

Bob Thomas

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St. Cloud Times (Saint Cloud, MN, USA)

20.08.1957, Seite 8

Standort Original:

Signaturen: R-A 2.1.019/012

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## Remarque Says Now He Can Take Chance on Film Play

By Bob Thomas

Hollywood (AP) – »I no longer have a lifetime to look forward to and take care of. At the most, it is 20 or 25 years. So now I can afford to take chances.«

This, Erich Maria Remarque reasons, is why he agreed to write the screen play for his book, »A Time To Love and a Time To Die« and act in it, too. At latest report, the film is being called »There's a Time To Love« – don't ask why.

I came across the famed novelist, handsome at 59, as he had finished the last pages of the screen play and was cleaning out his desk.

He proved to be an excellent talker. It is easy to see how his charm has fascinated such famous women as Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo and Paulette Goddard.

About his screen writing – »This is another departure for me. The first was last year when I went to Berlin to open my first play, ›The Last Station.«

»Before we opened, the *cast* came and asked me what they should do if the audience started throwing stones. We just didn't know what they would do. Here was a story of the last days of Berlin before the fall of Hitler. There were scenes of the rape of women and we knew there would be women in the audience who has been through such things. How would they react?

»The play had 35 curtain calls. It was a great hit and encouraged me to attempt this screen play.

Why hasn't he adapted his novels before? Six of the eight have been brought for the screen.

»Because I reach the point in the writing of a novel when I could become violently ill if I had to look at it again,« he sighed. »Although I have lived in this country for over 20 years, I still write in German and have someone else translate. I couldn't stand to look at the novel myself.«

Another reason for the *film* project: To escape the humid New York summer. Universal-International came up with the deal at just the right time.

It's the first time in 30 years he has worked in an office, he remarked. The last was when he edited a sports car magazine in Germany. He took time out from his work to write a novel, »All Quiet on the Western Front.« Writing time: Five weeks.

Remarque writes the hard way – pencil on paper. »I never learned to type,« he explained.

»When I was an editor in Germany, inflation had wiped out everyone's earnings and labor was cheap. I swore I would never have a job in which I had to do my own typing.«