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Now that Rock, after seventeen years under a contract with Universal, can control his own destiny, he plans to broaden his career to a great extent. "Many want to know how I could do some of the films I did," he states quite candidly. "Well, it was a matter of doing them or going on suspension, which I couldn't afford. I'll tell you one thing, I learned what *not* to do."

There are those who would argue that *MacMillian And Wife* is not taking him too far afield from his earlier romantic image—only that he's aged a little. Again he seems to have fallen into the trap of bad scripts. In this case his co-star is perky Susan St. James who, many feel, steals the show, leaving Rock to stand there once again being the guy who shoots dialogue to someone else.

"Some of the scripts have been less than I expected," admits the handsome 6'5" star. "I liked the original concept and the whole idea. I didn't know if people would accept Susan and me together. I don't know how old I look, but I know she doesn't look a day over 19." But the audience has accepted them and seems to loyally follow them hoping the show will spark off some good dialogue and some real acting from their favorite hero. But there have been problems—especially in the ratings.

"When I saw the first screening of the initial episode it was at Universal Studios," he tells us. "I thought it came off just fine. Then a few weeks later, I viewed it at home on the television tube and thought, 'My God what am I seeing?' It just wasn't the same show, so maybe my work is better displayed with a captive audience."

Returning to Universal, the studio that originally made him a big name (two words he finds extremely hard to pronounce to this day), is more an emotional triumph than a return to security. He's involved in a two picture a year deal with options for outs, and he's free to do films in his spare time with other studios. The real kicker is the fact that he's making, reportedly, \$50,000 an episode! This is a subject the actor doesn't care to discuss and he has the nicest way of smiling it off, all the while gazing steadily into your eyes. "You don't want to talk about that, now, do you?" he'll say.

Rock still gets stuck in the corner with the wrong kind of gushing fan or a rude reporter, but, fortunately, he has friends as well as publicity people who have known him for years, and who, better than anyone, know how Rock hates to get closed in. They can end an interview quicker than you can say Roy Fitzgerald, Jr., Rock's real name, making Rock still look like the good guy, helpless, for whatever the excuse, to go any further.

When he's with someone who livens up the conversation, who can open up his sense of humor, Hudson is a very funny man and many times will even laugh at himself. "Lots of my films were real dogs. *Seminole*—ugh!—*Son of Cochise*—some I can't even remember the names of. I guess you could call that a Freudian slip,

but it's the truth."

The secret to opening him up is all according to how you handle your questions. A good attitude and smile and he's yours. But dig in and say, "You've really had some bad films. Why?" and he backs off.

There are many things about his career Hudson would have changed if it were possible. "My contract with Universal should have run about 10 years but it went much more than that because of exercisable options. However, I'm one of the luckiest actors in town," he says modestly, meaning, of course, that he's always working.

Next on Rock's schedule is a western with Dean Martin, where "our hero" comes off less than saccharine sweet and he's looking forward to it.

"Another area people are always trying to fix for me," says the star, "is my personal life. Sure I'd like to be happily married but it hasn't happened. I'm not so positive an actor can find happiness with another person." Attesting to this is that so many of his close friends are now in the divorce courts or near it—Steve and Neile McQueen, being the latest "closest couple" to make the splitsville list.

Perhaps, in his thirties, he might have hoped for marriage, kids and all the trimmings, but today, in his forties, he admits to being almost too set in his ways. Regarding children, he says he might not make a good parent this late in life. "Kids need a lot of attention and patience and I'm not all that sure I have it anymore."

Someone asked him how he would raise youngsters if he had any and Hudson gave one of his short, tart answers meant to cut the reporter to the quick. "I'd just do it and not talk about it!"

Many shadows have been cast on his personal life. One strong rumor is that he married Jim Nabors in Las Vegas last year and that they will live happily ever after. Close friends have been angered by such talk and Rock himself has gone so far as to say he may sue various publications about their stories relating the rumor.

Rock thinks the sex-symbol label placed on him is a joke. "When you talk about that, you are discussing a subject in which I have no interest. I'm an actor trying to do his job and one who enjoys his work."

Pretty down to earth for a fellow who has been worshipped by millions of women through the years. There've been times when he hasn't talked to the press because of the inane type of questioning they put him through or times he'd avoid every party but a private one like the plague. Today he's much more prepared. If necessary, he'll sit for an interview and even be entertaining. He'll attend public functions, but he knows how to separate his private self while still putting his best public self forward. Rock has learned how to protect himself from his fans. **MOVIE LIFE**

DAVID CASSIDY
(continued from page 29)

decide whether to ask her out or not ("I didn't know what her reaction to it would be. Until I was sure that she would allow