

JACK LORD'S
INCREDIBLE STORY:

“Together We Beat The World!”

As Jack Lord walked away from the canvas chair on the perimeter of the “Hawaii Five-O” location in Liliuokalani Park, a small, beautiful boy watched wonderingly, his velvet-dark eyes riveted on the star’s broad back. The little boy was a neighborhood kid, one of dozens of youngsters who’d spilled out of bungalows near the park to watch the television company working there.

While Jack had been sitting in his canvas chair, the little boy with several friends had hovered near him, silent and magnetized. It was only as the star walked away, back to his work before cameras, that the child broke silence. Staring after him, the youngster demanded, “Is he the real one?”

Yes, he was seeing the real Jack Lord, but only one of the real Jack Lords, for the actor who’s playing Steve McGarrett for the ninth year is so complex a person, he’s many men.

Years ago, when Jack was a neophyte actor getting established on Broadway, Josh Logan said something to him so pertinent it’s been quoted over and over again. Jack had tested for the role of the young, virginal cowboy, *Bo*, in “Bus Stop,” but didn’t get the part, because Logan told him, “You’ll never play a virgin, kid. Your face looks too lived in.”

And, even so early, it had been lived in, for, almost from birth, Jack has lived hard, has lived many lives, has been a person of surprisingly diverse talents and experiences, which have contributed to the rich diversity of his personality.

As all his fans know, he’s a former Merchant Marine officer and college athlete who attended NYU on a football scholarship. He’s a very tough guy when he has to be, but, because his toughness is real, a part of his natural fiber, he doesn’t flaunt it.

However, Jack is much more than that. As his fans also know, he’s a gifted painter whose works are in museums and who can sell everything he paints for fat prices; he’s a professional writer who created the television series “Tramp Ship”; he’s a skilled photogra-

pher; he’s a man who can quote yards of poetry at will; and he’s also an actor-director who, more than anyone else, is responsible for the success of “Hawaii Five-O.” So the little boy’s question, “Is he the real one?” was a perceptive query.

One of the real Jack Lords, the one who supervises almost every detail of “Hawaii Five-O” with informed authority, came back to his canvas chair after a take to talk about this year’s time change for the series. A little girl, in an ankle-length, mud-stained, white shift, stood boldly before him, knee-high to the star, and asked, “Can I have a bullet?”

Jack’s eyes twinkled. “I don’t have any,” he said.

“Please,” begged the little girl. “Can’t I have just one?”

“Honest,” Jack said. “I don’t have any. Look.” He opened his prop gun and twirled the empty chamber.

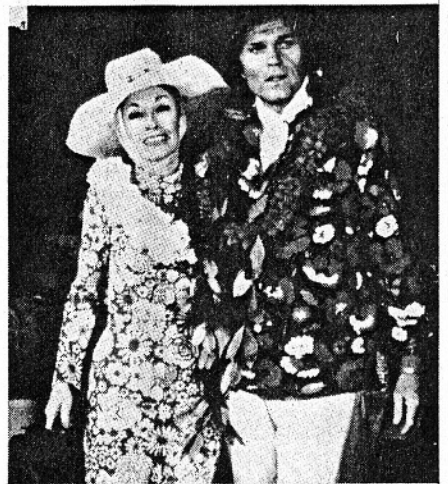
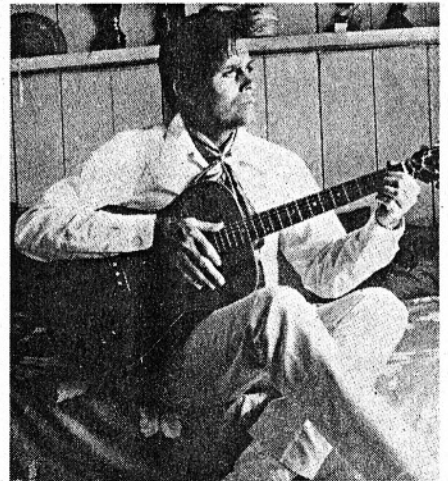
The child seemed satisfied and danced away.

“I didn’t welcome this change in time to Friday night,” Jack said, “but I’m not fearful about it. We were in the same spot for four years, and did well there. But I believe we’ll do well where we are, and I think the network believes so, too, or it wouldn’t have moved us.”

Quality, to Lord, is imperative. The shoddy and second rate won’t do. “I think we discard more scripts than any show on television,” he said. “With a lot of shows, if they put X-amount of dollars into a script, they feel they have to put it on film. But we’ve never believed in that, because there’s no sense throwing good money after bad.

“We’re spending about \$300,000 per episode, so we have to be damned sure that what we put on film is worth being put on film. Occasionally, we miss. We get trapped or something, but that doesn’t happen very often.

“I’m death on bad scripts. I’ve told producers, ‘I won’t do that one.’ But more than scripts—so many things—are responsible for our ratings. I think this whole ambience of Hawaii is a factor. The suc- (Continued on page 20)



Jack plays a tough detective on TV, but in real life he’s a sensitive man of many moods—one who is thoroughly committed to wife Marie, his family and God.

PSORIASIS TREATMENT SUIT



ELIMINATES WRAPPING IN PLASTIC

Lightweight, non-toxic Vinyl two-piece suit. Elastic at all openings seals in body heat to make medication penetrate deeper. Eliminates wrapping in plastic. Eliminates staining clothes and sheets. Used at Duke University Hospital, many others. Washable. Lasts for months. At Your Druggist or order direct. Sizes: S 28-34, M 36-40, L 42-44, XL 46-48, XXL 50-56. \$5.95 plus .75¢ postage . . . Slim-Ez Suit Co. 157 6th Ave. N.E., Dept. (Key), St. Petersburg, Fla. 33701. Dealers Invited

JACK LORD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

cess of the show has enabled me to do all the things I always wanted to do. That's the nicest thing. But I don't think it's changed me much, except that I believe I'm more relaxed than I used to be.

"Putting things in terms of a football game, I think the scrimmaging is over. I don't believe you can rest on your trophies, but we've gotten what they call in the movie business 'legs.' The legs are down. The foundation's built. And, whether we're on Tuesday nights or Friday nights, we have a loyal audience who will watch the show."

Called back to the set, Jack left his chair, which was promptly pre-empted by the little boy who'd asked whether the star was real. He wasn't playing cowboy or knight in shining armor or *Superman* or any of the heroes most moppets emulate. "I'm Jack Lord," he declared with satisfaction as he pressed his back against the canvas Jack's back had so recently pressed. His was the ultimate tribute.

His scene completed, Jack came back to the spot where he'd last seen the little girl who'd wanted the bullet. "Where is she?" he asked, his hand full of empty casings. He was making pets of the kids, enjoying them, spoiling them a little bit, revealing through his open fondness for the little people one of the many real Jack Lords.

"I've always had a reputation for turning down scripts whether I was rich or broke," he said, picking up an interrupted theme. "I was out of work for nine months once, because I wouldn't play another heavy. I've always exercised what I thought was my best judgment and have never once taken a job just for money. Never once in my life."

Before he came to Hollywood, Lord played leading men on Broadway, but, upon entering movies he was assigned a parade of villainous roles until he cried, "Enough.

"I played really tough, mean bastards,"

he remembered, "until eventually when a role like that came up they were saying, 'Get Jack Lord.' I love to play heavies, because they bring muscles into action you don't use as a leading man, but I played so many I finally said to my wife, 'I don't want to go that route anymore.' Every actor should be able to play a rainbow of parts. I didn't want to get locked into one hue."

So Jack told his agent that he wouldn't play another villain, and, as a result, he didn't play anything for three quarters of a year. Finally he went to Los Angeles columnist and critic Cecil Smith and explained his problem. "I need your help," Jack said, "a column." And Smith graciously obliged.

"I still have that column," Jack said. "Anyway, two days after it ran, I got a call from E.A. Doran at Paramount saying he'd read what Cecil had written and that he had a part he thought I might like. It was the lead in 'Walk Like A Dragon,'" written and directed by James Clavell of "Shogon," "King Rat" and "Taipan" fame.

Jack took it, of course, and from that point, his movie career was on the upswing. It had taken courage for him to hold out nine months awaiting the right role, but it had taken perhaps even more courage on the part of his wife, Marie, to back him in his decision. But she'd never questioned the wisdom of his stance.

"I have a very unusual wife," Lord pointed out. "Earlier, when I'd told her that I was giving up an \$18,000-a-year job as a Cadillac salesman to try to become an actor, she'd only said one word, 'Go.' The average lady wouldn't have reacted that way, because the average lady needs security, and I don't blame her for the need. It's natural. But my wife let me put the whole pile of chips on the line and roll with it. And what were the odds? Millions to one."

Asked to cite the most precious day of his marriage, the one he'd most like to live over, Lord was momentarily silent. "That's hard to answer," he said, "because our marriage has been a progression of precious days. My wife and I [he seldom refers to her as Marie] don't believe in astrology, but we sometimes kid each other, because her sign is the Lion and mine is the Goat, so, according to astrological charts, we aren't supposed to get along at all. We don't match, but we fooled the heavens. We've been together now for 22 years.

"The beginning of a marriage is supposed to be the best, but, in our case, our relationship has deepened continually as the love, admiration, and respect we feel for each other has grown. I sometimes think that, as we grow older, we hold each other more dear, because we know that we've beaten the world. We've done what we set out to do and we've done it on our own terms.

"By and large, it was dedication and sacrifice and all the noble things you read about in story books which made the happy ending possible. The faith my wife has in me—her belief that I can do whatever I set out to do—has never wavered for an instant."

Another call to work interrupted the conversation which, with Jack's next break,

veered to another topic. "This is my swan so far as a series goes," he said, answering a question. "When 'Hawaii Five-O' is over, my work will be directing, because directing is a whole, new wonderful world. It's like painting, because, when you direct, you're responsible for the total canvas instead of only the colors you bring to it as an actor. The concept, the execution, the camera set-ups, the lighting . . . you can shape and influence them all. The director puts his stamp, his hallmark on the product. That's why a movie directed by John Ford is called a John Ford movie.

"Strangely enough, I most admire comedy directors, because comedy is so difficult to achieve. Mel Brooks, in his strange way, is a genius; his taste is sometimes different from mine, but I consider him original, remarkable and inventive.

"I like Billy Wilder's work because of the way he can walk the tightrope between drama and comedy, and I've always admired Willy Wyler because of the monumental effort he's brought to film. I heard someone ask him once how he could keep up his enthusiasm for a year on a project like 'Ben Hur,' and he said, 'Day by day.'"

Keeping up enthusiasm is something Jack's done well over the long haul of his relationship with *Steve McGarrett*, his television alter ego. "I continually try to expose different facets of *McGarrett*," Jack said, "the way that one does with a character in a long-running Broadway play. I don't always achieve this, but the challenge is always there: It's an exercise in acting and discipline.

"I begin each day by thinking, 'Gee, I have a marvelous, new guest star from Hollywood to work with in this segment,' or, 'I have a great, new script.' In the series, I keep playing the same character, but I don't have to do the same play over and over. Every morning I have a page of script I've never worked with before, so there's a freshness to each day.

"A producer has asked me to star in a picture during my next hiatus, and I may do that. I'm not at liberty to name the producer, but he made a survey of exhibitors in which I placed fifth or sixth among the people they wanted in a movie. This was a pleasant surprise to me, because I had no idea I had that sort of name value in that area.

"Meanwhile, I have a property I want to put on film when 'Hawaii Five-O' ends. Called 'Melissa,' it's the story of my father's life at sea, a great story of an American sea captain operating in the China Seas. I'll either star in the picture or direct it, but I won't do both, because I'm not going to try an Orson Welles. Not that I don't admire Orson. I do. But I can't watch myself objectively. Also, as an actor, you may want to do a scene again, while, as a director, you may think, 'Well, we got that shot, so let's press on.' I don't want to try to handle both jobs at once.

"No, I won't tell you why the picture will be called, 'Melissa.' That's a secret. But it will be a love story, and it will be a very big production with a six million dollar budget,

(Continued on page 52)

JACK

LORD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

at least. Making it will mean working up and down the China Coast, in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan. And that's why I can't do it until 'Hawaii Five-O' has run its course."

Like other successful television shows, "Five-O" has been criticized for its violence, which, according to one magazine poll, is the most excessive on the air. But the criticism doesn't bother Lord. "I say, 'Nonsense,'" said Jack.

"All police shows are violent. They have to be, because we live in a violent world. What do the critics expect us to do? Shows about high school boys and girls? Networks have tried teacher shows, and you know what's happened to them. They've taken their sabbaticals.

"What most people fail to realize is that conflict is the life blood of drama, whether it's man against beast as in 'Jaws,' man against the elements, man against himself or man against some other strong antagonist. Head-on conflict is the essence of drama, and that's what we try to get. Just read Mr. Shakespeare. When we have a strong character working against *McGarrett*, we get our best shows. On the other hand, when you're working against a weak antagonist, it's like throwing a ball against a putty wall. Nothing comes back."

Naturally, because of its success, "Hawaii Five-O" has been copied but never duplicated. "That's true," Jack noted. "From time to time a producer will say, 'What the hell. Let's do another "Hawaii Five-O."' I say, 'Let them try.' Our erstwhile producer tried it in New Orleans. It was tried in the Caribbean. It's been tried other places. But the shows didn't work, because they had no guts. Unless you have something visceral, you only come up with a weak carbon copy.

"One of the biggest troubles with television is the imitation. A producer sees one successful show and decides to make one like it. Look at 'Stoney Burke' [a series in which Jack starred]. We had the first rodeo show, and then Universal said, 'Hey, let's have one, too.' So 20 minutes later, they had 'Wide Country.' It's not easy to duplicate the success of an original. I never want to be a vest pocket edition of anything."

The shooting day had ended and cast, crew and set-side moppets were drifting away. "You know," Jack said, "I think the only thing that can save us is a return to religion. I truly believe that." His solemn comment revealed another of the real Jack Lords. For, in addition to the artistic dreamer, and the hard-nosed man of action, there's a deeply spiritual Jack Lord.

There are so many Jack Lords, it may be impossible to know them all. But it's worth the challenge to try. He's a puzzle to solve; a rare blend of talent to enjoy; and, best of all, he's a warm and giving human being to cherish.

—NANCY ANDERSON