

# Patrick Macnee A View To Tibbett

By David Caruba

The one scene you definitely will not see in "A View To A Kill" is one of Patrick Macnee *waltzing* with Roger Moore. Macnee, the debonair, veteran British actor, portrays one of M's agents, Tibbett, an accomplished member of Her Majesty's Secret Service. Off-screen, Macnee and Moore have been friends for years.

In a lighthearted moment on the set of a French castle, the devilish Moore wandered over to Macnee. "Roger approached me and said, 'You like to lead, don't you?', so I led the two of us in a waltz around the entire production crew," Macnee recalls. "To do that you certainly need to be secure in your masculinity!"

Both Macnee and Moore have thrived on their indisputably masculine charm. They met at Pinewood Studios in the late 1960s and, ironically, in the intervening years both have become internationally famous as agents of British Secret Service. Moore assumed the James Bond role in 1973 while Macnee created the

character of John Steed in the beloved 1960s TV phenomenon, *The Avengers*.

It was Moore, in fact, who recommended Macnee for the role of a fellow agent in *A View To A Kill*. "Roger Moore suggested me for the part and I ended up being killed—as all good actors do in Bond films," Macnee said.

## Sir Tibbett

His character, Tibbett, works undercover as a racehorse trainer. M introduces Tibbett to Bond when 007 learns of villainous Max Zorin's (Christopher Walken) passion for racing and penchant for breeding incredibly successful horses.

"The two of us investigate Zorin and learn how his horses always manage to win. It turns out he's using steroids," Macnee explained, noting that, besides their behind-the-scenes waltz, he was also saddled (by the plot) with leading Moore around on-screen.

"After Tibbett's cover as a racehorse trainer, he becomes Bond's chauffeur,"

Macnee laments. "I ended up carrying all of Bond's bags, at least 10 of them—and badly bruised my elbow. The pain was certainly worth it because the scene is quite funny."

Disguised as a chauffeur, Tibbett takes Bond to Zorin's Stud Farm for a sale of thoroughbred horses. The two superpies waste no time investigating the farm, locating a large, automated warehouse beneath the stables.

"We filmed those scenes in a Renault factory in England," Macnee said. "The factory was entirely automated—we were really the only living people there. It was quite exciting and quite weird."

The identities of both agents are soon discovered, leading to a climactic confrontation between Tibbett and Zorin's assassin assistant, May Day (Grace Jones). Macnee believed the idea that he, a more traditional actor, would appear opposite Grace Jones, known for being very "new wave," might raise a few eyebrows. "Actually, I found her to be perfectly delightful, a tremendous



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## Patrick Macnee and Friend

Never actually rode a horse on set

talent," he observed, though admitting that he declined Jones' invitation to take him on a tour of her London. "She does live a very fast life, perhaps a bit too exciting for myself."

## From Del Mar To Ascot

Macnee, who is 63, has been in the forefront of screen excitement for some time. A perfect choice for *A View To A Kill*, he was able to draw on his own extensive knowledge of horses for the Tibbett role. His father was a racehorse trainer and Macnee spent most of his early childhood around horses. Did he

"Not quite the same as Del Mar, right Pat?"

Macnee's famed TV hero, John Steed, has much in common with James Bond. Like Bond, the urbane Steed is best described as the perfect English gentleman. He always dresses in the finest clothes, enjoys the finest food and solves some of the most bizarre crimes aided by some of the world's most beautiful women. In Macnee's case, those co-stars included Honor Blackman (who also romanced 007 as Pussy Galore in *Goldfinger*), Diana Rigg (later to become the ill-fated Mrs. Bond in *On Her Majesty's*

Like all espionage adventures, *A View To A Kill* and *The Avengers* abound in action and intricately choreographed stunt sequences. Macnee reports that stuntman Doug Robinson, another *Avengers* veteran, told Macnee the actor's fighting techniques had improved in 30 years. Referring to his injured elbow, Macnee, noted "I wish my ability to avoid injuries had done likewise."

In recent years, Macnee has found himself in demand, appearing in such movies as *The Howling* (as the werewolf psychoanalyst), *Spacship* and *This Is Spinal Tap*. On television, he portrayed the new man in charge of U.N.C.L.E. for *The Return of the Man From U.N.C.L.E.*

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He also starred in the corporate comedy series *Empire* and guested on *Magnus PI* (as an intelligence agent who thinks he's Sherlock Holmes), *The Hardy Boys* (as a British agent named "S"), *Battlestar Galactica*, and *The Love Boat*.

Macnee recently returned from a successful run starring in the mystery *Sleuth*. He spent early 1985 on location in Bermuda filming *Fifty Lime Street*. "I play Robert Wagner's M in the movie. It's an adventure/romance based on two insurance agents."

## Recalling Old Times

As Tibbett in *A View To A Kill*, Macnee shared the location with Roger Moore for two months. The duo devoted a good deal of their time on the set discussing old times and past mysteries. This isn't the first instance they've battled evil together. "The last time we teamed up," Macnee explains, "I played Dr. Watson opposite Roger's Holmes in the TV movie, *Sherlock Holmes in New York*."

"And I enjoyed making *A View To A Kill* very much. After all, acting is certainly the only job where you don't have to retire at age 60. I hope to keep going well into my 80s."

Perhaps in his next screen assignment, Patrick Macnee will once again get to demonstrate his dancing skills, waltzing around with a beautiful actress as befits a still dashing, British gentleman and super screen agent.



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Tibbett

ways ready for a close shave

at all during the Bond location lensing? "Heavens no," Macnee said. "I only admired them from afar."

Producer Albert "Cubby" Broccoli enjoys watching horses and first met Macnee at a race course in Del Mar.

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Broccoli. "We were filming the film's opening scenes in Ascot in England," he recalled. "All of us were dressed in top hats. We were quite a sight. Cubby came on the set and said,

Secret Service.) Linda Thorson and Joanna Lumley (who also had a small role in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*.)

"I pretty much considered Steed a character in the past," Macnee observed, "although he certainly didn't hinder me getting the role in the Bond movie."

## An Avengers Reunion

In many ways, filming *A View To A Kill* was also a reunion for Macnee. Alan Hume, the film's director of photography, had worked with Macnee on *The Avengers* for four years, as had several other crew members. "It was really like coming home," Macnee says.