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FILM

# Burt Lancaster

## near 60 - - Honest!

By SIDNEY EDWARDS

(London Express)

LONDON — When Visconti directed Burt Lancaster in *The Leopard* he described him like this: "The most perfectly mysterious man I've ever met."

There was more than an element of mystery involved in meeting Mr. Lancaster this week. No one actually put on a blindfold but I had to meet at a rendezvous, a hotel, about 500 yards away from the house in which he is staying. Then escorted through back streets.

He is anxious to preserve the anonymity of his whereabouts (although if you are out early in Hyde Park you might meet him jogging in a blue track-suit).

The setting is aristocratic: a black Rolls at the door, old paintings on the walls of the beautifully furnished drawing room. One ashtray is crowded with cigarette ends. "I stayed up until 4 a.m. trying to adjust to the time change from New York. I finally got to sleep and I feel much better."

It was mid-morning and he had just got up. He was wearing his track suit and a blue, unshaven chin to match. A housekeeper brings tea and toast. He stretches

onto the carpet. The frame is large, the shoulders broad. The eyes are bright blue, which you don't quite expect.

He will be 60 next year. I say he looks pretty fit. "You mean for an old man?" he asks smilingly. I say, no, I didn't mean that.

"I have to act my age. No more love scenes in films. I'd look rather silly making love to a 19-year-old girl. It's character parts from now on."

He talks crisply in the deep voice. He is rather cool and serious.

A character part has brought him to London. He plays an ageing CIA agent in Michael Winner's film, *Scorpio*. Location shots were done in Washington last week but the scenes ostensibly inside the CIA headquarters will be shot in an office block at Hemel Hempstead.

His co-star is Paul Scofield, who plays a Russian agent. They last worked together on the film *The Train*. Lancaster says he admires Scofield very much. "I'm a movie star. He's a great actor. That's the difference."

Some of the scenes will be shot in Vienna. I notice a Salzburg Festival programme

at Salzburg from Vienna and to the Olympics."

Then he fixes you with the blue eyes, the whole 6 ft. 2 in. frame looks a shade overbearing and he asks: "Do you have any influence in this town, Mr. Edwards?" I say no, then he says he wants a ticket to hear the Nilsson-Solid performance of *Elektra* at Covent Garden, also Jon Vickers in *Otello*.

He says his one ambition in life had been to be an opera singer. "Ever since I sang in the church choir as a boy. Then the voice broke and I've spent the rest of my life searching for it."

We talk for a while about his early days in New York. "I lived on 105th Street, a wide block—Central Park was five minutes away to play in. I spent most of my time in the library on 110th Street.

"My father worked in the post office. He made 49 dollars a week, a fortune in those days. I wore hand-down clothes. It didn't matter. Those things are unimportant.

"As a child I had a part in an amateur production called "Three Pills in the Bottle. Three men came to the door and offered me a

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