



Gareth has a son—Gareth Jr. (below)—by his ex-wife Carole

FIGHTING NEARLY COST ME MY JOB

says TV tough-guy Gareth Hunt

New *Avengers* star Gareth Hunt is an easy-going kind of fella. Away from the camera he's not at all deadly.

But the ex-Merchant Navy lad is treading a tight-rope. Like Gambit from the TV series, he's always having to look over his shoulder.

Since a court case in which he was alleged to have had a thumping night out, Gareth, aged 36, has been playing it softly softly.

Magistrates cleared Gareth in March of having used his fists on a pastry cook after an argument in a pub.

Yet the Nescafé coffee firm had doubts about signing him up for another batch

of commercials because of the incident. And that could have meant a gaping £30,000-a-year hole in his pocket.

"Frightening, isn't it?" sighed Gareth. "All over nothing, as well.

"I haven't changed at all over the years: I'm not big-headed or arrogant. But I realise now how careful I have to be.

Aware

"I never really believed that there was a place I couldn't go to because of my screen image. Now I'm aware of it. You stand to lose so much when you get involved in this kind of thing.

"Who wants to go off and hide away because some people out there really believe you're like that guy on the TV? But I'm having second thoughts."

Now Gareth has found somewhere away from it all. And somebody special to be with at his new home in the Surrey countryside near Cobham—the late Keith Moon's former fiancée, lovely Annette Walter-Lax.

They fell for one another before Christmas: she still mourning the death of the wild rock star, he getting over the break-up of a long romance.

For Gareth, who is divorced from his wife Carole and has a teenage son, Gareth Jr., it's not only his personal life that's been changing.

With the New *Avengers* over, Gareth knew he was at a dangerous professional crossroad.

"But I had to go and see the BBC about an important part," he said. "I knew there was little chance of my getting it.

"But I felt the need to reinstate myself as a person and not just someone who stands and looks pretty.

"They said they thought of me as a kind of male model. I went nuts when I heard that."

So Gareth is determinedly moving in a new direction. He won a starring role in the film *The World Is Full Of Married Men*, with Carroll Baker. And soon he will be off to film *Kumazi* with Trevor Howard and Christopher Plummer.

Gareth's out to show people he's not just a pretty face... or a Gambit-type tough guy either. Just, in fact, an actor with still unexplored potential.

As he put it: "I'm still a rough diamond. Still uncut. One day somebody is going to get hold of me and, shape me. Then you'll see."

Alan Leigh



The late Keith Moon's former girlfriend, Annette Walter-Lax (above), now lives with Gareth

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

● I SUPPOSE you could call it a case of keeping it in the business... Roger Moore's latest wartime thriller *Escape To Athena*, which co-stars Elliott Gould and Telly Savalas, was filmed on Anthony Quinn's land on the island of Rhodes. Quinn acquired the land after he made *Guns Of Navarone*, *Escape's* director George Cosmatos tells me.

● SEEN out together in Hollywood recently, Christopher Reeve and Pam Daw-

ber, Mindy of TV's hit off-beat comedy *Mork And Mindy*. I'm told they were spotted in one of Los Angeles' more fashionable restaurants holding hands. And after a party at the *Mork And Mindy* studios they left together in the same car.

● LOVELY Dyan Cannon stole the thunder from *Charlie's Angels*, accidentally, a little while ago. By mistake, she wandered near the film set with her daughter Jennifer.

● POP superstar Rod Stewart (right) is so weight-conscious that I gather he sticks to one meal a day to ensure he keeps his figure.

● HOW'S this for a bit of gossip? Pat Boone has revealed he developed his musical talent as a boy... singing to a cow on his family farm.

● AGATHA Christie's *The Mousetrap*, now in its 27th year, recently set another record when it clocked up its 11,000th performance in London's West End.