



Eaton as GOLDFINGER's mistress, Jill Masterson. Keeping a close vigilance on her boss's card game, she abets Goldfinger's chicanery by transmitting his opponent's hand through a hearing aid. A lapse of loyalty costs Jill her life.

007

SHIRLEY EATON

GOLDEN GIRL

GRANTING A RARE INTERVIEW, EATON RECOUNTS HER ASCENT FROM "SEXY STOUGE" TO 007'S FEMME FATALE.

BY TIM GREAVES

The rattle of a door handle.
Husband (sniffing): What's that? Paint? We're not due for a paint job this year. Honey, I'm home.

Wife: I'm in the bedroom, dear.

Husband: Honey, what are you doing with that paint?

Wife: Nothing.
Husband: Well, you've got gold paint all over your body.

Wife: Well, you don't expect me to walk around undressed.

Husband: I never heard of anyone painting their entire body gold...

Wife: The girl on the cover of *Life* magazine did it.

Husband: What girl?

Wife: The golden girl in James Bond's newest thriller, *GOLDFINGER*.

Husband: Are you going to start in with that 'James Bond, Agent 007' again? I had to change our apartment number to 007 after



GOLDFINGER: Eaton and Sean Connery's 007 enjoy a short-lived flirtation. "Sean is very interesting. He's very much a 'man's man.' And a terrific actor."

you saw *DR. NO*. Then I changed our license number to 007 after *FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE*. And furthermore, Shirley, furthermore...you know, that doesn't look bad! Maybe if you tried a little more paint on your left shoulder.

Wife: Well, don't stand there. Get a brush.

—U.S. radio commercial promoting the 1964 release of *GOLDFINGER*

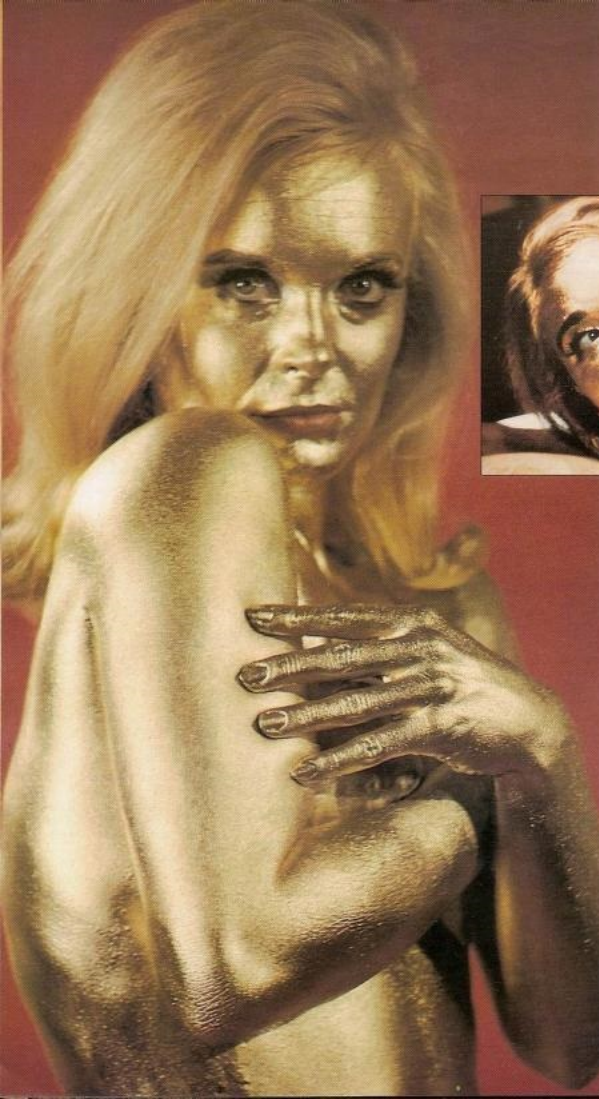
Who was the cover girl responsible for shamelessly disrupting the fabric of urbane society by inspiring such depravity behind bedroom doors? British actress Shirley Eaton, that's who. And that scintillating 1964

cover of *Life* magazine evoked enough provocation to be integrated within *GOLDFINGER*'s marketing blitz (to wit the above transcript, which even christened the wife as "Shirley").

With a can of gold paint and a selection of brushes at the ready, I track Shirley Eaton down to her home on the outskirts of London for a retrospect of her 15-year career. Long ago, she exiled herself from the spotlight and the bustle of the film community; nevertheless, Eaton bubbles with enthusiasm and speaks both fondly and effusively about her celluloid experiences.

Born in 1937, her first exposure to the British public was on the radio. She laughs when I mention that one writer referred to her as "a sexy stooge of the radio at 16."

"I did several radio programs like *EDUCATING ARCHIE*," she says, referring to the series featuring a ventriloquist's dummy. *On the radio?* Hard to imagine



how anyone ever swallowed that one, but it was hugely successful for many years. "But I was never sexy in the same sense as let's say Diana Dors. I'm not the girl-next-door, but I'm not obviously sexy."

She hesitates, groping for



GOLDFINGER: To prevent skin suffocation, Eaton's golden girl scenes were shot in a day. "I was painted all over except a strip down my tummy."

the least immodest way of defining herself. "How can I put it? My fan letters say that I have a vitality that they find sexy. Not the sultry, 'boobs-hanging-out' sexy — I'm not and never have been *that* type of sexy.

"I would *never* have done nude work. Although I look nude in **GOLDFINGER**, I was covered in gold paint." She laughs. "So I wasn't nude, was I?"

Regardless of how she may envision herself, Eaton was—and still is—a very attractive woman. A regular face on British television between 1954 and 1969, she appeared in upwards of 30 feature films before eventually packing away the greasepaint to raise a family with her husband Colin.

I make the mistake of asking her about **THE BELLES OF ST. TRINANS**, oft-cited as being her film debut. "I wasn't in that," she firmly counters. "Everybody thinks I was. It was Belinda Lee. We look similar." I hastily attempt to cover my blunder

by insisting her denial will, at the very least, set the record straight.

So which film qualifies as her first? DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE (1954) for director Ralph Thomas. "I had a small cameo. My second was with Arthur Askey [in David Paltenghi's THE LOVE MATCH] and I played his daughter, so I appeared throughout the whole film."

I observe that the DOCTOR's cast was recruited from British comedy heavies: Kenneth More, Kay Kendall, James Robertson Justice, Dirk Bogarde... "Dirk was absolutely sweet," recalls Eaton. "I was 17, and he was just the most marvelous, sensitive, kind actor. He was very kind to me and I'll always remember that. So was Arthur Askey. I've always had a good time. People are nice with me."

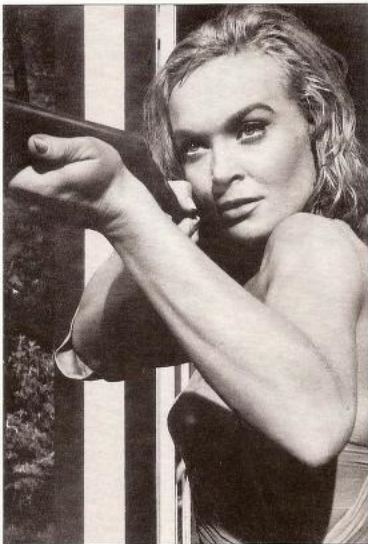
A parade of British farces ensued during the remainder of the 1950s: Gordon Parry's SAILOR BEWARE perpetuated Eaton's comic flair, but a similarly-titled Dean Martin/Jerry Lewis (1952) vehicle prompted the English film to debut in America as PANIC IN THE PARLOR.

The humor prevailing in Mario Zampi's NAKED TRUTH (U.S. title, YOUR PAST IS SHOWING), involving the dismantlement of a "smutty magazine" editor, was a shade darker. Peter Sellers and Terry Thomas costarred, respectively, as a "disgusting TV luminary and racketeer trying to prevent the exhumation of skeletons from their closets..."

Other films: Ken Annakin's THREE MEN IN A BOAT, which cast Eaton alongside Adrienne Corri and Jill Ireland; a Crazy Gang comedy, LIFE IS A CIRCUS, for director Val Guest; and a return to Ralph Thomas territory in 1957's DOCTOR AT LARGE, again with Dirk Bogarde.

Eaton adds, "Then, for Val Guest, I did FURTHER UP THE CREEK. There was WEEKEND WITH LULU with Bob Monkhouse—I must have done about five

"My fan letters say I have a vitality that they find sexy. Not the sultry, boobs-hanging-out sexy; I'm not, and never have been, that type of sexy."



THE GIRL HUNTERS (J). "Eaton's sexy femme fatale comes to a spectacular end," wrote William Everson. B: W/ Hugh O'Brian in 10 LITTLE INDIANS (1966).



films with Bob."

Without doubt, a landmark film in the history of British cinema—1958's CARRY ON SERGEANT (with Monkhouse)—was the first in a series that would endure 30 films and the next 35 years. The entire run was helmed by Gerald Thomas, though after SERGEANT, Eaton appeared in just two more installments: CARRY ON NURSE (59) and, one year later, CARRY ON CONSTABLE.

"While I was doing the CARRY ON NURSE, I discovered I was pregnant," Eaton smiles. "I was very pleased and I always think that's why I have a twinkle in my eye."

Eaton clearly has fond memories of the CARRY ON clan. "Unfortunately so many of them are dead, now," she sighs. "They were a lovely, lovely group of people and the first CARRY ON series was fun to do. They did get out of control, and I'm not just saying that because I wasn't in them. I chose not to be in them, I moved on to other films."

But Eaton's roles in NEARLY A NASTY ACCIDENT, DENTIST ON THE JOB (U.S.: GET ON WITH IT!) and WHAT A CARVE UP (U.S.: HOME SWEET HOMICIDE) weren't so far removed. With the likes of Kenneth Connor, Sid James and Bob Monkhouse on hand, they were CARRY ON movies in all but the name.

Based on Frank King's novel *The Ghoul*, CARVE UP is one of the finest and most underrated comedies of the period, fusing a CAT AND THE CANARY scenario with a solid supporting cast (Dennis Price, Donald Pleasence and Michael Gough). It's another one that harbors special meaning for Eaton, though not for the most obvious reasons.

"The thing I remember about it most is that Jonathan Coe, an author, has since written a book called *What a Carve Up* and he features me as an actress in his story. This is the book that has made his name.

Now, he's a very successful English writer and a very lovely person. He's had it published in ten languages and I'm on the cover!

"So when I think of WHAT A CARVE UP, I think more of what's happened recently than making the film. But it was fun, though."

Who can ever forget the moment when Eaton removes her brassiere before an intensely curious yet acutely chivalrous Kenneth Connor? "Kenneth was adorable," she smiles. "And, of course, Adam Faith played that little cameo at the end."

Defecting from the confines of lighthearted roles, Eaton portrayed a femme fatale in THE GIRL HUNTERS (1963). One U.S. critic noted, "Mickey Spillane plays his creation Mike Hammer in this unusual detective film...Lloyd Nolan and Shirley Eaton are the only real actors in this uneven production..."

One year later, Eaton was cast as the saffron-plated cadaver in GOLDFINGER. Jill Masterson, Eaton's heroine, betrays the vengeful title character; an impromptu paint job, applied to Masterson's naked body, induces her death via skin suffocation. "They spent the most money [up to that time] on that one," she recalls. "They had the biggest sets. And the excitement about GOLDFINGER whilst we were making it was tremendous."

This was the third Bond movie, the first to be directed by Guy Hamilton, and Sean Connery had settled into the part with which, for better or worse, he will forever be associated.

"Sean's lovely," enthuses Eaton. "Just what everyone writes about him, really. A very interesting person and very attractive. He's very much a 'man's man.' And a terrific actor."

Ian Fleming, the writer who pioneered 007's myth, visited the Miami Beach hotel set at Pinewood Studios, pausing to chat with Con-

"It took hours to wash off the gold makeup. The wardrobe and makeup ladies bathed me. I went to a Turkish bath to make sure it had all gone out of my pores."



THE GIRL HUNTERS (l) with Mickey Spillane, "the first mystery writer to play his own creation (Mike Hammer) in a movie." R: AROUND THE WORLD UNDER THE SEA: with David McCallum, Marshall Thompson, Lloyd Bridges, Brian Kelly.



nery and Eaton. "He was sophisticated and well mannered," Eaton smiles. "Just like his James Bond was, really." Tragically, Fleming died before screening the edited film.

Glancing at my little pot of paint, I have to ask the obvious question. *Could you describe the experience of being rendered into a Golden Girl?* "Those scenes had to be shot quickly. Actually, I had flu at the time. I was painted all over except a strip down my tummy because I was laying on my tummy so you couldn't see it. It wasn't paint like you paint on a wall. It was a greasy sort of makeup with gold leaf in it. But it is dangerous in the sense that it feels very hot and suffocating. Everything I touched was touched with gold, and my hair got all greasy and gold."

Hamilton captured the necessary footage in the space of a day. "Then I did another whole day being photographed," Eaton notes. "It took hours to wash off. The wardrobe mistress and the makeup lady bathed me and then, about three days later, I went for a Turkish bath to make sure it had all gone out of my pores."

The ITV network, presumably to deflect a spate of copycat killings, televised GOLDFINGER sans the initial shot of Eaton's glittering corpse. Apparently, this is news to Eaton. "They didn't!" she exclaims. "If I'd seen it, I'd have been furious! ITV cut that out when you see all the other garbage on their station?" She has a valid point.

Regardless of chopped-up TV broadcasts, it's the pivotal scene that eternally transformed Eaton—though her role is relatively minor one—into a 007 icon. Not that she minds. "I still get fan mail pouring through my letterbox after all these years. Most of it comes from America, Germany, England, then a few from Australia, Canada and other places; mainly from America and Germany, though. They

always mention the other films I've done, but they always say, of course, their favorite is me painted gold in **GOLDFINGER**."

As the hoopla surrounding **GOLDFINGER** cooled down, James Bond packed his suitcase and headed out to the Bahamas for **THUNDERBALL**. Eaton, meanwhile, was in the African bush making the first of a pair of films for producer Ivan Tors. **RHINO**, an amiable enough little movie also directed by Tors, found her starring opposite Robert Culp and Harry Guardino.

"It had a serious side to it," Eaton points out. "It was made when they were trying to stop the extinction of the white rhino. This was at a stage when they started to shoot animals with drugs instead of bullets.

"I got friendly with the game wardens when we were out there. They were catching rhinos to send them to other places to

GOLDFINGER: Connery & Eaton chat with 007 author Ian Fleming (r) at Pinewood Studios. E: "Although I looked nude, I was covered in gold paint."



breed, and they named one after me. The South African place we always was Um-foloz. They always put this 'Um-' before names. So this lady rhino was called *Umeaton*. I thought that was a great privilege. I hope she's still around somewhere."

Eaton's second film for Tors was Andrew Marton's *AROUND THE WORLD UNDER THE SEA*, a family adventure about a submarine planting seismographs on the ocean bed. "I know from my fan mail that the Americans love that one," remarks Eaton.

Alongside Lloyd Bridges and David McCallum were the stars of two Tors-produced TV shows, *FLIPPER*'s Brian Kelly and *DAKTARI*'s Marshall Thompson. "I think Brian Kelly died," says Eaton. "I'm not sure. He was a friend of my husband and mine, but he had a very bad road accident. Marshall Thompson was like me, he started acting when he was very young, about 14 years old, I think."

Next on the agenda was *TEN LITTLE INDIANS*, the second of four film adaptations of Agatha Christie's whodunit. Directed by George Pollock, the supporting cast included Dennis Price, Wilfred Hyde-White and "red herring" Daliah Lavi who, the following year, was literally locked in to Bond-age via her fetishistic scene in the 007 burlesque, *CASINO ROYALE*. This time around, Christie's deserted island iconography was altered to a remote house within the Austrian alps. Near the films conclusion, a stopwatch appeared on-screen as a voiceover invited the audience to determine—within a 60-second break—the murderer's identity; the gimmick was later borrowed in *THE BEAST MUST DIE* (1973).

While over in the States making a TV-movie called *THE SCORPIO LETTERS* (released theatrically in Britain), Eaton was thrilled to be offered a starring role

"In SU-MURU, I played a wicked lady. Then I carried on the role in THE 7 MEN OF SU-MURU. They were weird, wonderful parts and the last two films I did."



T: Eaton embodied Sax Rohmer's SUMURU (U.S. title: *THE MILLION EYES OF SU-MURU*). The distaff counterpart of archcriminal Fu Manchu, also created by Rohmer; she organizes a bureau of femmes fatales (b) for world domination.



in Bob Hope's new film project: "I had worked with Bob Hope when I was 17 in the Royal Variety Performance. I did a sketch with him and Maurice Chevalier. He remembered that. I was in the restaurant at MGM, while making *THE SCORPIO LETTERS*, and [Hope] came over and we talked a bit. The he said, 'I'm just starting a new film, would you like to be my leading lady?' I said, 'Yes, I would.' So I stayed on and did it."

Directed by George Marshall, the resulting film—*EIGHT ON THE LAM* (*EIGHT ON THE RUN* in the U.K.)—isn't a favorite among Hope's fans. He stars as a bank teller, suspected of embezzlement, who eludes the law with his seven children. Hope and Eaton were supported by Jill St. John, another prospective "Bond-girl" who was eventually cast in *DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER* (1971).

By this time, Eaton was beginning to feel the pinch of separation from her family. It was time to wind down. She followed a titular role in Lindsay Shonteff's *SU-MURU* (U.S.: *THE MILLION EYES OF SU-MURU*) with a sequel of sorts, *THE SEVEN MEN OF SU-MURU* (aka *THE GIRL FROM RIO, FUTURE WOMEN* and—confusingly—*SU-MURU*), and what amounted to little more than a walk-on in *THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU* (U.S.: *KISS AND KILL*), the latter pair helmed by Spanish cult director Jess Franco. Diabolical archcriminal Fu Manchu and his distaff counterpart, Sumuru, were characters created by English novelist Sax Rohmer. Writers Chris Steinbrunner and Otto Penzler described *THE MILLION EYES OF SU-MURU* as "A composite of themes from the Su-muru novels... a secret organization of beautiful women seek to enslave the globe's most influential men."

"There was a bit of hanky-panky that went on there," says Eaton mysteriously. "I did two films for Harry Alan Towers. In *SU-MURU*, I

played a wicked lady with long black hair, which was rather fun. I made it in Hong Kong. I've seen that first one in English cinemas. Then I carried on the character in [THE SEVEN MEN OF SU-MURU]. I've never seen it, the script was called THE GIRL FROM RIO but I think they changed it to something else. They were weird and wonderful parts. They were the last two films I did.

"As for THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU, I watched that just the other day. I only come into it briefly. I can't remember, he must have asked me to do that little bit he could put in. It wasn't like a film I made."

I remark that Franco is notorious for transposing scenes shot for one film into another; hence, it's possible that Eaton's FU MANCHU scene was possibly shot for something else, entirely. She winces. "Ooh, naughty!"

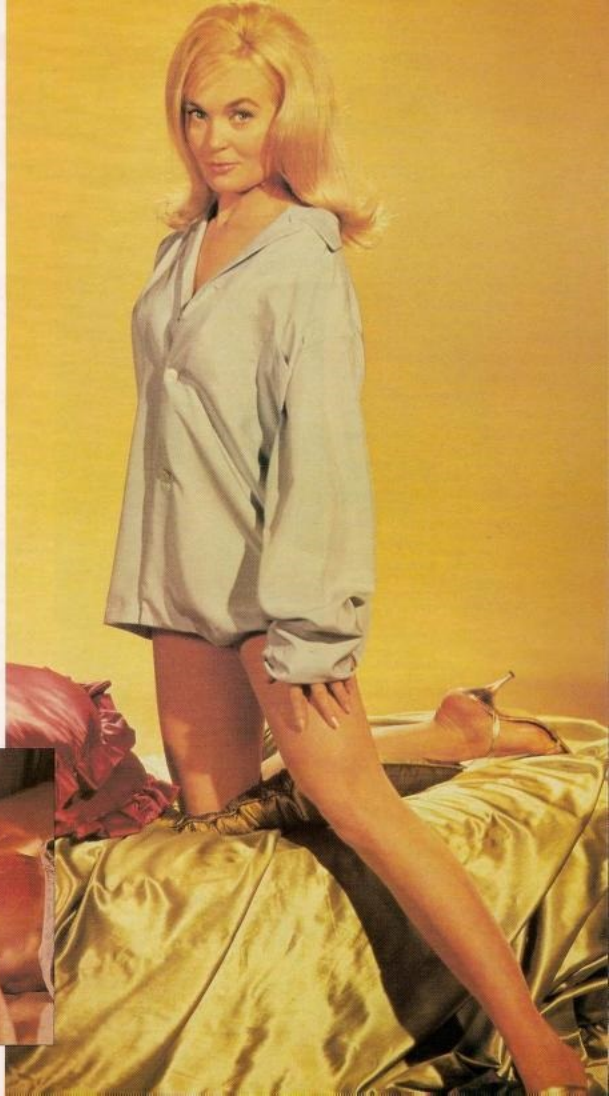
And so we move forward more than a quarter of a century. Looking back on those halcyon years, has she any regrets about anything she did or didn't do? It would seem not. All the memories Eaton has chosen to impart are happy ones.

And what does 1996 find her doing?

Having returned to Eng-

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GOLDFINGER: Her role as Jill (a), who's glided with gold, "lasted 3 minutes" but Eaton (b) is the icon indelibly associated with 007 movies.





Crystal Owens, former hostess of the syndicated **HIGH ROLLERS** television series, went from supporting player (**LITTLE SISTER** w/ Alyssa Milano) to leading lady in the steamy thriller, **TURN OF THE BLADE**. A stint role on **BAYWATCH** wrought a jawing union.

SHIRLEY EATON

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land from France in 1995 after the death of her husband, she's trying to carve herself a niche as a writer. "I want to start a new career in writing rather than acting. I don't want to play 'mumsy' roles. I've got loads of life in me, I'm still glamorous,"—you'd better believe it—"and I fall into a very funny category to act. So I'd like to write."

Currently working on an autobiography, Eaton freely admits that she's denied me one or two better lines for her own work. "When I get my book finished, I want to publish in America," she says emphatically, "because I worked with a lot of American stars in the latter part of my career."

And what in the meantime? She has a burgeoning collection of poetry just crying out to be published. "I've had one published in England." She laughs broadly. "Just one."

"I've made a video of about 40 of my poems, which I'm trying to get onto BBC television or Channel 4. My poems are very simple. But I recorded it in the South of France, where I lived for eight years and it's beautiful scenically.

Some of them are voiceover, so it's not just my poems, it's a whole package of lovely scenery with me appearing from time to time."

With a tangible note of zeal, she adds, "It's going to be difficult but I won't give up."

Indeed she won't. And somehow, as I thank her for her time and wistfully tuck away my unused brushes, I'm struck by a feeling of assuredness that she'll succeed. Unlike those who claim they're golden days are long since over, Shirley Eaton is determined to prove that the real golden days are yet to come. □

Bidding adieu to retirement, Michelle Bauer promptly landed roles as a wicked stepmother, frigid spouse, terrorist and a "007 femme fatale."

