

Edwards has five-year plan to keep from the poorhouse

By Vernon Scott
UPI Staff Writer

HOLLYWOOD (UPI)—Beetle-browed Vince Edwards has established a five year plan to escape the poorhouse when Dr. Ben Casey gets a malpractice notice from ABC.

Edwards does not want to die with Casey.

When the show goes off the air, probably in two years, the barrel-chested star plans to carry on in movies.

"I wanted to make some deals while I'm still in demand," Edwards said from a divan in his plush Desilu dressing room. "It's sort of an insurance policy for me."

Five Major Pictures

"So I'll be doing a major

picture only five or six next five years. I've already done 'The Victors' and I've got four more coming up. And when I say 'major picture' I mean one that costs two million dollars or more."

In sharp contrast to his video role, Edwards is a smiling, easy-going soul who'd rather throw scalpels at a dart board than use them for carving.

To avoid being another television flash-in-the-pan Edwards is picking his movie roles as carefully as he is choosing a wife (he's still a bachelor).

"It would be silly for me to play a doctor in a movie," he grinned, draining a glass of imported beer. "Audiences would laugh me right off the

screen."

Plays A Soldier

"I play a soldier in 'The Victors.' That's plenty different from my doctor role in the show."

"I don't want to become too closely associated with Casey. That's why I'll probably quit when my five-year contract is up. Why should I stay? I certainly wouldn't continue in the role just for the money."

"I think the Dr. Casey image is already being dispelled a little—thanks to some of my guest appearances on TV and my night club act. More people call me Vince now. It used to be Ben."

"Jim Garner and Steve Mc-

Queen made the switch from television to movies. Nobody calls Jim 'Maverick' anymore, and most people have forgotten that Steve played a bounty hunter for a couple of years."

Talent Counts

"If I'm a good enough actor people will eventually forget that I played Ben Casey."

Edwards is branching out in another direction. He has directed one segment of his series and plans to take the helm of several more this season.

He's also formed his own production company, and under a new contract with Columbia Pictures—and its subsidiary, Screen Gems—Vince will become a producer as well as an actor and director.

Fred was star before Steve or Gene born

UPI Staff Writer

HOLLYWOOD (UPI)—Movietown's youngest producers, Gene Taft, 24, and Steve Bernhardt, 26, just completed a picture with Fred MacMurray who was a major star before either of the boy wonders was born.

Among the hardened veterans on the Warner Bros. lot Taft and Bernhardt resemble refugees from a nursery.

They're frequently asked how they became producers at such tender ages. They answer that persistence, gall, luck and hard work have carried them from near starvation to semi-bigshot status.

A year ago the boys shared an apartment, an automobile and a burning ambition to

make a name for themselves. Young Bernhardt, who had the good fortune to be born the son of distinguished director Curtis Bernhardt, was finding work as a second assistant director. Taft had bounced around as an agent and personal manager.

At night they wrote television shows with spectacular lack of success.

One evening a friend dropped by with a script idea about the first woman president of the United States who gives up the office when she gets pregnant. The boys bought the idea for considerably less than \$500—which they didn't have in the first place.

"We wrote a 137-page treatment of the story," said Steve during lunch at Warner Bros. "We showed it to a couple of

producers who wanted to buy it for \$30,000, but we refused."

The property, "Kisses For My President," proved to be a valuable one, encouraging Steve to write to his famed father, asking him to direct it. Bernhardt Sr. agreed and suggested the lads contact MacMurray.

"Fred liked the story and agreed to do it," Gene put in.

"Now we had the ingredients for a package. We hired an agent and he sold the whole thing to Warners for a budget of \$1.5 million."

Taft and Bernhardt formed their own production company, Pearlayne (a combination of their mothers' first names), and were put on the payroll as assistant producers. Curtis Bernhardt was producer-director. After all the boys were in-

Murder suspect being sought

OREGON CITY (UPI)—Police today continued to seek a man for questioning in the gunshot slaying of Minnie Cornelia Milleson, 63, a widow from nearby Canby.

Her body was discovered in her home by a neighbor on Sunday. She apparently had been shot Saturday, police said.

Police said two transients who were picked up while driving the dead woman's car had been cleared as murder suspects.

experienced.

Both boys graduated from UCLA, but did not meet until after they'd left school. They walk around the Warner lot without neckties, and frequently without coats. They could still pass for undergraduates.

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