The Bold Doctor Almost Fainted

By DICK KLEINER
Hollywood Correspondent

HOLLYWOOD (NEA) — "The most advanced operating room in the country is right here—on Stage 14 at Universal Studio."

It is, apparently, the truth that biotechnologist Byron Bloch speaks. He helped design and equip the operating room they are using for the doctor third of NBC's new series, The Bold Ones. And it is, he says, the ultimate in well-equipped operating rooms.

The Bold Ones is three rotating stories in the same hour on NBC. One is a lawyer story, one a law enforcement story and one a medical story. There is no connection between the three —so far—but, theoretically, they all involve men who are bold and daring.

I dropped into the three sets, to see what bold and daring things were going on. The law enforcement team had Leslie Nielsen working on the case of a convicted murderer (Robert Drivas) trying to get a new trial. The lawyer show was shooting a scene in which Burl Ives had an argument with another lawyer (Dana Elcar). It all seemed about as bold and daring as Peyton Place.

But real boldness was going on on Stage 14, where John Saxon was operating. There were two genuine surgeons from UCLA in the team, plus a UCLA anesthesiologist, a nurse from St. Joseph's and "the best heart-lung machine man in the U. S." running the heart-lung machine.

They worked away, as the camera turned. An emergency. Turn on the heart-lung machine. David Hartman signaled the machine operator. He pulled a lever, turned a switch.

Red fluid — blood!—coursed through the transparent plastic tubes in the Disposable Total Body Perfusion Oxygenator. They watched the track of the heart on the television monitor.

"What happens now?" Saxon muttered, low enough so the microphone couldn't pick it up.

He kept on operating. The nurse handed him another instrument. He sewed another stitch in the sheet.

"Why don't they cut?" said Hartman.

They finally did cut, and the actors relaxed. Bloch, the biotechnologist, said that the best operating rooms he knew about were at the Methodist Hospital in Houston—where Dr. Michael DeBakey works—and the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Md.

"They have equipment like this," he said, "but not as good. This is the next generation, beyond DeBakey's."

It is valued at somewhere around $400,000, which would make it probably the world's most expensive set —except that it is all on loan.

Saxon seems extremely deft in his movements, and he has a logical explanation for his dexterity: "I think it's because I can eat Chinese food with chopsticks."

JOHN SAXON

Dr. Peter Henning, the genuine UCLA surgeon who was in the on-camera team, said it was a shame Saxon hadn't gone in for medicine. His calmness as well as dexterity impressed the good doctor. He said he would like to see Saxon in his class at UCLA in the fall.

But Saxon, who costars in the series with E. G. Marshall and Hartman, is not about to give up acting for medicine. He is serious about doing a good job, however, and went down to St. Joseph's Hospital to observe a few real operations.

"He was always kind of queasy," says his lovely wife, Mary Ann, "but he wasn't when he was doing research like that."

Saxon says he found that if he concentrated on the technical aspects of the real surgery he was all right, but as soon as he started relaxing his mind, he almost fainted.

Bill Russell Plans To Try Movie Career

By BOB THOMAS

HOLLYWOOD (AP) — Last week Bill Russell announced he was giving up his career in basketball to become a movie actor. If he carries out his plan, he will join a sizable fraternity of athletes-turned-actors.

"Russell might fake it," a film producer commented. "He commands attention with his size and power, and he's a ready-made celebrity, at least in this country. And there have never been more opportunities for Negro actors.

"His only drawback might be his height (6-foot-9). It'll be tough to find actors tall enough to play in scenes with him."

The comment points up why athletes and movies have long had an affinity: 1. The athletes are already stars in the public's eyes; 2. Their physiques and grace are well suited to films.

The casting of athletes in movies has been going on since the earliest days of motion pictures. One of the earliest "stars" of the nickelodeons was Sandow, the strongman who was first managed by Florenz Ziegfeld. He did little but flex his abundant muscles, but that was enough to fascinate viewers of the new medium.

Most of the superstars of 1920s sports were enlisted for movies, among them Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, Lou Gehrig, Bobby Jones. All returned to their sport careers without setting any acting records.

More successful was Johnny Mack Brown, who starred in the Rose Bowl for the University of Alabama. He costarred opposite Greta Garbo and Joan Crawford, later appeared in western series.

Heavyweight champ Max Baer proved a passable performer in "The Prizefighter and the Lady" opposite Myrna Loy. That's his son in "The Beverly Hillbillies."

Winsome Sonja Henie, Olympic skating star, came to Hollywood for a series of successful ice-musicals at 20th Century-Fox.

Olympic swimming champion Johnny Weissmuller was the most successful of a series of athletes who portrayed Tarzan, the Ape Man. Another swimmer, Buster Crabbe, gave it a try, as did decathlon Olympian Herman Brix, billed as Bruce Bennett. Later Tarzans have included Mike Henry of the Los Angeles Rams pro football team and Denny Miller of the UCLA basketball squad.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Hollywood cashed in on the fame of various sports figures with quickie biographies of such football stars as Tom Harmon, Frankie Albert and Glenn Davis —Doc Blanchard. None succeeded as actors, although Harmon became a top sportscaster.

Jackie Robinson, first Negro in big league baseball, and Olympic decathlon star Bob Mathias, also starred in film biographies. Both moved on to other fields—Robinson to business, Mathias to Congress.

Quick Purchase

"The Subject Was Roses," one of last year's best motion pictures, has already been purchased for television. NBC says it will show the Patricia Neal film within three years.

Other movies purchased by the networks include "Gigi," "A Patch of Blue," and "Far From the Madding Crowd." All are MGM releases.

Chanin Hale Has Modest Ambitions

By VERNON SCOTT
UPI Hollywood Correspondent

HOLLYWOOD (UPI)—"Dayton, Ohio, is a wonderful place if you just want to be a person."

Thus spaké Chanin (pronounced Shannon) Hale.

Miss Hale plays the not-too-bright blonde on the Red Skelton show, where, for two and a half years she didn't say a word.

When they finally did give her a line Chanin blew it, causing the crew to reshoot the scene.

A native of Dayton, Chanin left the Ohio city at age 18 for New York, seeking stardom.

Wants To Be Star

"I wanted to be a star, not just a person," she explained. "It's very hard to be both. Well, I didn't become a Broadway star, but I sang on an Italian cruise ship in the Caribbean. One of the members of the band told me to get off the ship. It was going to sink.

"Sure enough, two years later the ship sank off Florida. I think a lot of people lost their lives."

Chanin is blue eyed and masterfully constructed, 36-21-35. Her figure plays no small role in her modest success: video guest shots with Dean Martin, Dick Van Dyke, Jonathan Winters, Jack Benny and others.

"I've decided I don't want to be a super-star," Chanin said. "But I've got my own chinchilla coat. The furrie says I wear it so much even on scorching days that I'm liable to wear it out.

"I told him it was my security blanket. Anyway, you can't live too carefully. You could be walking down Sunset Boulevard and get hit by an airplane, you know?

"Right now I'm saving my quarters for another chinchilla and planning to visit Dayton before this one wears out."

Becomes Cause Celebre

Miss Hale became a cause celebre by attending a Paramount Studios costume ball as Eve. She carried an apple and wore the skimpiest of see-through bikinis with strategic flowers hither and thither. The photographs of Chanin became collectors items with GIs in Vietnam.

Chanin went on a tour of Europe for three months entertaining troops, sponsored by the State Department.

"I was so busy traveling and singing I didn't get to see any of the ruins or museums," she pouted.

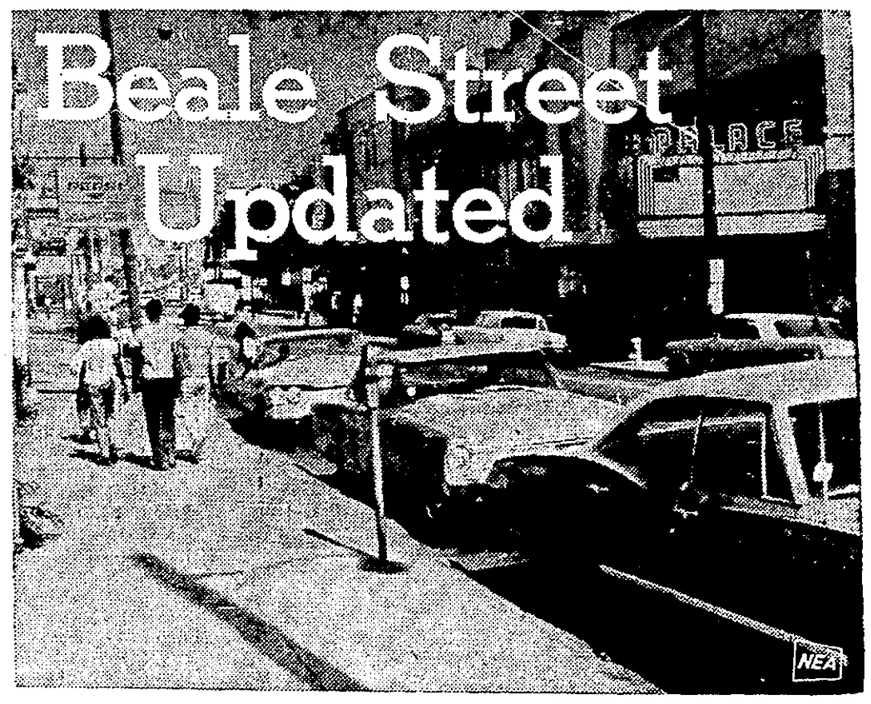
"Let me tell you, travelling and working is a vivacious cycle. (that's what she said.) The next time I'm going to Europe it will be just as a person. But I don't know when that will be.

"With the chinchilla coat and all I can't afford to keep myself in the manner to which I've made myself accustomed."

Promoted

HOLLYWOOD (UPI)—Gene Evans has played some 100 servicemen roles in movie and television as an enlisted man, but becomes a colonel in "There Was a Crooked Man."

Birthplace Of The 'Blues' To Be Modernized



By ROGER DOUGHTY
NEA News Editor

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (NEA) — "Ive been trying to get the old man to move away from here for years," smiled Maurice Hulbert Jr., a lanky young man in his 20s. Leaning against a printing press, one ear cocked to the unsteady beat of an air conditioner, Hulbert nodded toward his father. "He talks about it sometimes," the son continued, "but they will carry him out in a box. Beale Street is in his blood."

"It all started here a long time ago," explains Hulbert Sr., a nattily attired Negro in his 70s. "This is the cradle of the only original American art form. This is where the blues were born. This, mister, is Beale Street."

Hulbert says the name with pride. He's the mayor of Beale Street, the old-timers tell you, and he remembers things as they once were.

This year marks the 150th birthday of this bustling Mississippi River port and "The Mayor" has seen a lot of its history written right here on Beale. Once it rivaled Greenwich Village for color and notoriety. Both have slipped a long way.

Shade your eyes to the sun and squint through the time-worn window of Hulbert's print shop and you can see Beale Street as it is today—the way his son sees it.

"Nothing here," says the young man, downing a soft drink. "Nothing but old buildings and memories of a lot of things that probably never happened in the first place. There's still good music—Booker T. lives here and Johnny Winter and Albert King are in town this weekend, but they're not on Beale Street. Nothing is."

Whatever it once was, Beall isn't much today. The official Memphis guidebook calls it dilapidated, which is being kind.

The Memphis Housing Authority sees Beale not as it is or was but as it will be after a $240 million urban renewal project plows under the rubble and gives birth to a " 'blue-light' district of night clubs and restaurants reminiscent of Beale Street's colorful past."

Whatever that means, it's bound to be an improvement. But the old ways die hard in places like this and the future can be frightening to the hardy handful of Beale Streeters who were here shortly after the turn of the century when W. C. Handy used to spread his music sheets on the cigar counter of Pee Wee's saloon. Handy wrote "The Memphis Blues" at Pee Wee's, getting his inspiration from the street, but that was a long, long time ago.

"The white kids like the blues," says Hulbert the elder, shutting the door to his shop behind him and stepping into the mind-bending heat, "and Handy would have liked that. His music was for everybody. If you ask me, he was way ahead of his time."

Walking along Beale, past the long-boarded-up Daisy Theater, where the rank smell of urine fills the air, the ghosts of happier times are everywhere—and Handy's spirit dominates the street. His statue casts a giant shadow from its perch in Handy Park, where pigeons land disrespectively on the stone likeness of the great man's trumpet and sleeping drifters take cover from the sun.

"Back around 1910," Hulbert recalls, "things were really happening around here. Handy was at his best and there was gambling and corn whisky and policy houses and plenty of women and good times. Lots of things went on here that wasn't right with the law, but they were right as far as we were concerned. As the kids say now, we were doing our own thing."

Which may explain why, on a blistering Saturday with the temperature nudging the 97-degree mark at noon, a half-dozen white kids from half a country away walk down Beale, shading their eyes from the sun, searching for the truth.

"I didn't come all the way down here to see a lot of broken-down buildings and cracked-up sidewalk," explains Bob Thomas, a New Yorker who says he's skipping his college graduation to be here for a blues festival. "I came to hear the music, but I figured that as long as I'm here I might just as well see the street. This is where 'soul' was born, in the truest sense of the word. When you listen to Winter or Jimi Hendrix, or Janis Joplin or Charley Musselwhite, you know their roots are here, even if they have never been near this street. If it hadn't been for Handy, there wouldn't be much worth listening to today."

And so it is that the late W. C., a quiet genius whose music made other people rich, has taken his place today as the man who closed the generation gap. Those who remember him well don't seem too surprised by his most recent accomplishment.

"Handy wasn't much when it came to getting paid," recalls Robert Henry, a 79-year-old pool room operator. "I remember when his band used to make $2.50 a night right across the street from my place. Funny thing was, the white folks always liked Handy the most. The blacks never did think too much of him until he packed up and moved to New York.

"But Handy's music was the real thing. The songs of the fields, the long days in the sun, the hard times, it was all there. Handy told it like it was a long time before anybody thought up that expression. First time I heard it, I thought they must have had Handy in mind when they made it up."

A block or so away, in a house that's scheduled to be torn down to make way for that $240 million project, Otto Lee, a member of Handy's last band, collects pictures and clippings of his former friend and waits for the bulldozer.

"I used to call him Professor Handy," Lee says in a quiet, pleasant voice. "There were other bands, but Handy was the master. He wanted to have a band that would make headlines from Beale Street to Broadway, but it never worked out. Professor Handy would have liked things the way they are today. He was such an honest man who believed in love and kindness that he would have liked playing for these young folks."

Just around the corner, in an old hotel that has seen better days, Sun Smith, a blind trumpeter well into his 70s, fingers his horn while sitting in the breeze of a fan and gets ready to go to work.

"I play some new songs, like 'Chicago'," Sun says, slipping his mouthpiece into his instrument, "but mostly I play Handy's music. 'St. Louis Blues', 'Memphis Blues', 'Beale Street Blues', those are the songs people like to hear, especially the young people. The blues never did go away, but now they're really back. The blues are gonna outlast me."

The blues outlasted Handy, outlasted Beale Street as he knew it and will outlast the street as it is today. The blues, it would appear, are gonna' outlast us all.

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CUMBERLAND, MD., TIMES-NEWS, SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 1969

GIVING CONCERT IN ROME — The Warren Junior Military Band of Cleveland, Ohio, is shown performing on the Spanish Steps in Rome, Italy. The band currently is in Europe on a concert tour. (AP Photofax)