on my shoulders, teasingly brushed against me and stepped onto the bed. Entranced, I watched her lie down and stretch her arms and legs suggestively toward the bedposts.

"I'm yours, Boy Wonder. Take me!"

Looking down at her supple young figure, I drew a deep breath and wondered how I ever came to be in this position . . .



“Roll Camera” . . . “Speed” . . . “Action!”

Monday, Day One: The First Day of Shooting!

I had never been on a set where a television show or a movie was being made and didn't know what to expect. Today was my very first day on *Batman*, and all week long I had been worrying that I was going to mess up.

I hadn't slept the night before and was in a daze as I drove to the set at six that morning. I was concerned about everything, but particularly frightened that the director and producer might not be satisfied with my performance, since this was also my very first acting job. I feared they might replace me with another, more experienced actor.

Every potential problem attacked my psyche—forgetting my lines, having my teenage voice break from nervousness, making a fool of myself during the action scenes. I rehearsed possible solutions to each situation, and thought of all the things I could do if something bad actually happened. Out of more than 1,100 young actors who'd auditioned for the role of Robin, the Boy Wonder, I was the one who got it! Now I had to perform.

My stomach growled as I proceeded up the winding road into Bronson Canyon in the Hollywood Hills. I was in such a rush to make sure I was on time for my early morning set call that I hadn't eaten breakfast. Now, after arriving in the parking area where the dressing trailers and the outdoor makeup tables were set up, I was starving.

I expected to be noticed and welcomed when I arrived, but everyone was busy doing something else and no one looked in my direction. Wasn't anyone going to acknowledge my presence and herald the arrival of one of the show's stars? I had made an effort to show up extra early only to learn that no one seemed to know or care that I existed.

After about ten minutes, the first assistant director (A.D.) finally noticed me and came over. I was off on a wild three-year adventure.

"Good morning, Mr. Ward. I'm Sam Strangis."

"Hi, I'm Burt."

We shook hands.

"Let me show you to your dressing room," he said.

I started to tell him how excited I was to be working on the series, but he walked away so quickly that I never got the chance. I ran to catch up.

"Here you are," he said.

He pointed to a trailer.

"I'll send wardrobe over with your costume. And after you get dressed, I'll need to get you into makeup."

I stood outside a large tractor-trailer with six separate compartments. My name was written with a felt marker on a piece of packing tape and slapped up on the outside. This was my new home. Starting up the steep, narrow aluminum stairs that led to an equally narrow entrance, I noticed that the door opened out and wondered how I could open it without falling backwards. Of course, there's a trick to opening those doors and keeping your balance—you have to lean toward the door as you open it—but I didn't know it at the time. I managed to open it and get in but I made it look difficult. Anybody watching me struggle would have laughed.

Inside my dressing room I felt a blast of cold air from an air conditioner far too big for the tiny space. I could stretch my arms and touch both sides at the same time.

The door opened.

"Good morning."

An energetic man entered with two enormous armfuls of clothes. We had an instant traffic jam. I didn't know where he would go, or where I could go to get out of his way.

"Excuse me."

He brushed past and the costumes knocked me down onto a padded bench seat that ran the length of the room.

He pushed and pulled and managed to squeeze all of the clothes, which turned out to be six Robin costumes, inside the tiniest closet imaginable, no larger than the width and depth of a clothes hamper. It was so small I hadn't even noticed it when I first entered.

"Jan Kemp, wardrobe department," he announced in an English accent as he firmly grasped my hand in his.

"Roll Camera"... "Speed"... "Action!"

He nodded toward the closet.

"There's your mask, your T-shirt, your vest, your cape, your trunks, your tights and your boots. Let me know if you need any help. I'll be back."

He left so fast that I didn't have time to ask him where he would be if I *did* need him.

The pace and energy level these people seemed to keep was phenomenal. I breathed deeply, then listened to my stomach growl like the wolfman on a full-moon night.

I stripped to my briefs to don the costume. I put the T-shirt on first. That was easiest to figure out, the label was in the back. I flashed back to the day I had dressed for the screen test. But then there were two wardrobe guys all over me, and I was dressed faster than a quick change artist. Somehow I had forgotten about my discomfort with the crimefighting leotards. Or maybe the horror of them had been conveniently blocked from my memory.

Now it was time to take the bull by the tail and face the situation. The tights were next. I called them my "python pants" because they nearly strangled me to death. As I started to put them on, I discovered something had dramatically changed for the worse. These new tights were much, much heavier than the ones I had worn for the screen test. They were also extraordinarily rigid and had what looked like a thick, rough coating of beige paint, both inside and out, that cracked when I bent the fabric. They were strange and so unbearably uncomfortable that it took me almost fifteen minutes to put them on. Even when I had them on I felt little flakes of dried paint slide down my legs. Not only did they hug my skin tightly and itch unmercifully from my ankles to my inner thighs, but their limited elasticity meant that it took extra effort just to bend my legs and walk.

My crimefighting trunks and the specially designed rubber-soled BatBoots, with their long green ears, were quite comfortable. I just couldn't imagine walking straight up the outside of a ten-story building wearing them, as the script called for me to do. For that matter, I couldn't imagine how I was going to climb up the outside of a ten-story building in the first place, regardless of *what* I was wearing!

Jan arrived back at my dressing room to zip up my form-fitting vest and connect the four snaps on my cape to hold my collar and the

folds in place. I was constricted from so many directions that I could barely breathe, and eating anything more than a donut hole was out of the question.

With the Robin vest zippered up, I discovered another problem. The prickly hairs of the vest's double-thick red wool found their way through my green Boy Wonder T-shirt, and those itchy little mothers poked and jabbed my skin from time to time, causing my chest muscles to twitch. After the first few episodes I managed to get the vest lined in silk and the problem disappeared. But that was because we were a hit. They'll do anything to make an actor happy if the Nielsen ratings are high enough.

The almost knee-length double-thick bridal satin yellow cape draped heavily down behind me and exerted a continual backward pull on my neck. I compensated for the stress by constantly leaning forward and tilting my head slightly downward toward my chest. The cape's neck clasp rubbed against my throat, and an unsightly red rash developed after the first day of shooting.

Finally, the fabric hairs of my crimefighter's mask irritated my eyelashes and eyebrows. The elastic band in back pulled my hair so tightly to my head that my ears stuck out like Dumbo's. I was afraid to start my new career by complaining and causing trouble. On the other hand, I knew that at some point I had to say *something* because I couldn't think straight in that costume, much less act. Still, I was thrilled about working as an actor, so I avoided mentioning the problems. Jan later solved the cape's strain on my neck. He attached snaps on its underneath side to the outside of the vest at the shoulders and upper back.

Knock. Knock

"Yes?"

"Time for makeup, Burt," called the second A.D.

I opened the door and hobbled down the stairs and into the heat of a California Indian summer. I felt like someone stiff from riding a horse too long.

Wow, was it hot outside, and hotter in that costume! I inched my way to the makeup seat, sat down and was thrilled that I had made it that far. I kept telling myself that acting was the most glamorous occupation in the world. After all, for the price of fame, fortune and a bed

of roses you'd have to expect a few prickly thorns or itchy tights along the way, right?

The makeup guys were funny. I listened to them talk about all the people they had beautified, and some of the neurotic concerns of different performers. They had made up some real nightmares.

"Please make me look handsome!" I said.

The makeup man stopped, looked at the other artist, then turned back to me.

"Look, I'm a makeup artist, not a magician!"

Dead silence as they waited for me to respond. I didn't know what to say.

They started laughing, and my makeup man said he was just kidding. I forced a laugh too. Then he added:

"You're going to look great."

I felt better.

"Ready for you, Burt."

Sam Strangis arrived to usher me to the set. Months down the line, whenever he came on the set, someone always sang "Strangis in the Night."

We were working high up in the dry hills under the famous Hollywood sign. The temperature was already in the nineties at 9:15 a.m. It was less than 150 feet to the cameras, lights and crew, but despite the short distance, I began oozing perspiration between my legs and my tights.

Later I found out from Jan, whom I christened "the Marquis de Sade of the 20th Century Fox wardrobe department," that I was wearing the heaviest dancer's tights made by Danskin. Jan was most particular and decided he liked a lighter shade of beige. He took it upon himself to dye the already confining fabric a slightly different tint, thus encapsulating each of the woven threads with a thick, non-hypoallergenic chemical.

Whatever air might otherwise have gotten in through the fabric was now completely shut out. As I walked up a steep dirt incline toward the cameras, I felt painful tugs. The elastic, synthetically dyed material grudgingly expanded and contracted with every step so the hairs on my inner thighs and other delicate areas were torturously pinched and pulled with no relief.

On the set, an army of people worked on lights, cameras, cables, generators, props and set decoration. Strangis introduced me to director Robert Butler. He was tall, lanky and brassy and reminded me of Ichabod Crane in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

"Nice to meet you, sir," I said.

"Call me Bob," was his reply.

Bob explained the shot in simple terms. Too simple.

"You and Batman drive out of the BatCave towards the camera and veer off to your left. A quick shot. Any questions?"

I shook my head.

"Okay," he continued. "We'll be ready for you in a few minutes."

That was fast, I mused to myself as I wandered around, not knowing where to go or what to do until they were ready to shoot. I suppose I expected more discussion and maybe his ideas on how I should approach playing the character of the Boy Wonder. This would be my first lesson as an actor in television production. Nobody cares about anything in your portrayal of a character other than what you will be doing in the specific shot you are about to film.

"He's not the real Batman!" I thought to myself as I struggled to focus my tired eyes. "What is he doing in Batman's costume?"

I watched this newcomer in BatDrag get into a unique black convertible parked on a fire trail near the opening of the caves in Bronson Canyon, a favorite movie filming spot of mountainous terrain overlooking the famous city of Hollywood.

"What an unusual car!" I thought.

It was the Batmobile.

"Burt Ward, Burt Ward!"

The second A.D. was shouting my name, even though he stood less than two feet away. I couldn't believe he was yelling but that's what they do on a set. They yell all the time, night and day. They scream your name even if you're sitting next to them, obviously not for your benefit, but so everyone else knows the actors are coming on the set and the crew should finish their coffee and cigarettes.

He asked me to get into the Batmobile so we could film the now famous high-speed exit from the BatCave to the mountain road that leads to Gotham City. As we walked toward the Batmobile, I asked about the costumed impostor.

"Who is that guy?"

"Oh, he's Batman's stunt double, Hubie Kerns."

I never expected to hear that. Then again, I never expected to work with a stunt man. I had never even met one.

I climbed into the Batmobile.

"Hi, I'm Burt Ward."

Slowly the masked figure turned his face to me and spoke.

"Hubie Kerns."

Then this cowed creature turned his head back toward the BatWindshield. I shivered. Quite a charming guy.

Actually, Hubie was a fantastic guy, as I later found out. But stunt people get very quiet before a shot and concentrate intensely on what they are about to do.

Regardless of how many precautions stunt doubles take, the work is terribly dangerous, and this upcoming shot was no exception. Unfortunately, my attention was on my empty stomach, not on the nightmare about to happen.

Since this was to be a quick shot, I wondered why they had brought in a big-time, hired-gun stunt man to drive the Batmobile in Batman's costume. Why didn't they just have Adam West, who was certainly of legal age and had a driver's license, drive the Batmobile and save the studio the extra bucks?

At this point I became totally preoccupied with arranging my private parts in my underwear. Soon after taking my seat in the Batmobile, I discovered I'd have to find a special way to sit to keep my tights from pinching and pulling delicate areas. **HOLY TORTURE CHAMBER!**

"Take the car into first position!" barked Sam.

As we pulled away, I laughed to myself that his words sounded like instructions from a ballet coach to her students.

I stopped enjoying my little moment when we pulled into the dark Bronson Canyon cave. It was cold and damp, the only light came from the cave's opening. I could see the production crew in the distance, adjusting lights, cameras and cables.

As we waited, I attempted to start a conversation.

"How do you like being a stunt man?" I asked.

"I like it," was the emotionless reply.

"Is it ever dangerous?" I queried naively.

There was a long pause as he probably pondered my stupidity

"Almost always is, if you do it right," he answered.

"I see. Hrrmm Do you get hurt a lot?"

What he said startled me

"The more you get hurt, the more money you make. Even though it can put you out of commission for a while, when you work again, you command a higher price per stunt."

"Ready," announced the second A.D.

"Close up the tunnel!"

Two grips, the pumped-muscle types who do all the lifting, moved a giant fake rock to cover the opening of the tunnel. Suddenly everything was totally black.

The walkie-talkie lying next to Hubie cracked.

"Roll sound!"

"Hold on tight!" Hubie said. "We'll be accelerating fast as we approach the camera. On our mark, at seventeen feet in front of the crew, we make a sharp left turn, go into a skid, lock the brakes and slide right up to the camera at about fifty-five miles per hour. Then I'll gun it past them!"

I suddenly realized how real the danger was. What if this macho honcho missed that seventeen-foot mark and we rammed into a wall of camera and light equipment? What if Mario Andretti lost his touch while making that hairpin turn and we crashed into a tree? What if we skidded out of control and took out a couple of our production crew members as well as ourselves? I made a mental note to call my life insurance agent.

As this stunt cowboy began revving up the Batmobile's thundering 500-horsepower engine in preparation for a screaming start, I panicked. My palms gushed sweat but the rest of me began to feel numb. I tried to think logically. Suddenly I had a disturbing realization.

"Hey, wait a minute! What am I doing in this car? If Batman has a stunt man, why don't I have one? And if I *do* have one then where the hell is he?"

Had the director made a mistake using me for what appeared to be a trained stunt man's job? Hey, I was just a college kid struggling to survive my first day as a TV actor!

My mind raced. Was it too late to jump out and let somebody else

ride with this maniac who hoped that a few more broken bones would raise his daily stunt rate? I had forgotten to ask any of the right questions earlier, when I had the chance. I then noticed that I didn't even have a seat belt.

"Action!"

The door to the cave's tunnel blew open and the Batmobile rushed toward the opening, picking up incredible speed.

I gripped the BatWindshield with all my strength and couldn't believe what was happening. This tense stunt man had put the pedal to the metal and showed no signs of slowing down as he sped directly toward the camera. In fact, the speed of the Batmobile kept increasing.

The scenery was a blur. We were barreling directly toward a huge, immensely heavy 35mm BNC film camera, securely locked on a solid steel dolly and surrounded by giant 10K arc lights on either side. Imagine sitting in a Go-Kart and rushing headlong into a waiting Sherman Tank, and you'll have some sense of how I felt.

I was riding with a kamikaze pilot who talked like Gary Cooper and who had no intention whatsoever of slowing down, even when he reached the camera and lighting equipment. This guy was going to prove that no one in his right mind would do what he was doing and make a fortune for himself when we both got out of the hospital. If we lived that long!

As we neared collision impact, I was positive I was going to be killed. Hubie was going to swerve sharply to his left, which would expose *my* side of the car to the steel wall of film equipment.

Hubie whipped the wheel a split second before crashing into the camera. We skidded up to the crew and equipment. Hubie stomped on the accelerator but it was too late. My door flew wide open and smashed into the camera dolly.

HOLY UNINTENDED WIPEOUT! The camera and the dolly rolled over and the cameraman and his assistant were thrown to the ground. I lost my grip on the windshield and was hurled toward my open door.

When I think now about the speed we were traveling, there is no question in my mind that I could easily have been killed—"or worse!" (the familiar line that Batman used to say to me and to Commissioner Gordon).

Instinctively I swung my left arm behind me and, with amazing

luck, managed to wrap my little finger around the metal shaft of the floor-mounted gearshift. I held on with all my strength. My head and right shoulder were already out the door when I felt the pinkie on my left hand dislocate.

Nevertheless, I managed to stay inside the Batmobile.

Hubie brought the car to a screeching stop. I let go of the gearshift and my left hand was throbbing in pain.

I needed a doctor, but they hadn't gotten the shot the way the director wanted it, which, of course, meant we had to do it all over again, right away before I could be taken for medical attention.

This time, before I climbed into the Batmobile, I asked the second A.D. why I didn't have a stunt man.

"Oh, you do," he replied. "He's over there drinking coffee with Adam West."

"Why aren't you using *him* instead of *me*?"

"Because the camera sees you in a close shot as you go by and your mask is small, unlike Batman's, so you are easily recognizable."

That became standard operating procedure for all future questions as to why I was always the one exposed to danger while my stunt double sat comfortably away at a distance, sipping coffee. After I'd been maimed a dozen or more times, the suits in the front office finally decided that something had to be done, and that a more formal stunt policy needed to be issued.

I have recorded here, for your benefit and for posterity, the Batman producers' formal policy on when I should or should not have to do my own stunts.

"If there is ever anything really dangerous, where the potential for harm is significant or even life-threatening, always use Burt!"

I finally figured out why. I was on a half-hour episodic rate contract at Screen Actors Guild minimum scale, which worked out to be \$350 per week. And that was gross earnings before a deduction for taxes, medical insurance and agents' fees. It didn't cost the producers a dime more to use me to do my own stunts (except the hospital bills), but they paid double or triple that amount every time a stunt man stood in for me, because stunt doubles are paid on a per-stunt basis.

And now, as I was being driven from the set on the first of my many trips to the emergency room, I took the opportunity to deliver a few

choice four- and five-letter words to the stunt driver, none of which would ever have been said by my wonderfully antiseptic Boy Wonder character.

What a lousy start. My first day in show business was over, and I was in a lot of pain. Worse yet, I had missed my breakfast *and* the catered lunch!

Tuesday, Day Two

In my tiny, five-by-six location dressing room, in a rare moment of peace and tranquility I was carefully pulling up my flesh-colored tights, trying to avoid bumping my sore left pookie, when I heard the familiar fist-pounding on my door and the foghorn voice of Sam Strangis

"Burt, we need you on the set in five minutes. And don't forget, you're Jill St. John today!"

HOLY FEMALE IMPERSONATOR! So you don't get the wrong impression about me or Jill St. John, switching identities was part of the show's story line. Unfortunately, even the magic of Hollywood couldn't allow us to pull off a totally believable role reversal, so the producers decided I should play Jill St. John's character, Molly, during the sequence when she was supposed to look like me, and that my voice would be overdubbed by Jill. Sounds complicated, but it's actually easier to do than explain.

In the script, at the Riddler's secret hideout, Jill, as Molly, dresses up to impersonate me. When she starts to put on a masked replica of my face, we stop filming so I can replace her in the scene. That's when I end up impersonating her and walking like a woman.

After some campy dialogue, I smile, turn and strut away. I've never been very good at swaying my hips when I walk, probably because I don't normally do it! I tried my best to imitate Jill's walk but didn't think that I moved smoothly enough, and later, when I saw the show, I was surprised how realistic it looked.

I talked with Jill after lunch and was in awe. It seemed like a fantasy to speak with this incredibly beautiful and intelligent star and as I listened to her, my eyes kept looking and looking and looking. She was intoxicating. I had never met anyone like her before and was dumbfounded.

This was not erotic desire or adult puppy love. I was happily married and had no intention of cheating on my wife. In fact, during the first season, I almost got fired for refusing to kiss Donna Loren ("Susie") on the cheek in the "Joker Goes to School" episode. I was conservative, and my wife and I thought even an innocent onscreen kiss would mean I was being unfaithful.

Jill had amazing presence. She was more than beautiful. She was glamorous, electric, breathtaking. I had seen many beautiful women before but they didn't have that aura of knowledge and grandeur and worldly experience. Jill had so much of everything that I couldn't imagine any man emotionally strong enough, wise enough and secure enough to handle her.

I certainly couldn't imagine her being interested in any man for very long. She knew more about everything than I knew about anything. How could anybody keep up with her? (She is currently married to Robert Wagner and they couldn't be happier so there's my answer.)

I'd never met a person so composed, articulate, magnetic and self-assured. And I knew it was not an act. She was really just that way.

A knock.

"Burt, this is Sam. We need you on the set right now for rehearsal."

I picked up my green gauntlet BatGloves, opened the honey-wagon door and started putting them on as I walked down the steep steps, still dazzled with thoughts of Jill.

I didn't realize that my mask had numerous limitations and if I didn't stay acutely aware of them, I could get into trouble. It rigidly restricted my peripheral vision as well as my horizontal and vertical vision.

I missed the second step and fell on my face. I was unhurt except for a mouthful of dust and a bruised ego.

"Is that the kind of coordination they teach when you study karate?" asked a wisecracking grip. He was referring to my martial arts training, which obviously had not included specific instructions on how to walk down steep stairs while wearing a long cape and raccoon mask. For my screen test I'd demonstrated some karate, breaking a one-inch board with my hand and doing some fighting and running falls.

"Roll Camera"... "Speed"... "Action!"

I arrived at the set and was besieged by wardrobe and makeup. One brushed the dust off my costume and the other plastered on a second layer of makeup to cover up the dust.

In a clearing ahead I saw an old junker of a car on its side, the dummy version of the Riddler's black Rolls-Royce. Smoke was coming out its belly, and a swarm of special-effects jocks were rigging it with other incendiary devices.

Earlier in the episode, the Riddler kidnapped Robin for a cunning purpose. He made a life mask of my face in order to create an exact replica of me that his moll, appropriately named Molly, could wear in this scene to trick Batman into taking her back to the BatCave with the goal of assassinating him. Tough lady.

Having a life mask made is a hideous three-hour process. I know this because I had it done to me the week before the show began. It was a cool idea, making an exact likeness of someone, but if the subject isn't dead before this experience (which was the intention when the process was invented), then he likely *could* be after it!

Three inches of real plaster was applied to my face and neck and then allowed to harden for almost an hour. Plaster completely sealed my mouth, and straws were put into my nostrils so I could breathe. A smothering experience, not one I would recommend for the faint of heart or anyone who tends to panic in claustrophobic situations. One hour later, the hardened plaster was removed, creating a mold into which flesh-colored liquid adhesive was poured. In another hour or so, the crew had a near-perfect replica of my face.

The Riddler's plan included leading Batman on a wild goose chase after the Robin impersonator (Molly). The Riddler and Molly (me impersonating Jill St. John) race away from Batman, taking the black Rolls-Royce getaway car around numerous tight corners on narrow mountain roads.

The Riddler then intentionally crashes and overturns his Rolls-Royce, and Batman, thinking he is saving Robin, rescues Molly. In the scene we are about to film, the Riddler and Molly escape from the Riddler's overturned car just before it catches fire and Batman arrives on the scene.

Bob Butler introduced me to Frank Gorshin and explained what he wanted us to do.

"Okay, you guys are going to be in the car and it's smoking. On Action, Frank, you'll come up and out through the driver's window first, and remove your crash helmet. Robin (for some reason throughout the entire show Bob only called me Robin, never Burt), you'll come out and do the same. Then both of you throw your crash helmets behind the car so Batman won't know that you've planned this charade."

Bob continued. "I want you to jump to the ground quickly because the car will catch on fire. Be sure you clear well away—everything is going up in flames. Special effects says there is no reason to worry about the car exploding while you're still in it, but between you and me, I'd get out of there fast. Oh, by the way, we don't have time to re-rig the shot, so you'll have to get it right the first time. Any questions?"

Frank and I looked at each other uneasily. Neither of us liked the sound of what we were to do. And when somebody says I have nothing to worry about, that's when I start worrying. Butler was intent on getting a great-looking shot even though he felt it was risky to his actors.

"Okay, let's rehearse it!" said Bob. "Positions, everyone!"

"QUIET ON THE SET!" yelled Sam at the top of his considerable lungs.

I was standing next to him and, as it had the day before, his bellying voice completely disoriented my equilibrium and stung my ears. I vowed to never again stand so close to an assistant director before a shot.

With the help of the production crew's special-effects guys, Frank and I began our uncomfortable journey into the smoking car. I had the "honor" of going first. We climbed a ladder, transferred ourselves onto the car, then eased down inside through the driver's window while dressed in full villain and superhero regalia. Once Frank got in, I was in total darkness.

We waited in the hot, cramped interior of the car while the director chatted with the director of photography (the head cameraman) and the head gaffer (in charge of lighting) for what seemed like an eternity. Today was my introduction to the most famous of all Hollywood filmmaking truisms, "Hurry up and wait!"

I felt more than a little claustrophobic in the dark car, so I focused on trying to remain calm. I took slow, long breaths. Frank must have

had his own problems with those confining quarters. He was unusually quiet, with no jokes—which I came to realize was a rarity for him.

Finally the second A. D. shouted.

"Settle down, everybody. This is a rehearsal!"

"Okay, action!"

Frank was as anxious to get out of that car as I was. He stumbled for his footing and accidentally stepped on my head. His hard-soled green Riddler shoe crushed my sprayed Boy Wonder hairdo and buckled my neck.

I now had the sensation of daylight somewhere above me as Frank crawled through the car window.

I followed and scrambled quickly onto the top of the car. A cool breeze blew across my face. I took a deep breath of fresh air and felt better.

"Okay, let's do it for real," quipped the director.

The special-effects guys armed the incendiary devices. With a sinking feeling, I watched them set the triggers for the hot-flash charges. Yesterday's disaster had been no fluke. That's when my idea of the glamour of show business flew out the window for good, and the reality of danger assaulted me.

Back into the belly of the car we went. We waited and worried. At last the camera rolled, and Butler called "Action."

Frank vaulted out of the car with me close behind. In seconds we were on the roof and preparing to jump.

We discarded our crash helmets so Batman wouldn't see them when he arrived. Then Frank jumped to the ground, and I moved to the edge to get a better footing.

I squatted to launch myself and was distracted by the sound of combustion, like the popping of someone lighting a gas stove, only magnified many times. Suddenly I felt the back of my neck burn with an intense heat. Though I hadn't left my perch, I was thrown hard to the ground and was soon surrounded by a group of people. I heard somebody call for ice.

Drat! Not again! Someone told me to lie there and remain calm until help arrived. Another voice asked if I was all right. My face was toward the ground and I couldn't see who was talking. I knew I was hurt but I didn't know how badly.

I felt ice on the back of my neck. It stung from being so cold but it also felt good. I forced myself to sit up. Someone removed my cape and, as it came off, I could see patches of smoldering ash rising from its shoulders and collar. That miserably hot double-thick bridal satin had saved me from a much worse injury.

I asked for a mirror to assess the damage. My hair was singed, and there was an ugly pinkish blister across the entire back of my neck.

Butler asked how I was.

"I think I'm okay, but I feel like I just got the worst sunburn of my life!"

The oil-meets-gas combination of magnesium flash powder and plastic explosives had almost turned me into an instant Chinese stir-fry. I tried to be professionally cool and asked if the shot turned out okay.

"No, but we've got to get you to a doctor!"

I stood up.

"Okay, but I think I can handle the pain for at least one more take."

Even though we all knew I needed medical attention, leaving the set now would seriously affect the day's schedule and might require another full day of shooting with an entire crew of about a hundred union professionals, plus pyrotechnic specialists, fire department personnel, police officers, city permits and crane rentals, among other things. That could easily add another hundred thousand dollars or more to the show's already burgeoning budget.

Bob accepted my offer with a sigh of relief and an acknowledgment that he appreciated my personal sacrifice for the sake of the show.

The car was re-rigged and, more than an hour later, we did get the shot exactly as the director wanted it. Then I was off on my way to the hospital for the second straight day I would go to the emergency room dozens of times over the next 119 episodes. Glamorous, yeah.

Wednesday. Day Three

By now I figured the law of averages was on my side. Two days of near disaster could not be followed by more pain and suffering.

"Comes a new day over Gotham City."

These were the comic-style words our narrator/executive producer, William Dozier, said at the beginning of many of our shows.

I bounced out of my dressing room early and greeted everyone beaming and in wonderful spirits. I knew the odds *had* to be in my favor. Adam was genuinely concerned about my first two days of horror. He said every actor experiences accidents sooner or later, mine had just come sooner. He assured me that everything would be fine from now on and told me not to worry, just to have fun. I was the eternal optimist and I agreed with him. Even the production office suits and the entrenched studio techies offered me numerous unsolicited assurances that the events of the previous two days were so extraordinary that I could be guaranteed from now on I would enjoy "everyday acting without incident or accident."

The morning's filming focused on the part of the story where the Riddler abducts me to his secret hideout and straps me to a surgical table. In the first scene I just lay there, supposedly unconscious, because the Riddler had given me a shot of knockout gas before preparing to make the life mask.

In that first show's cliffhanger, Frank Gorshin stood over me toying with a sharp scalpel, leading viewers to believe the worst—that Robin's face was about to be mangled or perhaps, he was to undergo another circumcision. Little did the TV audience or even the crew know how very close the former came to being the truth! I should have applied for hazard pay, or worn the life mask that the Riddler had made earlier.

The shooting of the initial scenes went smoothly. Still strapped to the operating table, I woke up and had some dialogue with the Riddler, who tricked me into calling Batman for help. When I tried to warn Batman that a trap was being set, the Riddler gave me another shot of knockout gas and I fell back unconscious.

Mid-morning the crew began setting up the big special effects scene, in which Batman blows a hole through the subway wall and bursts into the Riddler's hideout to rescue Robin. In this shot, I am still unconscious... flat on my back... legs spread apart... and securely strapped down. (I couldn't have known that as the show took off I would be making love to some women tied in that exact position.)

Special effects finished rigging a breakaway wall for Batman to blow through. To simulate an explosion, they would use magnesium flash powder, which burns extremely fast, hot and bright.

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

I called one of the pyrotechnic men to ask about the upcoming blast. How big would it be? In what direction would it go? Was I in any danger? He laughed when he saw I was worried. I wasn't amused.

I felt uncomfortable that he refused to answer my questions. What disturbed me the most was that, from my position on the table, I could smell liquor on his breath. Even with as little experience as I had, I knew this guy shouldn't have been drinking on the job.

Now I really wanted some answers, but strapped to that table I couldn't get the attention of the director or his assistants. I was helpless, tied down, with no way to free myself if something dangerous *did* happen. I thought about what I should do. I didn't want to create a major scene in front of our crew by screaming. Before I could find a solution, it was too late.

"Roll sound!"

"We're rolling!" answered the sound mixer, who paused briefly and continued, "Sound ready."

"Roll camera!"

"Camera rolling!" barked the camera operator. "Speed."

There was a pause, and then Butler called, "Action!"

The Riddler started laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha! . . . Ho, ho, ho! . . . HEY, HEY, HEY!"

The Riddler's vocal energy grew in a crescendo.

BOOM!

The blast sounded like a dozen Molotov cocktails exploding simultaneously. My ears were instantly stopped up. Dust was everywhere. Even so, the breakaway wall hadn't moved an inch.

"Holy smoke!" I exclaimed.

Adam was offstage and unable to enter because the wall hadn't blown open. He said his line of dialogue from behind the wall.

"Surrender, you rat!"

"Cut!" yelled the director.

The whole crew started laughing. Adam, always quick on his feet, had turned embarrassment into humor by speaking his line even though he couldn't get in front of the camera.

"What in hell happened to the breakaway wall?" Butler yelled.

The set would have to be cleaned and the entire shot re-staged; all this would take time he didn't have. He was already way behind

"Roll Camera"... "Speed"... "Action!"

schedule, and to deliver a television pilot late was death for a director. The big, hot lights were shut down, and the property and scenery men scrambled to the back of the wall to see why it hadn't blown.

Five minutes passed and I was still tied there, not going anywhere.

I heard a lot of hubbub, and then the director instructed someone to untie me. I got up, still a little shaken from the blast, and walked to Bob.

"What happened?"

"We've got a serious problem. The construction crew failed to build a breakaway set. And it'll take a half-day to remove all the two-by-four studs and replace them with breakaways."

"Oh, wow," I said. "What are we going to do?"

"I don't know yet. Special effects is working on it."

I removed my mask, cape and vest, and walked over to Adam to find out his thoughts. We'd become very friendly since our original screen test together. He was a seasoned show biz survivor who knew the ropes. He didn't seem concerned.

"Let them worry about it, Burt," he said. "It's not our problem."

I've always been a conflicting combination of optimist and worrier. I walked back to my dressing room muttering to myself.

"Geez, if this screws up our schedule and we go over budget, the producers might pull the plug on the entire show and it'll never even get on television!" "Nah, that won't happen." "Then again, no one can predict the future." "No way, everything is going to be fine!" My birth sign is Cancer (the crab) and my rising sign is Gemini (the twins) which is why I can move in opposite directions simultaneously. I can have entire conversations with myself and debate issues vigorously from both sides.

Twenty-five minutes later, the second A.D. knocked on my door.

"Take lunch, Burt, one hour."

Still in tights and T-shirt, I walked to the commissary, which dictionaries define as a store for military personnel. At a movie or television studio, the commissary is where you go to eat breakfast, lunch or dinner. And it's fun to see cowboys and Indians dining together, cops and robbers, et al.

I wanted some solitude, so I took my food outside and headed to

my dressing room. I was forty minutes into my lunch break when the second A.D. knocked.

"Can we get you into makeup a little early, Burt? We're running way behind schedule."

"Sure. Did they solve the breakaway set problem?"

"I don't know how, but they did," came the A.D.'s reply.

He walked toward the set at a fast pace and indicated I should do the same.

There was more than the usual commotion, so I asked around and got the news.

"They're not going to tear out the walls and put in breakaways," someone told me. "They're using **THREE STICKS OF DYNAMITE** to blow the set apart!"

HOLY EXPEDIENCY! I wondered where the fire marshal was. Every movie and television show in Los Angeles is required by law to have a fire marshal on the premises to supervise any special effects that could result in fire. Since real dynamite was being used, and assuming a license from the city to use it had been issued, there should have been a fire truck there.

I also wondered where the paramedics were and why there was no ambulance nearby. Minor special effects don't require standby emergency care, but what was about to happen was not minor by anyone's definition.

I approached the special-effects men and the pyrotechnic specialist. Regardless of the possibility of losing face—figuratively speaking, or maybe literally if something went wrong—I insisted on answers before I would agree to expose myself to yet another dangerous situation, especially one rigged by guys I thought were boozing on the job.

They swore they were using only "half height" or "short" sticks of dynamite, not full-size sticks, so they were excused from the extra-care responsibilities and licensing restrictions of using standard dynamite. (Looking back on it now, I think they were giving me baloney to avoid the likelihood of my blowing the whistle.) This scene was going to be shot with or without my protestations, even if it blew the entire sound stage up or down.

When a scene is to be filmed that may violate safety codes, the crew members actually hurry to get the shot going before someone

pulls the plug. Rushing like this does get the shot filmed, but at the cost of substantially magnifying the already existing danger.

Another commonplace occurrence during a risky shoot is that the actors become unusually quiet just before the action. Adam, Frank and I were silent before the shot, although we were standing (in my case lying) in close proximity to each other for nearly ten minutes before the cameras started rolling.

"Clear the set and clear the stage! No one, and I mean NO ONE, should be in this building unless they have to be!" barked Strangis.

No press, no visitors, no family and no friends were allowed. No front office personnel, no network execs, no agents, no actors except those in the shot (the Riddler's henchmen), no atmosphere (extras), no set decorators, no transportation drivers, no Kraft service (food and snack servers). Even the camera and lighting crews operated with skeleton staffs.

Sam continued barking like a drill sergeant.

"Close 'em up!"

Crew members at every entrance began closing the huge, one-and-a-half-foot-thick, soundproofed doors.

"Red light!"

Bright red lights, warning of filming in progress, flashed rapidly inside and outside every door and high up, just under the catwalks, on the four inner walls of the sound stage.

"Give me a bell!"

The loud, resonant warning bell rang for a full ten seconds.

There was no turning back. This incredibly dangerous scene was happening now!

"Special effects, get your fire extinguishers ready! Roll sound."

"Sound!" answered the sound mixer.

"Roll cameras."

"First camera speed," answered a camera operator.

"Second camera speed," answered the other camera operator.

"Everybody settle!" yelled Sam.

A very long pause.

"Action!" called Butler.

My dialogue was mechanical. While the words were spoken with the right intonation and timing, and were clearly in sync with Gorshin's

dialogue, my thoughts weren't all there on that sound stage, half of me was in deep space, thinking defensively about the powerful mistake that might happen. I was also thinking seriously about disability insurance.

BOOM!

The explosion was far worse than I had imagined. I couldn't believe that something as small as those three half-size sticks of dynamite could wreak such devastating havoc. They blew a ten-foot gaping hole through a solid wall, slingng two-by-fours and pieces of plywood in all directions. The whole building shook. The explosion blew plasterboard, studs and crossbeams into pieces small enough to fuel a backyard barbecue. Sections of two-by-fours fell on my legs, stomach and face. I had no way to protect myself and no way to avoid getting hit. I couldn't even use my hands to cover my face, because my arms, chest and legs were strapped to the table. Something long and narrow but very hard, landed on the bridge of my nose. My eyes filled with tears from the pain. Smoke and dust were everywhere.

Finally someone was untying me and pulling me off the table and onto the floor. I didn't want to lie down because putting my head back substantially increased the pressure and pain on my face and forehead.

I remember being carried to my dressing room. I didn't know what had happened to Adam and Frank and was in no condition to find out.

One of the people carrying me, noting that I had now been hurt for the third day in a row, said half-kiddingly, half-sincerely to me:

"Hey, Burt, don't sweat it. That's why you get paid the big bucks, right?"

The \$350 per week I was making was hardly "big bucks." But I was thrilled to be making anything for my very first acting job. Appreciate the irony of the suggestion that I was making beaucoup dollars, and was thus more than compensated for the suffering I was undergoing! (I later found out I was the lowest-paid person on the entire crew. Everyone else, and I mean EVERYONE ELSE ON THE SET had either big salaries or much bigger union minimum wages than the Screen Actors Guild minimum wage I received.)

In my dressing room I removed my mask, cape, vest and utility belt, slumped in a chair and looked in a mirror to assess the damage. I

had a pink, baseball-sized blotch on my forehead where a two-by-four had landed, and I could feel it swelling. There was also a deep cut across the bridge of my nose. I held tissues against the wound until the blood coagulated.

My stomach was okay. I pulled down my tights and both my shins were already black and blue. At least the tights would cover that up.

I was shaken and hurt and wanted medical attention for my nose and forehead. This was the third day in a row that I would be going to the hospital. Everyone knew I was genuinely hurt, but I was afraid that another hospital visit would start people saying I was accident prone, which I'm not. (Prior to working in the *Batman* series, I had only been to an emergency room once, and in the twenty-seven years since *Batman* ended I have only been back once, in March 1995, when one of my horses stepped on my toe and broke it.)

I rested awhile then put a cold, wet towel on the bridge of my nose—the hell with my makeup!

Sam knocked and asked if I wanted to see a doctor. I knew I was needed for close-ups and other additional filming. I told him no, that I was bruised and shaken but okay. I could see relief bathe his face.

"Did Adam and Frank get hurt?" I asked.

"Miraculously, no," he answered.

I felt awful and my nose was throbbing, so I went to the closest men's room with cold water in an adjacent empty sound stage, wet some paper towels, and put them on my nose and forehead. The only place to relax and sit down was on a toilet seat. I'll never forget what I saw when I closed the stall's metal door. Scratched on it was show biz graffiti, crude inscriptions perhaps a cut above regular graffiti in their composition, style and diction. Prophetic words were written thereupon:

"Life is like a shit sandwich. The more bread you have, the less shit you taste."

I stayed at the studio all afternoon. The makeup man managed to cover the bruise on my forehead with colors from his paint palette. My mask covered my nose, and the tights covered my shins so I didn't look as bad as I felt. I shot my close-up reaction to the explosion and managed to shoot the next scene. By the end of the day my entire face was swollen.

At 6:30 p.m. I asked for help and a driver carted me back to the emergency room at the nearby hospital. My forehead was just bruised, but my nose had to be sutured and had a hairline fracture. The doctor gave me an ice pack and some pain pills, and seemed interested in going out of her way to give me other tender loving care. I was surprised and thanked her for the opportunity, but explained that I was married.

Thursday, Day Four

Today we planned to shoot all the exterior footage of Gotham City's streets and buildings, used many times through the series as stock shots, and to follow with an evening of action at Gotham's super-in-discotheque, What a Way to GO-GO. We were filming outside on the 20th Century Fox studio lot on Pico Boulevard in West Los Angeles.

The afternoon passed quickly, and production was blessedly uneventful. At dusk it was time for the big action scene. The Riddler was to shoot me with a tranquilizer dart, try to steal the Batmobile, and kidnap me (I was kidnapped regularly on the show.)

Well, here we were again in another "take your chances with your life" scene with an automobile. And, of course, not just any automobile, but the Batmobile. I knew something had to go wrong.

On the surface it didn't sound difficult, but the plan was that when the Riddler tries to steal the Batmobile, he accidentally sets off the Batmobile's anti-theft device, which triggers an alarm system and a spectacular display of fireworks.

These fireworks were not "sparklers," nor toys sold by street vendors for the Fourth of July. These were heavy-duty incendiary devices. The three metal cylinders holding the fireworks on the trunk of the car sat a scant eighteen inches behind my seat.

The scene took more than two dozen crew members five hours to rig. It was to be what we call a one-shot deal. No second take. All dialogue was eliminated to reduce the likelihood of an actor flubbing lines. Whatever we got, we would use.

Five cameras and five complete camera crews would film the fireworks simultaneously from different angles. One camera was even

mounted on a motorized crane truck. Imagine the amount of electrical power necessary, the number of lights (including huge 10,000-watt arc lamps), and all the time, effort and manpower involved in lighting an entire street for a gigantic one-take, five-camera shot. Imagine the pressure on the crew to get great footage from every camera without any camera accidentally photographing any of the other cameras. Imagine how much this night was costing: \$250,000 in 1966 dollars!

The studio went first class all the way and brought in City of Los Angeles fire trucks, paramedics and police. I heard that even the nearby Santa Monica airport had been forewarned about the fireworks and the danger to low-flying aircraft.

The Riddler's scene, in which he approaches the Batmobile after I've been zapped unconscious with a tranquilizer dart, was filmed smoothly and quickly. "Quickly," on an exterior movie set this size, means twenty minutes of lighting, five minutes of rehearsal, ten more minutes of last-minute lighting and prop adjustments, and five minutes to film the shot, for a total of forty minutes!

The medium shot on the Riddler inside the Batmobile, pressing what he thinks is the ignition button, also went fine. Then we did two insert shots (an insert shot is usually a close-up of a stationary object), one shot of my hand, in my Robin glove, placing a fake starter button over the Batmobile's anti-theft button, and a second of the Riddler's gloved hand pushing the fake starter button and setting off the fireworks.

Now we were ready to begin the big scene. The Riddler is in the Batmobile's driver's seat; Robin is in the passenger seat with his head slumped back so he can be clearly seen by the camera, on "Action," the Riddler pushes the fake starter button. (He is pushing it for the second time, since he had already done so in the previous medium take; many shots intentionally overlap the prior action, giving editors a wider selection of footage to edit more effectively.) After the Riddler pushes the button, fireworks go off and the Riddler jumps out of the Batmobile to safety. Off camera, he waits a full minute to allow the five cameras to photograph the spectacular display of lights. Then the Riddler sends one of his Molehill Mob to open the passenger door, pick up the unconscious Robin, and cart him off to the Riddler's hideout. That is a lot of action for one take, and timing is crucial.

My job was to stay perfectly still. Butler told me that once he called "Action." I couldn't move until he yelled "Cut."

Rehearsal. Frank Gorshin, Allen Jaffe (who played Harry, the Riddler's henchman) and I took our positions.

"Rehearsal! Action."

The Riddler pushed the fake starter button. Bob yelled "Fire works!" as a substitute for the actual fireworks. Frank jumped out of the Batmobile and ran out of the shot. The director continued.

"Holding for the fireworks, everybody . . . explosions, explosions . . . still holding our positions, everyone (pause) . . . okay, Frank!"

Frank motioned to Allen Jaffe, who then approached the Batmobile, opened the door on my side of the car, took me out and carried me off camera.

"Cut! Worked perfectly!" said Bob. "Now let's get this puppy on celluloid!"

The crew made last-minute preparations for filming. Everything was checked and double-checked, tested and retested.

"Positions, everybody. This is it. We're doing it for real!" boomed Sam.

I got into the Batmobile. My job was easy. The crew teasingly asked how I was going to prepare for my performance. I have met some real gung-ho, military-type "method" actors who would probably have done their homework for this shot by going to a recovery room in a hospital to watch unconscious people, but not every movie or television show is *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Most of *Batman* didn't require extraordinary research. The scene I was about to do certainly didn't.

I settled against the leather seat, took a deep breath and tried to rationalize my situation.

"Hey," I thought. "This is the last shot. Kick back and relax, Burt. Let everybody else worry about what they have to do. Just lie here and enjoy listening to the fireworks."

I knew I couldn't open my eyes for this shot, and that once we actually started filming, I couldn't move, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED, until I was taken out of the Batmobile and carried off camera. Any motion on my part might ruin everything. And at a cost of more than \$250,000 to reshoot, plus the time lost and the risk of missing the air date for the world premiere, the producers might have given seri-

ous consideration to staging a permanent accident to get rid of the Boy Wonder once and for all, collect the \$.3 million insurance policy they had taken out on me the second week of production (when I started riding my motorcycle to work in the rain), and find themselves a new Boy Wonder who would be willing to work for union scale and go to the hospital regularly.

"QUIET ON THE SET!" yelled the second A D

Silence.

"Roll sound!"

An endless roll call of cameras began, all five of them. Wait a second! I suddenly realized that no camera was filming close enough to distinguish me from my stunt man. With all the fireworks and explosions and ashes that would fly over everything, and given that I had already been hurt three times, why wasn't my stunt man doing this shot?

I peeked past the glaring lights, which were so bright that I felt that I was in a prison yard, not on a movie set. It was difficult because everyone behind the cameras was in the shadows. I knew I had only a few more seconds to look, and then I saw my stunt man. **HE WAS IN HIS USUAL SPOT, STANDING AT THE SNACK TABLE HAVING COFFEE AND TALKING TO ADAM!**

It was too late now. I fumed at myself for not having asked Bob to use my stunt man instead of me. I was also unhappy with Bob and Sam and the other assistants, because not one of them had even thought of replacing me with my coffee-guzzling double. How could this have happened?

What I didn't know was that the fury burning inside me was about to be overshadowed by a far more painful burning outside!

"Action!" called Bob

My eyes closed, my brain worked overtime to analyze every sound I heard. I was waiting for Hiroshima. I didn't have to wait long.

"Fireworks!" came Bob's voice cue.

All hell broke loose.

You have no idea how loud fireworks really are until they detonate eighteen inches from your head!

The bombs burst one after another, some simultaneously. Zap! Pow! Biff! Bam! Splat! Crunch! All of them were loud. My ears were

clogged within seconds. If that had been all that was to happen to me, fine. I'd survived yesterday's explosion. Heck, in an hour or so my ears would be back to normal.

Ow! I winced as something hot struck and stung the inside of my right forearm. My skin sizzled! I didn't dare move my arm lest I ruin the shot. Then my left forearm started to sting badly, though not nearly as much as the right one.

Next, something started scratching the top of my shoulders. A moment later the itching stopped and burning started. Hot ashes were falling on my shoulders, burning right through the double-thick cape, through a heavyweight wool vest lined with silk, through a T-shirt and then through my skin! And there was nothing I could do to stop them short of jumping out of the car and disrupting the filming. I thought the fireworks would stop soon and calculated I could bear the pain a while longer. Another hot ash fell on my head. I could hear it sizzling and actually smelled my own hair burning. Bam! Kapow! Biff Boom! Bam! Stop already! Stop! The explosions kept on coming and coming.

Oh, no! Something began to burn through my green polyester BatTrunks. EEEeee! **HOLY SCORCHED SCROTUM!** This was more than I could stand, and I decided to get out of there fast.

The door on my side of the Batmobile opened. Someone picked me up and carried me away. Unfortunately, the hot ashes didn't fall off as I was lifted and had burned so deeply into my clothes and skin that they were lodged in position.

My eyes were still shut, but when I no longer felt the heat of the giant lamps, I made my move and didn't wait for Allen Jaffe to put me down. I wriggled out of his grasp and fell to the cement. My gloved left hand instantly swung down my right arm and brushed off the large hot ash still burning the inside of my forearm, and then brushed off the other hot ash that had landed in my crotch. Then I used my right glove to brush off my left forearm. The ashes were gone but the pain was still there. Then I brushed the hot ashes off my head and shoulders.

"Cut" yelled the director.

The crew started whooping and hollering at the success of the shot. Everyone was having such a good time that no one noticed that I was hunched over on the ground, smoldering—in more ways than one.

A few minutes ticked by. I was glad to hear the shot had gone well,

but I felt horrible. Somebody eventually noticed me on the ground. I heard a commotion above me, and when I looked up, there were two paramedics. I unbuttoned my cape

They looked at my forearms first. Totally unprotected, they had suffered the worst burns. I examined my right forearm and saw exposed bone surrounded by charcoal-white skin; the huge hot ash had completely burned through every layer of my skin and muscle.

My left forearm suffered a second-degree burn and had a one-inch-high blister.

The paramedics bandaged my arms, then helped me remove my vest and T-shirt so they could work on my shoulders. The chilly night air felt good.

They asked if my head hurt; I replied that it didn't. They said my hair was singed but that it had done a good job protecting my head.

I told them about my burned testicle. With the stinging pain I was in, I probably would have taken everything off right there if that would have stopped the burning! They wisely suggested that we go somewhere private to examine my private parts.

Back in my dressing room, they perused my tortured manhood. There was a hickey-sized bright red spot on my right testicle. Thank God it was only a first-degree burn.

The paramedics insisted I go to the emergency room. Apparently my right forearm had to be anesthetized, and the skin needed to be pulled over the exposed bone and stitched shut.

Business at the hospital was good that night. I waited for more than forty-five minutes before a doctor could see me. Lucky I wasn't bleeding, or I'd have been a goner. When he finally got to me, it was a doctor who looked younger than I did—and that's *very* young-looking, because as the Boy Wonder I was playing a teenager fifteen and a half years old. He did a great job sewing me up and gave me some strong prescription medicine for my other burns.

The doctor spoke about the possibility of a skin graft but I explained it was against my religion. He asked me what religion I practiced, and I answered, "I'm a devout coward."

I was exhausted. It was well past midnight and I had to be on the set early the next morning. Four medical days in a row—a new Olympic record.

Friday, Day Five

The Secret Origin of the Batusi

In the What a Way to GO-GO disco bar, Batman meets Molly and she invites him to dance. On the dance floor, Jill's ample breasts struggle to stay in her low-cut sequin dress (a young crimefighter shouldn't be exposed to such sexiness). Batman does the Batusi—less than 15 seconds air time—and creates a furor worldwide. Millions of girls fall in love with Batman, begin getting Batman-style haircuts and dancing the Batusi.

An interesting piece of trivia is the origin of the Batusi. Adam gets credit for creating the dance, and I can vouch for that. Immediately after filming his suggestive cavoring, Adam rushed to tell me the inside scoop.

"Last night I was humping a nubile young maiden and I had a vision of the Batusi's movements. It's sort of a horizontal mambo."

I listened and shivered. It was then that I realized THIS COWLED CRUSADER REALLY DID HAVE A SECRET IDENTITY.

Adam elaborated *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseum* about all the sexual symbolism and double meanings that he had secretly injected into the dance. At 21 I didn't catch half of them. He prided himself that no one caught on to what he was doing and, with any luck, it would slip past the censors. Look closely at his motions and you can see his symbolism and interpret it for yourself. For example, as he approaches Molly on the dance floor, he begins a series of hilarious frontal bumps, tantalizing her. I wonder if he did those same bumps and grinds the night before to tantalize his date.

Then he raises his hands in a weaving, snakelike motion on either side of his cowl, to indicate his removal of his mask. His hands recoil and snake up and down, simulating the removal of his clothes and, as he loves to say, his growing serpent. He then raises his cape, Dracula style, to enfold it around her and draw her to him. This is a control move to show how he overpowers her, how her defenses and her will to resist him crumble in realization of the unavoidable taking of her body, and how she inevitably succumbs to the massive thrust of his will. Finally he throws his head back and forth rapidly, indicating a climactic sexual moment where he is on his back and she is rid-

ing bronco on his saddle's horn. I do have to give Adam an A for imagination.

Truth is stranger than fiction, and this is the truth Adam has the unique ability to penetrate an audience's thoughts on a subconscious level. It's a fact that in less than fifteen seconds of symbolic dancing with a powerful, subliminal message, even seen through the squeezed electronic medium of a cathode tube, millions of women and even men were affected around the world. His performance played subtle tricks on the unsuspecting minds of an unsuspecting audience, then and all through the series. The Batust became a giant hit that no one would ever have expected. And I was amazed to see photos of all those Batman-style hairdos that women began wearing.

Adam was more than just my acting mentor. He also introduced me to the seamy side of Hollywood. Here I was, shocked and unnerved about the sexual details of a dance, while Adam, with intricate detail and great relish, told me how many of the great female stars of Hollywood's Golden Age had designs cut into their public hair, such as hearts, flowers and animals. After hearing this, I realized that my conservative upbringing was out of step with reality. I was the odd man out.

I looked up to Adam as the older brother who would help me adjust to the ways of show business and newfound stardom. After all, as a kid looking for a role model to follow, who better to be my teacher than Batman?

The World Premiere of "Batman"!

Luckily, I Lived to See It! A Calendar of the Events of Wednesday, January 12, 1966.

6:35 a.m. Today is a production day like all the others. No time off to celebrate—just a promise from the front office to get everybody off the set early enough to go home and watch the premiere of *Batman*.

I drag myself out of bed. Actually, my preferred wake-up method is to first convince myself how important it is to get up. Next, the monumental task is achieved by rolling over to the side of the bed and hanging my upper torso over the edge until I finally fall off. Works every time.

6:55 a.m. Shave, shower and out the door with a pickie and a bagel.

7:15 a.m. On the set and wandering around, as usual, like a zombie.

7:30 a.m. In makeup. The makeup artist seemingly has my eyelids taped open (okay, so it just feels that way) and is using a brown pencil to fill in my eyebrows, even though my mask will cover them. I can only reason they make more money if they cover more of you with makeup.

8:00 a.m.: I have a half-hour to be dressed, on the set and ready to go. I begin working up the nerve to put on those miserable tights. Soon a parade of assistant directors pound on my door. "Are you ready, Burt?" "We need you on set now, Burt!" With that unending pressure, I drag the sandpaper fabric up my legs, groan and finish dressing.

8:30 a.m.—12:00 noon: All I hear about is the excitement and anticipation of the premiere. We are a mid season replacement series for ABC, always a tough uphill battle for a new show.

The producers come and go all morning with good tidings in the form of notes, letters and telegrams from well-wishers, including the heads of the network, who had put their necks on the line by financially committing to twenty-six episodes. Included are the top brass at 20th Century Fox; the executives at Greenway Productions, who produced

The World Premiere of "Batman"!

our show, and even people who had worked on our set for only a day. Everyone is rooting for us, but nobody, and I mean nobody, is confident that we will be successful, much less good enough to last the season. Although we are smiling, everybody is worrying. I know I am.

12:00 noon-1:00 p.m. A catered lunch. Usually the production company caters location shoots only, but today we enjoy a nice meal at our regular sound stage.

1:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.: More work, more well-wishers, and more butterflies dive-bombing my stomach. We quit early so everyone can watch the show.

7:15 p.m. Home, wash off my makeup and enjoy a light dinner of soup and salad in front of the television set with my wife.

7:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m. The premiere of *BATMAN!* IT LOOKS FANTASTIC! I had never even seen dailies, which are the printed takes seen just as they were shot, before editing, sound effects and graphics are added. And now I was watching what I thought was such a great show that I almost forgot that I was in it!

What really blew me away were the riveting bright colors and the spectacular explosions. They were so exciting that it almost made it worthwhile to get hurt. I loved the *Batman* theme music, the background score and sound effects, and, most of all, I loved the incredibly creative optical effects . . . POW! ZAP! BIFF! BAM! I thought they were so wonderful that I jumped up and down and began yelling. My wife thought I should be forcibly restrained.

8:30 p.m.. A little celebration of popcorn and a soft drink (believe it or not, I never smoked, drank or took drugs, and the same is true today) and then sex before sleep.

11:00 p.m.: SWEET DREAMS, EVERYONE! I WONDER IF ANYONE ELSE WHO WATCHED OUR SHOW TONIGHT LIKED IT AS MUCH AS I DID.

Beyond Decadence

(Clasping the hand of a susceptible young conquest)

“Would you like to touch my Bat?” lecherously asks Adam West, dressed as Batman, as he swells his chest with its BatInsignia. Pretending the surprised young woman has acceded to his request, he adds with feigned pleasure, “Ahhhhhhh!”

“Mmmm. I’ve got steam coming out of the corners of my mask,” pants Burt Ward, dressed as Robin, anxious to participate

“Ohhhhhh, my dear!” deeply groans the couled carouser in the blue cape as he draws her young hand to his BatTrunks. “I’m beginning to feel strange stirrings in my utility belt! How do you feel?”

The pantyhose python was poised to strike, while his junior partner watched and learned. Like Dracula casting his spell upon beautiful young women to make them swoon helplessly, the senior member of the Dynamic Duo was in the final stages of preparing his evening meal. With strong eye contact, a seductive smile and an armada of suggestive double-meaning comments, the young woman’s will wavered. She was mentally numb and ready for the taking. It happened so fast that she never knew what hit her and never had a chance to resist. It was always that way. The awesome power of this predator was unstoppable. Time after time after time the beast engorged himself at will. No woman was safe, married or not. My crimefighting partner was a consummate expert, and my educator. His tutelage helped to contribute to my first divorce and to my becoming an insatiable creature who hungered for female bodies. By day we were human and relatively harmless. By night we became sexual vampires.

Thousands of young women were inseminated with BatSperm . . . our ultimate autograph.

This is not to say that many women weren't already willing. Ninety-five percent were and it was simply a matter of fitting them into our schedules. The available time slots were early morning before the first appearance, in the afternoon between autograph signings, after dinner, and after midnight. Regardless of how, when or where, the women we anointed were so extraordinarily worked up that many became desperate for our bodies and more aggressive than we were—if that's possible. Some women, in frenzied anticipation, climaxed repeatedly in front of us before we even touched them.

Most were one-timers. Others who had more access to us became addicted beyond imagination. Desperately they begged for repeated transfusions of our bodily fluids. Not uncommon were panic calls in the middle of the night, begging for a frantic orgasm or to drink from our fountains. Forgettable were the living nightmares of screaming and banging on our front doors, back doors and bedroom windows while we were bedded down with other women.

Bizarra were the few who weren't satisfied with conventional sex. They wanted penetration in every one of their bodily orifices.

There is one fact so amazing that it overpowers me. Not one partner ever got enough, and when we stopped seeing someone, her emotions inevitably ranged from disappointment to devastation.

What was the essence of our power and their fantasy? How did the Dynamic Duo use and abuse that mountain-moving force? What was the magic behind the momentum that convinced nearly every woman, in less than five minutes, to bare her body?

Magical Chemical Reactions

There was a chemistry between Adam and me that ignited two sane men into a pair of wild animals. What resulted was a feeding frenzy of a couple of hungry sharks in a world of unlimited halibut. Let me amend that—in Adam's case, it was more like the feeding frenzy of a killer whale in a world of plankton.

These events occurred due to a combination of our popularity and celebrity status mixed with a fantasy centered on our costumes and sexual prowess. Women were fascinated with our BatTrunks and stared

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

intently at our bulges. I found this awkward and disconcerting at first, but as I became accustomed to it, I was enthralled by the desire and passion we engendered. I often experimented with the way I stood to see if particular positions caused more dramatic results. What I found to be most effective was when I stood directly in front of a woman and spread my legs—the classic Batman/Robin stance you see when you watch our show and in photographs we autograph and on the cover of this book. Taking that highly recognizable position to the public was no accident. It was purposely done to titillate BatFans. So was the double-meaning sexuality we intentionally injected into every one of our .20 episodes, which found its mark in the subconscious minds of women—and some men. At the height of our popularity, it seemed that almost every teenager and adult, both heterosexual and homosexual wanted to have Batman and Robin in bed, or to dress up like one of the Dynamic Duo and take someone else to bed. Truckloads of Batman and Robin costumes were sold and they weren't just for kids.

I remember one incident backstage in a break between appearances. I was still in costume when a young fan knocked on my dressing room door. Upon entering, she professed her love for the show and her desire to have sex with me. I thanked her for the opportunity but explained that I had to return to the stage in a few minutes. Curious to see if she would be affected, I took my Robin stance with my fists on my hips as I spoke. I got more of a reaction than I expected. She began pleading with me that she had to have me inside of her that very minute. I declined, she cried and cried. I was upset by her near hysteria, so I locked the door and, still in full costume, made love to her on my dressing bench. She cried and groaned through the entire experience. After I climaxed which she seemed to feel intensely, she made loud animal noises—growls and deep-throat panting—and I was more scared than ever, believing I had an uncontrollable situation on my hands.

A knock on the door by the show security staff stopped her. Taking advantage of the moment, I pulled up my leotards, washed my hands of her and the situation, and left for my appearance. I never saw her again.

The free-love mind set of the 1960s was a unique period in the history of our country. At no other time before or after has there been such openness, with millions of people enjoying sex. If you lived

Beyond Decadence

through it, you know what I mean. If you didn't, you might think it was a reenactment of Roman debauchery.

Sex was comparatively safe. AIDS did not exist. People sought peace and love, not violence and aggression. The flower children spoke of kinder, gentler times. It was not uncommon to see mothers unbutton their blouses, exposing breasts as they suckled their infants. Teenage girls and young women were open, earthy, with unshaven underarms and legs, natural body fragrances like lemon, raspberry and peach, colorful print skirts that came undone with the slightest touch, and no underpanties. Girls were as sexually aggressive, if not more aggressive, than men. Everybody loved everybody, and everybody made love to everybody.

There was that bumper sticker on nearly every man's car. "So many women, so little time." It was their motto, and it was ours.

Today that would be viewed as sexist. Then women took it as a compliment.

Enter the Dynamic Duo into this forest of lovebirds (I swear I resisted until after my divorce). On the set during lunch breaks, behind it between shots, in the dressing rooms, in our cars parked near the sound stage, anyplace that was reasonably comfortable and that offered a bit of privacy.

In the evenings and on weekends, the activity generated at each of our homes redefined the meaning of "pleasure pad." Even that paled against what happened when we made personal appearances across the country. Between us, a dozen or so girls per weekend received our most personalized autograph of all.

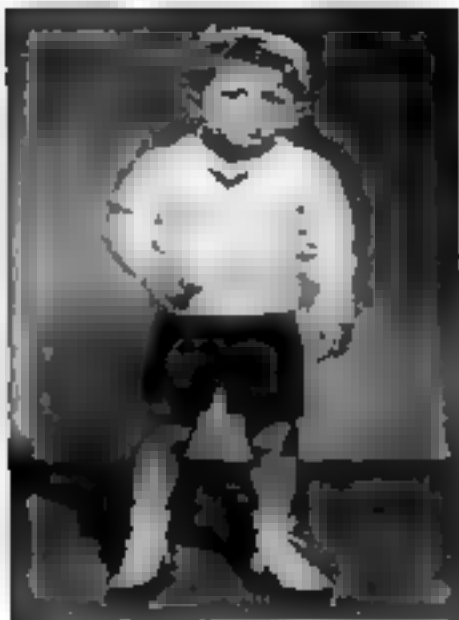
It wasn't a matter of quantity or conquest. We didn't keep count. At least I didn't. Opportunity was bountiful. Often we were the ones chased. No one asked or expected any commitments or return privileges.

I was more conservative than Adam. I would take my date out to dinner or dancing, and spend a little time getting to know her before returning to my hotel or her house. Adam liked to get right down to business, many times without even knowing her name. We did a bang-up business.

I became addicted to sex and was out of control. I don't know about Adam, but I hadn't always been that way.



Innocence Found



My first professional skating performance, at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas (1947).

I was born Ben John Gervis, Jr., but in grade school my energetic nature caused my mother to nickname me "Sparky." I didn't mind that and everybody called me Sparky until high school, when I realized that if I didn't have a cooler name I would be exiled to Nerdsville. Then I changed the spelling of my first name to B-u-r-t because I liked the way it looked. Before filming the first *Batman* episode I went to court and legally changed my last name to my mother's maiden name, Ward. I thought it would look better and be more readable onscreen.

I enjoyed somewhat humble beginnings in the so-called slums of Beverly Hills—what comedy writer Pat McCormick called "Skid Drive," the duplex apartments south of the railroad tracks that ran east and west along Santa Monica Boulevard through the middle of the city. I fondly remember the electric streetcars. Not quite San Francisco, but nevertheless charming. Later we moved to a nicer section north of the tracks, in Coldwater Canyon above Sunset Boulevard, where the houses were worth about \$150,000. That valuation is, of course, based on property values in 1953, when I was eight. Today the same houses would cost \$5 million.

My parents weren't wealthy, but they got by—and managed mostly to provide me with the best of everything. When I was a toddler, my father owned and operated a traveling ice show called "Rhapsody On Ice." As a family of three we traveled across America with it. I loved being with my family and became used to working hard.

I became a professional ice skater at age two and, with instruction from ice skaters in my father's show, among the finest in the business, I was soon performing before large crowds, earning huge



applause and a tiny salary. People called me a boy wonder eighteen years before I became Robin, but back then I didn't wear a cape or a mask.

Local newspapers in each town ran stories and photos about my skating ability. After considerable publicity, including being featured in *Strange as It Seems* (forerunner to the *Guinness Book of Records*), I was billed as "the world's youngest professional ice skater."

Even though my mother, Marjorie Charlotte Ward, had been Miss Fort Worth, Miss Texas and a professional tap dancer who performed at the Village Barn in Greenwich Village, the Palmer House and Chez Paree in Chicago, and the Ambassador in Los Angeles with the Freddy Martin Band, she didn't encourage my involvement in show business. Neither did my father, who briefly worked with NBC and MCA and later as an agent for traveling big bands.

I vividly remember only one thing during that period: my first professional performance at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. Twice a day I skated around a gigantic rink with music blaring and lights shining on me from every direction. People clapped and cheered, but I couldn't see them. Later I skated at every performance in every city, except when my father took the show to Havana. Luckily I didn't go.

Serious trouble in Havana. The Cuban government under Batista arbitrarily decided to nationalize my father's entire ice show. They showed up at a performance with soldiers carrying guns, and generously gave my father the opportunity to take himself safely back to the States without harm, provided that he give up ownership of the show that he had worked years for, paid for and built. Nice folks, eh?

So dad returned to Beverly Hills with no money and a short window of opportunity to find some business to provide us with an income. He went into real estate.

Growing up in Beverly Hills was marvelous. My dad studied every night, and after four months he passed the State of California test for a real estate salesman's license. At the time, about 1948, there were two famous real estate brokers in Beverly Hills: George Elkins and Mike Silverman, who is still a giant in the business. At one time or another, before my father became a licensed broker, he worked for both of them.

I vaguely remember nursery school but definitely remember Hawthorne elementary school. Every morning my father dropped me off, and in the afternoon my mother picked me up.

I loved the playground — the swings, the bars, the wide open



Sunbathing with Mom
at the park.

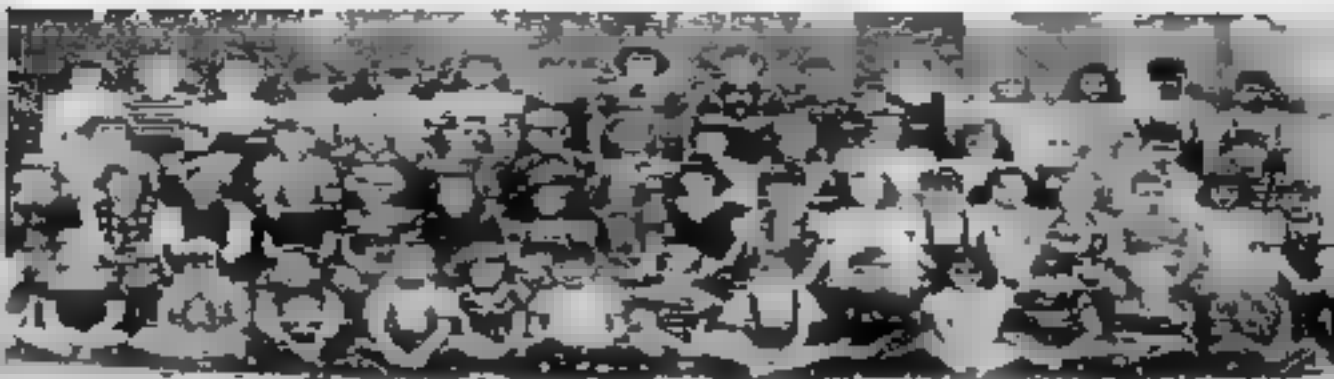


Mom, Dad and I celebrate Christmas in
our Beverly Hills apartment.

spaces for running and jumping and playing. I actually liked the classes, too. My parents were smart and explained that my own efforts would directly affect my ability to succeed. They never forced me to study or learn. I was told that if I didn't study, I would do poorly, and that doing poorly was a prescription for failure later in life. I didn't like the idea of failure.

Growing up in Beverly Hills meant always seeing

others achieving success in business and in education. Competition was fierce, even for kids. Worse yet, in Beverly Hills, if you start to rise above the other kids, the parents enter the competition.



Hawthorne School. Can you find me? (Hint: I'm wearing suspenders.)

Will the Real Boy Wonder Please Stand Up?

I never read *Batman* comic books but I did read *Superman*. Before that, after coming home from second grade, I watched *Superman* on the spectacular new electrical contraption my parents had just bought—a television set! After the show I went outside and spent hours daydreaming about being SuperBoy. My mother even photographed me riding my tricycle with a blue bath towel tied around my neck, held together with a clothespin.

In the next few years there were two additions to our family. One was a brother named Gavin and the other was my sister Gigi. My mother had her hands full, my father worked harder to support a larger family, and I took on the role of the older brother (I'm still playing that role).

I excelled in athletics. At the Hawthorne School in Beverly Hills, I made all the varsity teams. During my senior year I remember eagerly awaiting the decathlon. Unfortunately, one week before the competition, I caught the measles. I was sick and brokenhearted and just getting well when the tournament was scheduled to begin. Amazingly, the school delayed the competition one week to give me a chance to compete. I couldn't believe they would do that for anyone.

Though still weak, I returned in time to participate in the competition—and won! It was my biggest athletic accomplishment.

I entered Beverly Hills High in the fall of 1959. Smaller than most boys, I could only make the varsity teams in which size was not a factor, such as track and field, wrestling and golf.

I was chess champion and played first board on the Beverly Hills High School chess team in competitions with other high schools. We won every tournament.

Academically I maintained a B+ I enrolled in a speed reading class under Dr J. E. Sparks, a speed reading expert who also taught at UCLA. My initial speed was average, 240 words per minute with forty percent comprehension. However, I became fascinated by the prospect of exceeding the top scores of the then fastest speed reader in the country, another student of Dr. Sparks. That student was able to read 11,000 words per minute with sixty percent comprehension. My goal was to beat that record.

After three years of study, I was tested before the American Medical Society in Beverly Hills. I had never met the doctors and educators there nor had I seen the material with which I was to be tested. Under pressure in front of a renowned panel, I achieved my highest speed: 30,000 words per minute with comprehension of ninety percent. I don't know if that is or was a world record, but I haven't heard of anyone else getting close to those numbers. I received national publicity for that accomplishment. The title of the article was, "Will the Real Boy Wonder Please Stand Up?" Later I appeared on a national reading show called *Read Right*.

During the *Batman* series my agents received an offer for me to endorse a new speed reading course developed by a fledgling company. I was offered ten percent of their stock to promote their curriculum on television and radio and in newspapers. My agents turned down the offer without showing it to me. The company was Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics, which was eventually worth more than \$200 million. I would have become so wealthy that I'd be able to afford to buy my own copy of this book.

At age fifteen I started studying karate. In 1960 karate had only recently come to America. I trained with Ed Parker at a small Kenpo karate school in Los Angeles, and became a brown belt. Ed later became one of the most famous karate instructors in America. Following *Batman*, I also studied taekwon do with the all-Korean champion Young Ik Suh and received my black belt.

(One of my dearest friends today is Bob Chaney, who won the world karate championship in Paris in 1976 and who has trained over

200 national and international champions. He is an eighth-degree black belt and has been driving me crazy to start training again. I'm tempted.)

By fifteen and a half, the only sport I had not participated in was sex. Life was conservative in those days, and I was more sheltered than many other kids. I also think the reason I started late was because sex wasn't something I was interested in, focusing instead on athletics and academics.

Eventually I visited "Sex, the Final Frontier." Like ninety-five percent of my pals, I had my first experience in the back seat of a station wagon at a drive-in theater with a female student in my class (another couple sat in front and coached us). It was good but fast. Actually, it was good *and* fast.

My first love didn't occur until I was seventeen when I met a beautiful girl on Pacific Palisades beach. Her name was Bonney Lindsey and her mother and father were both successful and talented. Her mother was Judy Johnson, an excellent singer and a regular on *Your Show of Shows*. Bonney's father was Mort Lindsey, musical conductor, writer and arranger for Judy Garland and later Pat Boone, Barbra Streisand and Merv Griffin. Mr. Lindsey invited me to accompany Bonney to one of the tapings of *The Judy Garland Show*. It was incredibly exciting, and the debut performance of Liza Minnelli—Wow! What a talent!

Bonney and I fell in love, and Mr. Lindsey arranged for us to spend the summer of 1963 as theatre apprentices at Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope, Pennsylvania, a prestigious summer theatre testing ground for many plays and musicals that later went to Broadway. It was my first exposure to working with actors, and one of the best times I ever had. There was another young apprentice there who has since become a successful actor and director—Rob Reiner, son of Carl Reiner, also a regular on *Your Show of Shows*.

I built sets, watched rehearsals and assisted during the eight performances per week of many stars, including James Whitmore and Merv Griffin. Rob Reiner, larger than the rest of us, was given the job of assistant stage manager, which meant raising and lowering the curtain. He won the coveted position because he was the only apprentice with the combination of strength and weight to hoist the enormous cur-

tain up and down. He also had the exciting job of going outside the theatre before every performance and using his considerable strength to shut off a water wheel that fed a waterfall. Until that job was done, no one inside could hear the actors talk.

(Rob has had a fabulous career as an actor on *All in the Family* and now as a super director with many hits to his credit, including *A Few Good Men* and *When Harry Met Sally*. By the way, it was Rob's mother, Estelle, who said the famous line to the delicatessen waitress after seeing Meg Ryan fake an orgasm for Billy Crystal in *When Harry Met Sally*—"I'll have whatever *she's* having.")

In the fall of 1963 I attended the University Of California "at the beach," UCSB, a beautiful campus. I became a disc jockey for the college-owned-and-operated radio station, KCSB. When I wasn't in class, I was either sunning or surfing. What a life! But I missed Bonney.

The next semester I transferred down to UCLA as a motion picture and theatre major. I moved back in with my parents and dated Bonney every free minute I had.

I studied acting at the university and at Curt Conway Studios with Eric Morris. He had me doing abandonment exercises—you throw yourself on the floor and start yelling and kicking. It teaches you to let go of your inhibitions. Eric also had me visit the zoo three times a week to study the movements of animals and to bring back what I learned and perform it for the other students. That was fun, but the zoo employees kept pointing me out and giggling to one another, especially when I spent six weeks watching and imitating kangaroos.

There is more politics in college theatrical classes than in professional acting classes. Apparently I didn't brown-nose enough with the royals of the university teaching staff, and I was rejected for the advanced acting class. That letdown was quickly turned around when I landed the role of Robin in the series two weeks later. I had to drop out of UCLA to take the job. My dean was upset because my educational testing put me in the top three percent in the nation in mathematics and science. She wanted me to be a nuclear physicist.

After the first year of *Batman*'s success, I was voted Alumni King at UCLA. Ironic, because as a regular student my abilities were overlooked, but as a celebrity I received an alumni honor even though I never graduated. **HOLY HYPOCRISY!**

I needed money, so I read the real estate primer and, without taking a single real estate class, managed to pass the State of California salesman exam and became one of the youngest people in California to earn a real estate license—at age eighteen. Of course, it helped having a father who had become one of the most prominent real estate brokers in Beverly Hills.

Life was far from perfect. I had suffered with a physical impairment since childhood that humiliated me as I was growing up: I never learned to speak from my diaphragm, only from my throat. This resulted in a high-pitched voice that didn't fit the way I looked. In high school, because the other kids teased me unmercifully, I rarely raised my hand to answer questions, always afraid to speak for fear of being ridiculed. My father sent me to a top theatrical voice coach and I struggled through exercises, but they didn't do any good. At UCSB I had to quit being a disc jockey because of peer pressure.

Thank goodness we finally solved the problem. My father sold a house to Ross Martin, who co-starred with Robert Conrad in *The Wild, Wild West*. I met Mr. Martin and explained that I wanted to be an actor. He heard my voice, stopped and thought a moment.

"I can fix that!"

"Really?"

"Yes. Take a deep breath and turn around. I'm going to force you to speak from your diaphragm."

I was apprehensive but did as he said, I took a deep breath and turned. He wrapped his arms around my solar plexus and asked me to speak. I spoke in my usual voice and he jerked his hands into my body. Suddenly my voice became so deep it scared me. It was far too deep for the size of my body. Mr. Martin explained that I needn't worry; if I kept speaking like that, in a month or so my voice would balance and sound normal. He was 100 percent right. It did and I've had a normal voice ever since.

What surprised me were the vocal compliments I received both then and even now—"You have a great voice!" I was thrilled to hear that. I still am. I didn't need to have a great voice, just a normal one.

Feeling able to compete with other kids my age as a performer, I talked my dad into introducing me to another client, producer Saul David. Mr. David was responsible for the *Our Man Flint* features, *Fan-*

tastic Voyage and Skullduggery I did a scene for Mr. David and asked if he would be kind enough to help me get work in television or movies as an extra in what is called "atmosphere," or non-speaking, roles. I thought that would be a way to get started, sort of from the bottom up.

Mr. David explained, "Burt, if you start as an extra, you'll have a hard time making the transition to speaking roles. There's nothing I'm doing that you would be right for, but I'll send you to an agent. I can't promise any more than that. Hopefully he'll try to get you some acting auditions."

I went to see Jim Maloney at the John F Dugan Agency. Mr. Maloney was very polite, but what he said was rough to hear.

"We already have too many actors we can't get work for. We don't need another one. However, Saul David asked that we represent you, and out of respect for him we will. Don't expect to work for at least a year. And if you're lucky enough to get a job, you'll probably only say a word or two."

There was tension at home with my parents. They thought I was spending too much time with Bonney and not enough studying in college. I was maintaining an A- average and couldn't understand their concern.

There was stress at Bonney's home, too. She was being pressured to return with her parents to their East Coast residence in Montclair, New Jersey. We were like two kids standing back to back trying to fend off an oppressive world. It was time to leave.

I was fighting with my parents daily. Bonney was no longer welcome in their home. That was the final straw for me. In January 1964, at eighteen, I angrily said good-bye to my parents (I didn't see them or speak to them until I got the role of Robin nearly two years later) and moved in with Bonney, then seventeen, who had convinced Mort and Judy to allow her to stay in California. They thought she was living alone and we were just dating. Secretly we rented a tiny one-bedroom apartment across the street from Muscle Beach, south of the Santa Monica pier. Our rent was \$100 per month.

Times were tough. Bonney worked as an information operator for General Telephone, and my financial contribution was limited to real estate commissions on two houses I sold before I moved away from home. Between us, we barely made enough money to live. She helped

put me through college. Her salary covered the rent, and I managed to stretch my meager savings to cover the cost of my books. In the afternoons we picked up Coke bottles along the beach and redeemed them for cash and dinner. We ate only once a day, each having a baked potato and a Coke, and we shared a package of chicken wings, which at the time cost only twenty-five cents. Imagine two people living on only fifty cents' worth of food per day!

In 1964 California there was a law that made it illegal for unmarried couples to live together. It was called an "act of cohabitation." The law was rarely enforced except in the case of minors and unfortunately for me, Bonney was still a minor. Mort and Judy had discovered from my parents that Bonney and I were cohabiting. They threatened to have me arrested. We had to get married or break up. Neither of us wanted to make a decision either way. We decided to get married. I was almost nineteen, and Bonney was six weeks shy of eighteen. In California the legal age of consent for marriage was twenty-one.

We negotiated a settlement with her parents to drive east to New Jersey and marry in a major ceremony that their many friends and business associates could attend. We stayed in their home, in separate bedrooms on opposite sides of the house. There was definitely no opportunity for cohabitation.

But we didn't want to go through with it. We loved living together. We had a lot of fun together. Still, we didn't want to get married . . . at least not yet.

We called off the wedding and fled back to California.

Mort and Judy were furious at our eleventh-hour cancellation, but we knew what we wanted, and marriage wasn't it. Halfway along our trip westward, Bonney telephoned them, and they went bananas. They said they could prosecute me for numerous felony violations under the Mann Act, and threatened to call everyone—the police, the FBI, the Marines.

The Mann Act was originally legislated to combat interstate transportation of underage children for prostitution, and even transporting a minor across state lines for illegal purposes (having sex) was enforceable under the statute. Bonney was underage and, although prostitution wasn't a concern, sleeping with a minor under the age of eighteen was.

I calculated that I had brought Bonney across fifteen states so far from her parents' home toward California. Simple multiplication led me to believe I could spend my next five lifetimes in prison. I told Bonney that we had to get married because I couldn't live with the constant fear of being arrested.

Three days later Bonney turned eighteen, and we detoured to Pocatello, Idaho, where eighteen is the legal age of consent for marriage. Both of us needed blood tests. After waiting two hours at a local hospital, I asked the nurse to get to us.

"Sit down and I'll draw your blood!" came the angry reply.

I was frightened of that shrewish R.N. but more frightened about appearing on the FBI's Most Wanted list, so I sat down and did the brave thing. I closed my eyes and hoped for the best.

We were married in a brief ceremony in front of a judge. We took our vows seriously but wondered if we could honor them forever.

When we returned to California, we had a little bit of good luck. Bonney got a small raise from the telephone company. We were so excited that we acted as though we had inherited a million dollars. Actually it was closer to seventy-five dollars per month, but that was enough for us to raise our living standard. We moved into a palace, a corner apartment in the same building with a small side window view to the ocean. Every night we played the sound-track album from *The Sandpiper*. We thought we were living like a king and queen, and all it cost was an extra twenty-five dollars per month.

My new agent called. He set up my first interview *that* afternoon. I was sent to 20th Century Fox Studios in West Los Angeles and told to see a certain casting director, but I didn't know what the role was.

As I passed through the massive studio gates I felt a surge of adrenaline. This was the studio where some of the most famous motion pictures of all time had been made.

The security guard asked my name and who I was there to see. Then he gave me a lot pass to keep on my dashboard. If nothing else ever happened, I knew I would keep that as a souvenir.

I met the casting director. He asked me a lot of questions about my personal life, my education, sports, and so on, but told me nothing about the role. He next sent me across the lot to meet William Dozier, the executive producer. As I walked by several incredibly real-looking

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sets, they looked familiar but I couldn't remember the movies in which I had seen them. I arrived at Mr. Dozier's office in the Lasky Building and wondered why the casting people would be so far away from each other. In those days I was so naive that I didn't know the difference between a producer and an executive producer. Actually, I still don't.

Mr. Dozier appeared very powerful, and I was intimidated.

"I guess you've been playing parts between fifteen and seventeen?"

I knew I had to say something but stopped myself from telling him I had never played *any* role and, in fact, that I had never even tried out for a role, except in second grade—which I didn't get.

"Yes, sir!" I gulped.

I hoped he wouldn't ask me the names of any of the roles that I had supposedly portrayed.

"You're big."

He asked me a number of other questions about my background and interests, then got to his biggest concern.

"Are you sure you won't grow anymore?"

"I promise you, sir, I won't grow anymore."

Mr. Dozier laughed.

"I'm going to hold you to that!" He did.

I left thinking I'd had a great interview and I had a real chance for the role—but I still didn't know what it was.

On my way out of the studio, I was stopped again at the security gate. They asked me for my lot pass back. I was crushed, but handed it over. As I passed through the gates into my accustomed obscurity, I was brokenhearted that my closest connection to an Oscar had just been taken away.

Holy Screen Test!

A few weeks passed and I was called in for a screen test. When I arrived at the studio, I was rapidly dressed by two wardrobe guys. I couldn't figure out the style of clothes — tights, cape and mask. Was this a period program? I was too shy to ask. I met Bob Butler, the director and two other actors, Adam West and Lyle Waggoner, both hopefuls trying out for the part of Batman. I immediately recognized Lyle from

Innocence Found

his many years on the *Carol Burnett Show* Lyle eventually did get a job on a Superheroine show, *Wonder Woman*, which was developed for television by our number one BarWriter, Stanley Ralph Ross. The other actor I had never seen before. He was almost as nervous as I but he hid it better. I laugh today when I hear Adam talk about becoming Batman. He makes it sound as though he was interviewing the producers for the role, that he already had the part wrapped up, and the producers were screen testing for *him*. That couldn't be further from the truth.

The director explained what my role as a Superhero was. Wow, I was getting a chance to become someone like SuperBoy. I wondered if all those thousands of hours of daydreaming as a child were about to pay off.

First I did a scene as Robin.

"Right, Batman!" was all I had to say.

I was nervous when the camera rolled and the director said, "Action!"

Adam said his line and my voice broke. They cut and started over.

I was embarrassed but determined.

The second time I got it right! Perfect

"Cut! Print!" Butler said.

I had a second scene as Robin, which also went well. Then I changed into civilian clothes to do a scene as Dick Grayson, Bruce Wayne's youthful ward. I had no problem memorizing my lines. That was easy. What threw me was a curve ball from the director.

"Slide down the banister and when you get to the bottom, say your lines."

I went up the stairs and on "Action" slid down the banister. But worrying about falling off caused me to go blank when it came time to speak. They cut and I had to do it again. That was the first time I realized that no matter how well you know your lines, you must never allow the action keep you from remembering them.

My second take was perfect.

Then I changed into the karate outfit I had brought along. The producers wanted Robin to be athletic. They allowed me to show my athletic ability, and I thought that because very few people in America had seen much karate in 1965, a demonstration would be impressive. I was right. After some falls and tumbles, I broke a one-inch pine board with my hand. Everyone was seriously impressed. Nobody there had ever heard of or seen such a thing.

I left the studio thinking I had done an excellent job. The real question was, Would I get the role? I still didn't know if this was for a movie or a television series. But who cared? I just wanted to work!

I Got the Role of Robin!

Six weeks snailed by. Not a word from my agents. A wardrobe man from Fox called a couple of times to ask what shoe size I wore, what glove size I wore, that sort of thing.

Financially, things got tougher—people weren't leaving their Coke bottles on the beach and I almost quit college to find work to help support us. So much time had passed that I knew I wouldn't get the part, and even if I did, I didn't know if I'd work for a day or a month. Whatever, I would still need to bring in serious money because we weren't making it on what we had.

Desperate, I interviewed for a job as a gas station attendant across from where we lived. If I got the job, I'd be paid \$1.25 per hour before taxes. At least there would be food on our table.

Another week dragged and I was turned down for the gas station job. We were starving, and my pride wouldn't allow me to contact my parents for help. One more week passed and my agents called to ask me to sign contracts. I thought they meant agency contracts, their agreement to represent me.

"Before you come over here, get to Fox and see your new executive producer!"

"You mean I got the part? Wow! I can't believe it!"

Eight weeks of worrying were over. I had the part two weeks after the screen test but didn't know it! The studio thought my agents had told me, and my agents thought the studio had told me, so I suffered six extra weeks for nothing. I was so excited and thrilled that it didn't matter. After being rejected for a gas station job at \$1.25 per hour, I was co-starring in a brand new television series and made plans to buy that station and fire the guy who gave me thumbs down. **HOLY CLOUD NINE!**

I went to see William Dozier and his right-hand man, Charles FitzSimons. FitzSimons, who is Maureen O'Hara's brother, is a charm-

ing Irishman who also spent years as an actor and is best remembered for his role as Kevin McCloskey, the man who beats Spencer Tracy in the mayoralty election in *The Last Hurrah*. They congratulated me and told me that my performance stood out above all others. They had only one request for me to follow in my portrayal.

"Be enthusiastic and be yourself. What you are is exactly what we always envisioned the Boy Wonder to be. Now go sign your contracts."

I thanked them profusely. When I left, I stopped to thank the casting director and asked which actor would play Batman. He said the producers had chosen Adam West.

"Gosh," I said. "That's who I screen tested with."

"Yes, I know," he laughed.

"With your bubbling energy and his natural stiffness, you make a great couple."

I didn't know quite how to take that.

At my agent's office I didn't even read the agreements. I just signed. I reminded Jim Maloney of his words of doom when we first met: "Don't expect to work for at least a year. And if you're lucky enough to get a job, you'll probably only say a word or two." I added, "What do you think about me landing a co-starring role in a television series on my first interview?"

"Unbelievable . . . one chance in 10 million," Jim answered. "But I always knew you could do it."

HOLY FLIP-FLOP! What a television series can do to change someone's opinion of you!

While I was there I received a small check as an advance on shooting the pilot. I had less than fifty cents in my pocket and not enough gas to get home. Jim cashed the check for me and that night Bonney and I went out for a celebration dinner.

I called my parents and told them about the series. They were thrilled, and we reunited as a family. I then called Mort and Judy Lindsey and told them. They were happy for me too, but Mort said that, even though I was a newcomer, I should be paid more than scale, the minimum wage an actor can be paid under the terms of the Screen Actors Guild agreement with the Motion Picture Producers Association.

The next day I called my agents and requested that they ask for only a little more money, just so that I would be paid above minimum

wage. An hour later they called back and said William Dozier wanted to see me in his office right away. Uh-oh.

Mr Dozier had a single straight-backed wooden chair sitting alone on the wood floor in the center of his large office. He told me to sit. He had a riding crop in his hand. He circled me, hitting the riding crop into his palm as he lectured me in no uncertain terms that I had better keep my mouth shut and not ask for anything. I knew he meant business. I agreed.

I left his office with my cape between my legs. I didn't want to ever cross that man again!

Robin—Dick Grayson

The character of Robin, the Boy Wonder, is energetic and effervescent. As Batman's right-hand kid, he is a fearless fighter, a brilliant strategist quick with his hands and effective with his punches. He is faster than a speeding crook, more powerful than a villain with a local motive, and able to leap tall villainesses in a single bound. He and Batman are the only crimefighters of human origin who can climb straight up the outsides of buildings with a shared BatRope.

When he's not out hunting heinous villains, Robin returns to his true identity of Dick Grayson, a tremendous athlete and a straight-A student at Gotham High. He is all American, apple pie, antiseptic and the boy who every mother would want to date her daughter, knowing nothing would ever happen. Dick Grayson is Bruce Wayne's young ward. I still can't get over the coincidence that Burt Ward played Bruce Wayne's ward. During nearly every one of our episodes, William Dozier, our executive producer and the show's narrator, would intone, "And in Wayne Manor, stately home of millionaire Bruce Wayne and his youthful ward, Dick Grayson . . ."

I think I did a good job as Robin and as Dick, but that could be because my real nature is virtually identical to the characters (uh . . . or . . . almost, except the part about every mother knowing that nothing would ever happen to her daughter.) As the Boy Wonder, I enjoyed the opportunity to do all the things I had ever dreamed of as a little kid—and what I really wanted to do (and still want to do) as a grown-up kid.

“On Your Knees, Girls, and Stay in Line!”

At our personal appearances our dressing room was usually a trailer or motor home about twenty-five feet long, positioned behind the stage where we were signing autographs. There were curtains draped to block the trailer from the view of the thousands of parents and children anxiously waiting to see Batman and Robin.

While I was still married to Bonney I controlled my desires but knew that it was only a matter of time until my sexual addiction took control of me. Adam succumbed to the opportunities at hand every waking moment, even minutes before and after work. I felt he was cutting it too close. He had an insatiable cobra that needed to be fed or, more appropriately described, “nursed” constantly.

During breaks between autograph sessions I would return to the hotel to relax and grab a nosh. I remember returning to the hall about twenty minutes early one day, accompanied by show security. The security guys left, I opened the trailer door and went in. As I entered, I looked to my right and saw our employer and two assistants at a table and chairs, discussing arrangements for crowd control. I turned left to go to where Adam and I dressed, and I noticed the overhead light was off. However, the lights in the front of the trailer clearly illuminated the rear. There was Adam, leaning back on a cushioned bench in the shadows with his legs apart. All he wore was a shirt. I could see the back of a girl on her knees with her head buried in his lap, nibbling a nosh of her own. We were minutes away from going back onstage. I was stunned that he had allowed a young lady to bob his box in front of the people who hired us. **HOLY CHUTZ-PAH! . . . HOLY MOUTHFUL!**

I looked at the show guys. They were talking and either didn't bother to look at Adam, or saw what was happening and just figured, “Well, that's Adam going at it again.”

I turned back in semi shock. My eyes adjusted to the dimness. At

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the back of the trailer were two more girls who looked like teenagers, waiting their turn at his anaconda. Adam spoke firmly.

"On your knees, girls, and stay in line!"

HOLY DRILL SERGEANT!

I was awed by the control he exerted over those young ladies—and women in general—and never ceased to be amazed by his almost superhuman sexual prowess. I remembered the saying, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Adam's power was absolute!

I was surprised and yet curiously entertained. I started to laugh and wished I had a video camera to catch my crimefighting partner in one of his biggest performances. I was too embarrassed to just walk back there, so I went up front and took a seat with the guys.

Five minutes before we were to go on, I called, "Adam! We have to be onstage soon."

I heard a furtive rustle of footsteps and the three attractive young ladies exited.

"Adam, I can't believe what you were doing with the producers right up front."

"What was I doing?"

He answered with his customary innocent twinkle. I caught his drift.

"Okay, Adam, then how did you like what you weren't doing?"

He smiled.

"Beyond decadence!" was his reply.

That became our secret code to describe the exhilarated feeling we had after spectacular sex.

I sensed that my continuing exposure to Adam's carnal appetite was drawing me into following in his footsteps. Not fulfilling my growing hunger was like torture. I was addicted mentally—and physical release was only a few steps behind. My personal life was drifting towards obsessive sensual indulgence, and I couldn't stop myself.

Back to the BatCave

“We put on our tights so we could put on the world. We were the only Superheroes who wore our underwear on the outside of our clothes.”

The premiere was over. The ratings were in, and *Batman* was a smash. The show received a Nielsen share of fifty-five percent for the first night's episode, meaning that of all the television sets turned on in America at that time, **FIFTY-FIVE PERCENT OF THEM WERE TUNED IN TO *BATMAN!*** It was no longer the world's best-kept secret, it was the world's biggest success.

Batman also became one of the biggest successes in television history. After three years of prime-time television—twice a week for the first two years—and nearly thirty years of worldwide syndication (reruns on independent television stations and cable to this day), I believe that *Batman* merchandise, toys, games, T-shirts, cups, saucers, underwear, pajamas, sheets and pillowcases, chewing gum and nearly everything else you can imagine attained gross retail sales of over \$3 billion.

After I earned my first paycheck, Bonney and I went looking for a new place to live, closer to the studio and a step up in the world. We actually moved up twelve giant steps to the twelfth floor of the Barington Plaza, a group of three fifteen-story apartment buildings in an upscale business/residential complex in West Los Angeles, a few minutes from UCLA. Our apartment was a few floors above the one into which Bruce Lee and his wife, Linda, would soon be moving.

The Boy Wonder Goes Public

The first personal appearance I ever made became the largest two-day gig of my career. It was a few months after *Batman* began airing. My agents booked me a Saturday and Sunday autograph party at

the B & I Circus Store in Tacoma, Washington, a gigantic general-merchandise operation that featured caged baby wild animals throughout the store. B & I was the size of a small mall.

The store not only assembled a spectacular advertising campaign, which included handing out raffle tickets for tens of thousands of dollars in prizes; they also arranged with the University of Washington football team to furnish their top eleven players as my bodyguards.

The news of my upcoming appearance in costume generated crowds that no one expected or imagined. On the Wednesday before my first Saturday signing, traffic came to a halt six blocks from the store when thousands began camping out in all directions. Store personnel panicked when the fire marshal and the police declared a major safety hazard and ordered people to clear at least enough space for safe entry and exit of the building.

Since the start of the series, I had been spending nearly all my waking time filming, with the exception of quiet weekends at home. I had no concept of the reaction our show was causing and figured fifty to a hundred people at most each day would come to meet the Boy Wonder. I didn't even know what I was supposed to do except say hello. I had never signed an autograph in my life.

From the moment Bonney and I arrived in Washington, the security was presidential. On Saturday, when we left the hotel room (booked under someone else's name), the procession to the store totaled eight cars plus a stream of police in front of us, behind us and alongside us. I couldn't believe the need for so much security until I saw acres of people standing shoulder to shoulder, waving and cheering. Even with our security, two cars were overturned by the exuberant crowd. We were lucky it wasn't us. Bonney was four months pregnant, and I worried about the danger to our baby.

People went berserk upon my arrival and throughout the two days of appearances. More than 310,000 raffle tickets were handed out, and \$150,000 damage was sustained by the store as fans climbed on tables and pushed their way closer. My athletic bodyguards were bruised by ardent Boy Wonder admirers stepping on their feet, trying to jump over them from counters to get to me, and even biting them on the ankles.

As I was escorted from my dressing area across cordoned-off areas to where I was supposed to sign, I would pass within a few feet

of the crowd. I recall two elderly lady shoppers who obviously had never seen our show. As I passed them, one lady turned to the other and said, "Hmmpf. Look at that . . . damn hippie!"

I found that hilarious and still do whenever I think about that appearance.

Equally memorable was my personal petting tour of the baby wild animals. First I held a three-month-old gorilla. He was about the size of a three-year-old child, but his arms were almost as long as mine. One of the defensive players handed him a football as a joke. The gorilla examined it carefully and smelled it. The player was laughing and trying to show him how to throw it. The baby gorilla had hands so large and fingers so long and thick that he could easily hold the ball in one hand. After toying with it in his own way, this little baby suddenly smashed the football between those giant hands. The air exploded out and scared all of us, including the little gorilla. I was stunned. I had watched a lot of football with huge players, but I'd never seen anybody break a football. What incredible strength that animal had!

Bonney and I fell in love with a baby lion, Clarence the Cross-Eyed Lion's brother, born in captivity. I don't know what prompted us to do so, but we bought the cub from the store. The problem was how to have it sent to us. I didn't know there were laws in each state about the transportation of wild animals. I remember going to Los Angeles International Airport to pick up the lion. As the baggage came down the motorized ramp, I saw a wooden crate with air holes that was addressed to me. It had CAT written in big letters on all sides. Well, technically that was correct.

I brought the lion cub back to our two-bedroom apartment in the Barrington Plaza. We already had ten cats, nine more than our lease allowed. Luckily I was friendly with one of the two owners of the \$22 million project. He let me keep the lion and all the cats in our cramped quarters.

The little lion loved the cats and wanted to play with them, but they wanted no part of him. This lion was smart. He watched those cats entering our bathroom to get to their sandbox and pretended to sleep in the doorway as he waited for one to pass.

WHAM! A huge lion paw came down on the back of a cat. I was worried that it might be lunch for him, but all he did was wash the cat's fur practically off its body.

I named the lion Puff because he had a big black puff on the end of his tail. Unfortunately, as his body grew, his lungs were not able to keep pace with the doubling of his size every two weeks. At the first sign of his problems, I called Dr. Charles McWherter, the wild animal expert who raised Clarence, and he provided the finest care possible. But two months later, Puff died. It was the first loss by death that I was aware of, and it saddened me more than anything I had ever experienced.

The people at the B & I Circus Store offered me the little gorilla, which was now six months old and not so little. I was reluctant to take him, not because of what he would grow into, but because I wasn't prepared to chance the loss of another life.

As Bonney became noticeably larger, we both started having nesting tendencies and realized an apartment on the twelfth floor of a high-rise in a busy area was not the ideal place to raise a child. We looked for a home on a quiet street and found one in Brentwood, a classy westside residential neighborhood. The house was on the site of the original merry-go-round area of the Shirley Temple estate. It was magnificent—not large, but beautifully finished in wood and glass, with overhead beams and pegged hardwood floors. The landscaping was like a tropical jungle, with babbling brooks and a koi pond with a hand-carved wooden bridge leading from the parking area to the front door.

Everything was perfect about the house, but not about our marriage. My sheltered background made for a difficult transition into Hollywood. Too much exposure to an alien lifestyle was the breeding ground for trouble. Emotional turmoil was the byproduct of a naive twenty-one-year-old trying to maintain two separate lives, a public one in front of the camera and a private one with a young, pregnant wife at home. Both were tugging for time and attention. The only solution was to clone myself or unite my dual lives into one. The first one was impossible. **HOLY SPLIT PERSONALITIES!** The second I attempted.

My Bonney Lies Over the BatCave

As a result of some long, emotional conversations, Bonney stayed on the set daily. Initially the pressure abated. As a teenage crime-fighter, the young ward of a philanthropic do-good millionaire on a

prime-time network television series targeted to "kids of all ages," how much trouble could anyone like me get into? Plenty!

I never expected to have the remotest shred of a love affair onscreen. After all, Batman and Robin were antiseptic. But during the first season, one of the scripts called for me to kiss the cheek of another teenager, Donna Loren ("Susie"), a student at Gotham City High.

Being childishly innocent, Bonney felt that kissing another woman, even on the cheek, was being unfaithful to our marriage. Her purity of thought almost cost me my job. I didn't want her to take the blame, so I mentioned to the director that I didn't feel comfortable kissing the actress.

"Isn't there something else I can do?"

"No, just kiss her!" was the director's response.

I balked, and that led to a telephone call to the production office. Minutes later the associate producer, Bill D'Angelo, was on the set asking me what the problem was. Apparently everyone found it hard to believe that I was really serious.

"It's just a kiss. What's the big deal?"

The mule in me wouldn't budge because I knew how upset Bonney was. Ten minutes later the executive producer, William Dozier, called for my presence.

Soon I was back on that seat in the middle of his office. No telling how many victims were hornswoggled into capitulating in that executioner's chair. Dozier walked around me as he tapped his palm with his riding crop.

"You're going to kiss that girl or you'll be back picking up Coke bottles from the beach."

I flashed back to my pre-Bat days in that tiny Santa Monica apartment. Dozier knew about my life-supporting income.

I realized I was much better off now than before, so I agreed to Dozier's demand to kiss the girl.

"Okay, sir. I'll do it. I guess my wife won't mind."

Unfortunately, Bonney did mind . . . big time! Between takes, words erupted between us and our disagreements became a battle seen by everyone on the set. The result made filming more difficult. It was hard to be energetic, exuberant and excited in front of a camera when you hurt inside. It was even harder to perform in front of your spouse

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

ten hours a day as she tearfully watched you and focused her pain in your direction.

It wasn't just the kiss—it was everything. Bonney accused me of losing interest in our marriage. Maybe she was right. I felt that I had lost control of my life, that I was being distanced from everything except my job. I was bombarded from every direction to maintain a "perfect image" of the role I portrayed, so I began to retreat from everyone and everything. The mental strain was continuous. It became laborious to learn my lines, which, with my near photographic memory, was something with which I would normally never have a problem. I felt trapped. Bonney felt betrayed. There was no win for either of us, and no romance to counterbalance the emptiness. Our life at home became as silent as our life on the set. We couldn't find a solution, and neither was happy.

Our disagreements became public, and our too-early marriage was ultimately taking its toll.

‘Keep an Eye Out for the Big Polynesian Mama Who Looks Like She Got Hit in the Face With a Plank!’

Sunday noon—another weekend gig, Batman and Robin are set to go on stage at 1.00 p.m. I was still at the hotel when Adam called. “Burdy?”

“Hi, Adam!”

“What are you doing?”

“Watching a football game. What about you?” I asked.

“Recovering from a terrible experience last night,” he said.

“What was her name?” I asked.

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

He paused. He was extremely bothered by something.

“I’m not sure I want to appear there this afternoon. Maybe you’d better go on without me.”

“I don’t think so, Adam. They’re paying for both of us. What’s the problem?”

He recaptured control of his emotions.

“I’ll see you downstairs,” he said.

I could hear desperation in his voice.

The show impresarios picked us up and took us to the convention center. Adam was unusually quiet. I thought for once I’d give him a little peace.

Inside the building I couldn’t help noticing Adam’s furtive glances in all directions. Either he was looking for somebody, or somebody was looking for him. As we approached our dressing trailer, he pulled me aside.

“You gotta help me, Burt.”

"Okay. What is it?"

Adam put his hand to his forehead and shook his head in dismay.

"I had too much to drink last night and I made a terrible mistake.

I'm afraid she may show up here and I don't want to face her!"

So that's what it was. Adam was hiding from the previous night's conquest. I thought I would find out a little more by playing naive.

"Who are you talking about?" I probed.

Adam didn't fall for it.

"Here's what I need you to do, Burt."

He paused. It pained him to talk about it.

"KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE BIG POLYNESIAN MAMA WHO LOOKS LIKE SHE GOT HIT IN THE FACE WITH A PLANK!"

"What?" I asked.

"I'm telling you she's gonna show up here, and you've got to warn me so I can hide in the trailer until she leaves. And you've got to tell her that I'm not here!"

I thought to myself, His Horniness must really have been desperate last night. Apparently the beauty he bedded looked beauty to him afterwards.

"I can't tell her you're not here. That would be a lie," I answered innocently.

"So lie! You've got to keep that Amazon away from me."

He was in agony, and I was suddenly having fun. I began to lay it on a little thicker.

"She sounds like a nice girl. You know, Adam, I think it's about time you settled down. You haven't been married for a while. Any chance you might consider this vision of beauty as prospective nuptial material?"

Adam winced. "Geez, Burt, with those lips she could suck the chrome off a bumper!"

I laughed, but I shouldn't have. It was a demeaning thing he'd said. I felt sorry for her. But now I was more curious than ever to see what he'd gotten himself into *literally*.

Nearly two hours later we were in our last minutes of the first of two appearances for the day. The girl hadn't shown up. Maybe Adam was going to huck out. It was time for what we called the "seventh-inning stretch," which was really nothing more than a "BatRoom" break

in our trailer. We also took five or ten minutes to remove our masks and give our heads a chance to breathe.

We took separate breaks that afternoon. The lines of BatFans waiting to see their heroes were so long that if both of us took a break simultaneously, we might have a riot on our hands. The average waiting time to see us, once in line, was a little over two hours. I felt bad for the little kids. Often, when it came their turn to see us, they had already fallen asleep in their mom or dad's arms. After waiting so long they never even got to meet us.

Adam returned to the stage and picked up his microphone. I could tell he was about to cut loose with one of his great put-ons.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I apologize for the extra time I spent backstage, but unfortunately, I had a terrible accident. I was in deep meditation in our mobile BatRoom, and when I flushed, my cape got stuck in the toilet and I nearly strangled. I'm feeling better now."

He turned to me.

"Robin, how fast is our line moving?"

"Gosh, Batman," I answered. "It's really been picking up speed. We're up to the blistering pace of two inches per hour."

People in line were chuckling.

"Impressive!" he retorted.

He sat, and I rose to take my quick break.

As I walked down the stairs behind the stage, I heard him teasing one of our adoring little fans.

"Excuse me, young man," he said. "I have an itch inside one of my BatEars. Would you scratch my cow?"

The boy scratched the ear of Adam's mask.

"Wonderful!" Adam said. "Thanks, I needed that."

The youngster giggled some more. I laughed even though I'd heard that line a hundred times. Adam was very good with kids. It was only with the grown-up kids that he got himself into trouble.

In the trailer I took off my mask and rubbed my eyes. The mask irritated my eyelashes, and I was tired. Greeting so many parents and their kids is exhausting. Everyone in line expects a special moment, and Adam and I went out of our way to make them happy.

Time to return. I put my mask back on, took a deep breath and came out of the trailer. As I approached the stairs at the back of the

stage. I noticed there was someone standing out of view at the curtained area adjoining our dressing room. Curiosity caused me to take a closer look

"Oh, my God. It's her!"

I approached the lady. She was Samoan and had a large build with even larger features. Her shoulders were actually wider than Adam's, and a bodybuilder would have loved to have those upper arms. I understood why Adam might be afraid of a confrontation with her. I glanced at the size of her hands and the thickness of her fingers and concluded that I wouldn't want those hands around my throat. I remembered that one of our security guards at a prior appearance was Samoan. He had told me about his life growing up there and had explained their culture is much more violent than ours. "Samoan kids growing up don't think they're loved unless they get hit by their parents at least three times a day."

I introduced myself and asked if she was there to see Adam.

"Yes," she replied

Through all the wild and crazy times I've had, I made a point of only getting physically involved with girls I really liked as much as I perceived them to like me. I never got intimate with someone I was ashamed to be seen with or whom I avoided after sharing their most precious personal affections. I felt badly for this lady. Every fan is not a beauty queen, and she certainly wasn't, but I could tell that she adored Adam and would be crushed if she were shunned or avoided. As much as I had laughed at the choice of words Adam used when he first related his interlude with her, now I wasn't laughing. I felt she deserved to be treated fairly and decided that I was going to make sure she was.

So though my first instinct was to cover for him, I believed she deserved to have the opportunity to confront him, thereby forcing him to deal with the situation

"Please come into our trailer. You can wait for Adam there. We're almost finished with our appearance today."

She went into our dressing room. I went back onstage and began, "Adam, I've got to tell you something."

"Save it for later. I've got to talk to these kids." He chuckled.

"Thank God I got out of facing that nightmare."

I knew he was referring to his "Polynesian Mama" and I was instantly steaming mad.

"Okay, Romeo," I said to myself "You're about to get a surprise visit from Juliet!"

It was 4:00 p.m. and Adam dashed back to the trailer. I stayed onstage to sign autographs for a few last kids. I also wanted to avoid the holocaust. I wondered what was happening inside. I'll bet my senior crimefighting partner was facing one of his greatest challenges. I didn't hear the roof being torn off, which she could easily have done. I didn't hear a window breaking from Batman being thrown through it. I didn't even hear a scuffle. The big guy in the blue cape had seemingly avoided his own lynching. But how? What was the key to his success? Had he decided that it was better to make love than war, especially one he would lose? Was he at that very moment having a second serving of his Polynesian Mama? I never found out but I'd love to know.

“Sorry, Burt, I Had to Do It!”

How many times have I heard those words of Adam West's resonate inside my head? Hundreds! And how many times have I questioned the reasons for the actions that precipitated those words? Hundreds! This is the executioner's sentence that Adam personally delivered to me after each shot in which he purposely blocked the camera's view of me or intentionally stomped on my lines or committed some other dastardly deed. But why? Why would anyone block another actor from the camera or willfully step on another performer's dialogue?

The answer? Greed. What? What has greed got to do with it?

Everything. Some people can't get enough money to satisfy their desires, so they commit unscrupulous acts to line their pockets with cash, regardless of what they do, how they do it or how much they hurt others. Some actors turn inward and think only of themselves. Even their friends and family suffer while the self-focused performer hungers insatiably for screen time so he can bask in the warm sun of popularity.

What that kind of actor really wants, if he could have everything the way *he really wants it*, is to be onscreen every second of every day with no distractions, such as commercials or other actors — just limitless close-ups of his face. This is the person who envisions conquering everyone and forcing them to fix their attention on him, and to worship him like a god . . . the ultimate screen hog.

We all know what happens to hogs. They get slaughtered.

Granted, these are heavy statements. But unfortunately, they apply perfectly to a performer who considers himself more popular than James Bond (Adam boasts that he was offered the coveted role and turned it down), and on a level with the world-class superstar status of the Beatles, Mickey Mouse, John Wayne, Michael Jordan, Roger Moore, James Garner and Paul Newman. The ultimate stretch of real-

ity, the one I gag on every time I think of it, is how he says he felt when he first put on the cowl: the same way Charlton Heston felt when he played Moses! Can you believe that? Moses! Moses parted the Red Sea.

"Adam, come back down to earth. You and I both know the closest you've ever come to Moses' parting of the Red Sea was your parting of some redhead's legs!"

My friend managed to conjure even remote comparisons—to Winston Churchill, J. Paul Getty, Thomas Edison, Errol Flynn, James Cagney, Humphrey Bogart, Jack Lemmon and . . . Bugs Bunny?

I need to scream AAAAAhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

Lest anyone misinterpret, I adore Adam. As a friend, he is almost the greatest. As a fellow actor, I wanted to wring his neck hourly.

"Sorry, Burt, I had to do it!"

That rationalization was usually spoken in low enough tones that no one else could hear. These acting transgressions were intentionally hidden from the director, the script supervisor and the assistant directors. Had they been noticed, they would never have been allowed. Adam took pains to make certain no one would find out what he had done until it was too late to reshoot the scenes.

What does all this mean, you say? I speak of what is known in theatrical terms as upstaging.

Upstaging describes the relative position of, usually, two actors so the camera will see the face of the actor doing the upstaging and the back of the other actor's head. It is a proven technique of forcing an audience's attention on the perpetrator to the detriment of the victim. Consider this: Television audiences must watch what they see onscreen. If you are an actor among others on a show, your actual screen time is effectively limited by the amount of dialogue and action written for you, the director's determination of the camera angles used to film the dialogue and action, and the editor's selection of footage to be included in the finished program as opposed to what is left on the cutting room floor.

An unscrupulous performer can upset the creative balance of professionals whose interests are for the good of the entire show. Simply by speaking slowly, a shrewd operator can force the camera to linger on him. So what happens to the screen time of the other actors on the same show? It's reduced accordingly.

**Under the Tutelage of the
World's Greatest Upstager: Adam West!**

Having learned some painful upstaging lessons as Adam's foil, I feel reasonably qualified to describe some of the finer points of this international grand master's technique. Let's say that you are an unscrupulous actor and you aren't satisfied with Upstaging 101, which may only be saying your lines more slowly to hold the camera on you longer. Let's say, in your more advanced state of self-interest, you want to make sure no other actors in the same show have a chance to fairly share screen time. What can you do to annihilate your competition? Well, you can start by shortening *their* dialogue. How?

Step one is to jump in on top of another actor's lines before he finishes speaking. Every word you successfully take away from another actor results in less screen time for him and substantially more for you.

For the consummate expert in upstaging, the would-be Darth Vader operating from his own Death Star, one of the most advanced upstaging techniques is to speak lines with a stilted stop-and-go style and a ragged ending. This creates an unnatural silence before the next actor's dialogue, leading the audience to believe that the upstager has more lines to say. Therefore the audience's attention remains on that actor in expectation of important words to come. The unfortunate actor who has been upstaged must think quickly and utilize this pause to figure some way to catch the audience's attention before speaking, or chance their missing his lines altogether. Well-executed upstaging ruins the timing of the actor who has to speak after the upstager, can effectively confuse him and make him stammer his lines, and can even obliterate his speech entirely.

After being upstaged in a scene in which I knew that only the back of my head would show, I would innocently ask Adam why he couldn't have performed the scene without ruining my work.

"Sorry, Burt, I had to do it!" would always come the reply.

I would sometimes even ask nicely a second time.

"But, why, Adam?"

And he would always repeat the same answer without further explanation.

"Sorry, Burt, I had to do it!"

How many times have you watched the *Batman* series and wondered why you see so much of the back of Robin's head? How many times have you noticed Batman's advanced cape blocking techniques, which covered the Boy Wonder's face? How many times can you remember Batman speaking his lines so slowly that you could fall asleep between the words, and then watch him rush at blistering speed to stomp on Robin's short, quickly spoken dialogue before the Boy Wonder could clearly enunciate his lines? **HOLY SECRET AGENDA, BATMAN! HOLY DIRTY TRICKS, BENEDICT ARNOLD!**

Here is a simulated example of excruciatingly slow dialogue as performed by grand master West.

BATMAN (*slower than snails making love*).

"I . . . think . . . we . . . should . . . pay . . . him . . . a . . . visit!"

ROBIN (*fast and energetic*)

"You're . . . [right, Batman]."

("right, Batman" is overlapped by Adam and lost for all eternity)

BATMAN (*interrupting, stomping and bellowing like an irate water buffalo*):

"Precisely, old chum!"

(*A Grand Canyon pause, and then even more slowly*)

"I . . . suspect . . . that . . . he . . . may . . . be . . . up . . . to . . . some . . . nefarious . . . new . . . scheme!"

ROBIN (*snoring privately and to himself*):

"Come on. Get real, Adam!"

Comic readers already knew almost everything about their favorite Superheroes, but new BatFans often asked, Who is Batman? Who is Bruce Wayne? Was Adam West's portrayal of these fictional characters easy or difficult? What went on behind closed sound stage doors?

Batman—Bruce Wayne—Adam West

Batman is a crimefighter and defender of righteousness extraordinaire. His parents were murdered by dastardly crooks and he vowed to avenge their death by fighting crime. He chose the costume of a bat to strike fear and terror into the hearts of heinous villains.

Bruce Wayne is his true identity. He is a millionaire philanthropist, a humanitarian, and a man of great integrity.

Adam did a remarkable job as Bruce, inasmuch as the character is so totally unlike the real Adam West. However, as the other half of the Dynamic Duo, I have always felt that Adam was more like Batman than Batman! He was the quintessential Superhero, with a face of stone and a style of acting as wooden as a larger-than-life crimefighter should be. As opposed to Adam's ongoing accusations that I looked like a raccoon in my Robin mask I often accused him of looking hilariously crossed-eyed in his crimefighter's cowl.

One of Adam's biggest continuing arguments with the producers was that as Robin, the Boy Wonder, I seemed to come up with all the right answers in every episode before Batman could even make his first guess. Adam accused the writers and producers of ganging up on him to make him appear stupid. Looking out for the best interests of the entire show, the producers didn't want to have a Boy Wonder who wasn't a whiz, so they compromised and gave Adam half the lines that solved each problem. Unfortunately for Adam, his upstaging tactics of taking long pauses before speaking, and then dragging each word out to hold the camera on him longer, may have given him more screen time—but even with the right answers, he certainly didn't come out looking any smarter.

A Threesome in the Batmobile

During the run of our series I only recall Batman and Robin bringing four outsiders back to see the BatCave. One was Molly (Jill St. John), the Riddler's girlfriend, whom I discussed earlier. The second was the Penguin (Burgess Meredith), whom we brought back to the BatCave in the full-length feature film we made. Third was Lydia Limpet (Francine York), whom we took to the BatCave to interrogate with our Hypermetric Lie Detector in hopes of locating the elusive Bookworm (Roddy McDowall). And fourth, we brought Batgirl back to the BatCave during our last television season.

This particular scene was simple. The BatCave was already pre-lit from the many scenes we had shot earlier. There was no large group

of actors to be directed, it was just the three of us, Adam, Yvonne and me. Compared with the complex fight scenes, which required extensive choreography and rehearsal, this one was easy. We were seated in the Batmobile for a short dialogue sequence. And yet the scene ended up taking an hour and a half of "golden time" (after-hours filming beyond the twelve-hour work maximum; union contracts provided for triple pay per hour for every member of the cast and crew), and thus cost the production company a fortune. Here's why.

We had already shot the first sequence—pulling into the cave with the Batmobile as Batgirl dozes from a whiff of BatSleep we had given her (to keep her from knowing the whereabouts of the BatCave and discovering our secret identities). Next we shot Batman giving her a whiff of anti-BatSleep, and Batgirl awakening to find herself in the BatCave. Now that Batman had honored his promise to show her our secret hideout, it was time to film the three of us in the Batmobile as Batman gives Batgirl another dose of BatSleep, after two lines of dialogue between Adam and me, we drive the Batmobile out of the BatCave.

This last scene was filmed in two sections. The first included some initial dialogue, with Batman giving Batgirl the BatSleep. Those shots went perfectly.

Batgirl was now asleep. We had one shot left with our two lines. Here is the gist of what the dialogue was supposed to be:

ROBIN: "Gosh, Batman. Batgirl sure is beautiful."

BATMAN: "I'm glad you noticed, Robin. It shows me a sign of your oncoming manhood."

Through take after take, Adam kept screwing up his dialogue. We had been filming since early morning, and now it was late and everyone was exhausted. The twelve-hour union limit had already expired. I thought the heat of the incredibly hot 10K arc lamps used to light our set was taking their toll on my crimefighting buddy. Any working actor can tell you stories of how disorienting it can be if the lights are too hot or if there isn't enough air circulating through the set. It's happened to me many times, although I have been accused of being disoriented even when I don't have a legitimate excuse.

After eighteen takes, director Oscar Rudolph approached and said, "Adam, this is absolutely our last take. You've gotta make it work. We

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have to use this shot, because we're outta time, we're outta film and we're way over budget. And if you don't get it right on this shot, I'm out of a job!"

Adam promised he would do his best.

Oscar turned and walked behind the camera, and Adam winked at me. Okay, now I knew what was going on. He was purposely goofing up his lines so a situation would be created where the director would have to use the last take. It would be the only one that wasn't flubbed. Most importantly, Adam would have free rein to throw in some extraneous dialogue that there was no way to correct, because there was no time to reshoot. It was premeditated improvisation.

The only question now was, What kind of a zonker was Adam going to lay on the audience, the crew and the censors? I didn't have to wait long to find out. Here is the same dialogue with the one added word Adam used to cast an entirely different meaning into the scene.

ROBIN "Gosh, Batman. Batgirl sure is beautiful."

BATMAN "I'm glad you noticed, Robin. It shows me your oncoming **THRUST** of manhood."

HOLY SEXUAL SYMBOLISM! HOLY GRAB 'EM BY THE GONADS! He successfully slipped that suggestive dialogue past the director, the assistant directors and the script supervisor.

However, after the next day's dailies, Adam had a lot of explaining to do about the patently offensive implications he had created. With no time or budget to reshoot the scene, the producers were coerced into sneaking this scene past the ever-vigilant network censors.

Holy Maternity Ward! The Boy Wonder's \$86,000 Baby

The film crew labor unions exercised great power over the studio and our show's producer. I had never heard the term "featherbedding" and was shocked to learn that the production company had to pay for extra personnel to stand around just in case someone got sick and couldn't perform his job. Even more unbelievable were strict union policies that only cameramen could touch the cameras, only gaffers could move lights, and only stagehands could move and

"Sorry, Burt, I Had to Do It!"

assemble the sets I didn't know this at the time and found out the hard way.

During the first sequence in the BarCave, I noticed that a small plant on the table in front of me was restricting my view of Batman. I pushed it aside. The next day I was called on the carpet. The studio had been assessed a \$500 fine because a card-carrying greenery man hadn't moved it for me.

I followed my initial faux pas later in the week when the second assistant director told me to go to the sound stage next door. I left the BarCave set and walked no more than fifteen feet to the next stage. **HOLY FLACK!** Because I wasn't driven the 160 inches by a union driver, the producers were fined \$2,500—this was obviously a more serious offense than moving a plant.

The studio got off easily with these fines, compared with what I cost them next.

I had forewarned Greenway Productions well in advance that I would definitely leave the set to be with my wife at the hospital for our baby's birth. On the morning of August 4, 1966, I got a frantic call from Bonney. The time had arrived! I left.

This caused an uproar. I was in every scene, so the entire production came to a halt and the crew was given the day off at full pay. (Union contracts required the studio to pay the crew whether they worked or not.)

A funny thing happened on the way to the hospital. Bonney wanted to keep the car windows down so she could have plenty of fresh air. But every time we came to a traffic light she seemed to have another contraction and would let out a cry of pain. Drivers on either side of us looked at me as though I were beating my wife. I repeatedly announced that she was in labor. It was still embarrassing.

Our personal differences momentarily disappeared with the realization that we were about to bring a precious human being into this world. We decided to try to make our marriage work.

A few hours later we had a beautiful baby girl, and to me she will always be my beautiful baby. We named her Lisa Ann. That night mother and daughter stayed in the hospital while I returned to an empty home. In those days, fathers couldn't spend the night at the hospital unless they wanted to sleep on a wooden chair in the waiting room.

The next day everyone cheered my arrival on the set. Some of the older crew teased me that the Boy Wonder was actually capable of having a real baby:

"Hey, Robin, I didn't think you could do it."

Some were even more sexually sarcastic.

"Boy Wonder, I didn't think you had it in you!"

Apparently I could and I did.

I also received an amazing telegram from ABC. It read:

Dear Burt,

*You cost us \$35,000 by leaving the studio yesterday morning.
Congratulations on the birth of your new daughter, Lisa!*

Deep Doo-Do

I soon discovered that my inexperience caused me innumerable problems, most of which I didn't see coming. Embarrassment and humiliation were often byproducts of poor judgment, such as when I thought I could slip away from a lunch break to go into Beverly Hills for some shopping.

It was a windy afternoon, and we were shooting outside on location across from the studio. A crew of chefs on the chartered catering truck were charbroiling steaks, and a magnificent lunch was being served outside for the cast, crew, production staff and some important visiting studio execs. Everyone was moving through the buffet line and seating themselves at rows of checkered-cloth-covered picnic tables. I wasn't hungry, so I thought I'd slip away for our hour break. We weren't supposed to leave the set, because a delay in returning could have cost the studio tens of thousands of dollars per half-hour while an entire union crew of ninety to a hundred people waited for the actor.

I felt sure I'd be back on time. It just meant slipping away from the eagle-eyed first and second assistant directors. I was determined to take the chance, so I eased myself to my car, looked back to make sure no one was watching and then backed up rapidly.

Unwittingly I created a massive, and I mean humongous, dust cloud that rose thirty feet in the air. I hadn't anticipated the effects of the wind. A tidal wave of dust and dirt proceeded directly toward the

hundred or so people who had just begun to eat. A space shuttle launch at Cape Canaveral couldn't have been more accurate. It is one of life's most torturous horrors when you know something bad is about to happen to a crowd of people who don't know it's coming. Worse yet, it's even more horrible when you know that *you* are the cause of the impending nightmare, and that not only is there no reasonable, plausible or logical excuse for what you have done, but that you have exercised an extraordinary amount of poor judgment and are totally at fault.

The entire production staff, including executive producer William Dozier and other 20th Century Fox studio brass, were directly in line with my descending dust fallout.

HOLY BUTTERFLIES IN THE STOMACH! The mountainous wave of gravel and grime hit its mark with the deadly accuracy of a Tomahawk missile. Crew members rose from their chairs and waved their arms in a feeble attempt to protect their food, to no avail. Others choked on mouthfuls of fine dust and rubbed their eyes. The place was in an uproar. My only out was that with such mass confusion and no visibility, I could hopefully speed off before anyone could identify the culprit and hang him by his gonads.

Although no one saw me leave, I failed to take into account the zealous investigation conducted by our new first assistant director, Bill Darwin, and his co-investigator, our new second assistant director, Reuben Watts. A simple roll call quickly identified who was there and who wasn't. Guess who wasn't there? After finding out it was me, there was a near riot among the crew as to who could be first to get their hands around my throat. Sam Strangis, who had been promoted to unit production manager, won the raffle.

I returned to the studio and turned to Adam for help. He succeeded in negotiating a *détente* with Sam so I could go back to work and finish the day's filming.

Needless to say, Adam's ego was stroked by the success of his diplomacy. I appreciated his efforts and was pleased to have avoided being burned at the stake. Following my cowardly appearance on the set that afternoon, my popularity plummeted drastically.

That wasn't the only downfall in my ratings. My popularity at home was irrevocably damaged as well. According to Bonney, her

great-great-grandfather was William Bonney, the infamous Billy the Kid. On prior occasions she had attributed her combustible temper as well as the unique spelling of her first name to that outlaw. I remember coming home from the hospital late one evening with raised blisters on my right arm and cheek from second-degree burns I had received during a hot-flash powder explosion earlier in the day. Bonney and I got into a disagreement and she used her long fingernails to puncture the fourteen-inch solid blister at the top of my shoulder. She dragged those nails down through the raised tissue to my forearm, emptying the blister of the liquid inside. I had to go back to the hospital that night and get my entire arm bandaged.

The next day I went to see Bill Dozier for advice. I had great respect for his wisdom. He listened intently to my entire story, reflected for a moment and said, "Burt, try everything you can to make your marriage work. But if you determine there is no solution and there is nothing more you can do, then be like a surgeon and cut it off."

Those words stick with me even today.

Divorce: Superhero Style

Bonney and I hoped the loving child we had created would heal the wounds. If there was ever a reason to make our marriage work, it was Lisa. She was the lifeblood that bound Bonney and me together for eternity.

But life at home became intolerable, and in September 1966 I asked for a divorce. I don't think I was mature enough then to fully comprehend the damage I was inflicting. Regardless of our disagreements, Bonney's love for me was pure, and my own identity crisis, however important it seemed to me at the time, was no excuse for devastating her life. I am very sorry for that. It is my deepest regret.

The Boy Wonder's divorce made front-page headlines and was featured in television news stories. It was also the sole topic of Rona Barrett's opening night as a TV gossip. When the story broke, I was ill with a fever and laryngitis. Reporters flocked to our outdoor set on the 20th Century Fox backlot. I didn't give any interviews because I

couldn't speak. All my dialogue that day had to be looped later and composited with the final footage.

Adam approached me during a break in the filming to tease me, saying, "Burt, that is the most brilliant and creative idea I've ever seen. What a coincidence that the day the world finds out about your divorce, you just happen to have laryngitis."

The cash and property settlement exceeded \$500,000 for one year of marriage. In 1968 that was a lot of money. It's still a lot of money! Bonney was given custody of our daughter, and I was given visitation rights. Bonney quickly remarried and moved north of San Francisco, and then to Washington state. Being so far away, I was only able to see Lisa twice a year.

I moved to Malibu and temporarily rented a beautiful beach house owned by Howard Schwartz, our director of photography.

My Crimefighting Cave in Malibu

I was earning serious money from appearances—ten times more in one day than I earned all week filming the show. I made two lucky real estate investments, took my profits and, with them and my savings, purchased a beach house in Malibu. I completely renovated it into a one-of-a-kind home. It had two stories, with floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors opening to expansive decks overlooking the relentlessly pounding surf.

I constructed the entrance with a variety of river-bottom rocks. The front door was made of hand-carved planks, six inches thick. The interior space combined carved wooden beams with floor-to-ceiling mirrors and lush tropical plants. All the furniture was built in. There were stone couches with sailcloth cushions, rock beds with custom mattresses, fireplaces in every room, sun-cured Saltillo tile floors, and indoor balconies with wrought-iron rails overlooking a twenty-foot rock waterfall cascading into a blue-tiled wading pool in the center of the house. A massive skylight provided natural light.

People who had no idea I lived there made a point of ringing my front gate and asking for a tour of what appeared to be a bats' nest on the beach. They were so anxious to get in that they even offered to pay.

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

I took no money but I did reluctantly get talked into giving a few tours. I really only wanted my privacy, because most of the time I was at the studio or on the road signing autographs to an average of 5,000 Bat-Fans per day. Because I spent so much time away, I craved the sanctity of a retreat. In time I realized I had created my own crimefighter's cave. All the rocks and water and plants represented a desire to escape from anything that looked like a set. I needed a strong dose of reality because I spent nearly every waking hour of my life either performing in artificial worlds or maintaining a Superhero image for others.

“Are Batman and Robin Gay?”

A mature man, unmarried and rarely seen in the company of women, takes a naive teenage boy under his wing. The boy isn't adopted, so there is no father/son relationship—and there has never been any such intention. They regard each other as equals and unequals at the same time—equal enough that the boy is treated like an adult, yet unequal in that the man dominates and controls him. There is no mother figure in the house with whom the boy can relate, only an elderly aunt who is kept in the dark as to the secret lives the man and boy share. No one really knows what goes on late at night, when the household retires.

Although not parental, there is a strong relationship between the two. The boy has been made a ward of the court, and the man has been given full custody and control over him. Young and impressionable, the boy reveres, emulates and worships his mentor in thought and deed.

The man has a powerful, imposing physique—muscular, full-chested, . . . like a bodybuilder. The boy's build is slight and firm. Both are good looking and agile, and maintain themselves in superb physical condition. The boy seldom dates girls. Presupposing that his interests are focused on academics and athletics, this teenager chooses to live a larger-than-life fantasy-reality with the man he idolizes rather than spend time with those his own age.

Both TV Superheroes constantly change clothes and identities, usually in each other's company, in bizarre fashion—wrapping their legs around a long pole and sliding either up or down so that if the altitude change didn't kill them, the friction might. Their costumes are so tight-fitting that every bulge and ripple is accentuated. Hiding their true identities, these two males switch between personalities faster than you can say “cross-dresser.” They share many secrets and spend long hours together alone in remote areas—undisturbed in a massive, impenetrable cave.

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

Wealth has made the man independent, powerful and in complete control of his lifestyle. With time on his hands, he is free to do as he pleases, when he pleases and with whom he pleases. Respected for his philanthropic contributions and business acumen, the man's motives and actions with his young ward are never questioned—and he knows it.

Whatever the man asks the boy to do is promptly obeyed. The boy is unlike other rebellious youngsters his own age, who balk and often defy their parents. The boy offers no resistance and submits to the man's every request—trusting him in blind devotion.

They live together in opulence befitting a baron. Exquisitely manicured grounds, a grand staircase leading to unknown rooms upstairs, spacious downstairs living areas decorated with macho furnishings—suits of armor in the foyer, heavy bookcases in the library, an imposing bust of Shakespeare, and enormous round vases in various sizes and shapes throughout the manor—create the stereotype of a strange and unnatural relationship fraught with closeted desires. **HOLY HOMOPHOBIA!**

Dr. Frederic Wertham, a prominent psychiatrist of the 1950s, wrote a controversial book in 1954 titled *Seduction of the Innocent*. In it he attacks the *Batman* comic book and condemns the behavior of the Dynamic Duo: "The feeling is conveyed that we men must stick together. They [Batman and Robin] live in sumptuous quarters, with beautiful flowers in large vases, and have a butler, Alfred. It is like a wish dream of two homosexuals living together."

Batman and Robin creator Bob Kane saw the relationship differently. He envisioned Batman as a Superhero above reproach, and Robin as the sidekick who got to do what Kane imagined every kid in the world would like to do (including himself)—ride in the Batmobile, climb up the sides of buildings and fight for justice next to the world's greatest Superhero. **HOLY FANTASY TRIP!**

As actors digging into the psyche of two-dimensional comic characters and looking for treasure, Adam and I came up shortchanged. Comic books are filled with action—not psychology. We were winging it until we found ourselves in costumes on the sets. Then our characters began to affect us in ways we never expected. In our outfits, we took on new life as Caped Crusaders. Integrating our dialogue with as much as we could glean from the comic book, our TV characters were born.

"Are Batman and Robin Gay?"

Our characterizations bore greater fruit psychologically than the comic book was capable of—not unlike Dr. Jekyll as he found himself taken over by Mr. Hyde. We avoided the darker side of our characters, it was safer just to say the dialogue, perform the action and try not to look too deeply into our Superheroes' psyches, because what we found when we did raised even our eyebrows.

We were flooded with questions and comments from kids and adults alike. I don't know how many hundreds (maybe thousands) of times over the last thirty years I have been asked "Why does Robin sleep on his stomach?" (Answer, "So Batman can't get his worm.")

Older BatFans questioned me at personal appearances about what they called "the strange and unnatural relationship between Batman and Robin." I always answered them the same way: "What's so strange and unnatural about two guys who run around in tights and live together?"

Still more nosy and zealous "truth inquisitors" grilled me about what Adam and I did to each other behind closed dressing room doors. A tabloid writer recently admitted to me that he has heard new homosexual stories circulating, even as this book goes to press to the effect that Adam and I had a torrid love affair on and off the set. Can you believe that?

It's true: Adam and I had a closer relationship than most actors who are merely co-starring in a series. In spite of our spats, we've always been personal friends (maybe our friendship has been based on having a lot in common), and we've gotten together socially. No question, we've had a lot of wild times together (this book testifies to that). No question that we've dressed and undressed in front of each other hundreds of times and made love in front of each other and next to each other on many occasions. Does that mean we've had a torrid love affair?

It's true: Adam and I spent long hours together filming our show, and at the end of the day—after dark, by the time we removed our costumes and makeup—we found a common bond in seeking a release of the tensions of our plugged geysers.

It's true: We share a special relationship and chemistry that is hard to define and harder to explain. While we were filming, we saw more of each other than we did our families. We have a lot of love for

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each other and the memories we've shared. Certainly that can't be misconstrued to mean more than it actually is and was. Can it?

We know who we are and we know what we've done and to whom we've done it. I've always felt comfortable in my own sexuality and believe in the old axiom, "He who looks behind the door has been there before."

Are Batman and Robin gay? Come on, you know the answer.

Fantasies Fulfilled

I sat on the edge of the bed waiting. The bathroom door opened slowly and a ravishing young woman emerged SHE WAS WEARING MY ROBIN COSTUME, EVERYTHING EXCEPT MY TRUNKS! I was stunned.

Her long brown hair flowed over the back of my cape. Her piercing blue eyes filled the openings of my mask. Her large breasts stretched my T-shirt and crimefighting vest to the limit.

She put her hands on her hips and took a familiar stance.

"All right, you fiend!" she purred.

I smiled and noticed she had several colorful scarves tucked into my utility belt. Even my BatBoots looked sensational on her. In fact, she looked better in the costume than I ever had.

She placed the scarves on my shoulders, teasingly brushed against me and stepped onto the bed. Entranced, I watched her lie down and stretch her arms and legs suggestively toward the bedposts.

"I'm yours, Boy Wonder. Take me!"

She was a fan. I was the star. This was the moment she'd dreamed of. This was the spontaneous gratification I had come to expect.

I moved to her and gently glided my fingers back and forth through her pubic hair. It was warm and soft and glistened in the dim light of the bed lamp. Her eyes closed and her body tightened. I ran my hands slowly along her legs, trailing my fingertips over her peach skin, easing them down the soft crease on the inside of her thighs, and caressing the outer edges of her curly locks. She breathed deeply. Reaching underneath her, I clasped her small, firm buttocks in my palms and squeezed tightly. Her back arched into the air and her mouth opened. I raised her to meet my face. My tongue delicately spread her lips and I pressed against her, kissing her firmly and drawing her into my mouth. Her body shuddered twice and became limp in my hands.

I laid her down and removed the colored scarves from my shoulders. Methodically I began tying her to the bedposts, gently yet firmly, wrapping a scarf several times around each glove and boot to hold her steady but also to protect her wrists and ankles. She looked forward to being tied up. She sighed and groaned impatiently. I made sure the scarves weren't too tight.

I reached under the gloves and caressed the soft skin below her wrists. My fingertips slowly found their way down the inside of her arms, into the short sleeves of my green T-shirt, and into her armpits. Those were sensitive spots and she was aroused by my touch.

Moving to the front of my red crimefighter's vest, my hands caressed her breasts. The tautly stretched fabric of the vest and T-shirt that separated our flesh served to excite her more in anticipation of what was to come.

Reaching behind her, I lifted her back high enough to unzip the vest and detach it from its clasp. My hands freely moved up underneath and I ever so lightly spiraled the tips of my middle fingers over her hardened nipples. She loved that and strained against the scarves that held her. I kissed her deeply.

Sitting over her, close to her face, I removed my clothes. She watched hungrily.

She took me into her mouth, passionately engorged my organ and moistened it for a smoother entry.

The time had arrived. Slowly she began undulating her hips, waiting to receive the pleasure she craved.

Those scarves served another purpose. She had a tight, firm body. Too tight for the Boy Wonder. She couldn't take it all. The scarves were a necessity. Tied to bedposts, headboards or bed frames, they firmly held her arms and legs open as, slowly and carefully, I entered her.

She paced her breathing more slowly, consciously keeping herself focused and relaxed as her body accommodated more than it was accustomed to, both in width and length.

Such a gradual entry was equally difficult for me. Restraining an intense feeling of pleasure is agonizing torture, but this was a journey of extreme ecstasy that we willingly made together.

I fully penetrated her. Our bodies were wet but our mouths were dry.

"Now I know why they call you the Boy Wonder," she whispered.

Those words were an aphrodisiac, making my ego and everything else swell even more. Thereafter our lovemaking became intense, pounding and unrelenting until we exploded in long-awaited climaxes and collapsed in exhaustion.

Our bodies were stuck together. I raised myself above her and felt an instant cooling as air circulated over my moist skin. Whew!

Practical Jokes

Repetition and boredom were to be expected on weekend after weekend of personal appearances. I found that practical jokes tended to liven things up, although they made me equally subject to unexpected reciprocal pranks. The idea was to be fun-loving and innovative, never vicious or cruel. But between those two opposites, there was an enormous amount of fertile ground on which to be creative and absurd.

Adam and I both felt it was time to demonstrate true creativity. Adam put my BatBoots in our dressing trailer's refrigerator during a dinner break. Since I wore no socks, when I put them on just before the next appearance, I literally got cold feet. Not to be outdone, I managed to sprinkle itching powder in his tightly fitting one-piece leotard. Onstage those sharp, poking little shreds of sawdust did their job, and poor Adam looked like one of those sixties disco dancers who rolled their shoulders and quivered their chest muscles. He seemed to be doing the hula with his pectorals instead of his waist. He was in agony, scratching his neck, back, chest, legs and everything else.

Everyone knows that practical jokes can snowball into bigger and more dramatic acts, a sort of cold war escalating to a hot war of increasing wildness. Adam was wise. It didn't take him long to figure out that I never quit, so he tempered his jokes to keep things from getting completely out of control.

An Aging Crimefighter's Fiftieth Birthday?

I had just arrived in Ohio for an upcoming weekend appearance. It was a Thursday evening, and after checking into an impressive brand new twelve-story hotel, I strolled down to the hotel restaurant for a late dinner.

Sitting by myself, I had a vision of a fantastic practical joke. I decided to enlist the assistance of the entire hotel staff, or as many of them as I could, to celebrate Adam's fiftieth birthday. Now, the basis of the joke was that it wasn't Adam's birthday, and at the time, he wasn't anywhere near fifty. But nobody else in the hotel knew that.

As I ordered my dinner, I asked the waitress if she had heard about Batman and Robin coming to the hotel for a weekend stay.

"Oh, yes!" she said excitedly.

"Well," I continued, "Adam West, who plays Batman, is a friend of mine."

"Really?" she inquired. "Wait a minute. I know who you are. You must be him!"

"No," I said. "I'm not Batman."

"I know that," she said. "But you're the other one . . . Robin."

"Right."

"Oh, my God. You look just like yourself!"

"I should hope so," I responded.

I could tell by the dazzle in her eyes that she was thrilled to meet me and was someone I could enlist to aid me in my pursuit of the ultimate practical joke on my senior partner.

"Perhaps you don't know this," I continued. "Saturday is Batman's fiftieth birthday."

"Really?" she said.

"Oh, yes." Then I added, "And being away from home and separated from his wife and children on his birthday is kind of sad."

"Gee, that's terrible," she replied.

My eyes brightened.

"I have an idea. Why don't we give my good friend Adam a birthday party? It's not like being at home, but I'm sure it'll cheer him. And what a surprise it'll be!"

"That's a great idea," she said.

"Would you help me?" I asked.

"Yes. I'll do anything you say."

"Wonderful. Here's what we need to do."

I described the arrangements to be made. First we had to have a special birthday cake. She told me that the head chef did his own baking.

"Excellent! I'll need to meet with him to discuss what I want on the cake."

She said she would arrange that. Then I asked how large the hotel staff was—about fifteen to twenty waitresses, but that represented several shifts. She also said there were twelve bellboys, two bell captains and about a hundred maids, as well as the head of housekeeping.

"Can you put me in touch with one of the bell captains and the head of housekeeping?"

"Oh, sure," she said.

By the next day I had talked to everyone, and all was arranged. The head chef was going to bake a spectacular multilayered cake with a Batman figure and a Batmobile. After much coaxing, he finally agreed to put the following message on the cake

"Happy 50th Birthday, Batman!"

He had argued that putting the number fifty on the cake might make Adam feel old.

"No " I said, "he isn't ashamed about being fifty. He isn't over the hill. He would want his age on the cake, just like anyone else."

The chef looked at me strangely but finally consented.

I had a much harder task convincing the head of housekeeping to agree to knocking on Adam's door at 8:30 Saturday morning. She thought that might be too early. She was also concerned about violating the "Do Not Disturb" sign Adam would probably hang outside his door.

"Oh, you have to knock on his door at exactly 8 30 a.m ." I said with great concern "Mr. West goes jogging precisely at 9:00 and I wouldn't want him to miss his own birthday party."

I knew Adam wouldn't be out jogging on Saturday morning. He'd still be in bed. I knew he liked to drink and I was also sure that Friday night he would be returning to his room in the wee hours, feeling no pain. A noisy, robust, rousing early Saturday morning birthday party. What a lovely way to smash a hangover!

The bellboys were the last piece of the puzzle. They would coordinate getting the available waitresses and cooks to Adam's room with the birthday cake, and would also check the hallways to make sure every maid took a break to congregate in front of Adam's room. After deducting the minimum staff to maintain the critical needs of the hotel,

I calculated that about 100 people would be joyously knocking on an unsuspecting recovering carouser.

The trap was in place. All we needed now was the rat, or I should say bat.

On Saturday morning I awoke just before 9.00 I was surprised I hadn't heard anything from Adam, and I wondered whether or not the birthday party had taken place. Maybe something went wrong. I was about to call the bell captain when the phone rang. It was Adam.

"Burt! . . . Burt!"

The voice was hoarse, tired and ragged.

"Yes, Adam."

"Burt! Burt! I'll get you for this! If it's the last thing I do, I'll get you for this!"

"What are you talking about, Adam?"

"You know what I'm talking about. I was sleeping soundly with my 'Do Not Disturb' sign on my door and I hear this cherubic singing in the hallway."

"Really?"

"Yes. And they wouldn't go away. They kept singing 'Happy Birthday.'"

"How nice," I commented.

"It was terrible. I had an awful hangover from last night, which I still have. And they kept singing and singing!"

"What did you do?"

"I tried to go back to sleep but they wouldn't leave me alone. They started pounding on my door. I yelled that my 'Do Not Disturb' was on the door and they should leave me alone. But they kept knocking and knocking."

"Uh huh."

"Finally I crawled out of bed. My head was killing me. I opened the door and I think my breath knocked the first two or three of them over. My trouser buttons were open and I told them that I had an elephant in my pajama bottoms. They didn't care. They kept on singing."

"Unbelievable."

"I told them that it wasn't my birthday. Some big German lady with a guttural accent kept insisting that it was my birthday. She said she heard it on the radio. I told them to leave, but they wouldn't leave

until I let them all in and until they sang 'Happy Birthday' to me. It was awful!"

"Gee, I'm sorry to hear that, Adam."

I said that innocently as I held back hysterical laughter.

"When I saw that birthday cake, I was furious. I told them that I wasn't fifty. I grabbed the numbers off the cake and flushed them down the toilet. They still wouldn't leave until I ate a piece of birthday cake. Can you imagine that? I know you're behind this. What do you have to say for yourself?"

"What can I say, Adam? . . . except happy birthday!"

I hung up and let him recuperate from his post-birthday party trauma.

There is a corollary to this story. After a grueling weekend of autographing, Adam and I boarded a plane back to L.A. The plane was full, and Adam was intent on reading his newspaper when another vision struck me. It was too delicious to pass up. I had a brief conversation with a flight attendant, who then took me to meet the pilot and crew. I had another conversation with them and then returned to my seat across from Adam.

Moments later, the pilot issued a statement to the passengers and crew.

"Ladies and gentlemen, on tonight's flight we have a very special guest, Mr. Adam West, who you all know is Batman."

I watched Adam bury his face in his newspaper, but not before he cast me a scalding look. Then the pilot continued, "I have been requested to ask you and my fellow crew members to sing 'Happy Birthday' to Mr. West, who is celebrating his fiftieth birthday."

A flight attendant boldly went over and took the newspaper out of Adam's hands. Then she pulled him by the arm and made him stand up for all the passengers to see. We all sang "Happy Birthday." Everyone cheered for him at the end of the song. Poor Adam forced a smile and slunk back to his seat. His face was redder than my Robin vest.

Indecent* Exposure

(*Belle Barth's definition: "If it's long enough, hard enough and in far enough, it's indecent.")

Over sized, Underrated Problem!

To bulge or not to bulge, that is the question!"
"You've got to be kidding! Come on. Is this some kind of joke?"

I found it hard to believe then. I find it harder to believe now. Suddenly my most private parts became public. Greenway Productions' busy front office called to say that 20th Century Fox had called them because ABC network had called them because the Catholic League Of Decency had called ABC with outraged indignation that the Boy Wonder's genitalia bulged indecently and enormously out of his tights and through his BatTrunks. So vociferous were their complaints that ABC demanded immediate action with the implied threat that future airings of *Batman* could be in jeopardy!

All this panic seemed ridiculous to me over what I thought, in proportion to the totality of the colorful series we were making, was something comparatively small and unnoticeable, in other words . . . no big thing. I guess I misjudged the depth of the furor, because this problem was enormously big and extraordinarily noticeable in everyone else's eyes.

Imagine the mind set of the Catholic League Of Decency, which allocated time and energy to hire a qualified voyeur to study the crotches of male actors in anticipation of catching a glimpse of indecent swelling. And how are genitalia measured and rated as too large or too bulging? By eye alone, or is there some mechanical device that can be attached to a television screen to calculate with irrefutable pre-

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cision the height, length, thickness and, perhaps, even the weight of the offending penis and testicles?

Would such a device, if it exists, be able to further calculate mass, and chart geometrically the expansion possibilities, based upon factors such as wind velocity and temperature and recordable data criteria such as expansion due to friction within specific clothing and nerve fiber response to visual stimulation? Gimme a break!

"I Know Your Secret! You Stuff Turkish Towels in Your Undershorts!"

That's exactly what Adam said! And that comment is typical of him. He can tease a person unmercifully. All in fun, of course until you tease him back. In this case he exaggerated to subtly accuse me of being so microscopically small that I had to make use of giant Turkish towels to look normal, and that I went too far and ended up with an oversized bulge. That's the way his mind plays games. I thought his teasing was playful and didn't find out until later that he had a dark secret to hide, and that more than I, he needed help from the towel-makers of Turkey to solve his own undersized, overrated problem.

I was surprised and complimented by the enormous amount of time and energy devoted to the stretching of the fabric of my Bat-Trunks, while everybody else, and particularly all the suits, were frantically worried. However, my own amusement was abruptly curtailed when Jan Kemp, feared for his endless assault upon genitalia throughout the universe and frightfully dubbed the "terror of the underwear," descended upon me with an armada of god-awful penile restraints and testicle crushers the likes of which the world has never seen. Further, I was grossly unprepared for his self-proclaimed righteousness and the force and vigilance of his almost religious zeal to overcome my oversized problem.

In all fairness to Jan, he is a dedicated man, but his frequent offers to help me put on the various contraptions were politely but firmly rejected. I will never forget the detailed description he gave me of how to position my genitals in a dancer's belt.

"Grasp your penis in the palm of your right hand with your fin-

gers gently wrapping around the shaft and your thumb pointing toward the bulbous head. Then, with the back of your left hand, depress the center section of the belt until you can comfortably raise your palm to softly seat your scrotum. Then slide your left hand forward and release your testicles onto the material. Now you can correctly position your penis forward and up into the front of the belt. Would you like me to show you?"

"No thanks, Jan!"

Shrinking the Serpent . . .

On the Eleventh Commandment: "Thou Shalt Not Fool With Thy Tool!"

"Bind his balls and let's get on with the show," wisecracked a frustrated crew member.

He was referring to the ancient Oriental tradition of binding the feet of women to keep them as small as possible. His comment was a quantum leap across centuries and gender, but our wardrobe department took it seriously.

Dancer's belts, jockstraps, double-thick jockey shorts, dong socks, testicle supports, padded underwear . . . nothing reduced the swelling! Not even ice packs! The Battle of My Bulge was becoming an ever bigger problem, and the studio wasn't winning. And with the physical hell I was going through, I certainly wasn't coming out ahead either. Of course, each show's director could have been instructed to film me in such a way as to avoid the beast in the BatTrunks, as the crew referred to my problem. However, that would have been so artistically restrictive and time intensive that, from a practical point of view, it was nonsensical.

This crotch crisis whipped me back and forth between the insistent demands of the studio, the network and the production company. Faced with the witch-hunt threats of the religious right that kept rearing its angry, blood-filled, bulbous head, the production company's honchos decided enough was enough and it was time to bring in the heavy artillery. With great secrecy I was taken to a special doctor I can't remember his name but I do remember his thick German accent.

My memory blockage is probably due to my pre-visit trauma, which included nightmares of castration. You see, in show biz, extreme sacrifice is a given because everybody knows that the show must go on! Yeah, right.

The momentous day arrived and I was taken from Desilu-Culver Studios to the 20th Century Fox backlot. There, in a nondescript bungalow, the doctor was waiting. I nervously began to tell him the story, but he already knew it. I forced a smile and tried to make a little joke. He wasn't laughing. In fact, he wasn't even smiling — a bad sign.

"We're going to try something," he said.

I apprehensively acquiesced.

He held up his hand. "Enough!"

I never said another word.

He wrote a prescription. I don't know if it was for saltpeter or what. Whatever it was, I took it every two hours while I was shooting for the entire next show. It worked! During the filming of that episode, I became a shadow of my former self.

Then I began to worry. What if this stuff had lasting effects? What if later in life I might have to pay terrible consequences? I was only twenty-one years old and effectively much younger, because I had been sheltered as a child.

On the next show and thereafter, I stopped taking the pills, during each close shot. I managed to cover up and avoid exposing the monster. No one complained, and so I thought I had put this ordeal behind me. Wrong!

Apparently there was a security leak (maybe that's an overstatement; maybe it was only a security drip) in the *Batman* production office's "code of silence," and during an interview with *Look* magazine, I was asked a surprise question concerning rumors circulating about me involving bulging tights. Somebody had let the cat out of the bag or, more appropriately, the organ out of its sack! I didn't deny the truth but said as little as possible. Of course, anything I said only served to bring more attention to it. What I needed was a penile press agent to hold off a wave of unwanted publicity. Most of the press did use restraint because of the sensitivity of the subject matter. Unfortunately, *Look* printed a blurb about it, and that's when I got the letter.

A young boy wrote me a funny note, although he didn't mean it

to be funny at the time. In fact, he was worried about a big problem he had when he wrote it. Here it is.

Dear Mr. Ward,

My name is Chip Richardson. I am fourteen years old and I have a problem like yours. All my friends in school laugh at me because of my large bulge. I don't know what to do about it. I read an article in Look magazine that you had the same problem. Is that true? If it is, would you please write to me and tell me the name and phone number of the doctor who helped you get smaller? I would really appreciate your help. Thank you.

Your friend,

Chip Richardson

P.S. My father doesn't know I am writing you this letter.

I sent him an autographed photo and a note saying that if he was really worried about his problem he should see his own doctor. Otherwise he shouldn't worry, because someday he would appreciate the gift God (or genetics) gave him. I certainly have!

Undersized, Overrated Problem

A few years after the series ended I was offered the opportunity to do the voice of Robin on the animated television series *The New Adventures of Batman and Robin*, produced at Filmation Studios under the direction of Norman Prescott and Lou Scheimer, who owned the studio. I loved working again with so many of my cohorts, especially Adam, who rightfully did Batman's voice. No one could ever be a better Batman than Adam.

After recording one of the shows, I was chatting with Mr. Prescott, whom I admired greatly and respected for his company's enormous stature in the animation industry. We were discussing innuendo and double meanings, both of which had been daily fare on our

1966 BatVersion, when Mr Prescott laughed to himself. I couldn't resist asking him what was so funny. He said Adam was the only person he had ever met to whom everything had a sexual connotation. Then he told me a story so horribly embarrassing I wasn't sure I could keep a straight face while confronting Adam about it.

I was saying how much aggravation the tights had caused me when Mr Prescott interjected that Adam had had much worse problems with his tights. I was amazed.

"Do you know what happened when the execs at ABC first saw the *Batman* footage?" he asked

I replied that I didn't.

"Imagine a screening room full of network assistant vice-presidents. These guys are deciding whether or not to air *Batman* and are very careful what they say to their executive VP to avoid taking a position that later turns out wrong and they lose their jobs. They had just finished screening *Batman*. The lights came up, and the senior exec asked each of these 'yes' guys what they thought. He got typically ambivalent answers. [Network executives are legendary for never making commitments. Fred Allen once said he knew a network guy who starved to death trying to decide where to eat lunch. These execs were either non-committal or said something good and had to cover themselves for the eventuality of good or bad ratings.] Supposedly the last man said:

'We can't put this show on the air. *Batman* has a ballerina's crotch!'

'What?' the senior exec said.

'Play back that film.'

They ran the reel again and he saw for himself.

'Geez, he's flat as a board! Get me the studio on the phone.'

At this point I was laughing so hard I had tears in my eyes.

Mr Prescott continued, "So they got the studio on the line and plugged into Dozier, and after hearing an earful, Bill wisecracked, 'Look, I'll stick a garden hose in his underwear. Just put this show on the air!'"

Apparently it worked (his comment, not the garden hose). But that wasn't the end of it. This masculinity horror story raced around Hollywood circles, and Adam heard about it and confronted Mr Prescott.

"I ran into Adam at a party, and he was a wreck. He denied that there was any truth to the story and pleaded with me to join him in the rest room to prove its falsity. I told him I wasn't going in there with a tape measure to find out. Adam replied that this whole business was too terrible and that he wanted me to know he was perfectly normal in every way. I said I was only repeating what I had heard, that I wasn't accusing him of any anatomical imperfections. That seemed to make him feel better for a while, but during the course of the evening, I ran into Adam several more times and he kept asking me to join him in the rest room."

What a story! But that's show biz. One minute you're a superstar, and the next minute everyone is buzzing about your shortcomings.

“Look! Batman and Robin Are Naked!”

Sandstone was a nudist colony and swingers' haven in the mountains of Malibu, not far from where Adam lived. I had never been to one and was so naive I wasn't sure that such a place really existed. When I mentioned to Adam that I knew someone who knew someone else who was a member and that there was a possibility of visiting the colony, he went bonkers and encouraged me to get us in. So I made the arrangements.

When we arrived, I expected to see something similar to Camp Sunshine in the Peter Sellers movie *A Shot in the Dark*. And that's exactly what we got! Before getting out of the car, Adam warned me, "You can't tell anyone who we are."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Can you imagine if people knew we were here? Can you imagine the headlines? **BATMAN AND ROBIN GET NAKED AT A NUDIST COLONY**"

"Yeah, I guess you're right."

After checking in at the front desk as Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones, we were led to a changing room with lockers. Now it was time to get undressed. I suddenly got cold feet.

"I wonder where everybody is? It seems pretty quiet here."

"This is the changing room."

Adam was stripping down to his underwear.

I paused apprehensively.

"It's just that I had a terrible thought."

"Yeah? What's that, Burt?"

"What if we're the only ones here with our clothes off?"

"Why would you say that?"

"Because I haven't seen anybody nude."

"They're probably all out back."

Adam noticed that I was still fully dressed.

"Look! Batman and Robin Are Naked!"

"Hurry up, or I'm not going to wait for you."

Reluctantly I undressed. Then I had a brainstorm, went over to a stack of bath towels, took one, wrapped it around myself, and then went to a sink and threw water on my hair. Now I was ready to go.

Adam looked at me curiously.

"What are you doing?"

"As far as anyone is concerned I just got out of the swimming pool and I'm wearing a towel to stay warm."

"It's ninety degrees out there, Burt. And what are you going to say if they don't have a pool?"

"Oh, no! Then I'm in deep trouble."

Adam laughed and walked outside. I followed about eight steps behind, looking in every direction at once.

As I entered the sunlight and scanned the scene I almost swallowed my tongue. I'd never seen so many naked bodies in my life. Hundreds of men and women, young, old, short, tall, thin and heavy . . . everything you could imagine. They were frolicking in the swimming pool, lounging in deck chairs, playing volleyball and badminton, throwing Frisbees, and even playing touch football. (Mmmm I can only surmise where they touched each other.)

I felt secure having seen the swimming pool. Now I could justify keeping the towel around my waist.

Adam stopped to talk to two very good-looking young ladies sitting at a table and chairs. I joined them.

"Beautiful day," said one.

I tried to look nonchalant. I also tried not to look at their breasts and pubic hair. They apparently noticed my discomfort.

"I'm a little cold," I countered.

"You are?" said a cute brunette with a slender, sexy body and a deep tan.

"I just got out of the pool," I added.

"Really?"

She ripped the towel from around my waist. I gasped.

"You need to let the sun warm your body naturally, like mine," she said.

I couldn't contain myself. I stared at her body and she saw me watching—embarrassing.

"See what the sun can do for you?" she smiled.

Suddenly I began to get a throbbing and quickly sat down, moving the chair as far under the table as I could. Everyone laughed. They'd seen what had happened. I was very embarrassed.

Unfortunately, because of my problem, I had to stay in that chair for most of the afternoon. Adam tortured me unmercifully. Knowing that I couldn't get up (or down, depending on what you're referring to), he periodically invited the girls and me to play volleyball and Frisbee. And, of course, everyone laughed uproariously every time I declined.

The brunette liked me and tried to make me feel better.

"Don't worry about it. It happens to most men when they come here for the first time. Hey, if I were a man, I would probably worry if it didn't happen."

She turned to Adam, who got red in the face. Now it was everybody's turn to laugh at him.

We exchanged phone numbers, and our new acquaintances left.

HOLY PRLAPISM! I was afraid I'd have a perpetual hard-on, but finally I returned to normal.

Adam suggested we get dressed and leave.

On the way back we went through a large recreation room and were stunned to see people making love everywhere. Along the walls were couches filled with voyeurs. Seven people were humping across the center of the room.

"It looks like a caterpillar," Adam said.

I burst out laughing. Adam whispered, "Shhh, Burt! We can't look like we're having too much fun!"

We watched a little longer and I felt a tug on my arm. I turned to see a woman in her forties with dark, leathery skin pulling me towards her. I wasn't interested in getting dragged into the action. She smiled at my worried look.

"I just want to ask you a question. Is that Adam West?"

"Uh huh."

She sighed deeply.

"He's so ruggedly handsome. A man like that . . ."

Taking into account where we were, and sans leotards, I was amazed that anyone recognized him.

"How did you know it was Adam?"

As soon as the words were out, I realized that asking a question like that in a nudist colony might produce a more graphic answer than I wanted to hear

"It's the way he walks. I'd recognize him anywhere. Mmmm "

She suddenly got an idea and looked closely at me. I was self-conscious as I followed her eyes downward. She smiled.

"Oh, my. Well, you certainly can't be the little one . . . Robin, can you?"

Embarrassed, I nodded. Anxious to leave, I turned back to Adam, who was engrossed watching the caterpillar's permutations. I was reminded of my trips to the zoo to watch and imitate the kangaroos. Maybe the old dog was learning a few new tricks.

Satisfied that he'd seen enough, Adam indicated we should go. I was more than ready, although I was sorry I hadn't scored with the brunette. (I did a week later, though, when she came to visit me for the weekend. We never got out of bed.)

As we started to leave, I overheard the woman talking to her friend.

"Look! Batman and Robin are naked!"

Catching up to Adam, I told him they knew who we were.

He was upset. We rushed to the changing room, quickly got dressed, and hightailed it.

Outside, Adam sighed. "This is bad, very bad. You'd better pray nobody finds out about this, or we're goners."

He noticed I was watching his movements.

"What are you looking at?"

"Your walk, Adam. You have a very distinctive walk."

He looked down at his legs to see what I was looking at, then looked at me as though I were crazy.

We got in his car and left. What an afternoon!

I never went back. Swinging went out of fashion with the onset of diseases with capital letters, and Sandstone eventually shut down.

“Batman”: The TV Series

A Personal Tour of Wayne Manor

Stately Wayne Manor was a magnificent set on Stage 15 at Desilu-Culver Studios. It had a large contemporary living room with bay windows overlooking an English-style garden, actually a painted backdrop. Many of our show openings and closings took place there. Often millionaire philanthropist Bruce Wayne and his young ward, Dick Grayson, were busy entertaining guests or socializing with dear, sweet Aunt Harriet (Madge Blake) when Alfred the Butler (Alan Napier) summoned us to the BatPhone. Leaping together in fighter formation, we politely excused ourselves and rushed through the manor’s opulent foyer, with its full-sized suits of armor and past an enormous staircase that led to catwalks spanning the entire sound stage, on our way to the famous library with Shakespeare’s head and the hotline to Commissioner Gordon’s office.

I laugh when I think of that staircase. In one scene, when Bruce and Dick said good-night to Aunt Harriet, we were supposed to turn and walk up the stairs. I decided to have some fun with the director and crew. So when we turned, I put my arm around Adam’s shoulders. The director, Oscar Rudolph, nearly had a stroke.

“Cut! Stop! What the hell is going on here?” he yelled. “You can’t put your arm around Batman. We’ll be off the air before I get my paycheck!”

Wayne Manor’s dark wood library was filled with elegant tomes, extravagant furniture, Shakespeare’s tilting head and the famous electrically controlled bookcase, which opened to the BatPoles and the BatCave below. As the bookcase slid back, each of us dashed to his own BatPole, one labeled “Bruce” and the other, “Dick.”

The slide down the BatPoles was accomplished in two sections. The first was a ten-foot drop below the library, just far enough to be out of camera sight. The second was a sixty-five-foot drop from the top of Stage 15

"Batman": The TV Series

all the way to the floor. That was a real thrill slide, not for the faint of heart. I've never been fond of heights, especially while wearing a restrictive costume with a raccoon mask whose tiny eyeholes act like horse blinders.

Adam and I only had to slide down those sixty-five-foot BatPoles once. Once was enough! We wrapped our legs around the eight-inch steel poles and held on tightly with our gloves and the inner soles of our BatBoots. The speed was tremendous and so was the friction. Adam enjoyed it and said he got "a peculiar thrill." That take became the stock shot used over and over in our shows. Thank goodness!

I wince when I think of a scene in another one of our episodes where I was supposed to be forced off the roof of a building while fighting a scurrilous foe. The director insisted that I—not my stunt man, because he didn't look enough like me—lean way out over the edge of the rooftop of Stage 16 while being strangled. Sensing I was fighting a losing battle by trying to talk him out of the shot, I back-pedaled with a request that the director show me exactly what he wanted, since the danger involved made this a one-shot take. He adamantly refused.

"Are you kidding? Do you think I want to risk my life on a dangerous shot like that?"

"Screw you!" I said to myself. "Screw you!" I said to him.

Apparently he had no qualms about having me risk my life. Now that I think about it, I wonder why the studio hired a stunt man who didn't look anything like me, thus leaving me to do all the life-threatening stuff.

The BatCave—A Crimefighter's Headquarters

The BatCave is the set I get the most questions about. It was fabulous, taking up nearly an entire sound stage and costing over \$800,000, which in today's dollars would be more like \$3 million. Taking months to complete, with every attention paid to quality and detail, the BatCave lived up to all expectations and was universally loved by BatFans everywhere. I'd never seen anything resembling an atomic pile in the original comic book, so I was surprised to see one built into the cave. Portrayed as the source of the BatCave's energy, it was the scene of one of only two deaths in the entire run of the 120-episode series (the other took place when Catwoman lost one of her nine lives). When

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chided by Batman for her evil ways, the Riddler's girlfriend, Molly (Jul St. John), allowed herself to fall into the reactor's nuclear core rather than take Batman's outstretched hand.

In fact, it was this scene that ended with one of the wittiest lines ever written for us. After she falls to her death, Batman deadpans to the camera, "What a Way to Go-Go!"

This was a play on the name of the discotheque, What a Way to GO GO, where Batman had danced the Batusi earlier and where he had been drugged by the Riddler's henchman, Harry (Allen Jaffe). Adam intentionally flubbed the line over and over, arguing that the phrase should be said without the extra "go." When the producers explained the tie-in with the discotheque, which Adam had not understood, and then forcefully told him that he *had* to do it their way anyway, he finally relented and managed to say it perfectly on the next take.

The script was written by the show's first writer, Lorenzo Semple, Jr. Early in the production of the series, Adam and I were so thrilled to be working that we didn't want to cause any stir by trying to change the dialogue we were given. We just said the lines verbatim from the script, but when we could get creative, we did.

I often tried to inject a suggestion of realism into our show. For example, I asked the producers to explain to our fans how Batman and Robin managed to turn the Batmobile around for our next high-speed exit after we entered the BatCave, since the Batmobile nearly filled the cave's open space. Ultimately, they shot a hydraulic turntable spinning the Batmobile around in the proper direction. The equipment really worked but was used only once to make the permanent stock shot. It was filmed in the second season and would probably not have been filmed at all if so many fans hadn't written to ask how we could turn the Batmobile around.

Our fervent fans asked many questions. Two sticky ones were (1) why didn't Batman and Robin ever buckle their seat belts (the Batmobile didn't have any until the National Safety Council complained to the producers), and (2) why did Batman litter the streets with Bat-Parachutes when he made the famous Emergency BatTurns? In both instances we filmed special scenes to answer those questions.

In the first, Batman starts the Batmobile and asks me why I haven't buckled my seat belt. I answer, "Gosh, Batman, we're only

going a few blocks."

Batman then stoically lectures me on the importance of buckling up for even the shortest distance.

In the second, they shot Alfred driving a van painted with the large words "Parachute Pickup" to the location where we had jettisoned the BatParachutes.

THE VILLAINS' HIDEOUTS

The villains' hideouts were created and custom built by our immensely talented set designer, Serge Krizman. Each set was themed to its villain's personality. Props were painstakingly selected to enhance the imagery.

There is a piece of trivia about these hideouts that I didn't know until the second season. The lairs were always filmed at an angle. I thought it was just an individual director's style until I began noticing it in every show. Then I wondered why.

I finally decided to ask the producer, Howie Horwitz. He laughed.

"Burt, I can't believe you don't know why we film all scenes in the villains' hideouts at an angle. Are you putting me on?"

When he realized I wasn't joking, he said, "The villains' hideouts are filmed that way because the villains are all crooked."

"Crooked?"

"Yes," he said. "You know, crooks are crooked."

I couldn't believe it. This was the corniest thing I had ever heard. I would never have figured it out in a million years. And nobody I ever spoke with ever figured it out either—except my wife Tracy, and I want to have her head examined. At the time I thought it was obtuse, today I think it was creative and symbolic.

Props and Sets

A SIMULATED BATFIGHT: Batman and Robin are confronted by the Joker and his gang of henchmen.

Batman (*concerned*): "Looks like trouble, Robin."

Robin "Gosh, Batman There are seven of them against the two of us! Odds are in our favor!"

ZAP! POW! BIFF! BAM! The Dynamic Duo goes into action, pummeling the bad guys about the head and shoulders.

ZONK! SPLAT! What a fight! Bodies are flying everywhere. Breakaway tables are smashed and collapse as the Joker's goons are hurled on top of them. Our Caped Crusaders swing through the air on BatRopes, chandeliers or anything else that is available.

CRACK! CRUNCH! A villainous goon breaks a heavy wooden chair over Batman's head.

CRASH! Batman's knees buckle and he drops to the floor
"Cut! Print!"

Prior to this shot, the real wooden chair was replaced by one that weighed a few ounces, and the real Batman was replaced by Hubie Kerna. Twenty-five minutes pass, more props are brought onto the set, the director of photography confers with the director, and the camera and lights are moved to a new position for a different shot. The head gaffer and his lighting crew redirect and focus dozens of lights—small ones, big ones—and add color filters, screens, scrims and other adjustments to shine light only on that portion of the set where the camera's lens will film. Then the first A.D. barks:

"Places, everyone! Henchmen in position. Rig the smoke bombs. Check the breakaways! Bring in Adam and Burt. Let's go for a take."

Batman and Robin are back in action. Three weeks later on network television in the U.S. and on stations throughout the rest of the world, colorful graphics simultaneously explode on the TV screens of 400 million *Batman* viewers. Excited kids with bath towels pinned around their necks jump off chairs and couches, swinging wildly into the air at imaginary villains. They idolize their favorite Superheroes, wear *Batman* T-shirts, costumes and even underwear. In school, youngsters discuss and analyze every aspect of the most recently aired show. We are the hottest topic in kindergarten show-and-tells.

Twice a week, otherwise rebellious teenagers sit with their friends in a rapt stupor, glued to thirty minutes of fun and action, anxiously awaiting each mind-teasing double-meaning comment from their favorite masters of put-on. Batman and Robin have vicariously become their friends, challenging their perceptions of multilevel humor, sharp-

ening their wits, and counterpointing their boring daily diet of repetitive responsibilities as they face the realities of life.

In universities across America, college students scramble for seats in their dormitories on show nights, determined to maximize their enjoyment of the fun and occasional suggestive sexuality.

Adults and seniors tune in to watch our show and reminisce about the nostalgia of their comic book days.

The number of props used on *Batman* was a property master's nightmare. Every set was meticulously decorated with Batmanesque art and furniture. Custom-painted artifacts were abundantly used. Names of items were hand-stenciled on each prop in large letters and painted as part of the overall *Batman* camp style. Even during the off-season rerun months of June, July and August, props used as *Batman* promotional materials had exaggerated giant type that referred to the style of our show as "summer camp."

There were the "good guys" props, the "bad guys" props, the interior set props, the exterior location props, the fight scene props . . . enough props to give the most dedicated professional a permanent migraine.

And these props weren't always simple. There are two basic types, stationary props and working props. An example of the latter is the Penguin's cigarette holder. It was more than a foot long and had to be fully functioning with a lighted cigarette in every Penguin sequence. Now, Burgess Meredith, who portrayed the Penguin, had quit smoking twenty years before. As I understand it, the prop guys went through contortions trying to make the Penguin's cigarette holder self-smoking. It never worked properly, and Burgess continued to inhale smoke and was constantly coughing. Being the creative actor he is, Burgess covered up his coughs with Penguin quacks. Who would have guessed that the most recognizable and beloved trait of the Penguin was his QUACK!

Another Excedrin headache was getting the BatArang (what Batman threw with its attached BatRope) to hook onto the top ledges of buildings prior to our climbing straight up their walls. Although it could never happen in real life, the prop master's work needed to be sufficiently realistic to create a willing suspension of disbelief.

Not enough could ever be said about the brilliant work accomplished by our set builders. Their workmanship and attention to detail

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were outstanding. Set building is an art and requires the knowledge of a professional contractor combined with the artistry of a master painter.

Even a seemingly simple set like Commissioner Gordon's office required enormous time and effort. All the pecan woodwork was constructed with custom-made moldings followed by meticulous hours of staining and lacquering. One of the most famous BatProps of all was in Commissioner Gordon's office: the glowing red hotline direct to Batman. To give it even greater stature, the prop men put the phone "under glass," as you might expect a pheasant to be served in a fine restaurant.

Batgirl--Barbara Gordon--Yvonne Craig

Batgirl, played by Yvonne Craig, is Commissioner Gordon's daughter, Barbara, who has been away at college and returns to Gotham City after graduating to secretly become a crimefighter--Batgirl.

Barbara Gordon's apartment, Batgirl's secret headquarters was a small, complex set highlighted by innumerable props. With a sophisticated moving mechanism, Barbara could spin the wall behind her dressing table to reach her crimefighting costume, her crimefighting paraphernalia and her Batgirl cycle. When Yvonne Craig alighted into that tight-fitting Lycra-spandex outfit, she filled every inch and more of the stretchable fabric in such a provocative way that I wish I'd had the towel concession to catch the drool of all the horny crew members who ogled her on the set. And no human being could calculate the number of young men who masturbated while watching Yvonne do her thing.

Yvonne is an adorable person and a fine actress who joined us in the third and final season. Finally I worked with a professional who didn't think she was Hamlet . . . or, in this case, Ophelia. She is also one of the great laughers in the world. Comedians should be willing to pay big money to have her in the audience.

Yvonne had been a dancer with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and trained hard for many years. She was in incredible condition. Even in the tight-fitting Batgirl costume she was able to zap the crooks in the fight scenes with high kicks to their heads. I think Adam had a secret crush on her. Second only, of course, to himself.

**Ménage à Trois:
Batman, Batgirl and Robin**

In our third season with Batgirl, there was a lot of talk and teasing from the crew asking Adam and me (I doubt they had enough nerve to ask Yvonne) if Batman and Robin were ever going to have a three-way sex-capade with Batgirl. That was a total fantasy on their part, and is somewhat understandable considering how many of them were always horny and half a heartbeat away from the petroleum jelly. It was no secret on the set. They lusted in their hearts and everywhere else for Batgirl (not that I blame them).

The closest we came to anything like that was the episode entitled "Nora Clavicle and the Ladies' Crime Club." The guest villainess was Barbara Rush.

The script, by Stanford Sherman, had the dynamic trio captured and tied in a Siamese Human Knot, supposedly designed to strangle *all* of us if *any* of us made a move to escape. Adam and I joked about this scene before we shot it. He envisioned what he described with relish as a "BatSandwich" with Batgirl in the middle. He encouraged me to think of the possibilities and told me that girls loved being penetrated simultaneously from both directions. I had never heard of such a thing and was embarrassed but curious.

Taking a clinching position with Yvonne and Adam before the shot, with our arms and legs intricately and tightly interwoven, was hilarious and titillating. Adam, wild man that he is, playfully began groping me on the legs and buttocks. At first I thought it was Yvonne (or maybe I just wished it) and didn't resist, but Yvonne is a classy lady who would never stoop to such perversion. I caught the real culprit and told him to cut it out. That's when I nicknamed him "The Groper." On our road tours years after the series ended, I changed his nickname to "The Grouper" —intending the double meaning for both the party animal and the pouting fish.

The dialogue for the Siamese Human Knot scene was only two lines, one for Adam and one for me. But in the Dynamic Duo's "close encounter with its third kind," we discussed having fun with the scene and improvising additional dialogue. Our harried director, Oscar Rudolph, was already panicking from being behind schedule.

(although to the best of my knowledge he finished every *Batman* episode he directed on time, which is miraculous considering how many curves Adam and I constantly threw at that poor overworked man).

On "Action" we all started ad-libbing, making sure we didn't step on one another's lines for fear of getting caught and our antics exposed. Come to think of it, I owe Adam a thank-you for having provided me the one scene I know of in three years of filming together in which I can comfortably say he made no effort to upstage me by trouncing on my dialogue.

Thank you, Adam.

On camera, we said some very hokey lines.

I said something like, "Gosh, Batman, if I wiggle the fourth finger of my left hand, see if you can twitch your right ear."

"Robin, as I slide my upper thigh underneath you, try to turn over on your stomach," Adam responded.

"Batman, can you rotate the dimple in your chin? (Our makeup honchos painted a cleft in the center of Adam's chin to give him that square look.)

The scene turned out wonderfully, but after nearly twenty seconds of this cockamamie, Oscar yelled:

"Cut! Cut! What the hell is going on here? Where is all this dialogue coming from?"

Answer: the dynamic deviants.

Being in that position on the floor for so long left Adam and me with aching muscles. Recently I spoke with Yvonne, and she remembered what I had said when they pulled us apart.

"Oh! I'm so sore I'm gonna die. I'm not used to having my legs in this position!"

Yvonne had no problems with tight muscles because of her ballet conditioning and training. She was used to opening her legs wide, lying on her back and thrusting herself against a wall with a bar between her thighs. (Whew! I'm only referring to ballet exercises, and I'm getting myself worked up!)

As I think about this scene now, I don't doubt that our Siamese Human Knot may have been one of the inspirations for the creator of the Rubik's Cube.

Location shoots were fun and an opportunity to enjoy surroundings other than the interior of a cold, damp sound stage. I enjoyed the fresh air, too. Unfortunately, the insides of my tights were always hot, but if the outside temperature was mild, I would manage to get by and have a reasonably good time. However, if the day was steamy, like those scorchers when we shot on the Burbank backlot of Warner Brothers in the sweltering San Fernando Valley, then every step was agony. Yet even in that heat, I would never sweat. I was so preoccupied with trying to keep my outfit from itching me to death that I wouldn't allow myself to perspire. I know that sounds strange, but it's true.

Because of all the action sequences, I was going through Robin costumes as fast as they could make them. It got to the point that Jan Kemp had to mix and match capes and vests to keep me in a single costume that wasn't torn or scuffed.

Later I solved the worst of my extreme discomfort in the costume by having the wardrobe department sew a silk lining into everything I wore—except the tights, which they refused to line for lighting reasons. But that wasn't until the last season, after I had already personally paid for a duplicate costume to be made with a silk lining. I owned that costume, guarded it closely and used it during the series for close-up shots only. I didn't want to risk it being damaged during the fight scenes. As a result, the Boy Wonder's cape and collar always looked good.

We didn't anticipate the ultimate value of keeping one of our own costumes from the series. The only reason I had one was because I needed to find a way to make the filming more bearable. In retrospect, if I had known or even guessed today's value for real Batman and Robin costumes (there aren't any, except for the one I had made), I probably would have had a couple of dozen manufactured, sold them and retired to a yacht in the south of France.

When I hear about these auctions of Batman and Robin costumes I laugh, because I know they aren't real—at least they're not any of the ones Adam and I wore in the series. There are a few Batman and Robin stunt costumes, but they were only worn by Hubie and Victor. Adam said, during the last days, that every one of his costumes was in near shreds. Several years after the series, I took Adam on the custom-car-

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show circuit. He didn't have a Batman costume to wear at the appearances and he asked if I knew where he could have one made, because he didn't want to lose the opportunity to earn money on all those highly paid weekends. I recommended the tailor I had used.

I recently sold my costume privately to a gentleman in Tennessee who operates a television station. I understand he is going to make it available to the general public. I hadn't been using it except to go trick-or-treating on Halloween and in some wild but intimate moments with my wife. Although it is certainly a treasure, I think it will get more appreciation and exposure to BatFans where it's gone.

A Superhero's Crimefighting Paraphernalia

Walking up the sides of buildings using our BatArangs and BatRopes caused a lot of excitement among our fans and prompted endless questions.

"How do you climb straight up the sides of those buildings?"

"Carefully, citizen," I answered. "Very carefully."

"Can you fly?"

"No, Batman and Robin don't fly. We do a lot of climbing and swinging with our BatRopes. We're swingers."

The technique used to film these wall-climbing sequences made them look very real. The camera and wall were set at a forty-five-degree angle, and we had clear monofilament lines connected to our capes. The special-effects guys kept our capes taut with the fish lines so they would realistically look as though they were hanging straight down. In addition, several powerful fans were aimed at us to create a wind effect.

I would be in front of Batman as we ascended. When I had a line of dialogue, I would usually stop, let go of the BatRope with one hand and turn around to speak. Of course, who could possibly have the strength to hold his position going straight up the side of a wall with only one hand? This was kind of an inside joke for Superhero buffs who made an effort to see the little extras Adam and I added to the show.

As we walked up the walls we almost always had a special guest open a window and lean out to discuss some funny situation or ask us some inconsequential question. These cameo appearances were made

by well-known personalities, and I was thrilled to meet all of them. Among them were Jack La Lanne, Jerry Lewis, Dick Clark, Van Williams (as the Green Hornet) and Bruce Lee (as Kato), Sammy Davis, Jr., Howard Duff (he later appeared on our show as a guest villain named Cabala along with his wife, Ida Lupino, who portrayed Dr. Cassandra), Werner Klemperer (as Colonel Klink), Ted Cassidy (as Lurch), Don Ho, Santa Claus, Art Linkletter, Edward G. Robinson, George Raft, Jerry Mathers, William Dozier (Batman's executive producer) and Howie Horwitz (Batman's line producer) and several obscure people who were inside jokes. Years later, *Laugh In* borrowed this window concept for cameo guest appearances as well as for their cast.

I loved the scene in the feature where Batman and I were magnetically locked onto an ocean buoy. We were trying to avoid the Penguin's murderous torpedoes, launched from a preatomic submarine. Batman pulled out his BatHoming Transmitter and managed to interfere with the torpedo's guidance system, causing it to explode without terminating us. After two successes, the Bat-Homing Transmitter failed and the third torpedo got through. Facing imminent annihilation, Batman exclaims:

"Confound it. The batteries are dead!"

It tickled me that two of the world's greatest crimefighters could have been killed because twenty-nine-cent batteries failed.

The scene ends with a massive explosion on the water. In the next sequence we are miraculously alive. Batman comments to me how noble a porpoise was to purposely swim in the way of the torpedo, intentionally giving his life to save ours. **HOLY STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION!**

Another famous scene whose implausible ending could have left stretch marks on your credibility was the *Batman* three-parter, "The Londinium Larcenies." Here I was subdued by four lovely teenagers and subjected to the life-terminating bite of an African death bee. As I appear to pass on to the great BatCave in the sky, the episode leaves the viewers in the lurch with our usual cliffhanger.

The next episode opens with me having miraculously survived. But how? I was bitten by an African death bee. There is no known antidote or cure. How did I manage to live?

As I ultimately explained to my captors:

"I was down to my last African death bee antidote pill "

There was a funny and embarrassing moment connected with this episode. In rehearsals, while no one was looking, the four girls holding me kept grabbing me and rubbing their hands and bodies against my BatBulge, exciting me to a point where I became enormously swollen in my BarTrunks. You're probably thinking, "Why is he complaining? What man wouldn't want four gorgeous girls mauling his sex organ?"

I agree, except there is a time and place for everything. And exciting an actor's libido just before a shot in front of a hundred crew members, the show's producers, visiting studio heads, a group of tourists who had paid for the opportunity to come on the set, and two national magazines with accompanying photographers—to be aired before an unsuspecting audience of half a billion viewers—was a nightmare of embarrassment!

Well they wouldn't leave me alone, and the swelling wouldn't go down. I even went back to my dressing room and stuck myself in a glass of ice water. That made it harder. I was beginning to panic. Then I heard the second assistant director calling me for another rehearsal.

These four girls had me by the short hairs. They thought it was funny. I pleaded for them to leave me alone. They laughed and kept on coming. I tried every mental trick I could think of to influence a return to normalcy. I thought about baseball, obscure Chekhov plays, algebraic equations. No help. The girls kept rubbing against me, teasing me and grabbing me every time I finally was able to start shrinking my problem. If I didn't come up with some quick solution, and if the camera caught sight of an engorged Robin, then the network censors and the Catholic League of Decency might legitimately have something to complain about, and the network might be forced to take us off the air . . . or at least replace the Boy Wonder with a boy eunuch. Time was running out!

The scene was ready to be filmed, and I was a goner until I took one end of my cape and pulled it around in front of me. There were so many people in the shot that nobody noticed or complained about what I had done. I was a nervous wreck but saved myself from mass humiliation.

Although there was no BatParaphernalia involved, there was some Riddler Paraphernalia in the only really tasteless scene ever

shot during the series. And it happened in the very first episode. The censors failed to do their job when they should have been on the alert.

Robin was tied on the Riddler's operating table with a real buzz saw at the end of it. The director filmed me on a conveyor belt as it approached the spinning saw blade. At the height of the cliffhanger, my head came within two inches of the spinning blade—**HOLY SPLITTING HEADACHE!** Other than the actual danger to me, I have no problem with that shot cinematically.

The problem with the scene for viewers is the conclusion in the second episode. Instead of the usual last-minute save by Batman, the producers chose an incredibly violent and tasteless end. They replaced me with a dummy so well made as to confuse every viewer into believing that it was me. Then they actually buzz-sawed straight through the dummy's head, splitting it in half. I couldn't believe that they could get away with it.

Minutes later, viewers were told that Robin hadn't really been killed and that the other Robin was a dummy. So was the person responsible for such bad taste. Even so, hordes of angry parents called and wrote to the studio decrying the gore. The producers must have received some serious flak, because they never again filmed any scene with such realistic violence.

The Secret X-Rated Christmas Footage for the Network

Knock! Knock!
"Who is it?" I asked, as I struggled to pull my tights up over my BatBriefs.

"It's Reuben, Burt!"

I opened the door.

"Here's some new material we'll be filming before breaking for lunch."

He handed me two pages. I didn't immediately look at them because I still hadn't gotten positioned in my tights. (I really never got comfortable in them, but managed to reduce the agony of pulled inner

thigh hairs by stretching the fabric away from my legs to free the hairs that had gotten caught when I expended the tights up to my waist.) Finally, with some sense of temporary peace, I read the pages.

First, these pages didn't seem to replace anything in our current script, and appeared not to have anything to do with this episode's story line. It was new material. Nor did they refer to any villain, nor include Batman. That was strange. What I read was even stranger. I started laughing. This stuff was raunchy. There was no show number on the pages and no writer's name. This was brown paper bag stuff. Who was playing a joke on me?

We could never get this past the censors. I wish I still had a copy of the script. I'd reprint it word for word in this book. I'll just have to describe what I can recall.

The action had me rushing into the backstage dressing room of a nightclub. The dressing room turns out to be for ladies. I am alone, looking for Batman. I enter and am surprised by two gorgeous showgirls who approach me from opposite ends of the room. Particularly unique about these girls are their fantastically enormous breasts. (At that point in my career, I wasn't a connoisseur of bra sizes and couldn't imagine that anyone could be that large, but by the numbers that I would learn later, they both were equipped with twin 60EEE howitzers or more. Certainly those were more than a couple of handfuls, maybe more than an entire armful. I didn't know whether this scene was supposedly set in Gotham City's version of Las Vegas or San Francisco's North Beach district.)

I was called to the set. Before we began shooting, the majority of the crew were excused, leaving only a handful of technicians to put the scene on film. When they clear a stage like that, something out of the ordinary is about to happen.

"Rehearsal," called the director.

The girls were tall and leggy and wore high heels. I looked directly into their chests. Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining. I couldn't think of a nicer place to spend my time. Yet I still couldn't believe what I was filming.

According to the story line, I was suspicious of them and challenged their intentions. The director said we would film two versions, one sizzling, the other simmering. Compared with what the censors

would scream about, which was tepid to lukewarm, both of these takes would be far wilder than anyone would expect or approve.

"Where is this going to be shown?" I asked. I thought it might go overseas.

"It's a Christmas gift for the network," said the director. "This is for real, everybody. Let's have a red light!"

The flashing red light came on, particularly appropriate for this scene, and the overhead buzzer signaled a take.

"Okay, roll sound!" (Pause.) "Roll camera!"

"Speed!" barked the sound mixer

"Action," said the director.

I enter the room and look around. Suddenly I notice the two showgirls

"Who are you?"

No answer. They keep getting closer.

"Where's Batman?"

Girl #1: "We're looking for him too, Boy Wonder."

"You are? You know him?"

Girl #2: "Oh, yes. We're friends of his."

I eye them suspiciously. They don't look like types that Batman would share a glass of orange juice with.

"How do I know you're for real?" I ask.

I say my line tongue in cheek with as much double meaning as a twenty-one-year-old could muster.

Without warning, the first girl pulls down her top and shows me two perfectly formed watermelons.

"Holy humongous BatBoobs!" I exclaim. (I remember my voice breaking and the crew laughing. It wasn't intentional, but what I saw almost made me swallow my nose. They used that take.)

I turn to face the other girl.

"And what about you?"

"Here are my credentials, Boy Wonder."

She lowers her top and reveals her even larger breasts.

"Holy monstrous mammaries!" I exclaim.

I turn and look directly into the camera.

"Mmm. If Batman were here, he would know what to do!"

I exit.

"Cut. Print."

Everybody roared. I had to laugh too. I think the crew had such a good time that they tried to convince the director to shoot the scene again.

We did shoot the other version, in which the girls push their boobs into my face, but not with their tops down. Afterward we broke for lunch.

I couldn't clear my thoughts of what we had just filmed. I had the image of those two pairs of huge breasts permanently recorded in my mind's eye. For the rest of the afternoon I was spaced out even when I tried to focus on our regular filming. I thought I would be back to normal by the next day. I was wrong. For months I entertained myself with daydreams of smothering under those gigantic glandular ecstasies. I was worried I might not ever get over them. Obviously they made a *huge* impression on me.

In those days, that kind of footage was X-rated. Today you could practically show it on *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*.

I have often wondered how the final print looked, and am curious to know what the execs at ABC saw and what was left on Greenway Productions' cutting-room floor. I would love to get a copy of the hot version and the rights to market it. **HOLY BLOCKBUSTER!**

Innocence Lost

My sense of values was established during childhood and built over time. Some moral decisions were unshakable. Others were at odds with my desires, and my norm became Adam's behavior and the mob attitude of our *Batman* crew. I reasoned that they were adults, and I was still very much a kid. No one on the set was less than twice my age, and most felt I didn't deserve to co-star in a television series without paying dues of humiliation and suffering on the way up. I spent more of my life working with my *Batman* family than I did with my own real family. My perception of reality became my environment, however jaded it was.

Adam was a successful actor, and I was only a beginner. Our production crew laughed at every cute comment he made, while I humbled myself and begged my way into their good graces, which usually resulted in failure to achieve their acceptance.

Adam's actions should have been exemplary, but they weren't. He encouraged me to adopt the philosophy of hard knocks he had learned. When you're in somebody's else ballpark, you have to play their game by their rules.

He convinced me that I had left the everyday world with its everyday standards. I was in show business, and its own unique code of ethics and silence dictated that I play the game "the way it was played" or get out.

"Why do you think almost every producer has a casting couch? Do you believe all the little girls who come to Hollywood to try to make it big say no? Haven't you noticed older producers with beautiful young girls or boys hanging onto them?" (Actually I hadn't. Our producers were married, and while on our set, they seemed uninterested in the beautiful young actors and actresses who were either filming or visiting. What the producers did offstage, I don't know.) "I'm telling you this for your own good, Burt. Others won't look out for you."

I was unsure of myself with adults, and it showed. That's what had bonded Bonney and me in the first place—we were two kids standing up to an adult world. For years to come, in personal involvements I only felt comfortable and safe with girls my own age or younger, because they were only as mature and in control of themselves as I was. I viewed them as my equals, and it seemed they were the only ones who weren't hardened to life.

Beautiful, But Nobody Will Touch Her

On tour in God's country . . . rural Missouri, where Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn grew up in the stories I had read and treasured as a child. I remember daydreaming of visiting the Ozarks and going for a dip in one of Tom or Huck's favorite "swimmin' holes." Now I was there.

At the mobile home dealership where I was appearing, a spunky young lady came to meet the Boy Wonder. She was tempting and tasty and offered me a personalized local tour. As she handed me a photo to autograph, I noticed her hands and was impressed by her polished nails, handsome jewelry and beautiful grooming. I looked into her soft green eyes and thought about her offer. Her charming, innocent face, exquisite womanly figure and convertible sports car were impossible to say no to.

I had a wonderful time. Her guided excursion included heart-stopping teenage driving, warm simpleminded conversation, and frolicking with me in a nearby water hole. Who could want anything more?

She did. While we cavorted in the cool water, her temperature rose. She pulled herself close, wrapped her legs around my upper thigh, and French-kissed me deeply and passionately. Her lips were tender and sweet, her tongue was hot, and I was helpless to fight her off when she so badly wanted to get on. Looking at her more closely in a way I hadn't previously considered, I noted this was a desirable and sexy young woman.

She invited me back to the apartment where she lived alone. This beauty had more going for her materially than others her age . . . fashionable clothes, an upscale apartment and hot wheels.

We both knew where we were heading—her bedroom—that was a given. She was so forthright that I wondered why she didn't already have a boyfriend, or if she did, why she was so available for me. I was curious, and inquired. She resisted my questions but not my affections. Usually it's the other way around. But I wasn't going to pressure her and put a chill on the volcano that was erupting between us. I accepted that her personal business was her own.

We made love, and the energy that this charmer contributed convinced me that she was hungry for more than just my body, she was hungry for love. That piqued my interest more.

I rested inside of her between orgasms. We kissed tenderly. I broached the subject of why she didn't have a boyfriend, or if she did. Her eyes teared, but her expression remained warm. Something was hurting her very much. I was sorry I'd asked.

"I don't have any boyfriends because no one will go out with me," her voice quivered.

"Why? You're wonderful, intelligent and beautiful," I said.

"Guys are afraid," she answered.

"Of what?" I asked. "You don't seem like the kind of person who would hurt anybody."

"I'm not," she answered. "But my father is. He's the sheriff."

My heart stopped beating, and I thought I was dead. Fortunately it started again.

"Gee," I said. "Even though your dad's the sheriff, I'm sure he knows you're a normal girl and that you're old enough to do what you want."

"No, I'm not," she said, without offering more.

HOLY JAILBART! Forget my heart. I was about to dump in my pants. I felt like the remains of Hiroshima in 1945. And the fact that she didn't willingly provide any details to soften the atomic bomb she had just dropped scalded me like radioactive fallout. I prayed to hear something like "Don't worry, I'm seventeen and eleven-twelfths," or "It's not a big deal, I'll be eighteen next Thursday." No word at all was an extraordinarily bad sign. I cleared my throat.

"How old are you?" I asked weakly.

"Fifteen and a half."

Oh, my God! I pulled out of her and out of town immediately.

That's when I determined that I wasn't ever fooling around again with anybody who didn't first furnish me a passport, a birth certificate, credit cards and a psychological profile. I should have suspected something when I noticed she wore a training bra.

By the Way

Just when I thought it was safe to get back in the water, I met Teri in Waikiki. I had never seen anyone so beautiful. She was a photographic model with such an incredibly sexy and exotic look that people could get into a car accident simply watching her pass. I nearly did.

I was driving a little rental car and she was in a Lincoln Continental that seemed as long as a city block. We were going in the same direction and stopped next to each other at a traffic signal. I looked at her and she looked at me and we proceeded to hold up traffic. Angry drivers leaned on their horns and shouted obscenities, so we finally we pulled over to the curb.

"Hi! I'm Burt. What's your name?"

"Teri," she said in a soft Southern accent.

"I don't have time to explain because the people behind us are raising hell. Let me see your driver's license, birth certificate and credit cards." She must have thought I was crazy, but I wasn't taking any chances.

We were instantly in lust. There was no courting necessary. This was unbridled, raw sexual desire between two animals in heat that burned like molten lava.

I had been in Hawaii on a weekend appearance and now I had to fly back to L.A. Though I didn't want to leave, I had to make that plane because I was filming *Batman* the next day.

Teri promised to fly to Los Angeles the following week after completing a modeling job. I wasn't sure I could wait that long. She wasn't sure either.

One week to the day later she was in Malibu, in bed with me. I did everything to her that I could think of. She loved every minute and reciprocated by doing everything *she* could think of to me. I thought she might be the one. I wasn't thinking with my head, at least not the one on my shoulders.

After our first round of lovemaking, Teri told me she had never experienced more than two orgasms back to back, which she had just done with me. I asked if she would like to experience two dozen orgasms back to back. She was intrigued and skeptical.

It wasn't any great prowess on my part. It was simply using the right tool for the right job. Forty minutes and nine orgasms later she called it quits, pleading with me that it was too much for her and she would never doubt me again. Over the next week of rigorous conditioning with a heady focus—licking the right spot combined with simultaneous front and back digital penetration—we reached her double-digit goal.

As we lay on our backs congratulating our teamwork, Teri began telling me about her life in Hawaii. She told me she had a sugar daddy, a wealthy older Asian gentleman who furnished her with a million-dollar condo, the new Lincoln, credit cards in her own name and \$1,000 a week spending money. She added that she only had to sleep with him once a month, when he was in town, but she had a female roommate to keep her company.

"He pays for what he gets. He wants the best, and that commands top dollar."

I was speechless.

Then she laughed and told me that several months before, he had complained that she hadn't allowed him to make love to her in four months. She asked him to come out onto the balcony of her twenty-fifth-floor condo, and when he did, she went inside and locked him out there for three hours. She said he hadn't complained since.

I had heard enough, but she wasn't finished. That's when she shot me the greatest zinger of my life.

"Honey," she said, "I have something else to tell you."

"Yes?" I said dryly, expecting that she couldn't top what she had already told me.

"My girlfriend who stays with me—sugar, I sleep with her. I'm bisexual."

I nearly swallowed my tongue. But being an actor with great control over my emotions, I paused to maintain my composure.

"What the hell did you say?" I shouted.

So much for composure.

"Darlin', I adore making love to the right man and to the right woman. You're certainly the right man, but to enjoy total pleasure you need to be intimate with your own sex as well. You shouldn't be so negative about it if you haven't tried it."

"That's what my mother told me about yogurt," I said. "And I still haven't eaten it."

"Burt, honey, you've given me more pleasure than anyone ever in my life. I know that this may be a little difficult for you to understand, but what you've done to me is so truly wonderful that I can hardly wait to get back to Hawaii and try it on my girlfriend. I'm sure she'll want to call you and thank you too."

"I love appreciation, but save the phone call," I shot back. In less than an hour I had her bags packed and had dropped her off at LAX.

Unfortunately, that's not the end to this story. Three months later she called to tell me she had kicked her girlfriend out, decided that she wanted to marry me and have a monogamous relationship and was prepared to end her relationship with her sugar daddy, provided I would maintain her standard of living. She said she wanted to get our marriage off on the right foot and tell me everything she thought I should know. She started by explaining that she had been back in Los Angeles less than a month before and had slept with an acquaintance of mine who promised her work in some television commercials he was producing. She thought I'd appreciate her honesty.

"Oh, that's wonderful," I said sarcastically.

"I love you, Burt. What about us getting married? You see what I'm willing to give up for you."

"No, thank you," I said. "I don't need the heartache."

"Look, Burt," she replied, a little offended. "If you want a Volkswagen that's one thing, but if you want a Rolls-Royce, you'd better be prepared to pay for it."

"Teri," I answered. "I wouldn't have something that was going to give me trouble, and if I decided to spend the money for a Rolls-Royce, I can assure you I'd buy one without a lot of miles on it."

I wished her well and said good-bye.

I hung up and imagined what it would be like to be married to her. I could just see myself coming home after a hard day's work. First, she'd probably spend every dime I made and more than I could earn.

Second, if I walked in the door and saw her sitting in our living room talking with another man, my own insecurity and distrust would probably make me wonder if she had gone to bed with him while I was away.

But worst of all, if I walked in the door and saw her sitting in our living room talking with another *woman*, I'd probably worry that she had gone to bed with her, too.

What a nightmare. As beautiful as she was, there was no way to afford her, and it would double the worry of trying to trust her. That marriage would be a living hell.

Years later, Teri moved to Los Angeles and found her way into Hugh Hefner's Playboy mansion as a regular. She reverted to her old ways and told me that with all the good-looking guys and gals there, she was enjoying a sexual smorgasbord.

"Batman": The Movie

Batman was so popular on television that the producers decided to film a full-length motion picture. Instead of the Dynamic Duo facing a single archcriminal, we were faced with four. In Commissioner Gordon's office, Batman and Robin huddled with him and Chief O'Hara to analyze clues and uncover our adversaries and their goal. Concluding that there was a crime syndicate of four villains, Batman had the memorable line:

"But four their minimum objective must be the entire world!"

There were many funny moments. Among them was the time when Batman discovered a bomb in a sleazy bar on a pier. To protect lives, he ran around like a madman looking for someplace to dispose of it. Everywhere he turned he placed more lives in danger—a Salvation Army marching band, young lovers, a family of ducks. He had a wonderful Lorenzo Semple, Jr., line to vent his frustration: "Some days you just can't get rid of a bomb."

In another scene the Penguin dehydrated the United Nations Security Council into tubes of powder. Unfortunately, I sneezed and scattered the powder everywhere. Using our sophisticated BatEquipment, we reassembled the delegates, but when we rehydrated them, everyone spoke the wrong language. It was zany.

Overseas, in addition to the *Batman* feature, the episodic three-parter "The Londonium Larcenies" was combined into one program and released as a second *Batman* movie. I never found out how it did, or if the three-parter was shown as individual episodes of our series as well.

I enjoyed filming the movie and, having a larger budget than our television show, the producers introduced the BatCopter, BatBoat and BatCycle.

"How fast does the Batmobile go?" asked a wide-eyed twelve-year-old.

"Oh, about 150 miles per hour . . . (pause, then subtly, with less volume) . . . and that's in reverse," I replied.

Adults snickered. Kids took it at face value.

"Was the Batmobile originally an Oldsmobile?" queried a curious adult BatFan.

"No, citizen," I answered. "It had a 1957 Lincoln frame with a custom body."

These were questions asked at costumed Robin appearances across the country.

I remember the Batmobile on the first day of shooting. Two guys were giving its handmade steel body a final dusting just before a shot. It glistened like no other automobile I had ever seen. Even from a distance I could clearly note the bright red BatLogos on the chrome wheel covers. I also liked the huge, wide tires.

"Too cool!" I thought.

The individual front and back contoured glass windshields looked like the glass canopies on fighter jets. I immediately saw an opportunity to make use of mine by holding onto it as I jumped over the door.

Here's a snippet of BatTrivia. The producers filmed the stunt men, not Adam and me, for the stock shot in which the Batmobile pulls up in front of Commissioner Gordon's headquarters. We hardly had enough time to shoot each episode, much less the stock shots that were used repeatedly. A second unit crew frequently rushed to get fill-in footage for transitions between scenes. Meanwhile, Adam and I were shooting with the main crew. When I learned about the upcoming lensing with the stunt men in front of Commissioner Gordon's office, I reminded my double, Victor Paul, to jump over the door when the Batmobile stopped at the curb.

He laughed and said, "Sure."

Weil, he soared over the door better than I ever did. When I watch the reruns and see him make that jump, I always think, "Boy, does he make me look good!"

Filming the "Emergency BatTurn" was fun. We only did it once, and it was used often as a stock shot. It was an extra crimefighting tool the Caped Crusaders had in their arsenal of villain catchers. The Emergency BatTurn allowed Batman and Robin to reverse direction even while traveling at high speed. Here's how the seemingly unbelievable

technique worked: When Batman pulled the brightly marked Emergency BatFurn lever, BatParachutes unfurled to slow the Batmobile down. Upon reaching a designated speed, the chutes were jettisoned and the front and rear brakes on the right side of the Batmobile would automatically lock, causing the vehicle to spin 180 degrees. Batman would then accelerate rapidly, and we'd speed off in the opposite direction. It worked!

Another unique feature of the Batmobile was its ability to repair its own tires and immediately reinflate them. I watched the filming of all four tires inflating simultaneously. It was impressive.

In short, the Batmobile was truly magnificent and is a tribute to the artistry of George Barnes, its creator.

I met George on the set and was amazed to learn of all the different television shows for which he has made custom cars. They included *The Munsters*, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *The Monkees*, *The Green Hornet*, *Dick Tracy* (the pilot for a 1968 TV series and, more recently, the feature film starring Warren Beatty and Madonna), *Knight Riders*, *The Dukes of Hazard*, *Remington Steele* and *Maverick*. He also built the vehicles for the major motion pictures *Jurassic Park* and *The Flintstones*. **GOLLY GEE, BATMAN. HOLY BODY WORK!**

George has made a fortune building and selling custom cars, and did spectacularly well with the Batmobile. He originally leased the car to the studio for \$1,000 per week of filming. At the time, no one knew how successful the show would be. We filmed one episode per week, and as it turned out, we shot 120 episodes, plus six weeks on the *Batman* movie. George eventually built eight Batmobiles, five of which were used on our show and three solely for the custom-car-show circuit. He made even more money booking the Batmobile on personal appearances. The Batmobile has been by far the most popular personal appearance moneymaker in the history of automobiles. George recently told me he was raking in \$800 or more per day plus \$1.47 per mile traveling expenses for each Batmobile while on tour. More than twenty-five years of touring all those different Batmobiles has to have been a gold mine for him. **HOLY ROYALTIES, BATMAN!**

In the last few years, George has been auctioning off one of his Batmobiles every year—so far, six of the eight he built.

The BatCycle was hot, too. I saw it for the first time at Van Nuys

Airport when Batman and Robin were supposed to pull up and then take off in the BatCopter. The BatCycle was no toy or mock-up; it was real. The two-piece vehicle was a melding of high-powered motorcycle and souped-up Go-Kart. I took the Go-Kart for a quick spin before filming so I could look like I knew what I was doing. It could turn on a dime, and I almost fell off while circling the BatCopter. It had great maneuverability, but you could flip over without much effort.

It was ironic that Greenway Productions made such a big deal about how dangerous they thought it was for me to ride my motorcycle to work and consequently took out a \$3 million insurance policy to protect their interests. The truth is that I never suffered from the danger of riding to work. I suffered *after* I got to work! At one point, with all the "accidents" on the set, I almost believed the producers were trying to collect on that policy.

The BatCopter was a real helicopter. To this day I still can't comprehend how it could fly with customized BatWings. It seemed to defy gravity. We used the BatCopter only in the *Batman* movie, when we filmed the Shark Repellent BatSpray scene. That's the one where I'm flying the BatCopter, and Batman lowers himself down a rope ladder in anticipation of landing on a large yacht at sea. As Batman is about to touch the deck, the ship disappears and he sinks into the ocean. I ascend and pull Batman out of the water to reveal that a giant shark is biting his upper thigh. He pounds on the shark's head with his fist, to no avail. Finally he asks me to put the BatCopter on auto-pilot and hand him the Shark Repellent BatSpray. I climb down the rope ladder, hook my ankles around the ropes and lean upside down to hand Batman the spray. After a couple of whiffs of BatSpray, the shark lets go and falls back into the sea.

Between takes Adam confided to me, "I'm getting tired beating off this shark."

His emphasis on the words "beating off" (in that suggestively raunchy way only Adam can do) was funny and gross at the same time, but certainly more gross than funny. Imagine hearing such double meanings regularly and it isn't difficult to see how it would influence your thinking, especially if your mind was as young and impressionable as mine was.

The BatBoat was beautiful and fast but was only used in the *Bat-*

man movie and in the episodic two-parter "The Catwoman Goeth/A Stitch in Time."

It nearly became my floating coffin. Adam's stunt man, Hubie "Mad Max" Kerns, was piloting it, and I was his less-than-enthusiastic passenger. Between Hubie's speed and the erratic driving of the man at the wheel of the camera boat, I was nearly killed.

I knew something was wrong when I was called onto the set, a small boat mooring alongside the Santa Barbara pier where portions of the feature were being filmed, and saw the BatBoat bobbing in the rough surf. I learned that Adam would not be driving it in any of the scenes on the water. He was probably afraid of getting seasick. Instead, his stunt man, fearless Hubie, would be at the wheel.

"Uh-oh," I thought to myself.

I remembered the very first day of shooting. Was I going to get another dose of the stunt man credo, "The more bones you break the more work you get"?

This time I would speak up for my own self-preservation. I asked the second assistant director if we would be doing anything dangerous.

"Yes, that's why we have Batman's stunt man driving."

"Wait a minute! You should be using my stunt man, not me."

"No can do," came Reuben's calm reply.

After all, why shouldn't he be calm? He was safely tucked away on the pier, while I was about to enter the turbulent water.

"The camera boat will be on your side and light on you when you shoot the BatZooka. By the way, here it is."

He motioned for the prop manager to hand me the BatZooka, which was nearly as large as I was and much more awkward.

Another fine mess. I was getting into a tiny boat on rough water in my restrictive Boy Wonder costume and having to hold this giant, clumsy BatZooka with both arms. I wondered what would keep me in the boat, since I wouldn't be able to hold onto anything.

Helpless, all I could do now was reason with Hubie. I felt the direct approach was best.

"Hubie, I swear I'll kill you if you drive this boat recklessly."

He wasn't fazed. Why should he be? He courted death on nearly every stunt.

Before I could think of anything else to say, we were speeding at

about forty-five knots, continually soaring into the air and hammering the swells as we came down.

The director signaled me to pretend I was firing the BatZooka. I wanted to make the firing look realistic, so I recoiled my body after each shot.

Without warning, it happened. The camera boat was in front of us. Apparently, as they headed into the swells, the water was so rough that they couldn't get a smooth shot, even with the camera's gyro-steadying device. They also wanted to position the camera on my side for a close-up. So they turned broadside to the force of the sea, creating a deep wake immediately in front of us. Hubie attempted to stay behind them and keep us in the shot but we fell into the trough. The BatBoat flipped over on its side, my side, pushing me underwater. The force was tremendous and frightening. I was slammed back against my seat and violently dragged through the water. I held my breath for as long as I could and thought I was going to drown. Suddenly the BatBoat bounced into the air, and I was sure we were going to capsize. Luckily it righted itself at the last second.

I couldn't decide if I was going to throw the BatZooka into the water now and attack Hubie immediately, or wait until we got back to shore and then tear into him. I decided to wait. When we docked, I put down the BatZooka and was all over him. Three crew members jumped in and restrained me until I calmed down.

Only one other time did I lose control. It was during a fight scene in which a stunt man playing a villain's henchman was supposed to hit my head against a wall. The fight was to be simulated, as were all of our fight scenes. The head hitting was also to be simulated.

The pressure of performing in front of a movie camera causes some people to overact, and their nervous energy can be destructive. That's what happened in this case. On "Action," the stunt man started hitting my head against the wall *for real!* That hurt.

I fought back hard with full-contact punches to his stomach and face and he went down. The director called "Cut!" and everyone rushed in to see how badly he was hurt. On film the scene looked great because the fighting was real. Later, when I saw the episode on television, the producers had left in the part where my head was getting smashed, but removed my punches to the stunt man's bloodied face.

Joining the Mile-High Club

I joined the Mile-High Club on the way back from one of our appearances. I was boarding a connecting flight from Chicago to Los Angeles with a stop in Las Vegas. A beautiful brunette in her mid-twenties, with a heavy French accent, was in line ahead of me. We struck up a conversation and there was instant magnetism. She didn't know who I was, I didn't know who she was, and it didn't matter.

I was in first class and she had a coach ticket. It was the last flight to the West Coast that night, and the plane was half-full. I convinced a flight attendant to let her sit up front in the empty seat next to me.

We began talking suggestively.

"Have you ever made love in an airplane while in flight?"

"No," she said.

"I haven't either, but I'd really like to. It's called 'joining the Mile-High Club.' " Then I asked her, "Would you like to seek a joint membership with me?"

We both laughed.

"All right," she said.

I wanted to strategize how we could accomplish this coupling with passengers across from us to our left, as well as other passengers in seats both in front and behind. Even more problematic were the flight attendants; with so few passengers, everybody was getting extra attention. Right now I didn't want any attention, except from the delicious French pastry I was sitting next to.

As we spoke, I noticed we were being listened to by the man in the seat across the aisle. So I suggested we switch from English and speak in her native language.

"Voulez-vous coucher avec moi?"

That was about the only French I knew. I explained that I wasn't proficient in foreign tongues but that I would make an exception with her. I was great in charades, however, and we had a lot fun trying to

communicate with each other.

I finally succeeded in conveying my plan to make love in the only available private place — the bathroom.

"Eez too tight," she said.

I was still trying to speak French, and she was helping me by answering in English. Unexpectedly, the passenger across the aisle spoke to me.

"Excuse me. I really think you should speak a different language. If you don't want anyone to know what you're talking about, I'm a French interpreter for the United Nations."

Well, that was it. I nearly died of embarrassment. More agonizingly, I realized that I had another three hours of sitting across from this man before I could get off the airplane and hide. Even more horrendous was the fact that I had no alternative place to be with this girl if we were going to join the Mile-High Club. I mean, golly gee willikere! When was I ever going to get another chance like this?

Just then a passenger sitting in front of me turned around and started talking to us. I recognized him immediately. It was Donny Most, who portrayed Ralph Malph on the popular ABC television series *Happy Days*. He didn't know that the young lady and I had something going (or at least I thought I did), and he made a gigantic play for her.

After ten minutes of listening to some of the biggest corn I had ever heard, I finally interrupted "Okay, Donny, we'll talk to you later."

He turned around and went to sleep.

I wanted to refocus on the most important issue at hand.

"Are you ready?" I asked.

She nodded. I suggested she go into the rest room and close the door but leave it unlocked. I would join her in a few minutes. As she started to rise, a huge man sitting in the front row stood up and stretched. I told her to hurry, but it was too late. The man emitted a rude bodily noise and suddenly dove into the bathroom. **HOLY PASSED GAS!** What an unexpected, uncontrollable delay!

More than an hour passed. I thought the man must have fallen in. Actually, I was hoping he not only fell in but got flushed away, just for causing this unbearable wait. Finally he emerged. After that much time in the can, I expected the guy to come out as a shadow of his former self. Not so. A number of thoughts raced across my brain.

"What could that man have eaten to cause him to be in there for so long?" And . . .

"He doesn't look any different than when he went in. Whatever he did, it didn't do him any good." And . . .

"Gee, no telling what that place smells like. Maybe we should forget the whole thing?"

Before I could utter a word, my hot-to-trot date got up and walked straight to the bathroom. She turned and smiled at me as she went in.

"That's my cue," I said to myself.

So I went for it.

Even though it was cramped with me sitting on the toilet seat and Lady Godiva mounted on top, it was wonderful. Together with the up-and-down motion of the plane, I felt like the Lone Ranger.

The warning lights above the sink began to flash "Fasten seat belt" and "Return to your seat." At first I thought the pilot was sending us a special message. No way! I wasn't going anywhere. I bought my ticket, and I was there for the ride.

Membership has its privileges. And I can vouch for the fact that joining the Mile-High Club is everything it's cracked up to be . . . literally.

Unexpected turbulence suddenly chilled our focus and dampened our rhythm. My Siamese twin used her arms to brace herself between the walls, and I held on to her for the roller coaster ride of my life. Up and down, in and out, this was a Masters and Johnson moment.

Thank God the motion and commotion stopped. I wasn't accustomed to much movement during sex, other than my own.

With no more distractions, we refocused and enjoyed each other immensely. At first we giggled about what had happened, but the amusement soon turned into silence and then into groans of pleasure as the feeling intensified.

A terrible thing began to happen. She was having such a great time that she didn't realize her groans and sighs were getting very loud.

I said, "Shhh! We can't be too noisy."

She didn't hear me or didn't care; she just kept raising her voice. At this point I was too worried about the noise she was making to have a good time myself. What a helpless feeling. I couldn't stop her, and I couldn't get up. Of course, I was complimented by the fact that she was enjoying herself, but she was scaring me to death with the racket she made.

Dangerous Pussycats

I had never been around any wild animals other than some of the women I had dated after I divorced Bonney. Now my dear friend and prime *Batman* scriptwriter, Stanley Ralph Ross, had written a Catwoman episode with a cliffhanger that had me in Catwoman's lair dangling over three live Bengal tigers. I hadn't given much thought to



In Acapulco with a friend's Jaguar (1955)

the filming because I assumed my shots would be filmed separately from those of the tigers, and the show would then be edited—movie magic—to look as though I was in danger of getting eaten. I never dreamed this episode's artsy-fartsy director, Bob Butler (the most talented director I've ever worked with but whose pilot show sent me to the emergency room four days in a row), would return to wreak more havoc on the *Boy Wonder*.

As I rehearsed my lines in my dressing room, I heard a megaphone announcement that all women were to leave the stage. That seemed a strange request. Just then the first A.D. knocked on my door and summoned me to the set.

I asked him why women had been ordered off the set. He told me it was because they were bringing live tigers into the sound stage and if any woman was having her period the tigers' keen sense of smell could detect the odor of blood and they could become uncontrollable.

"Why are they bringing the tigers in now if they're going to be filming my scene?"

"Because the tigers are in the scene with you."

"What?"

"Don't worry about it," the A.D. laughed. "Have we ever gotten you in trouble before?"

"Yes, with grave regularity," I answered.

He laughed again, but nodded to acknowledge I was right. Reluctantly, I followed him to the set.

Visualize three wild Bengal tigers caged in a twenty-foot ring, ten feet high. They weren't circus cats used to working with humans. These were truly wild animals. The handlers told me they could jump as high as fifteen feet.

On a temporary circular catwalk set up around the top of the ring, four professional wild animal handlers holding long wooden poles with steel spikes on the end maintained constant vigilance. With the wranglers there, it was unlikely that the cats would jump out—but there was nothing to prevent them from jumping up!

Well Hung

An eight-foot wooden plank hung over the cage. On one end I was tied face down with my head dangling. On the opposite end of the plank was a huge hourglass filled with sand that counterbalanced my weight. In an attempt to lure Batman into a trap, Catwoman began to drain the sand out of the hourglass, which caused the plank—and Robin—to dip down into the tigers' cage. Ten feet above the starting point of the shot, at which the plank was fully horizontal, was a heavy-gauge steel cage where the director and cameraman were safely housed. I would be completely unprotected and within striking range of the tigers. I became concerned about my safety, and said to Butler, "Bob, the wild animal handlers tell me those tigers can jump fifteen to twenty feet. It looks like you've got me hung about ten feet over them. How do you figure I'm going to be safe?"

"Burt, it's unlikely that you have anything to worry about. They've already been fed this morning."

"That's very reassuring, Bob. But how do you know they're not still hungry? Perhaps they want a late morning snack? Let's find out. Throw them each a donut or something."

"Look at them. Do they look hungry to you? Besides, you'll only be up

there a few minutes, and only your head is going to be exposed."

"That's even more comforting, Bob. You must be kidding! Even if they're not hungry, they may decide to attack me. Where's my stunt man?"

"Burt, we need *you* to do this shot. When you turn your head back toward the camera, we're going to know it's you. And the audience is going to know it's you. Think of your fans!"

"They'll understand. I'm thinking of my life!"

Then I grumbled something to the effect that I believed my fans would like to still see me around for future episodes. He said everyone was counting on me, so I consented.

Imagine being tied to a plank, looking down at three ferocious tigers and only being able to move your head. One of the guys in our film crew succinctly expressed his views as I donned my costume and prepared to walk to the plank. "Better you than me, Burt," he said.

Bob agreed to be ready to begin filming as soon as I was strapped down. Once tied, I reiterated my request for expediency.

The tigers didn't know what kind of creature I was with my mask and costume on. That was definitely to my benefit, but they circled below nervously, and anything could have happened. We filmed one take. Expecting that it was all over, I asked to be untied. Bob called for another take.

"What?" I asked. "Are we making an epic?"

Bob was undeterred. This time he asked the wranglers to see if they could get more action out of the tigers. I cursed Stanley Ralph Ross under my breath.

We filmed another take, this time with the handlers tapping their poles against the top of the cage. The tigers became more agitated. One stood on his hind legs and reached up with his claws in my direction.

"Cut. Print."

"Great," I said. "Get me down!"

From the security of his steel cage ten feet above, Bob called for one more take. I couldn't believe it! Even worse, I had a premonition that we were tempting fate, playing a dangerous game, like a wild animal version of Russian roulette. I sensed the worst.

"Can't you get them to be more active?" asked Bob of the wranglers.

The guys left their positions above the cage and returned in about five minutes. It seemed like an eternity.

Running out of ideas and wanting to please the director, as well as the production company that was paying them big bucks, they tied pieces of meat to the ends of their poles. I didn't know this at the time or I would have screamed bloody murder. Unfortunately, the events that followed almost turned out to be my own bloody murder.

The first A.D. called for a bell and a red light, and we filmed another take. This time the tigers came to the center of the ring, directly below me. They growled. One jumped up in my direction. I closed my eyes and turned my head in fear.

"Great! More! More!" I heard the director yell.

Suddenly another huge cat jumped up, even closer to me. I screamed and strained my head back against my bonds.

"That's it. Cut. Print. We've got it!"

Several crew members untied me. I was definitely shaken.

I couldn't understand why the tigers had suddenly become so aggressive. When I found out the handlers had hung chunks of meat over my head, I was not a happy Boy Wonder.

I wanted to serve Butler's gonads to the tigers, but the handlers had already taken the cats away.

I pondered strangling Stanley Ralph Ross for writing such a dangerous show, but after considering that Stanley is six-foot-six and weighs 340 pounds (before lunch), I realized I was better off taking my chances with the tigers.

A Felonious Feline Shows Her Fur Coat

Occasionally I made personal appearances with one or more of the other cast members in the show. I remember one or two promotions with Yvonne Craig, a couple with Cesar Romero and Alan Napier, and a few with the most charming, sexy and highly unpredictable felonious feline, Julie Newmar. One thing you can always expect from Julie . . . during the course of the time you are around her, she will say or do something that takes everyone by surprise, electrify the moment and dramatically raise your eyebrows, among other things.

Men go crazy over Julie for several reasons. First, she is so

massive in a feminine way that she's almost too much of a good thing. I believe she is close to six foot three inches tall, barefoot. Standing next to her when she is wearing high heels (as she almost always is), most men face directly into her breasts. Smaller men's necks come up to the top of her legs. From either vantage point there is more than an eyeful or mouthful to imagine depending where your thoughts are.

Second, because she is in tremendous physical condition from years of training and experience as a talented professional dancer, even as tall as she is, she actually glides as she walks. Like a cat, she moves quietly, effortlessly and majestically. That also drives men crazy. She knows how to utilize every part of her anatomy to communicate sexuality, and she does it with the finesse of a master. At some appearances I would follow her onto the stage, a few yards behind. What I heard from men when she had passed out of hearing distance were graphic animalistic comments of unrealizable fantasies. In her presence, guys are overwhelmed with their own insecurity. And they don't dare say anything to her because they are afraid she will slice and dice their egos like a Cuisinart.

Guys would occasionally ask me if I "got it on" with Julie. I would kiddingly answer that it would be too strenuous.

"Golly, I'd have to stand on her kneecaps just to kiss her!"

(Note: Julie and I have never been lovers, only friendly co-workers, and I have the greatest respect for her.)

Women are sometimes intimidated by Julie at first. Whatever the average much smaller woman has is at best only a miniature version of Julie. Once Julie speaks, however, the intimidation evaporates because she is soft, gentle and non-threatening.

Third, Julie purrs her words. I don't mean to the extent that she did as Catwoman. Her voice is soft, her words are spoken gently and smoothly, and her intonation is unpredictably suggestive.

Lastly, Julie can be unexpectedly aggressive. I remember Adam flirting with her on the set, attempting to flex his macho hormones and testing the waters through seemingly innocent conversation. Julie listened to a couple of shovefuls, then stood up and walked over to him. Looking down into his eyes, she said something I could not hear. Whatever it was, it left Adam red in the face and at a loss for words. That

doesn't happen often. It was a rare treat.

A couple of years ago Julie and I appeared together in a small town west of Chicago. There was a portable stage set up in front of the audience. Usually the stage at an appearance is set up only a foot or two above the crowd, so we can shake hands with little kids as well as their parents. This was a different kind of gathering—A memorabilia show with an adult crowd. The stage was a full five feet above the floor and there were rows of chairs on two sides. A full house of BatFanatics occupied every seat.

Julie was introduced to applause and whistles. Then I was introduced to applause and cheers. When I saw the positioning of the audience and glanced at Julie, who was wearing a minidress that stopped about eight inches below her waist, I knew something explosive was about to happen. And did it ever. As I stood five feet away, Julie came out with a statement to the audience that caused about as much embarrassment and redness in my face as anything ever has in my life.

"FOR YOU EAGER-BEAVER YOUNG FANS DOWN THERE IN THE FRONT ROWS, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I'M NOT WEARING ANY UNDERWEAR!"

She spoke calmly and indicated she was going to raise her skirt.

The crowd went nuts. I went nuts. I thought there was going to be a riot. I immediately left the stage hysterical with embarrassment and tears in my eyes from laughing so hard. I found an empty corner backstage and stuck my head into it. I kept saying to myself, "Oh, my God! Oh, my God! Oh, my God! I can't believe it! I can't believe it!"

Did she raise her miniskirt? Was she wearing underwear? Did loyal BatFans see Catwoman's infamous fur coat? Did the eager beavers get an eyeful? Was it a Kodak moment?

I'm not beating around the bush (no pun intended). The truth is, I don't know. I didn't look, not that it wouldn't have been a fascinating sight—it's just that I have too much respect for Julie. And then I was off the stage faster than you can say "What a Spectacular Beaver!"

What horry BatFans may or may not have seen is only conjecture on my part. However, they know what they saw, if anything. And Julie knows whether or not she flashed them the real thing.

Catwoman's Young Assistant, Pussycat!

In another episode Stanley had written in a new character with whom Batman and Robin were not familiar. She was Catwoman's new assistant, Pussycat. The beautiful young pop singer Lesley Gore was hired to play the part. She was the niece of *Batman* producer Howie Horwitz. **HOLY NEPOTISM!**

In the episodic two-parter "That Darn Catwoman /Scat Darn Catwoman," Lesley drugs me with Cataphrenic, a secret substance that makes me fall in love with her and turns me evil. Then I join Catwoman's gang. After a vicious fight scene with Batman, Robin wins. Batman had taken the precaution of a BatAntidote pill, and Catwoman's Cataphrenic doesn't work on him. Batman had also arranged for Alfred (butler to the Dynamic Duo) to bring Robin some BatAntidote. Robin recovers and joins Batman to apprehend Catwoman and Pussycat.

I remember sitting close to Lesley in my final scene with her. She was wearing sexy see-through stockings and a tight-fitting dress that bulged her boobs. Her miniskirt had risen to the top of her thighs, exposing her incredible legs and maybe more. I lusted in my heart and everywhere else. I didn't know why I was so turned on. I was beginning to believe that Robin's dose of Cataphrenic was actually having an effect on me.

The action is Robin's arrest of Pussycat. As I speak my lines, Lesley raises her hands above her head and turns to kiss me. I move in close. After two rehearsals less than a fraction of an inch from her lips, I was so hot and bothered that I thought I might lose control. I wanted to kiss her and make a beeline for her honey pot. (Thinking about Lesley in that sexy outfit now, I associate my passion for her with the song Tom Jones made famous, and I find myself singing, "Pussycat, Pussycat, I love you.")

It was time for a take. I thought I had enough resistance for one shot. Anything beyond that was at the studio's own risk. I considered Lesley equally at fault for being so charming, beautiful and sexy. There ought to be a law against that.

On "Action!" I said my lines and moved in close. I was trying to concentrate but all I could think of was Lesley and her delicious lips. Her delicate, sexy perfume was no deterrent. She raised her arms and

out protruded those boobs. My resistance was collapsing. I briefly cast my eyes downward and saw that miniskirt rising along with my temperature. I tried to frighten myself by reminding myself that this was my producer's niece and there would be horrible repercussions from an unwarranted groping, but that didn't do any good either. I moved closer to those lips, so close that I could feel the warmth of her skin. I wanted her badly, and there was no stopping me.

"Cut!" yelled the director.

That startled me, and I stopped. Lesley hadn't moved from her position. It was almost as if she was waiting for me to continue. I looked into her gorgeous eyes and communicated my feelings. She already knew.

Mentally I regained control, but physically I was a wreck. The first A.D. gave me a half-hour off while the crew relocated the camera equipment to a different set. I raced to my bungalow for a cold shower.

As I stood there being pelted with cold drops of water, I tried to analyze what had started my never-ending vortex of horniness over Lesley. Earlier in the script my old friend Stanley had written one of the greatest short bits of dialogue in the entire *Batman* series. These are the words he scripted for Pussycat when I met her for the first time. Introducing herself to Robin, she says:

"Hi Robin! My name is Pussycat, but you can call me . . . *Cat!*"

That line was in true *Batman* style. I loved it and still do. When people ask me about some of the zany dialogue on our show, I often repeat Lesley's memorable words. I went so wild over the name Stanley created for her that I called her by the first part of it—the word before "cat"—in rehearsals. I'm lucky she didn't slap me. Then again, maybe she liked it?

Suddenly I realized that it was Stanley's witticism that had gotten me into trouble. It was all his fault. He knew me so well, he probably intentionally wrote that line to drive me crazy. Well, he succeeded!

As Stanley and I got to know each other better, he tailored his scripts more and more to my wildness. Stanley was a monster maker. He was Dr. Frankenstein, and I was a Teenage Karloff. Adding that to the road Adam was leading me down was a dangerously sexy combination.

Even More Dangerous Pussies

Bloody Mary

Mary was my first experience with a mature woman, and an intentional choice resulting from my two recent failures—one underage, and the other bisexual. I was determined to enjoy a conservative, normal relationship, uneventful save for the pleasures of intimacy. Mary was the former wife of a world-famous country music star and the mother of two fine children. How much more normal could a guy find?

I took the time to get to know her before hopping into bed. We didn't sleep together until our second date. My list of self-protective questions had grown. I was practically at the point of typesetting and printing four-part applications.

Confident that I had covered my bases and that all systems were go for a late-night launch, I arrived at her pad after the kids went to sleep.

Mary knew what she was doing. There were no false starts and no naive gropings. She was so calm and comfortable with who she was—almost as though she had been around for centuries. Her touch was soft, efficient and effective. She had me ready before I expected and introduced me into her warm, hospitable nest. The experience was smooth and heavenly, and I felt mesmerized by her presence. We enjoyed each other continuously throughout the night.

Near daybreak she became extremely tired and weak. She wanted to go to sleep before the sun rose. I was tired and thirsty, and asked if I could find myself something cold to drink. She directed me to her refrigerator.

I was considering pineapple juice when I saw four plastic bottles of what looked like grape juice. But there was no colorful printed label, just a hospital-type tape on the neck of each one, inked with scribbled

letters. My vivid imagination was playing tricks on me, and I imagined that these were bottles of blood. Let's see. That would make Mary a vampire and me . . . her next victim?

I shuddered. Not a pleasant thought. In fact, a ridiculous one, considering the typical American household I was in. I vowed to control my imagination as my next New Year's resolution.

I chose the pineapple juice and went back to Mary's bedroom. She was waiting for me. I referred to her refrigerator and made a tasteless joke about her being Dracula's ex-wife. She didn't laugh. I apologized.

"Those are vials of blood."

She read my mind and answered my question before I asked it.

"Hey! I'm cool," I said to myself. I wasn't jittery. For all I knew she or one of her kids could have undergone a recent operation. I didn't notice any IV equipment. Maybe she did charity work for the Red Cross, or was a regular donor, or . . .

"I drink it," she said calmly.

I felt a hollow feeling in my stomach and instinctively placed my left hand around the front of my throat.

"Why?" I asked. I didn't want to appear frightened, but I was.

"I like the taste of it, and it's nutritious."

A cold chill surged through me. I didn't feel comfortable about this revelation.

Stupidly I dropped the subject, rationalized some farfetched excuse and continued dating her for several weeks. Nothing bad ever happened—well, except one thing.

We made hamburgers one night. She liked hers raw, with garlic salt, pepper and parsley—steak tartare. While slicing some tomatoes for our salad, I cut myself.

She was genuinely concerned. I went for a paper towel to apply pressure and stop the bleeding.

"No," she blurted intensely. "Don't do that. I'll take care of it."

She put her mouth against my finger, and her lips over my wound. I felt a little sting, then suction. SHE WAS SUCKING MY BLOOD.

Suddenly she regained control of herself, swallowed and stopped sucking. She pressed her tongue firmly against the cut to close the wound, and in moments it no longer bled.

I was shaken, and ignoring her protestations, I left immediately.

and never returned. The negative image some men attribute to women as "bloodsuckers" took on a whole new meaning for me.

So much for mature women!

Shelley Winters: A Mothering Ma Parker

As played by Shelley Winters, Ma Parker is Gotham City's version of the 1930s gangster Ma Barker. Shelley's character is a calculating woman who sets up her hideout inside Gotham State Penitentiary, of which she takes complete control, and launches a rampage of robberies. One of her secret escape devices is a rocket-powered wheelchair. She orders a henchman to plant a bomb in the Batmobile that is designed to explode as the Batmobile accelerates above fifty-five miles per hour. Fortunately the Dynamic Duo discovers the bomb and defuses it. Batman and Robin make several attempts to capture Ma, but she eludes their efforts and finally captures them inside the prison. She straps us down to side-by-side electric chairs. We send a signal to Alfred, who is able to get the city to shut off its electricity. We manage to escape before we are fried and we finally capture Ma Parker.

Shelley was a marvelous Ma Parker. Unfortunately on her first day of work she slipped and fell. I was filming my last day on another show and hadn't seen the ruckus. Shelley was pretty upset. Weeks after completing her *Batman* stint, she said in an interview, "No wonder Adam West and Hurt Ward look dead. Everyone on *Batman* was overworked. There were unsafe conditions on the set!"

Hooray for Shelley! Now I wasn't the only one who was exposing the dangers of making our show. I had been saying this from day one, but it was squelched and swept under the rug to inquiries from members of the press.

"Watch out for Shelley Winters. She likes young boys," teased Sam.

Those were the words I heard on my first day on the Ma Parker episodes. After a dozen or so similar comments detailing what Shelley was going to do to my young body when she got hold of me, I was nervous and prepared for almost anything. What I got was nothing at first.

Shelley was delightful. She greeted me as she did Adam, politely and with respect, and disappeared into makeup. There was no child

molester or adolescent succubus lurking in this lady. She was all business, not the slightest hint of monkey business, seemingly not even interested in me. I was thrilled to be working with this marvelous and talented actress, but survival in the big city dictates keeping your eyes open and your zipper closed.

During the course of the day, between shows, I sat with her and the other members of the cast. I was a kid and Shelley was considerably older. I concluded that she wasn't after my body, so I wasn't tense when I answered her casual question about our shooting schedule. We talked for a few minutes about the show.

The crew was making a lot of noise moving cameras and lights, and Shelley commented that it was too noisy for her. She suggested I join her in her dressing room. The Boy Wonder's short hair instantly became Star Wars storm trooper sensors, and I went on DEFCON 3 alert.

I politely begged off—not because Shelley wasn't attractive. She was a beautiful lady and a charming actress, it's just that I dated girls my own age or younger.

Shelley was daring, daunting, devilish and unabashedly aggressive. I thought she perceived my reluctance and I believed our two ships had passed in the night, never again to cross paths. Wrong. The next day Shelley added another quality to her triple-D arsenal: determination. She repeated her offer of fun and games in her dressing room, became more graphic in her descriptions and kept pounding for my participation.

DEFCON 2 alert. I thanked her again for her kind offer but clarified that I just wasn't up for it. A little nervous and shy, I looked into her eyes and explained that I needed to remain focused on my work and keep my head buried in my script, not her lap.

She found that challenging and even more tempting.

"I have a book for you to read," she offered. "I'll bring it tomorrow."

"What's the name of it?" I asked curiously.

"In Praise of Older Women."

I laughed. That was a funny line. I had to hand it to Shelley. She had one heck of a sense of humor. The next day she brought the book.

DEFCON 1 alert! (Open the silos, arm the missiles, World War III is imminent!)

"I can't believe it. There really is a book with that name?"

"Yes," came her reply. "And I want you to come to my dressing room at lunch and feast your eyes on it . . . and me!" Then she added, "We'll read it together."

I politely thanked Shelley for inviting me to the feast but told her I was sticking to my existing diet. She got the message, and that was the last time I saw her, other than watching her wonderful movie performances on video.

So much for older women!

Holy Femmes Fatales!

I was running out of alternatives for suitable sexual partners. Maybe Adam was right. Maybe I should stay away from everyday-world women and focus my affections on ladies in show business. At least we had *something* in common.

I was quickly coming to the conclusion that women can be dangerous to your health.

Debra was the beautiful accomplice of one of Gotham City's most dastardly villains. She had long brown hair and dark, alluring eyes that reminded me of what I imagined sirens would have looked like in the days of Homer and the *Iliad*. Sirens were mythological vamps who emitted magical sounds that lured sailors to reefs and whose sex appeal was great but also deadly. Debra was as modern a person as you could imagine. However, she also exuded an almost scary, mystical feeling that she could read my mind. She had it all—a sharp mind, a quick wit, a heart-stopping face and a magnificent figure. All of this plus something more difficult to describe . . . an aura of forbidden passion that made her irresistible.

Basic Instinct and *Sleeping With the Enemy* were still twenty-five years away, but had those movies already been made, I might have thought twice about allowing myself to have an affair with Debra. Here is what happened one fateful night.

After filming, we went out for a long dinner. Debra and I enjoyed each other's company and talked a lot, later returning to her place. She lived in a duplex in a quiet residential area of West Los Angeles. It was an old-fashioned upstairs apartment, kept in immaculate condition.

From just inside her front door, steep stairs led up to the living room, kitchen, bedroom and adjoining bathroom. The living room had high Gothic ceilings with giant pillars that divided the room into sinister hiding places. The furniture was European, nice but a little creepy.

Debra's bedroom was a physical representation of the woman. Her bed could have told a fascinating story about a powerful femme fatale, worldly far beyond her years. Again the danger signals went up, for a moment the hair on my arms bristled with a tinge of fear. Unfortunately, the old saying proved true: A stiff dick has no conscience.

True to the cliché, I quickly submerged into her and her world, ignoring the intuitive warnings.

That night we made love endlessly. It was like having sex in a circle—with no beginning and no end—pleasurable to the point of pain. It was one of the most profound experiences I ever had. I was definitely smitten with her charm, even though a small voice inside warned me of danger. Was this girl another heartbreaker, a man-eater? I was too tired to ponder the ramifications. It was now very late, we both had to be on the set for early makeup and wardrobe calls, and I still had a long drive back to Malibu.

I kissed Debra good-night and tucked her into bed. As I left the room, she called me back. She asked me to leave by the back door, which was reached through the kitchen. I wondered why but accepted her request, figuring she knew what was best. Wrong again.

I walked through the dark hallway into the kitchen, fumbling my way to the back door. As I started to leave, I noticed there was no lock on the inside of the doorknob—just a deadbolt on the door that could only be locked and unlocked from the inside. If I went out that door, there was no way I could lock it as I left. I decided the right thing to do was go back through the apartment, down the steep stairs and out the front door. Wrong again . . . again.

I headed through the kitchen. As I entered the living room, something eerie caught my eye. It was shiny and appeared in the distance momentarily from behind one of the pillars. Then it disappeared. I thought my eyes were playing tricks. I started toward the stairs. Suddenly I heard a very soft, slow laugh and stopped dead in my tracks. I listened again but heard nothing.

I started again toward the stairs. Now I heard an animalistic

chuckling and knew that what I'd heard was real! Then I saw it—a long metallic object with a strong, shiny reflection. What was it? I didn't know and wasn't inclined to take the time to find out.

A shriek. In the darkness I saw someone running toward me very fast. Then I recognized the shiny object—a large, long, very sharp-looking butcher knife—and someone was coming at me.

I ran for my life, bounding down the stairs toward the front door. Whoever was chasing me now began screaming and was coming down the stairs toward me very fast. I struggled to open the front door but the deadbolt seemed stuck. I used all my strength, and at the last possible moment the door swung open! The danger was now very close, maybe five or six feet away.

I turned and saw Debra holding the huge knife high over her head in a threatening position. She had a wild look in her eyes and seemed to be in an uncontrollable frenzy.

"This girl's gone crazy," I thought. "She must be possessed!"

I dashed out the door as the blade came down, missing me by inches. I ran into the night toward my car. I couldn't believe how close I had come to losing my life!

The next morning I showed up for work tired and tense and didn't run into Debra until the afternoon. I avoided her. She finally approached and told me that she thought that what had happened was *funny*. She said something about now knowing what it had been like for the Tony Perkins character in *Psycho*, who dressed up as his dead mother and ran out onto the second-floor landing with his butcher knife, killing his victim Martin Balsam.

She abruptly changed the subject, smiled sexily and told me that she wanted to see me again. I told her I didn't regard her actions as a joke, that she had truly frightened me and that the knife's sharp blade had missed me by inches. I told her that I would never see her again. And I haven't! **HOLY CLOSE CALL!**

(Debra was last seen lobbying a producer to give her the role of Lorena in *The John Wayne Bobbitt* story.)

Special Effects and Fight Scenes

The Special Effects

We had so many spectacular rigs and gags in our 120 episodes that our production crew included three full-time special-effects men and one full-time pyrotechnics expert. Our post-production crew included feature film editors, film developers and processors, and darkroom effects people. The wide range of special effects for *Batman* required the expertise of more than a dozen production and post-production veterans with state-of-the-art technology and included atmospheric, mechanical, electrical, structural and optical effects.

Atmospheric effects utilize fire, gases, chemicals, explosives, water, ice and air pressure. *Mechanical effects* include automated and manual devices, motors, rigs, cranes and harnesses. *Electrical effects* concern electrically powered gadgets ranging in size from small hand-held battery-powered BatRadios to the medium-sized Batmobile's Radar Antenna to the BatCave's giant Atomic Pile. *Structural effects* include breakaways such as chairs, tables and walls. *Optical effects* employed during post-production make sophisticated transitions in editing, including wipes, zooms, squeezes, dissolves, split screens and optical overlays. These overlays created the POWS, ZAPS, BIFFS, BAMS and SPLATS that were the first of their kind and that became so popular in the show. The colorful titles were matted over contrasting backgrounds. In order to save the outlandish costs of overlaying the combined result on the fight sequences, the artists designed explosive images, and the film editors inserted them with fast-paced hard cuts immediately following punches to fool the eye into believing that they actually occurred over the action.

In the overall context of thousands of special effects created in our two and a half years of production, the results were fabulous

and ninety-nine-percent perfect. It was the other one percent that was so scary.

The Not-So-Special Effects

These were the hospital effects, because that's where they put me. With more than 100 people on the set who would have believed I'd be the only one needing repeated hospital visits?

I had no particular favorite among the effects that went awry. Each disaster had its own uniquely punishing results. Explosions meant havoc and falling debris, most of which hit me on exposed areas of skin. Flash powder is like napalm. It causes extraordinarily painful first- second- and third-degree burns.

One of my worst experiences was filming a "Mr. Freeze" episode. George Sanders was the guest star. (He was one of three show business greets who played the same role, the others were Otto Preminger and Eli Wallach). The scene was Batman and Robin's escape from a frozen steel cell. Batman placed an explosive device in the lock. The special-effects honchos assured me that the hot flash powder would explode straight up without shooting in the direction of Adam or me. I had a bad feeling about my proximity to the lock. I knew Adam's full head cowl would protect him, but my thin black mask scarcely covered the area around my eyes. I had been hurt so many times before that I shut my eyes on the director's cue for the explosion.

Much bigger than anyone anticipated, the explosion blew outward in my direction. It knocked me on my rear end. Within seconds, painful blisters arose from second-degree burns that covered my face and eyelids. I screamed in pain. Luckily, because it was a Mr. Freeze episode, there was plenty of ice on the set, and crew members quickly covered my face with it. I was rushed to the hospital, and the emergency room doctor told me that if I hadn't closed my eyes when I did, I would be permanently blind. I had to wear bandages over my eyes and couldn't work for several days. When I finally returned, the makeup I was required to wear stung the raw skin on my face. It also slowed the healing process, which went on for months.

There were a number of other not-so-special effects that I found

punishing. Colored gas, released by the villains in the claustrophobically sealed containers we were often confined in, left dust sediments in my lungs—which made breathing difficult and produced a horrible feeling of suffocation. Metal harnesses used by the crooks to hoist us into diabolical tortures often pinched the skin on my back and arms and tore hairs off my chest. One such metal harness not only failed to lift me, but struck me on the forehead and produced a concussion.

I could go on and on, but it would make me seem accident prone, which I am not. The fact is that the *Batman* television series was a dangerous experience for me, and as much as I loved most of the filming, those painful times will never be forgotten.

The Stunt Men, Stunt Fighting and Stunts

As I grew to know our stunt men, I realized that they were special people. My stunt man, Victor Paul, and I got off to a rocky start because I wound up doing the dangerous stunts in the first few episodes. I finally learned that it was not his fault, but the director's. In fact Victor was more than willing and brought his concern about my safety to the attention of the first assistant and to each director. But bombastic Bob Butler was determined to create more realism by filming close shots of the action, which I was required to perform because, up close, Victor looks about as much like me as Burt Reynolds looks like Burt Lancaster. The producers must have passed the word on to subsequent directors, because each of them used me the same way.

Although I was a brown belt in karate, Victor taught me a great deal about stunt fighting and coached me on a number of his specialties, including swordsmanship, for which he is an expert. Long before the show, he was a singer-dancer in the film version of *Guy's and Dolls*, so he was a versatile man indeed.

During the customary thirty to forty minutes between shots, I would get together with Victor and other stunt men and listen to some of these pros' funniest, strangest and most terrifying experiences. Once we shot a scene at an outdoor location on the Warner Brothers backlot. It was a "Shane" episode with Cliff Robertson guest-starring as a take-off on the legendary western hero, Shane. One of Shane's

henchmen was supposed to fall from a second-story balcony, so the producers brought in an expert whose specialty was high falls. I was amazed to see how it was done.

A huge heavy-duty cushion was placed on the ground about fifteen feet in front of the wall below the balcony. I remarked to Victor that the mat looked too far away. He explained that when someone falls, the motion and weight of his body carries him a distance that is calculable based upon the height of the fall and the speed of the person's forward movement as he enters the fall. Moments later I watched the stunt man tumble out the second-floor window and fall in the center of the mat. I was amazed.

Victor recounted an incredible story of one stunt man who nearly died.

Apparently he had positioned the landing pad about thirty feet in front of the fourth-story window he was falling from. Then he went into the building in preparation for doing the stunt.

Meanwhile the show's producer and associate producer walked onto the set and noticed how far the pad was from the window where the man would fall. Concerned that the stunt man would miss the pad, they ordered crew members to move it directly under the window. On "Action," the stunt man came flying out the window and fell past his safety pad, landing on the ground and breaking his back. Rightfully, he blamed the producer. Perhaps that explains radio comedian Fred Allen's one-liner, "An associate producer is the only guy in Hollywood who will associate with a producer."

That poor stunt man spent nine months in a hospital and underwent three back surgeries, none of which fully restored his spine. Consequently he walked hunched over and suffered continual muscle spasms. Surprisingly, he managed to return to his profession on a limited basis.

Eighteen months later he was hired to fall from the tall mast of an oceangoing sailboat. Sailboats tilt back and forth as their sails propel them forward. If you fell from the mast as it tilted over the sea, you would land in the water, which is what the stunt was designed to do. The stunt man miscalculated his trajectory and landed on the deck, breaking his back again.

This story has a happy ending. After another long hospital stay,

Special Effects and Fight Scenes

his body miraculously healed completely and he could walk normally once more. It took breaking his back for a second time to cure the damage caused by the first fall. **HOLY PAINFUL RESTORATION!**

I knew another stunt man who wasn't connected with our series. His name was Rick Sylvester, and he was the son of a successful Beverly Hills real estate developer who was my father's major client. Rick was a spectacular skier and an avid skydiver. He accomplished one of the best stunts ever, and I applaud him for it. Almost everyone who goes to the movies saw the breathtaking thriller that he performed in the James Bond movie *The Spy Who Loved Me*.

Rick doubled for Roger Moore in a high-speed ski chase down a steep mountain. At the beginning of the film, the bad guys were in hot pursuit of Bond, shooting at and trying to kill him. He managed to elude their bullets as he raced downhill. The camera shot switched to a wide angle as Rick came to the edge of a gigantic cliff, thousands of feet high. He skied right off the cliff at full speed, free-fell thousands of feet through the air for almost ten nerve-racking seconds, and finally opened his parachute, which had a giant logo of the English flag.

Spectacular and amazing! I understand Rick was paid \$30,000 for that stunt. I wouldn't have tried it for a hundred times that amount. Well, on second thought

Fighting Bruce Lee

Bruce Lee was the most famous martial artist in movie history. Even today he is a cult hero to many, and I feel he was personally responsible for creating the excitement and tremendous growth of the martial arts in the United States.

Very few people know this piece of film fighting trivia, but Bruce's first filmed fight scene was with me. The show was *Batman* and I, of course, was portraying Robin. Bruce was playing the Green Hornet's (Van Williams) right-hand man, Kato, in the *Batman* two-parter "A Piece of the Action" and "Batman's Satisfaction."

(Note: When *The Green Hornet* began on radio, Kato was Japanese. On December 7, 1941, he suddenly became Filipino. But the name stays popular. O. J. Simpson's house guest and his dog are both named

Kato. Old radio buffs will also know the Green Hornet is an update of the Lone Ranger. Both were created by the same author: the secret identities of both characters were named Reed, both wore masks and were perceived to be outlaws, both had minority sidekicks and one had a car called "the Black Beauty," while the other rode a big white horse.)

In a couple of inane news stories I was portrayed as being in mortal fear of having to fight Bruce; they said he toyed with me as a cat might with a mouse. These journalistic incompetents failed to research their stories. Had they done so, they would have found that I had studied Kenpo karate from the age of fifteen and had received my brown belt before I ever tried out for the part of Robin.

Even more importantly, Bruce and I were friends and neighbors long before we filmed that scene. I sparred and trained with him at his apartment a few floors below. Not only did we live in the same building, but we found time in our schedules to go out for dinner with our wives. Bruce liked to take us to Chinatown in downtown Los Angeles. He always ordered special things not on the menu for Caucasians, and he insisted on paying the bill. His wife, Linda, was carrying Brandon. Later, I remember our families getting together and Bruce proudly holding Brandon in his arms. Bruce was a wonderful person and a loving husband and father as well as a great martial artist. We spent hours together; he'd talk about his upbringing in China and how he had trained and fought real bouts on the rooftops of their houses, as was the custom.

We also spent days comparing exercise and sparring techniques. The times I spent with Bruce are fond memories, and our fight scene on film was barely more than a toned-down version of the real sparring we did off the set.

Fighting Adam West

Adam and I have had our fights but they never got physical. They were usually over petty things like who had to wait for whom on the set, who got a nicer carpet in his dressing room which dressing room was closer to the set and, much more seriously, why Adam refused to make a guest appearance or an autograph party with me

Special Effects and Fight Scenes

unless he got sixty percent of our combined salaries. Since we were offered the same amount, that meant I had to pay him twenty percent of my fee **HOLY EXTORTION!**

The producers averted a huge fight over my having a telephone in my dressing room. The waiting time between shots could easily be thirty minutes or more, which I could use productively instead of just vegetating (Imagine—all day, every day waiting and waiting for the crew to move the cameras, light the scene, make last-minute changes and so on) I wasn't allowed to leave the set to walk the few studio blocks to the producers' office because invariably I would be out of contact at the wrong time.

There was nothing unreasonable about requesting a phone. I offered to pay for installation and all charges. What was the holdup? Adam had at least one if not more telephone lines directly into his boudoir. Why was my request for a single line never fulfilled?

After six weeks of asking, I was quietly told,

"Another actor doesn't want you to have a phone because you might keep him waiting when it's time to shoot."

Oh, was I steaming. Let's see. I wonder *who* that actor could be. An extra? No, they were just there for a day or two of shooting. One of the guest villains? No, I only worked with them for two or three days; they were highly unlikely to be my source of grief. Was it Commissioner Gordon, Chief O'Hara, Alfred our butler, or dear old Aunt Harriet? Nopa, they only worked one day a week! The process of elimination didn't take long, and I knew that only someone with extraordinary nerve could have the audacity to prevent his crimefighting partner from having a single line to stay in touch with his pregnant wife or be able to call his agent.

As I was on my way out the door to confront the culprit, the producers relented and allowed me to have a phone. It was on that line that Bonney called weeks later when she suddenly went into labor

Her Chest Was Bigger Than Batman's, and She Could Pick Up Coins in a Really Incredible Way!

On the set I met a lady of extraordinary physical development and prowess, a true bodybuilder with an astonishing physique, sort of a female counterpart to Arnold Schwarzenegger. Jennifer was tall, beautiful, athletic, very muscular, exotic and tanned. She also had a chest bigger than Batman's.

Never having met a female bodybuilder and then seeing Jennifer up close was more than a shock—it was a major California earthquake, an eight on my Richter scale. Even though she was fully dressed, her arms, shoulders and legs bulged her clothes and nearly burst her seams. Her small waist accentuated her hourglass figure. It was fascinating to see a woman so well endowed, so well defined that she didn't need to wear anything to prove beyond any doubt that she was spectacular.

Jennifer was visiting the set as a guest of one of the producers (I wonder if his wife knew about that), and our brief meeting was long enough that we could arrange a date for that same evening. The rest of the afternoon I fantasized watching her perform one of her bodybuilding routines. Then I fantasized making love to her. Then I fantasized making love to her while she performed a bodybuilding routine. I worked myself into a frenzy. The permutations were endless.

That night we drove into the Hollywood Hills and parked on fabled Mulholland Drive, overlooking the glimmering lights spanning Los Angeles all the way west to Santa Monica. We kissed and petted and cuddled while we gazed at the stars. It was kind of awkward but fun, two adults acting like two shy teenagers. She was very feminine and

delicious. As I held her I felt those muscular shoulders and arms, much larger than mine. It was different, strange and erotic, like sampling forbidden fruits.

My Jaguar sedan presented definite room limitations, as the front seats were bisected by the console. We realized that we could only go so far comfortably, and neither of us was game for backseat contortions.

We headed to my house in Malibu, first stopping on Pacific Coast Highway for a light dinner. I knew it was best not to exercise too strenuously on a full stomach.

Jennifer loved my crimefighter's cave. Before I could ask, she removed her clothes and skinny-dipped in my indoor wading pool. I couldn't take my eyes off her deeply tanned body, those huge breasts and the bulging muscles. I turned on the waterfall and joined her. We kissed and petted some more.

She wanted to see the rest of the place, so we wrapped some towels around us. The house was cool that night. Outside, the sea air was chilly, and Malibu's predictable nighttime fog had already begun rolling ashore.

Upstairs in my bedroom I lit a colored fire log and slid the glass doors to the deck all the way open. The room warmed quickly, but the brisk ocean air kept it refreshing.

Jennifer dropped her towel and sauntered outside. We stood by the rail and watched the relentless surf pound against the beach. I gave up trying to control my curiosity and asked if she would perform a bodybuilding routine. She asked me to put on some upbeat music. I did.

Improvising perfectly to the music, Jennifer began a routine.

Oh, my God! Those muscles! That body! Those breasts! That pussy! A combination to die for. She had hundreds of muscles bulging everywhere . . . simultaneously! I sat on the end of my bed watching the show of a lifetime. Spectacular.

The music ended. I applauded. Jennifer was breathing heavily. I can imagine the energy it took to flex all those muscles one after another. I brought her a glass of ice water. As she drank, I noticed the moisture on her skin. It was warm to the touch.

I asked if I could feel her muscles—a fantasy since the moment I first saw her.

"Where would you like to start?"

"Your biceps."

It took both my hands to encircle one of her upper arms. Rock hard.

"Oh!" I sighed. "Why wasn't I built like this?"

I felt everything and it all felt wonderful. I told her so. We kissed. Unexpectedly she climbed atop the deck rail straddling it with her bare bottom and legs. The moon illuminated her tanned nude body from behind, outlining that spectacular figure with a bluish-white glow.

We talked about the exotic sexual pleasures of Asian cultures. She mentioned that many Asian women had a unique ability to perform controlled contractions of their vaginal muscles. They demonstrated their dexterity and excited their lovers by picking up and manipulating tiny objects and coins as small as a dime.

"Come on. How can anyone control her . . . uh, you know . . . down there?"

"Wanna see?"

I gulped. She spun around on the rail and unabashedly opened her legs. I was stunned. I looked directly at her nest, which was surrounded with dark brown hair. It was breathtaking.

"Do you have a dime?"

I was too shy for this, but I didn't want her to laugh at me for being bashful. Inwardly I breathed a sigh of relief because my change was inconveniently downstairs in my pants.

"Uh, no."

"Well, I'll show you anyway."

She began by manipulating her lower lips, expanding them open and squeezing them closed, moving them up and down and back and forth. She could probably have done a routine with them to music. They were like an extra hand and about the most amazing thing I'd ever seen. I was speechless.

I was viewing this incredible beauty perched nude on my beach-front deck rail twenty feet above the Malibu surf, performing genital gymnastics just for me. A once-in-a-lifetime treat!

No telling what other dexterities she possessed. I couldn't take any more and had to have her. I gently helped her off the rail and gallantly announced I was going to carry her to bed.

A serious problem. I couldn't lift her. She was bigger and weighed more than me—those tremendous muscles added greater weight than the Boy Wonder could handle. I should never have stated intentions I couldn't carry out.

What to do? Dragging her was not an option and definitely unromantic.

She provided me a solution, though far from what I had in mind. She picked me up and carried me to bed!

That night I enjoyed esoteric pleasures beyond anything found in the *Kama Sutra*. Her spirituality matched her sexuality, and her muscles and breasts drove me nuts. We kissed deeply. Her silky-smooth skin excited me everywhere I touched her. Using warm scented oils and massage techniques, we explored each other's bodies, extending the length and intensity of our pleasure. Then she pressed her body against me and used her incredible love muscles to draw me deeply into her. She was truly "Octopussy." Her inner temperature was like an oven. The experience was maddening. She repeatedly tightened and released, each time pulling me in deeper. At one point I felt as though she was ingesting my entire body into hers. It would be like returning to the womb.

I was panting. She controlled all movement entirely and provided me more prolonged pleasure than I had ever imagined was possible.

This experience was so intense that it left me drained and weak. Indeed, she'd managed to squeeze out the last drop. **HOLY DEHYDRATION!**

Thereafter our encounters were larger than life. And we provided each other with any number of pleasurable physical surprises.

Besides my continual fondness for ascending her matching Mount Everests ("Why? Because they are *there!*"), I could never get over the fact that she had the muscular ability to pick up and massage an object as small as a dime. But, of course, it wasn't my dime that she picked up and massaged.

I wonder who she's delighting these days. Sigh.

Eight Is Enough

Chattanooga, Tennessee

I'm alone and decide to go to a disco by myself --something I would normally never do. The city has a famous nightspot that is larger than anything I've ever seen. Sitting at a small table watching couples dance to the driving music, I look around and my eye catches a group of very attractive teenagers. They are dressed very prudently. I think it might be a prom queen and her court out in the safety of a group after their high school dance. A dark, pretty brunette looks up and our eyes meet. She smiles.

I'm feeling daring. I walk over and say hello. She invites me to sit, and I accept. One of them asks my name and I answer, "Burt." None of them recognizes me.

"I'm Linda. These are my friends and roommates."

I nod hello. I guess maybe they are older than I thought. Sometimes sorority freshmen look as young as high-schoolers.

I'm not looking to score (well, maybe I am, but it doesn't look like it's going to happen with anyone in this group), so I decide I'll talk to them for a few minutes and head back to my hotel. They seem too wholesome and naive, and they certainly don't fit in with this hip dance crowd. Besides, they're together as a group. I'd never be able to separate one girl out.

Linda has a sweet little voice, and I enjoy talking with her. Her large eyes are midnight blue and accentuated with black eye makeup to make them look even larger. She looks alluring. I want her but reckon I'll never get the chance. She asks me what I do, and I reveal that I am an actor. Another girl recognizes me. I'm complimented but a little embarrassed.

They flood me with questions . . . Batman, the Batmobile, Catwoman and the Joker. I've been signing autographs for four straight

hours, and now I'm hardly in the mood to rehash my life in tights.

Linda asks if I am married, I say no.

"Are you here alone?" asks another girl.

"Yes," I answer.

The girls look among themselves as though they are seeking each other's approval. I know these nymphs must be sorority sisters

Whatever they are proposing to each other meets with unanimous approval. They're smiling, and I'm wondering. Linda speaks for the group

"Why don't you come back to our place?"

I laugh.

"That's all I need," I reply. "I don't want to get you girls in trouble with your sorority house "

They all laugh hilariously. I feel stupid

Linda saves me further embarrassment.

"Boy Wonder, we don't live in a frat house. We have our own house."

My curiosity about them increases. Maybe I've misjudged my company.

"What do you do?"

"We're working girls," Linda answers

"That's nice. Where do you work?"

They all laugh at me again. I'm getting a little irritated.

"Hurt, we're prostitutes "

"Oh," I answer, shocked. "You certainly don't look like . . . uh, ladies of the evening."

"Guys here like 'em young and innocent," a pretty blonde replies.

I can't believe it. I'm dumbfounded. This is the first time in my life that I've met a prostitute or even seen one up close, and in this instance there are eight of them here with me. I don't know what to do next. They do.

"Come back with us and party," one of the girls offers.

"Didn't you say something on *Batman* like, 'There are eight of them against the two of us. Odds are in our favor' "

"You've got an incredible memory."

"It helps in our line of work," Linda says. They all laugh

"Well, there are eight of you and only *one* of me. I guess the odds are in *your* favor."

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

Linda puts her hand on mine. God, her touch feels good.

"I guess tonight we'll find out if you really are the Boy Wonder!"

More laughter. I'm in a daze. They've made me an offer I can't refuse.

We go back to their place. It's beautiful . . . a near palace. In one of the rooms they have two king-size beds. They push them together.

"Is this really going to happen?" I wonder. "Eight pros and me?"

On the ceiling in the center of the room is a motorized disco light, the kind with little pieces of cut mirror that cast shadows as it turns. Along the walls are floor lamps with colored bulbs. Someone dims the overhead light, and the colored lights and the rotating ceiling light are turned on. I hear soft music. Am I in heaven?

Linda undresses. Apparently she has first dibs on me. Her body is young and firm. She kisses me so gently that it drives me crazy. Soon the others appear. All of them are nude.

From behind I feel my shoulders being massaged. I love it.

These nymphs approach sex as though it were an art form.

"My God," I think to myself. "They're like Renaissance masters."

I'm kneeling near the center of the two beds. I notice blonde hair in front of me and I feel my left nipple being sucked. Another girl is kissing my back. Another is licking my neck. No one has touched my privates. They seem to be orchestrating this affair like a symphony.

Two more approach. They each take one of my hands and pull my arms outward. They spread my fingers apart, select one and put it into their mouth. They suck on it gently.

I lie down on my back. Linda preps me. Gently bending back my leading member she takes first one, then both of my supporting players into her mouth. I feel so vulnerable. I'm in a dangerously delicate position, but the feeling is spectacularly pleasure intensive and worth the risk. God forbid she should have a sudden attack of lockjaw.

Two others cleanse my feet with a warm, wet towel, then suck on my toes. I feel like royalty. Meanwhile three or four kiss my face, neck and chest. All I can see are masses of different-colored streams of hair swirling in front of me.

I'm ready. Linda removes me from her mouth and takes me to the next level. Suddenly I feel an ice-cold towel wrapped around my testicles. My heart jumps.

Eight Is Enough

The two holding my hands place them between their legs. I caress their hair. They insert my fingers and sit on them. Their inner warmth is fierce. The two at my feet do the same.

Linda mounts me and slowly rises up and down on me. I am a rock.

Another positions herself above my face. I lean into her and lick her spot.

All eight take turns having intercourse with me. I could never have made it without that ice cold towel. As the final moment approaches, Linda climbs on for the finish. I explode inside of her. It was a one-shot deal and the experience of a lifetime.

It's nearly daybreak, and we all fall asleep.

I awake before noon, enjoy a delightful breakfast in bed and passionately kiss every one of them good-bye before flying back to Los Angeles. Onboard, I am flying higher than the airplane.

Several weeks go by as I think about Linda and her friends. I miss her. I pick up the telephone and fly her to spend a week with me on tour. She broke her right ankle shortly after I left, and is in a cast up to the middle of her calf. Even this impediment is no hindrance to this gorgeous nymph. She proves herself to be a one-woman army.

We share a lot of memorable moments together, now and later.



Kathy North
and me at my
beach house
enjoying the
integrated
bites (1967).

Out of the Frying Pan and Into the Fire

I spend half my life getting out of messes, and the other half getting in. However, there are a number of profound realizations that I came to after much suffering. Here are some:

"It's not the good deals you miss that hurt you. It's the bad deals you make."

"Don't take life seriously. You don't get out alive anyway."

"The best things in life are free. So here I am, good for nothing."

"Live each day as though it were your last, and someday you'll be right."

"Your nearest helping hand is at the end of your arm."

"Speak when you're angry, and you'll make the best speech you'll ever regret."

Holy Heartthrob!

Several months after I separated from Bonney, I was visiting my parents at their home in Beverly Hills and watched the evening news. The commentator announced the divorce of TV's "Ben Casey" (Vince Edwards) and actress Kathy Kersh after a two-month marriage. When they showed a photograph of Kathy, I was stunned at her breathtaking good looks and remarked to my father that I had just seen the most beautiful woman in the world.

Apparently our *Batman* casting director saw her photo and was impressed as well, because two weeks later he cast her on our show.

When I found out that Kathy was going to be on *Batman*, I went nuts. **HOLY INFATUATION!**

I asked some people about her and found out she was known for having a perfect face and figure. She was a former Miss Rheingold and had been photographed for one of the most famous posters of the time, kissing Fabian on the beach as the surf rolled over their bodies. Holly-

wood columnist Hedda Hopper described Kathy as "the most beautiful girl to come to Hollywood since Elizabeth Taylor"

Kathy was hired to portray the Joker's girlfriend, Cornelia, in the episodes "The Impractical Joker" and "The Joker's Provokers."

The day I met her I was so smitten that I couldn't think straight (not that I normally think straight anyway) I can't even remember what I said. She was very friendly, and when her sky-blue eyes met mine for a brief moment, my heart almost exploded.

We filmed a number of sequences together for most of the day and after five hours of intense conversations with myself to build my courage and self-confidence, I worked up the nerve to ask her out on a date. Of course, I assumed she would say no for any number of reasons, all of which I played out in my head while practicing not looking too devastated. I was never prepared for her to say yes. But she did

"You will?"

She laughed at my insecure response and smiled. I was so embarrassed I wanted to put my Robin mask back on and hide.

We went out for dinner after work. I am flushed even as I write this account, because I can vividly remember how much I swooned and cooed and drooled. After dinner we went for a drive and then back to her house.

I expected her to say good-night, but she invited me in. She made hot tea and we talked some more. Then I kissed her. I was ready to pack it in and call it a night, satisfied that I had accomplished more in starting this new relationship than I'd ever expected.

I was shocked when she took me into her bedroom and undressed in front of me. I was so stunned I forgot to take off my clothes. We got on her bed and I began kissing her passionately. Everything my roving hands touched was spectacular. Her body was as beautiful as her face.

"Do you want to make love to me with your clothes on?" she asked.

I shivered in embarrassment.

She helped me take my clothes off and did things to me I had never experienced. I realized quickly that I was a first-semester student and she was a full-fledged professor in the sex department.

She lay on her back, and I knew it was my turn to please her. But I didn't know where to start, so I kissed her all over. She waited patiently, then realized that I was doing a lot of moving around without

ever stopping in any one place long enough to do any good

"Why don't you find a spot and light?" she suggested

I was naive but not stupid. I understood what she meant, calmed myself down found her spot and lit a forest fire with my tongue.

Intercourse afterwards was heart-stopping. I was hooked, line, sinker and the entire fishing pole. She fulfilled all my fantasies.

We began seeing each other every day, and I ended up leaving Malibu and moving in with her. We did a lot of things together and our daughters enjoyed each other's company on weekends

On one outing Kathy taught me to ski. For the most part I did well until I experienced some bad luck. For whatever reason, certainly not because I wasn't coordinated, trees began running into me. After a few good hard knocks, I suggested we return to our cabin so I could rest and heal what was left of my bruised body. Sitting on a bearskin rug in front of a roaring wood fire, we spent hours talking and making love.

I asked her to marry me, and she accepted.

I loved her very much and expected our marriage to last. We had a beautiful ceremony at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas, where Kathy was singing in a lounge act.

A number of producer types were there as well. I could see that they nonchalantly eyed Kathy, and this made me uncomfortable. I ignored the irritation and focused on the celebration of our wedding as we sat down to a beautiful dinner, complete with a bouquet of flowers at every table. Overhead were strings of white lights that added charm and ambiance. Later those men managed to get themselves introduced to me and, more importantly to them, to Kathy. Their smiles and firm handshakes didn't hide the fact that they were making a play for my wife right in front of me.

Kathy was very intelligent. She knew her way around Hollywood and had far more experience than I. She had been around town for many years, hearing every line imaginable from the biggest to the smallest of producers and casting directors who tried to get her into bed. Some she believed and some she didn't. The bottom line was a scrapbook of false promises and no starring roles. As beautiful as she was Kathy would teach me how to be tough . . . the hard way.

Kathy easily put them in their place. They were no match for her. I began to wonder if I was, either.

The Ugly Side of "Batman"

"Beauty is only skin deep, but ugly goes to the bone."

As much fun as we had on our series, there were also bad times. The pressure of our production schedule gave rise to flaring tempers, nasty verbal exchanges and near fistfights.

We were filming a sequence with a new director. Before I came on the set, he'd already had a couple of run-ins with some of the other actors, and I was warned that he was picky and disagreeable. The upcoming scene was to be filmed in the villain's hideout. I was supposed to burst in and rescue Batman. That day the air conditioning in the sound stage was malfunctioning, and everyone was hot and uncomfortable. Working under a dictatorial director, it didn't take long to get hot under my mask—and under my collar.

After a brief rehearsal, we filmed our first take. I entered at my cue and said my lines with my usual high energy. I thought it was perfect.

"Cut."

The director complained that I didn't project enough energy. I was surprised, because I knew that I had. But an actor must be able to take direction, and on a set the director is boss. So I increased my volume and energy for the next take.

We filmed the shot again. This time I boomed my dialogue and energy almost to the point of being ridiculous. I felt I had overdone the lines but I was determined to give the director what he wanted.

The director stopped the filming and complained that I still hadn't given enough energy to my lines. I was shocked. It was almost as if no matter what I did, he would find fault with it.

"This maestro has flipped his final raspberry," I thought.

"Okay, so this guy has wax in his ears. Or maybe he's wearing a hearing aid and forgot to turn it up. Whatever his problem is, he still wants more energy, so I'll REALLY GIVE IT TO HIM! I'll blow him off the stage this time."

I had nearly screamed on my previous take, and if there was ever anything someone could complain about in my performance, it would be that I was too loud and displayed too much energy.

What I didn't know was that the producers had just arrived and had brought several important guests on the set. They were all about to

get a real treat. Just before filming, I warned the sound mixer that I was going to be outrageously loud. These guys wear stethoscope-type plugs in their ears that are hardwired directly to the microphone that the boom man holds over the actors' heads. Without any warning, he could suffer serious aural damage, and I certainly didn't want that.

On "Action" I burst in and EXPLODED MY LINES AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS. The cameraman stopped filming. Everyone stopped dead in his tracks. No one moved. After a very long silence with every crew member frozen in his spot, Bill D'Angelo, the associate producer, approached me with great caution.

"Burt? Burt? Are you okay?" he asked gently.

I was fine and calm. I had given the director what he wanted. Everyone else on the set thought I had flipped out. Knowing of my martial arts training and the great relish with which I approached fight scenes, no one wanted to provoke something worse.

"I'm fine, Bill," I answered softly.

"Are you sure?" he queried, mistaking my calmness for a psychotic mood swing.

"Bill, everything's fine. On my previous take I all but yelled my lines and the director said that he wanted more energy. There was nothing else for me to do to give him more energy except yell."

Bill understood and spoke to the director. I later found out that the director had intentionally goaded me to see how far I would go. He was testing my limitations, like someone turning the volume up on a stereo to see how much power it had. He decided to go with the first take. Everyone calmed down, and we continued. After that confrontation the rest of the show went well. Most amazingly, the director who everyone else seemed to dislike was someone I began to like. Although his style was abrasive, I liked him because he was fearless. Others accused me of liking him because I had no taste—or maybe I was just a glutton for punishment.

"To each his own, the woman said as she kissed her cow!"

I enjoyed Bill D'Angelo. He was one of the coolest guys I'd ever met. Handsome, intelligent, witty, dressed like a million, having a great business mind and a wonderful sense of humor, he was my favorite person in the production office. He was also closest to my age. Bill was admired by just about everyone, including quite a few of the actresses.

Out of the Frying Pan . . .

staffer Tom Scott was assigned as my producer. He brought in one of the visually wildest music groups imaginable as my backup band, the Mothers of Invention. What a night! Neanderthal. They had incredibly long, scraggly hair, and clothes that appeared not to have been washed in this century if ever. These were musicians who became famous for tearing up furniture, their speakers, their microphones and even their expensive guitars onstage. They were maniacs!

Of all the people in the world to team with this wild and crazy bunch, I can't believe I was the one. The image of the Boy Wonder is all American and apple pie, while the image of the Mothers of Invention was so revolutionary that they made the Hell's Angels look like the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Even I had to laugh seeing a photo of myself with those animals.

Their fearless leader and king of grubbiness was the late Frank Zappa. (The full name of the band was Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention.) After recording with me, Frank became an internationally recognized cult superstar, which was understandable: after working with me, the only place Frank could go was up.

Although he looked like the others, Frank had an intelligence and education that elevated him beyond brilliance to sheer genius. I spent a considerable amount of time talking with him, and his rough, abrupt exterior concealed an intellectual, creative and sensitive interior.

For my records, the plan was to record four sides and then release two singles prior to producing an album. After listening to me sing, Frank got a wild idea to make use of my hideous voice to do a hilarious recording with a song that had some of the *Batman* feel to it. He picked "Orange Colored Sky."

I can't bear to think of this song. The memories are too embarrassing. Though the intent was to create comedy by putting my lousy singing to good use, the actual result was so disastrous that the studio thought the tape had been left out in the sun and warped. They insisted on re-recording.

But first, MGM took a radical step as an insurance policy that my next session would sound better. They sent me to an expensive vocal coach—and no doubt hoped for divine intervention. Back in 1966 they were shelling out about \$1,000 a week for those lessons. That was a lot of money, more than three times what I was bringing home after work-

ing twelve hours per day in my monkey suit for an entire week. With the coach raking in that much, even I am surprised that after two weeks of training, the lady politely asked me not to come back. I'm not sure if she felt that having me as a student was damaging to her career, or if listening to me sing was destroying her eardrums, or both.

In an attempt at self-preservation, the record company had me just talk on the second two sides I recorded. That I could do very well! The material for the song was a group of fan letters that had been sent to me. Frank and I edited them together to make one letter, which became the lyrics for the recording. Frank wrote a melody and an arrangement, and we titled the song, "Boy Wonder, I Love You!"

Among the lyrics was an invitation for me to come and visit an adoring pubescent fan and stay with her for the entire summer. She wrote, "I will even fix you breakfast in bed. I love you so much that I want you to stay the whole summer with me!" The lyrics ended with "I hope you know that this is a girl writing."

Every word in this song was actually written to me, and the kids and young teens who had written the letters were totally innocent.

"Boy Wonder, I Love You" was released regionally in the Midwest. It soared to number six on the Chicago charts in less than a week. Excellent. However, before MGM could launch it nationally, the record was pulled off the air by religious pressure groups and radio network censors who complained that it was too sexual because she wanted to fix me breakfast in bed. Can you believe it? To this day I wonder if the bluenoses who were so disjointed about how I fit into my costume were the same holier-than-thou, self-righteous bigots responsible for taking a charming and totally innocuous record off the airwaves.

Making a quantum leap from 1966 to today, look how times have changed. One of the most popular radio shows in America is *The Howard Stern Show*. I have been on Howard's show twice, once in a telephone call-in from Los Angeles to New York, and once live when Howard was taping at the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood.

Howard has always been very gracious to me. Much as it may amaze you, it is the truth, and the world's best-kept secret, that Howard Stern is really a very nice man. He is also brilliant, witty and a comic genius. Granted, he can rip apart well-known celebrities and non-celebrities alike, but they usually deserve it. The recipe for his success

is exposing hypocrisy through drastically outrageous humor. Howard succeeds in doing that, and most people love listening to him.

Singing My Way to Shame

Back to 1966. I really tried to improve my singing in anticipation of the final recording session and eventual release of "Orange Colored Sky." I practiced in my shower at home, even sang in the showers of my hotel rooms while on appearance tours. I rehearsed in showers because I thought it was the only safe place in the world where nobody could hear me. Was I wrong!

Humiliating as this confession is, it's also probably good to rid a haunting nightmare from my subconscious mind. It is like taking a mental enema.

I was on the road and had just finished a grueling six-hour day of signing autographed photos and meeting BatFans. Tired and drained, I returned to the hotel for a quiet dinner alone. Afterwards I went back to my room for peace and solitude. It was late, and I decided to take a hot shower before going to bed. In those relaxing moments, even with the water running, someone overheard me singing "Orange Colored Sky" and reported to the front desk that a cat was howling in my room, apparently trapped in a running shower.

I had forgotten to put the safety latch on my door. Without warning, the night maintenance man came to my room to remove the cat. I saw him and yelled. Through the wavy glass shower door he looked like Mrs. Bates in *Psycho*.

The man ran out, and I called the front desk to tell them about the intruder and to ask them to call the police. The clerk sheepishly explained what had happened and apologized profusely. He even took the room charge off my bill for the night. I was upset and complained that the maintenance guy should have not come into the bathroom after he entered the room and heard me singing. He should have realized that a person was in the shower, not a cat. Again the clerk apologized and said he would talk to the man. Twenty minutes later my phone rang. It was the clerk.

"Mr. Ward, I spoke to our maintenance man and asked him why,

when he entered your room and heard you singing, he went into the bathroom."

"Good," I said. "I want the answer!"

"Mr. Ward, I'm sorry to tell you, but even when he was in your room, it sounded to him like a cat was howling in your shower! That's the reason he went in."

I was crushed! **HOLY EMBARRASSMENT!** That was it. The next morning I checked out and rushed back to L.A.

I re-recorded "Orange Colored Sky." I thought all my practice had made a vast improvement in the final product. It had. It had raised the quality of the sound of my voice from the depths of the sewer to the bottom of the toilet bowl. That's what I call progress.

Horrors! "Orange Colored Sky" was released as a single and it got lots of air play. I am told that thirty years later it is still played regularly on Dr. Demento's Sunday show. How appropriate!

(When my daughter Lisa came to visit with me in Malibu, she used to sabotage my business meetings by loudly playing "Orange Colored Sky" while I was trying to talk. I never acknowledged to my business associates who it was that caused them to wince as my off-key voice struck discordant notes in their ears. **HOLY TERRORIST ATTACK!**)

The Crucifixion of "Batman" and Talk of Its Resurrection

Our series went to the great BatCave in the sky for a number of reasons. First, the ratings dropped, but not excessively low. Next, because of the show's spectacular effects and large crew, *Batman* was costing the producers more money to make than they were earning from the network. Three years of a constant bloodbath can take a toll on anybody, and I think it did on Fox and Greenway Productions.

More problems. Our visionary, Bill Dozier, and his talented assistant, Charles FitzSimons, were busy launching other projects. Our producer, Howie Horwitz, and associate, Bill D'Angelo, had their hands full chasing after name actors to bolster our guest cast while keeping our ship afloat. The creative writing of our show was left largely to Charles

Hoffman, who was originally hired as a script editor to maintain the quality of the screenplays. To save money, Charles wrote every other script and oversaw the scripts he didn't write. That was a serious mistake. Everyone makes errors and occasional poor choices. Who was there to catch Charlie's? No one. Worse yet, who was there to kick around show concepts and to give concept evaluations to Charlie before he wrote each script? No one.

I am surprised that Charlie was able to turn out the volume of scripts that he did. Unfortunately for all of us, it didn't matter. The net result was still the same. *Batman* was sinking fast into uncreative quicksand.

Charlie needed help, and the budget wouldn't allow it.

Another critical reason for our show's demise was the quality of the direction. To avoid the possibility of cost overruns by new or overly creative directors, only two people directed our shows during the last season. Bringing in each episode on time and on budget was a greater priority than providing comedic entertainment, which was the backbone of our show's success.

Batman was starved of quality and crucified for its cost. In its third season, episode by episode, the series that I loved with all my heart died a slow, painful death.

I also heard that the syndication fees—sales to independent television stations for reruns per episode already filmed—were so enormous that it didn't make sense to film new shows when the 120 shows we had already made were sold in blocks of up to twenty years. With reruns there were no more production costs, and the artistic super-show of the soon-to-end sixties became the gold mine of the seventies and eighties and nineties.

I understand that when ABC canceled the series, NBC nearly made a deal to pick it up. Unfortunately, studio space at 20th Century Fox was at a premium, and some genius had all the *Batman* sets destroyed instead of stored. To replace those sets would have cost *Batman*'s new network millions of dollars. NBC passed on the deal, but had Fox not destroyed the sets, I believe that what the memorabilia collectors would have paid in today's market for a piece of the BatCave and other *Batman* sets and props would have reimbursed the studio for the cost of its sets ten times over. Now, that's something to swallow.

HOLY LUMP IN THE THROAT!

The Crucifixion of Burt

“When it rains it pours!”

Life was tough in 1969. My series was canceled and I was out of a job and an income. My ex-wife was denying my infant daughter the love, tenderness and understanding that every little child needs and



“Look what an ex-wife can do to you!”
(Kill Crazy, 1988)

deserves, because Lisa reminded her of me. What I needed now, like another hole in my head, was some additional horror to put the icing on the cake.

Bingo! I hit the screwed-over jackpot! I discovered that my wife, Kathy, was cheating on me while shooting a national TV commercial that I had encouraged her to do. I received a telephone call from a lady on the set who reported that Kathy and the producer were

openly flaunting their adulterous relationship. She said the guy promised Kathy more commercials and to make her a star. I tried to reach her where she was supposed to be staying, but she had never checked in. I knew the approximate location where the commercial was being filmed, and I contacted the Highway Patrol to get in touch with her. They did; she called me. When I confronted her with what I had heard, she replied:

“You mean to tell me that you had the Highway Patrol get in touch with me so you could ask me this?” She said this incredulously, as though she was grossly offended by my audacity.

“Yes,” I said. “Have you been cheating on me and flaunting it, as I have been told?”

A very short pause.

“Yes.”

I told her that I loved her very much and that we should try to make our marriage work. I said I would forgive her unfaithfulness and we should make a fresh start. She said she wasn't interested and that she was going to continue the affair.

I told her we would have to get a divorce. She said she didn't care about our marriage anymore, she'd struggled ten years to succeed in show business, finally had an opportunity to make it big and intended to take it.

That did it. As much as I hated the thought of another divorce, events beyond my control had made me a two-time loser.

Kathy felt no shame for having been unfaithful but offered not to seek alimony for our one-year marriage. Her minuscule sense of integrity led me to believe the old truism that "there's always a little bit of heaven in a disaster area."

A false sense of integrity can be short-lived. When Kathy's attorney served the divorce papers, I noticed a demand for alimony of \$400 per month. That could have lasted a lifetime! All the more aggravating was the fact that she was earning twice what I was and had a savings account ten times larger than mine. Or was it twenty times larger? So much for integrity.

I hired an excellent attorney who understood the divorce racket. He explained, "Burt, if your ex-wife asks for \$400 per month and you argue that she agreed not to seek alimony and that you shouldn't have to pay anything, the judge will probably rule somewhere in between, and you'll be stuck for \$200 a month."

"Oh, great," I said. "A true double ring ceremony. One on my finger and the other through my nose."

"But," he added, "if you ask for, say, \$1,000 per month from her, the judge may say, 'Mrs. Ward, you want \$400 per month from Mr. Ward, and Mr. Ward, you want \$1,000 per month from Mrs. Ward. Well, I'm not going to give either of you anything!'"

And that is exactly what happened. There is some justice in this world.

On the Road

Make Womb for Burt

I was deep in life's septic tank, so I packed my belongings and moved out and back to my beach house. Acting work had dried up, so I decided to make a living out of signing autographs on tour.

Hustler Honey

I was out of money and facing mortgage payments, with no work in sight. Then I received a \$10,000 offer from *Hustler* magazine to be interviewed and to direct a fantasy photo shoot—my personal fantasy, however wild I thought of the negative image for doing it. Then I thought about missing child support payments for my daughter, Lisa. I thought about losing my home. I opted to take the money, accept the consequences, feed my child and keep a roof over my head.

By *Hustler* standards, my shoot was tame. No lesbianism, no perversion, just a loss of innocence as a young crimefighter is mauled by an evil caped temptress and her court of mindless sex slaves on a sacrificial night amid torches and African drums.

The temptress is a tall, lithe, buxom, twenty-something brunette who wears a black cape with red silk lining. Underneath her cape is her deeply tanned, nude, jungle-haired body.

Four amply endowed blonde, blue-eyed young assistants make up her court. They are also skimpily clothed, revealing their hard, barely ripe, "virginal" bodies.

Tied down, the young hero faces the onslaught of mind-controlling evil sexuality and tortured innocence. The queen and her court rape the boy in hopes he'll plant his pure seed in each of them. The temptress' ultimate goal is to have strong crimefighters to do her

On the Road

bidding in her quest for world domination.

Exercising great mental and physical control, the lad withholds his sacred seed, breaks his bonds and apprehends the dastardly dominatrix.

Directing the photo shoot turned out to be fun. Everyone was nice and down to business. It wasn't at all the negative experience I expected, and the magazine editor got a sexy layout without showing any pink.

Meeting BatFans

The fans I met on personal appearances were a constant source of fun and entertainment. Kids were a special treat, because I never knew what unexpected zingers they might come up with. At an elementary school in Macon, Georgia, where I gave a bicycle safety talk, the entire student body of 2,000 children and their teachers was crammed into the auditorium.

Children have short attention spans, so I always fired them up before I broached what they perceived as a boring subject—bicycle safety. After the principal or vice-principal read my prepared written introduction, which they usually mangled with mispronunciation and incorrect intonation, I would enter to cheers and whistles.

"Good morning, boys and girls!"

"Good morning," they answered.

"I bring you very special greetings from Gotham City—from Commissioner Gordon, Chief O'Hara, Alfred our butler, and dear, sweet, little old Aunt Harriet. Batman wishes he could be here today but unfortunately he has his hands full chasing Catwoman. She's loose, and Batman is in 'hot' pursuit of her."

The teachers were usually snickering by this time, knowing I was speaking on two levels. The kids didn't realize yet they were about to be put on big time.

"How many of you watch *Batman*?" I asked.

"I do! I do!" came the unanimous answer.

"Good! And when we fight the crooks, who do you think is going to win, Batman and Robin or the crooks?" I asked.

"Batman and Robin! Batman and Robin!" the kids would shout. "And do you know why we win?" came my next stock question. "Yeah! Yeah!" came screaming answers and hands raised.

At that point I would always call on one child.

"Okay, young man, tell me why."

This kid jumped and yelled at the top of his lungs, "Because you kick them in the balls!"

The kids, teachers and I became hysterical. I had never been caught off guard with an answer like that. I would usually explain to the kids why we beat the crooks: "Because our hearts are pure."

After several minutes of waiting while the teachers struggled to regain control, I continued with my talk about bicycle safety. Then it was question and answer time. I selected a child in the back row.

"How can you have BatBabies in your tights?" came the unexpected question.

Again, screaming laughter. I figured this was one wild educational institution.

At those appearances where I was one-on-one with kids, the unexpected became the norm. At a trade show in New York City I asked one ten-year-old what his name was so I could autograph a photo. The youngster was so nervous he couldn't remember. I suggested that he step aside and take time to think about it. When he could recall who he was, I told him I would sign a photo. He moved a few feet away, and I could overhear him running through a list of his brothers' and sisters' names, hoping to come upon his own. A father and son were next in line. The father had heard the previous youngster and encouraged his boy.

"Come on, son. Let's say hello to Robin. At least we know who we are!"

Later the other youngster finally remembered his name and I gave him an autographed photo of the Boy Wonder.

Adult fans are much more aggressive than kids. I had to take a bathroom break during the same trade show and was accompanied by security to a public men's room. The guards waited outside. I was parked inside a stall in what I thought would be a moment of peaceful privacy. Right in the middle of a grumbling stomach and accompanying rude noises, I noticed a pair of men's shoes with feet in them against the door of the stall. I also saw an eyeball peer through the space

between the stall door and the stall. Without warning, the man went down on his knees and thrust his entire arm under the door to hand me a piece of paper and a pen to sign an autograph. I couldn't go anywhere, so I signed it.

The Big Dipper Is a Small Tipper

A week later, at the Phoenix airport, Adam and I had just arrived for a big weekend gig where, between the two of us, we would make more than \$20,000. The convention center was gigantic, and the car show people were expecting a crowd of more than 50,000 for our three-day appearance. I had previously shipped my autographed photos to the show. Adam brought his photos with him on the plane in five enormous suitcases.

Imagine a very large suitcase full of twenty to thirty reams of paper. We're talking 125 pounds or more. Now imagine *five* such suitcases, each filled with that much weight. Heavy.

An elderly African-American porter struggled to lift the cases from the baggage carousel and place them on a luggage cart. He then positioned the cart to push it out to the street. My arms were full holding my carry-on duffel bag and the garment bag that held my costume. The porter put all his weight against the cart just to get it started.

"Ughhhhhhhhhhh! Oh, Lord! What in the world does this man have in these suitcases?"

Nodding toward Adam, I said with a straight face, "Oh, he's an anvil salesman."

The porter looked at me as if I were nuts.

We arrived outside at our waiting limo. Again this aged man struggled to lift the heavy suitcases and put them into the trunk. It was so strenuous for him in the hot Arizona sun that I was afraid he might have a heart attack. He was gripping his chest trying to catch his breath and couldn't utter a word. Adam came over to make sure the porter had loaded everything.

Satisfied, Adam unzipped an oversized carry-on bag and put his whole arm inside, digging deeply for something. He hadn't reached for his back pocket and his wallet (in thirty years, I can count on one hand

the times I've actually witnessed him open it and part with money), so I didn't think Adam was going to give him a tip. And he didn't. What he *did* do, after much digging and dipping, was to find what he had been looking for. He pulled out a thin, worn and wrinkled wallet-sized photo of himself as Batman, with a preprinted signature on it. That was the porter's tip for nearly killing himself lifting five back-breakers. The porter was gasping and holding up one hand as if to ask Adam to wait a minute while he got his heartbeat down to normal.

Adam didn't wait. He stuck the picture of himself in the porter's open hand and, before the guy could say a word, if that was even possible given his condition, Adam thanked him and retreated into the limo. We drove away. The porter was left in a wave of dust, too weak to complain.

After leaving, I scolded Adam for being such a tightwad

"How can you say that, Burty? It's the thought that's important. He can take that photo home for his six kids. Besides, you didn't hear him complaining!"

"He couldn't complain because he couldn't speak. Lifting your lead-weighted suitcases left the man out of breath and on the verge of a stroke. If you weren't going to give him money, at least you could have given him a full-sized photo for each of his kids, not one tiny picture half the size of a playing card that his youngsters would fight over!"

I was steaming. That was one area of personal choice in which we definitely didn't see eye to eye.

Beauty Lies in the Eye of the Beholder

Something else on which Adam and I didn't agree was our choice of women. He sneered when I dated an eighteen-year-old with braces. Adam was nice to her but teased us unmercifully about her "railroad ties" and gave her the nickname "the Shredder." Privately he suggested I should worry about getting my family jewels snagged in her braces.

I adored him, but that man could really exasperate me!

Our practical jokes on each other helped us keep our sanity (to the degree that either of us had any to begin with), because traveling

year-round, in and out of city after city, can get old quickly and succeeded in making us feel old as well.

As the one more easily bored and inclined to practical jokes, I usually instigated the conflict. At autograph parties before thousands of people waiting in line, I would start the initial agitation and announce on the microphone:

"Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, I would like your attention. Whatever you're doing, please stop and take a moment to join me in admiring Batman's incredible physique. Gaze in admiration, folks, at those bulging biceps (the crowd was already snickering), those protruding, swollen pecs of a great crimefighter's chest, and that kangaroo pouch of rippling BatFat under his utility belt (Adam feigned a dirty look at me, and the audience giggled). Today we have a *Batman* special for all you passionate BatFans. **BATMAN IS GIVING AWAY FREE KISSES TO ALL THOSE OVER FIFTY, LADIES FIRST!**"

Adam would shake his head no. Then under his breath he would say, "Please, Burt, not that one again." Once he added "I'm not in the mood to share my lips with the Geritol bunch."

A Tongue in His Cheek

At a Minneapolis appearance we had a strange lady with thinning red hair who responded to my silly announcement by coming onstage flicking her long tongue in and out like a serpent. There was something disturbing about her. Her tongue did coiling contortions outside of her mouth and reminded me of a Komodo dragon.

No doubt this woman was intent on sharing her mouth with Adam, and I foresaw her determination to "deep throat" him with her forked fury. Adam didn't notice until it was her turn in line and she was within striking distance. She didn't even say hello. She lunged at him like a mongoose after a cobra.

He leaned back as far as he could in his chair to avoid her and didn't expect her to climb onto the table. Nor did I.

This fearless crimefighter took evasive action and threw his head backward in one last, desperate attempt to get away. Unfortunately for him, my gloved hand was there to prevent his escape.

We both underestimated the fervor of this woman's attack.

He was trapped. His legs were pinned under the table, and there was no time for his military training to kick in. Her position on the table allowed the full use of her weight against his resisting arms, and he wasn't strong enough nor did he have the leverage to lift her off him. One of her hands held a tight grip on the ears of his fiberglass cowl, forcing his head backward and blocking his vision. Her other hand pulled the clasp of his cape to the side against his throat, forcing his mouth open to breathe. Into his mouth snaked that long, quivering tongue, not unlike what the creature did to the astronaut in *Alien*.

After watching in awe the mauling that I never expected to happen, and certainly never intended to go this far, I tried to pull her off him. I could sense the claustrophobia Adam had to be feeling.

This monster was like a 150-pound tick embedded in his face. During the ruckus, I caught glimpses of Adam's face covered with the drool and slobber of her wet kisses.

It took two security guards and me to finally get her off, and she was immediately escorted out of the show. In the meantime, Adam had to take a break to clean up and wash off the slime. He wasn't happy with me, but he knew that neither I nor our security staff had any idea or forewarning of the woman's animalistic hunger. I told Adam my vision of her as a giant tick. He shuddered and started laughing.

I said I hoped he didn't develop Lyme disease. He stopped laughing.

"Burt, that's a terrible thing to say!"

I sheepishly apologized.

Moments later he added, "By the way, do I look a little green to you?"

"Green?" I asked.

"You know . . . *limes* . . . L . Y . M . E . disease."

It was a long stretch for a joke, but we were still shaken, so we laughed longer than it was worth.

A Special Souvenir

Morton, Texas. I was appearing in a town so small that most Texans have never heard of it—and Texans pride themselves on their familiarity with all the towns in their beautiful state. Morton is

about fifty-two miles northwest of Lubbock. When I was there, room accommodations were nil. I had to stay thirty-two dusty miles northeast, in a town only a shade bigger, called Littlefield. There was no Hilton, Sheraton, Embassy Suites, Holiday Inn or even a Motel 6 (which would have been an oasis) in Littlefield. I landed in the Crescent Park Motel with about twenty rooms.

There is no direct jet service into Morton or Littlefield. There is no plane service at all. I flew in with my employer, Lonnie Alcott, in his twin-engine Cessna. Lonnie owned a dozen or so 7-Eleven stores.

The flight was uneventful, the landing frighteningly eventful. It was after dark and we were circling a dirt field with no runway lights and a tower that was closed. The thirty-mile-an-hour crosswind added real danger to landing with a twin-engine plane.

Obviously we managed to touch down safely, or I wouldn't be here to write this book. We were sweating heavily as our wheels crunched over the bumpy runway.

Early the next morning, and with difficulty, I finally found someone willing to do the dirty work of laundering my jockey shorts to wear under my BatTrunks.

Me.

I carried my clothes to the motel's antiquated washer/dryer and fought off a swarm of wasps. I hate doing laundry, but I hate dirty clothes worse. So I resigned myself.

I washed my underwear, put them in the dryer and returned an hour later. They were still wet. How can this be?

A single-digit-age boy on a bicycle rode by, and I asked him if he had seen anyone taking my clothes out of the dryer while it was still running, and putting their own clothes in.

"Well," he answered in a slow Texas drawl, "yess and nooo."

"Young citizen, what kind of an answer is that?" I asked.

"Yes, a lady took your clothes out, but no, she didn't put any of her clothes in."

"Mmmmm. Why do you suppose she did that?"

"Well, I heard her say to another woman that she wanted to meet Robin and take his picture, but since he wasn't around she said she would take a picture of his clothes. Then she put your clothes back, Mister Robin, can I have your autograph?"

"Absolutely, young man. I'll even get you an autographed photo. And thanks for telling me what happened."

So that was it. An ardent BatFan had photographed my wet jockey shorts, returned them to the dryer and probably forgot to turn it back on.

I signed a photo for the boy and thanked him again. Then I began to wonder how this woman would explain and display her keepsake photo of my underwear to her family and friends.

Is this the measure of true stardom? Can an actor know in his heart that he is a world-class celebrity once someone accepts an unsigned photo of his wet jockey shorts as a valued souvenir?

Mauled by a Bloodthirsty Swamp Queen

Coushatta, Louisiana: Saturday morning at a Piggly Wiggly store. There were supposedly only 200 people in the unincorporated area, but more than 600 showed up to meet the Boy Wonder. It was a terrific turnout, but where did all those people come from?

The swamps, I learned. I was amazed. It seems inconceivable that people can live in those isolated southern Louisiana bayous. They're wild, remote, jungled areas that you could get lost in and never find your way back . . . assuming you haven't been eaten by the hungry alligators.

I was nearly devoured alive, but not by an alligator—at least not the four-legged kind.

I met a bayou beauty and asked her for a date. She accepted. There was something about her that was fascinating and yet disturbing. She made me think of *Deliverance*. The people I had met that day in Coushatta were really like the people in the movie. So was she. The adults and even their children were restrained in their speech, but not because of shyness or insecurity. It was as if they knew something I didn't know and were intentionally holding back from telling me.

After a tasty feast in an "all-you-can-eat" catfish restaurant, with black-eyed peas, collard greens and cornbread, my date took me on a long walk along the edge of the bayou to her place. I wondered if I'd ever find my way back.

On the Road

Her dimly lit one-room shack reminded me of the waterfront shanty in the "Pirates of the Caribbean" ride at Disneyland—the one with the fireflies and the crickets and the croaking bullfrogs

After closing the only door, she wasted no time, grabbing my face and kissing me violently. Her fingernails dug into my cheeks and forced me down to the floor. She was rough and very strong.

Her passion ran hot. I wasn't prepared. She scratched my chest and arms and bit my shoulders and neck. I pushed her back and saw my blood on her lips. I flashed on a thought that the wilderness these people live in brings out their predatory qualities. This swamp queen was mauling me.

There is a fine line between pleasure and pain. As some people experience more pleasure, they can handle more pain. I didn't know if her prior lovers had been rough with her, leading her to assume that men liked unrestrained aggression, or whether she experienced more pleasure by extracting more pain. Either way, it didn't matter. I wanted nothing more of it, and I wasn't curious enough to find out.

Unfortunately, I had no choice.

I tried to end it early, thinking it prudent to avoid something more violent than I was prepared to experience.

I told her I wanted to leave. She didn't answer. I told her again. No response.

I tried to push her off. She held on tightly.

I wasn't about to hit her. I've never hit a woman. So I wrestled to get her off.

Suddenly she slapped me hard. I never saw it coming and couldn't believe it happened. My face stung and my vision blurred.

In that brief unguarded moment she ripped my pants open and grabbed my testicles from underneath, squeezing them painfully.

I groaned and tried to get up. She overpowered me by digging in her nails. Her violence changed my mind. At this point I considered hitting her, but reasoned she would retaliate with those talons. I stopped resisting.

She never let go until she finished. This wasn't pleasure. This was rape.

She pulled out my member with her other hand and squeezed it repeatedly until it hardened. That hurt.

Then she lifted her dress, moved aside her panties and inserted me. Without waiting for lubrication, she sat down hard. More pain.

I didn't climax, but she did three or four times. I could tell each time she did—that's when her nails dug in deeper.

Finally, without a word, she let go, rose, took a cigarette and stood there watching me on the floor as she inhaled deeply.

I stood and pulled on my trousers. The button was ripped off, so the best I could do was zipper halfway.

The room was filling up with smoke. I hate smoke, and I'd had my fill of her as well.

"You're an animal and belong in a cage," I said.

She said nothing, just kept smoking. I left and managed to find my way back to civilization, angry and violated.

For weeks my thoughts replayed that scene. I had nightmares. Should I have retaliated? She deserved it. Could I have lost control and gone too far?

I now have a permanent aversion to swamps, but thank heaven, not women.

A Scandal a Week

Springboro, Ohio: Adam and I were there for a weekend. What we didn't know was that this was the Weekend in Hell! It started on Thursday. The impresario hired off-duty policemen to escort us to and from our appearances. Once they had delivered us to the hotel for the night, however, they were finished. The first evening I had dinner in the hotel restaurant and then retired to my room. A few hours passed.

Ring! Ring! "Mr. Ward, I'm the bartender downstairs. Sorry to disturb you this late, but Mr. West has had a lot to drink tonight. Could you talk to him?"

"Sure," I said.

Adam came on the line.

"Hiya, Burty! How are you?"

"Adam, the bartender thinks you've had too much to drink. Can you make it back to your room, or do you want me to come and get you?"

"I'm fine," he slurred. "Hey, I want you to meet my best friend, Mike I just met him Here, Mike. Say hello to Robin "

"Hi, Robert! How are you? Come on down and join us for a drink, why dontcha?"

"Uh, the name's Burt. Thanks, but it's late and we have to get up very early tomorrow. We have bicycle safety talks lined up at three elementary schools. Why don't you tell Adam to go back to his room and get some sleep?"

"Whatta ya talkin' about? The night's still young. And we ain't drunk yet."

"Let me speak to Adam," I interjected.

Moments go by. Somebody drops the phone. Suddenly Adam is back on the line

"Yeah, Burty. We're having a great time. Let me introduce you to my best friend, Mike. I just met him."

"Adam, I don't want to go through this again. I'm going to sleep. And so should you. You have to work tomorrow. We both do. Promise me you'll go back to your room NOW!"

"Okay, old buddy. I'll go back to my room now."

I hung up the phone and wondered what kind of condition he was going to be in the next day. **HOLY HANGOVERS!**

At 7:30 the next morning, the phone rang. The show's press agent was in the lobby and wanted me to come down right away. A police escort was ready to take us to each of the elementary schools. I finished my orange juice and headed out.

The press agent led me to his car.

"Wait a minute," I said. "Where's Adam?"

"Uh . . . there was a little problem last night. But we'll see him for this afternoon's appearance."

I was irritated that I had made the extra effort to get up and felt Adam should, too. Those children were expecting to see Batman and Robin, not just the Boy Wonder.

The white and blue police car turned on its flashing red lights and we were off to the first school. Upon arriving, I was introduced to the officers. They were snickering.

"Something wrong, officers?" I checked to see if I had put on my deodorant.

More giggles.

"Where's your buddy?"

"Adam? Apparently something came up and he wasn't able to make it."

More giggles. "Yeah. We heard that, too."

I could tell they were in on something I didn't know, and whatever it was, they were having a lot of fun with it.

"Is there something you know about Adam that I don't?"

More giggles. "Yeah, big time," one of them said.

"Your friend's a real party animal!" said the other one.

Still more giggles.

"So tell me," I said.

One of the officers stopped laughing long enough to explain.

"This morning at four o' clock we got a drunk and disorderly call about your partner, Mr. West."

"Really?" I asked "What happened?"

"He was causing trouble in a bad part of town."

I was concerned. "Geez, is he all right?"

More giggles.

"Oh, he's okay. He's a little hung over, but fine. Uh . . . something else?" One of the cops finally blurted it out between guffaws

"Mr. West got nasty when he was turned down for sex by the ugliest barmaid in the city."

Both of them continued laughing

"Oh, no! Poor Adam!" I thought.

Then one of the cops added, "You know what they say . . . any old port in a storm!"

They both laughed uproariously.

At our appearance that evening I spoke to Adam, and he had a different story. He admitted to having dipped into the spirits more than he should have but swore he never propositioned the barmaid. He said *she* propositioned *him* and *he* turned *her* down.

I believe him. Adam could have anybody he wanted—he proved that in front of me hundreds of times. The barmaid was obviously vindictive about being rejected and tried to have his feet put to the fire by her buddies on the police force.

My friend was no angel, but I didn't want to see him unjustly humiliated. If anybody was going to humiliate Adam, I decided it was going to be *me*!

The whole incident was a matter of being in the wrong place at the right time, as I discovered two nights later.

Escaping Through Rain and Mud in My Underwear

9 30 p.m. Sunday. As bad a situation as Adam had experienced, I did him one better—or worse! It was a stormy night after our last performance. I returned to the hotel and stopped in the restaurant before it closed.

The hostess was exquisite, and there was instant chemistry. The restaurant was empty except for the two of us. That delicious twenty-one-

year-old former beauty queen and I had intermittent conversation.

I invited her back to my room after she got off work. She accepted.

It was almost midnight when I heard a knock on my door. She came in and we sat down on the bed. We looked into each other's eyes and neither of us wanted to wait any longer.

"I have something to tell you," she said. She moved her lips close to mine. "Make love to me. I want all of you inside of me."

I couldn't argue with that.

"Me, too," I said.

She kissed me gently and then, in a circular motion, slowly massaged the moisture on her lips against mine. I was intoxicated with lust.

Then she stood up and pulled her dress over her head, exposing her nude body. She approached me. I faced the soft hair of her luscious triangle. She guided me in. It was like a fluffy pillow.

"Before we make love I want to be upfront with you and tell you that I'm married."

I pulled back and looked upward through the valley of her breasts. She was serious.

I nearly swallowed my tongue. **HOLY RUDE AWAKENING!** That killed it. I rose and looked into her eyes.

"This isn't right. And it's not for me," I found myself saying against my lustful desires. "I'm sorry."

She was speechless. So was I. Neither of us expected I would turn her down.

I couldn't sleep with a married woman, because I imagined myself in her husband's place. I had been crushed when my former wife went to bed with another man. Unfortunately, most men don't think about that or don't care about the human being who gave the unfaithful spouse that wedding ring.

She told me she wanted to leave him because he was jealous and violent.

"He nearly beat someone to death who he thought was making eyes at me," she said. "The cops put him in jail and warned me that they thought sooner or later he was going to kill somebody."

This was not reassuring.

"And you're here to sleep with me and sign my death warrant at the same time?" I queried.

"No," she cried. "My husband is impotent, and I need love, too."

I felt sorry for her but escorted her to the door. She sadly said good-bye and left.

Whew!

Well, that was the end of that. Or was it?

I got into bed, high on the fact that I had just avoided a potentially life-threatening situation.

"I did the right thing," I told myself. "That could have turned out to be the most dangerous piece of pleasure I ever experienced."

I drifted off to sleep. Fifteen minutes later, another series of knocks at my door, much louder and much heavier. Half-asleep, I opened the door with the chain still on the hook. As I focused my eyes, I saw the upper torso of a man. I leaned forward to get a better look and bent my head back as far as I could. All I saw was the base of a thick neck. Uh-oh! This creature was enormous! I closed the door fast.

The guy, or whatever he was, started yelling at me about porking his wife. Then he began pounding my door with his gorilla fists. This man was dangerous. He believed that his wife and his honor had been totally violated.

Now comes Burt Ward's First Theory of Earthly Survival: "Never get into a war with an opponent who thinks he has nothing to lose, especially if he's the size of Godzilla!"

Then I recalled my Second Theory of Earthly Survival: "He who turns and runs away lives to fight another day!"

I could tell that no explanation of the circumstances would be listened to or accepted. I knew I needed help and called my trusted friend and buddy, Adam. His room was three doors down on the same side of the hall.

"Adam, I need your help. Some guy thinks I slept with his wife and he's breaking my door down."

"Don't worry, Burt. What are friends for? I'm here for you!"

"Adam, this guy is gigantic!"

"Hey, not a problem. Between the two of us, we can handle him. Hold on, I'm going to take a look."

He set the phone down. I could tell that Adam's military training

was already kicking in, and his broad range of hand-to-hand combat techniques would soon come into play. In the meantime I was getting antsy because this beast had gone bananas and was throwing his full weight against the door, which was splitting away from the hinges. Time was running out.

Adam returned to the phone.

"Gesz, Burt. *That guy really is big!* He must be seven feet tall! Sorry, old buddy, but you're on your own this time. You'd better get out of there fast. I'd go through the window!"

"It's pouring rain out there," I said.

C R A C K!

Mighty Joe Young had just broken the top of the door off its hinge. The whole door would collapse inward in seconds. No time to lose.

I slid my window open and pushed out the screen. I dove through the window and fell face first in the mud, still in my jockey shorts.

Instantly I was on my feet and running toward the lobby. The rain soaked me but also washed off some of the mud. I entered the lobby at full speed and yelled to the reservation clerk behind the front desk.

"Quick! Give me your car keys. There's a guy out there trying to kill me!"

The clerk believed me and threw his keys. He described his car and pointed. Seconds later I was unlocking the door and getting in.

I didn't know where I was going but I was determined to get there fast. I drove and drove. Every time I saw a pair of headlights behind me I wondered if it was that maniac in pursuit.

Finally I saw a police car and flagged it. The officer got out of his car with his raincoat and flashlight and came over to my open window. He flashed his light on me. As he tilted it downward, I saw shock on his face.

I told him who I was and what had happened; I could see information overload in his eyes. I suspect he had never received any formal training about handling a celebrity appearing in his small town who was half-naked in a torrential rainstorm, fleeing from a homicidal husband bent on avenging his fractured ego. But "Officer Friendly" did come up with a solution.

"I'm taking you in!" he said.

I locked the car and left it. I didn't think I was being arrested, because I hadn't done anything wrong, or so I thought. When we arrived at the station, I was excruciatingly embarrassed to find myself clothed only in wet underwear in front of a dozen or more police officers. Some of them were women.

"Are you a Chippendale dancer?" one female officer asked and laughed.

"Arrest him for indecent exposure," I heard another officer say.

"Wait a minute!" I interrupted. "Call the main police headquarters and ask if they don't have two officers on duty who have been assigned to Batman and Robin. You get the officer on the phone who has been escorting me, and he'll verify who I am."

They believed me enough to make the call. They found out I told the truth, but the policeman assigned to me was now off-duty and probably at home asleep. Not knowing what to do with me, they decided to call the officer at home. The poor guy generously agreed to come get me.

An hour later he arrived at the substation and I told him the whole story—about the girl, her husband, everything. He was sympathetic. I signed autographs for all the police on duty before we left. Whew! What a difference being on television can make. My security guard took me back where I had left the clerk's car, and I followed him back to the hotel to get my things.

When we arrived, he went into the lobby and spoke to the clerk, who had received a call from the girl that her husband had come home to get his shotgun and was on his way back to the hotel. He got a clear description of my assailant—a six-foot-eleven-inch 350-pound country hick with a police record.

The stakes increased dramatically. I left the keys in the clerk's car and rode with the officer around to the back entrance. We didn't know if we had gotten there first or if the shotgun-toting husband was lying in wait for me. The officer pulled out his gun and made sure it was ready to fire.

"I hope I don't have to use this," he said. "But if he's armed and threatening, I might have to shoot him!"

The sudden shock of an impending life-and-death crisis gave me great respect for the danger every police officer faces every time he

puts on his badge. Actors only simulate reality. Police officers live with it daily.

Approaching the building with his gun drawn, the officer entered with me close behind, cautiously proceeding through the hallways toward what was left of my room. Every second was tense. Each time we turned a corner, I expected a confrontation.

We reached the room safely. I was happy to see that the door hadn't completely caved in, not that I would have stayed in there even if I'd known that it wouldn't. While the officer stood guard, I packed my belongings.

We left as quickly as we had entered. The policeman drove me directly to the Cincinnati airport. It was now about 6.30 a.m. He waited until my flight was called. As I prepared to board, I thanked him for everything he had done. He made one final suggestion to me.

"I really like you and Mr. West. But considering the problems you've had since you've been here, I would strongly recommend that neither of you ever return."

I couldn't have agreed more

At Home

Funny things would happen even when I wasn't on tour. Back in Los Angeles I walked into the branch of the bank where I kept my accounts. The teller lines were long. When I finally got to the front of the line, I handed the girl my deposit slip. She recognized my name, looked up and shrieked "Oh, my God. It's you!"

I was a little embarrassed and turned around to see if anyone else was looking at me. Sure enough, the eight or nine people behind me were all staring as if to ask, "Who is this guy?"

I shuddered and turned back to the teller for her knockout punch.

"Oh Mr. Ward I still can't believe it's you. I didn't recognize you with your clothes on!"

I was so embarrassed that I took my deposit receipt and left without looking back. I was thinking that the customers were probably wondering if I was a super-stud porn star.



Zapping around town taking care of biz.(1975)

A Near-Fatal Attraction?

After the series was axed I had an experience in which I almost got axed for real. I had been dating a number of different girls when I met a vision of loveliness who had co-starred in an immensely popu-

lar television series set in outer space. We had an intergalactic love affair. This gorgeous young blonde Swedish bombshell with sky blue eyes was into candlelight baths, shiatsu massage and long hours of tenderness and extreme intimacy, and I was deeply into her. She shared the fruits of her God-given gifts lovingly and treated me like a king. As willing participants, we experienced extraordinary pleasures together, penetrating time and space (and everything else) in uncharted new territories "to boldly go where no man has gone before."

But we also had differences, and they were insurmountable. When the ultimate day of dissolution and disillusion came, it wasn't received well. It wasn't unexpected; the subject had been discussed, dropped and rehashed numerous times. The final break came when I was at her home, a quaint little house set on a wooded property. Those parting words devastated her, but she agreed that we were mismatched. She excused herself from the room. I waited for her to return. She never came back. I called to her several times. No answer.

I went after her, looking in every room. She was nowhere. I left.

It was fast becoming dark. As I walked out the front door I had a chilling feeling. I don't know what it is that forewarns us of danger. Intuition? Maybe, but I believe that when there is real danger and it is imminent, some chemical or nervous energy is released into the atmosphere and can be perceived by most people. The air was too still, the atmosphere too thick and the silence too eerie. Something was wrong.

I proceeded up the heavily wooded path with caution. I didn't know what I was looking for or what I was looking to avoid. Yet the feeling was bad.

As I approached a large tree with a thick trunk, I sensed someone there. The feeling changed. Carefully I walked around the tree, giving it a wide berth.

Then I saw her. She stood holding an ax high above her head. She wasn't threatening me, and I didn't feel she intended to hit me, but the blank stare on her face was eerie.

"Honey?" I spoke softly. "Hand me the ax."

Slowly she lowered her arms. I reached for the ax and carefully put it on the ground behind me, away from both of us. Then I looked her in the eyes.

She slowly came back from wherever she was. I could tell she was

disoriented. I walked her back to the house, made sure she was safely inside, then left.

Ten years later I appeared on a popular television game show. This particular program held a competition for charity that pitted the stars of *Batman* against the stars of her show. I wanted to say hello, but she didn't acknowledge my presence and avoided eye contact. I didn't force the issue. I knew it was best for us to continue in separate solar systems.

Three's Company

For weeks I had been telling Adam about my new French girlfriend with whom I was madly in love. Returning from a road tour, I met her on Malibu beach and we were mutually and instantly infatuated. Having been raised both in America and in France, she spoke English without an accent but also spoke French fluently. With a body better than Bardot's, a chest like Sophia Loren's, a voice softer than Marilyn Monroe's and a sexy French attitude, she could fulfill any man's fantasy. At eighteen she had a youthful naiveté and sometimes made me laugh with her misuse of the English language. After purchasing a bikini she informed me that she had bought "a pair of bathing suits."

I couldn't stop talking about her, and Adam became increasingly interested. He asked for details about our sex life, and I was so thrilled and indiscreet and descriptive to my mentor that I didn't realize I was fueling his fantasy. I shouldn't have been, but I was young and immature . . . and then again, if I couldn't trust the man who represented the epitome of integrity to a worldwide audience, then who could I trust?

Adam's curiosity came to a head after I described a passionate romp involving chocolate pudding, whipped cream, nuts and two dozen orgasms (if the sex didn't kill me, the cholesterol would.) He confided that he was having erotic dreams about us and it was driving him crazy.

I can't believe anyone could come that often."

Adam, it's true."

"I'd love to see it."

"Maybe that can be arranged."

I don't know what possessed me to prove such a personal point. Nor do I know why I later pressured my new girlfriend into giving a command performance just for Adam.

Next afternoon we drove less than a half-mile down Pacific Coast Highway to Adam's beach house. I brought my chocolate pudding and

Three's Company

whipped cream. Adam was very cordial, and we chatted and listened to Flip Wilson's album *The Devil Made Me Do It*.

Afterwards the subject of our sex-capades arose, and Adam said he had heard about our unique way of achieving multiple orgasms. More than anything, he said, he wanted to see it. The three of us went into his bedroom. Looking back now, we must have been crazy.

I set the ground rules. Adam had to stay off the bed and make no attempt to touch or participate.

"It's killing me to agree to that, but I will," he said.

She and I removed our clothes and climbed onto the king-sized playground. We kissed passionately and soon were so much involved that we forgot that Adam was watching . . . until he sat on the bed.

"Adam, you agreed to stay off," I charged.

He got up immediately.

"I'm sorry. Oh, my God. The two of you . . . It's so beautiful!"

He was speaking like an innocent little boy. Then he added "Would you mind if I take off my clothes?"

HOLY ROLE REVERSAL! I was now the one in charge, and he had become the junior partner seeking permission.

"Okay," I said. "But stay off the bed!"

Knowing Adam, I continued making love but kept one eye in his direction.

Adam removed his clothes and got a firm grip on himself.

We were really into it. I rolled onto my back and she knelt on her hands and knees over me. She gently lowered herself and we kissed deeply. Her skin was warm and her hair was soft.

"I love you," she said softly. "I love you," I answered.

Then she started kissing my chest and working her way downward. She sucked on my nipples, licked my belly button and used her tongue to blaze a trail lower. I was in ecstasy. I could hear Adam in the background having fits.

She fondled my testicles and took me into her mouth. I groaned. Adam groaned. He must have had a great view of her bobbing for apples.

It was time. She lay on her back. I went for the whipped cream and chocolate pudding, and Adam went nuts. Several times he repeated how beautiful and sensual the two of us looked as he circled his bed,

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

gently stroking himself. I told him to be quiet or he was going to ruin everything.

The moment we had all been waiting for arrived. She groaned as I stuffed her and had her first orgasm before I finished. Adam groaned louder than she did. Then I feasted on my French girl while Adam had a fistful of frustration.

Finally he said he couldn't bear to watch any more and exited into his bathroom.

We continued for another fifteen minutes, had intercourse, finished and got dressed. Adam was still in the bathroom. We'd had such a good time that having an audience didn't matter.

That night I was ashamed for having put her on display and apologized. She said the only reason she'd done it was because she loved me, which made me feel worse.

We lived together for another year and graduated from chocolate pudding, whipped cream and nuts to stuffing bagels, lox and cream cheese and achieving thousands of orgasms. Finally she called off our relationship because she gained so much weight.

Tales of Kinkiness

Holy Hermaphrodite

I might not have had the courage to write about certain aspects of my friendship with Adam had he not opened the closet door with his recent revelation (in his book *Back to the Batcave*) about a past interlude with a person of indeterminate gender—someone I take to be a transvestite, though it isn't entirely clear in the book. Adam confesses to a continuing curiosity about this person, with whom he spent one night in Madrid.

Unusual conversations with Adam have led me to believe that there may be other dimensions to my crimefighting partner than I was aware of.

On the set, Adam made crude comments to me about the way I walked in my leotards. He knew I was miserable and uncomfortable in them and that their pulling and pinching was walking torture.

"Burt, the way you walk looks like you just got f—ed in the ass."

I don't use language like that and was upset by both what he said and what he referred to. I asked the producers to allow me to work bare-legged. The suits in the front office were uptight about showing any hair on my legs. I was astounded and argued that viewers regularly see both sexes on television in bathing suits. I even showed them that Robin's legs were bare in the comic book.

"The answer is NO, Burt."

In desperation I offered to shave my legs.

"NO, Burt!"

They argued that the sponsors and censors would never go for it, and they didn't want to raise any more red flags since they had only recently silenced the furor over the "beast in my BatTrunks."

I can understand the producers' reluctance. They were taking heavy heat about the homosexual implications of Batman and Robin's close relationship.

It Takes Two to Tangle

One Monday morning before we started filming, Adam was tickled about something and pulled me aside to tell me a story of such thought-provoking oddity that it has left me to this very day perplexed and unsettled. He had attended a party over the weekend. It was late and he had had more than a few drinks when he met a man whom he described as about twenty-eight years old, six foot five, muscular and athletic—a blond Scandinavian, sort of a Viking type. He started a conversation with Adam and, recognizing him as Batman, moved the discussion from small talk to intense eye contact and aggressive, dominant behavior. Adam said the man asked him to wrestle outside on the front lawn.

What I don't understand is why Adam accepted. This wasn't a challenge to fight. This was an invitation to wrestle. Why would a straight forty-year-old man choose to roll around in the wet grass with a young male stranger?

Adam shook his head as he described the details of the match. "I don't know whatever possessed me to do this. We wrestled each other to the ground. First he was on top of me and then I got on top of him. We struggled and rolled some more. Finally he pinned me."

Adam's face turned red.

"What happened then?" I asked.

This was the part Adam didn't like.

"He kissed me!"

"Oh, my God, Adam. What did you do?"

"I couldn't do much. I got very upset and he let me up."

I kiddingly asked Adam if his blond Scandinavian wasn't really his Polynesian Mama after half a dozen stiff drinks. He said no and laughed.

"Gee, Adam," I teased. "You'll probably never want to wrestle with anyone again."

Suddenly he moved close to me. "Warna wrestle?"

"No way, Captain Quick." (Adam played Captain Quick on the Nestle's hot chocolate commercials years before *Batman*.)

Then he moved very close and looked me in the eyes.

"Kiss me, Burt!" he shrieked and reached out to grab me. I ran off the stage. I wanted to believe he was only kidding.

Getting Rid of All Kinds of Pests

You never appreciate what you have until you lose it. "I don't know the author of that cliché, but I do know how true it is. I was lonely and grieving the loss of my French amour, whom I'd really loved.

I hated to be alone but here I was, all by myself . . . or so I thought. Apparently I had more company than I bargained for: cockroaches in my kitchen cabinets. I let my fingers do the walking and called a local pest control company. The service technician inspected my home, noted the infested areas and scheduled an appointment to exterminate. On his way out he noticed a framed photo of me as Robin hanging by my front door and realized I was the Boy Wonder. He became instantly enamored and asked numerous things about me and the show. I answered a few questions, then politely excused myself, and he left. I thought he was merely an adoring fan. I just didn't realize how adoring!

On the day of the scheduled appointment I knew I had to be out of the house for at least three hours, so I left before the exterminator arrived, tacked a note on the door and left a key under the mat.

When I returned home I found an unusual letter he had left on my kitchen counter—six carefully handwritten pages. This passionate pest exterminator professed his adoration for me, detailing his thoughts about every word I had said to him at our previous meeting. He declared his wish to talk with me at great length and proposed that we spend time together comparing all the things we had in common. I half-expected him to ask me to wrestle.

He concluded his dissertation sadly: "I was so disappointed that you weren't here when I came, that I just sprayed and left."

I found it suspicious that the letter was wet and sticky. I didn't even want to try to figure that one out!

Holy Indecipherable Message!

People don't always say what they mean. Or if they do, sometimes it is indecipherable, at least to me. I was back in the dating jungle again, and with my luck picking partners at that time in my life, I was like a bug light. And you can imagine what kind of insects I attracted.

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

Here is a note I received after the briefest of brief meetings with a seemingly very successful and well-to-do young woman in front of the Beverly Hills Hotel.

Burt,

"The principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fullness and swelling of the heart which passions of all kinds do cause and induce " (Francis Bacon)

Let our newfound friendship be a sheltering tree.

Xoxo, Kaven

If Francis Bacon really wrote that, then either he was one of the horniest men of his time or, if he was referring to a nonsexual description of friendship, then his words would seem to indicate that he was out to lunch. I don't know if either conclusion is right.

I read that passage over and over and struggled for an answer. Did she mean by "Let our newfound friendship be a sheltering tree" that she wanted me to pick the fruits hanging from her tree? Or was it my fruit's swelling fullness and discharge that she wanted to pick? Or did she just want my heart to become swollen with desire for her so that she could pick it?

Her choice of quotes and her own comment seemed so kinky that I never got in touch with her because I was too disturbed trying to figure out what she meant. Of course, I could have called and asked for an explanation, but I felt that she was too weird for a conservative guy like me.

Safe Sex: Telephone Foreplay!

Life in L.A. was becoming too demented for me. I was safer on the road. I have always believed that when you're outside of Los Angeles and New York, you come across more down-to-earth types . . . you know, normal people, women accustomed to the missionary position, not weirdos.

So it was with pleasure and a comfortable feeling that I arrived in Montreal, the Paris of North America, for a weekend gig. My employers

Tales of Kinkiness

picked me up from the airport, checked me into the Bonaventure Hotel and provided me with an opportunity to take a nap. I was asleep when the phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Mr. Ward?"

"Yes."

"I'm with a local newspaper and I'd like to interview you," the male voice said.

"I'm sorry. I just arrived and I'm resting. You'll have to contact the car show office and they can schedule an appointment."

"May I at least ask you a question?"

"Go ahead."

"You have such beautiful legs! They're so silky smooth. Do you shave them or use a depilatory? Do you have special exercises to keep them so firm? Do you use exotic creams or salves to lubricate them? Can I come up and touch them?"

I hung up, shocked and indignant at the guy's nerve.

I fluffed up my pillow, lay back down and reached for my bottle of moisturizing lotion.

“Sorry, Adam, I Had to Do It!”

Payback time! It happened so fast I almost missed it. Finally, after all the years of suffering at the hands of a master upstager, the moment for retribution arrived. All the dirty tricks perpetrated, both in front of the camera and behind it, were about to be resolved. For Adam it was the chance to pay his entire karmic debt at once. For me it was the opportunity of a lifetime . . . the chance to make a point Adam couldn't ignore and would never forget! I had to do it!

Scene of retribution: A Holiday Inn in Buffalo, New York, on a windy below-zero night in the dead of winter. Snow fell steadily. "Not a fit night out for man nor beast!"

Trivia tidbit: Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter was staying in the same hotel, one floor below us.

We had our own rooms on the eighth floor directly across the hall from each other. Staying in the room next to Adam's was our show sponsor and one of our security guards. It was midnight.

The Dynamic Duo was in bed, both in Adam's room, but not in the same bed and not with each other. Handsomely spread-eagled on their backs on each of the two double beds were a pair of voluptuous, leggy brunettes, totally nude, with matching collars and cuffs. We were deeply engrossed in giving personal autographed memories to these two adoring young Superhero fans.

Animal passions ignited like forest fires, electricity filled the air, and the whole room rocked in rhythm to our motions. More servings of passion were dished up, and movement in the room gradually picked up momentum. With legs raised, the girls opened as willingly as sunflowers.

The air became thick with lust. Reaching a feeding frenzy of unremitting pleasure combined with an ecstasy of raw physical gratification four nearly simultaneous orgasms were achieved. As we later heard, our neighboring hotel guests thought a minor earthquake had occurred.

Time flies when you're having fun! It was 2:00 a.m., and I reminded Adam about some unfinished business (two other young fans) waiting for us across the hall in my room. We didn't want to be rude or unappreciative to the women we had just made love to by leaving them so abruptly, so we creatively thought we would introduce them to the sponsor of our appearance and the security guard and let nature take its course.

We knew the guys were stuy and would probably sit there and talk the girls' ears off all night—if they had enough guts to even come into a room with two naked women.

Adam and I were buck naked as we tiptoed to our neighbors' connecting door and knocked to offer bountiful gifts.

They must have been deeply asleep, because we banged on the door for at least five minutes before they acknowledged us. When they awoke and realized Adam and I were beckoning them, they got worried and wouldn't open the door between our rooms. Apparently all their worst fears about the possibility of Batman and Robin being the "wish dream of two homosexuals" must have frightened them. After much coaxing they finally, although timidly, opened their door.

When they saw Adam and me nude, that did it. They slammed the door shut and wouldn't open it! Again and again we tried to assure them that there really were two totally naked girls in the room, one on each bed, waiting to meet them.

It seemed like forever until they opened the door. This time they peeked in and saw the girls. The simultaneous sighs of relief and obvious excitement on their faces were hilarious.

At our suggestion, they obediently went to the bedsides to meet the women. This was our chance to make a quiet exit. At the door, Adam asked if I had my key.

"Yes. Let's make a run for it!"

"Wait!"

Adam stopped me.

"Listen, Burt, I'm six-three and a grown man. You're a kid. You've got to go alone across the hall and open the door for me. I couldn't dare be caught naked in that hallway. It would be devastating!"

I protested about human rights, age discrimination and the unfairness of my being the only one at risk, but he wouldn't budge. The

plan was for me to cross the very wide hallway undetected, open the door to my room and hold it open for him as he dashed across. I was nervous. It didn't seem like much to do, but when faced with doing something that could be horribly embarrassing, you think twice or, in my case, maybe three or four times.

Anyway, as we say in golf and sex: "Never up, never in!"

I decided to go for it. After all, it was now almost 3:00 a.m., and those two young Superhero fans in my room had been waiting for their meeting with our love muscles for several hours. Besides, I couldn't imagine who would be up at this time walking around the eighth floor.

HOLY BLOOD PRESSURE! I raced across the hall in no time. That wasn't difficult, but there was another problem: getting in the door. I had the right key, but the lock was stuck!

Suddenly I heard the elevator open! This couldn't be happening to me, not now, not tonight, not here! I pulled vainly on the damn door-knob. I heard steps and my heart sank. Then, miraculously, I got the door open, rushed in and closed it behind me.

Whoever came out of the elevator didn't see me—or if they did, they didn't say anything to anyone about it.

I looked at the two double beds and saw that these new conquests had already fallen asleep. I waited about thirty seconds and then reopened the door to the hallway.

Adam opened his door seconds later.

"Hold it open!" he whispered. "Here I come."

That's when the vision came to me, like a lightning bolt piercing a cloudy sky! I knew what I had to do!

Adam pulled his door closed, locking it behind him, and bounded across the hallway. There was no turning back for him. With perfectly precise timing and more nerve than I thought I had, I shut the door locking him in the hallway. He went nuts! He gritted his teeth and whispered loudly under his breath.

"Burt, open this door NOW!"

"Sorry, Adam, I had to do it!"

"What the hell are you talking about?"

Now, in the same tone of voice and inflection that I had heard Adam's words replayed in my head hundreds and maybe thousands of times I replied, "It's payback time for all your years of self-centered-

ness, for upstaging, for everything. It was your favorite line, Adam: 'Sorry, Burt, I had to do it!'

He instantly knew what I meant. He had never expected a day of reckoning, especially this many years later, and certainly not in this horribly embarrassing circumstance. He was truly caught with his pants down. Before either of us could say anything else, we heard the elevator door opening again.

"Oh, shit!" he exclaimed with a shudder.

I knew he had panicked and I heard him run. For a moment I felt bad for him and almost opened the door. Then memories flashed before my eyes and I decided I didn't truly feel that bad about what was happening to Adam. Looking on the positive side, I rationalized that I was really doing him a favor, helping him pay his karmic debt—relieving him of all the wrongdoing that had built up inside him and clogged his sense of right and wrong—with one well-placed exploding spiritual enema!

I sat on the edge of the bed next to the blonde I had first met that afternoon. Suddenly my conscience kicked in and I thought about Adam. I felt terrible because he was my friend and mentor, regardless of all the selfish things he had done to me in the past.

I rose to look for him, but sleeping beauty woke up, pulled me on top of her and aggressively wrapped her thighs around me. She was passionate and hungry and determined. Then she grabbed hold of me in the right place and wouldn't let go. I went for it.

Dissolve. The morning sun peeked through the blinds. She was asleep. I dressed and went looking for Adam. I knocked on his door to see if he had gotten back in, but the producer and the security guard answered that Adam wasn't there and that they hadn't heard from him. I knew I had been right about those two. They were still sitting there, innocently talking to the other women, too shy to do anything else. More importantly, where was Adam?

I didn't see him anywhere in the hallway, and I remembered that he didn't have any keys. What could have happened to the Costumeless Crusader?

I walked to the end of the hall and noticed that the window was open. I heard a sneeze. On the fire escape I saw someone sitting, hunched over and shivering, nearly covered with falling snow. His teeth were chattering. I looked closer. Oh, my! Yes, it was a familiar face!

The King and I

My new girlfriend threw herself on the motel bed and went into an uncontrollable fit of laughter I couldn't get her to stop and actually thought she might be having a seizure. I didn't know what she thought was so funny. I had taken all the regular, prudent precautions that I would with anyone before introducing her to my one-of-a-kind road manager, Andy King from Palestine, Texas.

She had been carefully warned about his eccentric looks and his more eccentric ways. Her disbelief and insinuation that I had exaggerated his description followed a well-worn trail of others before her who couldn't conceive that any human creature could be as outrageously uncouth.

I remember the first call I received from Andy, who introduced himself and said he booked road appearances for a number of past and present television celebrities. He spoke of Bob Conrad from *The Wild, Wild West*, Rory Calhoun from *The Texan*, and Johnny Weissmuller, the most popular of twelve Tarzans.

Andy said he was interested in having me for a client and that I could earn an average of \$2,000 per day, seven days a week, for nine months of the year. In addition, I would have a cancellation clause to reschedule appearances if I got a movie role. That sounded terrific, meant a lot of money, and gave me the freedom to pursue my acting career. Considering that I was between roles (which is the Hollywood term most frequently used to describe being unemployed), I thought going on the road and earning a consistent living would be the best thing for me. Besides, I knew that I would have the opportunity to meet some nice young BatFans, which could readily fill the painful void created by the loss of my youthful French coquette.

I believe you can have just about anything you want in this world if you're willing to pay the price. But, the price is not always payable in money. It can be a toll on your age, your health, your level of pres-

sure and aggravation, and your personal life. For the price I had to pay to earn the income I received through Andy's efforts, I paid in every way ten times over. Today I remember it fondly; at the time it was living hell.

I never would have believed I would be spending the next twenty years of my life, almost day in and day out, working with this creature. This is the only part of my forty-nine years on this planet that I can truthfully say represented perpetual aggravation combined with hysteria.

Andy King arrived. I didn't expect to see what I saw, nor get what I got.

The King from Palestine descended upon my doorstep like a cross between Montezuma's revenge and an angel from heaven—unexpected, quick to arrive but slow to leave, emitting an unpleasant odor, mentally and physically exhausting, discharging endless loads of crap, but also delivering a gorilla-sized armful of cash into my lap immediately.

Willing Customers?

Andy had a style of booking appearances that was beyond unconventional—it was outrageous. First he would drive up to some unsuspecting business and walk in unannounced to see the owner or manager. One store manager described how Andy booked my autograph party with him.

"Your manager is some character. I was lifting a large box onto a shelf when I heard this voice say, 'Here. Let me give you a hand.'

"Suddenly the box was out of my hands and this giant lifted it for me. I thanked him and then he introduced himself and started selling you. He followed me into my office and stood over me at my desk. He moved closer and started to crowd me. He had this cheap cigar in his mouth and was talking, smoking and clearing his throat all at the same time.

"The cigar smelled so bad that I began coughing and then choking. He had me pinned in my chair and wouldn't let me get up.

"Then he started coughing all over me. I was in agony. I didn't know what to do. He pulled out a wrinkled contract from his coat pocket that was wet from his perspiration, and he asked me to sign it. I told him I wanted time to think about it, and he said, 'Go ahead.'

"He expected me to consider the appearance and make a decision as he stood there. Then he pulled that nickel cigar out of his mouth and flicked the ashes on my carpet. That's when I gave up and signed."

In all fairness to Andy, the hard-sell tactics were not normally necessary. Most places I played were anxious to have me, and every place where I appeared during my career on the road drew hundreds and usually thousands of customers.

Less Willing Customers

Once in a while Andy applied the pressure a little too hard. There were some bookings that shouldn't have happened at all. Only afterwards did I see happiness and relief on my employers' faces that told me the experience had been worthwhile.

One gentleman owned a car dealership in the Midwest, and Andy caught him off guard, which was usually the case. Apparently Andy got into a terrible argument with the man.

The reason was that the man didn't want the appearance and had turned Andy down. Can you believe it? The guy had the nerve to say no to big Andy. He should have known that could have started World War III!

I tried to explain to Andy that people have a right to say no. He answered me by saying that a "no" answer was fine with him, and anybody can say anything he wants, as long as he signs and pays . . . and he meant it!

Early the next morning Andy stood in front of the car dealership telling people that the owner was a crook and not to buy his cars. He was out there for three days, and business slowed.

The dealer relented and not only booked the appearance, but paid \$1,100 more than what he was originally quoted. Andy had managed not only to turn around a refusal, but to raise the price. I guess he added in his time and expenses for protesting in front of the dealership.

Why didn't the dealer send a couple of his larger salesmen outside or call the police to eject Andy forcibly from the premises? Actually he did both, and neither worked. One aggressive salesman—who showed that he lacked good common sense by taking a swing at someone twice his size—got a gorilla-sized fist in his face, dislodging a cou-

ple of teeth. When the dealer called the police, they informed him that Andy could press charges and have his salesman arrested for assault and battery, even though the salesman got the worst of it, and could sue his dealership for damages. An officer did force Andy to leave the dealership premises, which was private property.

Andy still won. He parked outside on public property and confronted every customer approaching the showroom. Andy has a way of holding his audience, whether they want to be held or not. By the time he told the story of the dealer's salesman getting physical (he neglected to mention that he hadn't been touched, and that the salesman was the one who got bloodied), and with the police informing him that he could press charges, potential customers became uneasy. If that wasn't enough to deter them and they still went inside, Andy met them on their way out to give them another earful.

I asked Andy why he didn't press charges against the salesman who took the swing at him. He said he was in the process of doing that at the police station when the sergeant called the dealer. The dealer said he had had enough and agreed to sign Andy's contract and pay the deposit.

The appearance was successful and drew thousands of potential new customers. Ultimately, the dealer was happy.

But to fully grasp the total horror that man went through, you should have an idea what Andy looks like, because his image is what makes the entire situation significantly more distasteful.

Looks aren't Everything, and in Andy's Case They Were Nothing

Andy is best described as something you might see in tortured sleep following a bout of ptomaine poisoning and chronic indigestion. Six foot four inches, 400 pounds and shaped like a spinning top, he is enormous at the bottom and shrinks to almost nothing at the head. He is the mathematical opposite of a bodybuilder.

I never fault people for their looks, but with Andy King I will make an exception, because this is a man whose bizarre character and personality *exactly* match his appearance. With Andy, what you see is what you get. Wait a minute. In good conscience I admit that on one

occasion in the twenty years I worked with him, I did tease him to his face about his looks. Feeling mischievous one afternoon, I met this mountain of a man in a marginally clean coffee shop, his favorite hang-out-type place in the entire world. I produced a color photograph of a full-grown orangutan and handed it to him, telling him that, in rummaging through an old scrapbook, I had found one of his baby pictures. Andy studied it for almost a minute before responding that he wasn't sure but he didn't think it was him. I acted surprised and could never bring myself to tell him it was a joke. Some things are better left unsaid.

This man has feet the size of snowshoes, and ankles as thick as my thighs. On only one occasion did I see his legs not covered up by his trousers. It was in Malibu, when he came to the beach with his three kids and his wife just before they (understandably) divorced. I toast her for lasting through three kids with him.

I didn't notice his arrival as I lay tanning, but when I mistakenly thought there was an eclipse of the sun, I opened my eyes and there he was. I was tickled to see him in what could reasonably be described as a king-sized (no pun intended) sheet that had been re cut into a swimming suit. He and his kids got into the water and splashed each other noisily, causing a mild ruckus on the otherwise docile Malibu beach. Andy swallowed some water and began a loud, hacking cough that could be heard the entire length of the beach and sounded like the mating call of an anguished elephant walrus.

Andy balloons at the waist to the size of a small children's carousel. From there upward he keeps getting smaller and smaller right to the head, which is extraordinarily long and unusually narrow. The man has enormous ears, but don't dare call him Dumbo. He is bald on top and has two massive waves of hair that protrude five to six inches outward over his ears.

As much of a mountain as Andy is, he occasionally chooses to walk delicately. It is a riotous sight. Watching 400 rolling pounds alternate from lumbering up my driveway to crossing my living room to raid my refrigerator on his tippy-toes reminds me of the movie *Fantasia* and the hippopotamus ballerinas.

Andy has a sense of humor. He tells every pretty woman the same corny line: "It's girls like you that I dream about, but you should see what I get!"

The King and I

Andy also pokes fun at his looks. "People tell me when I walk down the street that I look like an old Mercury with both front doors wide open." That refers to his protruding ears.

One day Andy showed up unexpectedly at my parents' house. My mother heard a delicate knock and opened her door to the shock of seeing huge Andy. After answering his battery of questions, she requested that he leave and call later. She tried to shut the front door, but Andy stuck his foot in it. She asked him to remove his foot, and he just kept on asking questions and ignoring her request. Andy didn't think he was being rude, nor did he realize he was annoying my mother. He was just lonely and wanted to talk to somebody.

Andy's biggest problem (and the trait that also made him one of the world's great salesmen) was his insensitivity to the feelings of others and the extreme sensitivity he felt if you didn't agree with everything he said. Once someone he was trying to sell me to didn't agree with a statement that Andy represented as an incontrovertible fact, Andy blew up and accused the man of calling him a liar. The man denied it and in fact had done no such thing. Andy wouldn't quit, and I had to step in front of the man to keep Andy from hitting him. Talk about overreacting!

Andy could have made number one on Mr. Blackwell's worst-dressed list every year, hands down. Not that his taste was bad, but more that his clothes were always so wrinkled it seemed he was trying to introduce a new look into men's fashions. Andy kept his suits hanging on a metal bar he had welded over the back seat of his Lincoln Continental. Hanging his clothes on the bar was a good idea. Where he erred was when he removed them at night and used them as a mattress so he could sleep in his back seat.

I couldn't imagine Andy fitting into the back seat of even the big Continental he drove, and I questioned him about it. He said he always rolled down the window and stuck his legs out. I can't conceive what he did when it rained or snowed.

Andy King had a penchant for incongruity. He drove a beautiful brand new Lincoln but towed an enormous homemade bright green wood trailer, with rusty nails sticking out of its sides, that housed his worldly possessions, including his sofa and dishwasher. He dragged that trailer everywhere he went, but I don't recall ever seeing him open it up.

The King of Uncouth

Perhaps I seem too harsh in my description of Andy. You might even be ready to take his side to defend him. But before you lick the stamp and mail that protest, brace yourself.

I am at home in Malibu about 6:00 p.m., fixing dinner for myself and a young female guest. Andy calls. I ask him if I can call him back after dinner and he says, "No, I'll be on the road."

I explain that it is difficult to talk while I'm cooking (I'm making Suporhero ribs, homemade potato salad, splatter beans and a fresh spinach salad, so I'm busy). He is upset because he reckons that if he pays for the call, I have to talk to him then and there and for as long as he wants.

"Andy, can we at least make it short? My food's gonna be ruined."

"Oh me, oh my. If that don't beat all. I make you all that money and I can't even talk 'bidness' to you when I'm paying for the call."

"Andy," I say hopelessly, "go ahead and talk."

"That's better. You won't believe what I did for you this morning."

"Don't keep me in suspense, Andy."

"Well, I booked you at this Chevrolet dealership in Birmingham, Alabama."

"Yeah?"

"But wait till ya hear what I had to do to get the date."

"Hold the thought, Andy, while I turn my ribs."

"Oh, no! Now he's making me wait."

I hear Andy say that to someone else as I lay down the phone. Twenty seconds later I'm back.

"Burt, this is long distance. You're costing me a fortune."

"Okay, Andy. Continue your story."

He grumbles, "I go in at 9:00 a.m. sharp to see this car dealer, and he isn't there."

"That's amazing."

"I find out he doesn't even come into his dealership except once in a while."

"More amazing."

"He's one of them ath . . . ath . . . ath . . ."

"Athletic?"

"Yeah, ath-e-letic nuts."

"I'm following you."

"So I mosey around and find out he runs around this circle at the local high school."

"The high school track?"

"That's it!"

"Andy can you hold on? My beans are burning."

"Oh, no. Not again!"

I perform a quick stir and lower the heat. "I'm back."

"Now you made me forget where I am."

"You're telling me about the high school track."

"Oh, yes. Well, this guy runs every morning at five sharp."

"Why so early?"

"Because by eight it's startin' to heat up and the humidity is worse than the dickens."

"I see."

"Now just for you, I meet him out at that high school at five to convince him to book the date."

"Well, Andy, that's very nice of you."

"Wait till you hear. That ain't the half of it. He refuses to stand there and talk. He makes me run around that egg-shaped thing."

"The track."

"Yeah. I had to run around the track and try to sell you."

"That's admirable, Andy."

"But a terrible thing happened. My legs ain't what they used to be. I'm three hundred and, uh, almost four hundred pounds."

"Andy, you shouldn't jog like that. You could have a heart attack."

"Well, I did it for you. But I got him to agree to jog very slowly while we talked but even still . . . uh, you're cooking dinner?"

"Yes, Andy."

"Well, I don't want to make you sick and ruin your dinner."

"Then maybe you better not tell me."

"Well, it isn't that bad. That running made my legs rub together something fierce and now I got these terrible sores on the insides of my thighs."

"Andy, you're making me gag."

"One of them opened up. It's big and smells really bad."

I put the phone down and started gagging for real. I almost threw

up. When I got control of myself I picked up the phone and insisted that he stop describing the gruesome details. He agreed but then added.

"I won't say anything more about it. But I want you to know that I can't walk and I'm sitting here with a wet towel between my legs!"

"Andy, my dinner is burned and I've lost my appetite. I think it's time for me to say good-night. Good-night, Andy!"

"Well," Andy said, unhappy about having to get off the phone. "I've got some good news, too."

"Yeah," I said. "What is it?"

"I booked the date."

"Swell, Andy."

I always complimented him on each date he booked, regardless of the crazy dialogue that usually preceded his mention of it.

"That's good news. I appreciate your hard work."

I hung up, turned off all the burners and took my date out for dinner. I don't drink, but if I were ever going to start, that would have been the night!

Superhero Worshipers

Prior to an afternoon autograph session, I put on a benefit appearance in the morning for underprivileged young children at their elementary school. In marched the little people by the hundreds. A mass procession of miniature masterpieces quietly followed their teachers in single file into the enormous school auditorium with an almost precise military cadence. These creatures of innocence shared with each other commonalities of size and mischievous character and in spite of a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, they seemed successfully integrated into a united future generation.

My moments of reflection and appreciation of human life and its eternal immortality through procreation were suddenly shattered by my realization that I had a show to put on for these kids in less than five minutes and that I was the person all these youngsters had come to see. I was also nervous because I had never done this little act before and had put it together in two days as a one-time charitable request by my appearance employer.

Twelve hundred children hungering for Superhero entertainment, all expecting satisfaction for their imagination that they could share with their pals at lunch, on the playground with other kids, and at home that night with their parents. I couldn't let these kids down with some cheap sham of a show. I *had* to give them something wonderful, or doom each one to a day of disappointment and a tarnished image of one of their most revered role models.

However, let's not deceive ourselves with the myth of the innocence and naiveté of children. As an audience they are far more unforgiving and critical than their subdued and more corrupted older counterparts. Kids tell it like it is—good, bad, boring and sometimes ugly.

Hidden from view behind a closed curtain, I magnified the moment into unbelievable mental pressure.

"Mmmmm," my mathematical mind calculated. "Twelve hundred kids means that I am about to be watched by 2,400 eyes and 24,000 fingers, thumbs and toes . . . all waiting for me to make a mistake. What a frightening thought!"

The school principal struggled to read aloud the hyperbolized introduction I had quickly assembled for this special event with some semblance of professionalism. Ear-piercing feedback from the ancient microphone was a downer, and the children squirmed in their seats and grew impatient. They fidgeted, whispered and giggled to their classmates. It was plain to see that they didn't want the appetizer and they didn't want the soup. They wanted the main course and they wanted it *now!*

Cheers and whistles summoned me to the stage but this was nothing compared to all hell breaking loose when they actually saw the Boy Wonder IN COSTUME FOR REAL! They went nuts in an uncontrollable frenzy. Their teachers, who saw them daily and normally exercised strict control, failed miserably and were instantly overpowered. I chuckled as I watched the teachers, helpless, open-mouthed, not knowing what to do. I picked up the microphone, moved close to my audience and boomed aloud.

"Wowie' Zowie' kids, I'm Robin, the Boy Wonder!"

Suddenly, silence. Total silence. Not a whisper, not a word. I could hear myself breathing. I had their attention completely!

A universal law had just been demonstrated. Children feed on each other's excitement about the images they've built up in their imagi-

inations. This continues until they are confronted with reality. Seeing me up close in my extremely bright crimefighting costume, and standing so much bigger than they expected, was a real shock. I'm five foot nine. Adam is six foot three and wore two-inch heels on his BatBoots. Alan Napier (Alfred the Butler) was six foot nine inches. These kids had only seen me on their television sets and assumed that I was maybe just a little bigger than they were.

"Boys and girls, I'm here on a very important mission. Batman has been spending too much time out chasing Catwoman. All night long he seems to be in hot pursuit of her and trouble is beginning to brew in Gotham City. I've talked with Commissioner Gordon and we've decided that until Batman can come to his senses, Gotham City needs a *new* Batman. I'm here to find out if any of you would like to try out to become the new Batman and accompany me back to Gotham City in the Batmobile, which I have parked just outside. Anyone interested?"

My audience went berserk! Every hand volunteered.

I selected an average-looking boy, representative of the group of boys as a whole, and invited him onto the stage. Next I selected a heavy-set boy, not to make fun of his size, but to make a contrast with my Batman contestants. Third, I selected a little girl, purposely younger than the two boys.

When I had them together onstage I asked their names. When I got to the girl, I responded to her name as though I had just discovered that she was a girl. Then I turned to the audience and asked, "Can a girl try out for the part of Batman?"

All the boys in the audience screamed NO and all the girls screamed YES.

I said, "I'm going to let this young lady try out, because whoever makes the best Batman is the one I want to come back to Gotham City."

The girls cheered and the boys boomed.

My act was a Superheroes version of *Truth or Consequences*, one of my favorite game shows while growing up. I told the children there would be three tests to determine who would be the next Batman. First, the test of strength; second, the test of intelligence; and third, the test of courage.

Onstage, my props were a portable churning bar and three plastic buckets half-filled with water, which I kept near me. At stage right

was a chair facing the audience and standing against a five-foot-high screen, which blocked the view of what was on the other side. The edge of the screen faced the children in the audience so they could see everything. Only the contestants couldn't see past the screen. On the other side of the screen was another chair, facing the audience and placed against the screen to keep it supported. On the chair was another plastic bucket, which was empty.

I sent all three contestants backstage to try on Batman costumes. I had prearranged with the school for a teacher to help dress the kids. The costumes weren't real and they didn't look like Batman, but there was a mask with such a long elastic in the back that each of the boys would have to hold it in place with one of his hands, or else it would fall. And there were some gigantic crimefighting shorts (blue bathing suits), also so oversized as to require each boy to use his other hand to keep them from falling down.

Under the crimefighting shorts, but on top of their school clothes, the boys had to wear frilly white underwear that had big red hearts on it and said "Mom's Baby."

The girl's costume eliminated the underwear because the costume fit perfectly. Obviously I was taking affirmative action to keep her competitive with the boys.

While the kids were backstage getting dressed, I talked to the audience about the series, answered questions and continually made reference to the upcoming contest.

"Boy and girls, as I've said to you before, it's not easy fitting into Batman's pants! Remember that as you watch our three contestants!"

I called the contestants back onstage. For the test of strength, I held up the chin-up bar and required each contestant to do one chin-up. The children tried out in the same order as I had called them onto the stage.

Boy contestant #1 was first. Immediately he had a problem: He couldn't keep his mask in place with one hand and hold up his pants with the other hand while simultaneously grabbing the chin-up bar. He had to let go of his mask and his shorts, and they both fell down. The audience roared at the sight of the frilly underwear. The teachers laughed at the "Mommy's Baby" inscription and the big red hearts. Everyone had a great time, especially the contestants.

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

I reminded the contestants to keep their masks in place to hide their true identity, and to keep their crimefighting trunks pulled up, again explaining to them and to the audience that it wasn't easy fitting into Batman's pants.

Boy contestant #2 had the same problems, but since the audience knew what was coming they laughed even harder

Girl contestant #3 had it easy and looked great!

The test of intelligence was a different, ridiculously simple question for each child. I congratulated them with extreme exaggeration for their correct answers, eliciting more laughter from the audience.

It was the test of courage that highlighted the show and nearly caused the children to tear the seats out of their auditorium

I explained to the contestants that the audience would vote to determine the winner of the contest and that, to this point, the contestants were about even. The test of courage would be the deciding factor as to who would win. I stressed the importance of courage

Here is what I required them to do:

"Batman contestants, imagine there was smoke rising from the other side of that screen. What would that mean?"

They answered as one "Fire "

"That's right! Now, what are you supposed to do with a fire?"

"Put it out!"

"Exactly! What I want each of you to do, as I call on you, is pick up one of these buckets of water, go over to that chair, stand on it, look over the screen and use your bucket to put out the fire. Do you understand me?"

They all nodded yes.

This time I called on the girl first. She picked up the bucket of water, stood on the chair and, seeing the empty bucket sitting on the chair on the other side of the screen, poured her bucket of water into it. The other two contestants watched her.

Next I called on boy contestant #1 (the average-looking boy), who followed the girl's actions precisely and poured out his bucket of water. Again, boy contestant #2 watched everything.

I then spoke to the audience, describing what they had just seen while buying time for a classic switcheroo to occur. The principal of the school entered on the other side of the screen, wearing a raincoat. He

removed the bucket into which the first two contestants had poured their water and sat on the chair, hidden from the view of the last contestant.

The children in the audience began screaming at the top of their lungs, trying to warn their classmate. I talked to the last contestant, the heavyset boy, and kept his attention so he didn't know what was happening. Then I raised my voice to get some control over the audience.

"All right, young man, you've just seen the other two Batman contestants prove their courage. Now it's your turn. Pick up this bucket of water, go over and stand on that chair and put out the fire! Do you understand me?"

The boy nodded, picked up the bucket of water and headed toward the chair. The audience went crazy; the kids were jumping up and down in their seats, screaming with laughter.

When that youngster stood on the chair and looked over and saw his principal, he turned completely pale. I could see his mind racing for an answer. He remembered seeing both previous contestants pour their buckets of water over that screen, so he was inclined to do so. On the other hand, that was his *principal* sitting there, and he was in mortal fear of angering the most powerful person in the entire school. He also noticed that the principal wasn't wet! He may have even wondered why. What was he to do?

The entire school was egging him on, and that peer pressure was enormous.

Seconds seemed like hours to him, but he made his decision.

HE Poured the bucket of water on his principal's head!

The audience disintegrated. The teachers laughed just as hard as the students. There was such pandemonium that the entire school was in an uproar about it for days.

I calmed the children down to a mild roar and took a vote as to which Batman contestant was the winner. Who do you think won?

Right. It was the heavyset boy, and all the children in that auditorium had the time of their lives!

Wait a minute! Did the youngster get to drive the Batmobile back to Gotham City? I don't think his parents would have approved, not to mention that he wouldn't have gotten home in time for dinner. So I had to have an out.

I congratulated the boy and asked if he was ready to drive the Batmobile back to Gotham City.

"Yes."

"Excellent," I said. "Now, just show me your driver's license so I know you're old enough to drive the Batmobile."

When he said he didn't have one, I thanked him for trying out and suggested we hold the contest again when everyone turned sixteen. I thanked the children, their teachers and especially the principal and exited from the benefit on my way to lunch and my afternoon appearance.

Enough of Andy for a Lifetime

Arriving in Oklahoma City for the start of my next tour, Andy suggested I stay with him in his new trailer and save money. Unlike the larger weekend appearances, which paid for all my travel, lodging and food, the weekday autograph parties were flat fees only. Living on the road is very expensive, nearly \$300 per day. Andy's offer was tempting from a savings standpoint, but knowing Andy as I did, I was positive it wouldn't be long before I got gruzzed out over something and would be sorry I'd accepted his offer.

Against my better judgment, I agreed to stay with him. What made everything more complicated was that Andy tried his best to make me feel at home. He even gave me his own bed and, in a show of extraordinary concern for my well-being, he washed the sheets. My first night there was my only night there. It felt like a year. After that experience, money became no consideration.

Aggravation began at dinner. He was upset because, according to him, we dined at an extremely expensive gourmet restaurant: Stuart Anderson's Black Angus. I suppose when you eat three meals a day (in Andy's case, probably four or five) in a coffee shop, anything else would seem expensive. Andy wanted to order a steak but he had forgotten his false teeth.

"Excuse me, waitress. I left my false teeth at home, so I can't order a steak. What would you recommend for someone with no teeth?"

"I don't know," she stammered. "How about some bread?"

Andy opened his mouth and showed her his gums. The girl ran

from the table. I put my napkin over my head and refused to come out. From underneath the white linen, I coached Andy on what to order.

A few minutes later, another server came to our table and we placed our order.

The big problem came after dinner when the server brought us the check. Normally Andy and I split the bill; I always lost because he out-ate me three to one. That night Andy asked for separate checks. The girl said the cashier had already rung up the bill, and he should have asked for separate checks when we ordered. Andy exploded. He cussed her out and said that she should have asked us if we wanted separate checks when we first sat down. Obviously Andy was used to coffee shops.

I had intended to pay anyway, because I was staying at Andy's and I thought it was the right thing to do.

"I'll pay the whole bill. Let's not have a problem!"

Andy continued cussing the girl throughout the time it took me to get out my wallet and pay. The girl was in tears, and the manager asked us to leave and never come back. I was so embarrassed that I wanted to crawl out on my hands and knees, but I had to muster the confidence to restrain Andy, who was preparing to pulverize the guy.

My Bed Is Yours

We arrived at Andy's trailer and he showed me to his room. I closed the door and planned to go to sleep immediately, but first I walked into Andy's bathroom and noticed a complete set of unwashed false teeth on the counter next to a bar of soap. I had never seen false teeth before, and I felt my dinner returning to my mouth. Those were his steak-eaters. I didn't know what to do, because I couldn't get to the soap without risking the chance of touching those grimy molars. I walked back into the living room.

"Andy, I saw some false teeth on the bathroom counter. I was planning on washing my face and need the counter space. Could you take them?"

"Oh, just move 'em wherever you like. But don't forget where you put them. I'll need them in the morning."

"Andy, I'm not touching them. You come get them."

He did. On his way out, he stopped to tell me something important.

"You won't recognize me at the appearance tomorrow."

"Why? Won't you be there?" I asked.

"Oh, I'll be there. But, you won't recognize me."

"Andy, with all due respect, there isn't anything that you could do to yourself to keep me from recognizing you . . . except maybe fifty hours of liposuction."

"Lipo what?"

"Never mind."

"Maybe I said the wrong thing. Burt. I bought something and I'm going to wear it tomorrow. The man who sold it to me said it made me look completely different. 'Very handsome,' he said."

I said I was looking forward to seeing the new Andy, and then I said goodnight.

Sleep at last. Andy had gone to bed and I had my first moment of peace. It was almost exuberant. I was so happy to be out from under his well-meaning pressure that, without thinking, I plopped myself on Andy's bed. Actually I did a running jump, as I used to do when high-jumping back at Beverly Hills High.

SPLAT!

I landed flat on my back with a resounding thud and thought I'd broken my spine. Andy didn't have a bed as most people know it, just a worn-out two-inch-thin mattress on a plywood base. As I turned on my side to see if I was still alive, I felt the first of the hundreds of pokes that I would feel all night from old springs pushing through the nonexistent padding and into the mattress's outer fabric.

How do those Indian swamis do it when they lie on those beds of nails?

Hysterical Fans

My old friend Mark Williams flew into Oklahoma City the next morning to visit me. Mark is a topnotch comedy writer and a very funny man. As funny as he is, he probably never wrote anything funnier than what happened that fateful day.

Mark checked into a hotel and called me at Andy's. I told Andy about my visiting friend and he offered to take Mark out to lunch, then bring him back to my appearance. While I was busy doing radio and TV promotion before my afternoon autograph session, Andy went to Mark's hotel and squired him into its coffee shop. But suddenly Andy changed his mind. Later, at my appearance, a near-hysterical Mark related the events that occurred, word for word:

"Wait a minute, Mark," said Andy. "Let's not eat here. I want to take you someplace really special."

"That's not necessary," said Mark. "Where we are is fine."

"No," insisted Andy. "I'm taking you to the Hilton for lunch!"

Andy drove Mark across town to the Hilton. When they arrived, Mark walked into the Hilton's posh dining room, only to be stopped by Andy.

"Not here," said Andy. "Follow me."

Taken aback, Mark followed Andy to the other side of the lobby.

"Here we are," said Andy proudly. "The Hilton coffee shop!"

Mark was stunned. He thought Andy was going to take him to a ritzy restaurant. He didn't expect to be driven across town at Andy's invitation to a special lunch, and end up in another coffee shop.

That afternoon's appearance was almost autographing as usual. At the start of the two-hour signing, Mark watched the crowd wrapped around the perimeter of the Montgomery Ward store. After twenty minutes of viewing repetitious hellos and good-byes, Mark left to stroll around. Andy came to the front of the line to hand out photos.

I didn't notice him with the restricted peripheral vision of my Robin mask, but I smelled something horrible and knew Andy was standing next to me.

"Andy, you need a shower!"

"I can't help it. I'm nervous today."

"Andy, please go to the end of the line and hand out the photos. I can't handle the smell."

He retreated to the end of the line and everything proceeded properly . . . for about thirty minutes. Then I noticed something unusual.

Everyone in line had tears in their eyes. These weren't tears of sadness. No, these were tears of laughter, much like Mark's reaction when he described his lunch with Andy. What was causing it? I knew Andy hadn't taken them out to lunch.

I'll never forget two grown women in line, doubled over, unable to talk. Every time I asked their names they convulsed with laughter.

I wondered if there was something wrong with me. I checked to see if something was hanging out of my BatTrunks or if there was an embarrassing tear in my costume. I wiped my hand under my nostrils for fear something might be dangling out of my nose. No, everything was normal.

After much coaxing, the women pointed to Andy. I asked them if their delirium had something to do with my manager. They nodded and laughed harder.

I stopped signing because none of the people in front of me could utter their names. I sent someone to get Andy. When he arrived, I joined in their hilarity.

Andy had bought a toupee: *That* was his big makeover surprise for me. Whoever sold it had done him a terrible disservice. The hair-piece was no larger than a small pancake. The synthetic rug didn't come close to covering Andy's bald spot, which was twice its size. It looked like an island in the middle of the Atlantic. Worse, Andy didn't know what he was doing when he put it on, because the toupee was as hard as a rock from being drowned in hairspray, and its adhesive had come loose. It was sticking out rigidly from his head, hanging precariously and ready to fall off at any moment.

I sent Andy to the men's room and barely managed to restore calm so I could finish signing. **HOLY SLAPSTICK!** What a day! What a manager!

A Raving Nymph Meets the Boy Wonder and the Boy Wonder Meets His Waterloo!

The Coming of the End

Dawn was young, beautiful, romantic, haunting and sensual, a perfect combination with but one flaw: She wanted to make love in the morning, afternoon and all night, every night. I took it as a compliment and challenge—at first. What man wouldn't want to be craved twenty-four hours a day?

Her craving wasn't what almost killed me. It was my constant attempts to *fulfill* that craving that nearly sent the Boy Wonder to the big BatCave in the sky.

I thought I was holding my own (figuratively) for a while and managed to stay on top of things (literally). I had mounted a breakneck three-month personal appearance tour and, along with my new traveling companion, I had my hands full. The daily schedule of radio, television and newspaper promotional interviews followed by four to six hours of autographing was brutal. Here was a typical day's schedule:

Up at the crack of dawn (*no pun intended*), make love. By 8:00 a.m. I had completed interviews at two different radio stations and at the local newspaper. At 8:15, 8:45 and 9:15 a.m. I stopped by three elementary schools to make a short bicycle safety talk. Dawn accompanied me everywhere.

10:00 a.m.: In my Robin costume autographing photos at a car dealer, mobile home dealer, furniture store, department store, appliance store or supermarket until noon. We returned to our hotel for lunch in the room and dessert in bed with another round Robin of love-making. Real food took a distant second place.

From 2:00 until 4:00 p.m. I signed more autographs, shook

hands and answered a cacophony of questions. When the appearance ended, the organizers from the next city met us, picked up our baggage from the hotel and we were on our way again. By 6.00 we arrived in another city and had checked into another room. Immediately we christened our bed with more nooky.

Sometimes I appeared in the evenings. If not, we usually joined our hosts for a late dinner. Later they would drop us back at the hotel to rest before another early morning start.

By that hour I was exhausted and nearly useless for Dawn's purposes. I didn't have any purposes of my own other than to sleep and recover from her daily destruction derby on what was left of my body. I remember exaggerating my yawns and other feeble attempts to avoid more sex without seeming unmanly. I watched her listen and smile patiently, unconvinced and undaunted. She wasn't buying it. I was better off sticking to acting in front of the camera.

She always asked me to unzip her dress, her opening gambit. I half-kiddingly suggested she leave it on or don some pajamas. The hint soared over her head and wouldn't have mattered anyway. She was focusing on more earthly matters. I remember one night in particular.

"I wanted you at dinner "

"Mmmm. That's dietetic," came my reply.

"I'm still hungry," she said. "Sometimes I wonder if I have an insatiable appetite

"I think you do," I countered. "It's a good thing you're not a cannibal, or there'd be nothing left of me but a pile of bones "

"You never know what might happen if I can't satisfy my hunger," she answered matter-of-factly.

That raised the short hairs on the back of my neck. The rest of my short hairs were already limp with exhaustion. Was I going to have to sleep with one eye open from now on? I didn't want to stimulate my fertile imagination. Dawn perpetually kept enough of me stimulated. I refocused on my current role of pretending extreme naiveté, and playfully added, "Maybe we should order room service?"

What a dork I was. I should have realized that when you play with fire you can get your weenie burnt.

"That's not what I had in mind," she said.

She moved close and rubbed against me. Mmmm, I immediately

wondered what had happened to her underwear. This lady didn't waste any time.

"Oh, I'm stuffed," I groaned dramatically, looking for an out. "Who can eat with a full stomach?"

"I'm sure you can manage a few more mouthfuls," came her carnivorous retort.

My little vamp had no intention of taking no for an answer or suffering any more of my weak procrastinations. This girl was all business, even if it was monkey business. I relented and snatched a quick snack back in the trenches, pondering which end of Dawn I saw more of talk about lip service!

Click. She switched on the TV remote and found some old Western. This was to be another late-night screening (or screaming) for me of *Rawhide* only it was *my* hide that was going to be raw. Imagine preparing for a performance by repeatedly undressing instead of dressing. I quickly put on my birthday suit and saddled up my mare.

The curtain went up, so to speak. Actually, it was her dress. Act I began slowly at first: Pre-foreplay, foreplay and post-foreplay. Baseball broadcaster Vin Scully would have had a field day announcing this one.

Act II followed: I made love to her intermission for a bathroom break and to rest my jaw muscles.

Act III: She made love to me for as long as I could take it. Whew! Gotta have a break—at least a seventh-inning stretch.

Act IV: The denouement. We made love to each other in a pounding fury, culminating in a rousing grand finale. And then it was over and the curtain came down.

The end. I was panting. My audience of one cheered the performance and requested an encore. Ha! Ha! No way, José!

I was asleep in two minutes, maybe less. After an hour I awakened to the sound of distant drums. Actually it was her heartbeat as she lay her more than ample breasts on my face. Before I knew it, she had me making love again. What a mauling!

I succeeded in dousing her scorching hot flames once more and falsely prided myself on being a true Boy Wonder by keeping her satisfied. What a joke that turned out to be! Ignorance must truly be bliss. I didn't have the foresight to see what was coming. Humpty Dumpty had set himself up for one gigantic fall.

It was very late, and I was more exhausted than ever. I pleaded for a temporary truce to sleep because I faced a long, hard task the next morning. She coyly smiled and complimented me on my choice of words. We negotiated a fragile truce - an eleventh-hour reprieve, and I was back to sleep with ten toes up.

Another hour passed. I was having restless dreams, or so I thought. I finally comprehended that something major was happening under the sheets. I opened my eyes in a feeble squint and through my clouded vision observed something causing the covers to sway up and down. As it rapidly approached I imagined an attack by the giant sand worm in the movie *Duna*.

"Oh, God. Not again!"

I was so tired that I could hardly fight it off. Double-dipping Dawn had morphed into a great white shark under the sheets, and my poor testicles were targeted as chum for a wild feeding frenzy.

Haggard but fearless, I somehow managed to rise to the occasion and made one last pilgrimage to her holy land.

Redd Foxx once described his experience with the antithesis of my problem. He said his "old lady" rarely made love to him but one day she summoned him to her room, where he found her naked and spread-eagled on top of her bed. She beckoned him to make love to her. He related how he tore off his clothes and jumped her bones.

A brief moment passed and the woman asked, "Are you in yet?"

He responded, "What do you mean? I'm through!"

I was through, too.

"That's it. That's the last drop! Next comes dust!" I gasped. "I'm flushed!"

I was so tired I thought I was going to die!

In forceful terms I insisted on being left alone to sleep. Dawn grudgingly consented. She wanted to be reasonable, so she always agreed to stop when she saw how difficult it was on me. That wasn't the problem. Making agreements with her was never a problem either. It was her flagrant violations of her agreements that got me down, or up, or whatever.

I was losing vital bodily fluids and shriveling up like dried fruit, prunes in particular. My nuggets were now the size of Chiclets, and I was so sore that even a lustful thought in my heart gave me punishing pain. The writing was on the wall. I thought, "You're surviving the bat-

ties, Burt, but losing the war."

Devilishly dissipated over an extended—or distended—period of time, I felt like a piece of meat. Actually I was much worse off than that. A piece of meat only gets eaten once!

To survive dating this lady I needed a male chastity belt or ten pounds a day of raw oysters. (Raw oysters supposedly provide meat with greater potency. I thought everyone in the world knew this, but my wife didn't. And she says everyone has the right to know.) I considered the first option but fretted over what would happen if I lost the key. The second option was out of the question. I hate oysters.

Several weeks elapsed, and I felt like a zombie in *Night of the Living Dead*. I knew my life force was being sucked right out of me. I couldn't handle any more. I was being screwed to death. The Boy Wonder had met his Waterloo!

"Okay, I give up! Let me rest! Do you hear me? Enough already!"

Holy Impotence! My Testicles Grew to the Size of Grapefruits!

I returned to Los Angeles alone. My girlfriend went back to Oklahoma. I thought I was on the road to recovery—until that fateful morning. I awoke in more pain than ever. My first thought was that my recently departed lady had managed to get the pilot to reroute her flight to Los Angeles and she had somehow found her way back under my sheets.

As I awakened, I akin became aware of an intense, sharp pain. I barely managed to sit up and pull the sheet and covers off me. I was stunned at what I saw.

"Oh, my God!" I gasped.

I viewed the most enormous swelling I have ever seen in my entire life. Unfortunately it wasn't where I would have wanted it. In fact, my limp trouser trout seemed to be grossly obscured by the dominance of two hugely swollen, grapefruit-size testes.

Worse yet, the pain was so agonizing—the skin was stretched to the point of bursting—that if I had delicately laid so much as a tissue on top of them I would have screamed my lungs out.

If you are a man, you can realistically imagine the horror. If you are a woman and want to understand my agony, please imagine the worst pain in the world and then multiply by a thousand.

What had happened to me? Was this some rare tropical disease? Did I have infected balls like someone who has infected tonsils? Do doctors remove infected balls like they remove infected tonsils?

I didn't know what to do. I was afraid to call a doctor because I was afraid of what he might say.

"Unfortunately, Mr. Ward, you have AuntJemimaLumpatosis and we have to surgically remove your balls right now!"

My mind raced with possible causes. Had I overdone sex? Had I

achieved the excess of success? I remembered some words of wisdom from my first-grade teacher, "Abuse it and lose it!" Was the pendulum swinging back the other way?

Or had the nymph I'd just left taken things into her own hands—which she had obviously been doing anyway for the last three months—and gone to a voodoo doctor to seek revenge against me for sending her home? Was that black magic practitioner at this very moment sticking pins into a replica of my gonads?

I was at a total loss and considered the great wisdom of Socrates when he wrote, "SHIT HAPPENS!"

I needed advice. But from whom? I called my friend Mark Williams, who had written and produced a significant number of industrial films, including a series of medical information tapes. Maybe he would know a solution for this.

Mark confirmed my worst fears. He said he knew of an American in Thailand with the same symptoms. Supposedly this man first consulted with an American doctor there, who told him that he would have to undergo surgery to have his testicles removed. Apparently the man wanted a second opinion (I guess I would too) and, hoping for a miracle, he consulted with a Thai doctor. After a thorough examination and many tests, the local doctor gave him an entirely different medical opinion, saying, "No need for operation. No need for worry. Wait two or three months and they fall off by themselves."

Mark laughed.

"Don't tell me things like that, Mark!" I said. "I'm very worried about this. Even the slightest movement is painful. Even when I breathe it hurts. I'm lying here in agonizing pain and you're making jokes. That's not fair!"

Mark told me I should consult a medical specialist immediately.

"But see a urologist today. Now! Hang up this phone and call right away. I don't want to scare you, but people can die from things like that!"

Well, of course, that freaked me out even more.

I hung up feeling worse than ever. I searched for doctors in the Yellow Pages and called for an appointment, saying it was urgent. I managed to get in that same afternoon, which in Beverly Hills is nearly impossible.

Walking was extremely difficult. Imagine carrying a heavy bag of groceries in your underwear. Now hang that bag from your genitals. Pain!

I had to walk with my legs wide open so they wouldn't bump into my balls and make me yell, which I did four or five times anyway before I got to my car. I must have been a sight, hobbling along as though I were pregnant and straddling a U-shaped frame—like a cowboy seated on a nonexistent horse.

The sign on the door said "Urology and Surgery" after the doctor's name. I was deathly afraid to enter, but I did. The place was packed. Private parts were bigger business than I realized.

I looked around the waiting room to see if anyone else was suffering from anything like my problem. Maybe I could ask him about it? I figured not when I saw the looks in their eyes—nobody wanted me to sit next to him.

I waited forever.

When it came time for my examination, the doctor had me strip and put on the strangest gown I'd ever seen. It tied in front under my neck and exposed everything from my chest down to my ankles, making my swollen genitals the featured presentation. What was the point of the gown? If everything would show anyway, why wear anything? In retrospect, maybe I put the gown on backwards.

The doctor had me lie down on my back and put my feet in the stirrups. Then he tilted the table back like an incline board.

"Owwwww!"

Newton's First Law of Gravity took effect, and my ballards rolled backwards. Did that ever hurt! Slung that much weight around, I'm surprised I didn't end up with stretch marks.

I'd never felt so exposed and embarrassed in my life. He examined me and shook his head.

"I can't believe it. I've never seen this before!" he said, I anguished. "I'll be back to run some tests."

Now I was really frightened.

A few minutes later he returned with two female nurses. He spoke to them about my condition as they seated themselves on stools in a half-circle around the cause of my agony.

"There is acute inflammation of the posterior pair of the corpora quadrigemina."

"What?" I interjected. "That sounds terrible. What does that mean?"

"You have the very first case I have ever seen like this."

"What is it, doctor?" I was becoming frantic

"You have the mumps. But instead of the infection moving up into the glands in your neck, it moved down into your testes. We have to be very careful. You could become sterile!"

"Mumps?" I asked. I wondered how anyone could catch mumps in his testicles. "How did I get this?"

"Who knows?"

"What do we do?" I asked.

"We? You have to go into the hospital."

I was horrified because I've always been afraid of hospitals.

"Why? Isn't there another way, doctor?" I asked. "There must be another way! I'll do anything but I don't want to go into a hospital!"

"Then the only thing you can do is what the nurses would be doing to you if you were in the hospital. You must lie on your back, raise your testicles up between your legs, and close your legs to support them. Then you must put an ice pack on top of your testes for as long as it takes to reduce the swelling. Anything less than that can cause sterility and complications. It's going to be very painful."

I opted to go home and try what he said.

I headed back to Malibu and stopped at a drugstore to purchase an ice pack. At home I got a bucket of ice from the freezer and hobbled upstairs to my room. I tried to follow the doctor's advice. I was in such pain, lifting my testicles and laying them back down on top of my legs, that I never stopped screaming. Worst of all, I couldn't stand the ice pack. It wasn't the coldness; it was the weight of all the cubes. If the weight of a tissue lying on my poor balls would have caused me to yell, imagine how the weight of an ice pack felt.

I couldn't stand it for even thirty seconds. I came to a conclusion about my crisis.

"I'd rather die than stay in this bed and suffer. This whole situation is too incredibly painful. If I die, then I die."

With that, I got up and hobbled around for nearly a week, after which I miraculously made a full recovery. And as I later found out, this ball-buster of an illness wouldn't keep me from having another child.

Holy Maturity

Balancing Childhood Innocence (Optimism) With Adult Corruption (Pessimism) to Achieve Wisdom and Maturity (Realism)

From youthful optimism to adult pessimism, from happiness to heartache, from sexual innocence to libidinous debauchery, I found the extremes but not the middle in my frenetic search for love and happiness. It's been a long road, with painful and pleasurable stops by the wayside.

An anonymous fifteenth-century English philosopher exposed love's mystery: "Love is the child of illusion and the parent of disillusion. Love is consolation in desolation. It is the sole medicine against death for it is death's brother."

On happiness, a wise Canadian friend said, "There are three essentials to happiness: someone to love, something to do and something to look forward to."

I believe I have found my balance, true love and real happiness. Life is cyclical, and a meaningful relationship is not found by jumping from horse to horse in search of a better ride, but by getting off the carousel and finding that special human counterpart who has also reached a level of maturity. An American spiritualist minister and theologian once said to me, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears."

Your counterpart can become your teacher, and you, theirs. I found this to be true in my life.

Indian philosophy teaches that no matter *what* we want, we must prepare ourselves to receive it before it arrives. So many times I desired things that I lost because I wasn't trained to hold on.

A final piece of Eastern philosophical wisdom I learned: "Experience is a great teacher. She repeats her lessons until the student fully understands."

It's taken me a lot of lessons because I can be hard-headed. But even I learned.

Moving in With Dad

At age thirteen, Lisa called and asked if she could move in with me. I gladly accepted.

Living with my daughter required a considerable adjustment for both of us and became one of the most important learning experiences for me as a father. As a single playboy, having my daughter there presented problems when it came to bringing dates home. I was seeing actress Morgan Fairchild at the time and I remember sorting out any number of delicate issues. I finally arrived at a solution—I gave up dating until Lisa was settled



My beautiful daughter
Lisa at age 14 (1980).

in our Malibu home and had found new friends.

Most importantly, I re-ly-became friends with Lisa as a person and began enjoying the wonderful bright-eyed daughter who I had only seen a few weekends a year. I realize how much I missed being there when she grew up—and even now that brings tears to my eyes.

A few years later, Lisa launched a show business career of her own. She wanted to do commercials. She landed a Pepsi commercial that starred Lionel Richie. More than 1,000 other boys and girls were also in the commercial,

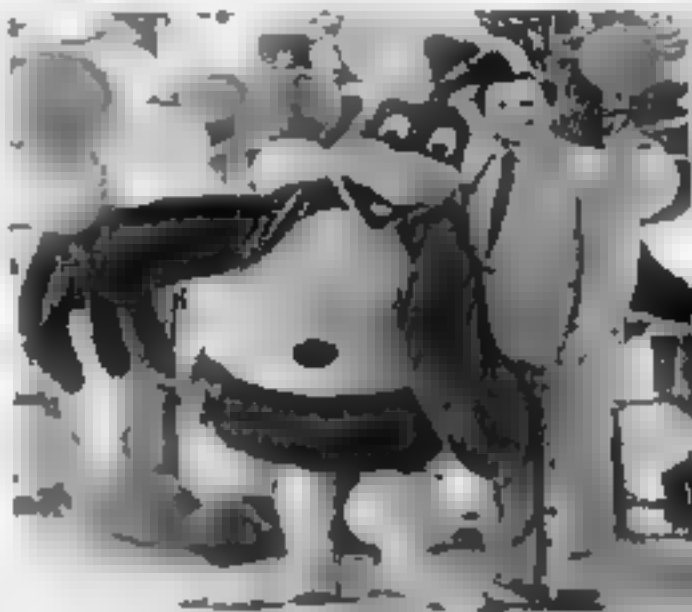
which was supposedly the most expensive thirty-second spot ever made at that time. Out of those youngsters, Lisa was the only one picked to stand in front of Lionel and dance. As a result of that commercial, she became qualified to join the Screen Actors Guild. I was very proud.

Giving Junior Bats the Best Start in Life

Ive met millions of children at the thousands of personal appearances I have made across America for the last thirty years. I love kids and make a conscious effort to make every child I meet a little happier than he was before we met.

I have become an advocate for children's issues. I believe our society has the responsibility to furnish all children the opportunity to make the most of their lives, and beyond the needs of food, shelter and love, education, values and good health and safety rules can make a better world for all of us.

Because children are so important to me, I spent several years and a sizable amount of money researching how I could make a meaningful contribution to their lives. After thoroughly familiarizing myself with facts, figures and psychological concepts, I created an early education program for children ages 3 to 8 to teach social values, good health and safety rules, and critical thinking skills.



My character, EarlyBird, and me (1988)

I produced a pilot episode for this curriculum on video that has been shown daily in many preschools and day care centers. That first program was a careful explanation of responsibility, with examples of important applications in children's young lives. The program encouraged parents and teachers to participate and lovingly help their children learn. Planned was a series of different value concepts, a new one each week, consisting of daily fifteen-minute segments.

I arranged for professional composers and original music and found prestigious educators and child psychologists to contribute to and review the curriculum. The American Academy of Pediatrics had agreed to endorse and co-produce the EarlyBird Learning Program, and they assembled a panel of top pediatricians to furnish advice and assistance.

Unfortunately the cost of producing these programs became prohibitive and I needed outside funding. In seeking help for a good cause I met someone who shared similar values and cared about children as much I did—and I found the help I needed, a partner for life and the greatest happiness I've ever experienced.



Corporate executive Tracy Pasner was a real "Wonder Woman." At 21 Tracy was VP of companies traded on the New York, American, NASDAQ and Pacific stock exchanges.

**The Boy Wonder Meets and
Marries "Wonder Woman"**

Ten minutes before six on a Friday night. The phone rang. My son-in-law, Kurt came into my office and said it was somebody from Arby's.

"Ah, the big fast-food chain," I thought. "Maybe they want to promote our values education program throughout their restaurants."

I picked up the phone, envisioning EarlyBird place mats with Arby's roast beef sandwiches on them. A young woman on the other end of the line briefly introduced herself, but I didn't hear her name clearly. She was talking a mile a minute about "children of all ages," a peaceable world, imagination, "logical figments" and "making a difference." She mentioned Arby's restaurants, both corporate and franchised locations. In the next breath (or maybe it was still the same breath) she talked about RC Cola. Moments later it was something about the Adams and Textron juice companies, computerizing her companies and putting them on satellite VSAT networks.

Somehow the discussion jumped across the business solar system to being one of Daney's largest licensees; manufacturing sipper cups, mood mugs, magic mugs, glasses, dishware and microwavable containers; owning 350 home centers across America, gold mines in Alaska, coal mines in Pennsylvania, oil fields in Texas, railroads in Colorado, a 1,000-acre farm in Delaware and racehorses in Orlando; and being the largest home-builder in the state of Maryland. Then the discussion made another 180-degree turn, this time landing in the soft drink world of Diet Rite Cola. My head was beginning to spin.

"Wait a minute!" I said. "First you said you were from Arby's."

"That's right."

"Then you said you work with RC Cola. Then you named just about every business in the world and now you're telling me you're involved with Diet Rite Cola, National Picture and Frame, and making Disney sipper cups. You need to get your story straight. Which company do you work for?"

"All of them," came the straightforward reply.

"That doesn't make any sense. What did you say your name was?"

"I already told you my name. Tracy Posner."

"Who?"

TRACY POSNER!

Oh, wow! I instantly flashed back to the words of a friend of mine, Steve Schwartz, who was a stockbroker working with us. Steve had told me of a connection of his at a major brokerage house who had contacted a wealthy businessman from Miami, named Victor Posner, and had told him of our business and its potential. Mr. Posner, who operated an international financial empire comprising 3,000 companies, and a multibillion-dollar personal empire as well, had indicated an interest in our company. I heard that he was going to have his daughter Tracy, a senior officer in his companies with a reputation for being a brilliant businesswoman and manager, contact us about a possible investment. I trusted Steve, but there are so many disappointments in business that I wasn't highly confident that I would hear anything. So I was surprised—this was the contact that I had never expected to materialize.

I took a deep breath, fastened my mental seat belt and rejoined this high-energy roller-coaster conversation for the ride of my life. Tracy and I talked for more than two and a half hours about everything, including getting together to discuss additional funding for my company. The impression I first had about her being all over the place was true in an unbelievably positive way. This girl was brilliant—so much so that, not expecting this intense dialogue, I was caught off guard. The Boy Wonder had briefly been unseated and left in the dust.

It was a thrill to talk with a true business genius. Apart from her financial success, her interest in making contributions to children and world peace showed me an aspect of her personality that was most impressive. These were the high-flying 1980s, and all I seemed to hear on television and in newspapers were stories about corrupt business operators who raped and pillaged companies, lined their pockets undeservingly and left shareholders with nothing. This young woman had integrity. What a rare opportunity to find someone so special.

"I wonder what she looks like? She's so brainy! She's got to look studious and dress very conservatively. I wonder if she's pretty? I doubt it. But it doesn't matter. She's so smart and such a pleasure to talk to, I'm going to enjoy meeting her."

I had a strange feeling during the conversation. I know it sounds crazy, but just talking, and responding back and forth to each other's

ideas, I got the impression that Tracy was attracted to me personally. Not because I'm an actor—this girl was too levelheaded to be an actor's groupie or anybody else's groupie. But whatever it was, my curiosity was driving me nuts and I felt attracted to her, too. I wondered what this Wonder Woman looked like.

"Let's get together," I suggested. "How about tonight?"

"No, I've got to get up early to meet with some record people. How about Sunday?"

"Okay. How about dinner?"

"Fine."

"Great! I'll pick you up. Bring your bathing suit and we'll go for a swim first."

"Swimming? I'm not going swimming. I've got too much to do!"

Whoo! This lady was focused on business, but I wanted to meet her.

"How about tonight?" I asked again, not wanting to wait two more days to meet

"Sunday."

I arrived at the Sheraton Universal Hotel late Sunday afternoon—July 18, 1980—and waited in the lobby. Minutes later I saw her, recognizing her without knowing what she looked like. Our eyes connected at exactly the same moment. Wow. I wasn't expecting such a warm, beautiful smile on such a sexy, hour-glassed body.

"Stunning," I thought to myself.

We stood there looking at each other. What I had sensed on the phone was a reality. There was enough electricity between us to light Universal Studios and have plenty of energy left over.

We walked to her room so she could freshen up before dinner. She showed me her excellent artwork—illustrations for books she was writ-



Tracy in the lobby of the Sheraton Universal.

ing—and then I listened to recordings of some of her songs. She had written the lyrics and music, and sang them beautifully. What a talent! What a body! What intelligence! What a body!



Tracy in her belly-dancing outfit. Wow!

“Too much for one human being,” I thought.

We had a romantic business dinner, if such a thing is possible. We dined on a sumptuous Thai feast at the *Siamese Princess* on West Third Street. It is a fabulous place where the *Gourm* of cuisine is prepared by the former chef for the King of Thailand.

We talked about my company and my goals, and then about her companies and her goals. Our eyes never left each other, and with every bite I took I imagined I was taking a bite out of her.

I stopped talking business and all of a sudden blurted some shocking words. “I think we’re destined to be in a relationship.”

She was stunned and excused herself to the ladies’ room. I asked myself why I had just said what I had.

A few minutes passed and Tracy returned. I thought it prudent to bring our discussion back to business, but, as much as my intellect told me that I had jumped the gun, another part of me answered that I wasn’t wrong. I decided to find out

When she went into the bathroom, I walked around the room still listening to her music. She had a special worktable set up and on it, among a myriad of business papers, faxes and corporate reports, was the annual report of *Wischell’s*, the donut chain. I was surprised to see numerous pages of complex financial calculations and a marked-up financial statement. Here was this incredibly beautiful, brilliant gal who could draw, paint, write and sing songs and, at the same time, run a business empire and was a financial analyst and corporate acquirer as well!

"What do you think of me?" I jumped back to the personal, very personal.

She paused and then dropped an atom bomb on me.

"Burt, if you are everything you seem to be, then I know we are going to do great things together. And even if you are not *anything* you seem to be, whatever you are is *more than enough!*"

There was a minute of unnerving silence as we struggled to comprehend how fast our relationship was progressing. Even she was surprised by the significance of her own words.

We stopped at my place and then returned to her hotel and spent the entire night talking in her hotel room -only talking. Believe me I wanted to do more! She wasn't frivolous and she didn't fool around. I sensed that this woman either played for keeps or didn't play at all!

The sun was rising, and it was time for me to go to work. We had spent twelve hours talking, from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. I tried to kiss her good-bye. She refused.

"I wouldn't kiss a man unless I was in love with him!"

I couldn't believe it. I was impressed by her virtue, but I really wanted that kiss and everything else!

I left to film the EarlyBird Learning Program in Phoenix and she left for business in New York. That night and every night for the next two weeks we spoke all night on the telephone. I was a sleepless vegetable but madly in love. After the first five seemingly endless days, I asked her to come live with me and get married. She accepted.

"But why didn't you kiss me good-night on our first date?"

"About five minutes after you left," she replied, "I thought about it and said to myself, 'I should have kissed him good-night. I'm going to marry him!'"

On the afternoon of August 4, 1989, my daughter Lisa's birthday, two and a half weeks after the day we had met, Tracy returned to Los Angeles to live with me and get married. I picked her up at the airport, and from the moment we saw each other we knew we would be together forever.

At my house the first thing we did was make love. All those passionate bicoastal telephone conversations had put us in a near frenzy. It was spectacular, still is, and I would describe all its delicious permutations, but Tracy would kill me.

That night we took Lisa and her husband Kurt out for a Moroccan dinner to celebrate her birthday. Tracy and Lisa instantly became friends, and it's been that way ever since. Tracy is my Wonder Woman and always will be. Her mother Sari, and the love of her life Matthew Cohen, are two of the warmest and nicest people in the world. I love to be around them.

I introduced Tracy to my mother Marjorie and her husband, Abe. (My real father passed away twenty years ago.) We spent a weekend at their desert home and had the time of our lives. But they didn't sleep a wink because of all the noise we made all night long. They both loved Tracy but were glad to see us leave so they could finally get some rest.

Prior to meeting me, Tracy worked twenty-two hours per day, seven days a week. She slept only two hours a night and had given up dating. You might wonder how someone can get by with so little sleep. Tracy wasn't forcing herself to stay up. In fact, she has lived at that breakneck pace since she was ten years old.



A gift from an artist friend.

Our meeting occurred because Tracy's father didn't want her to be involved in anything except his businesses, including the charitable work she wanted to do for children. He sought to find a company to do her special projects so she could devote her entire life to being by his side and operating his worldwide conglomerate. He thought my company would provide him the opportunity to take back the two hours per night that she was spending on her philanthropic goals. He was right and wrong at the same time. I not only took her projects, I took Tracy as well!

When he found out that we were seriously in love and intended to get married, and when he fully grasped the reality that his most capable heir was moving away to marry an actor, Hurt Ward became his worst living nightmare—even to this day. (It's nice to know you're appreciated.)

David Meets Goliath

Victor Posner is famous and instantly recognizable in financial circles and on Wall Street. Famous, but not as a role model for aspiring young entrepreneurs. Not by a long shot.

I had heard and read terrible things about my future father-in-law—so terrible, in fact, that usually it was inconceivable to me that anyone could be *that bad*. I began defending him to other people who found out I was in love with his daughter.

Here are a few things about him that have appeared in print.

"His usurpation of corporate assets . . . can truly be classified as a corporate holocaust."

Mr. Posner's conduct is so highly repugnant that he ranks prominent among those who have caused an erosion of public confidence in the integrity and economic stability of this nation.

The court has waited patiently for over one year for Victor Posner to honorably embrace the equitable principles of democratic corporate governance. Instead, Mr. Posner continues to stomp on the rights of shareholders, officers and directors by reigning over DWG as if it were his personal fiefdom."

—Thomas Lambros, U. S. District Court, Cleveland, Ohio

"Letting Victor Posner take over a company is like unleashing Dracula in a blood bank."

—*Forbes* magazine, March 9, 1987

"What's more likely is that Posner will figure some way to make a buck off NVF's continuing agony. And that 10 years from now, when Posner is 84 and still sucking the financial life out of companies, people like me will still be out here looking for wooden stakes."

—Allan Sloan, financial columnist for *New York Newsday*

I found myself in a strange position. The image I portrayed on *Batman* was surprisingly close to the way I lived my life—with honesty and integrity—except for the sexual debauchery taught to me by my co-star. Throughout my years during and after the series I maintained a clean image and always tried to deal fairly with everyone. Now by association with the love of my life, Tracy, I was connected to probably the

most hated businessperson in America, a man whose reputation was the antithesis of mine and of the character I portrayed. I imagined that the forces of good and evil were about to clash in a battle of the titans and that I was a pawn in that battle.

Tracy's father made a devilish effort to break us up. From his ivory tower on Miami Beach he would call Tracy at my Beverly Hills office, encouraging her in his own subtle way to return to Florida.

"This guy's a nobody. Why do you choose to follow a horse around with a shovel when you can come back here and run an empire?"

"Dad, I love him and I'm going to marry him. Don't ask me to decide between my father and the man I'm going to marry, because I'm going to do what any normal girl would do."

"Maybe I should rethink your participation in my companies. Maybe I should remove you from all the boards of directors."

"Dad, you do whatever you think is right. If you think it is just to fire me because I have fallen in love, despite the fact that I do a good job, then go ahead."

Victor momentarily backed down with Tracy, but the next day he was back on the telephone starting in on me. He got right to the point.

"You agree to end your relationship with Tracy and send her back, and I'll send you the \$10 million I was thinking of investing in your company . . . and you can keep all the stock."

"No!" I shot back. He hung up.

Needless to say I wasn't happy hearing things like that, and months later, when Tracy wanted me to meet him, I was more than reluctant. Regardless of how the world sees Victor Fosner, Tracy has always loved him. Through the years she has defended him against all criticism from anyone and everyone, even from me. She might have laid down her life to protect him, even though in the last few years she has seen the cruel side that he previously managed to keep hidden from her.

Tracy's love and coaxing finally got me to acquiesce and meet him. We flew to Miami and were met at the airport by two chauffeurs in two limousines. I was impressed. After what I had gone through with all the people I'd met in my career, I thought perhaps there was a misunderstanding about this man. Maybe he really was a great human being.

It was early evening when we arrived at 6917 Collins Avenue in Miami Beach. We passed through the main lobby, then boarded an elevator. The chauffeur had a special key to take us to the seventeenth floor. The doors finally opened to a nicely decorated lobby.

"Somebody around here has taste," I mused.

On my right I noticed two tall, heavy-looking doors that appeared to be electrically locked from the inside, the kind of doors that held back King Kong.

A security lock between the doors released—a heavy sound. The chauffeur shuffled us through. As I passed under those huge doors, I shuddered.

"Relax, Burt," I reasoned. "This is not the Bates Motel in *Psycho*."

We trudged down a seemingly endless corridor lined with original Norman Rockwell paintings and were stopped at Checkpoint Charlie by two burly guys with large handguns bulging in their shoulder holsters. We were told to wait. Standing next to these hulks, I couldn't help but notice that they were much bigger and more muscular than Adam. I also noticed a sawed-off shotgun in a half-open bottom desk drawer. I thought, "Maybe now is a good time to leave."

One of the guards said to me in a politely gruff voice, "Don't try to shake Mr. Posner's hand!"

I flashed on the stories I had heard about Howard Hughes and his obsession with cleanliness.

Moments later we continued, and another security door electronically unlocked, opening to another long and narrow hallway.

"Nobody would ever believe that this place exists," I thought to myself.

It was like some Transylvanian castle. Now my imagination began running amok. What if this man had fangs and a long black cape with a red silk lining? Worse yet, what if he had a pitchfork and a long tail?

Finally we reached the end of the hallway and entered a gigantic office whose crystal chandeliers reflected light in a million different directions. Awesome. I learned the next day that her father's personal office exceeded 50,000 square feet and encompassed two entire floors of his beachfront skyscraper. There was even an inner-sanctum private staircase connecting them.

Surrounded by two more bodyguards I saw the profile of an innocuous little gray-haired man, not at all what I'd envisioned. He reminded me of the Wizard of Oz.

Tracy hugged her father. He was affectionate and happy to see

her. Then she kissed him three or four times on his cheek. He smiled warmly and kissed her back. No question that the two shared a loving father-daughter relationship.

He said a few words to her very quietly. I couldn't hear them. Suddenly like a motorized gun turret, he slowly swiveled his head, and I saw his face straight on for the first time. Two steel-gray eyes like portals to hell penetrated right through me. I felt I was being ins-

ected by laser surgery without an anesthetic. The creature carefully analyzed me with a computer mind that has swallowed major companies into his ever-expanding financial black hole. Without a doubt this predator devoured some of the toughest gladiators in the business world.

I may have a good imagination, but I also have a trained perception of the nature of the characters I need to deal with as an actor. I knew one thing for sure. *This was no ordinary man!* I felt an icy chill rush through my body as I began to fully comprehend for the first time what I was up against.

Lesson #1 Describing Tracy's father as a five-foot-seven grizzly bear would be a gross understatement of the mental and emotional teeth and claws of this unique creature and an insult to the bear. In movie terms, he had the most fearful traits of *Jaws* and *The Terminator* combined.

Without speaking, he commanded me with his eyes to sit down. I did. Tracy began a conversation to span the chasm between two totally opposite human beings whose only similarity was an intense love for her. It would have been easier to build a suspension bridge across the Grand Canyon.

To rationalize why I should seek peaceful coexistence with this man, I thought it would make Tracy happy (I want her to be happy more than anything in the world) and I deemed it important to have an open line of communication in case of emergencies. Of course, my first choice would have been to have a great relationship with any future father-in-law. But even my vivid imagination wouldn't have gotten me a tenth of the way to picturing Victor Posner and me sitting out on the verandah of one of his estates barbecuing steaks and talking football. Small talk is nonexistent in the world of Victor Posner. This is a man who deals in facts and figures. Big ones.

A burly guard with a forty-five-caliber automatic nearly falling out of his shoulder holster approached me.

Uh-oh. Was I about to get whacked?

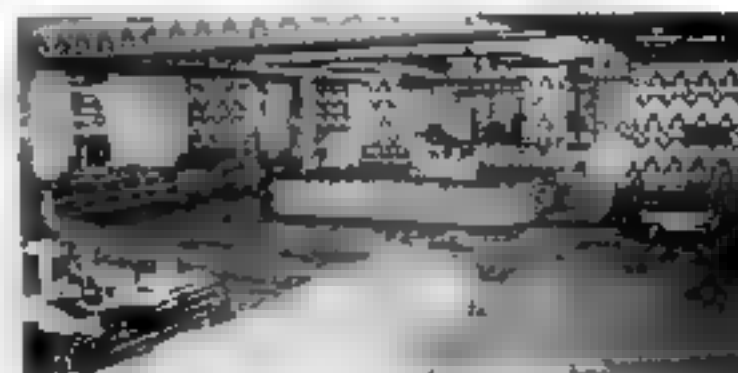
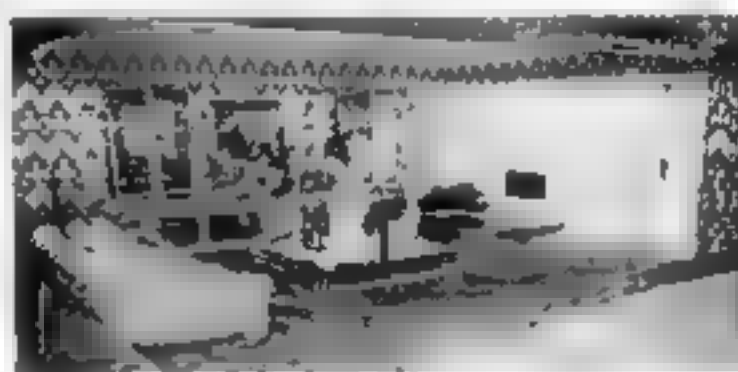
"You want another RC?" he asked in a voice with a built-in echo.

I breathed easier and made a resolution not to watch so many gangster movies.

Another bodyguard leaned in to say something to Victor. Darth Vader raised his hand to stop the talking, and the man instantly froze. I would never have expected to see one of his raptors tee up and act as though frightened by his diminutive human master.

I was told that Tracy and I would be dining with her father and staying at his home in Golden Beach, a short stretch of multimillion-dollar oceanfront homes with its own heavily armed security force.

Before we left, I managed to elude the guards and explore the seventeenth floor. I found two huge boardrooms, dozens of bedrooms



Victor Posner's corporate bedroom, which adjoins one of his boardrooms

and a maze of interconnected offices with endless file cabinets, where I nearly got lost. Tracy's suite of offices was beautifully decorated. In addition to her personal office and a private bath and shower, she had a corporate conference room and her own boardroom.

What looked like her father's "corporate bedroom" was larger than my in-town condo, and had mirrors on the ceiling over the bed and solid gold fixtures in the bathroom. Down a spiral staircase leading from the bedroom was his inner sanctum corporate screening room. (During our stay in Miami I heard tales of the horrors planned and executed in Victor's infamous "war room" several floors below. I never saw it, but it supposedly rivals the one in the Pentagon.)

Riding with her father in his extra wide, bump-proof limousine, we pulled up in front of an enormous house that I later learned had been owned at one time by the Firestone Tire and Rubber family. Supposedly it was the largest home and property in this super wealthy enclave. The servants' quarters were so large that I thought they had their *own* servants' quarters. I took a partial tour of the house—too much exercise. It was one of the few homes I've visited in which I had to sit down and rest after walking from one end of the living room to the other. That house should have its own zip code.

At dinner, in Victor's heavily fortified 6,000-square-foot personal quarters upstairs in the bulletproof wing of this 35,000-square-foot beach house, he and a teenage girlfriend hosted Tracy and me to a candlelit meal in a private dining room overlooking his lake-size



On the pool patio of Victor Posner's beach house with an ever-watchful bodyguard close by

swimming pool, the guard towers and the ocean beyond. Tracy insisted I sit between her and her father. She was very sweet, and tried hard to start conversations and to get her dad to like me. No doubt he

saw me as he probably sees every other man—nothing more than some form of competition.

At the dinner table, Victor selected his favorite dressing and emptied the bottle into the salad bowl. Then he calmly tossed it over his balcony and into the pool! (I know his aim was accurate because the next day I went swimming and came out smelling like Golden Caesar)

I dined mostly in silence, not feeling comfortable enough to talk. VR, as the inside people address him, finally decided to speak. He leaned over and tapped my forearm, and his first words were, "Listen, fella I just want to ask you one question "

"Yes, Mr Posner "

"How did you manage to bullshit my daughter into loving you?"

My mind raced. I analysed my options and sought the strongest possible answer. I would never think of being rude to this man, even though his question had been "What was he expecting my answer to be? Weak, I'm sure. Most people in this circumstance would buckle in fear, hem and haw, and struggle to defend a position. A strong answer was required, not backing down one inch, not showing anger and not faltering. I used warp speed to find the right words. With Tracy's father, to avoid a neutron bomb explosion and not be disrespected for your weakness, you must defend yourself against attack but NEVER RETALIATE!

"Well, Mr Posner," I replied, "we all have to be good at something."

My answer took him by surprise. He thought about it and laughed—one of the very few times I ever saw him laugh. We're not talking of a guffaw. With Victor Posner, the most anyone can ever hope for is something between a snicker and a chortle.

"Very funny," he said, and pointed his finger at me. "I like that. I like that!"

I wasn't gullible enough to believe I had just won him over with eleven words. Nobody wins him over because he doesn't want anyone to like him. Victor wants people to *fear* him. That way he stays in control. In the narrow focus of his objective, he is probably right.

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

Our FantaSea Wedding

Tracy and I returned to the West Coast and had a wonderful time planning our wedding. We chartered the largest private cruise ship in the Los Angeles area and designed a "FantaSea Wedding." I asked Adam to be my best man. As it turned out, it became an all-too-expensive proposition.

When I telephoned him in Ketchum, Idaho, he said he was complimented by my request, thought it was a great idea and would check his schedule. Each week over the next month I called Adam to attempt to solidify the plan, and each week the ante went up.

On my second call, he said he would like to be my best man, but added a curve ball.

"Of course, you know I live in Idaho."

That statement was easily translated into: "I want you to pay for my airline ticket."

"Gee," I thought, "Adam can easily afford to pay for his own ticket. Should I have to pay for him to come and be my best man?"

Well, I didn't know the answer. So I took his cue and offered to pay for his ticket.

Then he tossed me a slider and said that his wife and kids would also like to come, *if I could figure a way for him to bring them.*

"And of course," he added, "we'll all need round-trip tickets!"

Adam and his wife, Marcelle, have six kids. Each round-trip ticket from where he lived in Idaho required two connecting flights to get to Los Angeles and two connecting flights to get back home. We're talking serious money now. Tracy and I still agreed.

On the following week's telephone call, he pitched the sinker. He began by saying that he and his son Hunter had previously arranged for a professional driving course in Monterey, California, beginning on the Monday following our Sunday wedding at sea.

Now I became concerned. I knew Adam was looking to dig a lot deeper into my pockets but couldn't understand why.

"Gee, Adam, we chartered the cruise ship for only six hours. We're leaving the dock at four in the afternoon and we'll be back at ten. You and Hunter will have no problem catching a flight to Monterey."

"I don't know, Burty. I don't think there are flights that late."





Tracy and
Enjoying our
first dance

Holy Maturity

I had already checked the flight schedules just in case.

"No problem, Adam. I can make a reservation for you if you'd like."

There was a dead silence . . . a pregnant pause, as we used to say on the set.

"Well, I'm a little concerned that we might be too tired for our class the next day if we arrive late "

"What would you like me to do, Adam?"

"Is it possible that Hunter and I could get off the boat earlier?"

"I don't know how I could arrange that, except to end the wedding early and bring the boat back to the dock."

"Well," Adam parried, "maybe you could arrange for a helicopter to meet us at sea and fly us back to the L.A. airport. That would make things a lot more convenient for me. And I believe I could make things work out for me to come to your wedding then "

I had just gotten Adam's bottom line and guessed it would cost us an extra \$10,000 to have him as my best man. I began to think my fantasized wedding was turning into a shakedown cruise. I asked Adam to hold on while I spoke with Tracy.

Neither of us could stomach any more. I felt abused. Tracy agreed. I came back on and thanked Adam for trying to work things out but explained that the cost had become prohibitive.

"What's the big deal? Her father's rich," Adam countered.

"That may be so, Adam, but I don't want to take advantage of Tracy's father or Tracy. And I won't, ever. They don't deserve to be penalized because they've succeeded."

I thanked Adam for trying to work things out and we said good-bye.

Our wedding took place on July 15, 1990, a year after we met, and it was spectacular. We brought in full-size trees from Hollywood feature film prop suppliers and created a tropical jungle on the ship's upper deck. On the downstairs level we built an International bazaar with decorations from Spain, France, Italy, the Orient and Polynesia. We had a juggler, a magician, a mime, a harpist and a disc jockey. We brought in an entire professional video crew with multiple broadcast-quality cameras and wireless radio mikes for studio-quality sound. The video they produced was incredible.

Our wedding cake was so spectacular that the cake company had to hire a special artist to build the castle we wanted with Sir Lancelot sav-

ing a fair maiden from a fire-breathing dragon. We danced all evening. Those who shared our wedding brought love and best wishes.



My daughter, Lisa, as Tracy's bridesmaid.

Everyone who was important to either of us attended. Tracy had written every word the non-denominational minister spoke as he married us. Thank goodness I was successful in my pleas for her to keep it under ten typed pages.

The actual ceremony was held near the stern of the boat at the opening in the Marina Del Rey breakwater, a wonderful location. Many sailboats and motor yachts passed and rang their bells, making it even more of a fantasy wedding. Throughout the ceremony Tracy kept kissing me as the

minister spoke. She also wrote and sang to me the most beautiful song I ever heard, called "Being Married to You."

The minister finished what can only be described as a super ceremony, and said with a smile, "You may kiss the bride *again!*"

Well, Tracy gave me huge monster kisses—so big and so powerful that I nearly fell over.

Tracy also wrote a special conclusion to our ceremony, which the minister performed. First he "married" my daughter Lisa into our new family. Then he "married" every willing participant on the boat into our "larger family." Everyone said "I do!"

As the wedding party marched toward the bow, Tracy stopped and exclaimed, "Oh, that was so much fun. I want to do it again. I want to do it again! Let's go back and have the entire wedding over again!"

I barely talked her out of it.

David Battles Goliath

To this day I think Victor Posner sees me as his most threatening enemy, and I envision our relationship as the classic power play—good versus the ultimate evil. The stakes were and still are enormous.

Holy Maturity

We're not talking about another \$200 million acquisition target, a Victor Posner norm. We're talking about competing for the love of the most likely heir to run his worldwide empire . . . far beyond the \$10 million he originally offered me to send Tracy back. The stakes don't get any higher.

We were back in Miami for another visit, this time as husband and wife. I thought any problems Victor and I had would be over, and maybe we could just get along for the six weeks we were visiting. We stayed in his home and, for the most part, had a nice time. I assumed his efforts to destroy my relationship with Tracy were over now that we were married. For anyone else that might have been true, but Victor Posner had just begun.

Having lunch with Victor is like eating alone, until *he* wants to speak to *you*. At a posh waterfront bar and restaurant with a sign overhead that said "The Posner Room," he made us an offer that he secretly intended to be the basis of our breakup. He wasn't waiting any time and definitely came out swinging.

His one-two combination was a continuation of his original ploy to get me to send Tracy back to Miami. I hadn't gone for it then and I successfully blunted his every subsequent attempt to destroy our relationship. Some people just don't give up. This time he sweetened the pot.

"How about the two of you moving back here? I'll make Tracy president of all my companies and give her a starting salary of 15 million a year. You can be chief operating officer, and I'll pay you one million a year."

"Gee, Mr. Posner, that's a very generous offer!" I said.

Tracy listened, waiting to hear more.

Victor turned and stared at me.

"You are going to have to do a lot of traveling. You'll have to leave every Sunday night, travel to five or six companies during the week and then return on Friday night."

"We don't mind traveling." I turned to Tracy. "Do we, honey?"

"No, that's fine with me," she said, and added, "I used to travel to eight or nine states a week reviewing operations of our various companies."

"You don't understand," Victor said as he fixed a fisheye at me. "You have to do the traveling. Tracy stays here with me!"

"Dad! How could you pull that again? Anywhere my husband goes, I go."

"Thanks for the offer, Mr. Posner. But the answer is *no!*"

Later Tracy related to me her father's biggest falling. "Just when

he has the most to gain," she said, "he throws it all away!"

He could have had both a loving daughter and a devoted son-in-law, but because of his desire to separate us, he lost it all.

Time went on, and his offers began sounding like threats.

When he decided that he wanted Tracy to move to Baltimore to run the real estate division of his private holding company, Security Management Corporation, he took a less diplomatic tack.

"Move to Baltimore or else!" he growled.

"Or else what?" I asked.

"Or else you'll be a bartender and she'll be a waitress!"

I explained to him that I didn't drink. He figured I didn't understand what he meant. I did.

We heard that before he told us we were going to move to Maryland he informed his inner circle of subordinates that we would be moving upon his orders. Apparently, because we didn't roll over so he could violate our right to set our own course in life, he suffered a permanent bruise to his megalomaniacal ego.

I became more and more disenchanted with this man and his roughshod style, and I made no effort to kiss up to him as do the prideless yes-people who dance attendance upon him in the hope that they will miraculously be made millionaires in his will. Tracy doesn't care about her father's fortunes anyway and has told him so all her life, she only wants his love. That's the main difference between them. Her father focuses on money. Tracy focuses on family and love.

I have never been disrespectful to Victor; it's not my style. However, on one occasion when he flung a five-minute nonstop tirade of four-letter-word insults at me (he had called upon two of his biggest bodyguards to flank him for fear I would physically go after him), I looked right into his seething eyes and smiled the entire time. It drove him crazy. How dare anybody not be afraid of him? How dare anybody not bow before him and kiss the sacred ground on which he walks? How dare anybody not suck up in expectation of some future reward that he never bestows?

I recall one lunch with Tracy and his usual group of sycophantic cronies. His favorite legal hatchet man noticed that Tracy and I were laughing and enjoying each other, ignoring the proper etiquette of somberness in her father's dark presence. He commented to Victor

about how much fun we were having in flagrant violation of his code of behavior Victor mumbled a threatening comment about me. "One mistake and he's out forever."

"He doesn't look too worried to me," said the attorney.

I laughed to myself. And I liked the temporary chutzpah the man showed in telling Victor straight. Victor didn't say a word, but Tracy did.

"Burt will be in with me forever! And everyone knows it."

That steamed her father even more.

For once, even I started to have a good time at that luncheon. Somehow the subject came around to coffee and how it keeps many people awake. Victor must have felt conversational that day, because he actually participated with a one-sentence contribution. "Coffee doesn't keep me awake."

This was so out of character that I had to take advantage of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have some fun, so I contradicted him.

"Oh, yes it does!" I said with strong conviction.

Everyone at the table covered at the prospect of an impending nuclear holocaust.

"What?" he barked, with Attila the Hun eyes.

"Coffee keeps you awake!" I repeated.

I had just committed the unthinkable. I had stood my ground with Victor Posner in front of his most valued minions. This was the sin above all sins. The gauntlet was thrown. Was this to become a holy war, the "mother of all battles"? One or two bodies at the table began a slow snakelike slither down into their chairs. The others were poised, ready to dive under the table for cover.

"What are you talking about?" Victor raged.

"You drink coffee every morning, don't you?" I asked.

(I knew he drank cup after cup of super strong syrupy coffee every morning. In fact, he likes it so scalding hot that one of his maids stands there and pours a fresh cup after every two or three sips he takes.)

"Yes, so what?" Victor's volume decreased but his intensity remained.

"Well," I said, "you're up all day!"

Victor stopped cold. His mind was racing for an answer. He didn't have one. I could see confusion on his face, his anger dissipated and he even thought my joke was somewhat funny. Finally he decided to call it quits and returned to his food. The sycophants sat



The graveyard shift of Victor Posner's private army of bodyguards

up in their seats and the confrontation was forgotten. Or was it?

Victor is more than competitive. I think he has a Napoleon complex. **HOLY REINCARNATION!**

At his house one afternoon he challenged me to Ping-Pong. He didn't know that I am a good player. I didn't know that his style and his own rules make the game impossibly lopsided in his favor. Here's how he plays.

One of his hulking bodyguards (with a loaded gun in his shoulder he later) stands holding a box of fifty or more Ping-Pong balls. On Victor's cue, he pitches a ball into the air to land on a prearranged spot on Victor's side of the net (if he misses the exact mark he gets yelled at). Then Victor smashes the ball with all his might down on my side of the table, which makes it nearly impossible to return. Of course, I don't get a turn to serve. After I am unable to return ten or twelve balls, he declares himself the winner and the match is over. What a load of fun that is!

Over the years, and perhaps as a result of our skirmishes, the more time I spent around him the more I saw that even when he made an effort to be civil to me—which for him was truly an effort, everything he did was calculated to find a clear shot at my jugular. As I've read and heard from his unhappy employees, when he targets a conglomerate or holding company as his prey, he morphs into a cross

Holy Maturity

between a black widow and the Grim Reaper. He quietly surrounds his victim, buys a controlling interest in order to shoot the deadly venom, and devours the carcass. Then he wields his symbolic sickle and slays the corporate children, but not before removing every drop of their blood in the form of cash.

In personal business he is just as brutal, if not more. For Victor there is limited pleasure in sucking the life out of a company, bleeding its bank account and sitting back to watch its slow death. But when it comes to members of his family, in particular his children and grandchildren, there is great pleasure to be derived from watching those who looked up to him for love, understanding and encouragement as they suffer rejection, heartbreak, humiliation, degradation and disappointment. After all, a corporation only dies once. But a child looking for love—trying to please a parent or grandparent whose greatest joy seems to come from watching his own flesh and blood emotionally torn apart—innocently comes back for repeated doses of punishment. *Now, that's entertainment!*

I was outraged and helpless to do anything about the little girls he sleeps with—whom he calls his "little darlings." Victor once boasted to me of the volume of sexual conquests he made with those little darlings. He bragged "I have thirty-seven illegitimate children and every one of their mothers was under the age of eighteen when I got them pregnant."

I was disgusted.

On Easter Sunday, while sitting with Tracy, Victor, a sweet teenage girl who was living with him, her older sister and her sister's boyfriend, and several company executives and their wives, Victor hit the scumbag jackpot. We were having brunch at the Turnberry Club in North Miami Beach. The girl wasn't hungry and sat watching the rest of us. She plucked a mint leaf from a small vase in the center of the table and started to chew on it. He bawled, "Take that outta your mouth. I got other things I stick in there!"

It takes a lot of nerve to say something that crude. It takes even more nerve to say it in front of the young girl's family, his own family and company employees. **HOLY BAD TASTE!**

Months later he told us that he had dumped her, and she went back to her hometown in Ohio. I wonder if her parents ever found out about the degradation this teenager had suffered.

Awarding Trophies

For my birthday, Tracy gave me an Academy Award-like trophy entitled the "Love of My Life and Star of My Dreams Award." The inscription reads:

**LOVE OF MY LIFE AND
STAR OF MY DREAMS AWARD**

Presented to

TRACY POSNER

For Outstanding Performance as

"My Friend and My Lover, My Husband and My Life!"

Love, Tracy!

June 16, 1991

For outstanding continuing performance in the categories of Intelligence, looks and sex, I awarded Tracy the "World's Greatest Wife" award. The trophy is twenty-four inches high, weighs ten pounds and is made of sterling silver. The inscription reads:

WORLD'S GREATEST WIFE AWARD

Presented to

TRACY POSNER WARD

from her friend and her lover and her husband *Burt!*

on our 1st Anniversary - July 15, 1991

Tracy's Performance Rating

Intelligence	Rating	Looks	Rating	Sex	Rating
Business Sense	AAA+	Hair	AAA+	Naked Dancing	AAA+
Creativity	AAA+	Eyes	AAA	French Kissing	AAA+
I.Q.	AAA+	Nose	AAA	Dirty Talk	AAA
Negotiation	AAA+	Lips	AAA+	Tongue Action	AAA+
Perception	AAA+	Breasts	AAA+	Wild Sex	AAA+
Persistence	AAA+	Waist	AAA	Kinky Fantasies	AAA
Quickness	AAA+	Muffin	AAA+	Screaming	AAA+
				Wallbangers	
Sense of humor	AAA+	Legs	AAA	Multiple Orgasms	AAA+





**Melody
growing up
as Super
Baby.**

“To the Delivery Room, Batman!”

“Oh, my gosh!” After Tracy fainted three times in fifteen minutes in a parrot shop, I called 911. When the medics arrived, they asked her the most ridiculous question I could ever imagine

“Are you pregnant?”

I was stunned, but not as stunned as I was the next day when I took Tracy in for a pregnancy test and an ultrasound.

“You see that?” The nurse pointed to a little human body on a computer screen.

“What is it?” I asked.

“Your baby!”

“Wow! Wow! That’s our baby!” we shouted.

I felt faint, thrilled, stunned and numb at the same time. Twenty-five years had gone by and now I was going to become a father again! Later, one of my buddies teased me.

“Your wife is pregnant? It must’ve been an immaculate conception.”

“I’ve got news for you.” I said. “We make love almost every night!”

“I don’t believe that. You make love almost every night?”

“That’s right,” I replied. “Almost Monday, almost Tuesday, almost Wednesday, almost Thursday, almost Friday!”

We were hoping for a Valentine’s Day delivery. On February 14, 1991, armed with our video camera, we went to see Tracy’s ob/gyn, Dr. Elizabeth Irwin, asking if today was the day.

“No,” she replied. “I’d say another ten days to two weeks.”

We were sad about the delay but excited that the time was close.

The next day, movers delivered a truck full of stuff that had been sitting in Tracy’s condo in Miami. She ran around showing the movers where to put everything. We were tired, hungry and still a little misty about not having our baby in our arms. I suggested we go out for dinner and focus on other things until the magic moment arrived.

We went to an as yet untried Chinese restaurant. The food was average, but the consequences were spectacular!

After dinner Tracy complained of stomach cramps. I felt a little queasy myself so I told her it was probably the strange stuff I'd seen in the egg rolls. But her pains became more urgent, and I didn't need the BarComputer to figure that the upcoming addition would be arriving sooner than expected.

"You're wrong, Burt," Tracy said. "It can't be. Dr. Irwin said it would be two more weeks."

"Hey," I answered. "Doctors don't know it all. Remember, they only have the right to *practice*."

Tracy immediately doubled over with another contraction.

"That's it," I said. "It's been less than five minutes since the last one. We're going to the hospital!"

Sure enough, it turned out to be one of those rare occasions when I was right. Tracy checked in, was admitted to a labor room and had contractions every two minutes. I thought the baby was going to be born on the spot.

"Oh, my God!" Tracy said.

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, no!" Tracy cried.

"WHAT'S THE MATTER?" I shouted.

"We left the video camera in the car!"

"Forget the video camera!" I said. "I need to stay here with you."

"I am not having this baby without the video camera!"

There was no point in arguing. Now I was going to have to run down eight flights of stairs (a person could wait a year for the elevator) and into the parking lot to grab our camera, only to have to run eight flights back up.

I returned with the video camera in record time, but my heart was a jackhammer. I took a deep breath to calm myself and began to set up the tripod. Tracy said she'd missed me so much while I was gone that she decided she didn't want to have me worrying about making the video and we should forget taping the birth. I wasn't particularly thrilled that I had run like a maniac up and down eight flights of stairs and back and forth to the parking lot only to have her change her mind, but I was so excited about being with her for the birth that I didn't give it a second thought.

Though I did not videotape anything, I pondered the problems I might have had. There was no way to make this footage come across the way we had envisioned it. First, the angle was highly uncomplimentary. Her legs were alternately up and down, open and closed, with the long hospital gown sometimes up above her waist and sometimes down below her knees.

I didn't want these opening shots, and I use that term loosely, to look like a porno flick.

There was a sound problem, too. In the next room someone was having an apparently agonizing delivery. The lady was yelling and cursing the doctors and nurses, her husband was ordering relatives in and out of the room, and scaring me to death. Her screaming and crying wouldn't have enhanced our audio.

Tracy wasn't having the baby as quickly as expected. It turned out to be twelve and a half hours of labor. I would never have had enough videotape to cover that.

Our doctor encouraged Tracy to walk around during labor and take advantage of Newton's First Law Of Gravity. The hyperactive nurse suggested circular hula hoop hip movements. I suggested just lying in bed.

I held and hugged Tracy through every contraction—and there were more than a thousand.

During the last twenty minutes, the excitement was so intense that the time seem to pass in a matter of seconds. Suddenly I saw something dark emerging. I thought it was something that preceded birth.

"That's her hair and her head," the doctor said.

I couldn't have been more impressed. The birth was nothing like I'd imagined. It was the single most important event I have ever seen. The experience was one of the highlights of our marriage.

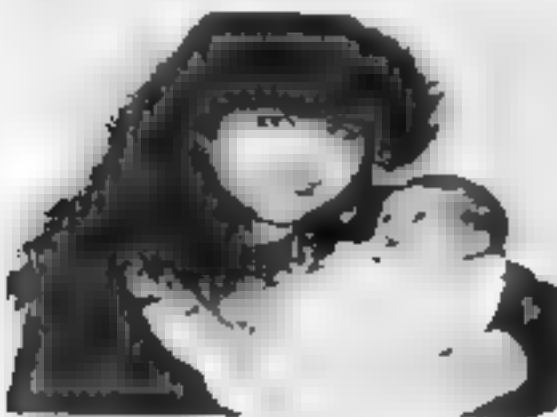
Melody Lane Ward was born at 3:07 p.m., February 16, 1991. A spectacular event! The Boy Wonder and Wonder Woman had produced Super Baby!

Dr. Irwin handed Melody to me, and I held her as the nurse cleaned



**Burt, Tracy and Melody Lane Ward—
Holy Exhaustion! (1991)**

her up a bit. Melody was so tiny and fragile. I'll never forget looking into those beautiful blue eyes. As I hugged her I felt her tiny warm breath



Tracy and Melody looking great the next day.

against my face. I kissed her and told her I loved her. There hasn't been a day since that I haven't done the same thing. I carried Melody to Tracy and put her in Tracy's arms. Tracy heaped kisses on her as she does on me. We are amazed and grateful that this incredible little child was created by our love.

Now in keeping with the honored tradition of childbearing that I have set forth so far, I have recently established for myself, for the imme-

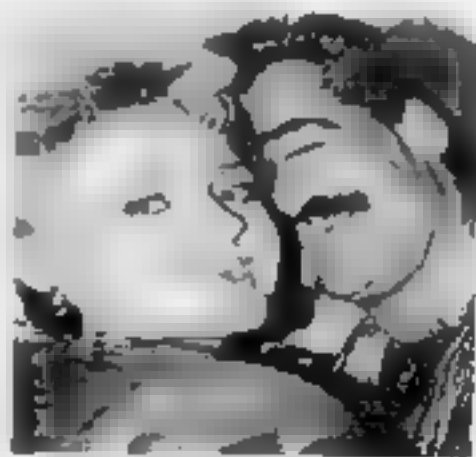
diante members of my family and for posterity what I call "Burt Ward's Personal Policy for Fatherhood." I have come to a decision.

Every twenty-five years I'm going to sire another baby!

Holy Procreation! Becoming a Grandfather

Six months later I was back in the same hospital, in the same maternity wing, in the same room, with my same wife for the delivery of yet another baby. Figure that one out!

It was my daughter Lisa's first baby. Tracy and I were there with little six-month-old Melody to watch Lisa and Kurt share that special moment. Lisa had an easier time than Tracy because Lisa accepted anesthesia. In fact when Lisa's doctor, again Dr. Irwin, told us that the drugs could significantly lengthen labor, Tracy and I decided to take Melody home so we could all rest. When we left I was upset because while Lisa was having contractions, she and Kurt were watching a football game on a television in the room.



My daughter Lisa and son-in-law, Kurt

"To the Delivery Room, Batman!"

I'm not against television. I make my living in it. But there's a time and a place for everything. *And that wasn't the time or place for it!*

We returned later that day and, on August 20, 1991, Kevin James Kockelsen was born and I instantly became a grandfather. A GRANDFATHER?? What did it all mean?

Well, it meant that my first child became a mother. It meant that my six-month-old daughter became an aunt. It meant that my beautiful twenty-nine-year-old wife became a grandmother. And it meant for me . . . uh . . . "Oh, my God! I've become a grandfather?"

No matter how I tried to say "grandfather," I choked on the word. I needed to find some way to deal with the concept. I sought outside help and revisited my dictionary for a thorough definition of that significant word: *the father of one's father or mother; sometimes used as a term of respectful familiarity to any old man.*

I was devastated. I rushed to the local drugstore and purchased a bottle of rat poison. When the clerk asked me if I wanted him to wrap it, I told him, "No. I'll drink it here!"

Well, that's not quite what happened.

What brought some peace to my otherwise tortured mind was thinking of how cute little Kevin was and how proud I was and at 11 am of Lisa, who is a great mother. I am also very proud of Kurt, who has more patience with kids and changing diapers than I could ever have.

And, of course, I am very proud of my fantastic wife, who had the foresight and extreme brilliance to realize I was such a wonderful catch.

Nowadays people often ask me what it's like to be a grandfather. After the first tiny internal sting, I explain, "Well, being a grandfather is really not all that different from being a father . . . it just feels a little strange to make love to a grandmother!"

Melody is my little Bangirl and the source of my greatest pride. She is so gifted, so beautiful, so fun-loving, so spectacular and so very nearly perfect that I can only tell you that she serves as a daily reminder of my own wonderfulness as a child and the incredible person I turned out to be. What more can I say? *

* Okay, I'm just kidding about being so wonderful. For an in-depth description of all my faults, please contact my wife.



Who's buying
Who? Anella
Sugar me, white
Carnation blue
Nylon

What's Happening Now

Today Tracy, Melody and I live happily on our beautifully landscaped private estate adjoining a magnificent river with many islands. In addition to our production facilities, we have our main house, a guesthouse, corrals, shelters and a barn plus five horses, four dogs, three cats and an exotic bird.

Going to the Dogs



Tracy has become involved with animal rescue and more specifically coordinates Great Dane Rescue for much of Southern California. She spends considerable time finding new homes for Great Danes living in animal shelters or with people who can no longer take care of them. I was surprised to learn that there are one or more rescue groups for almost every breed of dog. Most people don't realize that the pets that are rescued from shelters before being put to sleep are usu-

ally purebred housebroken puppies less than two years old. Unfortunately, many people buy dogs as a lark and then don't find time to care for them, so they end up in shelters.

These dogs make incredibly loving pets and don't cost the \$500 to \$1,000 that you'd have to pay if you bought one in a pet shop or from a breeder. Using her corporate management skills for charitable causes, Tracy has saved the lives of 160 Great Danes in the last seven months. Every day I seem to see a new Dane around and say good-bye to a familiar one that we've placed in a loving home. Melody can recite

every characteristic and trait, color and breeding of Great Danes, and just about every other breed of dog as well, and does so to anyone who will listen

Our biggest Dane, Apollo, is six feet six standing on his hind legs, thirty-seven inches tall at the shoulders, forty-seven inches at the head and weighs nearly 200 pounds. People accuse me of having another horse. Apollo has four unique traits that distinguish him from any of our other dogs.

First, he opens and closes doors from room to room and lets himself in and out to our front and back yards (we're teaching him to use a key)

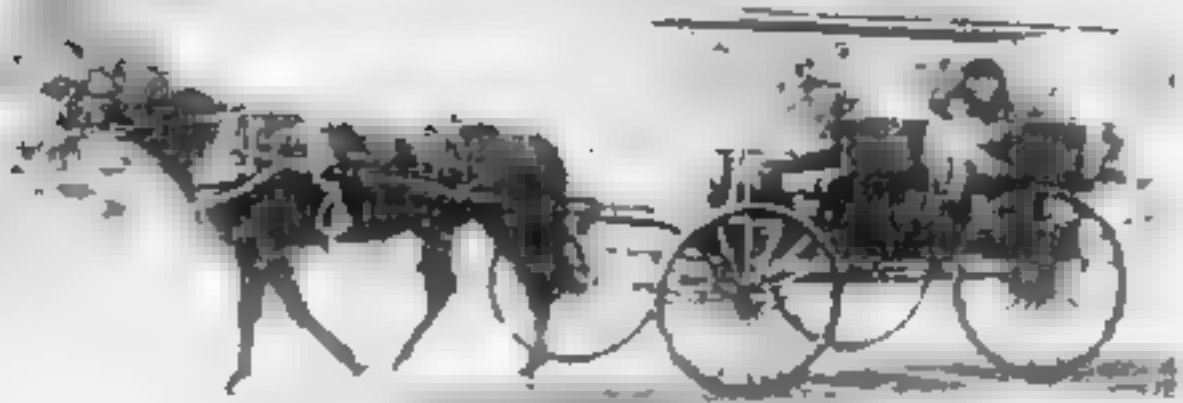
Second, he only drinks from faucets in kitchen and bathroom sinks, and he is so large that he actually puts his head *down* to drink from our kitchen faucet. When he lifts his head *up* he can lick our noses

Third he only sleeps on his back, with all four paws in the air and every night he races me to our bed. If he gets there first, he lies on my side of the bed and it is nearly impossible to get him off. Tracy and Melody think it's funny. I'm tired of sleeping on the sofa.

Finally, Apollo thinks he's a lap dog and regularly plops on our laps and those of our guests. No one has ever been able to get up when that 200 pounds of living, breathing muscle sits in his lap. *BatWriter* Stanley Ralph Ross is the only one I know who is as tall as Apollo and to Stanley's surprise, when the dog recently sat in his lap, even he couldn't get up. That's got to be worthy of the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the most unusual way for a watchdog to apprehend a prowler . . . sit in his lap

Horsing Around

By local law, based on the size of our property, we're permitted to maintain as many as 51 horses. We have five now—an Arab mare (Kitty Kat) an Appaloosa (Popcorn), a Standardbred (Sandman) an Arab/Quarter filly ten months old (Don't Play With Fire) and a Shetland pony (Rocky) for Melody. We don't need any more horses except for a few more Shetland ponies for Melody's friends. We ride our horses, play with them, feed them carrots and apples from our orchard and, most of all, love them.



Tracy, Melody and I cruising town in our surrey with Sandman doing the pulling (1995)

We acquired our Appaloosa in an unusual way. Our dear friends and neighbors Paul and Diane Snell were looking for a buyer for their teenage daughter's horse because she had suddenly become more interested in boys than horses. That's understandable. Tracy and I didn't need another horse, but we also didn't need the extra refrigerator that was included in the purchase of our home. When Paul saw that refrigerator and the refrigerator saw him, it was love at first sight, and they have been inseparable ever since. So we simply swapped our refrigerator plus \$500 for Popcorn. **HOLY HORSE TRADING!**

We have a surrey with a front and back seat and a canopy roof with trim around it. We ride it around town (there are no sidewalks here, but eighty miles of horse trails within the city limits). Sandman, my three-year-old trotter, pulls our family and friends, constantly trying to persuade me to let him to run. We occasionally drive the surrey in local parades.

I've always wanted a giraffe. Local animal regulators are panicking, and everyone except Tracy and Melody is trying to talk me out of it. I think it would be so cool to drive onto our grounds and see the neck and head of a giraffe as it walked around behind our house, trimming the high branches of our trees and eating the millions of leaves our gardeners pick up off the ground.

We aren't the only people with unusual animals here. Neighbors have pets that include llamas, ring-tailed lemurs, potbellied pigs, emus

and camels. Adjoining our property are friends with ostriches. Even the babies are so big that they easily stick their heads over our six-foot fence looking for handouts—or hands. You have to be careful around them.

Logical Pigments Inc.

“**A**ny pigment of your imagination can be brought to life if you follow a logical course of creating it.” That is the concept of the company Tracy started, Logical Pigments Inc. Beside the physical and intellectual attractions we share, Tracy and I are committed to making imaginative and entertaining educational projects for children of all ages. My program was EarlyBird, and Tracy, under the pen name “Trace Me,” has created worlds of characters that offer an imaginative journey for children of all ages. Her stories and songs teach children to trace back to the “me” deep inside themselves and to explore their mindscapes and dreamscapes, realizing that everyone is important and that each person can make a difference in our world. She has written and illustrated a collection of soon-to-be-published books.

Tracy has also written a movie called *Master of My Dream*, based upon the idea that “as reality becomes magically imaginative, the imaginative becomes magically real.” More than a dozen of her original songs will also be incorporated in the film.

Logical Pigments Inc. is publishing our books and her songs.

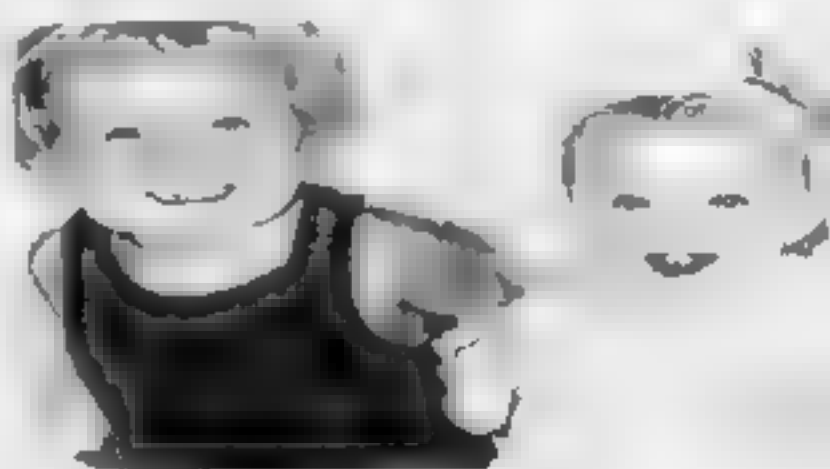
Logical Pigments also has a state-of-the-art production and post-production facility and sound stage on our property that provides 3-D animation and special effects for feature films, editing for television shows, graphic design and photo retouching. Some of our clients have their own helicopters, and we now have a twenty-four-hour helipad on our grounds.

We are working on several film and television projects and enjoy the creative capability of producing our own movies. Film projects can be time consuming, and we are looking at one now that will require more than two years of work on our computers before we can deliver a finished fully animated two-hour motion picture to theaters. I hope that some of the quality feature films, television shows and published books you enjoy will soon be produced here.

During production it is not uncommon to put in twenty-one-hour days. Milody has her own art computer next to ours. Every so often we take a break to stroll through our grounds and commune with nature. Sitting under a weeping willow tree or picking mulberries is a far cry from the pressure of working on a dozen sophisticated computers, churning out spectacular 3-D graphics nearly in real time.

We have a number of freelance artists and animators who work with us from time to time to relieve our workload. I tell our movie-producer clients that we can offer the world's best prices because we own our equipment free and clear and that at \$1 per hour I'm reasonable. I also tell everybody that with all the work we are doing, I'll be able to afford the finest rest home care because that's where I'll be.

Karl and Lisa have had another baby—my granddaughter, named Katelyn Rose Keckesen. Born New Year's Eve (1993), she is as cute and personable as anything you can imagine. Lisa has been taking the kids to auditions for television commercials and print advertising, and both have become big money



My grandkids, Kevin and Katelyn (1993).

earners. Grandson Kevin has already performed in eight national commercials and is being submitted for a number of television series. Katelyn, now a year and a half, has landed her first modeling job, several days' work at \$1,000 per day. The two kids just landed a national car commercial together, riding in the back seat of a Volkswagen. **HOLY DOUBLE RESIDUALS!**

I love watching my daughters and my grandchildren play on the floor together. And my heart warms to see my darling Tracy down there playing with them. Without an invitation I'll jump in and play as well. It's wonderful being a youngster. I think I'll stay one the rest of my life.



Melody does her Robin outfit (1999)

Everybody tells Melody that she looks, dances and sings like Shirley Temple and that she should be in movies. I will soon get her an agent so she can go to work and support us. She is getting so smart and so cute that I'm already trying to figure how to keep boys away from her until she is at least forty.

Tracy and I recently took Melody to see Circus Vargas, which was her first time under the big top. We all loved the show, particularly the lion and tiger act—which is led by Kay Rose, the only female lion tamer in the world. After the show she surprised us by coming over to our ringside seats to say hello.

"Burt, I worked with you twenty years ago in Harrisburg,

Pennsylvania."

"Oh, it's nice to see you again," I said, searching my memory to place the name or face. "Your act is wonderful. I love the way you handle those lions and tigers."

"They love me," she said.

Then I introduced her to Tracy and Melody. Kay leaned toward Tracy and confided, "Back then your husband sure got laid a lot!"

I nearly slid under my chair.

"He's not allowed to do that anymore," Tracy replied. "except with me."

Tracy is the world's greatest wife and mother. Lest you think I'm henpecked or on a very short leash (please ignore the fact that I wear a collar) I'd have you know that recently I had Tracy down on her knees begging me. "Burt," she said, "you come out from underneath that bed and I'll really work you over!"

I haven't spoken to Adam for a while but I have been told he is working on a new television series called *The Clinic* on the Comedy Channel. I do want to clarify one important point about Adam. All the crazy things we did together were during the height of our series and a few years thereafter. Adam has been happily married for many years to a charming lady, Marcelle, and they have six wonderful children. As much as I find fault with some of his traits, I adore the man. My life would never have been as much fun without him.

I loved writing this book and wish everyone who reads it all the health and happiness you could ever want, every moment of every day.

Prior to going to press, I gave two print interviews to publicize the book's release. The writers for each magazine were fascinated with the nearly finished version and, after reading it, both asked the same question:

"Are you going to write a sequel?"

"A sequel? What? That's crazy. I haven't published *this* book yet."

Two identical questions in two weeks. Hmmm. I reviewed my original notes and source material and determined I had another volume's worth of outrageous anecdotes and noteworthy events that I'd collected during my Superhero career. Will I write another book?

Frankly, I'm tempted—as Bill Dozier, our *Batman* announcer, stated almost weekly, "The wildest is yet to come."

The BatEnd

Resumé

Name:	Burt Ward			
Statistics:	Height.	5' 9"	Hair	Brown
	Weight	160 lbs.	Eyes	Blue
Training	1964	Bucks County Playhouse, Curt Conway, Actors West, Eric Morris		
	1969	Sherman Marks		
	1983	Beverly Hills Playhouse		
Television Series	1966	Batman - ABC - Robin, The Boy Wonder - 120 episodes		
	1984	High School USA - NBC - Guest Starring		
	1985	Santa Barbara - NBC - Guest Starring		
Television Specials	1980	Television Violence and Children - CBS - Starring		
	1981	A Superhero Roast - NBC - Guest Starring		
	1983	The Reunion - NBC - Guest Starring		
Television Movies:	1981	The Challenge - NBC Movie of the Week - Starring		
Feature Films:	1966	Batman - Robin, The Boy Wonder - Starring		
	1986	Scream - Race Car Driver - Guest Starring		
	1987	Fire in the Night - Karate Instructor - Guest Starring		
	1988	Night School - Climbing Instructor - Guest Starring		
	1989	Kill Crazy - Vietnam War Veteran - Starring		

Resume

	1990	Star Quest – Genetic Scientist – Starring
	1991	A Different Life – Psychotic Artist – Guest Starring
	1991	Robot Ninja – Book Publisher – Guest Starring
	1992	The Girl I Want – Star Athlete’s Father – Guest Starring
	1992	Masters – Police Detective – Starring
	1993	Robo-C.H I.C – Mad Bomber/Pest Exterminator – Starring
	1993	Smooth Talker – Crime Lab Technician – Guest Starring
	1993	Virgin High – Overly Protective Father – Starring
	1993	Hot Under the Collar – His Holiness the Pope – Guest Starring
	1994	Night Dwellers – Satanic Priest – Starring
	1994	Assault of the Party Nerds – Real Estate Mogul – Guest Starring
	1994	Reverse Heaven – Chief Surgeon – Guest Starring
	1994	Rock and a Hard Place – Doctor, Chief of Staff – Guest Starring
Stage	1967	Harold Pheasant Run Playhouse – Starring
	1970	Catch Me If You Can – Houghton Lake Playhouse – Starring
Voice-over	1975	Batman (Animated) – CBS – Guest Starring
	1984	The Gobots (Animated) – CBS – Guest Starring
Commercials:	1983	Goodyear Certified Auto Service – Starring – National
	1984	Nissan – Starring – National

Special Talents: Professional Ice Skater - Age 2
Speed Reader - 30,000 words per minute
Karate - Black Belt
Chess Champion
Scuba Diver

Awards: 1980 Stars Hall of Fame - Orlando Florida
1984 Man of the Year - Harvard University
1985 Golden Mask Award - Hollywood Appreciation Society
1986 Bronze Halo Award - Southern California Motion Picture Society

Guest Appearances: The Larry King Show
The Mike Douglas Show
The Pat Boone Show
The John Davidson Show
The Phil Donahue Show
The Regis Philbin Show
The Bob Braun Show
American Bandstand
Hollywood Squares
You Don't Say
Good Morning America
AM Los Angeles
Mid Morning LA
Entertainment Tonight
Eye On LA
Hollywood Closeup
Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous
Super Bloopers and Practical Jokes
The Merv Griffin Show
7,000+ Live Appearances at malls, shopping centers, circuses, etc.

My Most-Asked Questions

Q. *"What is it like being Robin?"*

A. "Wonderful! I get to climb buildings, ride in the Batmobile with Batman, swing on the Batropes and fight heinous villains wherever they raise their ugly heads." (Working on *Batman* was the experience of a lifetime, and being Robin was everything I fantasized it to be—totally spectacular!)

Q. *"Where is Batman?"*

A. "He is out chasing Catwoman and Batman is *hot* on her tail . . . er . . . uh . . . I mean trail," or

A. "Batman is in our mobile crime room with his hands full interrogating Catwoman." (Batman, Adam West, is performing in films and television and trotting around the country signing autographs. He lives in Ketchum, Idaho, just outside of Sun Valley.)

Q. *"Who are the villains who give you the most trouble?"*

A. "That foul feathered fiend, the Penguin, and that prankster of unfunny jokes, the Joker!" (The casting directors who refuse to consider me for a role without even meeting me or allowing me to read for a part.)

Q. *"Is your costume uncomfortable?"*

A. "More uncomfortable than when I was being eaten alive by that giant clam." (No more uncomfortable than having a root canal without an anesthetic.)

Q. *"Is it fun driving around in the Batmobile?"*

A. "It's fabulous, but I hate going grocery shopping and taking in the laundry." (It really was fun, but I never seemed to get to drive it.)

Q. *"Where is the Batmobile?"*

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

A. "Alfred is changing the oil in the BatCave " (Six Batmobiles are in the hands of collectors. George Barris has the remaining ones.)

Q. "Can I go for a ride in the Batmobile?"

A. "Sure. Wait a minute I only have a learner's permit. Do you have a driver's license? You don't have one? You're only twelve? Sorry, you'll have to wait till you're a little older." (Unfortunately it's not my decision. If you really want a ride, call George Barris at Barris Customs in North Hollywood, California. He built all of them and still owns at least one.)

Q. "Do you ever get hurt doing those stunts?"

A. "Do you ever get hurt when you run and play? Of course I get hurt but I try to be careful. And so should you!" (Yes, I was in and out of the emergency room regularly.)

Q. "Where is Gotham City?"

A. "Gotham City is New York City." (That's correct.)

Q. "What is it like working with all those stars who played the villains?"

A. "The actors are wonderful, but those villains are dastardly!" (It was the greatest thrill any actor could have and I loved it.)

Q. "How are you able to slide down the BatPoles and change into your costumes so fast?"

A. "We have a wardrobe man who slides down the pole behind us and helps us get dressed. He used to be a fireman." (For you serious seekers of BatKnowledge, the camera was stopped after we jumped onto the BatPoles and slid out of view. Then later, on the BatCave set, the camera filmed us sliding down into the BatCave.) **HOLY MOVIE MAGIC!**

Q. "What do you keep in your utility belt?"

A. "We keep our BatRopes, our BatArangs and our BatShield, as well as a sack lunch, a change of underwear and the BatAntidote to every known poison." (Nothing in mine. The pouches were solid wood. Batman's utility belt had usable pouches, but rarely was anything put in them.)

Q. "How do you like filming the cliffhangers?"

A. "Where else can you be tortured every week and still manage to survive?" (That was the most interesting part of the show except for the fight scenes)

Q. "Where is the BatCave?"

A. "Fourteen miles east of Gotham City, on the old mountain road " (The BatCave was on Stage 16 at Desilu-Culver Studios in Culver City, California, but was destroyed shortly after production ended)

Q. "Is Batgirl pretty?"

A. "I'm sure she is, but I don't have time to look at girls. I'm too busy fighting crime." (Yvonne is gorgeous and happily married)

Q. "Do you get to drive the Batmobile?"

A. "Now that I have my learner's permit, Batman lets me drive Alfred to the dentist " (Once or twice in the show, but the producers were really strict and wouldn't allow me to borrow it for hot dates)

Q. "What makes Batman so much taller than you?"

A. "Lifts . . . enlarged foot supports . . . shoe suits. He is also a lot older." (It's all in the genes. I was born with smaller genes)

Q. "How did you become Robin?"

A. "I was adopted by Bruce Wayne and became his young ward " (I was lucky enough to find an agent to represent me and send me out for an interview. The rest I did myself)

Q. "What do you eat for lunch?"

A. "Peanut butter and sardine sandwiches." (I'm on a seafood diet. I see food and I eat it. Actually, I'm a light eater. As soon as it gets light in the morning, I start eating)

Q. "Don't you feel a little weird wearing that costume?"

A. "Only on dates. But girls go nuts for my cape!" (Weird isn't descriptive of the feeling. It's more like "agonized, claustrophobic, itchy, tortured.")

Q. "How are you able to figure out all the answers before Batman?"

A. "Because I'm the Boy Wonder." (The creators and producers of *Batman* wanted Robin to make significant contributions to solving the crimes. Robin was super smart, a real whiz-kid.)

Q. "Can you come over and eat dinner at my house? Mom says she's making pizza."

A. "Gee that sounds delicious. Maybe I can call Batman and see if he and Alfred and Aunt Harriet can join us." (Kids say they don't think their mom made enough.) "Okay, then, maybe we'll all come next time." (I probably would if I weren't so busy and didn't have the responsibility of a family.)

Q. "How many times did you say 'Holy this' or 'Holy that' in the Batman series?"

A. 370. (That's correct.)

Q. "How can you be here when I just saw you an hour ago on my television?"

A. "I took the BatPlane." (You just saw reruns on your TV!)

Q. "How can you be the real Robin? Why would anyone want to come here?"

A. "I come to meet all the boys and girls and moms and dads. It's nice to get out of the BatCave and visit another city." (I am the real Robin from the 1966 television series. I came here to sign autographs as part of my job.)

Q. "How old are you?"

A. "I'm fifteen and a half." (Kids respond with "No way! You look as old as my dad!") "Well, crimefighting ages you!" (Forty-nine and holding.)

Our Crimefighting Paraphernalia

BatAntidotes (various)
BatAcceleration Particles
BatAlarm
BatAlert
BatAnalyzer
BatAntium Shield
BatArang
BatAwake Spray
BatBlowtorch
BatBank Computer Memory
BatBeam
BatBelts (*Auto Seat Belts*)
BatBelts (*Utility Belts*)
BatBomb
BatCamera & BatFilter
BatCapsule Dispensary
BatCentrifuge
BatCharge Launcher
BatClaws
BatCode
BatCommunicator
BatCompass
BatComputer Ingestor
BatContainer
BatControl
BatCopter
BatCopter Batcamera
BatCorrectional Signal
BatCrime Computer
BatCuffs
BatCycle
BatDissolving Switch
BatDirectional Finder
BatDisintegrator
BatDolly
BatDrone Airplane
BatDust
BatEarplugs
BatEjector Button
BatElectrodes
BatExtension Phone
BatExtinguisher
BatFlax
BatFunnel
BatGas Pellets
BatGeiger Counter
BatGenerator
BatGauge
BatHeadphones
BatHold BatHooks
BatIcillin Lozenge
BatIndicator
BatInverser
BatJets
BatKey
BatKnife
BatLab
BatLaser Gun
BatLaser
BatLift

BatLocator	BatSound Analyzer
BatLozenge	BatScanner
BatMagnet	BatScope
BatMissile	BatSensor
Batmobile	BatShield
Batmobile Afterburner	BatSignal
Batmobile Antitheft Device	BatSkivvies
Batmobile Bomb Detector	BatSleep Spray
Batmobile Ejection Seat	BatSonar Device
Batmobile Ejector Button	BatSpectrograph
Batmobile Tracking Map	BatSpeech Imitator
BatNesia Gau	BatSpot Analyzer
Batometer	BatSpray (<i>Barracuda Repellent</i>)
BatOscilloscope	BatSpray (<i>Manta Ray Repellent</i>)
BatOstat Antifire Activator	BatSpray (<i>Oceanic Repellent</i>)
BatOxygen Tanks	BatSpray (<i>Shark Repellent</i>)
BatPellets	BatSpray (<i>Whale Repellent</i>)
BatPhone	BatSprings
BatPhotoscope	BatSeismograph
BatPole Lift	BatSwatter
BatPontoons	Batsyllable Device
BatPlugs	BatTerror Control
BatPowder	BatTweezers
BatPress	BatTape Reader
BatPrinter	BatThermal D Underwear
BatProbe	BatTools
BatPumps	BatTracer
BatRam	BatTracker
BatRespirators	BatTransmitter
BatRadar	BatTunnel
BatRadio Batray Projector	BatVan
BatReflector	BatVault
BatResearch Shelves	BatWax Solvent
BatResistance Signal	BatX-Ray Deflector
BatReverser	BatZooica
BatRockets	
BatSound Amplifier	

Moving On to the Great BatCave in the Sky

Our Late, Great Cast

Commissioner Gordon—Neil Hamilton. Staunch Police Commissioner Gordon was the intermediary between Gotham City's government and Batman. He had the memorable line, "I don't know who he is behind that mask of his. But I know when we need him, and we need him now!"

Neil was everything his character represented and more. Even though he was a professional performer, he rose above his job and had a wonderful down-to-earth attitude. I admired him.

Years after the series ended, I was making a personal appearance in San Diego, and in the line of waiting people I saw a nurse pushing a distinguished-looking gentleman in a wheelchair. It was Neil. It was sad to see his frail condition but I was thrilled to see him again. I took a break and we caught up on each other's news. Sensing this was the last time I would ever see him, I was reluctant to say good-bye.

Chief O'Hara—Stafford Repp. Commissioner Gordon's right-hand man was Chief O'Hara, the big boss of Gotham City's men in blue. Before meeting Stafford Repp, who played O'Hara, I could have counted on one hand the number of times that I'd heard a real Irish brogue. As an actor I found the Irish dialect unique and difficult to learn. From time to time, Stafford would share a few minutes to teach me its authentic pronunciation. A very private man, Stafford passed away while still in his fifties.

Aunt Harriet—Mrs. Cooper—Madge Blake. Bruce and Dick's Aunt Harriet was known as Mrs. Cooper to everyone else in Gotham City. The Dynamic Duo went out of their way to protect dear Aunt Harriet from finding out that they were really Batman and Robin.

Madge was a perfect Aunt Harriet, a sweet lady and good actress

Boy Wonder: My Life in Tights

who was extremely nervous and excitable on camera. I learned not to get too close to her when we were about to film. Once the camera started rolling, Madge would look for something or someone to hold on to. More than once she got me in her steel grip, and no matter what I did, I couldn't break loose to do the action required. When the director called "Cut" and proceeded to chew me out for failing to follow his orders, I never betrayed Madge. She passed on before the end of the last season and left a real void in the cast of characters.

Alfred the Butler—Alan Napier. The Dynamic Duo's trusty servant and confidant, Alfred the Butler, was the only person who knew the pair's true identity. The same held true for Batgirl when she was introduced. A true English gentleman, Alan saw how Adam upstaged me and took the time to teach me how to defend myself.

Alan was a giant of a man, nearly six foot nine inches tall. Even with the two-inch heels Adam wore to make him look much taller than my five foot nine inches, Alan still towered over him. Alan's little dog, his favorite companion, fit into the palm of his hand.

A few years ago there was a televised *Batman* reunion on *The Late Show* and Alan appeared with me, Yvonne Craig, Frank Gorshin and Adam. Shortly thereafter, Alan passed away.

Departed Guest Villains

Mr Freeze—George Sanders. Mr. Freeze lived in a subzero environment. He specialized in the theft of famous diamonds, referred to by gangsters as "ice." George was a great Mr. Freeze. His deep voice and sophisticated manner made him seem like a grandiose villain from a James Bond movie. Years after the series ended, George became deeply depressed with life and ultimately committed suicide.

The Joker—Cesar Romero. The Joker was the most famous of all *Batman* villains. His practical jokes were an unfunny source of fiendish aggravation for the Dynamic Duo.

Cesar was Mr. Professionalism and never missed a line or made a mistake . . . not even once! His Joker laugh became world famous. I

Moving On to the Great BatCave in the Sky

can't tell you how many kids (and I am embarrassed to say how many adults) came up to me at personal appearances and taunted me by impersonating Cesar's laugh. Cesar was a great asset to our show.

The Mad Hatter—David Wayne. The Mad Hatter, a.k.a. Jervis Tetch, was obsessed with collecting hats. He set his sights on Batman's cowl and nearly got it. David created the character's very funny speech impediment, the "Mad Hatter's Lisp."

David spent years on Broadway in shows such as *Teahouse of the August Moon*, in which he played the lead. We were honored by his presence and dazzled by his talent.

King Tut—Victor Buono. King Tut was a mild-mannered professor of Egyptology at Yale University. After an artifact fell on his head, giving him a concussion, he awoke believing he was the reincarnation of King Tut.

Victor Buono was a mountain of a man who had some great roles in famous movies, including *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* and *Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte*.

In his King Tut costume, he was always in character. I never got to know him personally. He died at 43, due, in part, to his ample girth—he weighed nearly 400 pounds.

The Sandman—Michael Rennie. The Sandman was a European archcriminal who posed as a sleep expert, Dr. Somnambula, to meet and wed J. Pauline Spaghetti, a fabulously wealthy heiress and an incurable insomniac. J. Pauline fell for the Sandman—literally—when he gassed her and removed \$200 million from her bank account.

Michael Rennie had a great sense of humor, which belied his austere look on screen. He made his scariest impression on the moviegoing public as Klastu the alien in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

Egghead—Vincent Price. Egghead was an eggspasmerating villain who got Batman and Robin into numerous sticky messes.

Vincent Price was an incredibly nice man and had a long, illustrious career playing villainous roles. He was superb as Egghead, and I enjoyed working with this great star.

Fingers—Liberace. Fingers was the villainous secret identity of the Great Chandell (named after Liberace's famed chandeliers), an internationally famed pianist, who schemed to murder Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson, marry Aunt Harriet (who would then be next in line to inherit Bruce's millions) and make off with the Wayne fortune.

Liberace was hilarious because he was such a sweet man that it was impossible for him be convincing as a bad guy. His concerts and Las Vegas dates were always sellouts; he was a true showman, very flamboyant and consistently pleasing. The world lost a great entertainer when he succumbed to AIDS.

Marsha, Queen of Diamonds—Carolyn Jones. Marsha, Queen of Diamonds, was a diamond thief and dangerous temptress who used darts filled with love potion to enslave her victims with uncompromising love for her.

Carolyn Jones was another great pro who I was excited to work with. As Morticia on *The Addams Family*, Carolyn was loved the world over. I enjoyed her work as Marsha, but I always wanted to call her Morticia. She died while still in her forties.

Colonel Gumm—Roger C. Carmel. Colonel Gumm was a villainous stamp thief. He was played by Roger C. Carmel, a charming character actor whose unique, funny look was so recognizable that if you don't immediately associate the name with a face, you probably will when you realize that he was Harvey Mudd in *Star Trek*.

The Black Widow—Tallulah Bankhead. Max Black's non-grieving widow was, yes, the Black Widow. She used a hideous device, a "Cerebrum Short Circuitor," to alter the conscious mind of bank managers, inducing them to withdraw thousands of dollars from their vaults to give to her. Her philosophy was "Happiness can't buy money."

With her trademark husky voice and imperious manner, Tallulah Bankhead was a superstar. Among her films were *Tarnished Lady*, *Stage Door Canteen*, *Lifeboat* and *Die, Die My Darling*. She made her last onscreen appearance with us and died a few months later, in December 1968.