

'Open Door' Policy Hard for Stars to Keep



HOLLYWOOD, Jan. 12—While homes of some Hollywood stars are behind locked gates and six-foot fences, others have open driveways or unfenced lawns which permit autograph seekers or curious passersby to enter their property. The driveway entrance (top) of Clark Gable is of locked variety at his 20-acre Encino ranch home. At other extreme (below) is almost-on-the-sidewalk home of Liberace in Sherman Oaks. (AP Wirephoto)

Kidnaping Rare in Hollywood Despite Big Salaries of Stars

By JAMES BACON
HOLLYWOOD, Jan. 12 (AP) — Marie McDonald's kidnap headlines caught Hollywood with its front gates open.

And a survey among many top stars indicates that they will stay that way. Actors are different from normal people, else they wouldn't be actors. And most like to keep themselves accessible to the public.

Nothing like Marie's case has ever hit Hollywood before, although it would seem that movie stars, producers and directors would be natural targets for would-be kidnapers.

The average movie fan has only to pick up his daily newspaper to learn that Jimmy Stewart's percentage take from just one picture — "The Glenn Miller Story" — was three millions.

Or that Doris Day is getting \$250,000 for six weeks' work on "Pajama Game."

Magazines show top stars in their homes. It's not uncommon to see floor plans of movie mansions in those home magazines. Their children are often photographed and their schools mentioned.

And stars like Jayne Mansfield, Marilyn Monroe and others pose in revealing photos that can't help but excite the appetites of sex deviates.

Yet the McDonald case is really Hollywood's first kidnap scare. Police have a quick answer for the paucity of Hollywood kidnappings.

"The very publicity that tells a potential kidnaper everything he needs to know about a victim is so plentiful among movie stars that it scares off criminals," reports one veteran police lieutenant.

"Even a crackpot knows he couldn't get far with Marilyn Monroe tied up in the back seat of his car," the officer adds.

Miss McDonald told police that two swarthy abductors forced her from her home a week ago Thursday night, drove her to a hideout in Los Angeles and then transported her 120 miles more to the desert near Indian. A truck driver found her wandering dazed Friday night.

Let Men in
She told police that the men got into her house by threatening to harm her 4-month-old baby. She let them in, she said without waking her servants or a boxer watchdog.

Few movie stars live in walled mansions, with guards on patrol. Actually most live like their doctor or lawyer neighbors and probably get just as many calls from the Fuller Brush man as anyone else.

Like people everywhere else, there are extremes. Stars range from the easily accessible like Kim Novak and Liberace to recluses like Garbo.

Once I was in Kim's apartment and counted four separate instances when just plain fans rang her doorbell and asked for autographs. And she had been in the apartment only three days.

She confided that she opens the door often without looking through the peephole. She sometimes gets as many as 12 such callers a day.

Liberace's home in Sherman Oaks is built almost on the street — and with no fence. He was insistent that there be no fence.

"After all," he asks, "I want my fans to enjoy my home as much as I do." And thousands have. Some lucky ones have even been invited inside if they happened to catch the owner at home.

"People often ask me why I smile so much. Well, let's face it, I'm pretty damn happy," he answers.

All "For Sale"
But some of his neighbors aren't. At one time last winter, two houses on either side of Liberace's and three across the street

had "for sale" signs on them. One of the neighbors explained why: "It's not that the Liberaces aren't nice neighbors. They are. But those fans are terrible. When he's not home they knock on our doors and ask all sorts of personal questions about him. Some even want to peek over our fence at his piano-shaped swimming pool."

"We've had them here at 2 o'clock in the morning, believe it or not."

At the other extreme is the elusive Garbo, whose best friends don't even know whether she's in Paris, New York or Beverly Hills unless she calls them.

Another who doesn't answer his front door bell is Clark Gable. It takes a good quarter-mile of driveway to reach the Gable house from his electric gate. His Encino ranch is harder to get into than Fort Knox.

Many of the biggest stars get superior police protection by living in Beverly Hills. These include the Stewarts, George Burns and Gracie Allen, the Jack Benys, Dinah Shore and George Montgomery, Jimmy Durante and Groucho Marx.

Taken to Station
It's one city where anyone walking residential streets after dark is subject to questioning. One famous New York writer, accustomed to a midnight stroll in casual dress, got himself picked up one night in Beverly Hills and taken to the station.

Only a hurried phone call to a producer who lives in Beverly Hills saved the writer from a vagrancy booking.

But Groucho gives his own reason why the top stars select Beverly Hills.

"When you first come out here from Broadway, you got to have a home on a mountaintop with a view. You look at the view once or twice and then you forget it after you almost get killed skidding off a hairpin curve while driving ten miles for a loaf of bread."

Not Beach, Canyon
Next you move to the beach. Before long the waves are breaking in your living room. So you move to a canyon. The first winter rain washes your neighbor's backyard on top of your house.

"Finally you buy a house on a nice quiet street in Beverly Hills where the milkman comes every morning and the kids play with the kids next door just like they do in Bryn Mawr, Pa."

Miss McDonald's house is surrounded by a steel fence that could be easily vaulted. The front gate is electronically controlled from the house, but a slight push could easily force it. Bob Hope's Toluca Lake home has an electronic gate, but it usually is open. Hope enterprises has a good-sized office building right inside the gate.

Any potential kidnaper would have to fight his way through agents, writer secretaries, servants and even then would be lucky to find Hope home.

Hope Not Home
Tennessee Ernie Ford who moved next door six months ago says he hasn't yet seen Hope in Toluca Lake but sees him often at NBC. Bing Crosby also has an electronic gate that evokes a unique reaction from his fans.

Messages of endearment are scribbled all over it, usually with the writers' home towns and names. All the messages are complimentary, such as "you're the greatest, Bing." Crosby explains why there are no uncomplicated messages.

"My servants are under strict orders to wash those off right away."

Many of the top stars live in Bel-Air, a hilly subdivision with more natural barriers against kidnapers than Gibraltar. The roads wind and twist so that even the people who live there get lost. Red

Skelton once said that the fellow he bought his house from in 1950 occasionally calls on him.

"He hasn't found his way out of Bel-Air yet, and wants to buy the house back," Red quipped.

Private Patrol
Bel-Air once had its private police patrol but discontinued it as the area became more settled. Some stars, but not as many as one would think, still subscribe patrols. One such company said it had noticed little spurt from the McDonald headlines. Most stars think like John Wayne when it comes to their public.

His Encino home is on the maps of movie stars homes which are sold by the gross to tourists. Often when he drives out the gate, there's a cluster of fans waiting for his autograph. They usually apologize politely for bothering him at home and Wayne has a stock answer.

"It's no bother. I'll really be bothered when you don't show up."

"BETTER LATE THAN NEVER"

*(Author's name below)

If you have any persistent, recurring ailment, even though it does not seem serious enough to require medical attention, do not delay consulting your physician. Nature may be warning you of some future trouble.

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