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First Year ZORRO-TV

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"ZORRO" ROLE FOR DISNEY GREATEST  
CHALLENGE IN GUY WILLIAMS' LIFE

Several years ago, a tall, handsome young man visited Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California to make a screen test. The test turned out to be the most important event in this actor's career.

A few weeks later, Guy Williams signed an exclusive contract with Disney to star in his action-adventure series, "Zorro."

The thrill-packed story of the Robin Hood of Old California, "Zorro" is presented every \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. over station\_\_\_\_\_.

Stepping into a role made famous in motion pictures originally by Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., and later by Tyrone Power, Williams unquestionably faced the greatest challenge of his life. It was his first major assignment in either movies or TV. He handled the assignment like a veteran, and almost overnight, became one of the most popular television personalities in the United States.

Norman Foster, of "Davy Crockett" fame, who directed Williams in his first "Zorro," was amazed that "the other Hollywood studios failed to get him before we did!"

Apart from his magnetic personality and acting ability, Williams had one other great asset for the role of "Zorro."

He is one of the expert fencers of movie town and has crossed swords with many of the world's great fencing masters.

Williams is the son of the late Attilio Catalano, New York insurance broker, and Claire Catalano, an Italian couple who came to America several years before Guy was born.

The Catalanos sought to give Guy the best education possible. He attended grade school in New York and later went to George Washington High School. He received his advanced education at Peekskill Military Academy.

"I'm afraid I was a pretty indifferent student, though," laughs Williams. "The only subject I excelled in was mathematics."

Guy earned his first dollar when he was still attending high school, working in a soda fountain.

When his schooling was completed, he decided to try modeling in New York City. His father wanted him to pursue a brokerage career, but Guy refused.

He met his future wife, the lovely Powers model Janice Cooper, on a modeling assignment.

"We had to look like we were going skiing and the big action of the ad came when I had to tighten my ski boots. The photographer shot this sequence about 50 times, and by the time he had finished, I had got to know Janice pretty well!"

After a whirlwind six-city courtship, Guy and Janice were married in New York, and as Guy puts it, "we consolidated our finances."

In 1952, Williams was interviewed in New York by Hollywood coach Sophie Rosenstein. Sophie tested him in New York and

returned to Hollywood to recommend that Universal-International Studios place him under contract. Before coming to the coast and signing his U-I contract, Williams managed to find regular acting work in New York's Neighborhood Playhouse and in such television productions as Studio One.

He remained under his Universal contract for a year, but wasn't given any major assignment there. Shortly before winding up his work at U-I, he was badly injured in a fall from a horse. He bears a long scar on his left shoulder as a remembrance of the accident.

Somewhat discouraged by his first movie experience, Williams returned to New York to continue acting there, and do occasional modeling. It wasn't until early 1957 that he decided to try again in Hollywood. This time, he brought with him another member of the family: Steve, a curly-haired blond, born in 1952.

His second visit to Hollywood led to his Big Break, when he was given the golden opportunity to test for "Zorro." He was an unanimous choice for the highly-coveted role.

Guy resides in a two-story Spanish-type apartment close to the Sunset Strip. The apartment house was built originally by Norma Talmadge, and at various times many of Hollywood's greatest silent movie stars lived there, including Nazimova and Shirley Mason.

Despite his protestations of being an indifferent school student, Guy is extremely well-read and can hold his own in any wordly discussion on ancient history or theology.

Williams also is one of the country's better chess players, having played the game since he was a boy. He has competed in tournaments against several of America's top chess experts. He is also an authority on tropical fish, and purchased a small aquarium featuring several rare marine specimens.

A better-than-average cook, Guy's specialty is the Italian dish, risotto a la milanaise, but he admits that Janice can prepare it better than anyone he knows.

For his role in "Zorro," Williams took guitar lessons from Vicente Gomez, who has tutored many Hollywood stars on the instrument. He also received additional fencing training from the famed Fred Cavens, the same man who taught the two previous Zorros, Fairbanks and Power.

His intensive training schedule included regular horseback lessons to get acquainted with Tornado, the all-black seven-year-old quarter horse which is his equine co-star in the "Zorro" series.

"'Zorro' opened up an entire new life for me," says Guy, "and I have to admit it was just about the most wonderful thing that could happen to anyone."

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