

Hollywood Reporter

By Mike Connolly

Dear Mike: I've been a fan of Ernest Borgnine's ever since "Marty" but he just lost me. Did he really make the statement attributed to him—that he was dating Donna Rancourt 18 months before he married Ethel Merman and that he married Ethel on the rebound? If he didn't I'm back in his fold. If he did, I'm OUT.—Elsa Friend, Alexandria, Va.

Dear Elsa: He said it, all right. But Ethel topped him with: "How nice for them—Ernie's engagements always last longer than his marriages."

Dear Mike: Who will win the top Oscars this year?—Esther G. Sears, Lafayette, Ind.

Dear Esther: I'm not a betting man but the latest word from Las Vegas has "My Fair Lady" as the odds-on-best picture favorite, Rex Harrison as best actor at 5-1 odds, and Kim Stanley as best actress at 3-1—with George Cukor and Bryan Forbes an even bet for the best director laurels.

Dear Mr. C: You can have The Beatles, I'll still take Sal Mineo. He was tops in "Exodus" and he's still tops in my book. Why doesn't he make more movies?—Ginger Lambert, Hendersonville, N. C.

Dear Ginger: Sal is a hard type to cast but he just got the starring role opposite Juliet Prowse in Joe Cates' new movie, now shooting in New York City, "The Teddybear Caper." It is not as innocent as it sounds. Sal plays a goon who makes suggestive phone calls to Juliet.

Dear Mr. C.: What's happened to all the good comedians? Bob Hope and Red Skelton are still tops, of course, but how about some Irish comedians for a change instead of the guy who thumbed his nose on the Ed Sullivan show?—A. Kimes, N. J.

Dear A.: Where were you when Pat O'Brien unveiled his nightclub act in your neck of the woods?

Dear Sir: What was the name of the girl Robert Vaughn was with who was wearing the identical dress as another woman (about one or two months ago)? Does she have anything to do with the ring Bob wears on the little finger of his left hand?—Joy Davis, San Francisco.

Dear Joy: I am running your letter just for the sheer agony of it, because you don't give any hint about what show it was, whether it was a movie or TV segment, or—well, anyway, here's the answer which I got by phoning Bob. The girl was Stella Stevens and he admires her very much but they are not a romantic item. Next time, Joy, be a pal and drop a hint.

Dear Mike: Why did Stuart Whitman leave his beautiful wife and their four children? They seemed so happy, and he's so clean-cut, it's just too disillusioning, you know?—Anna Maria Zoppia, Mountain View, Calif.

Dear Anna Maria: I know but can't say until—or even if—they are divorced. But I can tell you that starlet Wendie Wagner is consoling him.

Dear Mike: I think I'll slit my wrists if what they say about "Wagon Train" is true. PLEASE say it's not going off the air next season!—Jennifer Matsas, Baltimore.

Dear Jennifer: I would do anything within reason to save your life, doll, but the ratings are very low so it looks like the train will be off the track.

Dear Mike: Are any of the Beatles Roman Catholics?—K. Brown, Syracuse, N. Y.

Dear K.: I never got around to asking them at the two interview sessions I had with them. Isn't it enough to know they belong to the human race?

Dear Sir: This may be out of your territory but I would be interested to know why Jackie Kennedy posed for all those photos in Colorado. I know her mourning period is over but it all seems so pat, or calculated, or something.—Horace Parkinson, Fortoria, Ohio.

Dear Horace: There was nothing pat or calculated "or something" about it at all. The town of Aspen was full of photographers, all of them hot on her trail. It was that astute politician, Bobby Kennedy, who talked her into posing, on the grounds that they would continue trailing her and that the one-sitting session was the sensible way of getting it over and done with once and for all.

(Mike Connolly will try to answer your questions in his column. He gives no personal replies by mail.)

Traffic Institute UCLA Probes Hazards Of Long-Trip Driving

Mr. Jones left Los Angeles early on a weekday morning for a cross-country car trip on U.S. Route 66. He hit Flagstaff, Ariz., some 450 miles away, toward late afternoon and with an easy stretch of road ahead, decided to push on to Albuquerque for his overnight stop.

Somewhere between Flagstaff and Albuquerque, Jones, a safe driver in a new car on a first-rate road, missed a slight curve, his automobile rolled over, and Jones was killed.

What caused the accident? Was it something that happened a split-second before he lost control, or a long chain of causes that started 500 miles and 10 hours earlier?

A GROUP of engineers and psychologists at the Institute of Transportation and Traffic Engineering at UCLA will look for the answer during a five-year study that will involve interviews with some

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25,000 motorists and open a new line of research on driving safety.

The project, entitled "Long-Trip Driving Habits of California Drivers," will be directed by Robert L. Melinger, Robert Brenner, and Slade Hulbert of UCLA, under a grant from the California Highway Transportation Agency, and with the cooperation of the California Division of Highways, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and the California Highway Patrol.

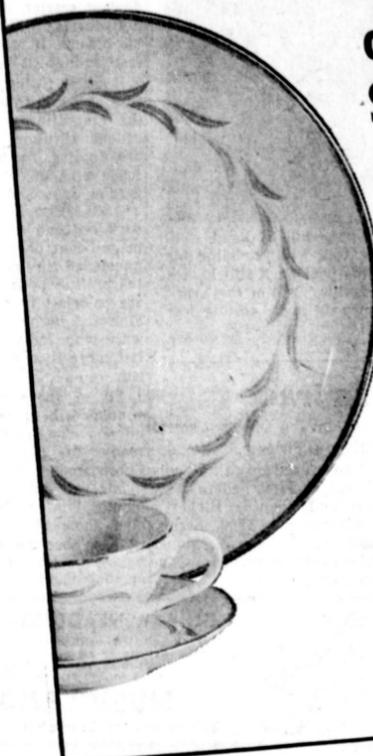
DURING the project's first phase, motorists will be interviewed on their long-trip planning and experiences through questionnaires at DMV offices and person-to-person at over 15 strategic checkpoints, such as the California-Nevada border for Los Angeles-Las Vegas commuters.

The interviews will be on a completely voluntary basis and the answers will be held in strictest confidence.

During the second stage, the UCLA group will reconstruct extended trips that ended up in accidents and study the combination of psychological, physiological, and geographical factors—called the "Psychology of Trip Geography"—that play a part in long automobile journeys.

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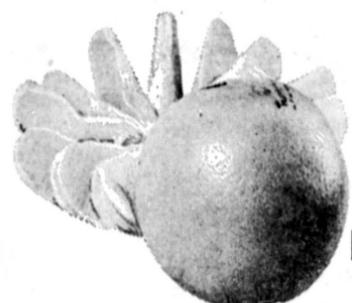
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