

Barbara Bain and Martin Landau say:

“For The Kids Of Today It’s Time For Parents To Break A Few Rules!”

By Sylvia Resnick

“There isn’t a parent in the world who doesn’t want the best for his kids!”

Martin Landau settled his long, slender frame into a comfortable position as he sat back in a chair facing me. As he spoke, expounding eloquently on the subject of bringing up children in today’s world, his blue eyes shot sparks across the room. There was nothing unusual or earth shattering about his opening statement. Hundreds of thousands of parents throughout history have echoed that same sentiment. But, as he continued to speak, his words sounded far from prosaic and repetitious.

Martin Landau is a main in every sense of the word; a man of strong convictions, and one of them is the fact that the time has come for each of us to stand up and be counted.

“We all have an obligation to do what we can to make this a better world. There are things to be considered...” The words poured out of him easily, but with great emotion. He is a man who feels deeply and is not ashamed to show it.

Our meeting took place in the evening, after Martin had put in a long day at the studio. He should have been exhausted, but as our conversation continued, excitement emanated from him, and fatigue was forgotten. We sat in a pleasant room off the living room of the home of Martin and his lovely wife Barbara and their two daughters. One can tell immediately that his room is the gathering place for the family. There are books and magazines, many of them relating to the theatre and motion pictures, lining the walls. Atop the television set are the two Emmys and the Golden Globe Award won by Barbara and Martin for their excellent acting in *Mission: Impossible*. Down a few steps is the gameroom where a large pool table

occupies the center of the floor, and a well stocked bar waits.

“Years ago, when we were kids, girls wanted to be like their mothers, and boys emulated their fathers. It was a small world and kids didn’t have the same exposure to life ... and death.” His blue eyes saddened, for our interview took place a week following the assassination of Robert Kennedy, and Martin was obviously distressed by the tragedy. “The world at this point is in a very bad shape. And the kids know it. The old ways no longer apply, because the boundaries are different, the ball is a different shape. We are hanging on to voices of the past that are no longer practical. Our archaic standards, lies, and hypocrisies disturb the young person growing up in today’s world. What they are really saying to us by some of their behavior is ‘Hey baby, you’re not playing the game.’ I think they want us to join them, and I think that we should. Together we might help change what’s wrong with the way things are today.”

His tone deepened as he continued and his expression grew more intense. This is a man, who as a child and even as a young man, was outwardly shy and reticent, while inwardly feeling all of life with a depth of emotion few of us are privileged to experience. His early attempts at expressing these feelings came in the form of art, as he was a well-paid cartoonist for the *New York Daily News*. But being safe and secure, having prestige, did not completely fill his life. He spent hours searching inwardly, knowing that there was a greater need to be expressed. When he realized that answer lay in new career, he quite his job, while his friends looked on in bewilderment. Actors starved. They rarely made it, and then only after years of struggling. His friends could not understand

that at last Martin was finding fulfillment, and that eventually he would be able to do what he felt he was meant to do.

“I want to reach people in the one way I think they can be reached successfully – through films.”

He spoke confidently, but without pomposity, for he is man of talent who possesses a most unusual quality – modesty. One believes in what he has to say. Martin Landau is a man to reckon with. He reaches out to your inner senses and fills you with a burning desire to do what is right and good for humanity, in whatever small way possible.

His hands moved in gestures of eloquence to amplify his words. “I feel that it isn’t the meek who will inherit the world, but the young. I have no fears about what will happen when they are of an age to take over. We are still living in much the same way as people did thousands of years ago. That’s as far as we’ve allowed our thinking and behavior to go. Yet, the world as it is right now is vastly different from what it was even 25 years ago. But the adults of today continue to cling to the old ways.

“One button can destroy the world. One bullet changes history. In regard to my own children – Susan, seven, and Juliet Rose, three – I can only say that I am trying to help them find their own way. Both Barbara and I agree that they should learn to function for themselves. We have faith in today’s youth. We feel that a happy child grows into a happy adult. Still, it would be audacious of me to presume that we are doing a perfect job. Basically, I feel that the good each of us thinks about and wants is the same. The question is how do we achieve this.”

It’s a closely-knit unit, the Landau four. Weekends are devoted strictly to doing things with the children. It can be spending time at the zoo, at the beach, playing Monopoly, or swimming in their pool. Or it can be a unique kind of outing such as they had just a few weeks ago.

“I hadn’t had time for a haircut,” Martin explained with an amused smile. “My barber lives down at the Marina on a forty-two-foot sailboat and one Saturday he invited us all down to spend the day with him and his dog,

who had just had a litter of eight puppies. The girls had a great time playing with the puppies while I got my hair cut. Susan is very precocious. She has known about where babies come from since the age of three. She is very well oriented and knows the parts of the body by their proper names. Juliet is still in the process of learning, but neither of our children has any hang-up in that department.

“We feel that this business of making a fuss about nudity is ridiculous. Everyone has a body, so why be embarrassed about it? There are certain scenes in movies that are really beautiful, yet they are thought of as vulgar and dirty by so many people. Wouldn’t it be odd if we had been taught that eating should be done in private, while other things are done in public? Just imagine how it would feel to be caught eating in a public place. That’s what the kids are screaming about today, the hypocrisy of their parents and the adults who make the rules.

“Everyone has hang-ups. We have to find out what we are first so that we aren’t at odds with ourselves. Most people lie to themselves, they make excuses. They’re afraid to come to terms with who and what they really are, that’s the real fear.”

Martin Landau and Barbara Bain are not afraid to get involved. Their theory might well be expressed in that much spoken phrase, “Say it like it is, baby.”

That’s the creed by which they live, right down the line. Martin admitted, “Even as a youngster I was not a joiner, as such. But I do care about things and I want to do them as well as I can. I always spoke my mind and sometimes, as a boy it got me into trouble. Acting taught me to come to grips with myself, something most people just don’t do.

“Each of us has a commitment...” he stated plainly, but meaningfully. The Landaus want a better world for their children and for all our children, but they know that unless each of us stand up to be counted, we’ll never have that world of peace and love. They are standing straight and tall, unafraid to tell it like it is.

With parents such as these in our corner, I have a strong conviction that setting the world to rights won’t be the impossible mission many of us seem to think it is.