

legs trimmed down. And my face was getting leaner every day.

This bothered me more than anything because as my face thinned, my nose looked larger. Every morning I'd look in the mirror and get upset. What were the diet and exercise worth if I was going to look worse in photographs and in front of the penetrating movie camera?

I didn't know what to do. Ervin told me I was brooding too much about my looks. Already, he said comfortingly, I looked 100 percent better. But I knew that diet and exercise weren't enough. But with a nose, what did you do? I began to wonder if I shouldn't consider plastic surgery.

I Changed My Face

Despite success, this teen-age idol hated his own looks—till he took drastic action

By PAUL ANKA

as told to
George Christy

I told my parents. They wouldn't hear of it. Since I was their son, nothing was wrong with the way I looked!

I tried to explain that I didn't think anything was "wrong," but after my experience in front of that cruel movie camera I was shaken up. My manager didn't sway me either way. But my feelings were strong; some inner voice insisted that I do it.

My parents agreed to talk to the doctor. I inquired about plastic surgeons, and came across a Dr. Samuel Sheer who had performed plastic surgery on numerous other entertainers.

We saw Dr. Sheer, and he explained his position: he couldn't make any promises about how much better I'd look after an operation.

My parents liked Dr. Sheer, however. I convinced them that this operation was very important to me and to my life. They maintained a skeptical attitude but allowed me to set a date for the operation.

The night before, I went into the hospital whistling. I sang in the elevator and

danced around the room assigned to me.

The next morning, for the first time in my life, I awoke early all by myself. After being wheeled into the operating room, I was given several pills and an anesthetic. But all through the operation I was conscious, and I wasn't afraid at all.

In less than a half hour I was wheeled back to my room. I fell asleep, and when I awoke my mother, father, and Ervin were there. Bandages covered most of my face, and dark bruises rimmed my eyes.

After a couple of weeks, I was "unveiled." You can imagine my excitement! I wanted to sing, shout, and whistle all at once. I wasn't worried about how I'd look; I knew



Here's Paul before—with the nose he hated.

it would turn out to be an improvement.

When the doctor removed the bandages and I was allowed to look at myself, I was so bowled over I couldn't speak.

It had taken 19 years to find myself, and there I was, the guy I always wanted to be. I prayed quietly, and then I looked up at my beaming parents, and we all started to cry out of happiness.

It's nearly two years since I had my nose "bobbied," and what my new nose has done for me is hard to measure because it has done so much. First of all, I jump out of bed as soon as the sun is up. I sleep half the time I did, and I have a deep, secure feeling about my goals and the future: I want to work hard and succeed in movies and television.

Now I enjoy exercise and the right food. My personality is better, I think, because I'm not as shy. I have a brighter outlook on everything I do. I go out more, date more, enjoy my friends more, and, of course, I accomplish more—because I don't try to hide myself from the world!

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