

# Hollywood's Biggest Gambler

In a world of conformity, movie-maker Darryl Zanuck stands out as a bold nonconformist.

by Peer J. Oppenheimer

IN HIS LAVISH hotel suite in Paris, Darryl F. Zanuck—a short, stocky man with clear blue eyes and sparse, graying hair—was in a typical Zanuck mood, pacing back and forth, chewing an unlit cigar.

He'd had a bad night. His chest, waist, and arms were burning with shingles, a skin disease contracted during 11 agonizing weeks in French Equatorial Africa. Even stronger and stronger doses of cortisone were losing their effectiveness.

But his personal discomfiture was the least of his problems. Juliette Greco, the star of his picture, was ill. Unless she could return to work within a week, Zanuck would be unable to complete the film—and he'd already spent \$4 million on it, most of it from his own bank account. The other stars in the picture had other commitments, and the studio space had to be relinquished in 14 days—with no place to move the sets.

Asked what would happen if Miss Greco didn't return, Zanuck shrugged and snapped, "That's one of the gambles you take in this business."

Zanuck should know. In a business noted for its colossal conservatism—where man-eating sharks are considered fairly safe symbols of evil, and even Zanuck himself, after one of his rare flops, has been heard to mutter, "I'll never make another movie without Betty Grable"—Darryl Francis Zanuck is notorious as a



Attention to detail has helped make many of Darryl Zanuck's gambles pay off. His latest gamble: using unknowns such as Juliette Greco.



At 56, Zanuck still retains much of the enthusiastic daring that won him the title, "boy wonder," when he was turning out weekly potboilers for his first big star, Rin Tin Tin. In all of Hollywood history, Zanuck has few peers as a pioneer, blazing trails others have rushed to follow.