

A DREAM COME TRUE

By Marj Lulay

I imagine everyone who joins a fan club hopes that they will have an opportunity to meet their favorite star. What person isn't awed by a famous personality or fascinated and curious about watching a movie being filmed? Well, I'm no different and my dream came true on May 19th, 1964. On that day I hit the jackpot because I met TWO favorites...ROD TAYLOR and James Garner. They had been working on 36 HOURS since April and I had hoped that a meeting with them could be set up. On May 18th I received a call from Liz to come down from Palmdale, California where I live, that night. This was the first time I had met either ROD or Jim and my first visit to a movie studio and was I excited.

Around noon of May 19th, Liz, Evelyn Christel and I went to MGM and ate lunch in the commissary before going to the set. While waiting for our food we saw Yvette Mimmeaux, Dewey Martin and George Maharis and as we started eating, ROD came into the Commissary with Eva Marie Saint. After greeting Liz warmly, Liz introduced ROD to Evelyn and I and was I ever nervous when we shook hands! ROD is handsome on screen but I think more so in person. He has a warm, friendly smile and sparkling eyes. After a little chat in which he said he'd see us later on the set, he left to join Eva Marie and Jim at lunch, as Jim came by just then and he, too, is more handsome in person. He was in an old suit he wears in the movie and had a slight beard and his hair was greyed for his role. I had always heard that Jim was a joker on the set and figured ROD would be, too, and I didn't have to visit the set to have this proven true. As they left the Commissary, Jim put a knife under his arm and ROD pushed him and said menacingly "That will teach you, Garner; next time it will be the other shoulder" Before they got to the door they started laughing and everyone in the Commissary joined in.

When we arrived at the sound stage we had to wander through a maze of cables, sets and several other assorted items before we found the dressing rooms. They were about to start shooting so after ROD introduced us to Jim we didn't have much time to talk. By this time, ROD was in his German uniform and looked very slim and handsome. As I shook hands with Jim I was impressed with his friendly greeting and thought he looked very distinguished with his hair greyed. Both were very friendly and made us feel welcome. ROD had one of the crew show us to the set to watch the scene filmed. The set was built on a high platform so there wasn't much room and we had to stand. This being my first time on a movie set, I was fascinated watching all of the activity and as I was watching I happened to overhear Jim telling one of the crew to get something for him and not to tell anyone, so I figured he was up to something. While they were rehearsing the scene, the crewman came back with a knife and waited till the scene was over and slipped it to Jim who put it under his arm and walked in front of ROD. ROD was studying the script as he had most of the dialogue and he was refreshing his memory. He wasn't in on the gag this time but when he saw Jim with the knife under his arm he was quick to say "That will teach you to give me all of the lines." Everyone on the set laughed and during the entire stay on the set I noticed that this same easy-going feeling was always present.

The scene runs about five minutes and it took until the fifth or sixth take before they got it the way they wanted it. There were several interruptions from people making noise below and Jim breaking up ROD by making faces or laughing in the midst of his scenes. After they had gotten it right, they set up for a close-up in a couple of spots. The first one didn't take very long and there was a short break while they moved a bed Jim sits on during the scene to arrange the lights and camera for a close-up of ROD in a chair. During this break one of the crew was checking the effect of the "rain" through the camera and kept saying that it looked and sounded like a garden hose to a crewman behind the scenes. After he had said this a few times, a voice came from behind the set and said "that's because it is!" Everyone broke up from that. They printed the fourth and fifth take on the last close-up and ROD and Jim headed for their dressing rooms.

It was time for us to leave so we said goodbye to the guys and thanked them for an interesting afternoon. The repetition did get a little boring and I'm sure that if they had run through it once more I could have repeated it word for word but I really enjoyed watching a movie being filmed.