

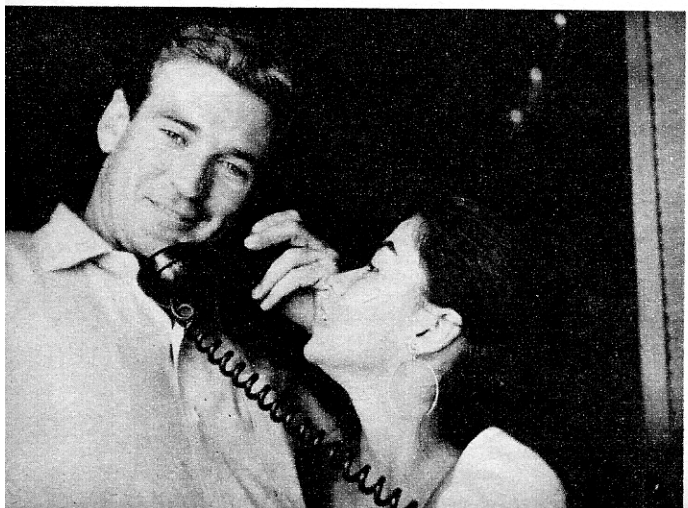
# HONG KONG



**Mate?** Just a chess game! Rod often dates France Nuyen—seen as Happy in *Hong Kong*, as well as on these pages—but claims he'll remain a bachelor.



**Though** fun may look serious for these two, Rod says of marriage: "I'm such a beast about work, I couldn't burden any gentle little girl with it."



The name promises intrigue, adventure, romance . . . Australian-born Rod Taylor is just the star—and the man—to find all three, in one of the world's most exotic settings . . .

by **BILL KELSAY**



**Border** incident in first *Hong Kong* episode (above, with Burt Brinckerhoff) was one which Rod almost experienced—in person.

**T**HE HONG KONG police told us we couldn't photograph the Red border, so I got to know a few of them socially and, after a little talk, conned our way into being taken up." Rod Taylor, star of the new hour-long 20th Century-Fox series *Hong Kong* on ABC, is the sort of a guy who dislikes being told he can't do anything. His natural reaction seems to be to turn on the charm—of which he has an ample (*Continued on page 65*)

Rod Taylor is Glenn Evans in *Hong Kong*, as seen on ABC-TV, Wednesday, from 7:30 to 8:30 P.M. EST, for Kaiser Industries and other sponsors.

# Hong Kong

(Continued from page 34)  
measure—and proceed to show you how wrong you can be.

"We set up the camera as if we were going to shoot the Hong Kong side," says Rod, "and then I walked across a little narrow railroad bridge, gave a signal behind my back, and the camera swung around to shoot the border. Everybody was very tense. Here were the Red police and the machine guns and the pillboxes. It was a weird atmosphere, and when you're there—when you are actually there—the whole thing seems unbelievable.

"The guards on both sides of the border stand about four feet apart and never speak to each other or smile or nod or anything like that. They just stand there with their machine guns, twenty-four hours a day, watching the border constantly." Rod shakes his head and seems to recall the scene with a slight chill. "It's weird," he says again.

"When I walked up to the border," Rod resumes, "this guy had his machine gun trained on me because I was wearing an American suit. Then, when they saw the camera and caught on to what we were doing, he started jabbering away and another guard ran into the pillbox and came out with his own camera and started taking pictures of me.

"About two minutes after I walked back, a loudspeaker came on, with a woman's voice shrieking in Cantonese that Eisenhower had lost face in the Orient and that, if the American movie company thought it could come up and poke fun at them, we were very much mistaken.

"It wasn't till then the Hong Kong police told me there had been some trouble the week before, when a Japanese company had been up there to shoot some scenes. The story came out that the Japanese script girl had shaken her fist in a guard's face and he had run away—which was untrue, of course—but the Japanese had been spreading it around and the Commies were just waiting for another movie company to show up.

"If I had known about that, we wouldn't have gone up there in the first place. I'm not *that* brave! I could have been shot!"

If Rod and the location crew were startled, it was mild compared with the surprises they brought to the residents of Hong Kong. "We had to hide the camera," Rod explains. "You couldn't leave it in the open, because thousands of people would come around and take the screws out of the tripod and anything else they could get.

"So, we'd hide the camera in a basket on a coolie's shoulder or in a rickshaw or anywhere we could think of. Lloyd Bochner, who plays the chief inspector in the series, had his uniform made at the police quartermaster's store, so it's identical to the Hong Kong police uniforms.

"Then I'd run down one of those crowded little streets, with Bochner in full pursuit, and the people wouldn't

know what was going on. We got genuine reactions. Beautiful reactions. Bochner would go into a little Hong Kong bar, sort of push his way in and stand there, looking stern. The patrons didn't know he wasn't a real policeman and they'd quiet down and watch him. After a minute, he'd say, 'Carry on!' very authoritatively. Then he'd turn around and walk out. Another time we boarded a junk and scared them pretty badly. They thought it was a raid and started throwing their opium pipes overboard."

If it hadn't been for Rod's penchant for turning a flat "no" into a positive "yes," the chances are he would not be in America today. His arrival here was not exactly auspicious, despite the fact he had won the Rola Award for radio acting in his native Australia plus the "down under" version of the Critics' Circle Award for his work in the theater.

"I had reached the point in my Australian career where I was a fly in a bottle," he explains. "I could go up and I could go down. It was fantastic. I was doing about forty starring roles in radio—there was no television. I'd work all day in radio, then, at night, I'd be at the theater. I was about as big as I could get in Australia.

"The Rola Award included a sum of money, and I was going to England to get out of the bottle. But then I delayed long enough to do the American movie which was shooting there with Robert Newton—'Long John Silver'—and everybody said, 'Go to America.'

"So I came to America. All sorts of flattering letters went back and forth before my arrival and, when I got here, M.C.A. was at the airport to meet me. I guess they were expecting a cross between Marlon Brando and Rock Hudson. Then I stepped off the plane in my tight Australian suit and their faces fell, visibly. I thought, *Okay, you don't like me. I'll stay!*"

Rod quickly decided that M.C.A. was too big and too disinterested in a newcomer, and he went to a smaller agency. Little by little, starting with bit parts, he began to climb again and, this time, there was no cork in the bottle to stop him.

He progressed from minor roles to starring parts on television's *Studio One*, *G-E Theater*, *Playhouse 90* and all the major shows. In motion pictures, he followed the same path, beginning with a small part in "A Catered Affair," working his way to important roles in "The Darkest Hour," "Giant," "Separate Tables" and a number of major productions.

His latest picture, "The Time Machine," in which he stars with Yvette Mimieux, brought him face to face with another man who wouldn't take no for an answer. "I turned the part down, to begin with," Rod recalls. "Then George Pal, the producer-director, called me and said he wasn't making 'a science-fiction picture.' He was making 'an H. G. Wells picture.' He said, 'I've never directed before. There are areas where you can help me and areas where I can be of help to you.' 'He's something of a con artist, too,

you know,'" Rod adds with a grin. "Fortunately so, because it did give me an opportunity to work closely with the director, rather than just coming to work and going home."

Rod was at the point in his career where he had a great deal of prestige within the business, but was only a familiar face to the average movie audience and television viewer. "Studios don't build stars anymore," he explains, "but I think television series do. Before *Hong Kong* came along, I had to turn down most of the new series because I felt they weren't right for me. I love to work, but I wouldn't do anything that I didn't believe in.

"When I first heard of this series, it intrigued me. I talked with the creator of the show, Bob Buckner, and found our ideas coincided. This was no 'Fu-Manchu in Hong Kong' thing. I felt the character Glenn Evans could very well be Rod Taylor. I'm not creating a separate screen personality for this. If I got up there on the screen and 'pretended' for thirty-nine weeks, somebody would see through it, or else get awfully sick of it. Either the public buys me, or we're out of luck.

"Now, don't confuse 'screen personality' with 'character.' This character of Glenn Evans, for instance, the roving American correspondent, is a guy who can be charming in a Cary Grant situation, and be just as suave—then take off his coat and slug it out, as Cary Grant wouldn't. He can be a gentleman, and still be tough. He can be well dressed, and sometimes he can be a slob.

"This, I think, is what is going to catch the audience and keep them interested, the injection of contrast. We are not holding to one static situation. There are gentle situations, loving situations, action situations—even sexy situations. Some shows are played within four walls. Others are completely out-of-doors. I think we have a good series, a good, solid, exciting show."

Rod has recently moved into a new home above Coldwater Canyon, in the area also favored by Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee. He's still a bachelor, and has no plans to change that status anytime soon. "I'm enjoying life too much," he admits, "and I'm such a beast about work that I couldn't burden any gentle little girl with it.

"I've been too busy to entertain much yet. I usually keep the group down to one or two—preferably some dear girl I can persuade to cook dinner for me." Rod possesses such a gracious, persuasive manner that this shouldn't present any serious problem, although he declares, "I'm not terribly fond of myself.

"I feel that, to get things done, often I have to be a not very nice guy. I'm very serious about things, especially my work, and sometimes I am probably a bit abrupt and rude. It takes people a while to see that I'm not a rat. Honesty is probably my trouble—some people don't like honesty in others, some do."

Apparently there are more who do than he realizes, for it's the audience which makes a star—and audiences at home and in the theater have definitely made a star of Rod Taylor.