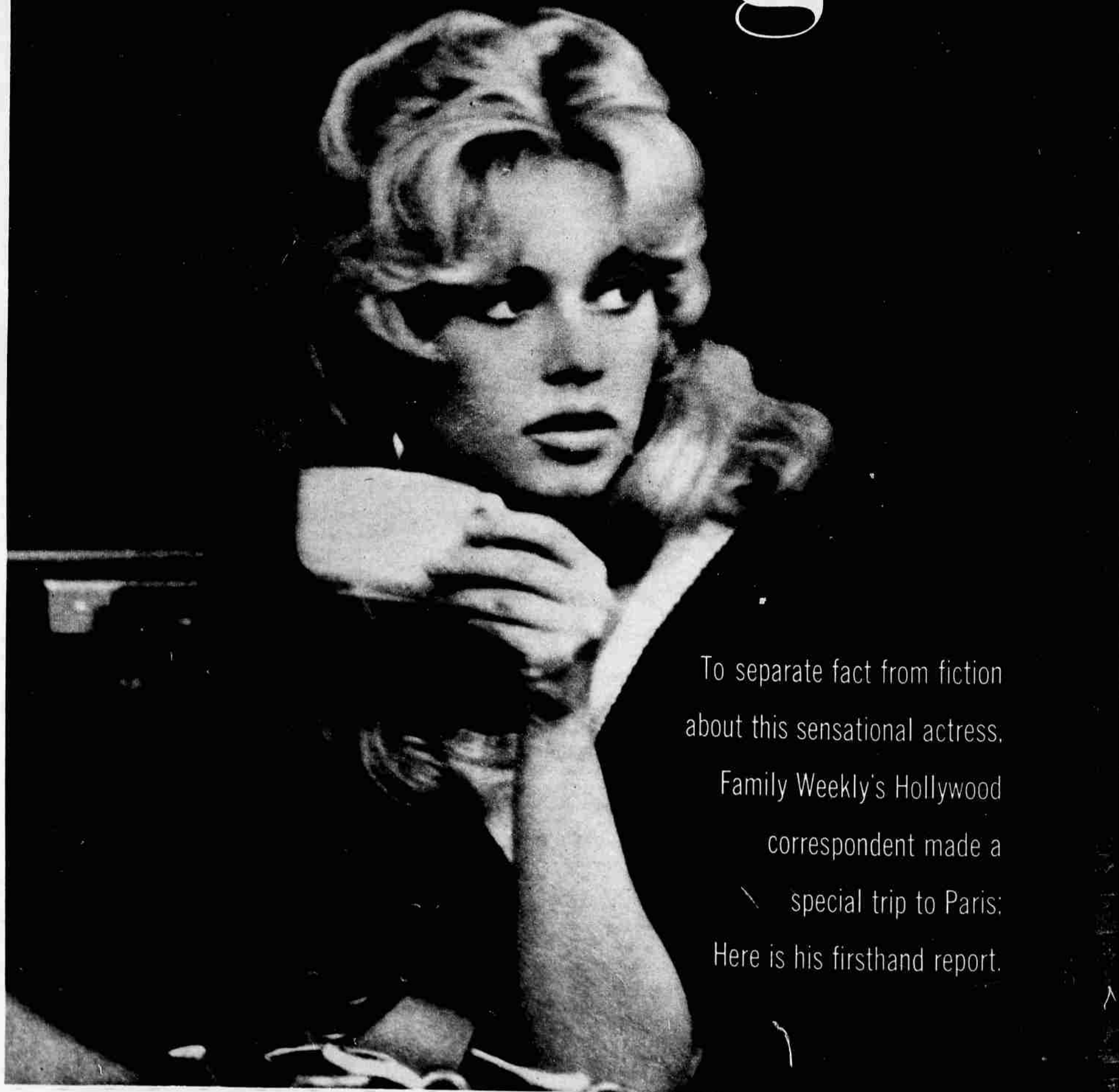


Meet the real Brigitte



To separate fact from fiction
about this sensational actress,
Family Weekly's Hollywood
correspondent made a
special trip to Paris.
Here is his firsthand report.

Bardot

by Peer J. Oppenheimer

THEY CALL HER the Sex Kitten, BB, La Irresistible—and a number of other things! But they all refer to the same person, a pouting, sensuous 24-year-old actress, Brigitte Bardot.

In Paris and Los Angeles, in Indianapolis and Manila, in practically every corner of the world, people have seen or heard of the girl who has become a national financial asset because she brings more money into France through her government-subsidized films than any other artist.

Curiously enough, except for her measurements, her tantrums, and her earthy film roles, very little is known about Brigitte.

Why? I found that out when I first attempted to interview her in Paris a few weeks ago.

There was no problem walking onto the set where she was costarring with an even more temperamental Spanish actor; he was near tears when the director demanded a 21st retake of a scene because he didn't get sufficiently upset when Brigitte slammed a door in his face. After the scene, before I even had a chance to say "Bonjour," Brigitte had rushed past me and headed upstairs. A thousand francs handed to an extra showed me the way to her dressing room.

I knocked on the door, which was opened a crack by Brigitte's stand-in. "What do you want?" she chirped in French.

"I would like to see Mademoiselle Bardot. I am a writer," I replied in my very best French.

That's as far as I got before the door was slammed in my face.

Patiently I waited at the foot of the stairs for La Bardot to make an appearance. When she did, I approached her again.

"Pas!" she hissed as she swished past me.

Not a word more in English, French, or any other language.

"Pas!" she hissed again when I approached her during intermission, and again when she finished her day. I couldn't get another word out of her.

"And you probably won't unless I intercede for you," insisted Raoul Levy—who produced her first big hit, "And God Created Woman"—over breakfast a few days later. After learning that other reporters had had exactly the same difficulties with Brigitte, I requested his help.

Yet she gave me all the time I wanted on my return to Paris after Levy had assured her that, unlike some publications, *Family Weekly* was interested in more than her measurements, love affairs, and tantrums. I had told him we wanted answers to questions that had never been asked before.

Is Brigitte a sensitive girl? An introvert, as claimed by some, or an extrovert, as others insist? What is she afraid of? Can she picture herself as a wife and mother? Has she ever cooked anything? How does she live? What are

her chances for marital happiness with Sascha Distel? Did she really propose to him, as I was told by a friend of hers?

It was a far more subdued Brigitte who amazed me by confessing that while the world considers her the epitome of sensuality and desirability—she thinks she's ugly.

"When I was a leetle girl," she told me, "I wanted to become a ballet dancere. I worked harder on eet than acteing or anytheeng een my life. But I feeneeshed only sevense in the onlee nationale competitione I ever parteeicipated een. And I was a good dancere. So eet must have been that zee other girls were prettier."

This ingenuous point of view threw some light on a statement made by her close friend Gustavo Rojo: "Brigitte is the most sensitive girl I know. Full of fears and complexes. When she first started out, Roger Vadim—the director who was also her first husband—assured her the more she exposed herself, the more footage she'd get on the screen. Apparently she felt she had little else to offer. I think she's wrong, but Brigitte doesn't."

Rojo had also told me that accounts of Brigitte's "romances" had been vastly exaggerated. One such case, he claimed, involved Brigitte and Stephen Boyd, her costar in the film, "The Night Heaven Fell." "Take my word for it, there was never anything between them!" Gustavo insisted.

AMAZINGLY, for a girl who demands more money per picture than any French star has ever been able to get—\$300,000 is her current price—most of her worries are financial.

While Brigitte never suffered any privations, her parents' wealth has been greatly exaggerated. Her official biography lists her father as "a well-to-do manufacturer." Actually, he is a chemical engineer with sufficient income to provide his family with necessities, but not luxuries.

Brigitte herself has long yearned to be financially independent, "for when I can no longer be een peectures." She has invested most of her savings in real estate, but in spite of her colossal earnings, she hasn't managed to put much aside because her living expenses are fantastically high.

She occupies the two top stories of an expensive apartment in Paris' exclusive Trocadero district, not far from the Eiffel Tower. She employs a cook, a maid, a chauffeur, and a male secretary. But mostly her money goes for parties, with guests taking advantage of her hospitality to the extent of ordering things by phone from her house and charging them to her. While she knows what's going on, she has never put a stop to it.

Her whole manner of living suggests a set of curious contradictions.

In Paris, for instance, she sometimes invites a hundred people to her house on a moment's



Sascha Distel, Brigitte's No. 1 fan, met her at a recording session.

notice. Her other home, in San Tropez, doesn't even have a phone, because she wants privacy.

One day she will dance the Flamenco in a night club, barefooted and atop a bar for everyone to watch; the next day she won't talk to anyone.

"Eet deepends how I feel," she told me. "Eef I theenk people like me, I feel at eeze. I dance. I seeng. Eef I theenk they laugh at me, I shot op."

Her agent Olga Orstig, Raoul Levy, and others I talked to acknowledged that Brigitte is alternately an exhibitionist and an introvert. But they don't necessarily agree that it depends on the people around her. As her production manager put it, "It depends entirely on her moods. In fact, everything does. And usually the moods depend on the picture she's in. The last time she made a film with a Spanish background, she ate nothing but Spanish food for a week!"

He agreed, however, that Brigitte is afraid of people. "I know she doesn't care whether or not they approve of her. But she's awfully sensitive about whether or not they like her. And she'll go out of her way to oblige—at times."

Curiously, the same girl, who is so brusque and temperamental with reporters and so self-centered and calculating with almost anyone else that one of her directors described her as "the egotist of the century," can make a complete about-face with people who are of no help to her whatever. I saw her get up and offer her chair to an old wardrobe woman who was tired from the heat. And I was told by a "grip" that Brigitte had given him 20,000 francs when his wife had a baby and he had difficulty meeting his bills. Her only condition was that he keep it quiet. Telling it to an American, he felt, was all right.

WHILE SHE may be scared of people at times, Brigitte certainly isn't scared of anything else. When she made "La Parisienne" with Charles Boyer, one scene called for her to get into a fist