

# Brian Clemens

BY DAVID CARUBA

While researching an article on the NEW AVENGERS for a future issue of Huntress magazine, I had the opportunity to submit a

questionnaire to Brian Clemens. Clemens is regarded as one of the finest AVENGERS writers as well as co-producer of the NEW AVENGERS series. Although most of his answers are brief, Clemens still succeeds in transferring a positive, optimistic

outlook towards the NEW AVENGERS:

Would you elaborate on the difficulties you faced updating the series to the 1970's?

"None really. A new format assured a new approach and new ideas—as has always been the case with the AVENGERS."

Do you feel the use of three main characters was successful and would you use the same number again?

"Partially. I am not sure I would go for three again, perhaps four next time, but then the AVENGERS always changes per series so that would be par for the course anyway."

Why, if you were trying to establish Purdey and Gambit as co-stars, did you allow Diana Rigg to appear in the episode, "K Is For Kill"?

"Continuity—the tip of the hat towards the past. We have always done it—Rigg episodes often mentioned and once showed the photo of Cathy Gale (Blackman). The Thorson episodes sometimes showed Rigg and Gale. We (were) just keeping up the custom. I wonder if you know though that the Rigg shots in 'K Is For Kill' were clips from the old Rigg AVENGERS (we could not get her to shoot fresh material—she was too busy)."

Considering Patrick Macnee's age when he started filming the NEW AVENGERS, do you feel his performance

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as John Steed was equal to that of the original series?

"Yes, absolutely yes."

Are there any elements in the NEW AVENGERS that you felt were stronger than the original series?

"Yes, it had more depth, more character-more heart. Or, if you prefer...the old AVENGERS were cardboard characters. In the NEW AVENGERS I used slightly thicker cardboard!"

What influenced you to create the characters Gambit and Purdey and do you feel they succeeded in continuing the AVENGERS "tradition" of co-stars?

"The need to give legs to Steed (who had aged a few years in the intervening years)-and to corner all sides of the market: Someone for the young boys (Lumley), the young girls (Hunt)-and for the afficianados (Steed)."

Joanna Lumley received many unfavorable reviews, how well do you believe she handled the role of Purdey?

"Lumley also received as many raves. I think she handled Purdey perfectly-because Purdey (the role) was Lumley-the role was shaped to fit the actress...the actual person."

What caused the filming of the NEW AVENGERS to move to Canada?

"Finance from Canada-the Canadians insisted that several

situation lead to our making episodes in France too."

What difficulties were experienced during the filming in Canada?

"The difficulties always experienced when making a series thousands of miles away from home base."

Out of the twenty-six episodes filmed, which three do you feel were the best?

"'Eagles Nest' (that hit the right mixture right up front), 'Emily' (one of the best scripts-most poorly realized, see above comment), 'Three Handed Game' (marvelous in lunacy), 'Targets' was damned good too."

In financial terms, were the NEW AVENGERS more successful than its predecessor?

"Yes. The NEW AVENGERS has sold worldwide and again got onto USA network-it has made a great deal of money."

Did any episodes of the NEW AVENGERS receive particularly high ratings in England?

"'Eagles Nest'-the first one-got to number two-thereafter they split the network here (that is, showed them at different days and different times per network), however, they all did a fine job and nobody pulled the show off."

What is the status of the television movie?

"It is still a maybe. The first person who backs it will make money."

"If he (and I) are still alive!"

Overall, how would you rate the NEW AVENGERS?

"The NEW AVENGERS just about found its feet in the U.K. when we ran into financing problems. We were just getting it right...just making that relationship work-might even have made subtle changes when things started to go adrift. I think that, with the exception of 'Trap'-the British made episodes stood up pretty well to anything that had gone before. It was the advent of the French and Canadian episodes that the series began to sag."

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What caused the filming of the NEW AVENGERS to move to Canada?

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What is the status of the television movie?

"It is still a maybe. The first person who backs it will make money. We are still trying."

Do you feel Macnee will repeat his role in the movie?

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