

Capital Newsmakers

By **VERA GLASER**

WAYNE J. HILMER A big brush Whiplash-thin and graceful, he leaped on his desk, pacing it like a panther as he closed a deal via trans-Atlantic telephone. He has direct blue eyes, a cleft chin, and a dazzling smile, wears checked suits with wild linings, drives a continental, advertises in *Fortune*, and operates from a lush Potomac Plaza suite where the phone bill runs \$6,000 a month (extensions in every bathroom). Today he's here, tomorrow he's in Lisbon. "I paint with a big brush," is the way Wayne Hilmer puts it.

Four years ago, as an Oxon Hill boy who left college to sell used cars, he sold a small plane, made a profit, kept going/ Now, at 25, Hilmer heads three corporations (Omni Aircraft Sales is the kingpin), says he will gross \$20 millions this year, has been called one of the

free world's leading merchants of used aircraft - corporate, transport, military, leasing, the works. When he bought the Shah of Iran's jet, Hilmer didn't hold it long enough to ferry home. A bidder caught him in Prestwick and the resale was made in Zurich. Once he traveled 60,000 miles in a month, buying Convairs in Spain, transacting via Paris and Amsterdam, subsisting on soft-boiled eggs, cold lobster, and Coca-Cola. Does he know languages? Does tension make him blow his stack? "I hire people for that," smiles Hilmer, whose electric personality hides brains, fantastic energy, and self-discipline. Although he has sixteen employees, he clinches most deals personally.

While still in his teens Hilmer married high-school sweetheart Lelia "Jackie" Melhart, now has two sons at their Crofton, Maryland, home. In spare moments the Hilmers enjoy trap shooting. "My wife says I have two speeds, off and on," Hilmer revealed. "When I hit the sack I'm like dead to the world." People are after him these days to buy into land, inventions, and movies. Hero of the Hilmer shop is - you guessed it - Howard Hughes.

