

ROD TAYLOR ACQUIRES OR LOSES ACCENT TO MEET EXIGENCIES OF VARIOUS ROLES

Every time Rod Taylor opens his mouth—a new accent comes out!

When the actor originally arrived in Hollywood from his native Australia, he spent much of his time trying to lose his “down-under” accent. Later he had to re-acquire it for his role as the Australian business tycoon in “The V.I.P.s.”

Now he plays the part of a German officer who “speaks like an American” in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer’s exciting new drama, “36 Hours,” in which he co-stars with James Garner and Eva Marie Saint.



Could he put humanity before duty to country? That is the question faced by Rod Taylor as the Nazi doctor asked to perform a unique experiment on captured American Intelligence officer James Garner in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer’s “36 Hours.” Eva Marie Saint also stars in the exciting drama.

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36 Hours Mat 1-E

And, on completion of this picture, Taylor went directly into “Young Cassidy,” in which he plays the title role in the story of Ireland’s Sean O’Casey as a youth. Nothing less than an Irish brogue would do for this part.

“I was so excited at the thought of working in this picture that I telephoned its director, Jack Cardiff, as soon as I learned that I’d been selected for the part,” declared Taylor. “But I was struck dumb when Cardiff, in an effort to reassure me, said, ‘Don’t worry, son, we’ll get along fine. After all, you’re IRISH, aren’t you?’”

Now, how does a broth of a lad from Australia get around that one?

In a steady rise of popularity and stature since arriving in Hollywood less than ten years ago (Taylor won a plane ticket to London as part of a newspaper critics award for his acting, stopped off in California on the way, and remained there) this fast-rising actor has provided the answer to those who bewail the dearth of new stars.

“The kookie period of Hollywood is passing,” he states. “Big pictures and stars have come back. My ambition is some day to measure up in a small way to the talent of Spencer Tracy, and I am trying to learn all phases of the film business. When I read a script, I approach it from not only an actor’s point of view but from that of a director.

Knew His Man

“Before we started ‘36 Hours,’ our director, George Seaton, gave each of us—James Garner, Miss Saint, Werner Peters and myself—a detailed biography of the respective characters we were to play. As Gerber, the German doctor more interested in scientific research than in being a good Nazi, I had a full outline of the man—where and when he was born, his background and education, his likes and dislikes. I *knew* Gerber before I stepped in front of the cameras.”

Taylor refuses to tag this as method acting. “It’s knowing your subject,” he says. I don’t believe in self-indulgence at the expense of the audience. Seaton gave each of us motivation by helping us to know the character we were to portray, but his first emphasis was on the story.

“The picture is in the best tradition of escape entertainment. Based on a true incident, it tells of a fantastic Nazi plot during World War II, when an American Intelligence Officer (Garner), who knows the time and place of the planned D-Day invasion, is almost duped into giving up this vital information. I can tell you, the suspense is really something!”

Busy with one film after another, his popularity skyrocketing after his success in the “Hong Kong” television series and such pictures as “Sunday in New York” and “The Birds,” this has been quite a year for Rod Taylor.

He and former New York model, Mary Hilem, celebrated their first wedding anniversary on the romantic Yosemite Big Trees location for “36 Hours.”

“Only one thing bothered my wife,” says Taylor. “She wondered why I insisted on talking to her with an Irish brogue!”