



In "The Ugly American" with Sandra Church, Marlon was a model star.

MARLON BRANDO: HOLLYWOOD'S EXPENSIVE ENIGMA

Bad-boy behavior has earned him headlines and enemies, but some who know him, particularly his leading ladies, insist he's gentle and considerate

By PEER J. OPPENHEIMER

Brando personally chose Tarita to costar in "Mutiny on the Bounty."



WHILE MARLON BRANDO was starring in "The Ugly American" at Universal-International, an acquaintance stopped him on his way out of the commissary one noon. "Hi, Marlon. How are you?"

A blank expression crept over Marlon's face. "I don't know how I am." After a moment's hesitation, he added: "I don't even know *who* I am today!" With that he shuffled out of the dining room like a sleepwalker.

If he doesn't know who he is, is it surprising that nobody else does?

Volumes of material have been written about him, mostly by reporters who have never come face to face with him, or who have seen him but briefly. An example of the latter is Bill Davidson, a well-known writer, who arranged an interview several years ago. Marlon rode into the interview room atop his drama coach, dismounted, and gave Davidson a two-hour lecture on why he shouldn't talk to him. Then he remounted his human charger and disappeared through the doorway!

Nowadays, practically the whole press corps is barred from talking not only to Brando but to anyone connected with him, down to a make-up man or unit publicist whose job, supposedly, is to get news about the current production into print!

Because FAMILY WEEKLY has a reputation for fairness, and because I promised not to reveal the source of my information when it might prove embarrassing, some of the people closest to Brando spoke freely about him to me. Combined with a lengthy meeting with Marlon himself—which established a good rapport between us—I now feel justified in drawing some conclusions.

Marlon's sister Jocelyn filled me in on Brando's formative years in Libertyville, Ill.: "He was just a normal boy, no different from anybody else I knew. He played the same games and did the same things—he went swimming, climbed trees, played the drums, got into trouble, like any other boy. He had chores around the house, like washing the car or cutting the lawn, for which he got 50 cents. I can't remember if he went steady, but he had girl friends and he went to dances and on picnics and did all the other things teen-agers do. We were all surprised that he turned out to be famous. There was nothing different about him till he was 21."

Jocelyn admitted that her brother hated school. His reasons seem to forecast the difficulties he later encountered in Hollywood. "He never liked mundane, organized knowledge, organized anything. He may know a lot about anthropology, for instance, but not the way it was taught in class. He read about it and retained most of it."

When Brando first came to Hollywood 12 years ago, he was called "the Slob." He showed up everywhere in blue jeans and soiled tee shirts, and invariably in need of a shave. He made unkind remarks about people driving around in fancy cars and wearing elegant clothes.

Brando, "the Slob," Disappears

The condition of his living quarters defied description, even before his pet raccoon moved in. Yet when interviewed at the time, he said: "I'm sick of being thought of as a blue-jeaned slobber mouth, and I'm sick of having people come up and say hello, and then just stand there and expect me to throw a raccoon at them."

In this respect Marlon has reformed considerably. He now lives in a well-kept, modest house, drives a modest car, and except for court fights with his ex-wife, Anna Kashfi, he gets into the news primarily through professional misbehavior.

Considering the disturbing family bickering of his early years, an even reasonably well-adjusted Brando is something of an achievement. His father was a limestone-products salesman (he now runs Marlon's various business enterprises). His mother was a beautiful woman with an interest in amateur dramatics and an alcohol problem. Marlon was very close to her and took her death a few years ago very hard.

There seemed to be more than the average family discord. Asked if theirs was a close-knit family, Jocelyn told me: "We were all individuals, but at the same time we were quite close without hanging onto one another. This still holds true today. If we don't see each other for two weeks or two years, we can always take up anything where we left it!"

Quite likely, even Jocelyn seems to have underestimated Marlon's longing for love. Apparently he has wanted to be reassured and since he wasn't, he has not been able to reassure others. "Whether he admits it or