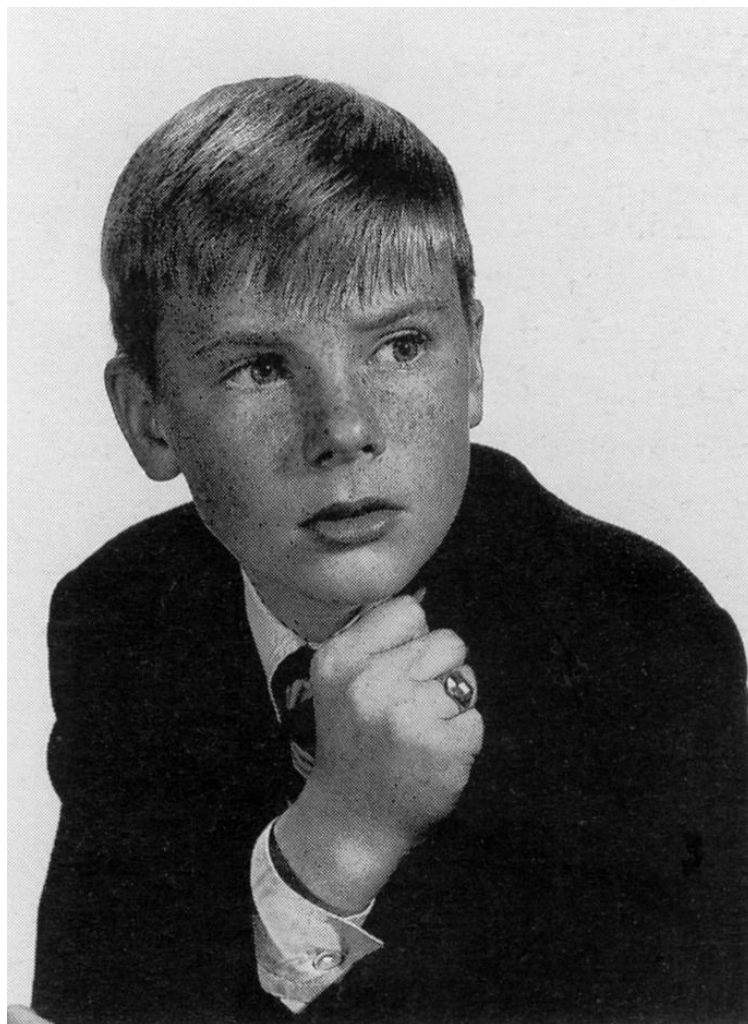


Man on Fire

US : 1957 : dir. Ranald MacDougall : M.G.M : 95 min
 prod: Sol C Siegel : scr: Ranald MacDougall : dir.ph.: Joseph Rattenberg
[Malcolm Brodrick](#)
 Bing Crosby; Mary Fickett; Inger Stevens; E.G. Marshall; Anne Seymour; Richard Eastham

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	□	≠	Z	⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5311a	2½	9	3	892	3	-	-	-	-	No	<i>unseen</i>



Boy fuming slightly – Malcolm Brodrick

Source: *The Moving Picture Boy*

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
2001 review:

“Divorced father (Crosby) refuses to grant his remarried ex-wife partial custody of their son in this modest domestic drama. **1½ ”

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review – identical to above



Source: *The M.G.M Story*

Halliwell's Film Guide review

"When his wife divorces him, a middle-aged man refuses to hand over their son. Low-key personal drama of very moderate interest and modest budget."

The Good Film and Video Guide review:

"Bing Crosby sings the title tune under the credits but after that everything is staunchly dramatic – and unpretentious, which is just as well since this is soap-opera masquerading as something more. Crosby plays a chemicals tycoon battling with his ex-wife for custody of his son; E.G. Marshall is his lawyer and Inger Stevens the latter's assistant. * "

The M.G.M Story review:

" "MAN ON FIRE" was quickly doused by cold water from the box-office. Ranald MacDougall's literate script, directed by him, invited its audiences to shed a tear for the child of divorce, shuttling between parents. Left to right [in still left]: Mary Fickett, Inger Stevens (Hollywood debut after 50 television plays). Malcolm Brodrick, Bing Crosby (good serious performance), E.G. Marshall. Sol C. Siegel produced..."

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

"The crooner plays a man with a custody problem concerning his son and his divorced wife. Melodramatic soap opera. **½ "

Picture Show Annual 1958 still caption:

"Malcolm Brodrick, young Broadway and television star, plays Bing Crosby's son in "MAN ON FIRE"."

The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television review:

"This 1957 attempt to establish Bing Crosby as non-singing dramatic actor sent him back to singing roles. The sincerity of the main plot (child caught up in divorce tug-of-war) was undermined by such ludicrous sub-stories as lawyer's assistant falling for Bing (relax, she's a girl¹) and the tritest of dialogue. Ranald MacDougall was responsible for that, as well as the direction. 7 "

TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995 review:

"One of the rare occasions Bing Crosby played a completely straight role. He gives a sincere performance as the father in a tug-of-love case [sic]. Inger Stevens made her film debut, and, for a while, the headlines, when she had a short-lived romance with the star. ** "

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Brodrick:

"Malcolm – who would have made a good brother for Peggy Ann Garner – was of English origins: his parents (father an engineer) came from Blackpool, and an uncle became Lord Mayor of Burnley. Having done modelling from the age of three, he was discovered by Jan Peerce, who required him to sing "What Is a Boy?" on his radio show.

Young Brodrick made a strong mark on the New York stage, notably (in 1953) in "The Desperate Hours". He did a lot of stage and television work in the years that followed, and it's a great pity that he only had one sizeable screen role.

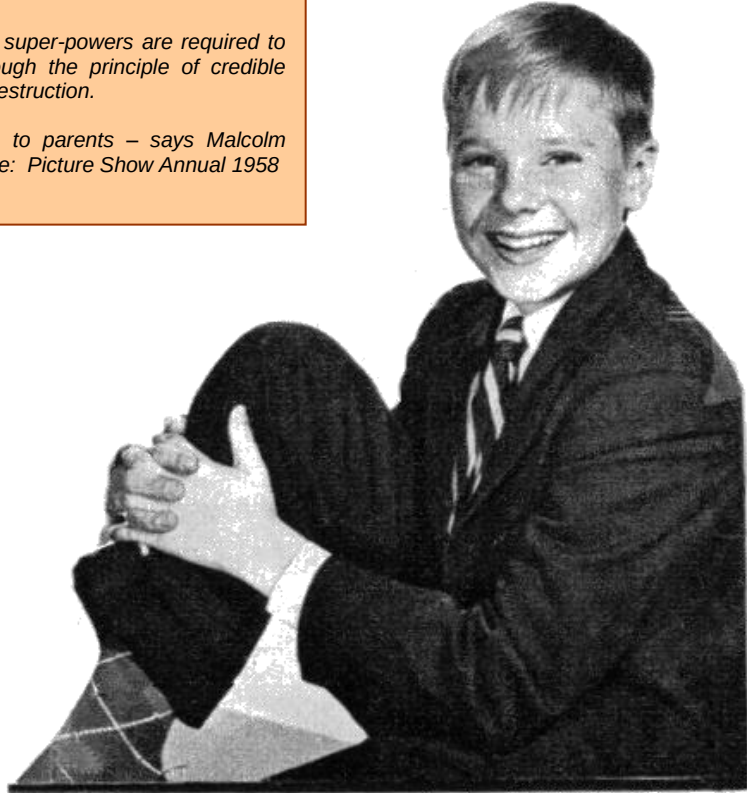
¹ Grow up! We're not *all* heterosexual morons.

In "**MAN ON FIRE**", as a cool, humorous boy who is gradually being torn apart by the manoeuvres of his parents' divorce, Brodrick is real and painfully touching. Bing Crosby, to his credit, shirks none of the ugliness and indignity of the father's well-written part."

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "A Pictorial History of the Talkies", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Time Out Film Guide", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

In the macro-political sphere, two super-powers are required to keep one another in check, through the principle of credible deterrence, or Mutually Assured Destruction.

It applies pretty much the same to parents – says Malcolm Brodrick
Source: Picture Show Annual 1958



Not to be confused with the 1987 French/Italian kidnap film of the same name. Divorce was for the 1950s what "child abuse" has been for the 1980s, 1990s and still today, the films on that subject not perhaps so shrill and paranoid, but uniformly portraying divorce as a Fate Worse Than Death for the child, a disaster so cataclysmic as to unhinge the child's reason or sap its will to live. A few decades later, and divorce has become as relaxed a national pastime as golf, a commonplace to the lives of millions of kids. In "**JURASSIC PARK**", as a measure of this new blasé approach, chaotician Jeff Goldblum wryly quips "Oh sure, I'm always on the lookout for another future ex-Mrs Malcolm.." If only western society would draw conclusions from this turn-around, and show a little less appetite for melodrama.

Bing Crosby always had a fair appetite for melodrama, and I'm not even referring to his private life. His films of interest to the archive included "**GOING MY WAY**" (44), "**THE BELLS OF St MARY'S**" (45) and "**LITTLE BOY LOST**" (53), and then there was "**The Bing Crosby Show**" (54) for TV. The only other title known for Brodrick was "**THAT NIGHT**", made the same year. He was 12. I've not been able to identify any of his TV work.

See subject index under **DIVORCE / CUSTODY BATTLES**, and in particular "**NO PLACE FOR JENNIFER**" (51) for a comparable British film on the dreaded schism.