



ROD TAYLOR

Along with Peter Finch and Errol Flynn, Rod Taylor is one of the few Australian actors to gain recognition — and full-time employment — in the international film world. Taylor's first major role was in George Stevens' "Giant" in 1956, and throughout the sixties he appeared in a number of major productions including "The Time Machine", "The Birds", "Young Cassidy", "Hotel" and "The High Commissioner". In

the seventies, Taylor has widened his scope and moved into the new fields of production and scriptwriting. As the following interview reveals, he has plans to launch a number of new projects, several to be based in Australia.

In "The Picture Show Man", Taylor makes a guest appearance as Pop's arch rival Palmer.

Joan Long indicated that you responded quickly to her invitation to appear in "The Picture Show Man". Had you been waiting for an offer to do something in Australia?

I'll tell you quite frankly. I had a script called *Banjo Creek*, written by Ted Willis, that had been re-written by some hack at Universal Studios for a production to be made in Australia. I thought the Universal version was a piece of shit, so I added some dialogue and made it good and Aussie and, I thought, funny. But unfortunately I got static from Willis about changing his script . . . me, not Universal!

Anyway I felt that I was flogging a dead horse, and knowing that there was a lot of production interest from hip guys like Neville Wran and Don Dunstan, I began to think that things could really open up out here. So when *The Picture Show Man* offer came along, I thought, well it's not the starring role, only a guest appearance, but I'll give it all the help I can. And that's why I am here. And I am proud that I am here, because I am sincere about the industry.

Before accepting "The Picture Show Man" offer I believe you had been involved in production, and to some extent, writing . . .

Yes. I had just written a script for a film called *On a Dead Man's Chest*, starring Stuart Whitman and Elke Sommer. It was directed by Henry Levin and will probably be released by United Artists.

My next film will be about the Bermuda Triangle, called *Sargossa*.



Director John Power and Rod Taylor

It's a horrifying phenomenon, a triangle of sea in which things just disappear. I was going to shoot it in Jamaica until I realized I could shoot for four days in Miami and simulate the rest of it in Australia using Australian technicians, Australian actors. I can do the whole thing down here. And that's what I intend to do.

Any other projects?

I have a Western that a man called Syd Donovan in Perth wants to talk to me about. I think he is tied up with a television station.

I think I can be a useful element in Australian projects. My name will certainly get U.S. distributors interested. They know that they can make at least a few bucks domestically on my name.

In terms of world-wide distribution they can certainly do something with my name. I feel I can be a useful cog for the local industry.

Have you taken a lower percentage in this film than normal?

You can bet your arse on that!

As far as this film goes, when I saw the crack in the door I came straight down to help. Forget the money, I am here to help.

Do you think it's really necessary for Australian films to have international names if they are to crack the world market?

Yes, I am afraid that in the beginning it is. After two years, forget it.