

## ANITA EKBERG TOO IMPULSIVE

# Rod Taylor Says Statements To Press Broke Up Romance

By LOUELLA O. PARSONS

HOLLYWOOD — Rod Taylor, handsome Australian actor and highly eligible bachelor, is one of the most outspoken young men in our town. Ask Rod a question and you get an answer. Sometimes it's an answer you can't print — at least in a family newspaper — but it's always interesting.

When Rod came to see me recently, the first question I asked him was "what happened to you and Anita?" Rod's much-publicized romance with and subsequent parting from the voluptuous Anita Ekberg brought him more publicity than all his screen performances.

### No Marriage

"We're not going to get married — now or in the future," answered Rod in a "that's that" tone.

"But what about all those announcements by Anita that she was going to marry you?" I asked.

"That's what did it," said Rod. "Those statements to the press, coming as they did so early in our friendship, created a situation between us which has made marriage out of the question. I had expected a courtship of many months during which we would find out if we were well enough suited to one another to make a go of marriage. But that's Anita for you. She makes up her mind all of a sudden.

"I love Anita," Rod went on earnestly, "and I hope I'll always have her friendship. I wish she would discard this caricature of herself which she shows to the world and be her real self. The real Anita is very much like Ingrid Bergman in her womanliness — she sends out a radar much like Bergman. What she really wants is a big white dog, two children and to spend her time in the kitchen making plug!"

"Well, now that you're back on the eligible list, how's your love life?" I asked Rod kiddingly. He gave me a long quizzical look. said, "I'm never alone, but I'm lonely. Do you understand what I mean?"

"I think I do," I said, "but how about elaborating."

Rod studied me a moment and apparently decided I was willing to take him seriously.

### Something Missing

"I'm disappointed in the women I've met in the film industry," he told me. "They don't seem really interested in a man and what he's really like. There's none of that 'across a crowded room' in Hollywood — no such thing as seeing someone at a party and getting that spark. I don't mean just a sex attraction, but a desire to know each other better and find out all about each other. I'm tired of going out with girls who just want to be seen with an eligible bachelor. And as for casual 'affairs' — I just don't find them stimulating."

Always the rugged individualist, Rod bought himself a big, rambling two-story house in Beverly Hills which he says is "a house for living in — not one of those all-glass, square boxes considered chic for bachelors." It's sparsely furnished at the moment because he's doing the decorating himself, picking up antiques a piece at a time, and refinishing them himself. The walls are covered with framed oils which he painted himself. "It's cheaper than buying paintings," is his tongue-in-cheek explanation.

Talk to him seriously, however,

and he will tell you that he finds painting the most relaxing of all hobbies, although he also plays tennis, sails, and is an expert archer.

Rod didn't start out to be an actor. His parents wanted him to be an artist, and, encouraged by his father, a steel construction contractor in Australia who did etching in his spare time, Rod "fooled around with etching, painting, ceramics and even sculpture." He studied art at Sydney Technical and Fine Arts College and won several awards. But he also won a drama scholarship.

### Resolved Doubts

While he was wavering between art and acting, Sir Laurence Olivier and the Old Vic Company visited Australia and after seeing one performance Rod resolved his doubts. He studied for a year at Sydney's Independent Theatre School, did amateur theatricals, and then appeared in several Australian movies. In 1954, after co-starring with Robert Newton in "Long John Silver," he won the Rola award given by the combined Australian newspaper critics to the best actor of the year. One of the fringe benefits was a plane ticket to London. But Rod got off in Hollywood, determined to try his luck.

One of his first breaks was a small part in "Giant" as Elizabeth Taylor's fiance in the early sequences. Typically, he says, "you probably don't remember me. I was that vapid young Englishman." One of the stars of "Giant" was Rock Hudson, and Red gets a great kick out of the fact that he is now co-starred with Rock in "Gathering of Eagles."

Recently he did a four months hitch for the one and only Alfred Hitchcock in "The Birds," and has enthusiastic praise for Hitch, who, he says, always considers the public.

"Unlike some Hollywood stars who turn producer and make movies just to further inflate their own egos and satisfy themselves, Hitchcock always keeps the audience in mind. I'm sick of stars who take everything from the industry and give nothing," said Rod.

Never let it be said my friend Rod pulls punches — either verbally or physically. And he has the scars to prove it.