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As the newly-christened "Eric Braeden," Eric began work on *COLOSSUS*, which was destined to become one of the most underrated science-fiction films in the 70's. The movie, which concerned a mammoth computer capable of controlling the entire earth, paled in comparison when it was released at the same time as another Universal film, *AIRPORT*. But if *COLOSSUS* died at the box office, Eric's career continued to flourish. He began appearing more frequently in films and telefilms, including the third installment in the "Planet of The Apes" series: *ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES*.

"I played a Kissinger-type from the scientific community who killed Milo, the baby ape. Talk about a negative reaction! I'd walk down the street here in Westwood and kids would be petrified of me. I went to a party at the producer's house after the film had been completed and the comedian Jack Carter had brought his children. They saw me out on the lawn and refused to come any closer. They were about eight years old at the time and they were scared to death. That was definitely one of my more effectively evil portrayals," Eric stated dryly.

That villainy has extended to the

role of Victor on *THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS*. "I've been with the show for a year. I must honestly tell you that I was wary of doing a soap. But Dabney Coleman (who played the male-chauvinist-pig boss in *9 TO 5*) is a friend of mine and he'd done a soap (*MARY HARTMAN, MARY HARTMAN*) for two years. He convinced me that *THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS* could be a rewarding experience for me as an actor and he was right.

"I've tried to induce as much credibility into the character of Victor as possible," he continued. "I didn't want him to be totally black. But somehow, it seems to work better on a soap opera if you have a character who's just plain mean. I still fight for his moments of humanity, though, and I'm proud of one in particular: As you know, Victor has had a vasectomy and there was a very sensitive scene in which he explained that he didn't want to bring children into the world because his own childhood had been so miserable." Eric sits back, reflecting for a moment. "I'm not sure where Victor's character is going in future episodes but for the moment, he's quite the bastard."

Eric and his family live a much less melodramatic existence in real life; more like the Cleaver family in "Leave