

# Star of 'Deputy' Finds Terror In Each Evening's Performance

By WILLIAM GLOVER

NEW YORK (AP) — The terror starts anew each night for Jeremy Brett.

His is the focal role in Broadway's hit drama, "The Deputy." His degree of involvement is blistering.

"Each performance is a personal experience," he reports with blunt intensity. "I'm in a state of total absorption. There are moments when I get almost hysterical."

Brett portrays a young Catholic priest who witnesses Nazi brutality to Jews during World War II and who comes into head-on conflict with Pope Pius XII about the Vatican's silence concerning the extermination of millions.

Since the play opened at the end of February, Brett has lost 14 pounds, his digestion has gone awry, his sleep become fitful.

"A good many people have told me to be objective," he says. "Well, try and do it."

BRETT'S torment centers upon the drama's graphic description of Germanic atrocities — "perhaps the ghost of Auschwitz has appeared to me a little." He goes on:

"I'm a rather idealistic person who would rather not believe human nature could sink so low. I was most vulnerable to what the play recalls — and I can't get used to it."

"At the same time, even though it may hurt like hell, and be hard to do, if the theater is to survive such topics must be aired."

Of the controversy that has swirled around "The Deputy" here and in Europe on religious grounds, Brett said:

"In the scene each night with the pope, I sometimes feel as if the roof of the theater was crashing in. I wish Pius was alive to speak for himself."

"You can't blame one person for those things that happened, just yesterday almost."

I only get frightened when I see 18-year-olds in the audience. I just hope they don't think that the play's viewpoint is the only one that should be heard."

"The play's importance is as a constant reminder of atrocity that happened — that may prevent such things ever happening again."

BRETT HAS had several reminders of the play's ability to provoke partisanship. There have been letters accusing him of being the dupe of anti-religious forces, threatening phone calls at his home.

"One day," he recounts a more chilling episode, "I was walking along a street when a man came up and asked me if I was Jeremy Brett."

"Well, you're always glad to meet a fan, so I reached over to take his out-stretched hand. Instead of a shake, however, he pulled me past

him at the curb. It was unexpected, and I went sprawling in front of a car that stopped just in time."

Brett was on his way home to England from a very different kind of part when "The Deputy" came along. He had just completed work in the film version of "My Fair Lady," playing the empty-headed dandy who vainly woos Eliza. On previous occasion, the 28-year-old Briton performed "Hamlet" in London.

"I've been incredibly lucky," he says of the role range that he has logged.

"I hope all my work won't be of equal importance to 'The Deputy,' because I'd be worn out by 40."