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**BECOMING
ELTON**

“Elton’s such a fascinating character... and still has a healthy dose of self-doubt,” says Egerton (in *Rocketman*).



SUPER SPY

With Colin Firth in *Kingsman: The Secret Service*. The spy movie was a \$400 million worldwide hit—as was its 2017 sequel.



HOW THE STAR
OF *ROCKETMAN*
WENT FROM
UNKNOWN ACTOR
TO AWARDS
CONTENDER IN
FIVE FAST YEARS
By **GILLIAN
TELLING**

Taron Egerton *Rocket* to Stardom

When Welsh actor Taron Egerton was auditioning to play Elton John in last year’s hit biopic *Rocketman*, there was just one man he needed to impress: Elton himself. “I mean, if Elton’s not into it, it’s not happening,” says the fast-rising star, who first earned rave reviews in 2014’s hit spy thriller *Kingsman: The Secret Service* just two years after graduating from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. “We immediately got on very well,” he says of Elton John, 72. “But he hadn’t heard me sing, so we went into Abbey Road Studios and recorded a couple of songs. It was off to the races from there.”

Now it’s off to the awards races. Egerton, 30, has been nominated for both a Golden Globe and a Screen Actors Guild Award for his portrayal of the rock icon. Raised in a small seaside town in Wales with his three siblings by his single mom, a social worker (his parents divorced when he was young), he still can’t believe the way life has turned out. “It feels like something that happens to other people,” he says. “It’s very surreal. But I’m very, very pleased to be part of those [awards] conversations.” He chatted about what he loved about his rock and roll role—and how he decompresses from life as a movie star.

He feels he was meant to play Elton

While I don’t look particularly like him, I have a very instinctive sense of who I thought he was. I understood the extremes of who he is. I understood his ability to be tempestuous. I could see quite clearly beyond what people have

‘Thad
Elton’s
blessing...
he was
excited
about me
playing
him’



HIS LOVE

“We like to eat good food, go to the gym, just run around,” he says of Thomas, his girlfriend of three years.

said about him, which is that he’s a diva. He’s actually quite shy in some ways. It’s a weird kind of duality. He can be incredibly gregarious and confident, but in the same instance can also seem very vulnerable and shy.

He loved pretending to be a rock star, but doesn’t want to be one

I love to sing and perform, but I don’t think I’ll be recording an album anytime soon. I’ve sung on-stage with Elton a couple of times, and I went out and did a song for Hugh Jackman on his tour in front of 20,000 people, but that’s probably as near to it as I’ll get. It’s a great thrill and exhilarating though. The music is a huge part of what I loved about the role. I got a copy of Elton John’s greatest hits in 2002 for Christmas, so his music has always been there. I’ve always been passionate about him as an artist.

When he’s not acting, he’s chilling in his camper

My life hasn’t changed that much [since *Rocketman*]. I just spent the weekend at my mom’s house, where she made beef stew. My girlfriend [assistant director Emily Thomas] and I spend quite a lot of time in my RV camper. I sing a lot for pleasure; I read books. When I’m not filming, I don’t really have a life. Well, I don’t have an *extraordinary* life. But I do share my success with my friends and family. I have incredible people in my life. Without them, I highly doubt I would have made anything of myself! ●