

# TV's Only Silent Star

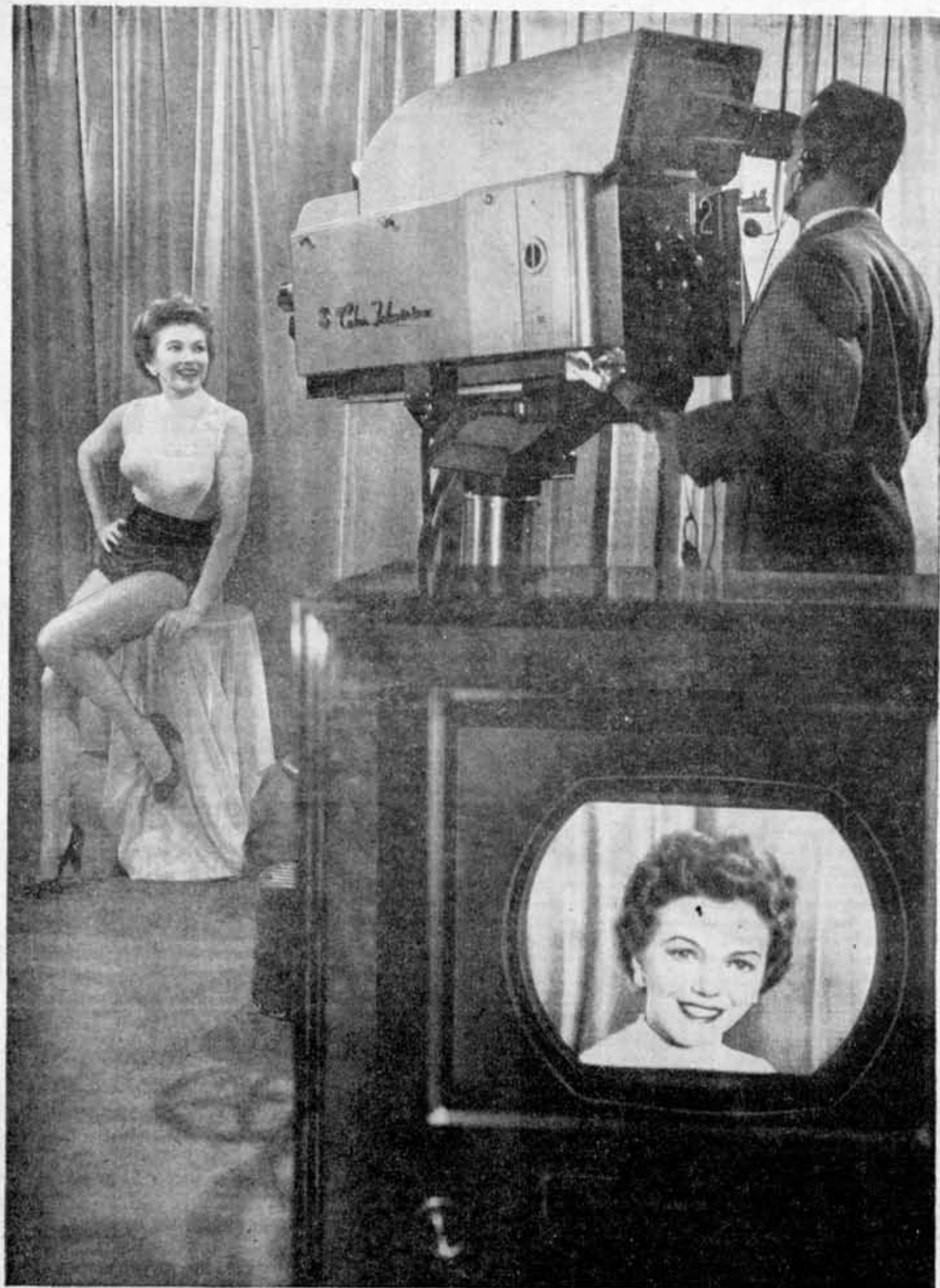
By  
Reg Ovington

engaged in the testing of color transmission. The color people took one look and pronounced her perfect for use as a color test pattern. She has, they say, a "natural complexion," which needs no artificial aid, as do most others, to overcome the peculiarities of the color camera which is unpredictably whimsical in choosing which hues it will or will not transmit. Marie has still another advantage in possessing a complexion which remains constant and does not change from day to day. "I just have to be careful," she says, "not to get sunburned or tanned. There's a little danger of that, anyway, because I work in front of the camera so much I rarely get a chance to go out."

Marie's hours are variable. She works from 50 to 60 hours a week—one week she worked 80 hours—and never knows until she's given her "good night" what hours she will work the next day. More than once she's worked around the clock, catching catnaps on a couch in her dressing room. "When I was first hired," she says, "they paid me by the hour. But after two months somebody discovered I was making almost as much money as the president of NBC, so they put me on a regular salary."

Looking forward to the day when she will no longer be needed for testing and when color television broadcasting will be as standardized as is black-and-white, Marie McNamara has prepared herself by taking courses in dramatics, in singing and dancing. "I had to stop my courses," she says, "because my hours are so uncertain, but I keep working at all those things by myself, between tests, and whenever I can at home."

Marie sighed deeply. "Color television," she said, "is a great thing, though it has ruined my social life completely. Every man who becomes interested in me soon gives up, because I have to keep breaking dates all the time on account of the strange hours I work. They always think I'm trying to be coy, or that I'm brushing them off, and they quit trying. It's happened so many times now, I've quit trying, too. I just don't have dates any more. Anyway, hardly ever. And when I do go out, I always wear black because I wear bright colors in front of the camera all the time, and I get tired of them."



ONLY a handful of studio technicians can see Marie McNamara's peaches-and-cream complexion.

## They Haven't Wired Color TV's Lovely "Guinea Pig" for Sound — But You Don't Have to Be a Lip Reader to Appreciate Her

**A** YOUNG LADY named Marie McNamara, who has been lavishly endowed with such highly negotiable assets as vivid red hair, large, blue-green eyes, a complexion vastly more appetizing than any dish of peaches and cream extant, and a bountiful, lissome figure, is responsible for creating more lip readers than any of the schools which teach that useful art to the hard-of-hearing.

Miss McNamara has had this effect on those hardy souls who have successfully combatted the somnolence induced by TV's *Midnight Movie* and *The Late, Late Show*, and who have stayed up long beyond the birth of a new day to watch the strange doings on the NBC-TV channel in the New York metropolitan area, where tests for color broadcasting are con-

ducted after the network has signed off. Miss McNamara, for two and a half years, has been the loveliest guinea pig of the electronic era, acting as a sort of living color chart for the experimenting engineers and cameramen engaged in the exhaustive research which has gone into color television transmission.

With the patience of a martyr, although a good deal more cheerfully, Marie McNamara sits before the cameras, under the blinding TV lights, while the engineers and cameramen try to duplicate on their screens the lovely colors of her hair, eyes and skin, and the vivid hues of the gowns she wears. These tests, when they go out over the air, are picked up by any black-and-white receivers which happen to be tuned

in. There is no sound transmission and that is where the lip reading comes into the picture. Marie chats with the technicians while she sits for them, and the viewers, by the hundreds, have written to her and to the network telling how they have learned to read what Marie says while she's guinea-pigging.

"Since the people started writing in to say they can tell what I'm saying," says Marie, "I've been a little self-conscious. I'll feel a lot better when color television really begins on a regular schedule, and I can stop being a guinea pig and a silent star and really go to work again as an actress."

Marie was a fashion model and bit player in television when she strayed into the office of an NBC executive