



KAPLAN WITH BONNIE SHARIE (1958)
A different sort of surprise.

constructed an elaborate plot to disappear. The murder victim, Kaplan maintained, was not even Vidal, and indeed, serious doubts were raised about the body's identity. When Kaplan took it on the lam, he was accompanied by Carlos Antonio Contreras Castro, a Venezuelan counterfeiter.

The escape plans had apparently been completed the day before when an American man visited Cell No. 10 and looked over the prison yard. He was accompanied by both men's wives. (Kaplan had married a Mexican woman—the only way he could have visitors, he said—without bothering to divorce New York Model Bonnie Sharie.) After the escape, Kaplan and Castro switched to a small Cessna at a nearby airfield and were flown to La Pesca airport near the Texas border, where two more planes awaited them. One flew Castro to Guatemala; the other flew Kaplan to Texas and then on to California. Kaplan used his own name when he passed U.S. customs at Brownsville. Both the helicopter, which was later found abandoned, and the Cessna had been bought in the U.S., at an estimated cost of \$100,000.

No James Bond. At week's end neither man had been caught. Kaplan's Mexican attorney declared that his client was a CIA agent and that the rescue had been engineered by the agency. But a spokesman for Jacob Kaplan pooh-poohed all that. "People are determined to substitute James Bond for the Kaplan family name," he said, though he could offer no explanation of just who had carried out the spectacular stunt. In Mexico, meanwhile, Attorney General Julio Sánchez Vargas was forced to resign, and prison officials and all 136 guards were arrested for questioning. The movie, after all, had been the first shown at the prison in two years.