



Jack Lord
Talks About His
Mother and Father:

**“they
were
two
brutes...”**

"In almost any relationship there's a weak one and a strong one. But my parents were two brutes. Equally strong. They each had their own function and own strength to add to the tandem, and tandem is the right word. That's exactly what it was," Jack finished. He reflected for a moment, then said, "My old man had a strange combination of tremendous strength and gentleness—a real family man." You could see the admiration on his face. "This guy fought with his hands most of his life. And my brothers and I did the same, which didn't bother him, not as long as we were truthful and honest, the qualities that he instilled in us. The qualities I hope are there in me today. He looked like that marvelous painting of John Brown with his hair flying . . . big and tough and Irish. And that's just how he was. William Lawrence Ryan. He

made over a million dollars in five years. Lost it, then made it back again. He lost it during the depression," Jack said matter-of-factly. "Ships were his business. His business and his passion. A genius with ships, my old man. He moved ships around the way most men would move automobiles. Starting as a master mariner, he built up his own company within ten years and made a fortune sailing ships from Singapore to Hong Kong and on up the China coast. That's a fabulous part of the world. I've sailed it myself, was on one of the last American ships to leave Shanghai in '48," he remarked. "My dad had five ships, all angels: Steel Angel, Arch Angel . . . and so forth. My mother—Josephine O'Brien she'd been before she married—was an Irish matriarch, just as strong as he was. Amazing. She was a real homebody, the homemaker, and to this day I appreciate home, appreciate my home and my wife as only perhaps someone can who spent years at sea as I did. My wife, Marie, is in many ways similar to my mother. Two different women, totally unlike, but with similar tastes

and affections. Deeply feminine both of them. My mother ran a beautiful home and my dad liked to come back from his travels to it," Jack went on. "He travelled a great deal, but he was home for long periods, too, and his influence guided me in so many ways. Literature for example. He was a great reader. He had a fantastic collection of books, a complete edition of Dickens on India paper and bound in Morocco leather. He went through the entire set of Dickens, reading to my brother Bill and me every night. Our brothers, Thomas and Robert, and our little sister Josephine were too young for Dickens; but for Bill and me, Dickens read in our father's deep, sonorous voice was marvelous. And he really interested us in books. Every Saturday we'd go down to 14th Street where all the good book stores are and spend hours going through books. When we found something treasured, he'd buy it for us; we loved these trips.

Dad paid us a penny a line to learn poetry," Jack continued. "I memorized hundreds and hundreds of poems, all of which proved useful later when I had to learn lines. Any mental gymnastics stand one in good stead. Everything you've done contributes in some way. The gentleness of art . . . the magic of the theatre (my dad took us to all the Broadway shows) . . . the toughness of the sailor . . . the discipline of the sea . . . the prowess of the athlete . . . the moral courage of a very strict Christian upbringing. These are the things which changed my life and I owe them all to him. They were all things I developed in my father's image." And as Jack Lord tells you all himself, it merges, somehow, (Continued on page 100)

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with his description of Steve McGarrett when "Hawaii Five-O" first went on the air. "I love the character. McGarrett is physically tough but he is also a gentleman," he told me. "I like to call him 'the compassionate cop'. He'll offer a new image of a policeman. Someone once told me that the most popular man on TV is a man who holds the power of life and death.

Jack has been in Hollywood, but not in the least ruled by Hollywood, since '55. He is an actor who would not sign a contract when every major studio offered him one . . . a man whose goal was actually to be one of the great actors of his generation . . . a man who turned down the leads in 22 series (including "Ben Casey," "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.," and "Wagon Train") after the demise of his first starrer, the one-season wonder, "Stoney Burke," which he's always called "the most successful failure in television." Jack has never downgraded Hollywood. "It's made me rich and it's made me famous," he admits.

During the years in Hollywood, he and Marie were never part of the scene. "I would say we are indifferent to it," he used to say. "I like people. We have small dinner parties, maybe for six. They're people we want to be with, who have some of the same interests. We're very satisfied. I'm not reaching for anything socially or economically, but artistically, I'll never stop." About their beautiful condominium at a beach on the island of Oahu he says, "We have an ivory tower, furnished with the things we love, our books, our art collection. We have no children, no relatives, and are totally dedicated to each other and to our marriage. Marie is all I care about in this world."

He is a star of stature now . . . he is also a wealthy man (with an interest in "Hawaii Five-O"). *Who's Who* lists him as **JACK LORD: actor, artist, writer.** For his paintings hang in the New York Metropolitan and other galleries all over the world and his screen credits include the TV series "Tramp Ship," "The Hunter" series, "Yankee Trader," "McAdoo," and the movie, "Melissa." He is also a photographer of note and has just assembled one hundred of his favorite color prints for a book, "Jack Lord's Hawaii." But above all, in the very toughness and tenderness he brings to every project, he is Bill Ryan's boy . . .

John Joseph Patrick Ryan from Halsey Street, Brooklyn. "A tough Irish, Jewish, Polish neighborhood across the street from a park," as today's Jack Lord recalls. "I could fight like a steer. I started as a kid boxing in the Police Athletic League and we learned to use our mitts."

"I wanted to go to sea as a cadet, which is a very lush, push job on the bridge, but
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my dad said no. 'No, if you are going to sea, son, you're going in the forecandle.'

It was the beginning of a whole new life. "I can never define the sea," he says. "It's a nebulous thing. But the experience, the knowledge, the whole world you move through is an eye opener! My God, and at 14 years!

He was a pretty mature kid by the time he went to NYU on a football scholarship.

But his interest in the sea persisted, too. At Fort Trumbull Academy in New London, Connecticut, he earned a third mate's ticket and served in the Merchant Marine during World War II, shipping out on Liberty ships on daring voyages. He finished the war as a Mate Navigator with a Presidential citation from Harry Truman, then spent a year in Persia as a steel worker with the U.S. Engineering department. Then he worked for a couple of years with the U.S. Maritime Service in Washington making maritime training films. It was when he was doing this that he began to think of acting as a career. Returning to New York he got himself a job in an automobile sales room on 55th Street and enrolled at the Neighborhood Playhouse under famed drama coach Sanford Meisner.

"Meisner really opened me up," Jack remembers. "I was closed, introverted, a scared guy. He had me leave the room that first day and return with an improvisation of a ham Shakespearean actor. I was petrified; I must have stood outside the door for 15 minutes.

"He was always intense," Meisner will tell you about Jack. "I admire that in him. He has an absolute set of principles and lives by them." Bill Ryan's boy, Jack Lord. He took the name for theatrical purposes because Ryan sounded too much like a police commissioner. In 1953, he resigned his job at the Cadillac agency and set out to become a professional actor.

With him completely on that decision was his wife, Marie, whom he had met while he was still in the Merchant Marine. Marie de Narde was a young French fashion designer. "Meeting her made all the difference," he's always said. "She gave my life purpose." She brought to him the sort of strength his mother had brought to his father.

They have a rare marriage, this Lord and his lady. But then, Jack has always been a rare man. Success can and has confused many men, *claimed* them. It's a price Jack isn't about to pay. He is his own man as his dad was . . . dead serious . . . ambitious . . . colorful . . . an ageless epic hero with something fiercely youthful in both his handsome person and his idealistic thinking . . . very much the man his dad would have had him be.

"The way to train a kid is not by discipline, but by example," he says, looking back. "Sometimes when I did things, my old man would say, 'It hurts me to see you do that, son. It's not the way I brought you up.' *That* cut me deeper than any lash." It gave John Joseph Patrick Ryan a measure to live by. He's been living up to it ever since—on screen and off.

—Roland Miller

See Jack Lord in "Hawaii Five-O," Wed., 10:00 P.M., EST, CBS-Television Net.