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Page 2
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UN Storey, "My Most Unforgettable Child" UNICEF Field workers stories of children told by Shirley Booth, Bing cosby, Greer Garson, Audrey Hepburn, Deborah Kerr, Brandon De Wilde

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Notes

Bing Crosby narrates, tells his own story about the girl who started the Greeting Cards Operation. See tapes HC-21 & HR-20

Print Name of Person Submit Images

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Number of images without cover

A KOSTER

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25

Transcription ^{DATE} March 19, 1986

UNICEF
UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK 10017

UN STORY

when prog 40's - 50's?

UN STORY

SIDE A

MAN:

Stay tuned for a specially recorded UN story,
featuring seven of the greatest stars of stage
and screen.

[MUSIC]

SHIRLEY BOOTH:

This is Shirley Booth.

BING CROSBY:

Bing Crosby.

KIRK DOUGLAS:

Kirk Douglas.

GREER GARSON:

Greer Garson.

AUDREY HEPBURN:

Audrey Hepburn.

DEBORAH KERR:

Deborah Kerr.

BRANDON DE WILDE:

And Brandon De Wilde, or as they sometimes say,

UN STORY

SIDE A

BRANDON DE WILDE (Cont'd.):

Brandon De Wilde. [PRONOUNCES IT "WILD"]

MUSIC

MAN:

United Nations Radio presents "My Most Unforgettable Child," produced for the U.N. Children's Fund. Now here is Bing Crosby.

BING CROSBY:

This is the time of the year for storytelling. You sit around the fire, you stretch out your legs, take the old pipe down from the shelf and you spin a few yarns. That's what we're going to do now. But our storytellers don't belong to the pipe and slippers group. They are men and women who go out to every corner of the world for the United Nations, trying to make life a little easier for children who have nothing.

Our storytellers are the ones who bring milk and life-saving drugs and the knowledge of how to live a better life. Their passports read: Occupation - UNICEF - United Nations Children's

UN STORY

SIDE A

BING CROSBY (Cont'd.):

Fund. Me, you know I've traveled a little bit too, but not their way. I can spin a few stories but not their kind of stories. You see, they've seen a lot of children along the way. They're the kids that you and I have never met and it's time we did because I think you'll agree that these children are - they're pretty unforgettable. Here are true stories written by UNICEF field workers. Since our authors are in faraway places making life more livable for somebody else, the U.N. has asked a few friends to tell their stories.

Shirley Booth, Kirk Douglas, Greer Garson, Audrey Hepburn, Deborah Kerr and Brandon De Wilde.

[MUSIC]

Our first story by Greer Garson and Brandon De Wilde.

GREER GARSON:

Thank you very much, Bing. Once upon a time Marie Antoinette [Abadis] ran a poultry farm near Nice. Today Marie says the only chicks

UN STORY

SIDE A

GREER GARSON (Cont'd.):

she has time for are the 70 million children UNICEF has assisted. So I don't know if Mademoiselle Abadis will ever get back to her poultry business. See what you think after you've heard her story.

[MUSIC]

My most unforgettable child is a 14-year-old boy named Fareed. In case you don't know, Fareed means alone or lonesome. And strangely enough, that's the way I remember him. Alone on a hill-top in Galilee. I was in Israel where we were trying to feed thousands of newly immigrated Jewish mothers and children as well as Arabs. Believe me, every week had its difficulties.

During the wet winter months there had been not one drop of rain in the area. Mothers and children were dependent entirely on UNICEF's milk, but it was powdered milk, you see. And to make it liquid you needed water. Unless the rains came, UNICEF could no longer help. The people pleaded with me to do something. Ever since our milk had saved Galilee's children

UN STORY

SIDE A

GREER GARSON (Cont'd.):

they revered UNICEF as a sort of miracle maker. It was futile to insist that the solution was beyond UNICEF, but just how futile was brought home to me in [Araba].

[MUSIC]

There, on a hilltop surrounded by olive groves, I was met by the [Muktar] or chief of the village. He was standing among the village ancients and at his side stood his son, Fareed. The Muktar addressed me as if UNICEF were God's substitute. His chant was translated into English by his son, Fareed.

[MUSIC]

BRANDON DE WILDE:

My father says there is God in heaven and here is UNICEF. The only somebodys who can help his village and his people. My father says you are the father and mother of this village and you can bring water to his people. Without water he has no more village, no people. My father says the somebodys is small, the heaven is high. You know the village needs water.

UN STORY

SIDE A

BRANDON DE WILDE (Cont'd.):

My father says you can speak for this village.

[MUSIC]

GREER GARSON:

The boy struck me so deeply that I stood mesmerized until his last word had faded through the hills of Galilee. I took the problem immediately to the liaison officer for foreign relief.

This is what we did: Water, believe it or not, was added to our UNICEF list of supplies. Somehow the military governor of the district requisitioned a truck large enough for water tankers, but although the village got UNICEF's milk, I could not bring the rains for all the somebods to drink, as Fareed phrased it.

[MUSIC]

I have never gone back to Araba. Oh, I know Fareed is older and might understand now, but somehow for me, I would always be haunted by the chant of that 14-year-old boy who expressed such extraordinary faith in the powers of UNICEF, and reminded me that man must still search beyond himself for the real miracles.

UN STORY

SIDE A

[MUSIC]

BRANDON DE WILDE:

My father says there is God in heaven and here is UNICEF. The only somebodys who can help his village and his people. My father says you are the father and mother of this village and you can bring water to his people.

BING CROSBY:

This story is that of Dixon Hartwell. His telephone extension at U.N. Headquarters in New York is 3374. If you dial it he is likely to say "Hartwell speaking, what's on your mind?" Tall, good-looking, Dixon J. Hartwell has been in practically every place where UNICEF is in action. He's written books on dogs, off-the-record war stories, profiles on Leo Durocher.

Hartwell can write about any subject from a dissertation on the Malthusian theory of overpopulation to my unforgettable child. Kirk Douglas, who could very well play Hartwell in a movie, tells us this story.

UN STORY

SIDE A

KIRK DOUGLAS:

My most unforgettable child? Hmm...that's a big order. You see, for the past year I've traveled through 30 countries and seen a lot of children, but it seems to me they all have one thing in common. Whether they're in Brazil or Bangkok or Baghdad, those children are the hope of the world.

This little human equation was acted out for me in the home of a rice farmer in Thailand, or Siam as it was once known. That's where I found her - my unforgettable child.

[MUSIC]

They called her Noy, and she was just five days old. A tiny, wrinkled, yelling bundle of life yet strangely beautiful. I went along with a nurse-midwife who'd come to instruct the mother on how to care for the new baby. Barely 17 years separated the baby from the mother. She was still a girl. This mother-girl received us with solemn courtesy, sitting on the floor with a grace that is only given to eastern peoples,

UN STORY

SIDE A

KIRK DOUGLAS (Cont'd.):

her swaddled baby lay before her on a straw mat. The baby's grandmother stood over her and looked at us with reserve edged with suspicion. Her eyes were a dark thundercloud. They told me a great deal. We weren't wanted here. But the mother-girl's eyes told me a different story. She was very young - only 17 and as lovely as only 17 can be. This was her first baby and she was filled with wonder. This tiny being was for her the wealth of all the world. And she must give to Noy the best possible life.

She listened intently as the nurse told her how to feed the baby, how to boil its water, how to bathe it. Then the storm struck. The grandmother suddenly spoke in an angry voice. I couldn't understand what she said so I asked the nurse to translate it. She says it is bad luck to bathe the baby before it is two weeks old. The mother-girl looked at the older woman. There was conflict on her brow, wrinkles of wonder, of puzzlement. Should she believe the

UN STORY

SIDE A

KIRK DOUGLAS (Cont'd.):

old or the new? The grandmother spoke again. The baby should be bathed in a broth of onion rings so it can grow to have strong children. I watched the mother-girl struggle. She looked up at the old woman who had raised her. Was it right to listen to this nurse who was after all a stranger? Were the news ways, the strange ways best for our child? After all, she herself had always lived by the old traditional ways. The grandmother sensed the struggle and went on relentlessly.

You must cut the fingernails of the child and place them on the window ledge or she will be killed in a fall. Do as I say. For a moment the young girl hesitated. She carefully gathered her child into her arms, rose from the floor and stood there undecided. Then slowly, shyly she shook her head and put her child in the nurse's arms. Yes, I was there and I saw it happen. The mother-girl, lovely as a lotus blossom, seemed to unfold with the realization

UN STORY

SIDE A

KIRK DOUGLAS (Cont'd.):

that in the nurse's arms lay a better chance for her baby's future.

[MUSIC]

SHIRLEY BOOTH:

This is Shirley Booth. Everyone knows that a wife plays an important part in the life and success of her husband. Every husband. But to be married to a U.N. man is a job and a half. Take Lillen Erinstraller, a Swedish girl who's never stopped traveling since she married Hans Erinstraller, now the chief of UNICEF's Middle Eastern Office. Lillen has worked right by his side so it's not surprising that the story I'm to tell you was written by Lillen, accompanied by a note that said "Hans agrees this is our unforgettable child."

[MUSIC]

On the very cold Christmas Eve of 1947 my husband and I were on our way to an orphanage a few miles south of Warsaw. The place was an estate which once belonged to a wealthy person. Now it was a home for 32 orphans. Once it has been

UN STORY

SIDE A

SHIRLEY BOOTH (Cont'd.):

a big beautiful park. Now the trees were cut and the antique statues thrown off their posts. The mansion had been badly damaged and the repairs could hardly keep out wind and snow.

[MUSIC]

Nevertheless, Sister Oshula and her group had transformed this abandoned estate into a home for her orphans.

[MUSIC]

Sister Oshula's orphanage had been kept going by a lot of people. Fruit and potatoes were given by farmers in the neighborhood. From UNICEF the orphanage received powdered milk. This day we had brought clothing. The packages were put in the large dining room and piled on a big oak table.

[CHILDREN SPEAKING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN BACKGROUND]

A pair of shoes. The sweater. A coat. All their eyes were gleaming with happiness. What a Christmas it was for these children. Stockings and coats were tried on. Old, worn-out clothes were changed with new ones. The number

UN STORY

SIDE A

SHIRLEY BOOTH (Cont'd.):

of shoes were so few that four children had to share one pair. Now the children had put on the shoes and the clothing and run out into the park. It was quiet in the room where we stood with the empty boxes in the corner. And I looked around and under the table I noticed one shoe for the right foot. Sister Oshula picked it up and looked at me and said "This shoe belongs to Urich." That's the Polish name for George. And then she told me the story of George.

[WOMAN SPEAKING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE]

I met George in the middle of the war, Sister Oshula said, in one of the badly damaged sections of Warsaw where most of the children had been evacuated. George was eight years old then and lived in a one-room apartment with his mother. His father was a soldier at the front; they didn't know where. Little George would also have been evacuated, but since his mother was alone she'd been permitted to keep him.

UN STORY

SIDE A

SHIRLEY BOOTH (Cont'd.):

George spent most of his time at home where he sat at the window dreaming. He loved birds and his friend was a starling who came to the window each day for the crumbs he would save. The street outside was deserted of people and there were no tramways rattling. Sometimes during the night George would hear loud explosions in other parts of the town. His favorite dream was of a house in the country with many trees and many, many birds and a mother who was always happy.

One evening, George was sitting in the window waiting for mother. He saw the searchlights getting brighter, nearer, and suddenly a giant fist knocked him down on the floor.

[MUSIC]

He didn't know that at that very moment his mother was dead under tons of sand and bricks only a few blocks away. He didn't know that his father had been buried weeks before in a mass grave. Now could he know that his little

UN STORY

SIDE A

SHIRLEY BOOTH (Cont'd.):

starling was crushed in the rubble. All this time he was in his dream of a little house in the country with all the beautiful trees, listening to the birds. But when he awoke there was a terrible pain in his right leg and it took him a long time to realize he didn't have a right leg. He was in a big room. He was the only child. His bed was too large and no one came to visit him. After a long time he was allowed to get up and learned how to use a crutch.

He would have been lonely in this world if it were not that Sister Oshula brought him to the orphanage. She took his mother's place. So he was not lonely anymore. And that was the story of the George.

[WOMAN SPEAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE]

[MUSIC]

Sister Oshula and I followed the children out to the terrace and we watched them play hide and seek in the park with the broken fountain and the fallen statues. George stood aside

UN STORY

SIDE A

SHIRLEY BOOTH (Cont'd.):

from the rest, leaning against a post. He had abandoned his crutch for a moment and was watching the other children running about. We could see that his eyes were full of the wish to play with them. Was this not his dream? A house in the country, the trees, the beloved birds? In his dream, George was playing the game of hide and seek. He was it. He was running to find the others but [some] with a cry he jumped forward.

[MUSIC]

The dream ended. He fell face forward on the ground and lay there. Slowly his hand reached out to seek the crutch and slowly he raised up from the ground and leaned against his post. You see, George had forgotten that his wings were cut. But I've never forgotten.

[MUSIC]

AUDREY HEPBURN:

This story belongs to Alice Shafer. In a way, I'm getting a big thrill out of telling it to you because in a way, Alice is something like

UN STORY

SIDE A

AUDREY HEPBURN (Cont'd.):

me. My name is Audrey Hepburn. I've always felt a little like a walking United Nations myself. I was born in Belgium. My father is Irish and my mother is Dutch. And I got a start in pictures in England. Anyway, this is her story, just like Alice Shafer wrote it.

[MUSIC]

One unforgettable child? No, I have six of them. Six little girls who live in Nicaragua. They gave me something I'll never forget. About a year ago I flew down to Nicaragua. It was a wonderful day. White, blue, sunshiny. The Minister of Health met me at the airport and he had a twinkle in his eye. He said "Miss Shafer, I have a surprise for you, but we have to hurry; can't be late." I didn't stop to ask any questions because I like surprises. Find me a woman that doesn't. The Minister was leading me through an archway into a large, outdoor court. Very formally the Minister introduced me. "Boys and girls, this is Miss UNICEF in person." The children clapped and yelled and

UN STORY

SIDE A

AUDREY HEPBURN (Cont'd.):

made me feel as famous as a movie star. Then six little girls walked into the court and they each had a glass in their hand. Another little girl came out with a pitcher of milk and filled their glasses. But that wasn't all. Every child in that huge courtyard, and there were many, started to sing. It was a song they'd written especially for UNICEF. Let me try to translate it for you.

With UNICEF milk we are so healthy, no children are dying.

[NOTE: THERE MAY BE A SOUND CUT IN THE ABOVE]

The devil is worried because now he doesn't get any little souls anymore.

Then the Minister of Health leaned over to me. The twinkle was still there. He said today is UNICEF's birthday and we wanted to have a party. There isn't a cake with candles, but there's something else instead. You know what I mean. I knew. I sat up a long time that

UN STORY

SIDE A

AUDREY HEPBURN (Cont'd.):

night thinking. No, I can't call my job work. It's a privilege that is given to very few. The privilege of seeing six small unforgettable faces with thank yous in their eyes.

[MUSIC]

BING CROSBY:

One of the best doctors in the Philippines is also the prettiest. She has a pretty name too. Sophia Bonadesantos. Doc Sophia was trained to take over tuberculosis vaccination work in the seven thousand Philippine Islands. When she isn't protecting children from tuberculosis this pert practitioner will dash off a short story or two. In fact, she's kind of renowned around the literati. Her work gives her plenty to write about.

For instance, you take the letter that Sophia received from a mother whose child's life had been saved by UNICEF. Doctor Sir, wrote the woman, excuse, I am ignorant to write but my heart is thanking. And I think perhaps you

UN STORY

SIDE A

BING CROSBY (Cont'd.):

around will be thanking too for the story that Doc Sophia has written. The story told for her by Deborah Kerr.

[MUSIC]

DEBORAH KERR:

His name was Rinaldo. He was 11, but barely tipped the scales at 42 pounds. He had great eyes in a tiny face and the enlarged glands on either side of his neck emphasized his thinness even more. His older sister brought Rinaldo to our clinic in the Philippines for examination. He had been ill. Intense headaches, fever, swelling of the glands at the neck. It looked like tuberculosis.

Rinaldo's sister had heard of BCG, a serum we use to vaccinate children against tuberculosis. And she thought, like many other people, that it actually could cure the disease. But that is not the case. It can only prevent tuberculosis in a healthy child. With Rinaldo it was as I expected. Any medicine at best would only

UN STORY

SIDE A

DEBORAH KERR (Cont'd.):

prolong his life a short while. I treated Rinaldo as best I could. He said nothing, but his eyes talked for him. Patience and resignation were there, but not one hint of hope.

[MUSIC]

The next time Rinaldo turned up at the clinic he brought his whole family with him. His sister told me that the boy had insisted on his family being x-rayed and tested for tuberculosis. He had said to his mother "I am sick and the vaccine cannot help me, but Sinida and Vilma maybe can get it." Vilma was suffering from primary tuberculosis, but miraculously her sister Sinida was tubercular negative. I don't know how she escaped.

I gave her the BCG vaccination and for the first time I saw a flicker of a smile in Rinaldo's huge eyes.

[MUSIC]

It came time for me to go on my annual vacation. Before I left I made a point of saying goodbye

UN STORY

SIDE A

DEBORAH KERR (Cont'd.):

to Rinaldo. I felt I would not see him again and I knew he felt it too. In a rare burst of words he stammered "Thank you, doctor. Thank you for me and Vilma and Sinida."

Sinida returned to the clinic a year later with her father. I dreaded to ask about Rinaldo, but the father volunteered the information. Rinaldo had died a month after I had left for vacation. His mother also died three months later. And Sinida? She comes regularly to the clinic for her post-BCG checkup. She is a normal, healthy, happy child free from tuberculosis. But each time she leaves I involuntarily glance at my file of x-rays against the wall. I can't help myself, for among them is my only keepsake of Rinaldo. An x-ray picture of classical miliary tuberculosis. I show it to the medical students sometimes. If, in such moments, Rinaldo is somewhere watching me, I know there is no disapproval in his big, patient eyes.

[MUSIC]

UN STORY

SIDE A

BING CROSBY:

I'm sure you must agree with me those kids are unforgettable; no doubt about it. But I've got an unforgettable child too. It's seven years old, it's a girl. Although I've never met this young lady I'll never forget her, because something she did came to me in the mail one morning. It's like this: She was the youngest of four kids. Her father was a saw mill worker in Bohemia. Her mother worked too. She had to, to keep the family going. So - well, there wasn't anybody home all day and she stayed at school for lunch. There wasn't much food and not nearly enough to go around until UNICEF came into the picture.

They sent tinned meat and milk and the kids appreciated it. When you're littler your appetite's bigger, you remember? Well, she wanted to say thank you to UNICEF for this food, so she looked around for a way to do it and she found a way too. At school she sat down and she drew a picture. In one corner is the sun.

UN STORY

SIDE A

BING CROSBY (Cont'd.):

A great, big, white, yellow, happy sun. In the center there's a big maypole with lots of kids of all nationalities dancing around it, and at the top of the maypole is a wreath. This wreath means that UNICEF helps children all over the world. And this help, like the wreath, is endless. This picture was saying thank you for the food that made her feel better. I have it in my hand right now because UNICEF had it printed by the thousands as a Christmas card.

So thanks for that card, children. And to you, and to all the children around the world, the unforgettable children, may God remember you always with health and happiness.

MAN:

You've been listening to the United Nations radio production of My Most Unforgettable Child. Stories about the United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF - and how it helps children all

UN STORY

SIDE A

MAN (Cont'd.):

around the world. UNICEF aids in the fight against tuberculosis and malaria, against yaws and diptheria and just plain hunger. UNICEF is supported by governments and individuals. You can be proud that the United States is a contributor. But perhaps you want to help too. If you do, write UNICEF, United Nations, New York. U N I C E F. United Nations, New York.

My Most Unforgettable Child was a especially recorded U.S. story featuring Shirley Booth, Bing Crosby, Kirk Douglas, Greer Garson, Audrey Hepburn, Deborah Kerr and Brandon De Wilde. These stars generously gave their time to record the actual stories of UNICEF field workers, the men and women who today devote their lives to the generations of tomorrow. All names, places referred to and music are authentic. The entire production by Gerald Keene of United Nations Radio.

END