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STOPPED NANCY'S MARRIAGE PLANS

Linda Cristal: What's  
She Got That  
Drives Men CRAZY!

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1969

# TV STAR PARADE

APRIL 35¢

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APRIL 1969 TV STAR PARADE



# The INTIMATE Moments Mark Slade Shared With His Pregnant Wife...!

By Michael Harp

**I**N another week or so, I'll finally be a father!" Mark Slade said triumphantly. "I've so much to do, so much to remember now." The next minute he had to laugh at this enthusiasm. "All right," he added quickly, "there have been billions of fathers. But until I become one, too, I haven't taken one of my basic steps as a man!

"You remember how I didn't want to get married until I fell in love with Melinda? I was satisfied with expressing myself in my acting. Nobody could have been more astounded than I was when I found the girl I needed."



He confessed that after beautiful brunette Melinda became his bride in a Catholic wedding in January of last year neither of them wanted a baby right away.

"We were eager to enjoy the love that was such a surprise. A family of our own was for the future. Then, when we'd been married six months, Melinda discovered she was pregnant."

Mark was completely candid about plunging into the problems of parenthood when we talked at the Slades' two-story modern apartment in Sherman Oaks.

"We'd gone to an anniversary dinner next door," he recalled. "The following day Melinda felt groggy, though we'd had only a little wine. That night we were invited to a birthday party at a Japanese restaurant we like, and she was sick the rest of the week. Everyone said she better go to a doctor, and after her pregnancy test she was too sick to do what she planned. She intended to fix a fantastic dinner for me, serve it by candlelight, and top it by whispering, 'I've something to tell you!'"

"I guessed the good news," he chuckled. "Ever since, we've been excited about the baby. But Melinda was really ill the first three months. When she couldn't do anything else, she hooked a rug for our bedroom."

Mark is extraordinarily ambitious and hated his helplessness when she was feeling so poorly. When he had to go to Arizona for some more filming on NBC-TV's *The High Chaparral*, Melinda managed to go with him as usual. Actually, they've spent as much time in Tucson, where the stars of the series are provided with comfortable apartments, as they have at home.

When Melinda was finally past the distressing phase, they celebrated. They'd never been to the posh Bistro in Beverly Hills, so off they went.

Melinda was 19 when they met, 21 when they married. She was a girl who had to find herself and didn't want to get involved at the moment. Then she and Mark couldn't deny how much they cared about each other.

"The biggest difference in Melinda came when her body began to change for motherhood. She realized (Continued on page 74)

From guns to "goo-goo's," from ranches to rattles, and from Billy Blue Cannon (on NBC-TV's *High Chaparral*) to baby's bottles, is quite a transition for Mark Slade. Exciting, but terrifying, claim Mark and Melinda, as they await the birth of their first child . . .



Mark and Melinda Slade





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### MARK SLADE

(Continued from page 29)

she'd never be a girl anymore, and I was glad I had a woman to love.

"When we think of what our baby may be, we see how alike we are although we were brought up three thousand miles apart in contrasting atmospheres. We love our folks, appreciate all they've done for us. Still we both were rebels who insisted on becoming what we wanted to be."

Mark was supposed to go to a scholarly university in New England and then into a solid future because he was born in Salem, Massachusetts, the son of a business executive.

"I know a college education is important in some fields," Mark conceded. "But it's not for an actor! I detested the studying prescribed in high school. I didn't get a lot of the answers I wanted." Excellent as an athlete, popular as a leader, he shone in class plays. "I was writing plays and scripts for my home movies when I was 10. I got such a kick out of being in the sophomore play my secret dream was to become a real actor."

Checking on dramatic schools, he found the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Manhattan had the most successful graduates. On a trip to New York, he applied for admission and was accepted. On returning from what was to be only a holiday, he told his family what he'd done.

"I was 19 and had saved \$600 when I left home that fall to start a new life. My mother went to New York City with me to be certain I got settled. I rented a room for \$13 a week at 49th and 8th Avenue, a neighborhood that scared her. She cried when we said good-bye. Remaining there alone, I thought of her for the first time as a fellow human being, as a true friend.

"Classes that were invaluable took up my mornings. I located a job and was fired in four days. I had to stand at the end of a conveyor belt and put stickers on boxes on the thirty-fifth floor of a downtown loft. The boxes got ahead of me. But then I landed two jobs, totaling eleven hours a day. I ran around Madison Avenue offices delivering messages, from 1 to 5 p.m. Then I dashed over to '21' to check hats until midnight.

"As a father I won't forget that the young are more adventurous and less cautious than older people."

He predicts that his own teenagers will find their first love as thrilling and perplexing as his. At 19, he dated a classmate who was a darling. Mark and Debbie Walley still speak fondly of each other when reminiscing about their romance then. And out of their entire class of 150 acting students, they're the only two who've become famous!

"There were many with potential talent, but opportunities in our line are scarce. Perhaps we were more persistent. We didn't dare think of marriage because it was obvious we had to concentrate on our careers."

Mark went home to work another summer as a laborer to help with his expenses for his second year of classes. "I lived with several fellows at the Academy in one huge room at 56th and 8th Avenue. We paid \$80 a month for it and had to keep the window open because the gas leaked."

His first big break was the lead in the Academy's touring company that presented

*Blue Denim* across the country for six months. From it he went into a role on Broadway in *There Was A Little Girl*. Jane Fonda and Dean Jones had the leads. Gary Lockwood and Joey Heatherton were in the cast. Mark drove to Hollywood afterwards with Gary, shared an apartment with him in California for a year.

"Gary got film chances first. It took me literally six months to win my first part. I was never idle, never believed in waiting for a phone to ring. I went to work parking cars at a restaurant my first night in town and didn't quit till I had the first role. My ten lines in *My Three Sons* took ten minutes, but the scenes that followed came from that foothold. I lived for two months on what I made from it, the way I budgeted.

"I'll keep after our kids to be persistent. Yes," he grinned, "I say kids because we want more than one child within the next five years! When I came back from six months of training in the Army Reserves, I had to start all over—and with only seven bucks to my name! I lined up a job delivering liquor at night, but I didn't have to because I received a call for a small role. And the small role led to larger ones.

"I count on a daughter who'll be like Melinda in many ways," he mused. Although her parents were divorced, good grades came easily to her since she didn't choose to mix in school activities. Cataloging herself as an intellectual, she entered U.C.L.A. on a scholarship and quit after one semester. It was too huge, too impersonal, and she didn't want to belong to a sorority. "She thought she wanted to be an actress at that point. To prove she could be whatever she chose, she persuaded her mother to let her live alone.

"We won't betray any of our children's confidences, so they can talk to us freely. We won't put them down, thinking their problems to be unimportant. And we won't harp on what we did at their age because the situations won't be the same. I never felt I had to be seen at the 'in' spots, or that I must wear weird clothes to make an impression. I'm hoping they'll be self-reliant in that manner."

"Certainly we won't bring them up in sexual ignorance," Melinda says. "At the girls' school I went to, they explained sex in three minutes and made it horrible! There's no need to be ashamed of normal behavior.

"When we put down roots, I'd like them to be in a rustic retreat in Oregon," Mark continued, "so our children won't identify with unhealthy values. However, the family will come with me on my acting jobs. We can arrange for them to keep up with their schooling while away.

"It'd be shocking to fumble as a father. I'll never feel smugly safe when I'm one. No man can be too secure with the responsibilities he must handle."

A radiant Melinda came back in the room. Under her doctor's direction, she gained only ten pounds during her pregnancy. She flew into Mark's arms for his tender kiss.

"There's a lot I won't forget as a husband," he said softly.

Write Mark c/o High Chaparral, Old Tucson, Arizona.