



GARETH HUNT  
AND  
JOANNA LUMLEY

NEW AVENGERS  
IN CANADA

The World's  
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## THE NEW AVENGERS



Gambit (Gareth Hunt) and Purdey (Joanna Lumley) in action

Front Cover by Bruce Macaulay

On a rare sunny day in late September, two doughty British agents were attempting to thwart a Russian intelligence mission with a base near Ward's Island in Toronto Bay. Already a Canadian operative had been killed and the game had become deadly dangerous.

The two British agents were Purdey and Gambit, and the mission on which they were risking their very lives was an episode of *The New Avengers*, entitled *Forward Base*, the fourth of seven that will be filmed in Canada. Purdey is willowy, blond Joanna Lumley, 31, who borrowed her series name from a manufacturer of shotguns. Gambit is handsome Gareth Hunt, 33, who was Frederick the footman in the series *Upstairs, Downstairs*.

Purdey and Gambit had had a normally improbable day. The Canadian agent who had been murdered had dug up a Russian missile guidance unit which had been buried by a double agent, Ivan Halfhide. They had reinterred the mis-

sile — an advanced Mark VI device — and staked it out, waiting for Ivan Halfhide to return.

Sure enough, Ivan returned and there began a chase that is probably the slowest in television history. Ivan flees in a large white swan which he perloined from the children's amusement area on Ward's Island. Purdey and Gambit follow doggedly in an identical swan. The pursuit careens through the island lagoons at a giddy two knots, a pace roughly equivalent to the cruising speed of one of the Canada geese which have set up housekeeping on Ward's Island.

Ivan Halfhide dumps the missile guidance unit into Lake Ontario. Purdey dives and comes up with an outmoded Mark V device. In the meantime, the doughty Steed, a role played by Patrick Macnee, has unearthed vital information which, when collated with what Purdey and Gambit

## WESSELY HICKS

National Editor, *TV Times*

have discovered, leads to the Russian base which is located in a submarine that slipped into Lake Ontario during a typhoon in 1969.

That, in essence, is the plot of *Forward Base*, an episode in *The New Avengers* series which is now appearing on the CTV network. The series, which is produced in Canada by Nielsen-Ferns, Inc., now appears in 70 countries, including Cyprus, Gibraltar and Malta, as well as 83 cities in the U.S. *Forward Base*, and the other six Canadian episodes, will appear in 1978, beginning in January.

At the luncheon break on this September day, Joanna Lumley and Gareth Hunt sprawled on blankets on the grass and nibbled at grapes and apples and other exotic native foods which are fed to secret service operatives. Up close, they appear to be normal people, only much better looking.

They have ten days to shoot

each episode. There is no budget for an extra day's filming and often, the episodes overlap. Then, the cast is required to appear in two separate segments which eases the strain on the budget and increases the pressure on the actors.

So it was natural that, while they were working on *Forward Base*, Gareth Hunt and Joanna Lumley were discussing an episode which was scheduled to be filmed in Niagara Falls, Ont., several weeks hence.

"We'll probably be asked to go over the Falls in a barrel," Gareth was saying.

"How about going over the Falls on water skis?" Joanna said.

"That would be better than a barrel," Gareth said. "I hate being shut up in a tiny space like that."

"But just one take," Joanna said. "I don't want to hear anyone say: 'Let's see it just once more.'"

"Right," Gareth said. "I'm not all that good on water skis."