

Martin Landau confesses –

"Life would have been hell without her!"

By Rodger Wineland

Martin Landau loves his wife, Barbara Bain, so much that he'd give his life for her.

Not only that, but even in death he'd give her his heart. The love the Landaus have for each other comes from mutual respect and admiration. Barbara knows that a pretty face is not enough to keep her guy. She is there whenever he needs her to give him support when he's tense, or tired, or just feeling low. Martin thought that Barbara was an arrogant blonde when he first met her in New York. He was teaching an acting class and Barbara enrolled as a student. She impressed him with her charm and intelligence. Within a year they married. Martin has a very special feeling for Barbara. She is the mother of his children, the light in his future, and the love of his life.

When I asked him how he felt about heart transplants, made famous by Dr. Christiaan Barnard of South Africa, Martin said, "Of course I'm in favor of the heart transplant idea! Why shouldn't I perpetuate a life, if I could?"

Today, after 12 years knowing Barbara," he confided to us, "Life would have been hell without her." With the miracle of this operation, he perhaps will never have to face this possibility.

Martin said, thoughtfully, "Well, Barbara and I talked about heart transplant quite a bit. We discussed the situation in which a man's mother dies, and her heart is transplanted to another person's body! Where would this man's sentiments go? Should he feel closer to the person walking around with his mother's heart in his body? Is that man, walking around, extending the mother's life in any way?" "This kind of talk is strange! We never would have thought, as children, that some day we'd be talking about transplanting organs from one body to another. Yet, the

world changes and the impossible and the incredible of last year becomes the possible today. The idea of somebody walking around with your mother's heart is not impossible any more!"

Martin's own mother died 10 years ago. Who knows what would have happened if the heart transplant idea had been worked out then? Who knows how many of our dearly beloved relatives could have been saved? Martin has said that life would have been hell without Barbara. Maybe now he won't have to live without her. If accident or illness should ever threaten to take her from him, this new discovery could save her life. This could mean that he need never face a life without her.

Did Martin and Barbara come to any conclusion about heart transplants?

"No. There are no absolutes! Today, anything is possible! Why not? And I also have to say, 'Why' and 'Why bother?' "

Modern medicine offers so many startling changes in the years to come, Martin points out.

"I'm fascinated with the idea of freezing a person and letting him come back to life in another century. Have you read about it? It's a sensational way of preserving a genius for the future. It's a startling way of taking a person hopelessly ill and bringing him back at a time when that particular disease has a cure."

Did Martin Landau have any moral or religious reasons to oppose or be afraid of some of these medical miracles? "No, I don't think there's anything wrong with these ideas. They don't shock me. But I am shocked that people are still throwing rocks at each other, and now the rocks are bombs, and people are still throwing them at each other! We are still so primitive, basically, and I wonder why we've learned so little!"

A pause. He sipped on his drink, then took a few minutes to sign autographs.

"Somebody once asked George Bernard Shaw, 'Why don't you have cut flowers in your home? Don't you like cut flowers?' He answered, 'I like children, tpp, but I don't cut their heads off.'

"I'm much more concerned with the children of the world, and things that I find it's not easy to justify something like abortion, or not to justify it. There are times when abortions are immoral, and there are times when abortions are good, as in rape."

I noticed he wasn't smoking. "I was smoking three packs of cigarettes a day," he told us, "and my press agent bet me that I couldn't stop. But I did! It's been a month now. I'm dedicated not to resume smoking!"

His publicist, Gertrude Brooks, started to smoke a cigarette. Martin scolded her, then he said, "I had been smoking 20 years. If I could stop, then you can!"

He smiled mischievously, as he took the lighted cigarette out of her hand. "I'll show you how to stop smoking! Just make the cigarette disappear!" And with a magician's wave of his hand, the cigarette disappeared!

Actually, he had palmed it so that it went out of view. Then he brought it into view and squashed it in the ashtray.

"My wife smokes," he conceded, "but I don't try to stop her. Because I've stopped smoking doesn't mean I can insist that she stop too. Do I have the right to stop her? No, she has to find out for herself. You can't do thinking for other people! They have to experience something for themselves!"

How about your children smoking? Would you stop them? I asked.

"Our children are Susan Meredith, 8 and Juliet Rose, 3. Of course, I'd stop them if I caught them smoking at age 4. But when they got older, I'd warn them against the hazards of smoking, but I would not stop them. My job is to introduce my children to the world, to tell them about the good things and the bad things, to prepare them for life as it is, to let them know about life in a clean and healthy way.

"When they're older, they'll make their own mistakes. My job will be to give them guidance."

I asked if he believed in astrology, and he said, "People ask me all the time under what sign was I born? And I say, I'm not putting down astrology but I don't want to be classified. There's an oversimplification there."

But what is your birthday? I asked.

"My wife was born Sept. 13, and our Juliet was born Aug. 13, and my sister was born June 13. But I'm not a 13. I was born June 20. I'm between cancer and gemini."

Martin still keeps in touch with people he used to work with as a \$75-a-week apprentice in an art department, back in 1951. He used to convulse his fellow workers with dialect jokes and they kept urging him, "You ought to be an actor!" That encouraged him to study acting and, finally, after a period of starving, to make it big in TV and movies.

Because of his interest in heart transplants, I asked if he had ever thought of becoming a doctor. He had a quick answer: "I didn't become a doctor because I don't like to see blood. I leaned toward the artistic areas, anyway. Doctors do a great job for you and me and for everybody, but I didn't want to become a doctor." The conversation drifted back to heart transplants, after Martin had cheerfully signed a few more autographs.

"Would your wife want you to have her heart if she died first and knew you needed a new heart?" I asked.

"You'd have to ask her," he said. "She is very articulate, and she knows her mind, and I believe in letting her speak for herself."

"Would you give your heart to your children? I asked.

"Of course I would!" he said.

"Then would you give your heart to your wife?" I questioned.

"Why shouldn't I?" he said, firmly. "Besides, it's such a romantic conception!" Then he might never have to lose his lovely Barbara.