

**Excerpt from the book**  
**“With Umbrella, Scotch and Cigarettes -**  
**An Unauthorised Guide to The Avengers Series 1”**  
**by Richard McGinlay and Alan Hayes**

**Double Exposure**

On 21st November 1960, Leonard White sent a communication addressed to directors Don Leaver, James Ormerod and Guy Verney. This message contained, among other items of business, a request of these gentlemen: “I would like your individual ideas about possible openings [title sequences] for the series, and therefore would appreciate it if you would contact me as soon as possible.” It is unclear whether or not any of the directors responded with regard to this subject, as the pertinent documentation is missing. However, it was soon decided that the sequence would comprise photographic stills, and that these images would be specially shot on location.

Consequently, on Monday 5th December 1960, a small team including Ian Hendry, Patrick Macnee, Ingrid Hafner and an ABC photographer travelled into central London and headed towards the district of Soho, W1. With Hendry and Macnee dressed in sandstone-coloured trench coats, somewhat stereotypical apparel for sleuths of the era, photographs were posed in a variety of somewhat seedy, run-down settings. Among these was Moroni’s newsagents at 68 Old Compton Street, an outlet that specialised in imported European and American newspapers and magazines for more than 40 years. It was at this location that the oft-seen images of Keel and Steed smoking cigarettes by racks of newspapers were taken. The dating of the photo shoot has been narrowed down thanks to the publication dates of some of the papers shown on the racks. These poses have since become synonymous with Series 1 of *The Avengers*, though the trench coats were not seen regularly in the series in actuality. Ingrid Hafner also featured in these pictures, as did an unidentified, well-built male extra in his early thirties. Further photographs were taken outside Del Monico’s off licence, at 64 Old Compton Street, one of the area’s most celebrated and successful retailers, which was established in 1925 by Dante Del Monico. The shop boasted many famous customers

and the queue to gain entry one Christmas stretched so far down Old Compton Street that a police presence was necessary to keep order! The photographs shot there featured Patrick Macnee, complete with obligatory cigarette, looking longingly in the shop window at the display of wines and spirits. Both of these shops have now ceased trading and have vanished from the Soho landscape.

A few streets away, Berwick Street Market is thankfully still very much alive. The street itself dates back to the turn of the 17th century and its market was officially recognised in 1892, though street trading had been a regular feature on Berwick Street before that time. This world-famous market was among the locales visited during the photography session, with Ian Hendry and Patrick Macnee seemingly on the lookout for their quarry amid the bustle of the day's business. Ingrid Hafner then joined them for a series of light-hearted photos in which she is seen purchasing some fruit from the greengrocer's stall – number 168, owned by W.J. Butler.

Photographs of a more dramatic nature were taken on Bouchier Street, a narrow side road off Dean Street, W1. The first of these images showed Ingrid Hafner being menaced in a doorway by the extra seen in the Old Compton Street shots. The remainder of the session concentrated upon Hendry and Macnee. They are shown by the gates to a small car park on waste ground off Bouchier Street, where they have apprehended a middle-aged workman and pressure him for information (these photographs are often wrongly attributed to *The Springers*, dating back to an incorrect captioning on page 25 of Dave Rogers' 1989 book, *The Complete Avengers*, or sometimes to *The Frighteners*). Hendry and Macnee were photographed running east down Bouchier Street, passing a van belonging to Floris, the famed bakers and confectioners then situated on Brewer Street, and sprinting past buildings that are today demolished (including the one where Ingrid Hafner was seen in the doorway). They were then shown running to the west, back down the street to a small parking area adjacent to an office block. This building and the parking spaces, on the south side of the street, remain fundamentally unchanged today. The final shots taken in the environs of Bouchier Street depicted the two actors scaling a wall – with the aid of a ladder – from the waste ground car park. These shots, which are often

incorrectly associated with the episode *Dance with Death*, show the backs of the buildings on Meard Street which feature distinctive stepped chimneys. As well as being used as a car park, the waste ground was occasionally used in the 1950s by skiffle bands who performed impromptu concerts. An office building now stands on this space.

The final site visited was the large car park that stood in the grounds of the tower of St Anne's church. The building had been severely damaged in 1940 during the London Blitz, with only the tower left fully intact. With acts of worship impossible at the site, the church was deconsecrated, and, as was common in Britain after the war, the land – bounded by Old Compton Street, Dean Street, Shaftesbury Avenue and Wardour Street – became a national car park. It was here that Ian Hendry and Patrick Macnee ran between rows of cars which were somewhat impractically parked nose-to-tail. The church has since been renovated, with the tower and parish clock being refurbished by the Soho Society in 1979, leading to a full restoration and reconstruction of the complete church which was completed in 1991.

The photographs that were shot during this excursion from Teddington into central London were utilised for publicity purposes, some appearing in *TV Times* magazine and national newspapers. Imagery from the shoot was also used to make up 'caption cards' which would form title sequences once placed before the cameras in the studio. Cards for the beginnings and ends of acts were also created for use in the programmes.

Although the Soho location work comprised only stills photography, the production team would return there, both on film and in fiction, during Series 1. *The Frighteners* would feature film work at Berwick Street Market, and stock footage of Soho scenes would be inserted into *Toy Trap*, an episode that was set in the area and concerned a call girl racket.

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