

Phillip's Secret Affair: ANNE JEFFREYS

About Her Guest Rôle on *Falcon Crest*

Interview by

THOMAS J. PUCHER (*German FALCON CREST Fan Club*)

Shaun K. Chang, one of our editors at www.falconcrest.org, met Anne Jeffreys, through a mutual friend, actress Ann Rutherford, at the *Williamsburg Film Festival* on March 13, 2011 and was so kind to arrange for me an interview with Anne Jeffreys, who portrayed Phillip Erickson's (Mel Ferrer) lover, Amanda Croft, during season 2 of *Falcon Crest*. I was thrilled when Anne contacted me via e-mail to let me know she would love for me to call and interview her. So we set up an appointment for April 4, 2011.



Friends: Ann Rutherford (left) and Anne Jeffreys with Shaun K. Chang at the *Williamsburg Film Festival* on March 13, 2011.



Ann Rutherford and Anne Jeffreys at another film festival.

Anne, who has had an incredible career with far more than 80 projects in television, the movies and on stage, was very lovely and easy to talk to. After we had talked for a few moments about ourselves, she asked "What would you like to know about *Falcon Crest*?"

How She Became Amanda

"How did you get your rôle on the show?" I started with my first question.

"You know, I don't really know except that apparently Mr. Hamner had seen me some place — I don't know where — and he asked me up for interview, and I did — and I was in *Falcon Crest*," the actress replied.

"He was such a lovely gentleman," she continued about Earl, "a real Southern, wonderful man. I just enjoyed talking with him and visiting with him. I wished I'd been on the show even longer so I would have known him even better."

Anne thought that the reason for so many international actors and actresses — including Cliff Robertson, Gina Lollobrigida, Celeste Holm, Kim Novak and Leslie Caron, just to name a few — being attracted to *Falcon Crest* and signing on was the fact that Earl created the series: "This was a hot show, a big show and wonderful to work on, and everybody signed on. He is such a clever man! I just liked him. He is warm, intelligent and had a human understanding in his writing."



Earl Hamner in his office in 2007.

We talked a bit about Earl and his most recent books, some of which Anne was determined to purchase as she liked him and his writing so much. She particularly liked *The Waltons*: "That was a wonderful show. I never missed that. Such a wholesome show. We don't have shows like that anymore," she regretted. "It was about people and humanity... I wished he wrote another series now. *Falcon Crest* was very interesting with the wine business," she alluded to the fact that the topic was really perfect for California with its various wine growing regions.

Working with Fellow Cast Members

Thinking of *Falcon Crest*, Anne immediately started talking about the cast.



on it — I think — six weeks or six times."

"Of course, Jane — I loved Jane Wyman. She was so professional. Even though I have done so many films, my basic training came with the theater, live theater in New York. So I am a real believer in discipline and your work and what you do — and that isn't around anymore [nowadays]. Jane was the star of the show, as you well know, and she was always on time on the set, knew her lines, knew what she was going to do, and it was such a pleasure to work with her... She was so classy. She was not only nice to work with, but so professional. That's what I loved about her. Sometimes it made me nervous because she knew her lines better than I knew mine," Anne laughed. "It was a happy time, easy working and pleasant working, also with the crew. I only was

"Yes, you played Amanda in six episodes," I confirmed. "Was your time on the show limited from the very beginning, or did the producers decide from one week to another how many more times you would be back?"

"I think that it was a planned character," Anne explained about the limited time her rôle was designed for, "to make a little diversion as for Jane's character. I was told that it wasn't a long part. I was sorry my rôle came to an end because I enjoyed it. I enjoyed meeting with him and talking with him," she referred to creator and executive producer Earl Hamner again. "And I enjoyed the other actors."

Anne started to laugh: "There was only one," she hesitated for a second, but decided to come forward: "I didn't come into real contact with her, which... wasn't her fault. It was Lana Turner. Lana came on the show as a guest star, as we were all... Hundreds of people were on that show. My goodness!" Anne exclaimed about the many big names on the cast list of *Falcon Crest* before coming back to Lana: "The first day she came on the set... They [the crew] were very disciplined in time, and if they called at 8 o'clock on the set, you had to be on the set — or you were supposed to be on the set, made-up, dialog memorized and ready to go. And I remember that on the first day somebody said: 'Oh, Lana Turner is guest starring, she's starting today.' And I thought: 'I'd love to see Lana. I haven't seen her since we were both at *Metro* years ago,'" she referred to the golden era of Hollywood when both actresses worked at *MGM*, the classic studio in Culver City, which was bought out by *Lorimar - Telepictures* in 1986 and is now *Sony Pictures Studios*. "They had a portable dressing room for her," Anne continued about Lana, "and 8 o'clock came, and 9 o'clock came, 10 o'clock came... she never came out of her little dressing room! I don't know what she was doing, but she held up the show for two hours, and that was unheard of!" Anne laughed. "You just couldn't do that! I guess, out of watching some of the 'Falcons' today, she actually came out of her dressing room because she had a lot of scenes. But I never could figure it out," the actress referred to the reason for Lana to completely halt production. "And she was the only one that I know ever did that. I know there were words down on the set: 'Either she comes out and goes to work, or she is out of the show!' So I guess she came into the show..."

For an episode to be filmed within 7 days, an incident like that must have been a major setback for the entire crew's work.



Chase and Jacqueline run into Angela and Richard in the *Falcon Crest Winery Building* (episode 24).

However, Anne defended Lana's behavior to a certain extent: "She was spoiled. She was a 'Metro baby'. They catered to every whim, and they could get away with a lot! I guess that was her first real television venture. It was just a shame! I felt very sorry later for her. First, I was angry that she didn't come out of her dressing room. But it wasn't all her fault — she's been raised that way. We were not social buddies. We knew each other, but I saw her a couple of years before she died and we were talking. But it never occurred to me to ask her why she wasn't coming out of her dressing room."



Lana Turner and Jane Wyman during a break while shooting episode 24.

"Speaking of celebrities — what was it like to work with Mel Ferrer, who you had most of your scenes with?" I asked.

"He was wonderful," Anne replied. "I liked Mel very much. He looked very good, he was professional, and we worked very well together. As I remember — it was so long ago, '82 – '83, something like that... Jane Wyman's character was making over just to him, who was her business agent or something — in the script." Anne misremembered here because Mel Ferrer actually played Angie's attorney, Phillip Erickson. "And when I came on, I was his secret girlfriend so she was jealous of me, of course, and at one time, she walked in to a sort of an embrace between the two of us, and that was then the end of Amanda Croft," Anne laughed.



Secret lovers: Phillip and Amanda are having a romance — until Angela finds out about their affair.

"Was that also your most favorite scene?" I asked, having realized how enthusiastically she had described it.

"Yes, the one where Jane Wyman walked in on us," she confirmed. She vividly remembered that moment, even the wardrobe. "We were in a very hot embrace on a sofa — which was, you know, very ahead of its time," she alluded to the prime time drama's decision to show vintage lovers in a steamy scene — actually from today's standpoint not really steamy, but considering CBS program practices quite revolutionary at that time to show a couple in their 60's embracing and kissing on a couch and moving to the bedroom where he slowly, but hungrily unbuttons her blouse.



"And she walks in and catches the two of us!" Anne described the moment when Jane Wyman's Angela entered Phillip's apartment. "And I remember the suit she had on was a beautiful white suit with a white fox collar."

Anne was still impressed with Jane's wardrobe. "I said: 'Jane, where do you get your clothes? They are so beautiful.' And she said: 'Well, I have a designer named David Hayes.' So when I left the show, I looked up David Hayes and I have hundreds of pieces of his clothing now. I am sitting in my office... A closet, I guess you would call it — a large room... The whole wall has racks for clothes. I would say that 90 % of it are David Hayes. Thanks to Jane!"

Now she came back to Mel Ferrer once again: "He had lemon groves. I had one lemon tree planted in my backyard." She explained that when they talked about the trees, she asked him how to prune them. "And he said:



'You don't prune lemon trees,' " Anne quoted Mel and pointed out that he taught her what exactly to do with them. "I had a lot of fun with that," the actress summarized her memories about Mel Ferrer's advice. "That lemon tree is still there! It's just loaded with lemons. I got so upset the other day. It was hanging all the way down, touching the ground," she described one of the main limbs and said that her gardener cut it off. "It just broke my heart. There I remembered what Mel said: 'You do not trim, you do not prune lemon trees.'"

Filming Locations

Another characteristic element of the series we talked about was the extensive use of filming locations.

However, Anne did not travel to the Napa Valley for location shots. All her scenes were filmed either at *The Burbank Studios* (now *Warner Bros. Studios*) or on location in and around Los Angeles.

"Do you know where you filmed the scenes in Phillip's apartment?" I asked. "It must have been somewhere in Westwood from what I know."

"It's over here on Wilshire Boulevard. Each apartment has a big round balcony. It's one of what they call the *Wilshire Corridor*. The architecture is very distinct because of these round balconies that come out from the apartments."

She described *The 10560 Wilshire*, a luxurious apartment complex built in 1982 — just ready in time for filming and in contemporary design of that era.



Scenes from the building where not only Phillip's apartment was filmed, but also Richard's apartment.



Another scene filmed outside the studios was the segment when Angela saw Amanda at the *Del Lago Beauty Shop* in San Francisco, as we both recalled. "I vaguely remember that, too," Anne said. "I remember something about hair wrapped in towels."

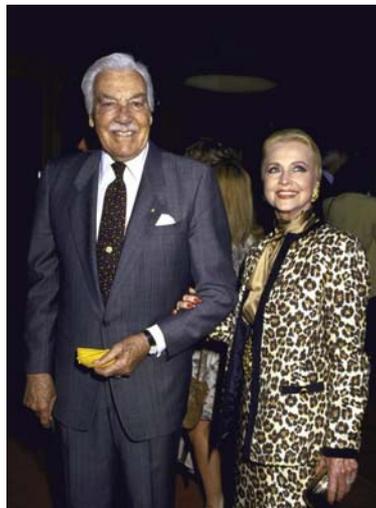
The scene was actually shot at a beauty salon in Sherman Oaks.

Real Life Buddies

"In your real life, as I know from many photos in magazines and newspapers, you were often in the company of Cesar Romero, who later also starred on *Falcon Crest*, and you

were also seen with Jane Wyman at various social events. Did you see each other in your personal lives very often?"

"Unfortunately, neither of them are with us anymore. Cesar was a very good friend of my husband's — of Robert Sterling's — and mine. I go to so many charities... About one of them, Robert said: 'You know something — I don't like this, it's boring, and it takes my time up, and I'm not going to go anymore.' I said: 'But I have already accepted this and that.' And he said: 'I tell you that — you can go to any one you want with anybody you want at any time that you want, but just don't make me go!' I said: 'Okay, I'll go by myself.' So I went by myself to this one event, and Cesar was there. We met in the hallway, and I said: 'Hi, how are you, dear?' His nickname was 'Butch', by the way. And I said: 'How are you, Butch?' And he said: 'I am fine.' I said: 'Are you here alone?' — 'Yes.' — And I said: 'So am I. Are you going to such and such a show next week?' And he said: 'Yes, I am.' I said: 'You're going with anybody?' He said: 'No, I'm coming alone.' I said: 'Why don't we go together? You know, you could pick me up,' because he lived not too far from me, and we could just go to all these things with company. He said: 'Great!' So we started going out to all those charity things. He was wonderful company. I loved Butch very much. He was a close friend of ours, you know, a wonderful escort, very tall and very handsome and fun to be with. So it just worked out that way."



Cesar Romero and Anne Jeffreys at various events in the 1980's and 1990's.

Anne Nowadays

"I get a lot of fan mail from over there," she referred to Europe and explained that most of the fans contact her because of *Falcon Crest*, *General Hospital* and *Baywatch* where she played the mother to David Hasselhoff's character.

"It's quite startling to walk down the street in either London or on the Isle of Jersey and then to run into somebody who knows you: 'Oh, I saw you on... such and such!' That startles me. One lady came up... I was going to walk into *Harrods*, and in this crowd of people that were moving altogether I heard somebody say: 'Tess!' She kept calling, and she came up to me. And I said: 'You have the wrong person. I am not Tess.' And she looked at me kind of strange." Anne pointed out that she did not realize in that particular situation that the lady actually referred to her character name, Tess Trueheart, from the 1945 *Dick Tracy* movie. "I had forgotten... If you do that many films — a lot of

them were short shooting scheds; I think I did over 40 before I left and went to the theater stage — you forget.”

Anne is still active and loves playing. “Somebody gave me a script at the church yesterday. I haven’t had a chance to read it,” she told me. “He said: ‘I am writing this part for you, and I am going to make it even bigger,’” she quoted the writer.

“I really would like to go back on the stage again. I’ve always said: ‘There’s one more big show for me.’ But it better hurry!” she laughed.

She explained that she continues to be offered rôles, but she has become quite selective as she feels she is in an age where she does not have to play everything, but just the parts she really likes. “At my age — I don’t look my age. I am either too young or too old for rôles,” she described a typical problem that makes it hard for her to agree to a part she can identify with well.

She also enjoys traveling a lot. “I go at least once every other year to Europe,” she explained, listing some of the countries she visited, including France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria and Germany.

“These are such pleasant memories you are bringing back to me,” Anne said when we came to the end of our interview. She enjoyed reminiscing about her time on *Falcon Crest* and kindly offered that I could call her any time in case I had any other questions. My conversation with her was a most enjoyable experience. She is a very classy lady and was very pleasant to talk to.