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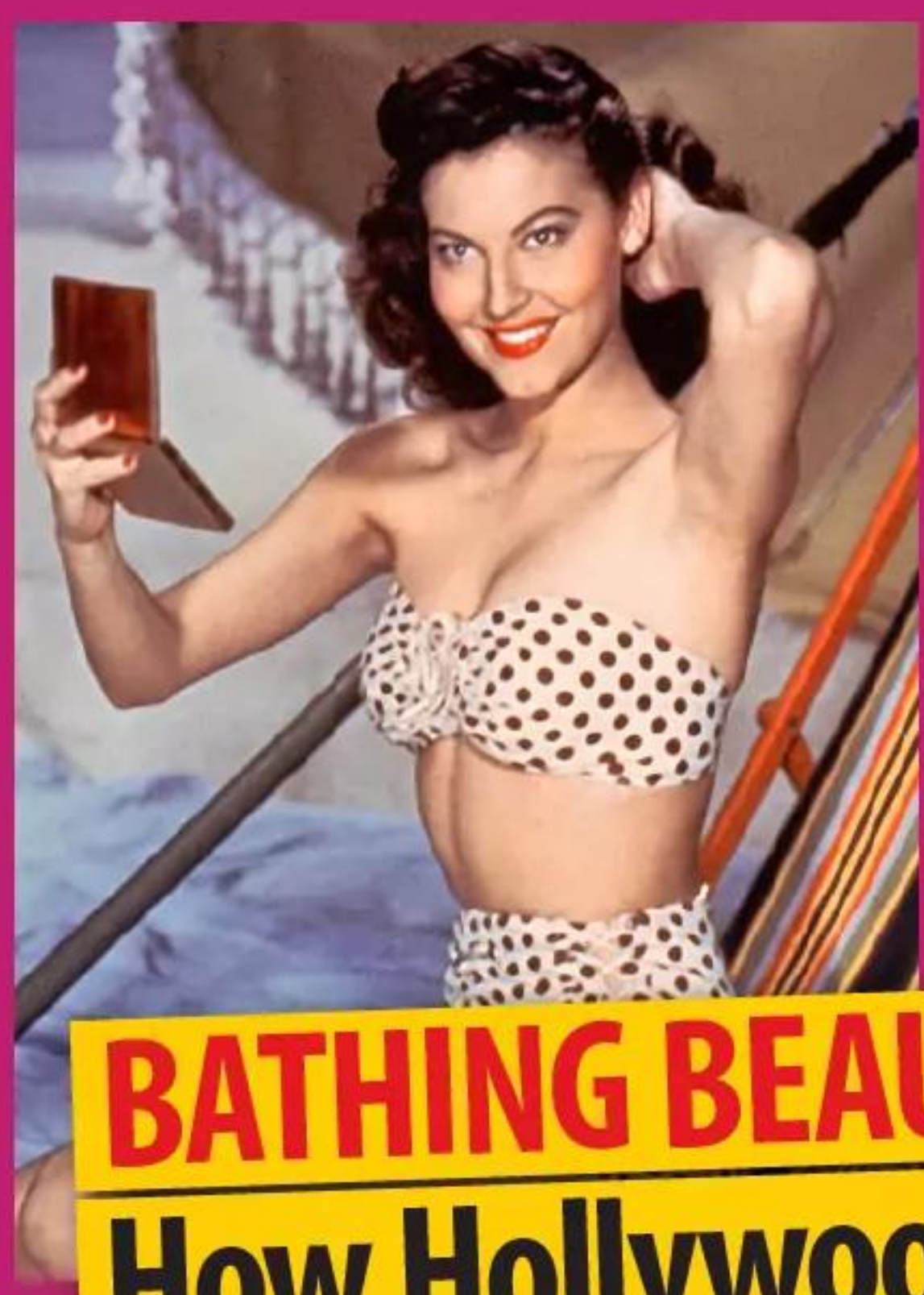


Yours

ISSUE 91 // August 2025

# RETRO

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shaped beach fashions



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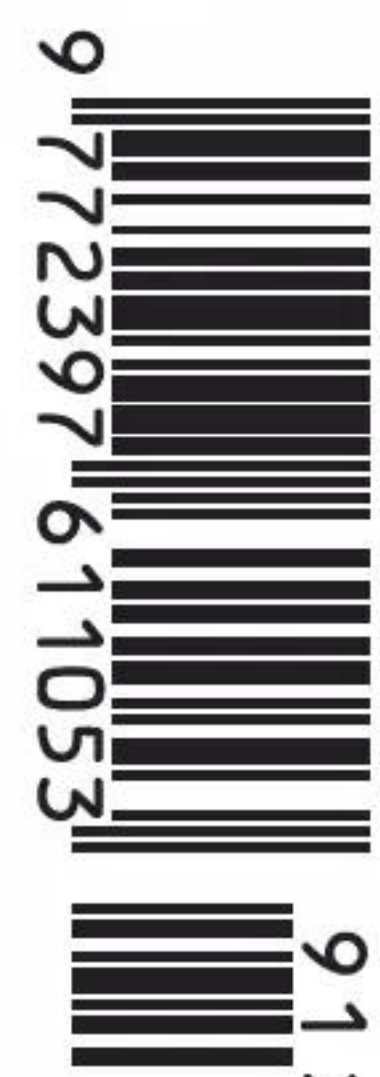
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A true love match that  
ended in tragedy

**QUANTUM LEAP: Dean Stockwell's big TV gamble**



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## Hello again...

**R**umour has it that Hitchcock made To Catch a Thief largely because he wanted a holiday in the South of France. That may be an urban myth, but what is true is that Hitch was determined to persuade his favourite leading man, Cary Grant, to abandon all talk of retirement. Then in his early 50s, Grant feared he was getting too old to play the romantic lead and felt out of step with the newcomers on the Hollywood scene. But Hitch had an ace up his sleeve – the prospect of working with the luminous Grace Kelly. That was enough to tempt Grant, and aren't we glad it did. Their screen partnership sparkles in a film packed with innuendo-laden humour, romance and suspense. It may not be Hitchcock's best work, but it's certainly a lot of fun.

*Sharon*

**Sharon** EDITOR



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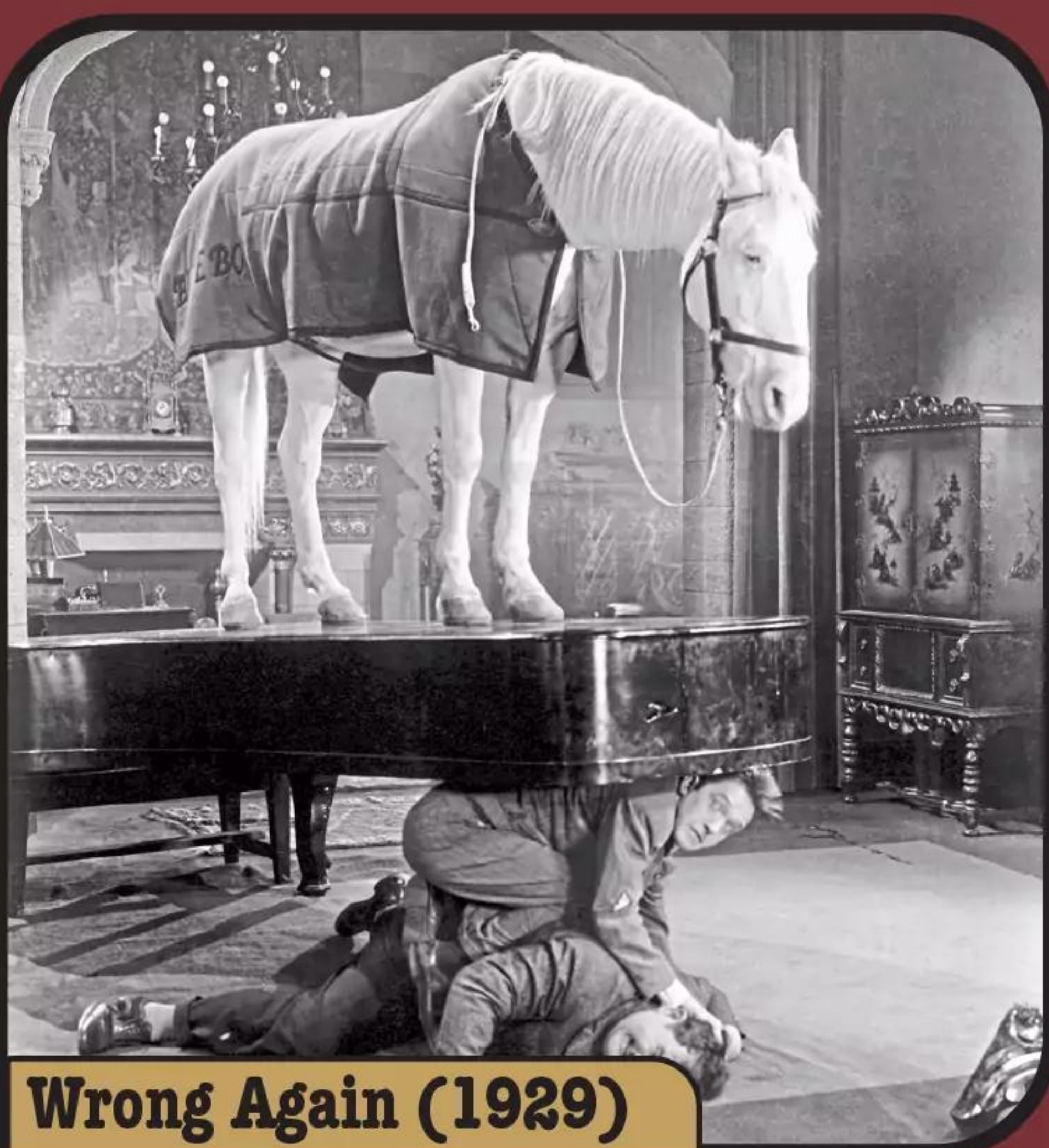
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# Seven scenes

...with pianos

Whether it's chopsticks or Chopin filmmakers have found plenty of opportunities for their stars to tickle the ivories



**Wrong Again (1929)**

Legendary duo Laurel and Hardy were no strangers to pianos. They struggle to deliver one up steps in *The Music Box* (1932) and across a rope bridge in *Swiss Miss* (1938), but their most bizarre encounter must be when they are horsing around in the 1929 short *Wrong Again*.

RETRO says: The pair also hide in a grand piano in *Way Out West* (1937).



**Shine (1996)**

The disturbing true story of child prodigy, David Helfgott, who overcomes childhood trauma, an overbearing father (Armin Mueller-Stahl) and mental illness to rediscover his passion for music, ultimately finding healing and fulfilment through love and resilience.

RETRO says: Noah Taylor (pictured) played adolescent Helfgott while Geoffrey Rush won the Oscar as the adult David.



**Big (1988)**

It's a scene of pure childlike joy when Josh (Tom Hanks) and toy shop owner MacMillan (Robert Loggia) play an impromptu duet of Heart and Soul and Chopsticks on a floor piano.

RETRO says: The studio had doubles on standby in case Hanks and Loggia couldn't reproduce the choreography, but the pair were determined and both made cardboard pianos to practise at home.

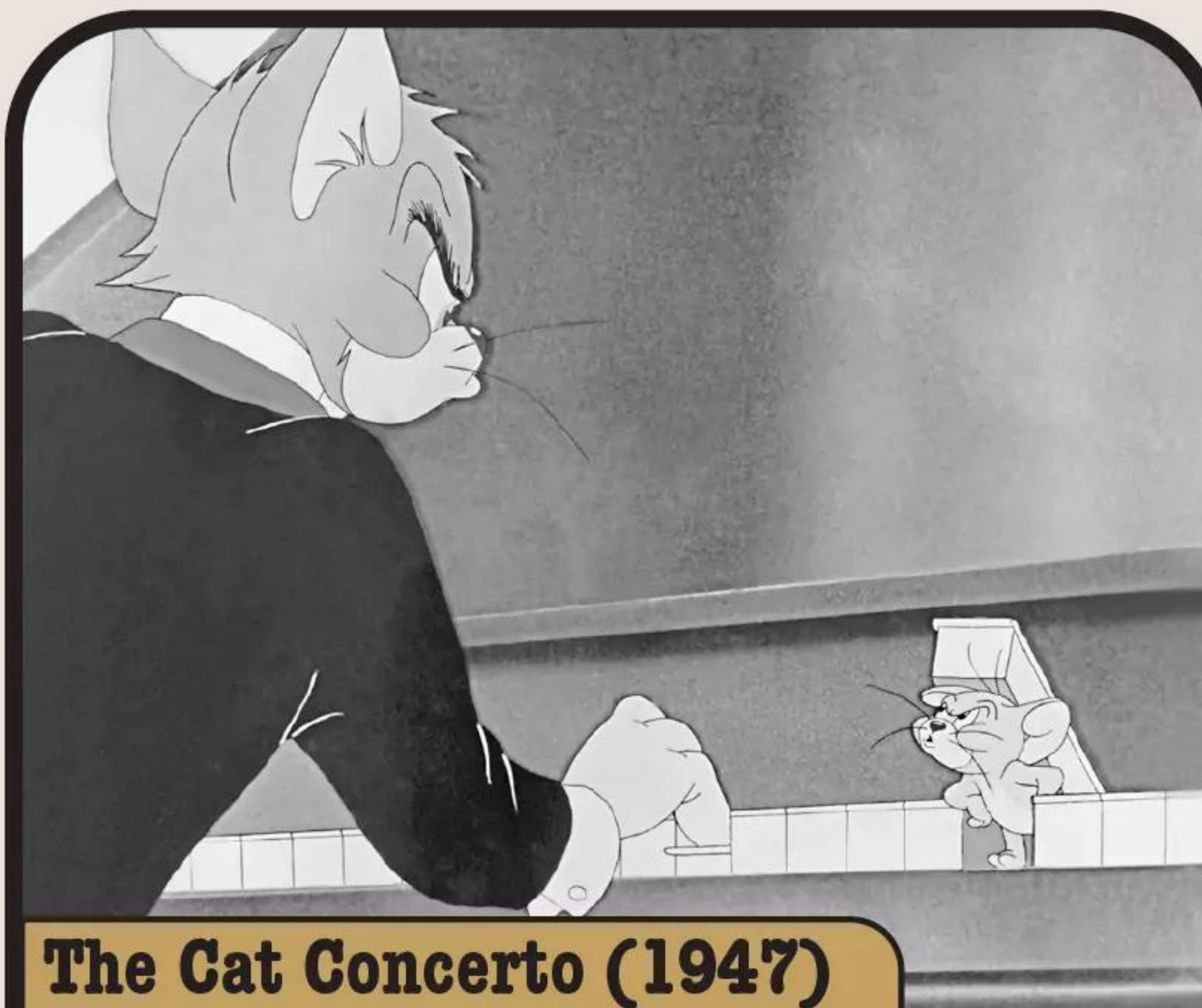




### Casablanca (1942)

As Sam (Dooley Wilson) plays *As Time Goes By*, Rick (Humphrey Bogart) is transported back to the night they fled Paris as the Germans advanced and the last time he laid eyes on Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman), the love of his life.

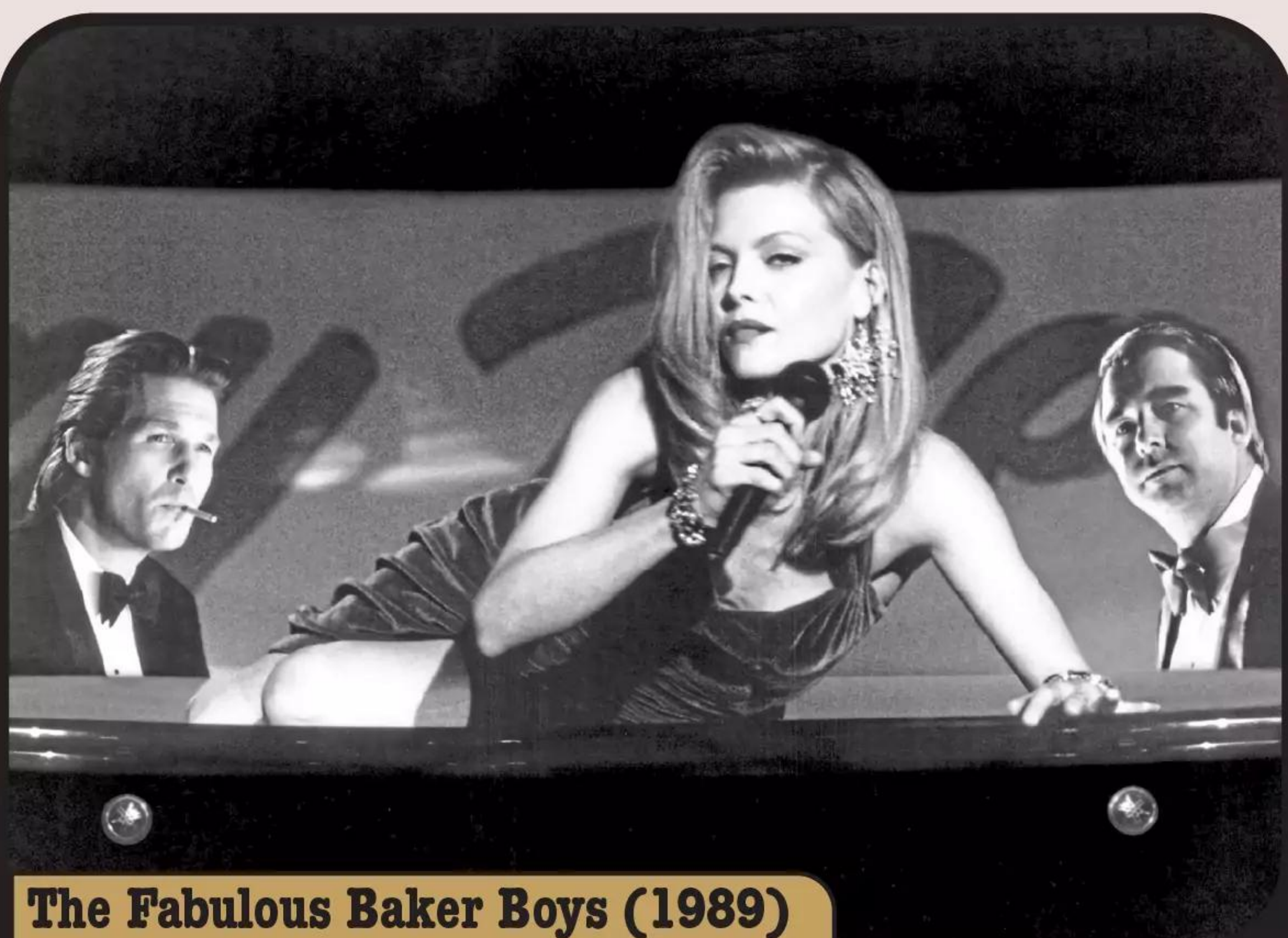
RETRO says: Sam's piano sold at auction in 2014 for \$3.4 million.



### The Cat Concerto (1947)

Tom in white tie and tails is happily playing Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody*, when he disturbs Jerry, who'd been using the piano as a bed. Warner Bros. accused the makers MGM of plagiarism because of similarities to the previous year's Bugs Bunny short *Rhapsody Rabbit*.

RETRO says: Despite the controversy the cartoon won the Oscar for Best Short Subject.



### The Fabulous Baker Boys (1989)

A story about two brothers is made all the more convincing by the genuine sibling rivalry between Jeff and Beau Bridges (in their first film together). The arrival of sultry singer Susie Diamond (Michelle Pfeiffer) adds further tension to the troubled act.

RETRO says: Michelle Pfeiffer practised for 10 hours a day in the studio to ensure her vocals weren't replaced by a ghost singer.



### The Pianist (2002)

At 29 years old, Adrien Brody became the youngest Best Actor Oscar winner playing Wladyslaw Szpilman, a Jewish pianist trying to survive the Nazi occupation of Poland in this dark and haunting film.

RETRO says: During location filming in Krakow, director Roman Polanski met a man who had helped Polanski's family survive the war.





**RETRO** *Star story*

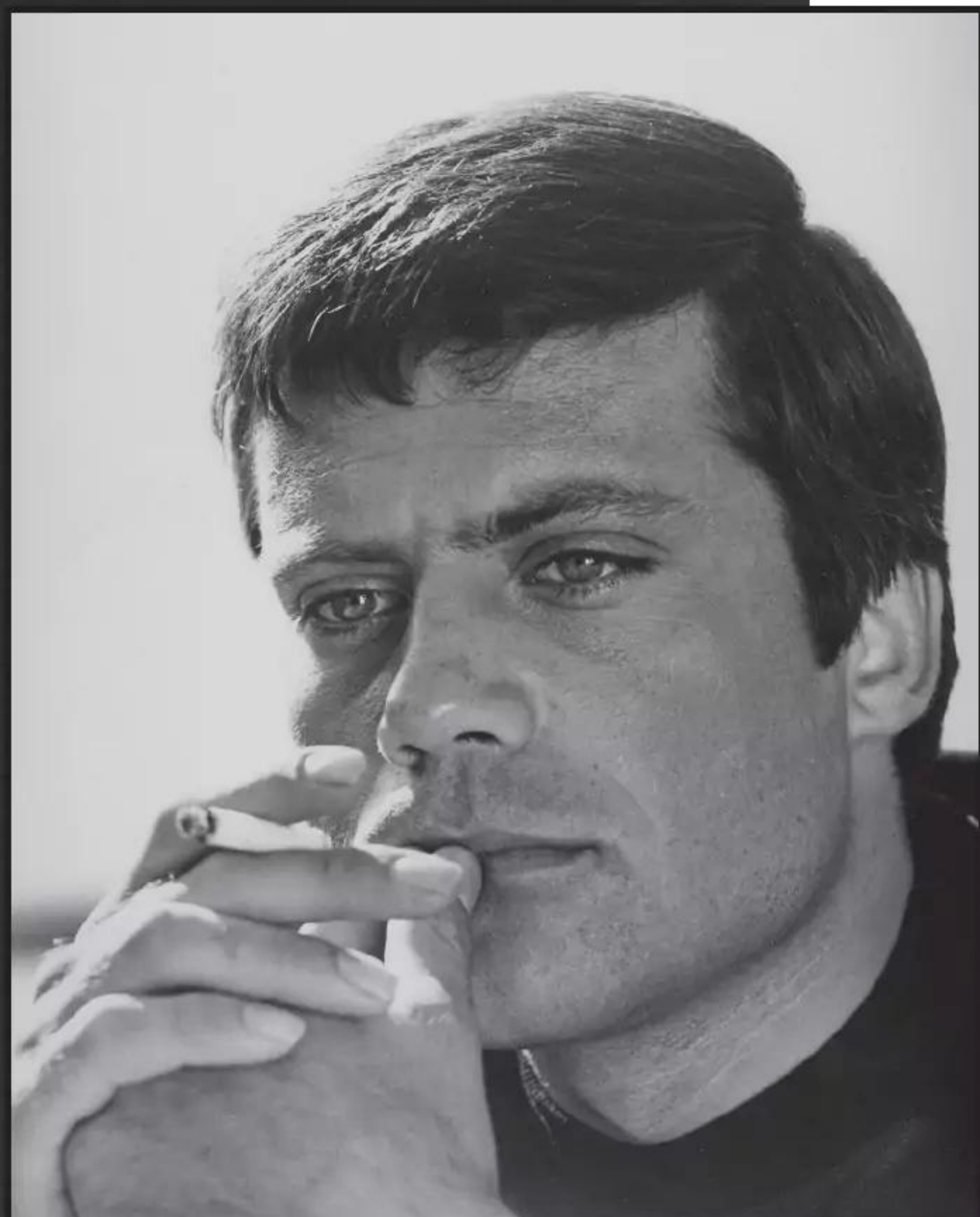
Hugely talented yet deeply flawed, Oliver Reed was a charismatic but complicated star whose smouldering good looks won him legions of fans. Nick Smurthwaite looks back at his troubled life and career

# Last of the HELLRAISERS



Reed narrowly missed out on replacing Sean Connery as James Bond in 1968. But his outrageous reputation and love of drinking and fighting made him too much of a risk.

DID YOU  
KNOW?



**H**ellraiser, philanderer, prankster, drunk... the press attached multiple labels to Oliver Reed in his three turbulent decades in the limelight and, for once, they were all true. He really was the last of the bad boys of cinema, in the best (or worst) tradition of Errol Flynn, Peter O'Toole, Richard Harris and Lee Marvin.

Like those gentlemen, for many years, Reed managed to combine excessive drinking and anti-social behaviour with a reputation for absolute professionalism in the line of duty, turning in stand-out performances in films such as *Oliver!* (1968), *Women in Love* (1969), *The Devils* (1971), *The Triple Echo* (1972), *The Three Musketeers* (1973), *Tommy* (1975), *Castaway* (1986), and more recently, *Gladiator* (2000).

Now, 25 years after his death, might be a good time to consider why he thought it was OK to whip out his penis at social gatherings, suspend the actor David Hemmings from a second floor hotel window after 20 pints of lager, randomly punch anyone he didn't like the look of, conduct affairs with three women simultaneously, and habitually sabotage TV chat shows with his drunken antics.

Not surprisingly, the cumulative effect of this behaviour made him virtually unemployable, but for a couple of decades at least it was tolerated because he was considered 'good box office'. And let's not forget how memorable he was in many of his movies. Hemmings, having survived his near defenestration, envied his friend's screen presence. 'It is something you can't be taught, you either have it or you don't, and Ollie had it in spades.' ➔

In 1964 Reed starred in *The System* alongside David Hemmings (second left). The pair became great friends and both appeared in Reed's final film *Gladiator*.





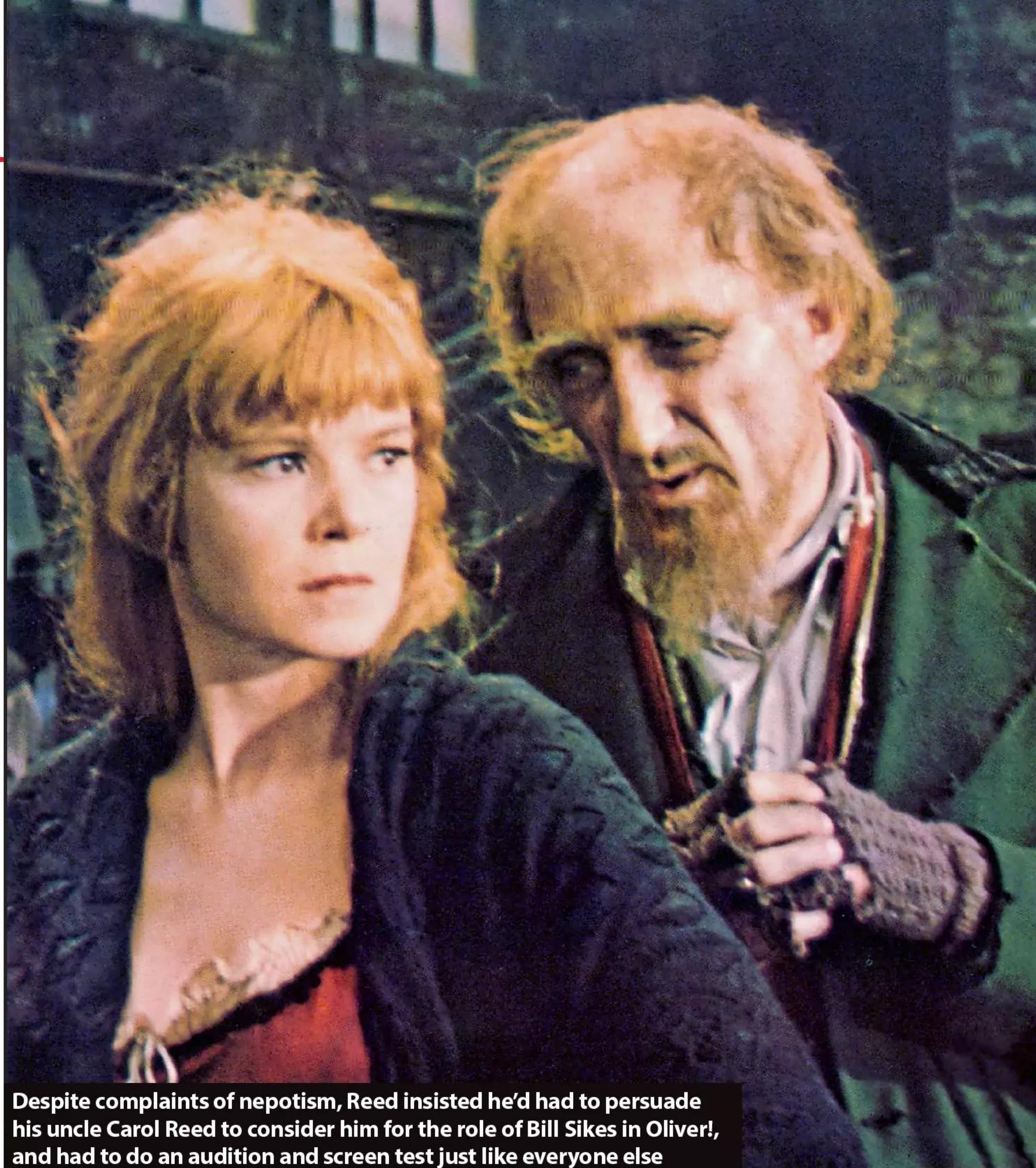
**BORN TO ACT**

So let's go back to the beginning. Reed's showbiz pedigree was impeccable. His grandfather was the revered actor, Herbert Beerbohm Tree, who created the role of Professor Higgins in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* as well as helping to establish RADA. His uncle was the distinguished film director Carol Reed, who made *The Third Man* (1949) and *Oliver!* However, Oliver was not so blessed with his parents, certainly not in terms of his emotional well-being.

His father, Peter, was remote and unsupportive, packing young Ollie off to boarding school aged six, while his mother appeared to be self-centred and lacking in motherly instincts. At school he tried to overcome dyslexia and boredom by excelling at athletics and mimicry. He was branded 'a troubled boy' early on, and his father told him he was 'only fit to (become) a burglar or an actor'. He felt unloved, unwanted and a burden.

Leaving school with no qualifications, he was probably spared a life of crime by two years of compulsory National Service in Hong Kong, from which he emerged with the rank of Lance Corporal. It was perhaps the first indication that Reed was more comfortable playing a role, with a costume, than being himself.

Back on civvy street he found work as a model and film extra.



Despite complaints of nepotism, Reed insisted he'd had to persuade his uncle Carol Reed to consider him for the role of Bill Sikes in *Oliver!*, and had to do an audition and screen test just like everyone else

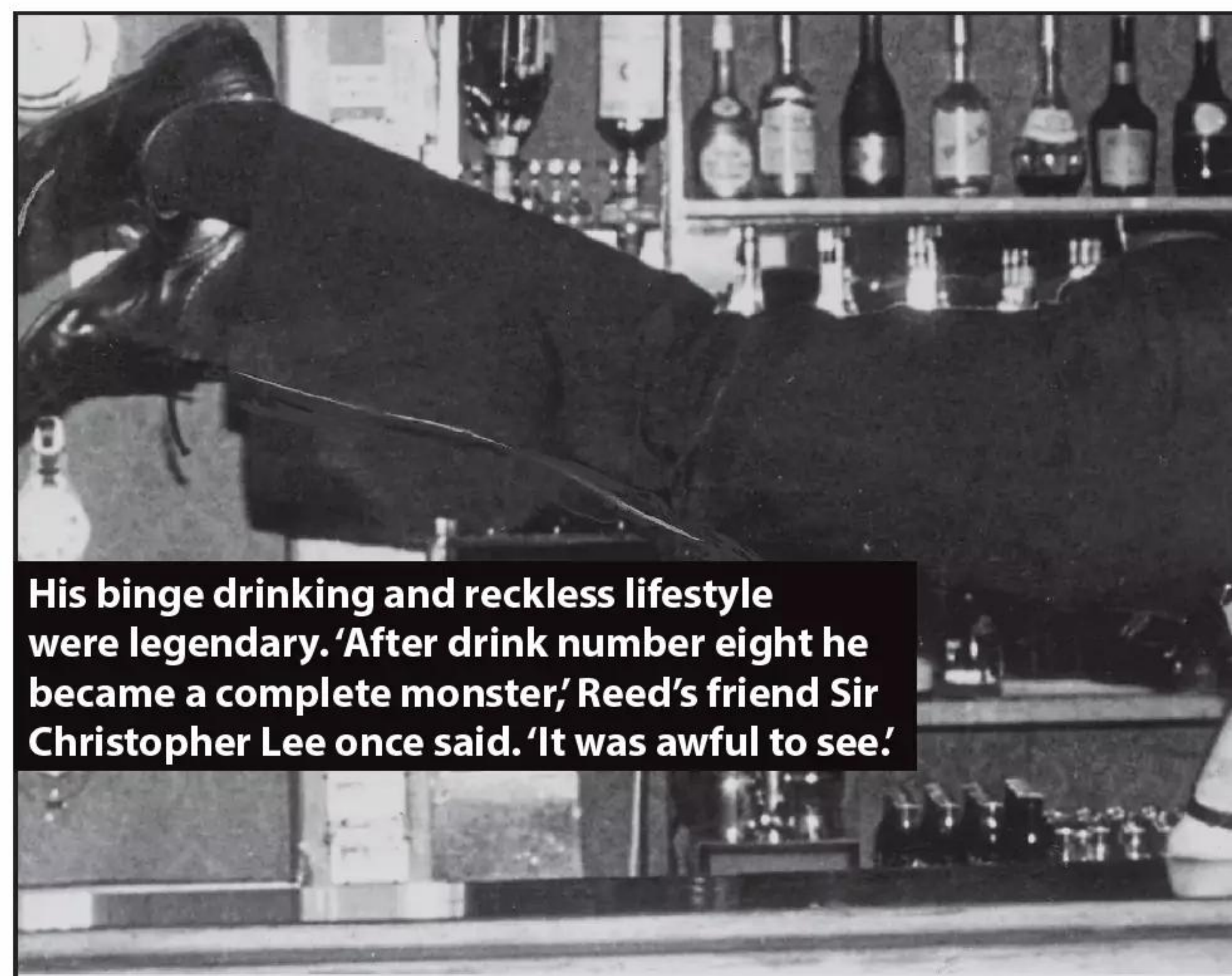
His first speaking role was as a gay chorus boy in *The League of Gentlemen* (1960), with Jack Hawkins, followed by *The Angry Silence* (1960), as a glowering factory worker who disapproves of Richard Attenborough's decision to vote against a wildcat strike. Veteran actor Michael Craig, playing Attenborough's best friend, recalls thinking the young actor was going

places. 'He was good-looking, very macho, and with presence. He was just out of the Army where he'd been an officer and a gent, which he still was.'

But it was Hammer's *The Curse of the Werewolf* (1961), in which he played the title role, that put Oliver Reed on the movie map. Though not as successful as Hammer's previous hits, such as *The Curse*

**Fights to remember**

In one of his drunken escapades in 1964, Oliver got into a fight with two men at the Crazy Elephant nightclub in Leicester Square in which he was attacked with a broken bottle. He needed 63 stitches on his face, leaving him permanently scarred. He thought at the time that this disfigurement would finish his chances of becoming a successful film actor, but actually in roles such as Bill Sikes in *Oliver!* and Athos in *The Three Musketeers*, the scar enhanced his already menacing features. Getting into fights became a regular feature of Oliver's social life, along with personal injury and the risk of spending a night in a prison cell. During the filming of *Castaway*, when his drinking was out of control, he even managed to pick a fight with the director Nicolas Roeg.



His binge drinking and reckless lifestyle were legendary. 'After drink number eight he became a complete monster,' Reed's friend Sir Christopher Lee once said. 'It was awful to see.'



## DID YOU KNOW?

He was widely considered Britain's biggest movie star in the mid-Seventies, but he turned down roles in *The Sting* (1973) and *Jaws* (1975) because he didn't want to move to LA.



While he won praise for his performance in *Women in Love*, Reed later admitted that he found parts of the DH Lawrence novel 'pretentious and repetitive'

of *Frankenstein* (1957), *Dracula* (1958), and *The Mummy* (1959), it washed its face at the box office and gave Reed the kind of exposure he craved, playing to his strengths. A year later, Hammer rebooked him to play the lead in *The Damned* (1962), a bleak science fiction-horror hybrid directed by Joseph Losey, who went on to make *The Servant* (1963) and *Accident* (1967).

### LOOKS TO KILL

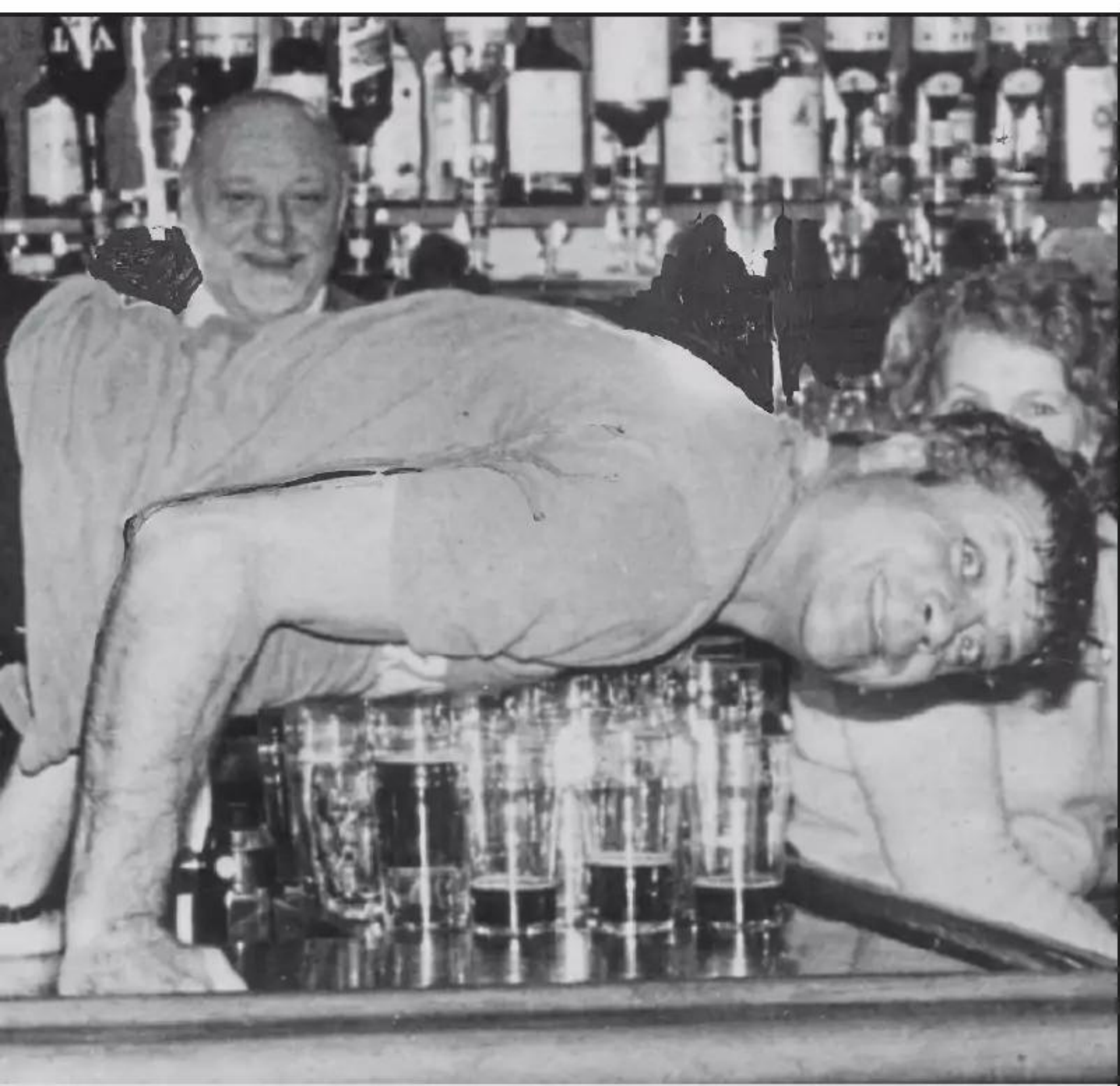
Believing they'd discovered the next big thing, Hammer continued casting Reed in their low-budget productions, even though he was heavily reliant on his smouldering looks and screen presence at this stage of his career. The finer points of screen acting were still a mystery to him. On *Captain Clegg* (1962), Hammer veteran Peter Cushing gave his young co-star some useful advice, 'I think you're going to go a long way, Oliver, but always remember, if you are hurt you don't have to act hurt. If somebody grabs you, just blink. The screen is so big that even the slightest movement makes the point.' In short, less is more.

Meeting the maverick director Ken Russell in 1965 probably marked the beginning of Reed's move away from roles that simply required him to be mean and moody. Russell had made his reputation as a drama-

documentary maker for the BBC, producing quirky films about composers and artists. Seeing the actor on the panel of Juke Box Jury, he was struck by Reed's resemblance to the composer Debussy. The resulting docu-drama, *Monitor Special: The Debussy Film* (1965), not one of Russell's best, was an ambitious amalgam of biography, celebration of Debussy's music and film-within-a-film. According to the British Film Institute, Reed had 'surprisingly little to do except to intersperse smouldering broodiness with violent rage'.

What it eventually led to, however, was *Women in Love* (1969), the film that would seal Russell's reputation as a director of international standing, and Oliver Reed's reputation as a screen actor of stature and sensitivity. He had already, by this time, had a big hit with Carol Reed's film of *Oliver!* in which he played the menacing Bill Sikes, but his role of the doomed Gerald Crich, the repressed homosexual son of a Midlands mining magnate, elevated him to a new level of celebrity, casting him opposite Glenda Jackson as a feisty firebrand who attracts and exasperates him in equal measure.

For many, the film is chiefly memorable for a homo-erotic nude wrestling scene between Reed and Alan Bates. Apart ➔





from the occasional glimpse of a male bottom, no certified film prior to *Women in Love* had ever shown male genitalia quite so flagrantly, albeit suffused by firelight. According to Reed it took two bottles of vodka to produce enough Dutch courage for the actors to shed their inhibitions as well as their clothes.

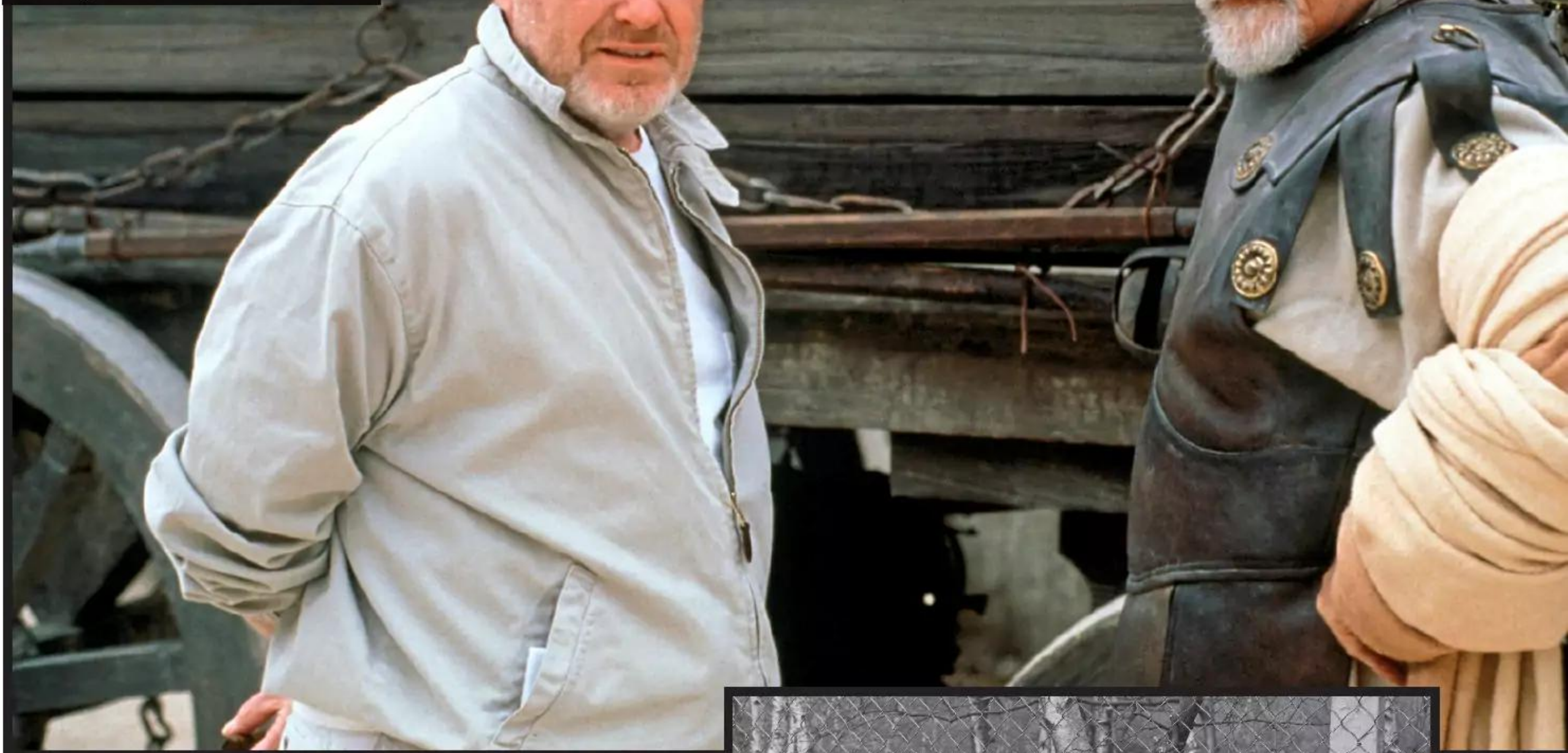
Unsurprisingly, *Women in Love* was more popular in some quarters than others. Italy banned it outright (Russell and its stars were warned they would be arrested for indecency if they ever set foot on Italian soil), and in some South American countries the wrestling scene was deleted altogether.

## COMPLETE CONTRADICTION

Behind the scenes, the pairing of Reed and Glenda Jackson also raised some eyebrows. Reed never made any secret of his male chauvinist views, while the forthright Jackson wasn't known for keeping her uncompromising feminism to herself. Luckily they respected each other's talent and kept their distance socially. Surprisingly, they went on to make another two films together – *The Triple Echo* and *The Class of Miss MacMichael* (1978).

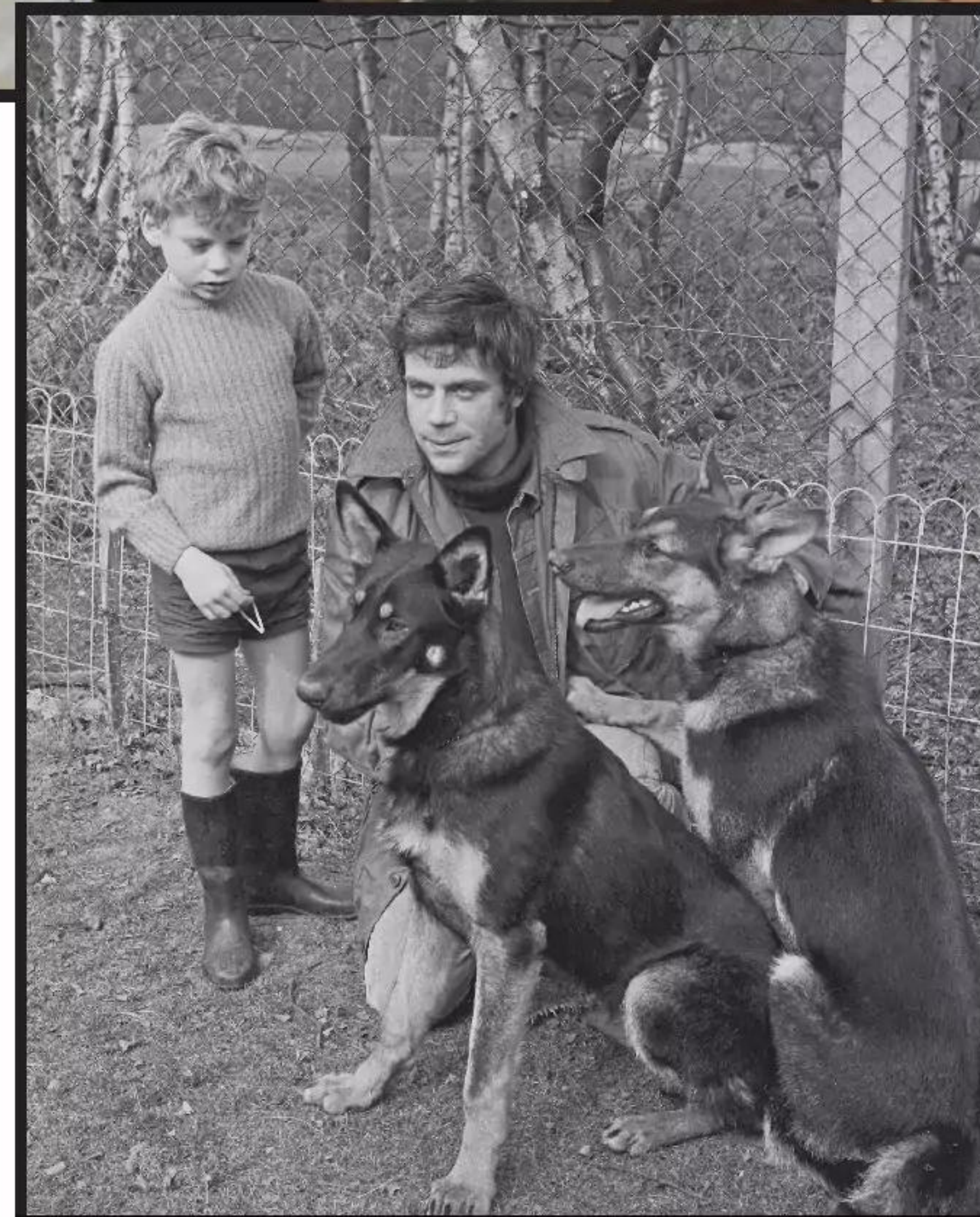
Interviewed about their unconventional working relationship, Jackson said, 'We were like chalk and cheese. Apart from

With director Ridley Scott on the *Gladiator* set shortly before his death. Oliver's remaining scenes had to be filmed using a body double and CGI



the script we had nothing to say to each other and no understanding of each other. He was the antithesis of everything I am. It was his attitude to women, it was his excessive behaviour, all of that. People were all too willing to tell you the terrible things he'd done the night before. It was a very narrow spectrum of life that he was engaged in and from my perspective, desperately repetitive.'

However, Jackson did also commend his work ethic, 'Even at his worst, be it exhausted, or hung-over or whatever, he was immensely professional in front of the camera, and he had great energy as an actor.'



Oliver and his seven-year-old son, Mark, in 1968 with their dogs Rex and Rinty

## Tangled love life

Oliver was married twice, firstly to the model Kate Byrne in 1959, with whom he had a son, Mark. They divorced in 1969. While filming *Oliver!* he met Jacquie Daryl, one of the dancers in the film. They were together throughout the Seventies, had a daughter, Sarah, but never married. His marriage to 21-year-old Josephine Burge in 1985, when he was 47, raised eyebrows, but lasted 14 years until his death in Malta in 1999, during the filming of *Gladiator*. Not surprisingly, there were numerous affairs in addition to these long-term relationships since Oliver's smouldering looks, manly physique and particular brand of ultra-male behaviour appealed to a lot of women. He once described himself as 'a sleeping volcano, always with the threat of eruption'.

'I always felt he was extremely protective of me,' said wife Josephine after her husband's death







While some of his friends and co-stars rose to the bait, many did not. In Robert Sellers' 2013 authorised biography of Reed, *What Fresh Lunacy is This?*, the TV presenter and film critic Barry Norman recalls an encounter with Reed when he was a showbiz reporter for the Daily Mail, 'We did the interview and then he suggested that we go off and box each other. At that point I made an excuse and left because he was in much better shape than I was and I wasn't about to be knocked around by him.'

The legendary Bette Davis, with whom he starred in *Burnt Offerings* (1976) described him as 'possibly one of the most loathsome human beings I have ever had the misfortune of meeting,' adding that, '(Reed) seems to be perpetually on a hangover.'

The actor Michael York, one of his co-stars in *The Three Musketeers*, always felt Reed was eager to live up to his image in the press as 'a latter-day Errol Flynn'. What is certainly true is that the actor felt Athos, his character in *The Three Musketeers*, one of his best performances, was the nearest he'd ever got to playing himself. 'Oliver wasn't run of the mill,' says York. 'He'd been brought up in good schools, with good manners. He was like an aristocratic ruffian, a complete contradiction in terms.'

## THE DEMON DRINK

In Sellers' respectful biography, one of the things that comes across most forcefully is that Reed's bad behaviour was always fuelled by alcohol, and hardly ever took place while he was working. Countless actors are quoted as saying that, on the set, he was a hard-working professional, never a prima donna, even when suffering from a crushing hangover. Several also speculate that his tendency to drink himself to oblivion was driven by shyness because he feared he'd be boring in a more sober persona.

His son, Mark, interviewed by Barry Egan in the Irish

Independent in 2013, said his father preferred gardening to drinking at home. 'My dad wasn't a hellraiser at home. Underneath it all there was this very (well) mannered, intelligent and shy individual. Manners were important to him, the rules and the etiquette were important. The other side of the coin was this hellraiser.'

It wasn't easy having Oliver Reed for a father as Mark told Robert Sellers, 'He could be very dark, and the darker side was challenging for the people who did love him. There were times when I didn't particularly love him because he was hard and he was hurtful. If you tried to talk to him the next day about something he might have said or done, he'd just shrug it off, "Water under the bridge, let's move on," and often that wasn't as satisfactory a response as you wanted.'

It must have been gratifying for Mark and his stepsister Sarah to know their father's final screen performance in *Gladiator* (2000) was one of his best. His role of Proximo, a grizzled slave merchant and former gladiator, became central to the film and he confidently expected it would resurrect his, by now, depleted career. Despite being on his best behaviour on set, Reed reverted to his bad old ways in his down time on location in Malta. A raucous drinking session with a bunch of British sailors in a pub in Valetta culminated in his collapse, hospitalisation and death aged 61.

Director Michael Winner, who made six films with Reed and knew all about his erratic behaviour, summed up what a lot of his admirers – and loved ones – felt after he died. Winner said, 'A lot of the papers said he had a wasted life. It wasn't a wasted life at all, he had a wonderful life. He enjoyed himself. He did a lot of movies, he had a long career, he didn't end up broke, he lived in a lovely house in Ireland which he loved, and he had a lovely wife and lovely children. How can that be a wasted life?'

# I know the face...

## MILES MALLESON



**Born:** 25 May 1888, Croydon Surrey

**Died:** 15 March 1969, London

**Screen debut:** *The Headmaster* (1921)

**Screen credits:** 139

**Best known for:** Beloved British character actor, Miles Malleson, charmed audiences with his gentle wit and endearing presence on stage and screen. Distinguished by his kindly face and quietly whimsical delivery, Malleson was perpetually cast as absent-minded professors, amiable vicars, or bumbling aristocrats. He's especially remembered for comic turns in classic Ealing comedies such as *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949) and was equally at home in *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940), or *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1952). Also an accomplished playwright and screenwriter, Malleson enriched every production with his warmth and a sly, subversive humour.



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## AUCTION WATCH

An incredible and unique piece of cinema history, the 'lost' Rosebud sled from Citizen Kane (1941), sold at auction recently for the extraordinary amount of \$14,750,000 (£10,971,029). The prop was discovered by film director Joe Dante in 1984 when his crew were clearing an area of the Paramount lot that had once belonged to RKO (the makers of Citizen Kane). He went to great lengths to authenticate the piece including carbon dating, matching it to another surviving Rosebud sled that is owned by Steven Spielberg.



## CATCH IT NOW

# THE FUTURE WAS THEN

**OPENS 4 OCTOBER**



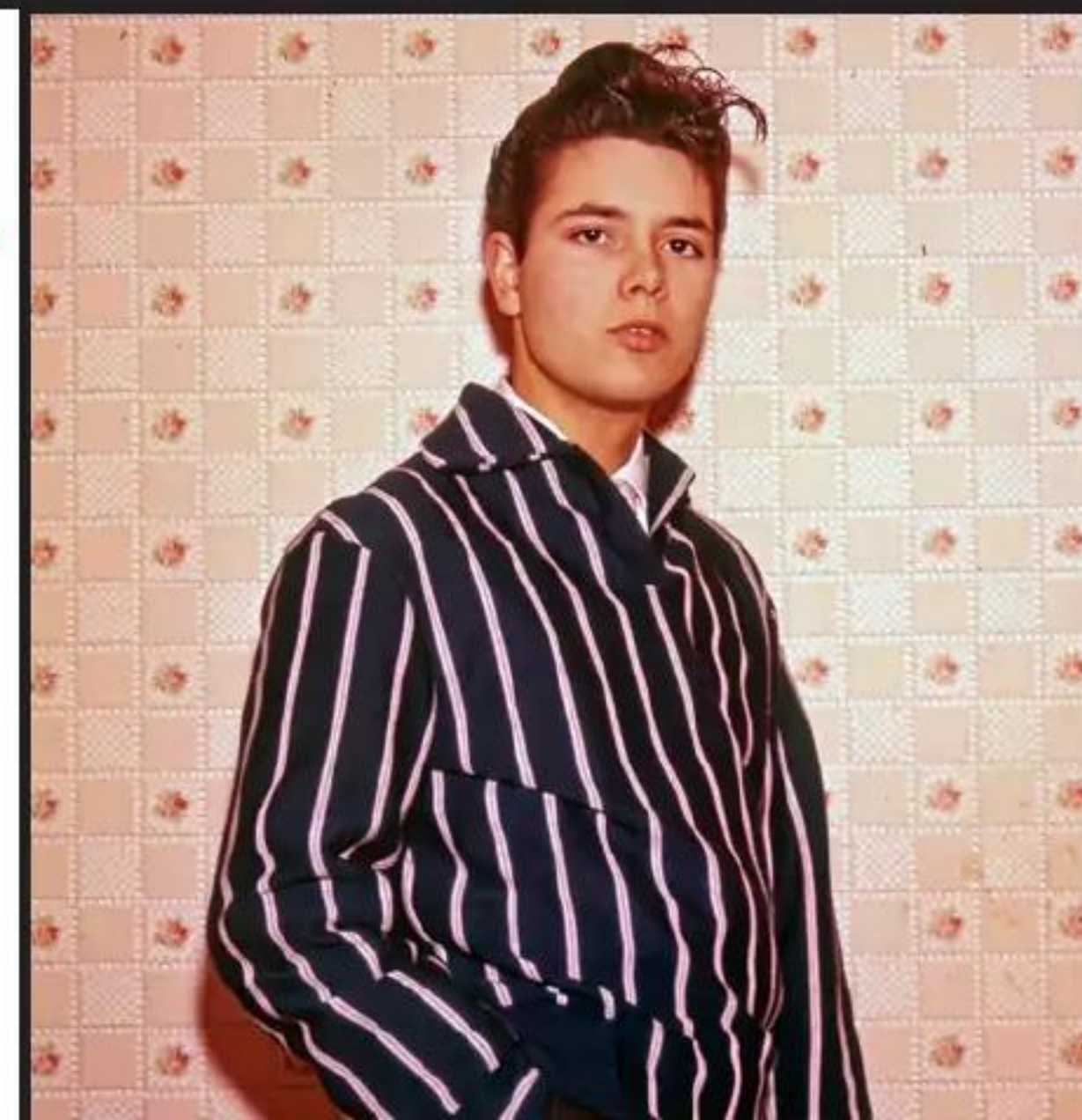
**T**his autumn, The Cartoon Museum in London, looks to the future – and the past – to explore comics that went beyond the final frontier to predict what humanity would look like in years to come. Will the Daleks invade in the year 2150? Will the space travel of Dan Dare or the dystopia of V for Vendetta come true? The Future Was Then exhibition features original comic art from iconic futuristic worlds such as Tank Girl, Judge Dredd, Black Mirror, Buck Rogers and Thunderbirds. Opening on 4 October the exhibition runs until spring 2026 at the venue in London, W1A 3AE. Admission is £12 for adults and free for children under 18. Find out more at [cartoonmuseum.org](http://cartoonmuseum.org)

■ In **Retro** 89 you answered Christine Bartram's letter about Margaret Lockwood's Hollywood co-stars. In addition to the American outings you mentioned, Lockwood made four British films with Hollywood co-stars. Dane Clark in *Highly Dangerous* (1950), Orson Welles in *Trent's Last Case* (1952), and *Trouble in the Glen* (1954), which also features Forrest Tucker and Victor McLaglen, and *Laughing Anne* (1953) with Forrest Tucker and Wendell Corey. Although I'm not sure whether any of the above were 'Hollywood greats', except perhaps Orson Welles and Victor McLaglen,  
**Seamus Rooney**



## 67 years ago... 29 August 1958

Cliff Richard and The Drifters released their debut single *Move it*, which is often credited as being the first British rock 'n' roll song.







■ I know you mainly feature films up to the Seventies, but how about a mention for the brilliant Rita, Sue and Bob Too (1987)? It's one of my favourites, a dark comedy filmed on a run-down estate in Bradford.

**Paul Murphy**

**Retro says:** The film starred Siobhan Finneran and Michelle Holmes as the eponymous teenage heroines who are both having an affair with the same married man.

■ I wanted to let **Retro** readers know about a documentary film, Laurel and Hardy's Yorkshire Adventures, made by me and my daughter Rebecca. It's our pilgrimage around our native Yorkshire, following in the footsteps of the iconic comedy duo, visiting the places where they performed in 1952 and 1954 and other locations linked to them. Along the way we meet fans and aficionados and share clips highlighting Laurel and Hardy's comedy genius. After a successful premiere at the UK Sons of the Desert Convention in Harrogate, the film will be released on DVD in October, but I'm pleased to say it's also now available to watch on demand at [tptvencore.co.uk](http://tptvencore.co.uk)

**Dean Sills**



■ I recently watched the film Train of Events and was reminded of the late, multi-talented Anthony Newley. One of his early TV vehicles I recall was The Strange World of Gurney Slade (1960), which featured him looking out of a speeding train and remarking, 'That's the third station called gentlemen.' Is this, or any other of his early work, available to watch?

**Paul Bayliss**

**Retro says:** You'll be pleased to know you can watch all six episodes of the comedy series on YouTube.

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?



■ did enjoy the recent The Sound of Music anniversary special (**Retro 89**), including the careers of the children who played the von Trapps. I'd love to know, though, what became of the lad who played Rolfe the telegram boy.

**John Douglas**

A spirited American actor, singer, and dancer, Daniel Truhitte (born in 1943 in Sacramento, California) is best known for his turn as Rolfe Gruber, and many of us remember him singing the iconic Sixteen Going on Seventeen with Charmian Carr. Trained from childhood in ballet and voice, Truhitte was the last person to be cast for The Sound of Music. He met his first wife, Gabrielle Hennig, on the set of the film, as she was Charmian Carr's understudy. After the film, he enlisted in the US Marine Corps, later settling in North Carolina to teach young performers. Truhitte twice returned to The Sound of Music on stage as Captain von Trapp and remained active into his 80s, but failed to make further impact on the big screen.

**Retro says:** Is there a little-known star you'd like us to find out more about? Write to ask us to find out what happened to your favourites.



## 48 years ago... 11 September 1977

Bing Crosby and David Bowie came together to record a duet of Peace on Earth/Little Drummer Boy for Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas television special.



# You've got **MORE MAIL**

■ I wonder if **Retro** could feature something on the life of a fine British actor, Harry Andrews. He was in so many great films of the Fifties and Sixties such as *The Hill* (1965) and *Play Dirty* (1969).  
**Alan Morgan**

**Retro says:** A rugged, strong-jawed British character actor who appeared in more than 80 films, Harry Andrews was acclaimed for authoritative roles, especially tough military types. He began his career on stage in 1933, excelling in Shakespearean classics. Awarded a CBE in 1966, Andrews died in 1989 and is now buried alongside his life partner of more than 30 years, fellow actor Basil Hoskins, whom he met on the set of *Ice Cold in Alex* (1958).



## REEL LOCATION



■ It's a *Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963), which showcased many top US comedians of its day, never fails to make me laugh every time I see it. What was the location of The Big W, formed by palm trees, where the loot everyone seeks is buried? Is it still there today?  
**Nancie Rutherford**

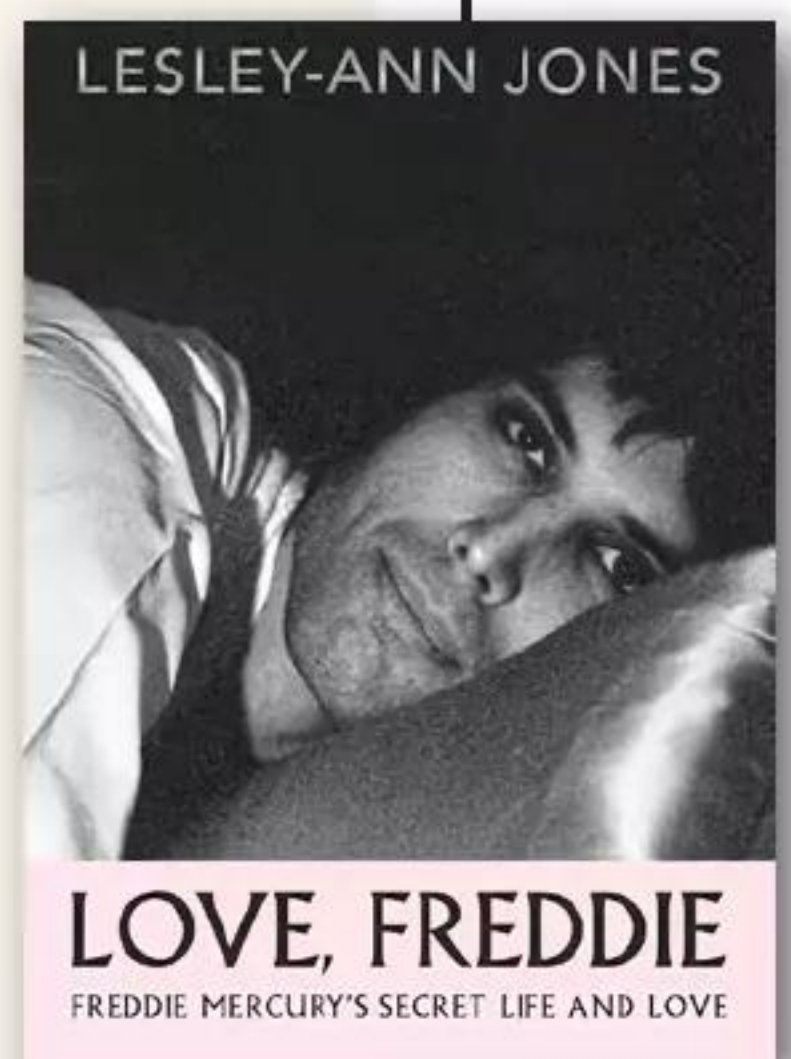
**Retro says:** The four trees that formed The Big W was a carefully arranged set of palms on an estate called Portuguese Point (above) in Rancho Palos Verdes, California, which stood in for the fictional Santa Rosita Beach State Park. The original palm trees are no longer there; they were either removed or lost to storms, and the location is private property so we can only guess what happened to the money!



## OUT NOW...

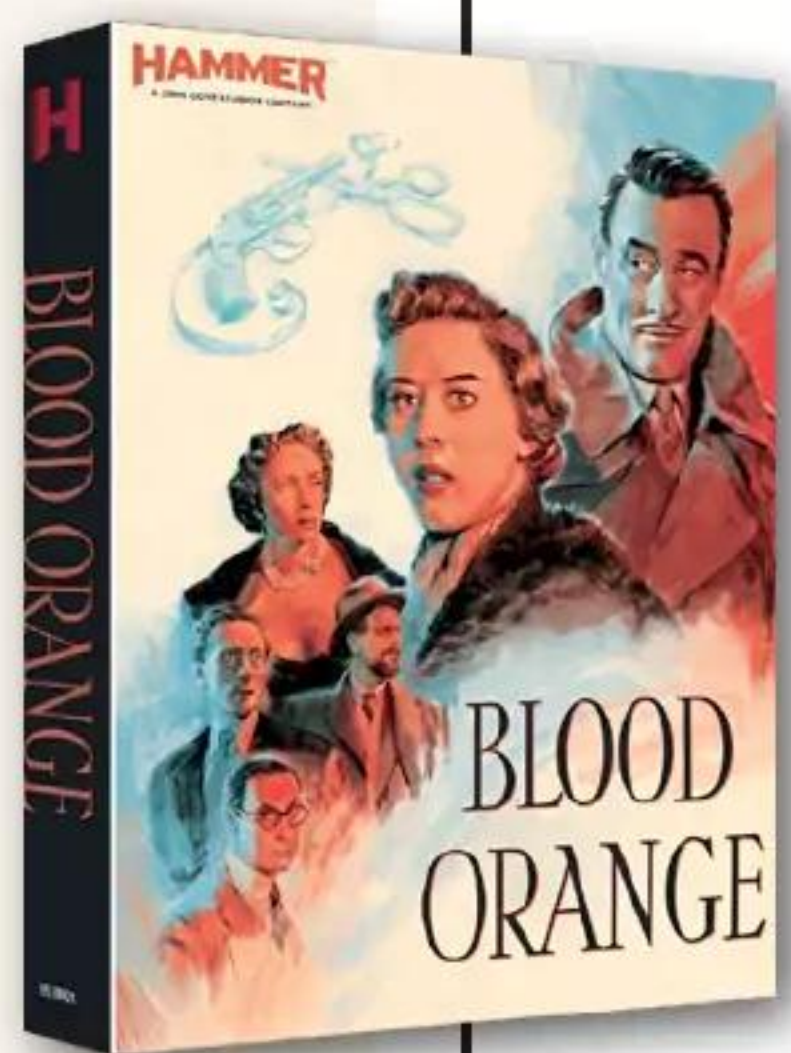
### BUY THE BOOK

When Freddie Mercury died in 1991 he left behind 17 handwritten notebooks chronicling his life from the height of Queen's fame to just weeks before his death. With unprecedented access, author Lesley-Ann Jones has crafted those diaries into *Love, Freddie*, a book that lifts the lid on Mercury's deepest fears, passionate desires, and closest relationships. **RRP £22.99**



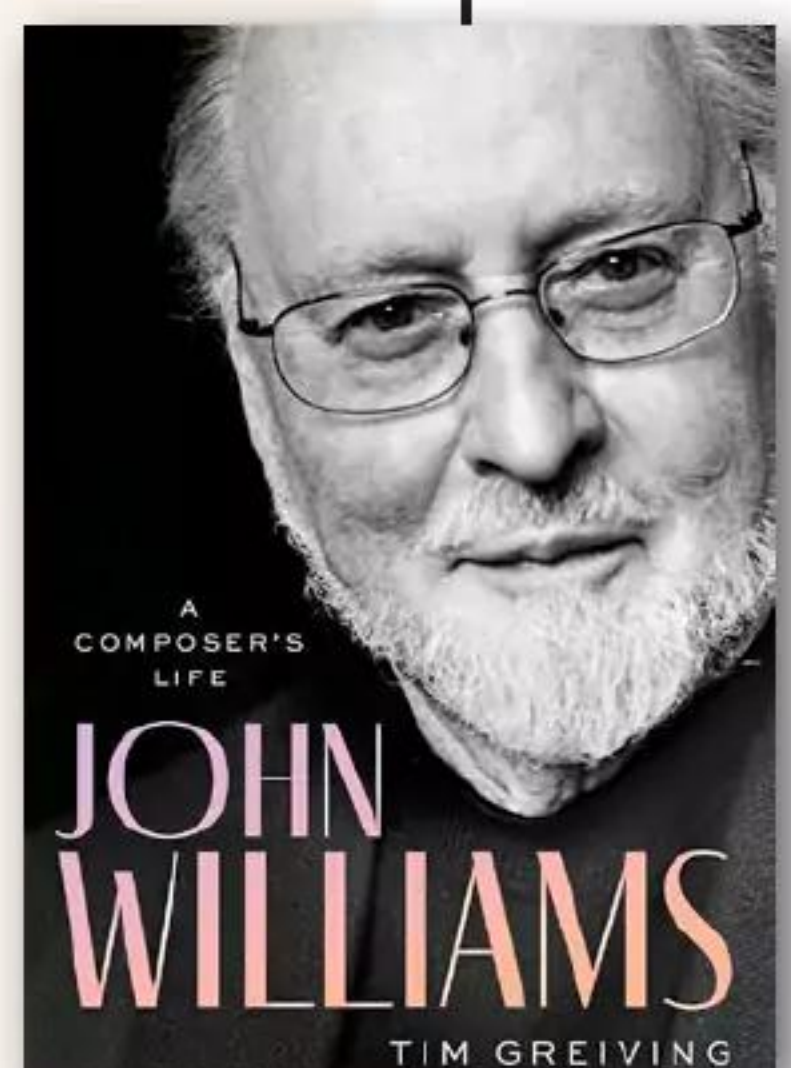
### WATCH ON BLU-RAY

Sharp-edged noir thriller *Blood Orange* (1953) is the latest Hammer title to receive the 4K restoration treatment. Hollywood favourite Tom Conway is an ex-FBI agent turned private eye called in to investigate a jewel robbery at an exclusive London fashion house. The film co-stars Naomi Chance as a model hiding dangerous secrets, and Richard Wattis as a grumbling police inspector. **RRP £23.99**



### BUY THE BOOK

Tim Greiving's *John Williams: A Composer's Life* is the first full biography of the iconic film composer behind *Star Wars*, *Jaws* and *Harry Potter*. With unique access to Williams, his family and collaborators, Greiving offers a detailed look at his prolific career and musical storytelling. The 640-page book reveals new stories exploring Williams' impact on music and culture. **RRP £31.99**



### WATCH ON BLU-RAY

Following hot on the heels of *The Sweeney* 50th anniversary Series One Collector's Edition, is the release of Series Two, for the first time ever on Blu-Ray – and this time around, everything is bigger, badder and more action-packed. **RRP £49.99**





**It was an album that music labels spurned and critics disdained, but the public loved it in numbers nigh-on unprecedented. Sean Egan traces the extraordinary story of Meat Loaf's Bat Out of Hell**

**I**t was a music industry proposal unlike any before: an obscure songwriter and an ageing, overweight vocalist touting around sprawling songs stuffed with adolescent, but simultaneously epic, concepts designed to deploy outrageously extravagant production techniques. The pair were repeatedly rebuffed and stymied by industry figures who, understandably, saw no commercial potential in their visions. When they finally realised their dream with the album *Bat Out of Hell*, however, the result was a sales colossus. It has long inhabited the top 10 chart of best-selling albums of all time.

Born in 1947 as Marvin Lee Aday, Meat Loaf was raised ➔

# To hell & bat...

**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

The revving sound heard on the album's title track is not a motorcycle but Todd Rundgren expertly imitating one on guitar.



in Dallas. In his youth, he was a handy American football player. Injury cut short that potential career, but not before the sport bequeathed him a lifelong nickname when a frustrated coach kicked him up the backside while yelling, 'Hey, meatloaf!'

Music became his new vocation, but his path was rocky. His late Sixties band Popcorn Blizzard played support to the exalted likes of The Who, Cream and Jimi Hendrix, but failed to make headway. His subsequent mixed-sex duo Stoney & Meatloaf released an R&B album on Motown subsidiary, Rare Earth, but he was so unhappy with it that he diverted into acting in order to gain sufficient money and space to try to re-enter the music business on his own terms.

## THE BIGGER THE BETTER

Multiple thespian parts, from *The Rocky Horror Show* to *Shakespeare*, many on Broadway, followed, but when he met Jim Steinman in 1973 while auditioning for *More Than You Deserve*, a Vietnam War musical Steinman had co-written, he slowly began to circle back round to his music career. He and New Yorker

Steinman found that they were on the same page about how music should be presented. They kept in touch, not least because Steinman began writing a collection of songs tailor-made for his new friend.

With those songs proudly ready for public consumption, Meat Loaf and Steinman were met with a wall of rejections. Even when companies expressed an interest, naysayers still blocked their path, resulting in multiple label switches. Only producer and recording artist Todd Rundgren showed faith, putting up his own money to keep the project alive. Yet he himself only came on board because he secretly felt the project constituted a parody of Bruce Springsteen, whose music he detested.

Rundgren and his group Utopia played on the album. Just in case the excessive songs, Utopia's pomp-orientation and Meat Loaf's lung-busting fervour weren't enough, Rundgren recruited drummer Max Weinberg and keyboardist Roy Bittan from the E Street Band, who had recently helped take rock to new operatic levels on Bruce Springsteen's *Born to Run* (1975). For good measure, Ellen Foley provided accompanying vocals and the New York Philharmonic

and Philadelphia orchestras classical strings.

Typical of the record's big-is-best, gargantuan-is-better approach, rather than a punchy opener, *Bat Out of Hell* begins with the title track, a slow-building, 10-minute apocalyptic street opera which finds the hitherto unsuspected link between rock and Richard Wagner. Similar incongruous juxtapositions of everyday lyrical scenarios and larger-than-life sonics attend much of the rest of the proceedings, especially the high-school vignette, *Paradise by the Dashboard Light*, which presents what could be considered routine teenage back-seat shenanigans as a story arc in three formally titled acts punctuated by an interlude in which a real-life sports announcer provides spoken-word commentary on the male protagonist's progress from first base onward. In fairness, *Heaven Can Wait* and *Two Out of Three Ain't Bad* are relatively understated and quite affecting ballads.

However, the finished product was housed in a very much not understated sleeve featuring motorbike and demon imagery against a bright-red background



The songs from the hit album have been adapted into a stage musical



The title track of Steinman's musical *More Than You Deserve* was eventually recorded by Meat Loaf in 1981 as *Dead Ringer*



overlaid with gothic lettering. The fact that the album appeared in October 1977 when punk was condemning all things virtuosic hardly helped.

### **SLOW BURNER**

Accordingly, *Bat Out of Hell* received a mixed reception, with few hailing it a keeper and some expressing bewilderment and disgust. One critic dismissed it as 'grotesquely grandiose' and suggested that the production team intended a reaction of 'horrified, contemptuous laughter'. Yet, the

work was undeniably also impressively polished, lyrically clever, melodically imaginative, thematically cinematic and rhythmically exciting. As such, it was bound to appeal to many who loved Springsteen, Led Zeppelin,



**Ellen Foley performed the female vocals on the album but Karla DeVito was Meat Loaf's touring partner**

Queen, Phil Spector's *Wall of Sound* and James Dean movies – and fans of those things numbered in their millions. Assiduous touring, promo videos and word of mouth in the UK were assisted by performances of a trio of songs on the BBC's

*The Old Grey Whistle Test*, during which Meat Loaf and touring vocalist Karla DeVito treated us to the sight of some remarkably athletic snogging.

While the LP was never a chart topper, the sales kept ticking relentlessly upward, especially in Britain, where it ultimately occupied the album chart for a mind-boggling 530 weeks.

With his first proper release, Meat Loaf had hit as big as he possibly could. For many years, he had great difficulty following it up. He was literally unable to sing on what should

have been the successor LP, *Bad for Good* – his vast success had a psychosomatic effect that froze his throat muscles, leaving Steinman to release the album under his own name in 1981. Subsequent Meat Loaf albums, *Bat Out of Hell II* and *III* (1993 and 2006), suggested a desperate grab for past glories.

Nonetheless, Meat Loaf had a respectable career with a dozen studio albums to his name. He also maintained a prolific acting sideline. His powerful performance as a victim of cancer in 1999's *Fight Club* was described by him as 'probably the thing I'm proudest of.'

Not that before his death in 2022 he was ever ashamed of *Bat Out of Hell*. While readily acknowledging his oeuvre as overblown, pompous, melodramatic and self-indulgent, he defiantly asserted, 'It's supposed to be overblown. Rock 'n' roll was never meant to answer the questions of the universe. It's a laugh. I'm a laugh. So laugh at me if you like. I have no problem with that.'



**Meat Loaf wore a 90lb fat suit in *Fight Club***

**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

The album's songs *Bat Out of Hell*, *Heaven Can Wait* and *All Revved Up* with *No Place to Go* originated in a proposed Steinman Peter Pan musical called *Neverland* in which Meat Loaf was envisioned as playing Tinker Bell!



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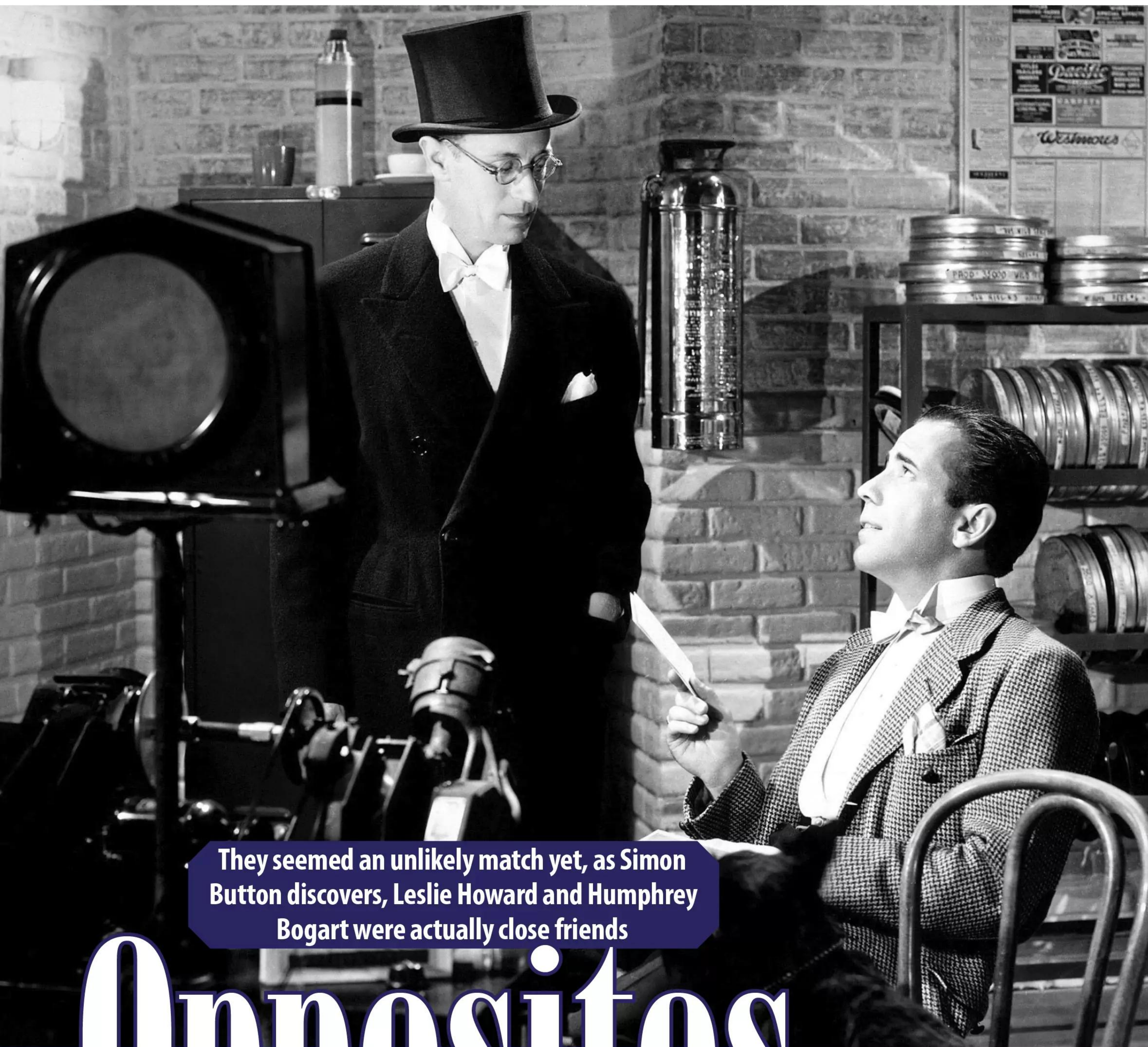
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They seemed an unlikely match yet, as Simon Button discovers, Leslie Howard and Humphrey Bogart were actually close friends

# Opposites attract





**O**n paper, Leslie Howard and Humphrey Bogart were not friendship material.

The former was a thoroughly British gentleman known for his charm and intellect. Six years his junior, the latter was a native New Yorker and a tough guy who, after hitting the bottle, could be fiery and bad-tempered.

Howard often played people who mirrored his real-life noble, upright persona and, cautious about Hollywood's publicity machine and uncomfortable with fame, he could come across as aloof. And he was a contradiction – known for his dry wit, yet often exuding an air of melancholy on film – prompting David Niven to remark, 'He had the kind of distraught air that would make people want to mother him. Actually, he was about as naïve as General Motors. Busy little brain, always going.'

That 'little brain' was often busy with reading or coming up with ideas to make scripts better. He ventured behind the camera to direct himself in the likes of *The First of the Few* (1942) and *The Gentle Sex* (1943). During the Second World War, he supported the anti-Nazi effort and was even rumoured to have been a secret British intelligence agent.

No such rumours circulated around Bogart. Often cast as a cynic, he was distrustful of authority and spoke up for civil liberties, famously saying, 'The

only good reason to have money is this: so that you can tell any SOB in the world to go to hell.'

Yet the staunchly macho American anti-hero and the stiff-upper-lipped English gent had more in common than casual followers of their careers might have thought. Like Howard, Bogart was witty and well-read. Of fame he said, 'The only thing you owe the public is a good performance.' And he shunned big Hollywood parties, preferring to hang out with a close bunch of friends.

## BOGIE'S BIG BREAK

Those friends included Howard, whom Humphrey met when the British actor was well on the way to making a name for himself in Hollywood. Like Bogart, and after dropping the third part of his full name, Leslie Howard Steiner, the Londoner got his start on stage – firstly in England, then on Broadway.

Breaking into movies, he was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Actor for the film adaptation of *Berkeley Square* (1933). When it came time for Warner Bros to turn Robert E Sherwood's Pulitzer Prize-shortlisted melodrama, *The Petrified Forest*, into a 1936 film, Howard was almost certain to play Alan Squier, a suicidal drifter who finds a reason to live when he meets Gabby in her parents' café, just

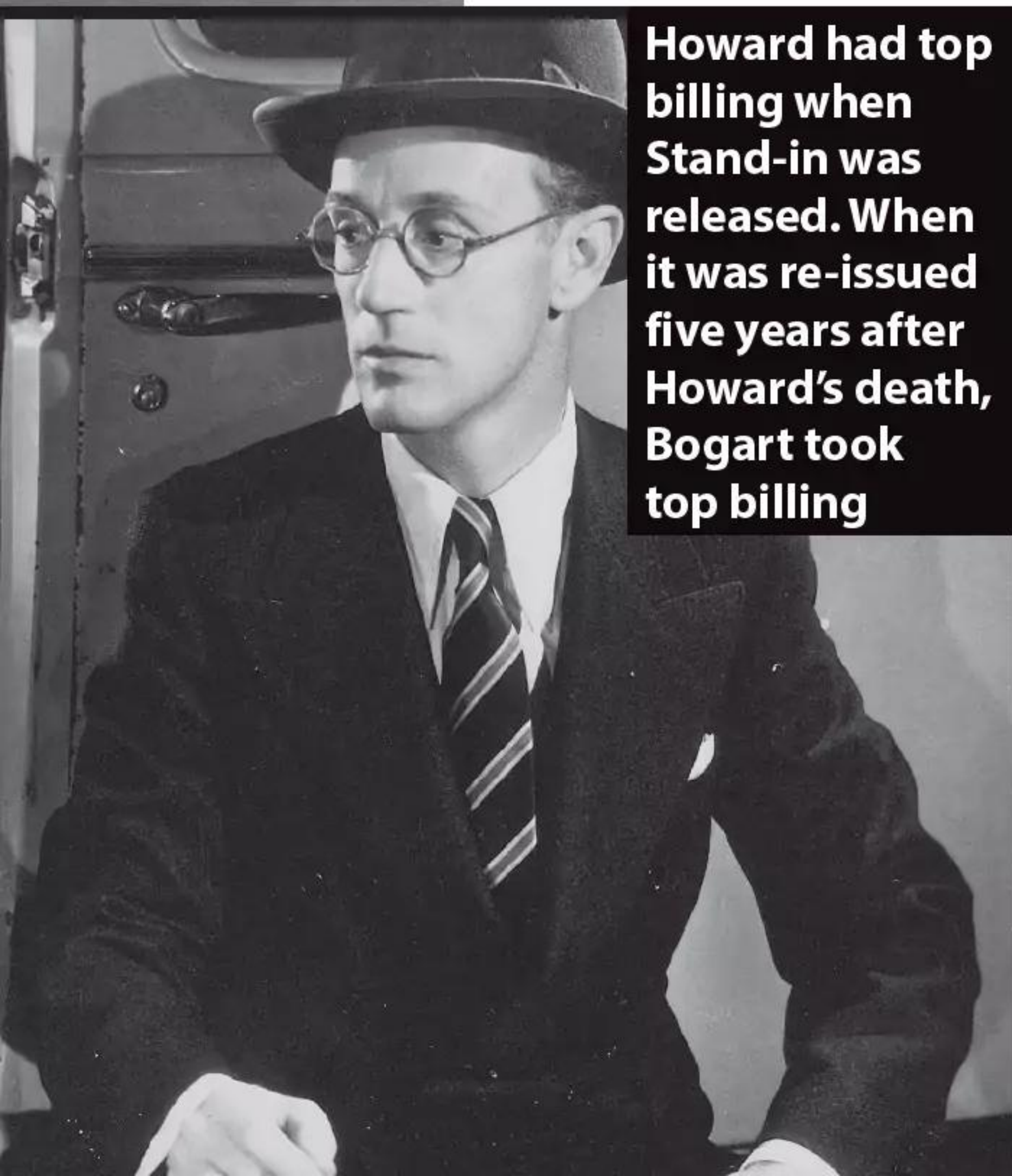
before gangsters turn up and take all the diners hostage.

Premiering in January 1935, the play starred Leslie as Squier (he also co-produced it) and was both a critical and commercial hit. Also in the cast was an up-and-comer named Humphrey Bogart, who, after dropping the middle part of his full name Humphrey DeForest Bogart, had been toiling away on Broadway in comedies and romances since the early Twenties and had been in 10 films without setting the screen alight.

His performance as escaped convict and mobster Duke Mantee – a character based on Great Depression gangster John Dillinger – proved to be the down-on-his-luck boozer's salvation. He wore pale make-up and two-day stubble to land the role and, partly cast because of his physical resemblance to the FBI's first Public Enemy No.1, he studied footage of Dillinger and his mannerisms, prompting *The New York Times*' redoubtable critic Brooks Atkinson to declare, 'Bogart does the best work of his career as a motorised guerrilla.' ➔



Howard and Bogart in *The Petrified Forest*...



Howard had top billing when *Stand-in* was released. When it was re-issued five years after Howard's death, Bogart took top billing



...the studio shot two different endings – one tragic and one happy. Reviewers preferred the tragic ending so it remained



Warner Bros was happy with Howard reprising his stage performance in the film version, which also starred Bette Davis as Gabby, but they wanted the better-known Edward G Robinson as Mantee. However, Howard, who had lots of clout and whose contract gave him script approval, put his foot down, saying via telegram, 'No Bogart, no deal'.

'Leslie Howard stuck out for me,' Bogart recalled later. 'He said he wouldn't do the film unless I was cast as Duke Mantee, the killer.' If that hadn't happened, Bogie believed, 'I'd have been out of the movies altogether.' A friendship that had been forged during the play's Broadway run was solidified, with Bogart going on to sign a five-year contract with the studio. Said contract would prove annoyingly restrictive at first, but it helped propel him to superstar status.

## A LIFE CUT SHORT

It also led to him eventually working with, falling for and marrying Lauren Bacall. The couple became parents to a son named Stephen in 1949. Then when a daughter came along in 1952 they named her Leslie Howard Bogart in honour of the man to whom Humphrey felt he owed his career: 'Bogie and I had decided that a girl would be named after Leslie Howard, his first mentor and my imagined love.' For his part, Bogart said, 'I owe a lot to Leslie and he was always a great friend of mine.'

In her autobiography, Bacall also confessed that she had a crush on Howard as a youngster. When she went with her mother and her sister Rosalie to see *Casablanca* (1942), she couldn't understand why Rosalie was mad about its star Humphrey Bogart because, 'Bogart didn't vaguely resemble Leslie Howard.'

The actors only worked together once more after *The Petrified Forest*, in the screwball comedy *Stand-in* (1937), but they remained friends. The two publicity-shy men



**Bogie and Bacall with their children.** Stephen went on to become a TV writer and producer while Leslie has worked as a nurse and yoga teacher

seldom talked publicly about their friendship, although Howard's son Ronald revealed they shared good-natured banter – such as when, referring to Leslie's youthful looks that allowed him, at the age of 46, to play the late-20s Ashley Wilkes in *Gone with the Wind* (1939), Humphrey 'once asked him what he took as he would like to try it'.

Sadly, Howard didn't live to meet the girl the Bogarts named in his honour. In 1943, the plane he was travelling on from Lisbon to Bristol was shot

down by the German Luftwaffe, killing everyone on board. Conspiracy theories abounded, including one that the actor had been targeted because of his pro-British propaganda efforts, but for Humphrey the loss was a personal one. 'I loved the man,' he said, 'and would always be grateful to him.'

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Bogart was nominated for three Best Actor Oscars and won one, for *The African Queen* (1951). Howard was nominated twice but didn't win.



# SCREEN CHIC MOVIE STYLE

## FILM: EL CID (1961)

**ICONIC COSTUME:** A floor-length white gown in the Medieval style of 11th century Spain, embellished with gold details around the neck and waistline.

**SHE WORE IT WELL:** Sophia Loren  
**DESIGNED BY:** Veniero Colasanti and John Moore

**SHOWSTOPPING SCENE:** This garment wasn't worn in the film but used extensively in publicity material.

■ Veniero Colasanti and John Moore together oversaw the visual spectacle of the film.

■ Around \$500,000 was spent employing 400 seamstresses to manufacture the 2000 Medieval-style costumes needed.

■ Colasanti and Moore also oversaw the production of weaponry for the extravagant battle scenes, including 3000 helmets and hundreds of iron-studded leather jerkins, 7000 swords, scimitars, and lances, 40,000 arrows, 5780 shields, 1253 Medieval harnesses, 800 maces and daggers, 650 suits of mail and 500 saddles.

■ Charlton Heston was unhappy that his character aged dramatically during the movie, while Sophia Loren remained young and beautiful throughout. The co-stars didn't have a good working relationship, something Heston said he regretted in hindsight.

■ Colasanti and Moore were nominated for a Best Art Direction/Set Direction Oscar but lost out to *West Side Story* (1961).

## DID YOU KNOW?

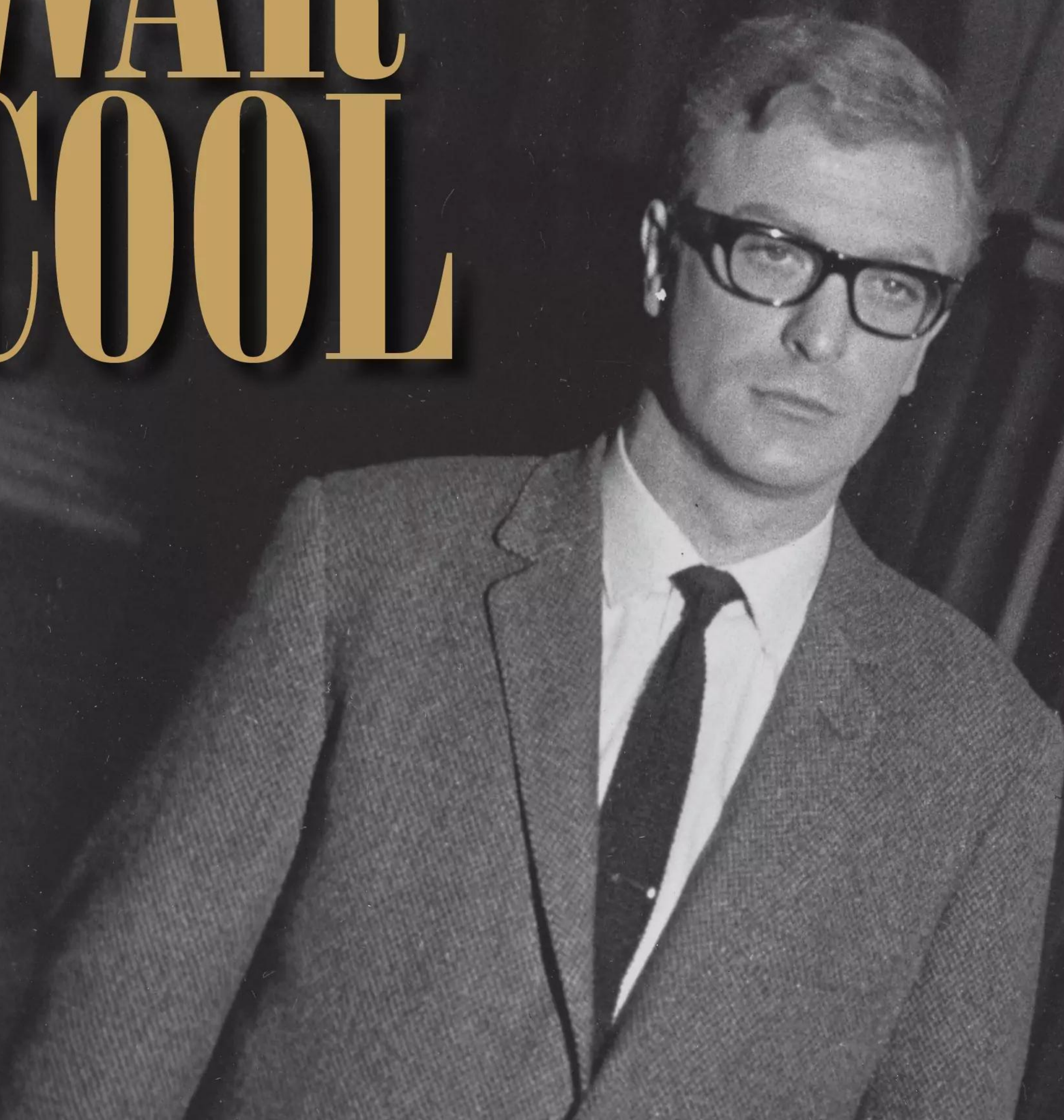
The film cost over \$7 million, tying for the most expensive film of the year with the biblical epic, *King of Kings*.





With no Bond-style gadgets or gimmicks, Michael Caine made his mark on the spy genre six decades ago in *The Ipcress File*, writes Brian J Robb

# COLD WAR COOL





## DID YOU KNOW?

Caine's iconic chunky specs were later worn by Taron Egerton in the Kingsman espionage series and by Mike Myers in the Austin Powers Bond spoofs – Michael Caine features in both film series.

**S**ixty years ago, the James Bond movie business was in full swing. Between 1962 and 1965, producers Albert Broccoli and Harry Saltzman brought four of Ian Fleming's spy thrillers to the big screen: *Dr No* (1962), *From Russia with Love* (1963), *Goldfinger* (1964), and *Thunderball* (1965). Sean Connery established himself as the definitive Bond, with the screen version very different to the character in Fleming's books.

An alternative take on the world of espionage was also released 60 years ago. In *The Ipcress File*, Michael Caine embodied a very different kind of spy. His Harry Palmer was all the things Bond was not: working class, state educated, bed-sit dwelling, and battling red tape within his intelligence agency. Despite all that, this 'anti-Bond' ironically grew out of the Bond films themselves.

Advertising illustrator Len Deighton's debut spy novel, *The IPCRESS File*, was published in 1962, the same year *Dr No* made a big splash in cinemas. This tale of Cold War brainwashing and international intrigue was a commercial and critical success, becoming an international bestseller. It wasn't long until the film moguls came calling. However, the approach from Bond producers Broccoli and Saltzman was not about making a film of *The IPCRESS File* – they wanted Deighton to script the

second James Bond movie, *From Russia with Love*.

Deighton recalled his brief involvement with Bond as, 'a wonderful course in movie making'. Not used to the pace of film production, Deighton produced around 35 pages of his screenplay, but he wasn't working fast enough and Broccoli and Saltzman brought in writers Richard Maibaum and Johanna Harwood (who had worked on *Dr No*) to complete the script.

### THE EVERYDAY SPY

Prior to Bond, Harry Saltzman produced social realist dramas including *Look Back in Anger* (1959) and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960) – far from Bond's world of exotic espionage. Having worked with Deighton on the Bond script, Saltzman saw an opportunity – he decided to film *The IPCRESS File* as a separate venture from the Bond movies. For Saltzman, Deighton's novel offered a more realistic view of the spy world, bringing in 'kitchen sink' gritty realism.

In 1965's *The Ipcress File*, Harry Palmer is sent to find Dr Radcliffe, the latest eminent British scientist to vanish. Following suspects and leads, Palmer finds he's investigating a literal 'brain drain', with the scientists' knowledge syphoned off using a technique dubbed 'IPCRESS'. Before resolving the case, Palmer himself is subjected to the traumatic brainwashing process.

Several writers had toiled on the screenplay for *The Ipcress File*, including Hammer writer/director, Jimmy Sangster. It was Sangster who'd recommended Canadian director Sidney J Furie to Saltzman to helm *Ipcress*. It was also Sangster who'd given Deighton's nameless anti-hero a suitable monicker: Harry Palmer.

In 1964, Michael Caine's career looked over before it had even begun. He'd been cast in *Zulu*, following stage experience and smaller roles on television. A box office hit in Britain, *Zulu* failed to perform abroad, and the film's producer Joseph E Levine dropped Caine from his recently signed seven-year contract. A demoralised Caine might have faced a future confined to the small screen if not for Harry Saltzman and Harry Palmer.

Searching for someone to play the lead, Saltzman offered the part to Christopher Plummer who preferred *The Sound of Music*, while Richard Harris turned it down in favour of *Western, Major Dundee* (both 1965). A sign of Saltzman's growing desperation came when he considered Steptoe and Son's Harry H Corbett for Palmer.

Legend has it that Saltzman spotted the then 32-year-old Caine in a restaurant that he regularly frequented. He called the *Zulu* actor ➔

Michael Caine's fee was £6000, which was £5000 more than his co-star Sue Lloyd

Saltzman secured the film rights to Deighton's book for £12,000





over and, after a few minutes, Caine had not only secured the role but had also won a seven-year contract with Saltzman worth around £250,000. Caine had recently started sharing a flat with Bond composer John Barry, who would also provide the music for *Ipcress*. It's thought to be likely that Barry tipped off the unemployed Caine about Saltzman's search for Palmer.

## SPECS APPEAL

Saltzman was taking a risk with the relatively unknown Caine, so he took a close interest in shaping the character of Palmer. Looking for something distinctive to mark him out from Bond, Saltzman decided Caine's Palmer should wear glasses. Caine himself was short-sighted and always wore his own glasses. Saltzman wanted Caine to wear something more iconic, settling upon a pair of Curry & Paxton's 1948 Yvan Optical frames. The optician had supplied Britain's National Health Service with mass-produced spectacle frames. These 'NHS specs' were instrumental in separating Caine's Harry Palmer from Connery's suave Bond, who'd never be seen dead in glasses (other than sunglasses) and Caine felt the chunky frames defined him as Palmer, protecting him from typecasting.

Caine was supported by a cast of well-known British character actors, including his *Zulu* co-star Nigel Green, Gordon Jackson (*The Great Escape*, 1963), and Guy Doleman (*Thunderball*). Suffering a downturn in her career, Joan



**Gordon Jackson (as Jock Carswell) later appeared as CI5 boss George Cowley in *The Professionals* (1977-83)**

Collins auditioned for Palmer's romantic interest, Jean, but lost out to Sue Lloyd in her first major role.

John Barry wasn't the only Bond name that Saltzman brought across to *Ipcress*. The film was designed by Ken Adam, responsible for iconic Bond film, *Goldfinger*, while Bond editor Peter Hunt cut the movie. Saltzman told Deighton, 'I'm the only producer who you can be certain won't make an imitation Bond film from your book', yet he came to rely on several Bond talents.

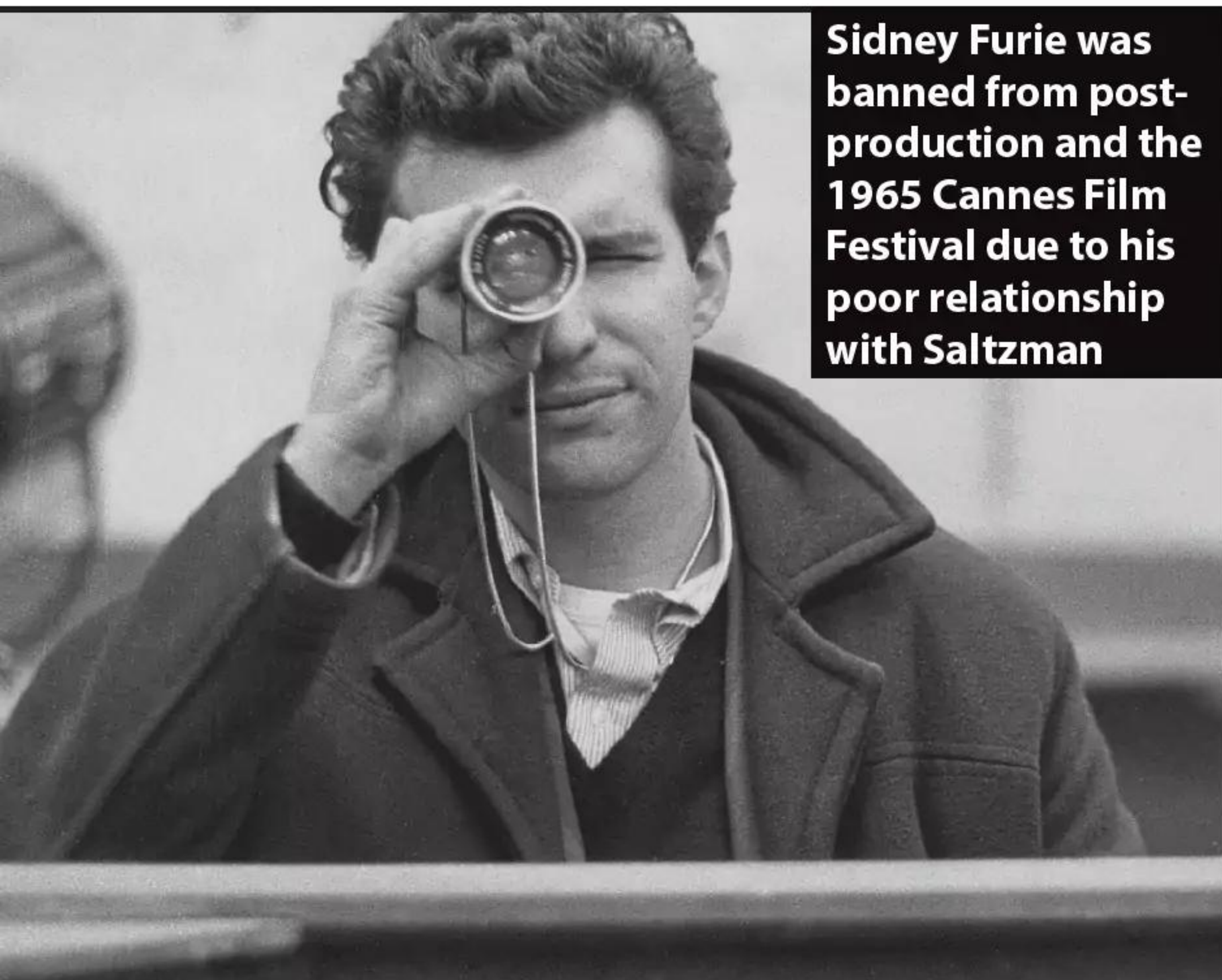
Saltzman, Furie, and Caine collaborated to make their spy as distinctive from Bond as possible. Palmer had an interest in fine food, often cooking for himself (while the literary Bond had an interest in cuisine, it rarely translated to



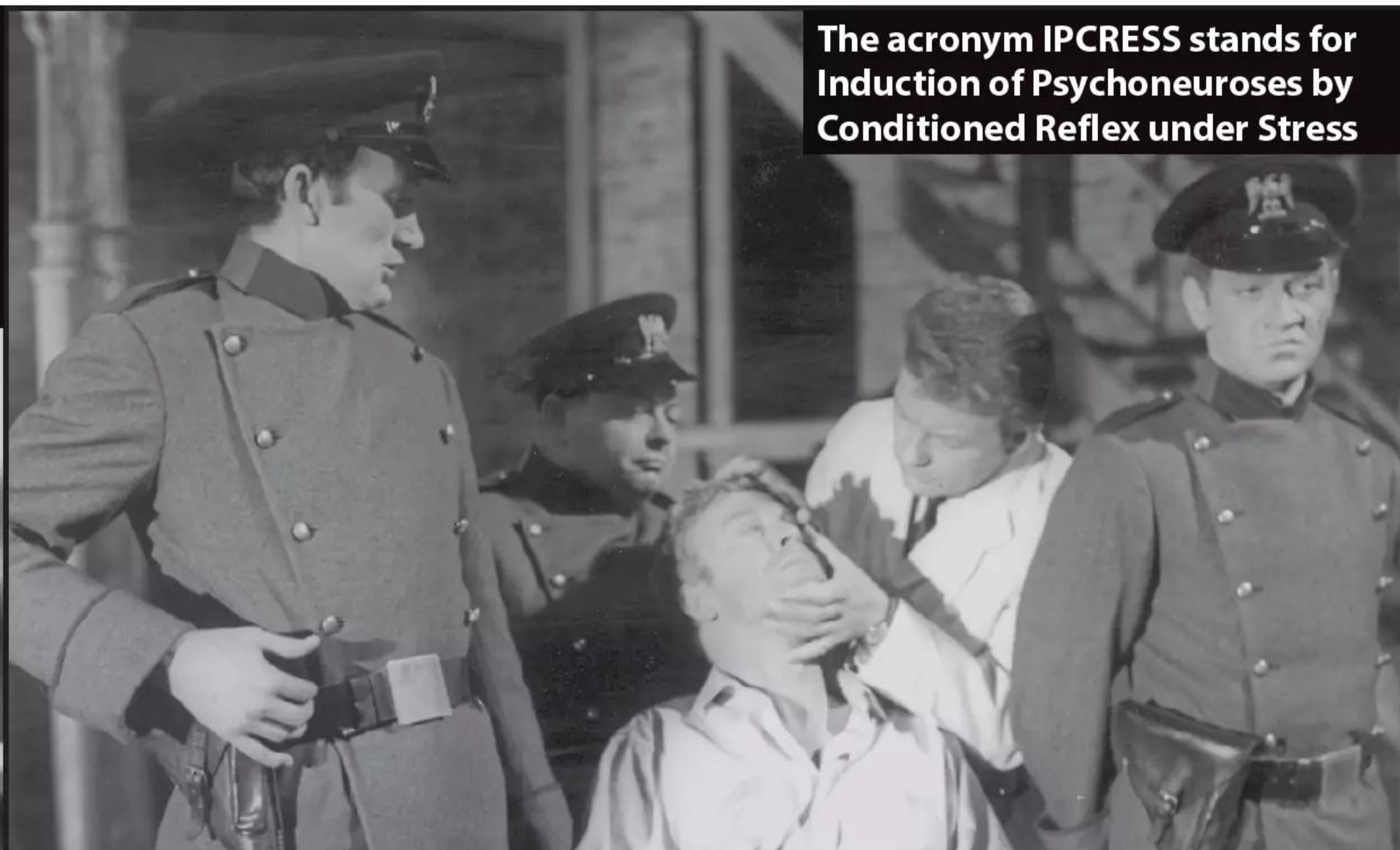
**Nigel Green (as Major Dalby) also appeared with Caine in *Zulu* (1964) and *Play Dirty* (1969).**

the films). He was shown shopping for ingredients in a Safeway supermarket, a relatively new thing in 1965.

Caine's spy had come to the intelligence service to work off a two-year sentence he'd got as a sergeant distributing black market goods in Berlin. While Bond often chaffed at his superiors, Palmer had a deep distrust for authority figures. His world is analogue, featuring



**Sidney Furie was banned from post-production and the 1965 Cannes Film Festival due to his poor relationship with Saltzman**



**The acronym IPCRESS stands for Induction of Psychoneuroses by Conditioned Reflex under Stress**





**Author Len Deighton was a keen cook and had a weekly recipe column in *The Observer***

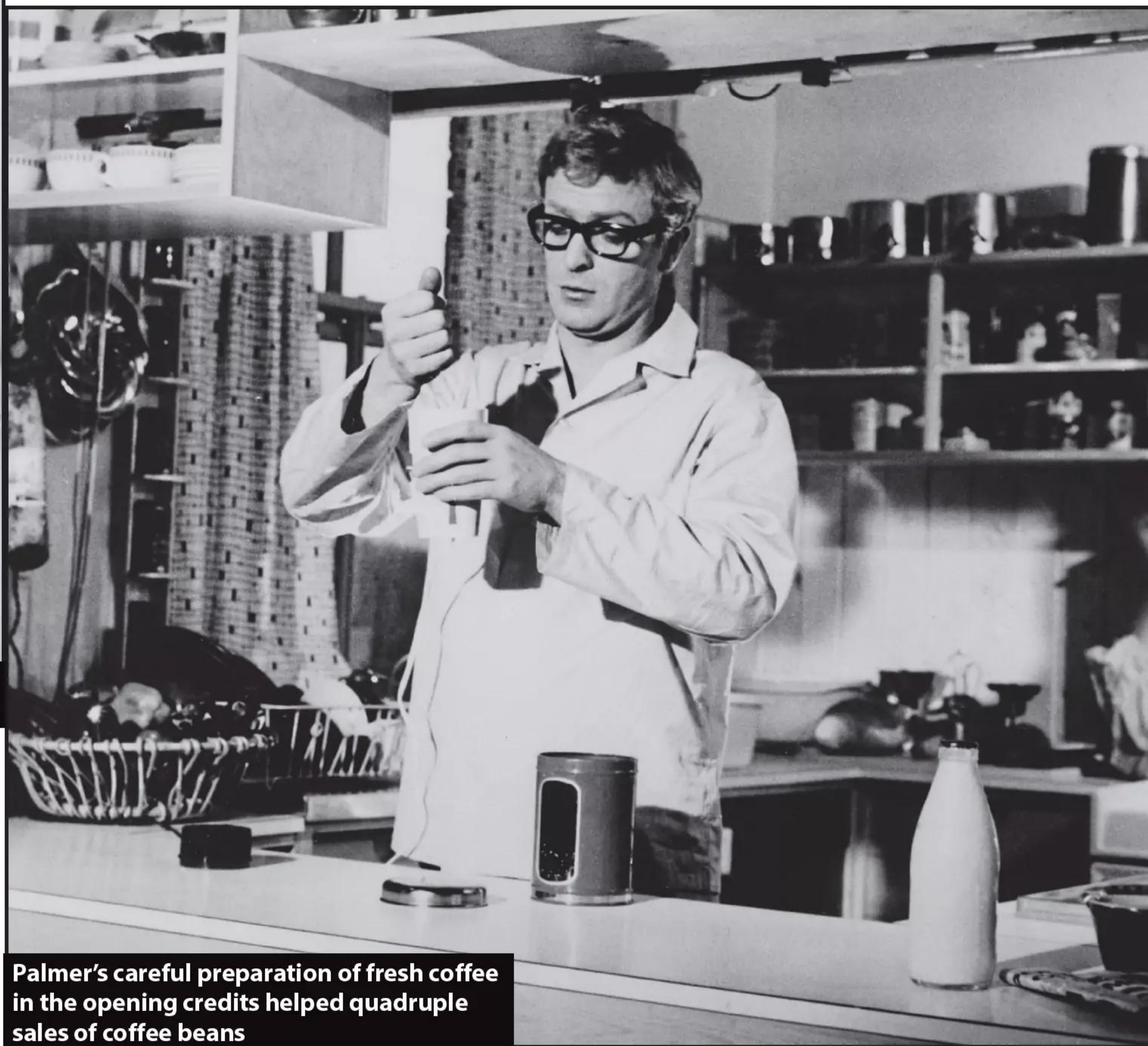
photographic film and reel-to-reel audio tape, with events taking place in an everyday London, just on the edge of the 'swinging Sixties'.

## **SUBURBAN SECRET AGENT**

The production of *The Ipcress File* was not terribly smooth. The producer and the director didn't get on, and Furie took a dislike to the script, symbolically burning the screenplay on the first day of shooting. Furie was determined to shoot *Ipcress* in a stylised way, opting to take shots from unusual angles. Saltzman regarded Furie's stylish excesses as pretentious. It took editor Peter Hunt to convince Saltzman that Furie's material would cut together to make for an intriguing and unique movie.

Shooting began in September 1964 on a £300,000 budget, using two houses in Grosvenor Gardens as a makeshift studio and production office. The *Ipcress File* was shot across London in ordinary suburban streets around Shepherd's Bush, Harlesden, Wimbledon, and Docklands, largely ignoring landmarks, apart from the Royal Albert Hall, with additional interiors shot at Pinewood.

Upon release in 1965, *The Ipcress File* received mixed reviews. The Times reviewer praised Caine, but seemed confused by plot – '[It]



**Palmer's careful preparation of fresh coffee in the opening credits helped quadruple sales of coffee beans**

ceases to be pleasantly mystifying and becomes just irritatingly obscure.' Variety's review was one of the first to dub the film 'the anti-Bond', suggesting it was 'rather more true to the facts of intelligence work than the Bond world of fantasy... Caine in his consistent underplaying adds considerably to the picture.' In The New York Times, Bosley Crowther praised *The Ipcress File*, declaring it 'as classy a spy film as you could ask to see'.

The movie spawned two inferior sequels, *Funeral in Berlin* (1966) and *Billion Dollar Brain* (1967), both starring Caine, but over subsequent decades, *The Ipcress File* was recognised as a classic, reaching 59 on the BFI's list of the 100 Best British Films of the 20th Century (the original won a BAFTA as Best British Film at the time).

Of his breakthrough role as Harry Palmer, Caine noted, '[He] represents all of us. He's not a superman, like James Bond. [He's]



a government guy who went into danger – where we would never go – but he was ordinary.' In 2016, a Channel 4 documentary placed *The Ipcress File* as the seventh best spy movie of all time, according to an international panel of real-life spooks. Seems Michael Caine's 'ordinary' spy was even more realistic than he thought.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Michael Caine returned to the role of Harry Palmer for two television movie follow-ups – *Bullet to Beijing* (1995) and *Midnight in Saint Petersburg* (1996). In 2022, Len Deighton's book was adapted as a television series starring Joe Cole as Harry Palmer.





# The Avengers... A rogue's gallery

Secret agent John Steed and his talented partners are among TV's most memorable heroes. David Reid recalls some of their equally amazing and unforgettable adversaries



## DID YOU KNOW?

The role of Emma Peel was initially given to Elizabeth Shepherd, but after filming only one and a half episodes, the producers decided she wasn't right. Co-producer Brian Clemens explained, 'She was a competent actress but not an Avengers girl. Stopping production cost money but we felt we had to recast.'

**F**rom its dark, low-budget thriller origins, *The Avengers* (1961-69) evolved into an ultra-stylish, surreal classic and enduring international sensation. The series began with Ian Hendry as Dr David Keel and Ingrid Hafner as nurse Carol Wilson, joining forces with mysterious agent John Steed (Patrick Macnee) after Keel's fiancée is murdered. When Hendry left after the first season, Steed became the lead, joined by three new partners: Dr King (Jon Rollason), glamorous nightclub singer, Venus Smith (Julie Stevens) and, most successfully, Cathy Gale (Honor Blackman). The motorbike-riding judo expert Gale was a pioneering strong female lead and her seductive sparring with Steed in series three propelled the show to even greater success.

In 1964, Blackman was lured away by the James Bond franchise to play Pussy Galore in *Goldfinger*, prompting a major reinvention: from studio-bound, live video to stylish 35mm location shoots, and with surreal, sci-fi and comedic elements bought to the fore.

Steed transformed into the ultimate debonair gentleman, but the fourth season's greatest triumph was the casting of relatively unknown Shakespearean actress Diana Rigg as Mrs Emma Peel. The new pairing's on-screen chemistry helped sell the show in America and it became the first UK series to be shown on US primetime.

Rigg's exit (also to Bond) brought Linda Thorson as Tara King, a softer, more youthful agent. Throughout all six series, Steed and Co battled unforgettable villains, aided by a parade of renowned guest stars and brilliant actors in ever-changing roles. Here are some of the most memorable...

### BRIEF FOR MURDER (1963)

The Lakin brothers (John Laurie and Harold Scott), are defence lawyers with a suspiciously high success rate, including the unlikely acquittal of a known traitor. Steed goes

undercover to find that their legal services include advance instructions on how to commit a perfect crime. He employs them to plan the 'murder' of one Cathy Gale.

The Lakins, with their enormous brandy bowls, are a fine early example of the series' signature eccentrics. John Laurie is now best remembered for playing the ever-dour Frazer in *Dad's Army* (1968-77). Two of his hapless Home Guard co-stars, also guested in *The Avengers*, John Le Mesurier in two episodes and Arthur Lowe in one.

### THE GILDED CAGE (1963)

Steed and Gale plan to entrap 'retired' criminal mastermind JP Spagge (Patrick Magee on suitably sinister form) by enticing him to steal £3 million of gold bullion. Steed approaches Spagge as a go-between for Cathy who is posing as a crooked ➔

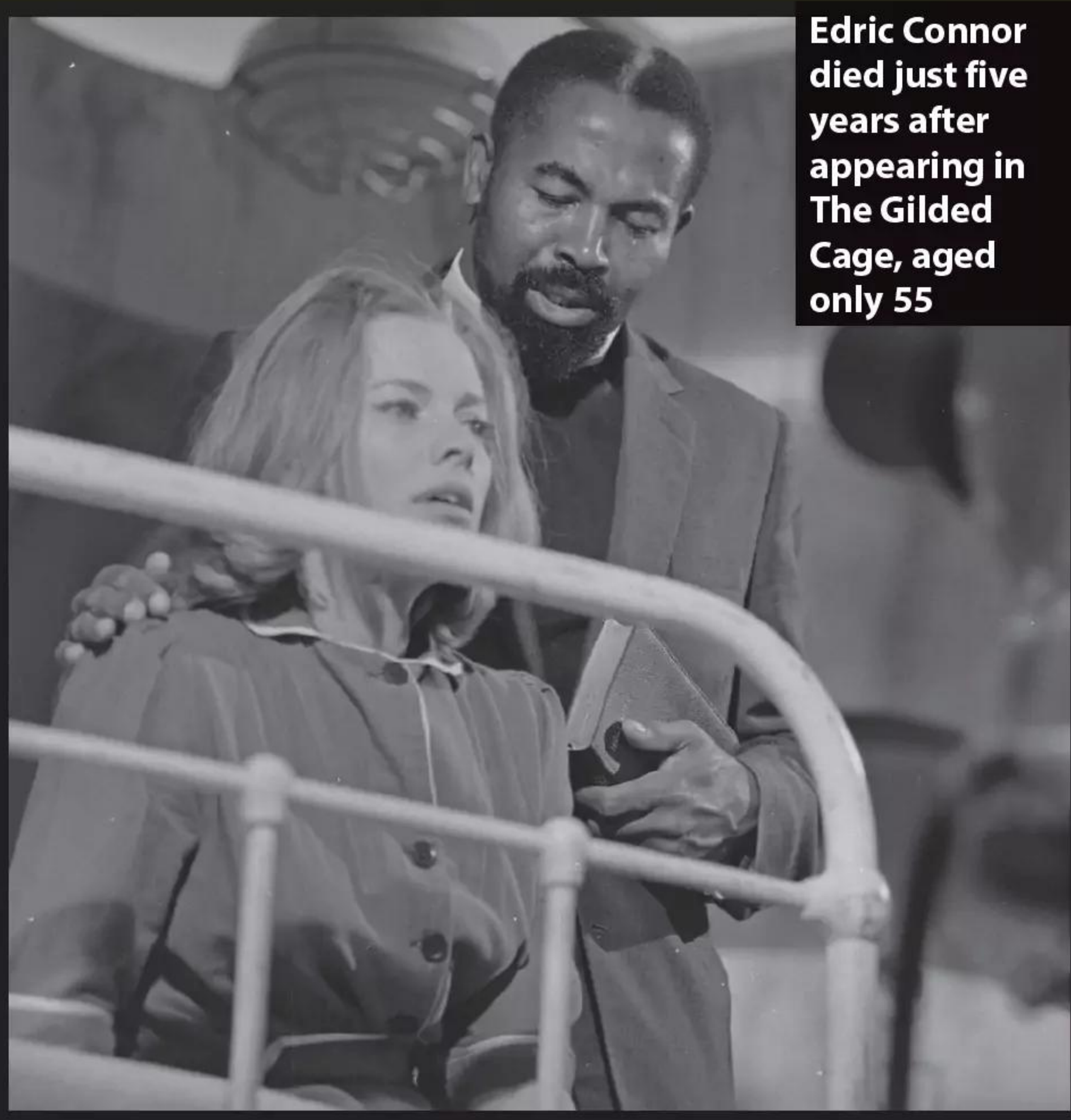


Brief for Murder guest starred Harold Scott and John Laurie in the second of his four Avengers appearances

A tale of two Patricks – Magee and Macnee in *The Gilded Cage*



Edric Connor died just five years after appearing in *The Gilded Cage*, aged only 55







A Touch of Brimstone was originally banned in America for being too explicit



Mrs Peel's tormentor, John Cartney, was played by Peter Wyngarde who went on to play Jason King from 1969-72

### A TOUCH OF BRIMSTONE (1966)

Peter Wyngarde plays charmingly suave and malevolently cruel Cartney, who is running a modern-day version of the 18th Century Hellfire Club. The club is responsible for a series of increasingly dangerous pranks against foreign VIPs and, after the latest proves fatal, Steed and Peel infiltrate the organisation. Cartney is so taken with Mrs Peel that he casts her as the Queen of Sin at a debauched gathering that is an elaborate cover for an assassination attempt. Steed is exposed as a spy but wins the resulting sword fight, while Emma tackles Cartney, who attacks her with a whip.

In the original British transmission, the final whipping scene between Mrs Peel and Cartney was edited to just one lash.

Rather than shying away from the incredibly risqué concept (for its time), Diana Rigg took control and designed the Queen of Sin costume herself.

employee at the gold depository. The episode takes a grippingly unexpected turn when Gale is arrested for Spagge's murder. Upon waking up in prison with no memory of a trial, she is informed that she has been sentenced to hang. Blackman's superb performance perfectly evokes horror, fear and confusion as the usually ice-cool Gale grapples with her terrible situation, which turns out to be an elaborate ruse by Spagge and his gang to make sure she is genuine.

The outstanding episode has shades of Goldfinger, the movie Blackman would leave The Avengers to star in only a few months later.

### A SENSE OF HISTORY (1966)

An economist with a striking vision of a united Europe is shot dead with an arrow. Steed and Emma's investigation leads them to St Bode's College and a group of anarchic students led by narcissistic bully Eric Dubois (Patrick Mower). While most Avengers villains are quite charming and polite as their fiendish plans unfold, Mower's Dubois is a dark, genuinely nasty piece of work, abusive and sadistic to both his allies and opponents. The episode's excellent supporting cast includes John Barron, Jacqueline Pearce, Nigel Stock and John Ringham.

Rising star Patrick Mower in an early lead role, with Diana Rigg, in A Sense of History







Steed's relationship with Tara King (Linda Thorson) was more paternal than with her predecessors

## STAY TUNED (1969)

Steed is getting ready to go on holiday when a stranger (Gary Bond) arrives at his door and knocks him out. The scene resets and repeats but this time it's Tara King at the door who asserts that Steed has already been on holiday. Steed is horrified to realise that he has no memory of the past three weeks of his life because he's been kidnapped, brainwashed and hypnotised as part of a plot to have him assassinate his boss, Mother (Patrick Newell). Alongside Gary Bond, the unforgettable gang of crooks includes Duncan Lamont plus Roger Delgado and Kate O'Mara, who would go on to play iconic villains, The Master and The Rani in Sydney Newman's other great creation, Doctor Who (1963-89).



Peter Cushing out for revenge in *Return of the Cybernauts*

## THE CYBERNAUTS (1966)

Several businessmen, all bidding on a revolutionary new electronic component, have been killed by what seems to be a karate blow. As karate is one of her many talents, Mrs Peel investigates a leading Dojo, while Steed encounters Dr Armstrong (Michael Gough), a brilliant but insane scientist who has created a team of deadly robot assassins – the Cybernauts.

The first episode to be shown in America, it fully embraced The Avengers' sci-fi influences and was popular enough to spawn a sequel...

**Return of the Cybernauts (1967)** guest stars Peter Cushing as suave Paul Beresford, a new friend of Steed and Emma's who turns out to be Dr Armstrong's brother, now in control of the Cybernauts and intent on revenge.

**Never, Never Say Die (1967)** also features robots. Unrelated to the Cybernauts but co-starring Peter Cushing's great friend and Hammer cohort, Christopher Lee, as the wryly named Dr Frank N Stone, who has created an incredibly life-like, but frequently malfunctioning, robot duplicate of himself.



John Barron as Dr Gordon Henge in *A Sense of History*



Christopher Lee played both monster and creator in *Never, Never Say Die*

Images courtesy of STUDIOCANAL

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The Cybernauts were eventually honoured with a third adventure. *The Last of the Cybernauts...?* (1976) was the third episode of sequel series, *The New Avengers*.



**RETRO**

*Behind the lens*

# A message

JD Savage marvels at the landmark Fifties science-fiction film that addressed Atomic Age anxieties – and, despite featuring an iconic spaceship and robot, was truly a movie about people and a plea for peace

**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

There was an issue with casting Sam Jaffe as Professor Barnhardt. The actor was blacklisted in Hollywood for refusing to name names for the House Un-American Activities Committee, but Blaustein refused to recast.



# e for mankind

**A** movie like *The Day the Earth Stood Still* was almost unheard of when it premiered in September 1951. A big-budget, major studio-backed science-fiction film was highly unusual in itself, but here was a flying saucer story grounded in downbeat, documentary-style realism, and driven by a serious message.

By 1950, the United States was locked in an escalating Cold War with the Soviet Union – a global rivalry marked by paranoia, mistrust and, with both nations now armed with atomic weapons, the looming threat of nuclear conflict.

20th Century Fox producer Julian Blaustein was keen to make a flying saucer movie with social value. He read through hundreds of science-fiction stories before an assistant flagged Harry Bates' novella, *Farewell to the Master*. Its core idea struck a chord: humanity's instinct to respond to the unknown with fear and force rather than understanding.

Blaustein commissioned screenwriter Edmund H North to develop a screenplay. He sent the

first draft to director Robert Wise, a master craftsman who loved how it addressed the issue of atom bomb testing, and eagerly took the helm.

## VISITORS FROM THE STARS

The film begins strikingly: a glowing spacecraft becomes visible over Washington DC, and lands on the National Mall. This opening makes powerful use of the US capital through superb location shots, captured not by Wise himself but by second unit director, Bert Leeds, while Wise remained in Hollywood. The saucer was added later through animation.

In the classic scene that follows, a door opens in the sleek spacecraft, and the alien Klaatu, human-shaped, in a space suit and helmet, descends a ramp, declaring peaceful intent. But when he whips out a device meant as a gift, a nervous soldier shoots him. Immediately, the towering robot Gort emerges. Its visor lifts, unleashing a ray that melts the soldiers' weapons yet without harming anyone. The ray effect, though achieved with simple animation, still holds up remarkably well.

When Klaatu's helmet is lifted, the face of actor Michael Rennie is revealed. Earlier, studio head Darryl F Zanuck had to apologise to Blaustein for sending the script to Spencer Tracy. The highly popular actor loved it and wanted to play Klaatu. But Blaustein stood firm: the alien had to be unfamiliar to American audiences. Zanuck reluctantly agreed, signing up Rennie after seeing him on stage in London.

Gort was played by the 7ft 4in Lock Martin, the doorman at a Hollywood Chinese theatre. His costume was made of foam rubber, sprayed with metallic paint, and topped with a fibreglass and metal helmet. Platforms in the boots made him appear even taller, though Martin's own head only reached the suit's neckline. To preserve the illusion that Gort was a seamless, featureless robot, there were two versions of the costume – one laced at the front, the other at the back – depending on the camera angle, so the joins were never seen. Martin endured intense heat and claustrophobia, and could only wear each suit for 20 minutes at a time. For static shots outside ➤



Michael Rennie with House Peters Jr and Robert Osterloh, two out of the 116 supporting actors in the film



Billy Gray, who played Bobby, went on to appear in 200 episodes of the TV series *Father Knows Best* (1954-60)



the spaceship, the crew also used a 9ft fibreglass Gort statue.

## MIXING WITH HUMANS

Klaatu is rushed to a military medical base, where he insists he'll only deliver his intergalactic message to all the world's leaders at once. When the squabbling heads of state can't agree on a neutral host country, he slips out to try to learn more about us.

He rents a room in a boarding house under the alias Carpenter, where he befriends Helen Benson (Patricia Neal) and her young son Bobby (Billy Gray) – the only human Klaatu seems to care about, although possibly because he's such a great source of information.

The unsuspecting boy shows Klaatu the best of humanity, taking him to Arlington National Cemetery to visit the grave of his beloved father, killed at the Battle of Anzio, and the Lincoln Memorial where Klaatu reads the Gettysburg Address. Neither actor visited Washington however; the scenes were shot in LA standing in front of backdrops replaced with pre-filmed backgrounds in post-production (a fact that's just noticeable when viewed in modern high-definition).

Bobby also tells Klaatu that local scientist, Jacob Barnhardt (Sam Jaffe), is Earth's smartest man. Klaatu later persuades the



Renowned cinematographer Leo Tover began in the industry as a clapper boy

professor to convene the world's top scientists to listen to his message.

## MOOD OVER MAYHEM

Some of the eeriest, most striking moments owe less to special effects than to atmosphere, shadows and moody lighting crafted by cinematographer Leo Tover. In one gorgeously shot night sequence, Bobby secretly follows Klaatu through Washington's shadowy streets to the parked spaceship. There, Klaatu uses flickering torch signals to awaken Gort. With chilling calm, the robot knocks out the guard soldiers as Bobby watches, wide-eyed in shock.

We follow Klaatu into the ship, whose sleek, futuristic, minimalist interior still looks convincing today.

Further eeriness comes from Bernard Herrmann's extraordinary score, driven by the haunting, gliding tones of two theremins – one high, one low.

To demonstrate his power, Klaatu cuts off the world's electricity for 30 minutes – except where lives may be lost. He's stuck inside a lift with Helen when it happens. Admitting his identity, he instructs her to give Gort the command, 'Klaatu barada nikto' should anything go wrong.

After Klaatu is fatally shot while fleeing, Gort's revengeful rampage is halted just in time when Helen delivers the command.

When Lock Martin had to carry Helen – and later Klaatu's corpse, taken from a military cell after Gort melts through its wall – into the saucer, the actors were suspended on wires to reduce their weight. For shots of Gort walking away from the camera, he carries a lightweight dummy.

## PEACE... OR ELSE

Only half of a full-size saucer was built, with a miniature used elsewhere, including the memorable final sequence, as Klaatu, temporarily revived by Gort, returns home after delivering his stark warning: if we extend our aggressions beyond Earth, our planet will be reduced to a burnt-out cinder by robot enforcers.

So, Klaatu is no typical, morally superior good guy. He brings peace only through the threat of annihilation. It's another unsettling idea to ponder on from a thoughtful sci-fi film that still resonates far beyond its pioneering visuals.



Patricia Neal was less than two years into her acting career when she landed the part of Helen Benson

DID YOU  
KNOW?

Edmund H North wrote the script as a Christian allegory with Klaatu's story mirroring the peace message, persecution, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ – but kept this to himself – and wasn't allowed to let Gort give Klaatu eternal life.



# MOMENT IN TIME

• 28 August 1972 •

**PRINCE  
WILLIAM  
KILLED**

**P**rince William of Gloucester was killed when a light aircraft he was flying crashed and burst into flames.

The 30-year-old prince, who was ninth in line to the throne, had entered an air race at Halfpenny Green Airfield in the West Midlands. In front of his mother, the Duchess of Gloucester, and 30,000 appalled spectators, his Piper Cherokee banked abruptly shortly after take-off, lost altitude, hit a tree, flipped over and crashed into an earthen bank.

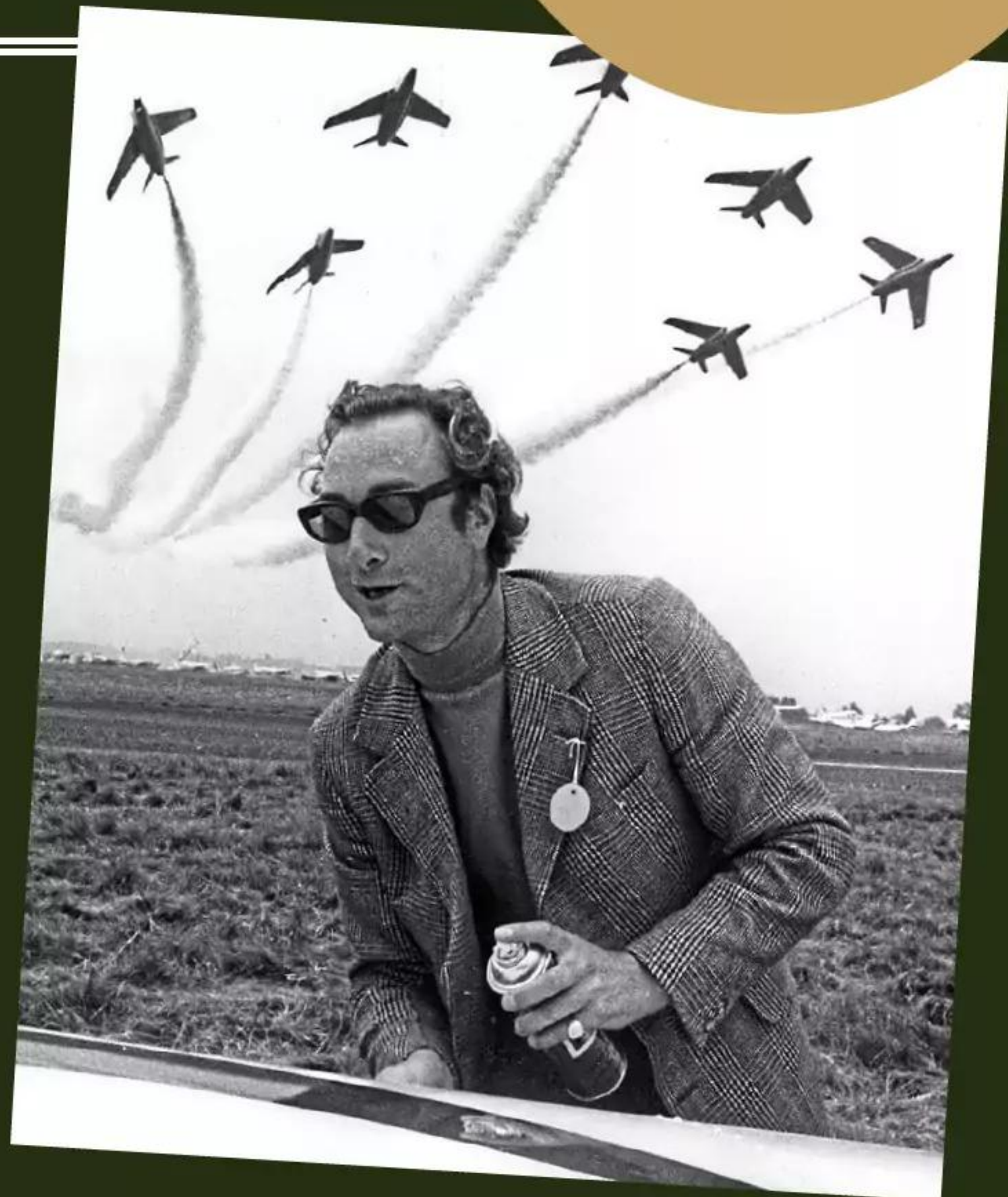
He and his co-pilot, Vyrell Mitchell, were trapped in the wreckage. First on the scene were three boys who frantically tried to mount a rescue but were beaten back by the flames.

Firemen arrived on the scene a few minutes later, but the heat of the blaze was so great it took two hours to bring under control.

Distressed at the death of her cousin, Queen Elizabeth II cancelled her planned visit to the Olympic Games. The prince was buried at the Royal Burial Ground, Frogmore, where, earlier that year, his uncle, the Duke of Windsor, had been interred.

Government air safety experts began an investigation into the crash and appealed to amateur photographers to submit cine film and pictures of the accident to aid investigators. They found no evidence of mechanical failure, so speculated that pilot error was to blame.

**Did you know?**  
William's father, Prince Henry, was in such poor health his wife decided not to tell him of the accident.



**'It was no good, we had to go back because of the heat.'**  
Would-be rescuer, Derek Perton





HOLLYWOOD'S  
**LOST**  
INTERVIEWS



**Z**sa Zsa Gabor was sitting on a hotel terrace in Nice, warmed by the dying sun and looking remarkably good for whatever age she says she is this year.

Anyone with 20-20 vision just has to be impressed with the way she is fighting the battle of the calendar. She may not be winning it, but at least there appears to have been a temporary ceasefire – which is more than can be said for most of us.

I am always pleased to see Zsa Zsa. For it seems to me she has given the world quite a few laughs since she fled the plains of Hungary to become, after Cartier's, the most reliable authority on precious stones in the western hemisphere.

I mentioned it was some time since we had read much about her, and she said the whole world was changing so why not her?

'Nothing is the fun it was,' she scolded. 'No one gets any younger. It's disgusting. I know, but it's true.'

'Remember how you used to come and see me when I was

Retro is privileged to publish the 'lost' interviews of renowned journalist Roderick Mann. In the late Sixties Roderick spoke to Zsa Zsa Gabor about men, marriage and the decline of Hollywood

# 'All the fun has gone...'

with Rubi (the late playboy Porfirio Rubirosa)? I was shattered when he was killed. But Rubi was destined not to live long. Who could imagine him as an old man?

'He really loved me, you know. Remember how he once gave me a black eye? It must take real love to bring out such passion, to make a man do something he was brought up not to do.'

She sipped her lemon juice, taking care to keep that great pussycat face of hers away from the fading sun ('it gives me freckles').

'The trouble is, darlink, she said, 'I am always attracted only to men who did not really want to marry.'

'My first husband Burhan Belge was a Turkish career diplomat;

then there was Conrad Hilton – he certainly didn't want to marry. And then came George Sanders who didn't either. Oh what a talent I had for choosing the wrong men.

'You know what I said when George and I divorced? "We had only one thing in common; we were both in love with him."

'Part of the trouble, I think, is that men fall in love with their eyes and women with their ears. A man meets an attractive girl and there he is, crazy about her. No wonder so many showgirls and models make good marriages. It is not until later that the man discovers the girl is not all she appears.

'But a woman, she listens. And if a small, bald, fat man knows the ➤





Magda, Eva and Zsa Zsa Gabor and their mother Jolie moved to New York from Hungary in the wake of the Second World War





right things to whisper into a woman's ear, he can make her fall in love with him easily. Look at Sophia Loren and Carlo Ponti.

'I keep telling my daughter Francie (Francesca Hilton) that the only way a woman will hold a man is with intelligence,' she said. 'Sex, it does not last'.

'When I was her age, I was already an excellency, married to [Turkish politician and diplomat] Burhan Belge. When we visited London Anthony Eden himself greeted us.

'I met Shaw [George Bernard] and Wells [HG], and Lady Astor herself called me 'a beautiful bitch'. So you see, I was quite something.

She sighed, 'Yes, intelligence is everything. When I was friendly with Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic some years back and he gave me those gifts [a Mercedes Benz and a chinchilla coat] a congressman called me 'a courtesan, a Madame Pompadour'.

'I laughed. I said then that Madame Pompadour helped Louis XV run France for 20 years and she did it with intelligence, not sex. She was a clever girl, that one.

'People always knock you if you are an actress,' she said. 'Even actors knock each other. That is why I don't have many actor friends.

'When I was married to Hilton we used to give wonderful parties and I was wildly popular. But as soon as we divorced, nobody wanted to know me.

'It was the same when I was with George Sanders. Friendships in Hollywood are not based on much. And actors are so odd. Glenn Ford came round one night and fell in love with my dog. So I gave him a five-month-old Vizsla puppy.



**Zsa Zsa's first starring role was opposite José Ferrer in *Moulin Rouge* (1952)**



**With Charlton Heston on the set of *Touch of Evil* (1958) in which she played a strip club owner**

'The next day at seven in the morning a servant brought the dog back. Apparently, it had been howling during the night and kept Glenn awake. There was no note, nothing. Just the dog.'

She looked at me sadly. 'The trouble, of course, is that there is no glamour in our business any more. Real glamour to my mind is being the wife of an ambassador or a wildly rich American. Acting is only make-believe glamour.

'Look how dreary most of these stars are when you meet them.

Always so badly dressed. Few of them can even talk unless they've got a script in front of them.

'Fortunately, I never have any trouble talking. In fact, that is how I first got started in this business, darlink, on a TV show. People sent in questions and I answered them.

'A woman who had broken off her engagement wanted to know if she should return the ring, "Certainly return the ring," I advised, "but keep the stone."

'Another wrote in asking if I believed in large families. "Of course I do," I said. "I think every woman should have three husbands."

'Now I have been asked to do another TV series, and I think I will accept. It is such fun.

'The money I earn myself gives me my greatest pleasure. It makes me so mad when people suggest I ever married for money.

'When I left Hilton I had \$40,000 a year tax free from him as long as I didn't remarry. And what did do? I threw it all away to marry George. Does that sound like someone who marries for money?

At this point a man came over to the table and introduced himself as her mailman from Bel Air. 'Good God,' said Zsa Zsa after he'd gone. 'There's America for you. Where else would you find your mailman taking his vacation on the French Riviera?'

She thought for a moment and then said: 'I must check up to see how much I tipped him last Christmas!'

*Interview written and edited by Roderick Mann*





## WISE WORDS

“ For beautiful eyes, look for the good in others; for beautiful lips, speak only words of kindness; and for poise, walk with the knowledge that you are never alone. Audrey Hepburn







**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

Hitchcock was always looking for another Grace Kelly. In 1961, he thought Tippi Hedren might be the one and shot a screen test of her using scenes from *To Catch a Thief*. Tippi would star in *The Birds* (1963) and *Marnie* (1964).



# To Catch a Thief

## GLAMOUR, WIT & PURE CLASS

It's a film renowned for its elegance, mystery and romance. Allan Hunter celebrates the 70th anniversary of Alfred Hitchcock's *To Catch a Thief* ➔



Cary Grant was always uncomfortable with the prospect of growing old on screen. As early as 1953 he started telling reporters that he was contemplating retirement. Recent Grant films *Room for One More* (1952) and *Dream Wife* (1953) had been box-office disappointments and he started to wonder if there was still a place for him in the Hollywood of Marlon Brando and Montgomery Clift. He complained, 'It was the period of the blue jeans, the dope addicts, the Method. Nobody cared about elegance or comedy at all.'

Grant spent 1953 rejecting every script that came his way. Even offers from old friends failed to rouse him from his melancholy. Among the roles he reportedly turned down were the James Mason part in *A Star is Born* and the character played by Humphrey Bogart in *Sabrina* (both 1954).

But Alfred Hitchcock felt that he had the solution to all Grant's woes. In January 1954, shortly before Cary's 50th birthday, Hitchcock drove to his Palm Springs house Las Palomas to discuss a project that he considered irresistible. 'Don't count on it, Hitch,' was Grant's retort.

The project was *To Catch a Thief*, a romantic thriller with a tailor-made role for Grant as John Robie, a wartime resistance hero and retired jewel thief known as The Cat. A spate of robberies lead everyone to assume he has resumed his wicked ways. He

is forced to clear his name and unmask the real culprit, but in doing so he becomes entangled with a nouveau riche American widow and her distractingly beautiful, thrill-seeking daughter Frances.

Hitchcock had purchased an option on the David Dodge novel shortly before its publication in 1952 and Grant had previously expressed an interest in the material if the script was up to scratch. Hitchcock was certain that he had a winner, telling Cary, 'There isn't a thing wrong with you, old man, that a first-rate screenplay won't cure. I'd appreciate if you'd read this as soon as possible.'

### ASSEMBLING A TEAM

There was an added incentive for Grant; if her hectic schedule permitted, Grace Kelly would be his leading lady. Hitchcock later admitted he had never envisaged anyone else as Frances and would have waited for her to become available. 'I'm not sure what I would have done if I hadn't been able to get Gracie. I saw her in the role ever since I bought the rights to the novel,' he confessed.

The story was, in fact, inspired by a real event. David Dodge had been renting a small villa in France when a large cache of jewels was stolen from a wealthy neighbour. Dodge became a suspect, but the case of mistaken identity was amicably resolved. It left Dodge with the basis of *To Catch a Thief*.

The screen adaptation was entrusted to John Michael



### Amazing Grace

Cary Grant and Grace Kelly formed a mutual admiration during the filming of *To Catch a Thief*. He later claimed that she was, 'The best actress I ever worked with, with all due respect to Ingrid [Bergman].' He added, 'She was enormously friendly to everyone – no stuffy attitude, no star complex. Grace acted the way Johnny Weissmuller swam or Fred Astaire danced – she made it look easy.' Grace was equally complimentary about Grant, revealing, 'Cary and I shared the same warped and sometimes risqué sense of humour, so it was just a great deal of fun for us.' They remained friends after the filming and hoped to work together again. Grant joked, 'She had the indecency to marry Rainier. And that was the end of that.' Grant was one of the few Hollywood friends to attend her fairytale wedding in 1956.







Producers delayed the film's release over concerns the age difference between Grant, 50, and Kelly, 24, was too great



Grace Kelly drives a nifty sports car called a Sunbeam-Talbot Alpine Sports Mk 1 roadster, which was considered glamorous and ultra chic

Hayes, one of Hitchcock's closest collaborators at the time. Hayes had written *Rear Window* (1954) and would go on to write *The Trouble with Harry* (1955) and *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956). Hayes and his wife Mildred, a former fashion model, were afforded the luxury of a two-week stay at the Carlton Hotel in Cannes towards the end of 1953 to soak up the local atmosphere. His brief was to create a confection of romance and mystery set against

the sparkling sunshine and beauty of the French Riviera.

By January 1954, Hayes and Hitchcock had agreed on a detailed story outline and that was enough to attract Grant. His commitment to the film meant that everything else quickly fell into place. Hayes finished a first draft of the screenplay and Hitchcock began assembling a team that included costume designer Edith Head

and cinematographer Robert Burks, who had shot a number of Hitchcock titles including *Strangers on a Train* (1951) and *Rear Window*.

The cast expanded to include John Williams, fresh from *Dial M for Murder* (1954), as Lloyds of London investigator HH Hughson, and Jessie Royce Landis as Frances' bejewelled, bourbon-drinking mother. She would go on to play Grant's mother in *North by Northwest* (1959), despite being just seven years his senior. Finally, Hitchcock had spotted Brigitte Auber in Julien Duvivier's *Sous le Ciel de Paris* (1951) and she was engaged to play Kelly's younger love rival Danielle.

### IMPLICIT TRUST

Grant's contract was signed and a starting date was agreed that would accommodate Kelly's other commitments. Grant would be paid 10% of the film's gross box-office takings. Hitchcock would receive \$150,000 and 10% of the profits but only after the film earned twice its production costs and Grant's percentage had been deducted. By contrast, 24-year-old Grace Kelly would receive a flat fee of \$80,000 (a little short of \$1 million today).

The most important thing for Cary was that he trusted Hitchcock implicitly and knew that his every concern and suggestion would be taken seriously. 'Hitch and I had a rapport and understanding deeper than words,' Grant once admitted. 'He was a very agreeable human being, and we were very compatible. I always went to work whistling when I worked with him because everything on the set was just as you envisioned it would be. Nothing ever went wrong.'

'He was so incredibly well prepared. I never knew anyone as capable. He was a tasteful, intelligent, decent and patient man who knew the actor's business as well as he knew his own.' ➔

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In January 2022, Paramount announced plans for a remake of *To Catch a Thief* that would feature Wonder Woman star Gal Gadot in the Grace Kelly role. To date, it has yet to materialise.



To Catch a Thief was Grant's third film with Hitchcock and was also Hitch's third collaboration with Grace Kelly, who revealed, 'How could I turn down the chance for another Hitchcock picture? I was flattered he wanted me. It was a comedy, but it was also romantic – and rather daring for its time, too, but always with the sophisticated Hitchcock touch. Frances is eager to be a thief – she's out for kicks and thrills and she thinks it's exciting to join up with a man she believes to be an outlaw. She was all set to climb out over rooftops with him!'

Kelly was the embodiment of Hitchcock's ice-cool blonde; a mystery woman seemingly aloof on the surface but smouldering with passion underneath. 'People think she's cold,' said Hitchcock in a 1963 interview. 'Rubbish! She's a volcano covered with snow.' In To Catch a Thief, it is Frances who makes all the romantic running, brazenly kissing Robie on the mouth after an early encounter.

## FRENCH CONNECTIONS

Kelly's tight shooting schedule meant that her arrival in France went right down to the wire. 'I finished Green Fire at eleven o'clock on the morning of May 24. I went into the dubbing room at one in the afternoon – and at six o'clock that evening I was on my way to France,' she recounted.

Principal photography began on 31 May with scenes at Robie's villa shot in Saint-Jeannet, north of Vence. Filming was scheduled to last for six weeks on locations that would include Nice, Cannes and Le Corniche. The cast were housed at the Carlton Hotel in Cannes. Grant was accompanied by his third wife, actress Betsy Drake, and Grace Kelly was joined by her then boyfriend, costume



Jessie Royce Landis played Francine's mother and went on to play Grant's mother in *North by Northwest*



Bing Crosby visited Grace Kelly on set. While Grace saw his visit as nothing more than a friendly gesture, others believed he had more amorous intentions

designer Oleg Cassini. The couples would often socialise with Hitchcock and his wife Alma. In a 1998 interview, Cassini recalled, 'Those were the most enchanting days I ever lived.'

Filming appears to have been a relatively relaxed affair. Grant and Kelly were encouraged to improvise some of their flirtatious banter. Hitchcock made his now trademark appearance on screen as a bus passenger sharing a back seat with Grant and a pair of caged birds. Grant's contract included the provision that he would finish filming by 6pm each night. The actor insisted on eating at a civilised

time and not even a Hitchcock production could change that.

Hitchcock may have started to wonder if the pace of filming was a little too relaxed as they fell behind schedule. He had already cut some planned scenes to ensure the film stayed within its generous budget of \$3 million. His insistence on using a helicopter to capture a lofty view of car chases added to the expense. Intermittent rain accounted for some of the delays and Grant was briefly hospitalised with some back and shoulder injuries sustained during the filming of a chase sequence through the famous flower market at Nice.

## PIECE OF CAKE

Principal photography was completed on Paramount sound stages and the studio's water tank by 4 September. There would still be reshoots and second thoughts as Hitchcock started to fine tune the film. The one sticking point was an ending that satisfied everyone. Hitchcock was seeking to undercut a typical happy ending by adding a little sting to the tale. John Michael Hayes later revealed, 'The worst fight we ever had was over the ending of To Catch a Thief. We had different ideas. I wrote 27 different



# TOP 5 BOX OFFICE GOLD...

## DUSTIN HOFFMAN



**The Graduate (1967) \$1,004.8m**



**Tootsie (1982) \$668.2m**



**Meet the Fockers (2004) \$518.9m**



**Rain Man (1988) \$508.4m**



**All the President's Men (1976)  
\$501.5m**

\* Adjusted domestic box office gross using current movie ticket price (in millions) according to [ultimate-movie-rankings.com](http://ultimate-movie-rankings.com)

The shimmering gold lame dress, which came with gold mask and wig accessories, is now iconic



### Dress to impress

Costume designer Edith Head worked on 11 films with Alfred Hitchcock, but *To Catch a Thief* was her favourite. 'The film was a costume designer's dream,' she later admitted. It must have helped that the characters are wealthy, effortlessly chic and in the mood for love. Head's designs reflected all those elements, with Grace Kelly often appearing to float through the film on a sea of chiffon and pastel colours.

Grant chose much of his own wardrobe, looking jaunty in a striped pullover and red bandana, wearing brown loafers hand made for him by Maxwell of Dover Street in London. For the film's masked ball Head created a spectacular gold gown for Kelly that makes her look every inch like a Christmas tree decoration. The film earned Head the 10th of her 35 Oscar nominations.

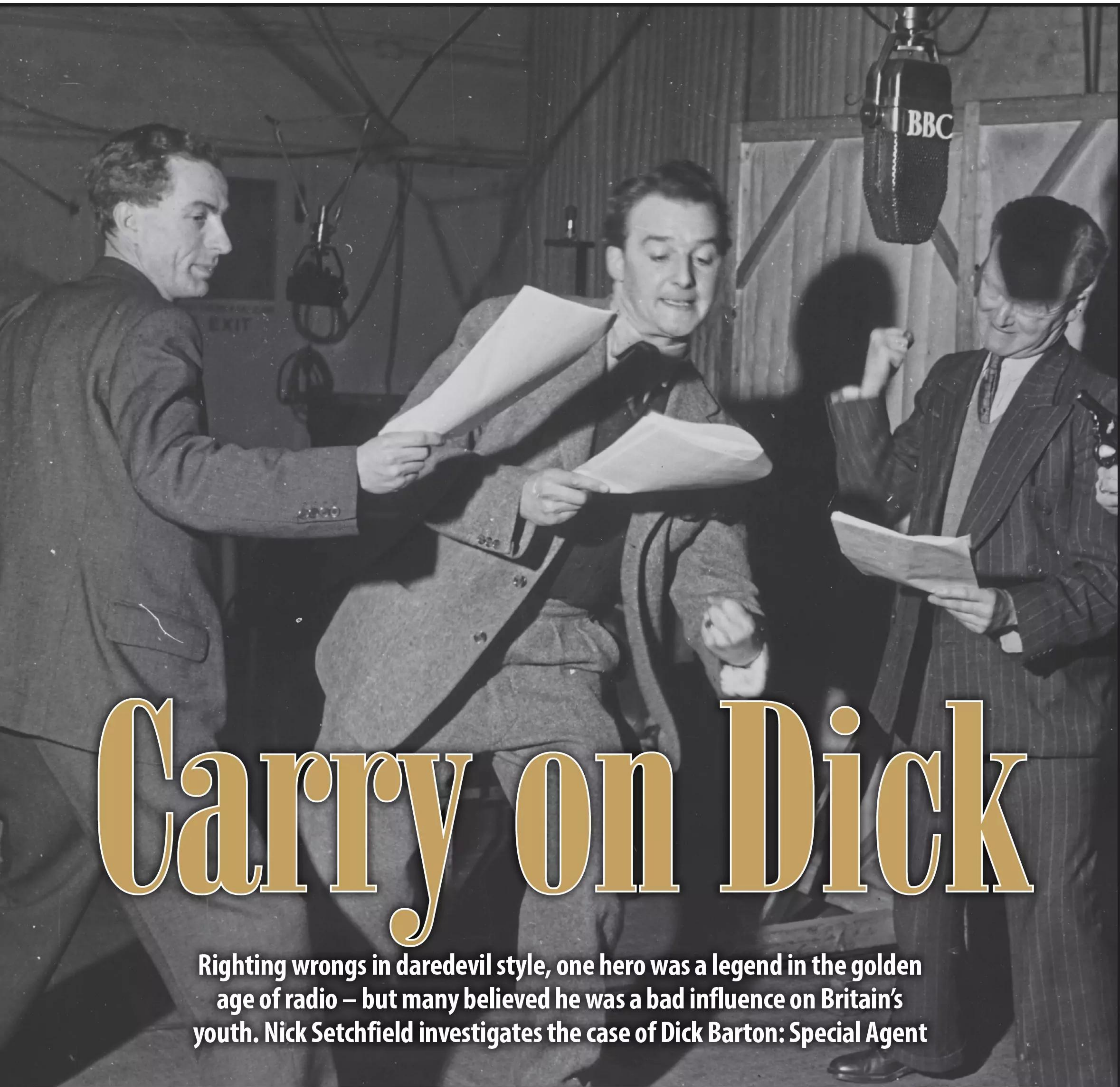
endings and still don't like the one that was used. We had a couple of slam-bang script fights.'

*To Catch a Thief* premiered in Grace Kelly's hometown of Philadelphia on 2 August 1955. The reviews were surprisingly mixed, with some critics disappointed that it felt too slight and escapist a work from the master of suspense. But audiences loved it. *To Catch a Thief* wound up in the top 10 box-office hits of the year, in America, earning \$8.75 million and selling more than 17 million cinema tickets. The public's delight in the film seemed to endorse Hitchcock's oft-quoted

maxim, 'For me, the cinema is not a slice of life, but a piece of cake'.

Hitchcock started to plan future collaborations with Grace Kelly, including an adaptation of JM Barrie's ghost story *Mary Rose*. Cary Grant was back in business, confidently extending his career by another decade until his frequent threats of retirement became a reality in 1966. As for Grace Kelly, she returned to France for the Cannes Film Festival in 1955 which is when she met Prince Rainier of Monaco and began a real-life Riviera romance that took her life in a very different direction.





# Carry on Dick

Righting wrongs in daredevil style, one hero was a legend in the golden age of radio – but many believed he was a bad influence on Britain's youth. Nick Setchfield investigates the case of Dick Barton: Special Agent

Future horror merchants Hammer brought Dick to the big screen in three movie adventures starring George Ford as Snowy White, Joyce Linden as Mary and Don Stannard as Dick Barton



Before acting, Duncan Carse was an explorer. He led an expedition to South Georgia (1951-57)





**D**ick Barton: Special Agent arrived like a burst of adrenaline in the post-war Britain of ration books and drab grey flannel.

Furiously racing theme tune, The Devil's Galop, declared the thrills to come. Close your eyes and there you were, clinging to the side of some dynamite-loaded locomotive or going toe-to-toe with another cosh-wielding scoundrel. Broadcast each weeknight before the news, this beloved BBC radio serial delivered 15 minutes of pulse-quickenning excitement, crackling out of the Bakelite wireless on long wave.

But was the dashing, square-jawed Barton truly a force for good? Or was he, as many warned, a menace to the morals of the nation's youth, stirring up juvenile delinquency a whole decade before rock 'n' roll shook jukeboxes everywhere?

For the BBC it began as an experiment, 'a strip cartoon in sound'. Norman Collins, newly appointed controller of the Light Programme, wanted something as breathlessly engaging as the thriller serials that had proved so popular in America. This was to be a 'cloak-and-dagger soap opera', a full-blooded, rip-roaring listen, played with zest. 'I decided it was going to be the fastest thing on radio,' recalled producer Neil Tuson. If tongues ever threatened to slip into cheeks it wouldn't show across the airwaves.

Part one of Dick Barton and the Secret Weapon was broadcast on 7 October 1946. Our hero is introduced as a former commando who had won the Military Cross at Dunkirk. Demobbed in 1945, he finds himself still craving the blood-rush that only comes from perilous scrapes. 'Six years of battle, murder and sudden death just spoil you completely for a nice, peaceful office job,' Dick declares, lines that must have chimed with many a war-

hardened listener. Teaming with partners-in-derring-do, Snowy White and Jock Anderson, he sets up in business as a special inquiry agent, determined to right wrongs in a private crusade against the crooked and the fiendish.

## HEROES AND VILLAINS

Cast as Captain Richard Barton MC was Noel Johnson, a true-life Dunkirk evacuee, wounded in France. Part of the BBC Drama Repertory Company, he appreciated the steady employment the serial offered – 'Work every day!'

Trading in fearless British pluck and dramatic cliffhangers which made the news bulletins that followed seem impossibly dull, Dick Barton: Special Agent was an immediate hit. Word of mouth spread among kids while their parents found themselves equally addicted. Homework and household chores were put on hold as families leaned closer to wireless sets that were positively rattling with adventure. In time, the audience for Dick's exploits would reach 15 million.

Not everyone was a fan. Communist newspaper The Daily Worker decried pure-hearted Dick as nothing less than a crypto-fascist. A letter to The Times, meanwhile, incited a full-blown storm of controversy, 'The BBC seems bent on turning children into a new kind of drug addict... more concerned from day to day about what Dick Barton may do next than about their futures or the

future of England.' Another pearl-clutching headline asked, 'Dick Barton – Too Thrilling For Girls? Headmistress Says "Yes".'

Noel Johnson was understandably frustrated by the show's critics. 'They think that Barton is a sort of glorified crook,' he sighed, pipe in hand as he spoke to Pathé News. 'He isn't, at all. He always beats the crooks. He should be an inspiration.'

Faced with a scandalised press, the BBC soon implemented a 12-point code of conduct, insisting that Dick never drank, never lied and, like a true gentleman, only ever resorted to 'clean socks on the jaw'. Along with an outright ban on such spooky fare as 'ghosts, gorillas and vampires', our hero was exiled to a life of enforced celibacy. 'Sex, in the active sense, plays no part in the Barton adventures' ruled the code. Girlfriend Jean Hunter was promptly written out.

## CAST CHANGES

Johnson quit in 1949 after being denied a pay rise. He had spent over £1000 of his own money on postage replying to fans, finding himself 'in the position, if you like, of a film star... with something like a fraction of a film star's earnings'. He was replaced in the role by true life Antarctic explorer Duncan Carse and then Gordon Davies, but by the early Fifties the show's audience was dwindling. The final episode was broadcast on 30 March 1951, just as The Archers was in the ascendant – a daily radio serial conceived as 'a farming Dick Barton'.

A belated TV revival appeared in 1979, with Tony Vogel in Dick's trench coat and trilby, and future Game of Thrones star James Cosmo as Jock. The breezy, straight-faced 15-minute episodes did their best to replicate the old radio magic, but the show only lasted one season. In the age of Star Wars (1977) and Superman (1978) it was easy to assume Dick's day was done.



Tony Vogel (centre) was TV's Dick Barton with Anthony Heaton (left) as Snowy and James Cosmo (right) as Jock



# Projecting HOPE



After the guns fell silent in 1945 a new kind of storytelling emerged – one that helped Britain understand its past and imagine its future. Jeremy Colman explores how film helped heal a wounded nation



**O**n 1 September 1939, the BBC abruptly shut down its television service, redeploying 50 engineers to work on radar projects. It was thought that the transmitter at Alexandra Palace would provide navigational guidance for enemy aircraft.

At the time only 20,000 households across the country owned a television, and the airwaves remained silent for almost seven years, resuming on 7 June 1946 to an almost non-existent audience.

During that time, opportunity knocked for the silver screen. The cinema became the sole outlet for moving picture media throughout the war, and in 1946 alone, 1.6 billion tickets were sold across the nation's 4700 picture houses.

## ESCAPING HARDSHIP

Throughout the war, British cinema served a practical and often propagandist function – boosting morale, instructing the public, and reporting on the war effort. But once the fighting stopped, the role of film had to change. Wartime documentaries and sombre newsreels were no

longer appealing. People were exhausted, grieving and desperate for something different.

The end of the war marked not just a political and social turning point for Britain, but a cultural one too – especially in the world of cinema. The weary, war-battered nation craved escape, understanding and identity, and the British film industry – though deeply scarred by the conflict – stepped up to meet the need.

The decade following VE Day in 1945 saw British cinema evolve in a fascinating and often unexpected way. Against a backdrop of rationing, bombed-out cities, and economic hardship, films became both a form of comfort and a vehicle for national reflection. Audiences packed into cinemas, looking for distraction, entertainment and sometimes answers. In doing so, they helped fuel a cinematic revival that continues to resonate with film lovers today.

The immediate post-war years saw a boom in lighter fare. Musicals, romantic comedies and witty dramas took centre stage. These weren't merely escapist fantasies; they were a national mood-

setter. Films such as *The Wicked Lady*, *Brief Encounter* (both 1945), and *Great Expectations* (1946) offered not just entertainment but also a sense of reassurance – that life could be beautiful, funny, or meaningful again.

But not every film sugar-coated real life. While the general mood leaned towards optimism, some filmmakers began to explore some of the deeper scars left by the war. These films tackled tough subjects: returning veterans struggling to reintegrate, the changing roles of women, the pressures of rebuilding families and communities. Yet even the grittiest of these efforts were often laced with a promising tone, a quiet belief in hope and renewal.

## BIG AMBITIONS

It's important to remember just how dire the situation was for the British film industry itself in 1945. Studios such as Ealing and Pinewood had suffered bomb damage or been repurposed for military use. Equipment and celluloid film stock were in short supply. They were, like so many essentials in post-war Britain, still rationed. Many skilled professionals were either still in ➔



*Brief Encounter* was filmed at Carnforth Station which, thanks to the film, attracts 50,000 visitors a year



uniform or had moved away from filmmaking into other lines of work.

And yet, there was a distinct sense of possibility in the air. The newly elected Labour government under Clement Attlee knew that cinema was going to play a vital role in the national recovery, both culturally and economically. In 1948, the government passed the Cinematograph Film Production (Special Loans) Act, which provided state-backed funding to revitalise domestic film production. This was not just an economic strategy; it was about cultural sovereignty. Britain wasn't going to sit back and simply import glossy American glamour – it was going to tell its own stories, on its own screens, in its own way.

## A CHANGING NATION

A new realism was beginning to creep into post-war British film, and a wave of socially conscious filmmakers started exploring what life was really like for ordinary people.

This didn't come out of nowhere. The war had been a great leveller in many ways, people from different classes and backgrounds were regularly mixing, both in the armed forces and on the home front. In the aftermath of the war, questions about social mobility, housing, employment, and inequality were on everybody's lips. Cinema, always a mirror of its time, began to reflect this reality.

Films including *It Always Rains on Sunday* (1947) and *The Blue Lamp* (1950) turned the lens on



**Passport to Pimlico** was filmed on a genuine Lambeth bomb site

working-class life in a way that felt fresh and urgent. They laid the groundwork for the more evident political subtexts of the 'kitchen sink' dramas of the Fifties and early Sixties, but even in their earlier form, they hinted at a shift in perspective. The message was clear: British cinema wasn't just for the middle classes any more.

## NEW FACES AND LEGACIES

The post-war years also ushered in a wave of talent that would shape British film for generations. A young David Lean, already an accomplished editor and co-director, became a major force with films such as *Brief Encounter* and *Oliver Twist* (1948). His ability to combine intimate storytelling with sweeping cinematic style would eventually earn him international fame, but it all began in post-war Britain.

Meanwhile, actors including Richard Attenborough, Alec

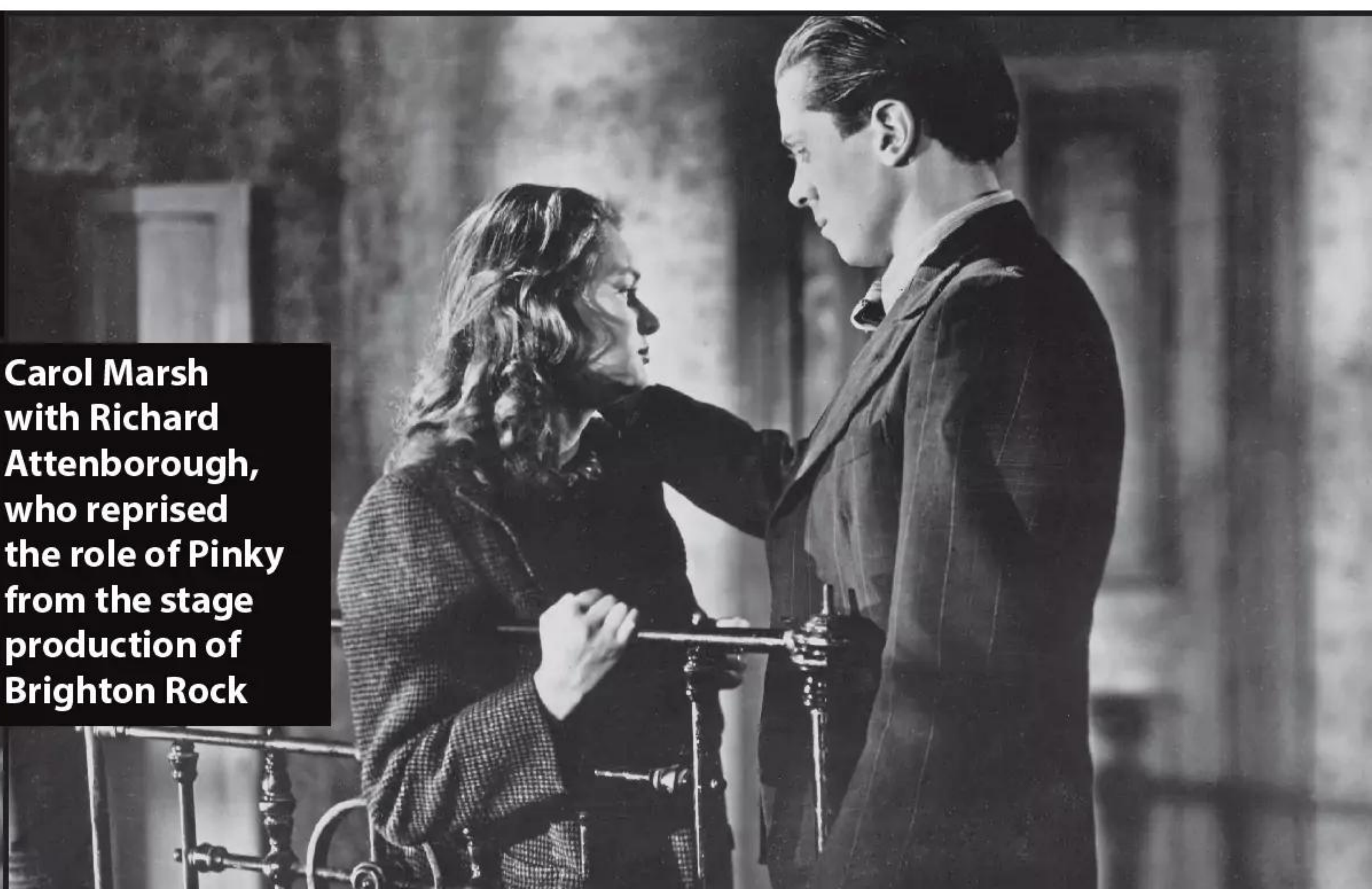
Guinness, and Dirk Bogarde began to emerge as household names. Attenborough's breakout role in *Brighton Rock* (1948) showcased a new kind of British antihero – complex and conflicted, a far cry from the stiff-upper-lip stereotypes of earlier decades.

Behind the camera, directors like Carol Reed (*The Third Man*, 1949) and Michael Powell in collaboration with Emeric Pressburger (*A Matter of Life and Death*, 1946) pushed artistic boundaries. Their films were technically accomplished, but also deeply human, exploring moral ambiguity, national identity, and psychological trauma with a sophistication that still holds up today.

By the early Fifties, British cinema was starting to change once again. The introduction of television, rising American imports, and shifts in audience tastes posed fresh challenges.



**Martita Hunt with Jean Simmons in *Great Expectations*. Simmons played Miss Havisham 43 years later, in the 1989 TV mini-series**



**Carol Marsh with Richard Attenborough, who reprised the role of Pinky from the stage production of *Brighton Rock***





But the legacy of the immediate post-war decade endured. The films of this period occupy a unique place in the national imagination. They captured a Britain in flux – battered but resilient, questioning but hopeful. They helped a generation process trauma and imagine new futures. And they did it with style, wit, and an unmistakably British sense of character, with films such as *The Man in the White Suit* (1951) and *Hobson's Choice* (1954).

### A TIME WORTH REWATCHING

Today, the post-war era of British cinema is a treasure trove for lovers of the silver screen. Whether it's the romantic melancholy of *Brief Encounter*, the post-war pluck of *Passport to Pimlico* (1949), or the noir-like grit of *The Blue Lamp*, these films offer more than a history lesson – they offer a window into the spirit of a nation rebuilding itself.

They also remind us of the power of storytelling during uncertain times. When resources were few and futures unclear, filmmakers found a way to reflect, entertain, and inspire. They told stories that mattered and, in doing so, helped Britain rediscover its voice on the world stage.

The decade after the Second World War may have started with rubble and rations, but it blossomed into one of the most inventive and meaningful eras in British cinematic history. In its films, we find both the wounds of war and the seeds of renewal – all captured in flickering black-and-white (and occasional Technicolor) glory.

We all know what happened when television returned and got its act together, but the head start cinema got during the war years, and the incredible work in the decade that followed, has left a remarkable legacy.

Whether you're revisiting old favourites or discovering them anew, one thing's clear: the golden age of post-war British cinema isn't just history. It's heritage.



Downed pilot David Niven appeared alongside real RAF crewmen, nurses and WACs in *A Matter of Life and Death*

**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

Some of the filming of *Brighton Rock* was done using hidden cameras because the local authority objected to their town being depicted as a haven for gangsters, fearing it would damage their reputation as a family-friendly seaside town.



We wanna tell you  
a story... about  
Max Bygraves.  
Douglas McPherson  
charts the all-round  
entertainer's rise  
from the docks to the  
London Palladium

# To the Max





Bygraves bought the rights to *Oliver!* For £350 and later sold them again for a cool £250,000. His most popular catchphrase, 'I wanna tell you a story' was attributed to him by impressionist Mike Yarwood before being adopted by the man himself.

**F**rom radio to TV and stage to film, Max Bygraves brought an effortless cockney charm to the world of showbusiness, winning audiences with relaxed patter and sweetly sentimental songs that sold by the million.

Max was a master of the slow delivery. With an understated smile on his lips and a twinkle in his eyes, he had a way of pausing between sentences that drew audiences to him, hanging on every word, waiting for the casually delivered punchline.

His most memorable songs, Gilly Gilly Ossenfeffer Katzenellen Bogen by the Sea and You're a Pink Toothbrush, were saccharine novelties on paper. But his silky delivery lent them weight. They were catchy and easy to sing along with, which helped embed them in the national consciousness.

Bygraves joked of attending more Royal Variety Performances than the Queen, but with 20 appearances to his name, he was entitled to the boast.

## RAGS TO RICHES

'Dad was part of a generation of entertainers who could do a bit of everything,' his son Anthony recalled. 'They could sing, dance, tell jokes and make it all look so easy. He went from poverty to stardom. He was one of the biggest names in variety.'

Max used to drive his son to school in a Rolls-Royce with the licence plate MB1. But he grew up in very different circumstances himself as a docker's son in

a two-bedroom flat in Rotherhithe, south-east London.

'He shared a bedroom with his four sisters and a brother,' said Anthony. 'There was no electricity. He had to read by the gaslight in the street, which is why he had poor eyesight.'

Born Walter William Bygraves on 16 October 1922, Max sang at Westminster Cathedral with his school choir as a boy. His dad also arranged for him to sing an army song for the dockers, where he got such a good reception that the seeds for his showbiz dreams were sown.

At the start of the Second World War, Bygraves became an apprentice carpenter, building air raid shelters and repairing bomb-damaged buildings – until he was blown off a roof he was fixing by a bomb that landed within 100 yards of him.

He subsequently volunteered for the RAF, where he was employed as a fitter, near Kew. It was there that he met a sergeant in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, Gladys 'Blossom' Murray, who became the love of his life. They were married in 1942.

Also while serving, Bygraves began entertaining the troops and performing in pubs. His impressions of comedian Max Miller earned him the nickname Max, which he adopted as his stage name.

## THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, SON!

After the war, Bygraves set his heart on turning professional. Theatrical newspaper, *The Stage*, praised the 'brilliance' of his impressions, but making a living wasn't easy.

He and Blossom were on the verge of giving up and emigrating to Australia when he was given his big break on the BBC radio series, *They're Out*, alongside Frankie Howerd, Harry Secombe, Spike Milligan and Benny Hill.

Max went on to radio fame in *Educating Archie*, a vehicle

for ventriloquist Peter Brough.

The show drew up to 15 million Sunday lunchtime listeners.

Bygraves played Archie's tutor in the first three series (1950-53) and introduced his catchphrases 'I've arrived, and to prove it, I'm here,' and 'That's a good idea, son!'

Bygraves starred in his first film, the musical comedy *Bless 'Em All*, in 1949, and went on to make *Charley Moon* (1956), *A Cry from the Streets* (1958) and *Bobbikins* (1959).

In 1961, he turned from musicals and comedies to the tough social drama of *Spare the Rod*, playing an idealistic teacher in an unruly East End school. Critics likened the picture to 1955's *Blackboard Jungle*, but Bygraves took no further steps into dramatic acting, concentrating instead on his forte of light entertainment.

He appeared on the very first UK singles chart with Cowpuncher's *Cantata* in 1952 and enjoyed a string of Top 10 hits throughout the Fifties including *Meet Me on the Corner* and *Jingle Bell Rock*.

One of his biggest hits, *You Need Hands*, penned by Bygraves under the pseudonym Roy Erwin, reached No.3 in 1958, won an Ivor Novello award and later graced the soundtrack of the John Travolta film, *Look Who's Talking* (1989).

Throughout the Seventies, Bygraves hosted a string of his own TV variety series and released a series of *Singalongamax* albums of old-time songs that sold millions. From 1983-85 he took over from Bob Monkhouse as the host of *Family Fortunes*.

Bygraves was given an OBE in 1983. He retired to Australia in 2003 after a sell-out show at the Bournemouth Pavilion, and died in 2012 aged 89. But his musical legacy lives on as a generation raised on sing-alongs like Gilly Gilly Ossenfeffer Katzenellen Bogen by the Sea and You're a Pink Toothbrush introduce them to their grandchildren who love them just as much.

Max and Blossom were married for almost 70 years





# Bathing beauties

Hollywood has always had a fascination with photographing glamorous women on the beach. These images also show the evolution of the swimsuit from the Forties to the Seventies

## MODEL BEHAVIOUR

Long before her screen debut in *Dangerous Years* (1947) Marilyn Monroe was carving out a career as a model signed to the Blue Book Modelling Agency. The agency's director, Emmeline Snively, introduced Norma Jeane Dougherty (as she was known at the time) to photographer Richard C Miller, saying, 'I've got a real cute girl. You ought to see her.'

Miller shot pictures of her on the beach but the session had to be cut short, 'She was a cutie...' he recalled, 'I remember the crowd was collecting very fast. A lot of men.'

'She was nice when she was Norma Jeane, very sweet,' he added. 'She came to dinner at the house. A nice, friendly girl.'





## DID YOU KNOW?

Swimwear style was redefined again in the Seventies when Charlie's Angels star Farrah Fawcett donned a red one-piece swimsuit for a photoshoot. The resulting poster made millions of dollars and started a trend for super-tight swimwear with low necklines and high-cut legs.



### DOTTY ABOUT AVA

Wartime restrictions on material added to the popularity of the two-piece bathing costume such as this one worn by Ava Gardner in 1944. Modesty was still the order of the day so the shorts were cut high, revealing only an extra few inches of skin, as an actress revealing her navel would have been considered scandalous.

'Beach' photos were often carefully constructed in the studio, where photographers had better control over lighting. Actresses were taught how to pose for maximum effect and the images were hand finished by skilled retouch artists.

### SURF'S UP FOR JOAN

Posing with a longboard on Waikiki Beach, Hawaii in 1949, Joan Crawford was cashing in on the surf trend that was beginning to sweep America. The other trend that was becoming serious business was the pursuit of a tan. Previously seen as a sign of the lower classes Coco Chanel changed everything when she arrived in Paris with 'a healthy glow'. Suddenly a tan was no longer déclassé and everyone started taking full advantage of the sunshine.



### GILDING THE LILY

Cole of California created this glamorous swimsuit worn by Janet Leigh in 1950 for an advertisement campaign. The accompanying text described the 'Gilded Lily' as a 'fashion swimsuit of white latex and 24-carat gold. The suit every woman dreams of owning.'



### MAKING OF A MERMAID

Ann Blyth (pictured in 1952) was no stranger to posing in a bra top after starring as a creature of the sea in Mr Peabody and the Mermaid (1948) opposite William Powell. The film's underwater scenes were shot at Weeki Wachee Springs State Park in Florida, which was famous for its 'live mermaid' shows.



**TAYLOR MADE**

This shot was taken on location in Spain to promote the film *Suddenly Last Summer* (1959). In Tennessee Williams' psychological drama Elizabeth Taylor's character recounts how her cousin Sebastian insisted she accompany him to the beach wearing a revealing white bathing suit, that became nearly transparent when wet, so that she could help him attract men.

**NO CONTEST**

The breakthrough that brought the bikini into the mainstream was the iconic moment when Bond Girl Honey Ryder (Ursula Andress) emerged from the sea in *Dr No* (1962). The swimsuit was designed with multiple layers, so it didn't turn translucent and upset the censors. What did cause problems, though, was the fact that the bottoms sat 3in below her navel, which was too low for some.

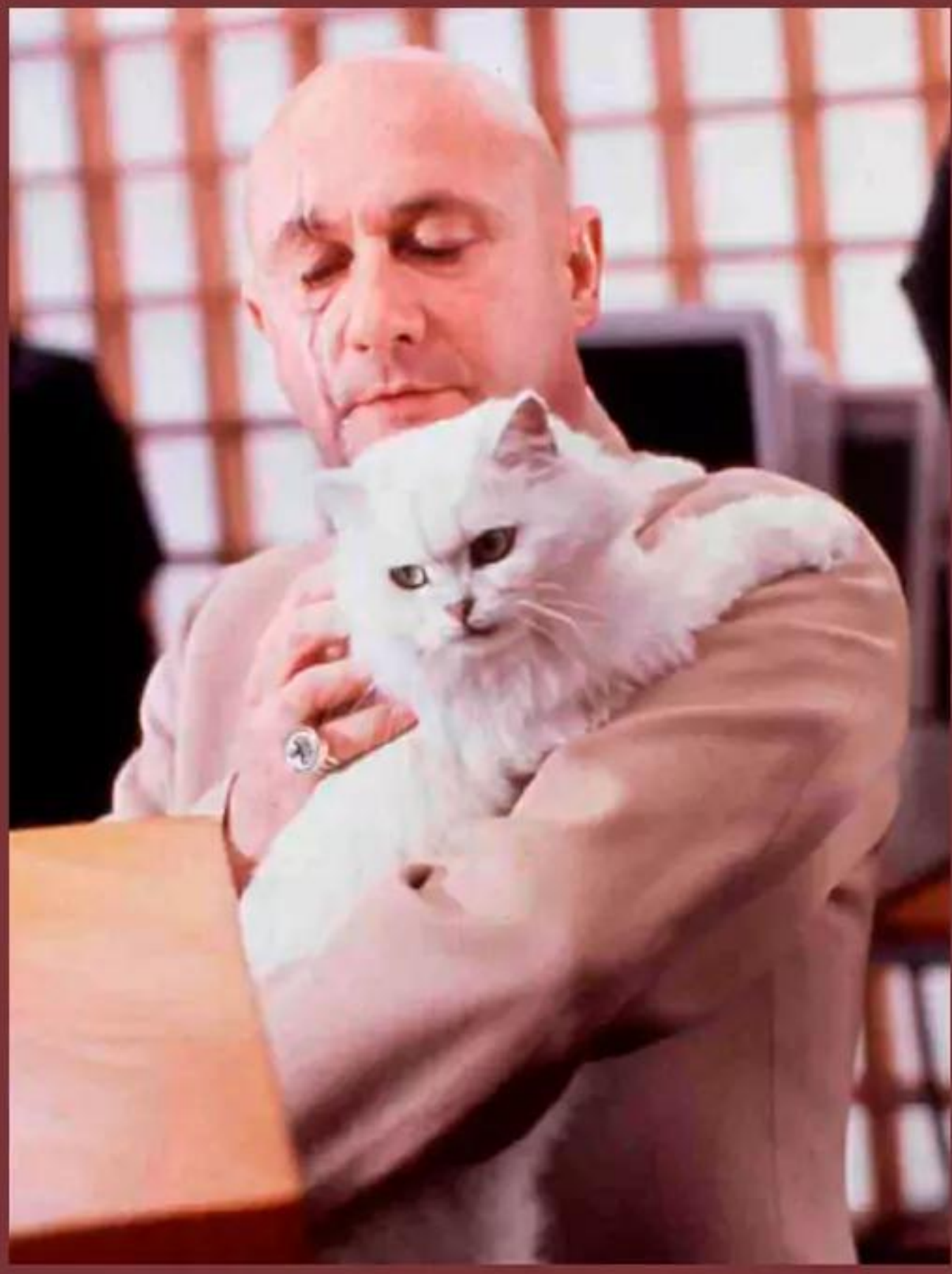
The bikini was sold at auction in 2001, bought by Planet Hollywood co-founder Robert Earl for £41,125.

**BEDAZZLING BIKINI**

By the mid Sixties the bikini had well and truly taken over and few wore it better than Raquel Welch. She had shot to fame in 1966 wearing a fur two-piece in *One Million Years BC* and would don swimwear again to spectacular effect in *Fathom*, *Bedazzled* (both 1967) *The Biggest Bundle of Them All* (1968) and *Myra Breckinridge* (1970).



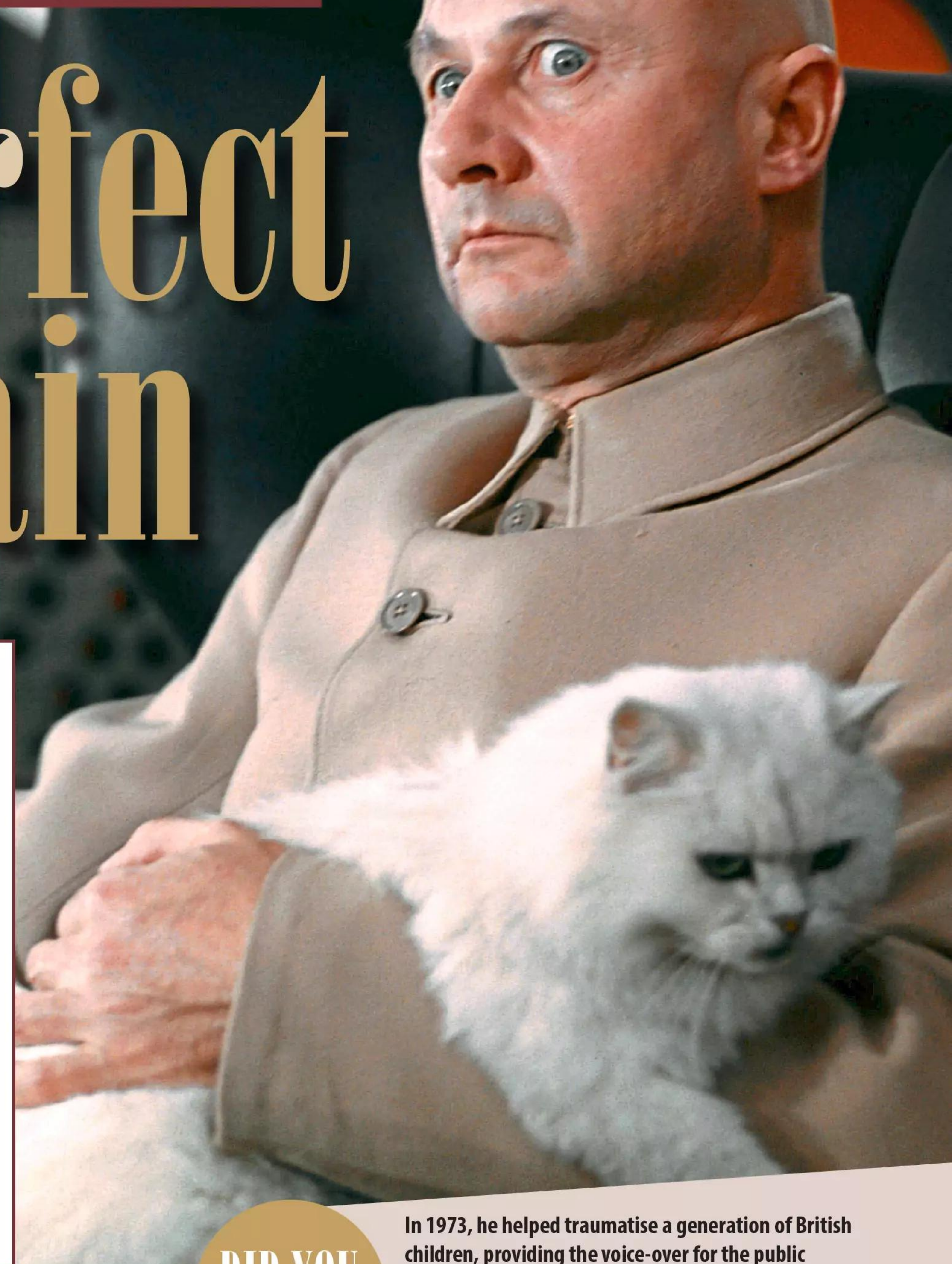
Renowned for his chilling portrayals of villains and tormented souls, Donald Pleasence carved a unique niche. Adam Smith revisits the actor's extraordinary six-decade career



The character Dr Evil in the Austin Powers film franchise is a parody of Donald Pleasence's Blofeld

# The purrfect villain

**H**as there ever been a more inappropriately monikered movie star than Donald Pleasence? Sinister? Yes. Menacing? Certainly. Creepy? At the drop of a hat. But pleasant? It's not the word that comes to mind. Despite being, by all accounts, a charmer in real life, during a career stretching six decades, he became synonymous with some of cinema's most menacing villains. From Heinrich Himmler in *The Eagle Has Landed* (1976) to Ernst Blofeld in *You Only Live Twice* (1967), he was the man audiences loved to hate. ➔



**DID YOU KNOW?**

In 1973, he helped traumatised a generation of British children, providing the voice-over for the public information film, *The Spirit of Dark and Lonely Water*. The short film, shown on TV and in schools, featured a cloaked figure salivating over children doomed to fall into ponds.



But more than just villains, he could conjure tortured, anguished souls. His oeuvre stretched beyond bad guys to tormented men perched on a ledge between desperation and madness. To put it in terms not entirely sanctioned by the critical community, he cornered the market in boggly-eyed weirdos.

He worked with some of cinema's greatest names, both in front of and behind the camera. He was a favourite of Harold Pinter, collaborated with Roman Polanski, appeared on stage with Olivier and Vivien Leigh in the legendary 1951 production of *Antony and Cleopatra*. And if there were an Academy Award for hardest working thespian, Donald Pleasence would have a sideboard groaning with them. In a career that spanned 60 years, he amassed more than 200 stage, TV and movie credits, leading *Variety*, in the Eighties, to name him the busiest actor in the world.

### STRATEGIC SHIFT

Even when the work didn't quite have that level of quality, he elevated it. His performances were perched, precisely, deliciously on the edges of comedy, malevolence and dread. As Polanski put it when asked about Pleasence, 'He was a tricky actor to work with, but he had an aura about him that was unmistakably his.'

Pretty good going for a station master's son from Worksop. Born in 1919, when it came to performing,



The *Great Escape* director John Sturges took input on historical accuracy from former POW Pleasence

Donald Henry Pleasence was an early starter. As a teenager, he auditioned for RADA. 'I was offered a scholarship, but couldn't afford to live in London because my parents were really quite poor. And so, for two years I actually did work on the railways, at my father's station in Yorkshire,' he remembered.

Later, his concerned father tried to dissuade him from pursuing a risky career in acting. It was to no avail, but his nascent performing career *was* almost kiboshed by the Luftwaffe when, during the Second World War, he was shot down over northern France.

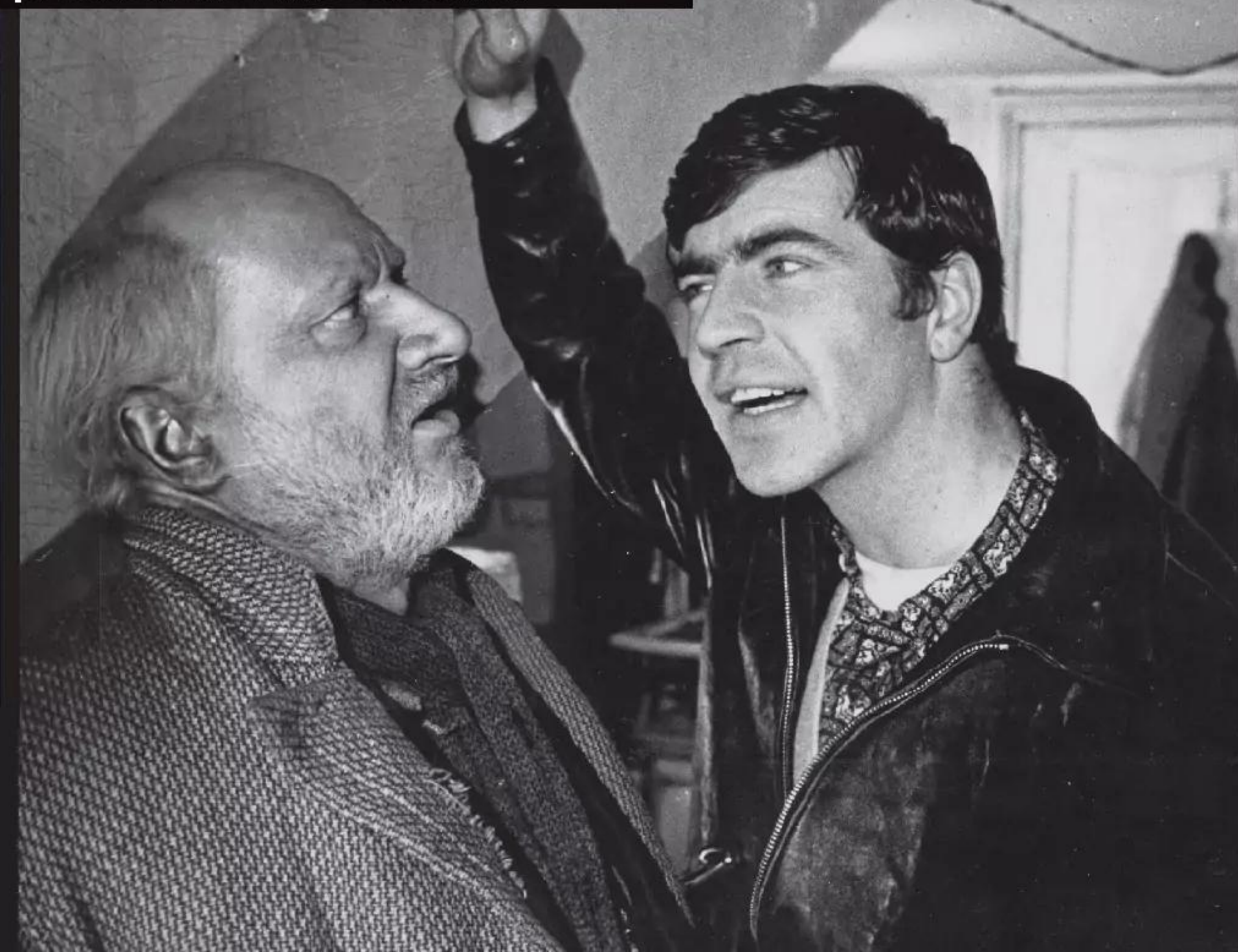
Returning to the thespian life after being demobbed, he thrived in repertory theatre. In 1954 he made a huge impact in a BBC production of 1984 alongside Peter Cushing, while his stage performance as The Tramp in Pinter's *The Caretaker* in 1960 attracted rave reviews. Cunning, wheedling and sinister, his performance foreshadowed the malevolent movie roles that would later make him famous. It all came as a bit of a surprise to him.

'People saw me in some kind of screwy way. That I wasn't suitable for the tall, handsome parts,' he later ruminated. 'They didn't realise they were looking at this

For his role in *The Eagle Has Landed* he spent hours at the Imperial War Museum mimicking the walk and gestures of Himmler



Pleasence and Alan Bates reprised their roles from the original stage production of *The Caretaker*







tall, blond, crinkly-haired Adonis with the perfect features. Then I started seeing myself on the screen. Suddenly, I understood why and stopped watching.'

Later, he would add, 'I tossed away my toupee and entered the beady-eyed business.'

The beady-eyed business was good to him. He played the murderous medic in *Dr Crippen* (1963), following it up by reprising his breakthrough stage role on the big screen in Clive Donner's *The Caretaker* (1963). American audiences were introduced to him in his first Hollywood hit, *The Great Escape* (1963) as 'The Forger', a role in which he tapped his ability to conjure sympathy as much as dread.

'That was my first big Hollywood picture, and it struck particularly close to home for me because I had spent some time in a Prisoner of War camp in Germany,' he remembered. But international audiences were soon treated to Pleasence in full-on sinister mode. He got the role of 007's most iconic villain, Ernst Blofeld, in *You Only Live Twice* (1967), only after Czech actor Jan Werich, had been fired for being insufficiently menacing.

It was not a particularly happy experience for Pleasence. 'I had grave difficulties with the cats,' he said. 'All the hair they covered me with was bad enough, I'm allergic, but they were terrified of the gunfire, and they used to do it all over me during each take.'

### DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

He had shown an early willingness to turn up for the cheque with Barry McKenzie Holds His Own (1974), an example of the brief fad for saucy Aussie comedies in which he played vampiric Count von Plasma alongside Barry Humphries. But in among the workmanlike horror with which he increasingly made his bread and butter, his career is studded with occasional, deliciously unexpected little masterpieces. Polanski's *Cul-de-sac* (1966), in which he played an emasculated husband, is among the director's strangest and best; *Death Line* (1972), a standout British horror movie about the London Underground overtaken by a tribe of maniac cannibals, featured Pleasence as a bewildered,

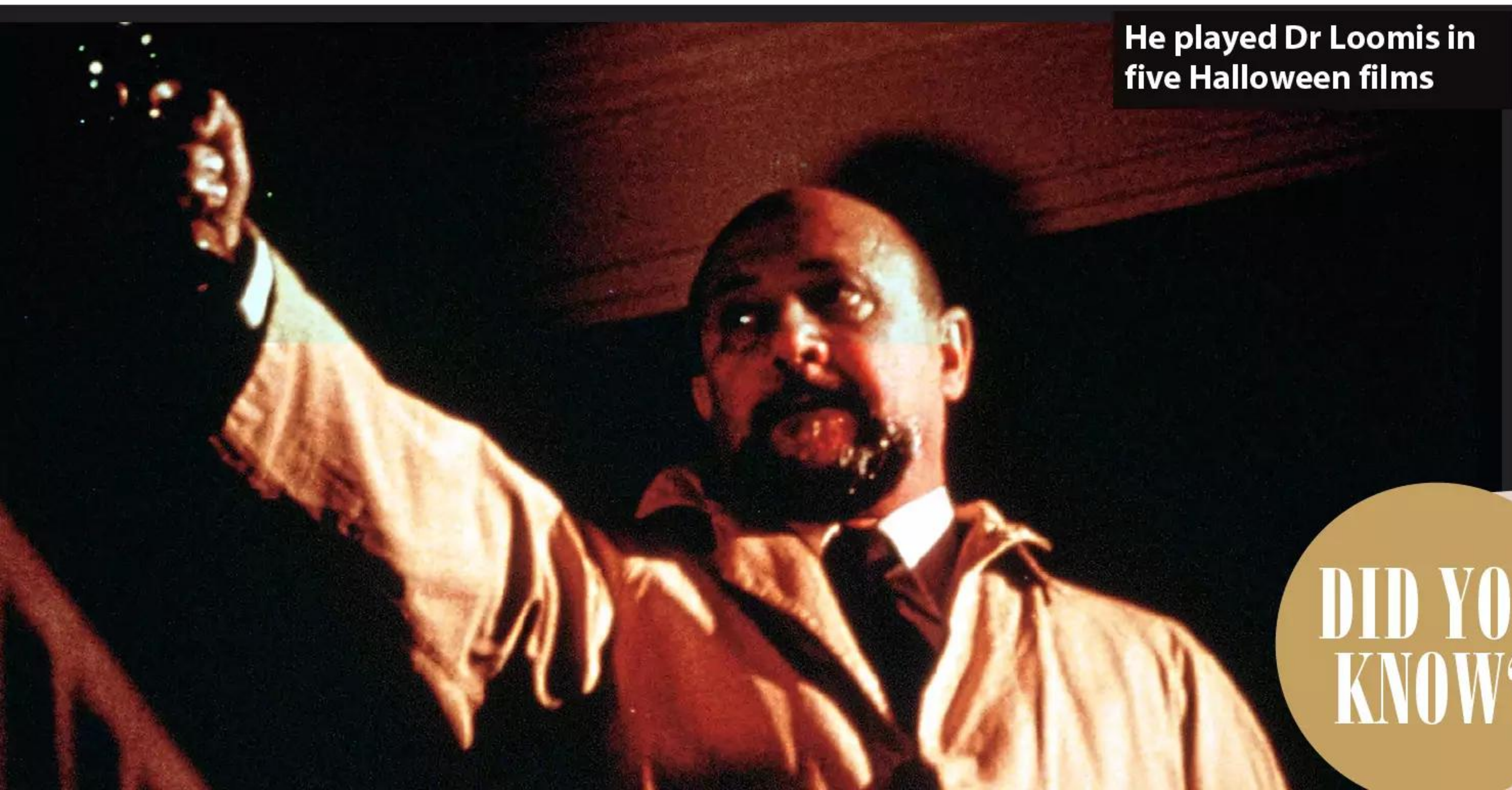
terrified police detective. *Wake in Fright* (1971), directed by the late Ted Kotcheff, is a genuine cult classic. An existentialist nightmare set in the brutal Australian outback, it had Gary Bond as a schoolteacher who embarks on an ill-advised trip, with a bug-eyed, frock-sporting Pleasence among the horrors that he encounters.

But for the VHS generation, he will forever be remembered as the guilt-ridden shrink, Dr Loomis, in John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978). As with Blofeld, he was the second choice for the role with Carpenter initially pursuing Peter Cushing or Christopher Lee. Unfazed by being sloppy seconds, he took the part. 'John Carpenter liked my work, and he needed some kind of name for the picture,' Pleasence remembered. 'The script was good, and I immediately liked John, so I did it.'

It might be his greatest, or at least most typically essential work. His perfectly pitched performance, as a kind of chorus whose declarations about the pure wickedness of Michael Myers, ('I met this six-year-old child with this blank, pale, emotionless face, and the blackest eyes. The Devil's eyes...'), become crucial to the audience's fear of him. He elevates what could have been a rote slasher to an enduring horror classic.

'It's gotten to the point where it's big news when I *don't* do a horror film,' he said towards the end of his life. 'But I like to work, and horror films keep me working.'

Married four times, he died in 1995, aged 75, at his home in Saint Paul de Vance in France due to complications after heart surgery. His body of work remains vast, variable, but always supremely watchable. He had been, as one critic at the time put it, 'a necessary evil'.



He played Dr Loomis in five *Halloween* films

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Despite his long history with the horror genre, he never appeared in a Hammer film. 'I can make that statement with pride,' he once said. 'I'm only kidding. Actually, they've made some very interesting pictures, but not with me.'



# EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

**A**lec Guinness gets a good soaking on the set of Ealing crime caper, *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951). Mild-mannered bank clerk Holland (Guinness) orchestrates a gold bullion robbery with the help of Pendlebury (Stanley Holloway), Lackery (Sid James) and Shorty (Alfie Bass). To avoid suspicion of an 'inside job' his cohorts bind and gag him before making off with the loot. Stumbling about, he promptly falls into the Thames and is rescued by two unsuspecting police officers.

In his memoirs, Guinness describes another terrifying incident on the set. 'Rehearsing a brief scene in which Stanley and I were required to escape from the top of the Eiffel Tower, the director said, "Alec, there's a trap door over there – where it says Workmen Only – I'd like you to run to it, open it and start running down the spiral staircase. Stanley will follow."

After a few steps Guinness realised the steps had broken off and ahead of him was just an enormous drop so he sat down and began to edge back up.

"What the hell are you doing?" the director yelled. "Down! Further down!!" "Further down is eternity," I called back.

He and Stanley made their shaky way back to the top, both pale from the ordeal.

Overall, though, Guinness found working on the film was a positive experience. 'I got on exceedingly well with Stanley and we became good friends. He was always genial, easy-going and meticulously professional.'





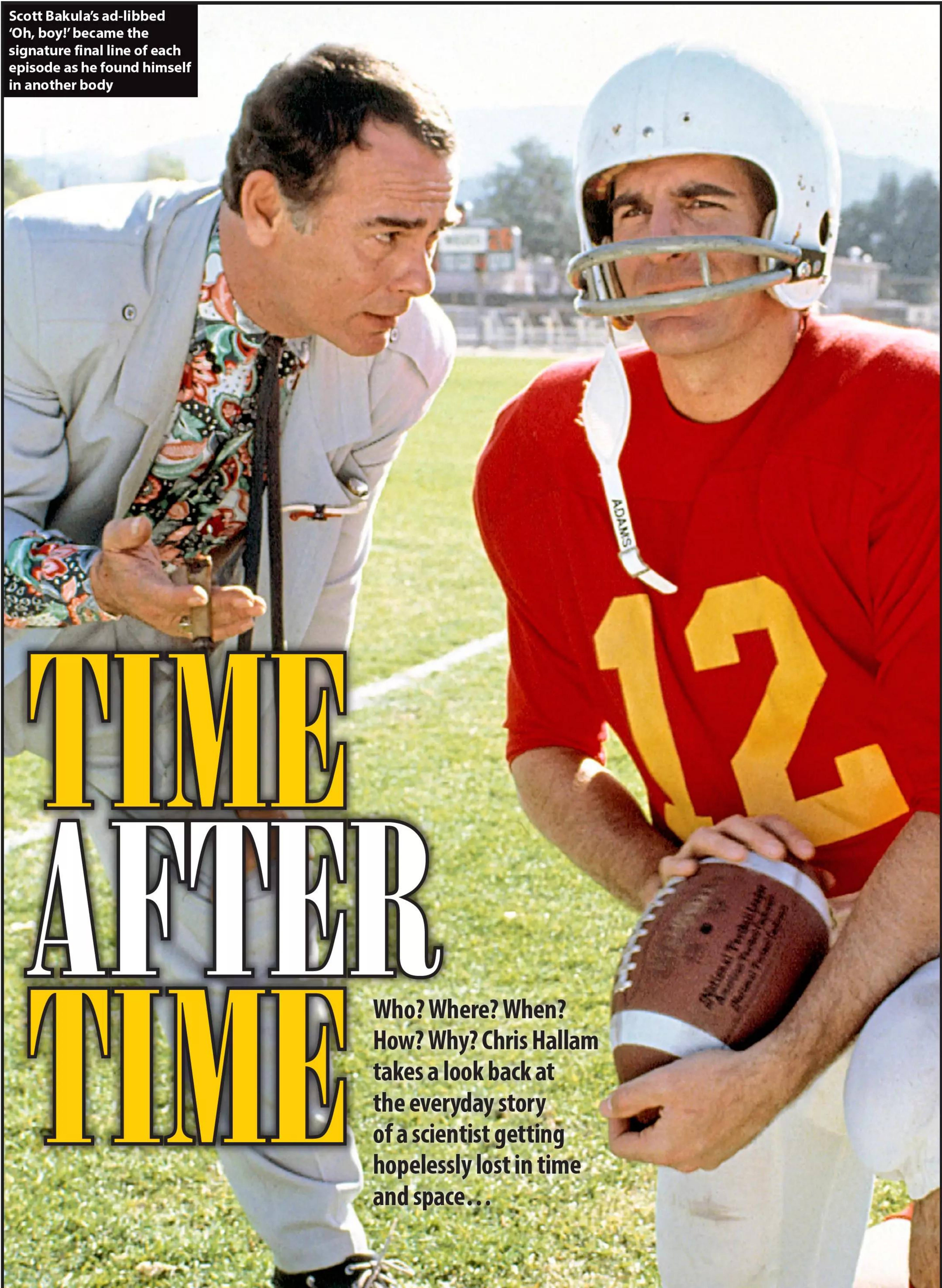


**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

Robert Shaw (as a chemist at the police exhibition) and Audrey Hepburn (as Chiquita) both have blink-and-you'll-miss-them roles in the film.



Scott Bakula's ad-libbed 'Oh, boy!' became the signature final line of each episode as he found himself in another body



# TIME AFTER TIME

Who? Where? When?  
How? Why? Chris Hallam  
takes a look back at  
the everyday story  
of a scientist getting  
hopelessly lost in time  
and space...



**H**e is the second most famous time-travelling doctor in TV history. Every week, viewers of sci-fi series, *Quantum Leap* (1989-93) would get the chance to see physicist, Dr Sam Beckett (Scott Bakula) 'leaping' through space and time, before being transported into the body of a different person. Granted, Sam would usually be a man living in the US at some point between the Fifties and the Eighties, but otherwise, all bets were off as to where (and, indeed, when) Sam would leap to next.

Over five series, Sam briefly took over the lives of a music star in a glam rock band, a black chauffeur experiencing racism in the Deep South, a college tutor, an air-force pilot, a blind pianist, a top surgeon and many other assorted characters. He was like a sci-fi version of Mr Benn. Occasionally, he would unexpectedly find himself living the life of a woman, ensuring actor Scott Bakula would spend the episode in drag. Sam would always face the task of resolving some sort of problem in his host person's life before he was able to move on and leap into someone new. Each episode would typically be bookended by Sam's arrival in his new identity. This always occurred in a spectacular blaze of light (although this was unseen by anyone around him) followed by a world weary 'Oh, boy!' from Sam as he adjusted to his new surroundings.

As time wore on, we grew to learn that Sam himself had inadvertently created the whole situation, by launching a time

travel experiment that had gone badly wrong. As a result, he had been left with a 'Swiss cheese' memory and had no option other than to go on leaping from person to person, until one day he would hopefully leap back into himself.

The one constant in Sam's ever-changing existence was the presence of Al (Dean Stockwell), Sam's friend who was also involved in the time-travel project, and able to periodically appear in the form of a hologram, enabling him to assist Sam in his mission's objectives and supply useful information, gleaned from the project's unseen computer, Ziggy. Although a friendly figure, we soon learned that the cigar-chomping Al was a very different character to Sam, with a roving eye and a colourful background, including a string of divorces and a battle with alcoholism behind him, as well as a wealth of experiences, including time spent as a pilot and as a prisoner-of-war in Vietnam. As a companion visible to Sam alone, unseen and unheard by anyone else, Al's role was similar to that played by Marty (Kenneth Cope) in the series, *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)* (1969-71).

## QUANTUM MECHANICS

Created by Donald P Bellisario, *Quantum Leap* quickly established a cult following. Production was often complicated by the fact that, like an anthology series, the show required new sets, new locations and (aside from Bakula and Stockwell) a new cast every week. Future stars, Jennifer Aniston and Teri Hatcher were among those to appear in some of the stories.

For actor Scott Bakula, then in his 30s, *Quantum Leap* ultimately provided him with one of the defining roles in his career. For Dean Stockwell, nearly 20 years older and a Hollywood veteran since his days as a child actor in *The Boy*

With the *Green Hair* (1948), the decision to join the new show was more complicated. Thanks to roles in *Paris, Texas* (1984) and *Blue Velvet* (1986), Stockwell was experiencing a late career renaissance. He also received an Oscar nomination for his role in the 1988 Michelle Pfeiffer comedy, *Married to the Mob*, a few months after agreeing to play Al. At a time when TV was seen as cinema's poor relation, some were surprised to see Stockwell take on a small-screen role.

Stockwell took a different attitude to his film career. 'I wasn't flying that high,' he recalled of this period a few years later. 'I was on an ascendant, there's no question, but I had spent countless years of anxiety wondering whether I was going to get another job all the time, so I wanted a long run at something. I never thought there was anything wrong with doing a television series.'

It was undoubtedly a wise decision. Dean Stockwell's performance as Al won him three Emmy awards and a Golden Globe. By the time of his death in 2021, Rear Admiral Al Calavicci was undoubtedly one of the best remembered roles of his entire career.

The fifth season of *Quantum Leap* ended with a decidedly unusual episode. In truth, with the show's future in doubt, Bellisario had been set the near-impossible challenge of producing a programme that could both wrap the series up, while also simultaneously leaving things open if it was decided to continue the show in the future. But, in practice, the fifth season really did turn out to mark the end of the road, with neither Bakula or Stockwell ever playing Sam and Al again. Thankfully, more than 30 years on, no one has to resort to time travel to enjoy their legacy of 97 original *Quantum Leap* episodes available today.

Sam leaped into women's bodies nine times, including a pregnant teenager (S3,E12)





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Comedy historian Robert Ross pays tribute to some of the finest and funniest, but often overlooked, names in showbiz

# Forgotten Heroes of Comedy...



**S**uch a powerhouse of energetic comedy was Avril Angers that, at the peak of her fame on radio and on the variety theatre circuit, she was dubbed 'the British Lucille Ball'. No pressure then. Not that Avril need worry. She could lift an audience in an instant, with her fizzy wit and skills as comedienne, singer, dancer and, when the roles came along, an impressive actress. Typically self-deprecating, she would counterbalance praise by admitting she was the only Liverpudlian who couldn't play the guitar!

Born into showbusiness, by the time Avril was a teenager, in the mid-Thirties, she had been given the title role of Cinderella, at the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham.

Her early 20s coincided with the Second World War, when she channelled her talents into cheering up the troops, with the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) across conflict-scarred battlefields in West Africa and the Middle East. For her valiant service, Avril was

awarded the Africa Star, and the 1939-45 Star which she described as, 'little awards that I cherish more than any of the other possessions I have'.

Anvil's earliest broadcasts showcased her act, on Variety Bandbox and Navy Mixture, with her topical musical interlude, 'Look Back with Angers', being both satirical and controversial. She also proved herself more than able to hold her own against the greatest names in pioneering television

**'She could lift an audience in an instant, with her fizzy wit'**

comedy, supporting Arthur Askey, in *Before Your Very Eyes* (1952-58), and Terry-Thomas, in *How Do You View?* (1949-53). Her persistent BBC charlady, Rosie Lee, became a firm favourite, resulting in her spin-off situation comedy, *Friends and Neighbours*, and the

leading role in *Dear Dotty* (both 1954), which cast Avril as a staff writer on a women's magazine.

Avril's film and TV career saw her play everything from sycophantic assistant to Alastair Sim in *The Green Man* (1956) to two, separate, stints on *Coronation Street*, as toffee shop proprietress Norah

Dawson, in the early Sixties, and disapproving stepmother Sylvia Crozier, in the early Nineties.

Still, it was the theatre in which Avril was at her most free and her most happy. Favourite comedy parts included Billie Dawn in the wise-cracking satire of *Born Yesterday*; Eleanor Hunter in the trouser-dropping farce of *No Sex Please, We're British*, and the mad mystic Madame Arcati, in *Blithe Spirit*.

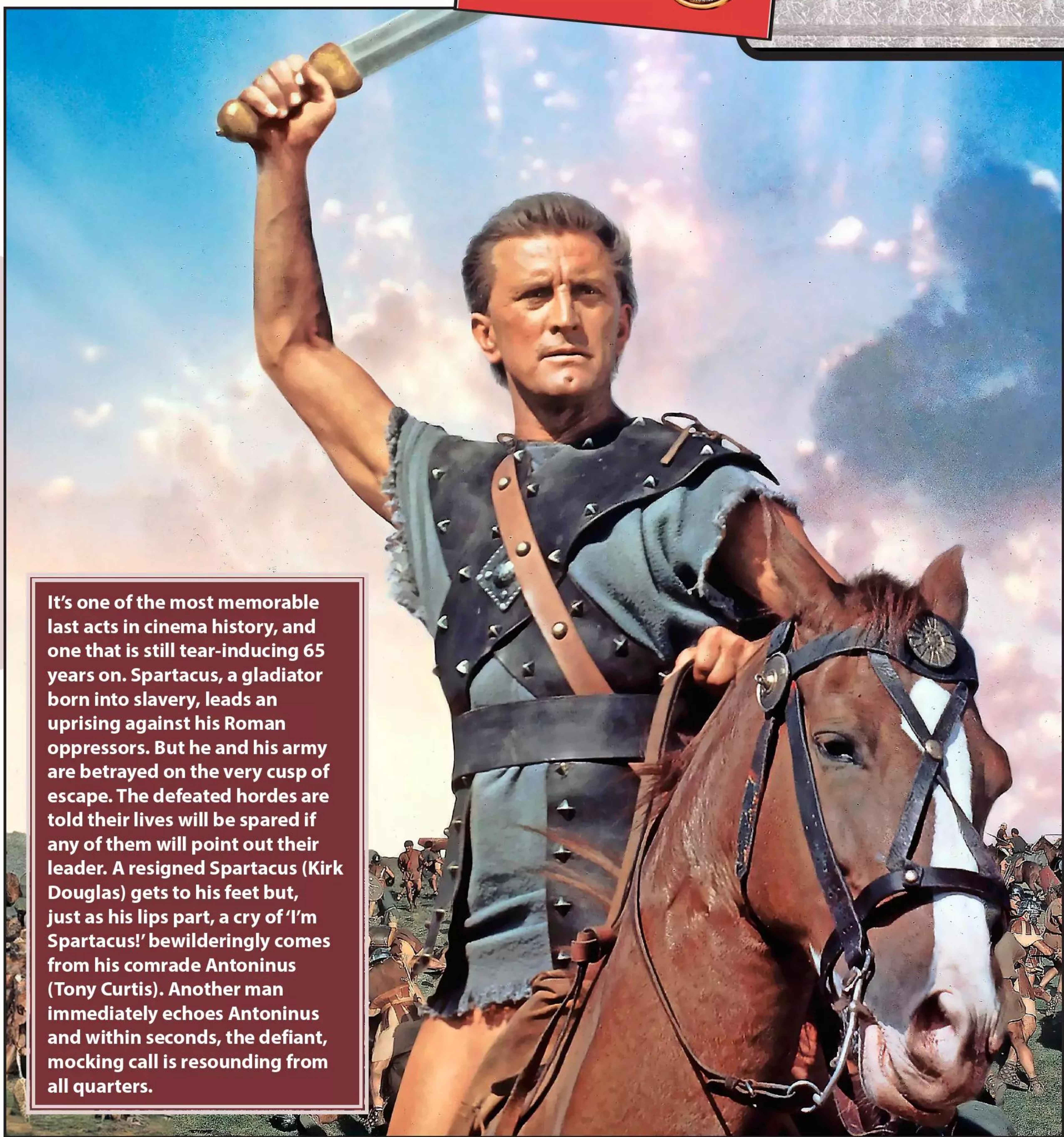
And, having continued to stooge for headliners Dick Emery and Kenny Everett, there was something very reassuring to see Avril being brilliant, in her twilight years, opposite Victoria Wood, in the country rambling comedy *Val de Ree* (Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha), in 1989. It was a perfect autumn years romp, and Avril kept busy until the end of her days, in 2005, at the age of 87. A proper trouper who could always make us happy. What a lovely legacy.

■ Visit the website of Robert Ross, Britain's Comedy Historian, at [robertross.co.uk](http://robertross.co.uk)



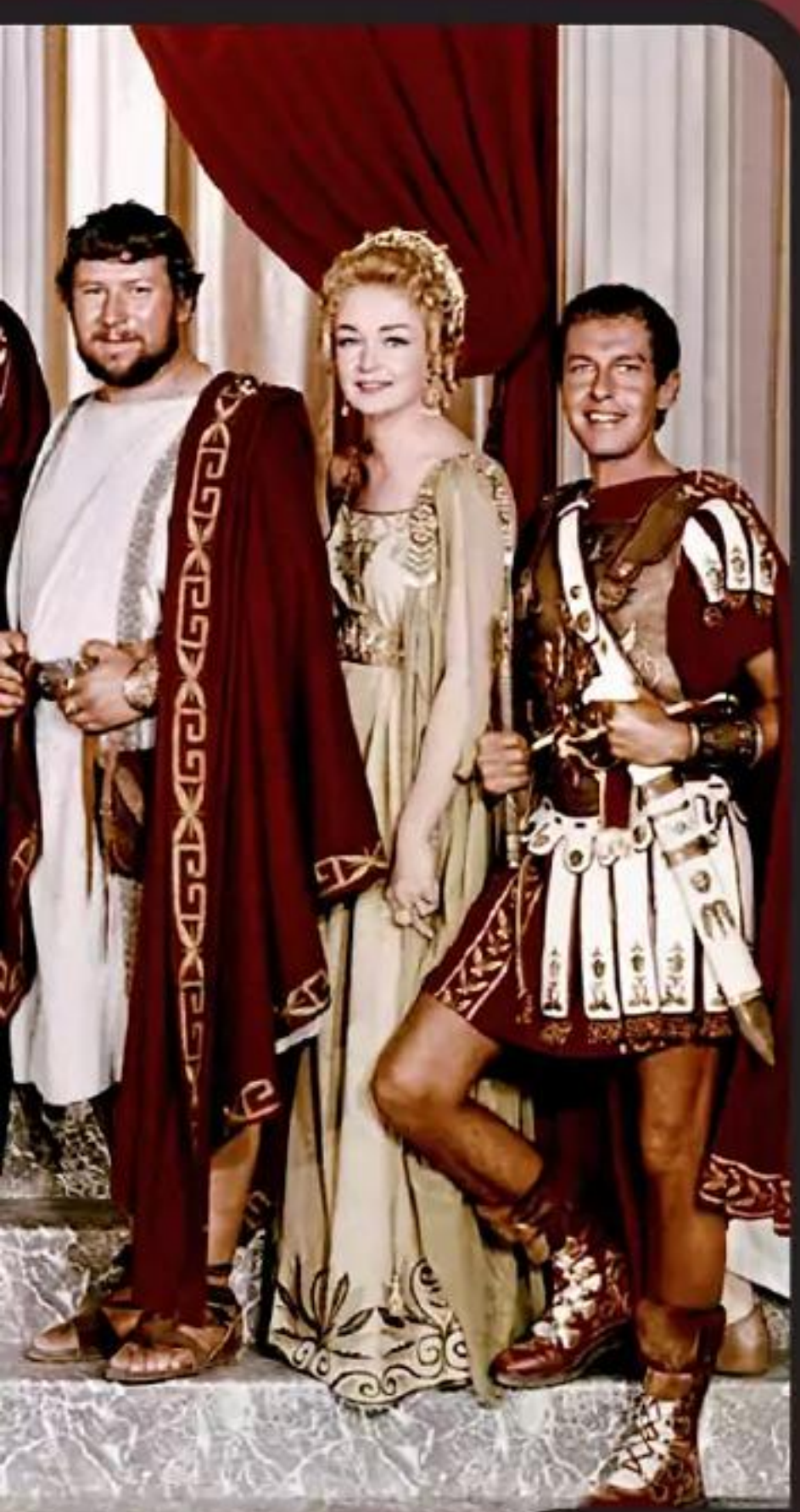
# >> MOVIE MASTERCLASSES No.49

Not only did *Spartacus* (1960) show us spectacle on a grand scale, it also shattered genre conventions by insisting on an unhappy ending, and helped spell the end of Joseph McCarthy's hold on Hollywood

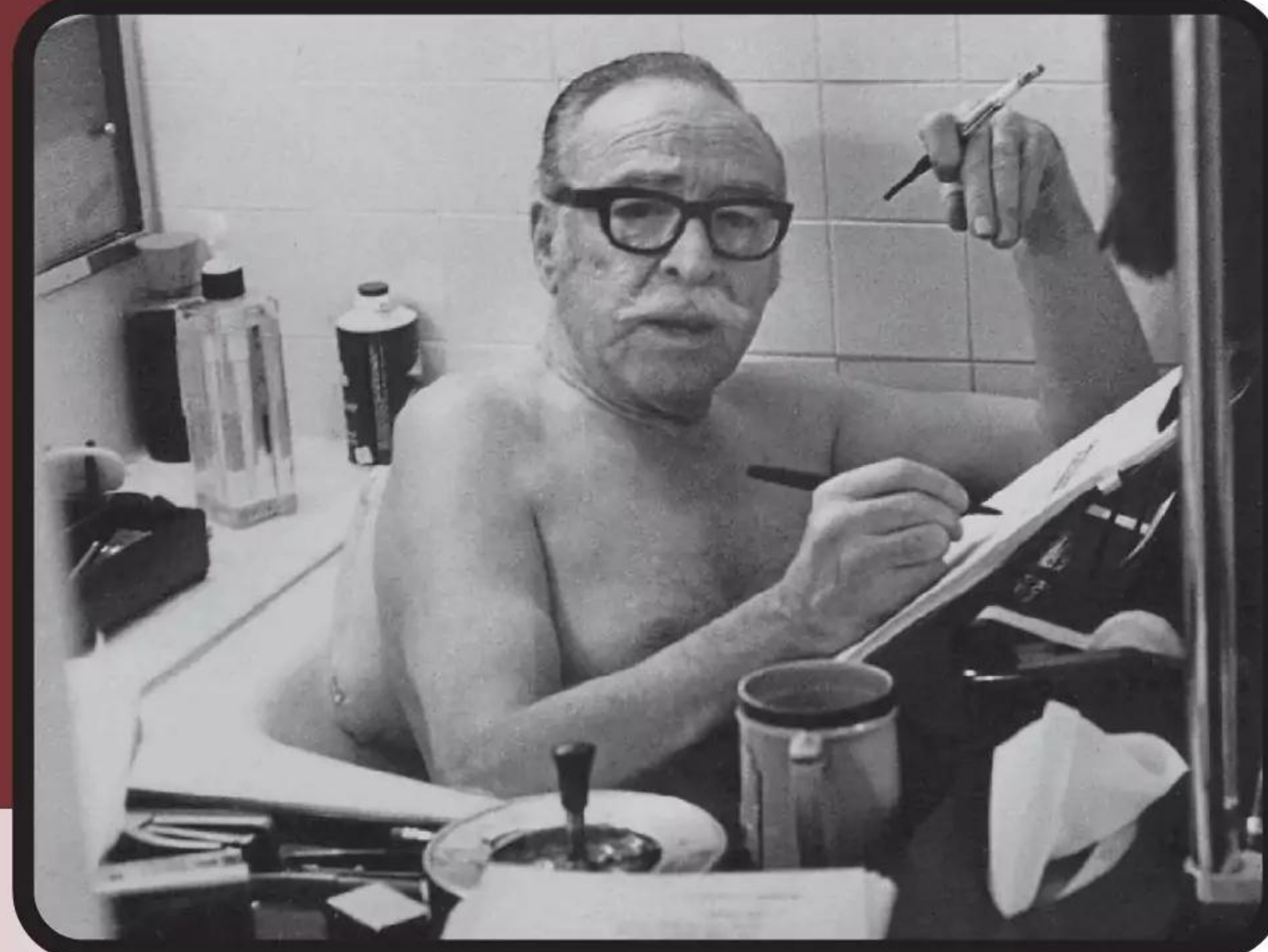


It's one of the most memorable last acts in cinema history, and one that is still tear-inducing 65 years on. Spartacus, a gladiator born into slavery, leads an uprising against his Roman oppressors. But he and his army are betrayed on the very cusp of escape. The defeated hordes are told their lives will be spared if any of them will point out their leader. A resigned Spartacus (Kirk Douglas) gets to his feet but, just as his lips part, a cry of 'I'm Spartacus!' bewilderingly comes from his comrade Antoninus (Tony Curtis). Another man immediately echoes Antoninus and within seconds, the defiant, mocking call is resounding from all quarters.





The star-studded cast included Laurence Olivier as the magisterial Crassus and Charles Laughton as his rival Gracchus. The pair were bitter rivals on set too, with their Oscar-winning co-star, Peter Ustinov frequently having to act as a buffer between them, recalling, 'For some reason they just didn't like each other.' Laughton also threatened to sue Douglas (who was executive producer) over his diminishing number of lines. Director, Anthony Mann, also clashed, lasting just 10 days before being replaced by relatively unknown 30-year-old Stanley Kubrick.



Blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo added many anti-McCarthyism references to the story, but the spirit of rebellion was not confined to the screen. By defiantly including his name in the credits instead of taking the easy option of a pseudonym, the producers signalled the end for the Red-Scare era in Hollywood.



Studio press materials stated that 5000 uniforms and seven tons of armour were borrowed from Italian museums, and that every one of Hollywood's 187 stuntmen was trained in the art of gladiatorial combat. Modern sources say 10,500 people worked on the film.

Filming started on 27 January 1959, but time and budget soon spiralled out of control. Peter Ustinov joked that his daughter, born at the beginning of production, was ready for kindergarten by the time they finished and, if asked what her father did for a living, she would answer, 'Spartacus'.



Poor test screenings saw all but one of Kubrick's carefully choreographed battle scenes cut, while censors objected to a scene where Crassus tries to seduce Antoninus. It was reinstated in 1991, but Curtis and Anthony Hopkins (standing in for the late Olivier) had to re-dub the dialogue



Sabine Bethmann, only worked two days on the film before Douglas decided she was not right for the role and paid her \$3000 to go home. She was replaced by Jean Simmons as Spartacus' love interest.



# The movie mobster banned from Britain

The tough-guy persona George Raft forged in films such as *Scarface* and *Some Like it Hot* earned him Hollywood fame – but, as Steve Green reveals, stalled his plans to spend his final years in London

**‘G**eorge Raft banned from Britain’. The headline hit the semi-retired actor like bullets from a screen mobster’s machine-gun. Worse, Raft had learned second-hand of his unexpected exile in February 1967 from a nation he’d come to think of as a second home, via a journalist following up *The Guardian*’s front-page exclusive.

The mystery deepened when British Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, later told the House of Commons his decision to bar Raft from re-admittance into the UK was made after





George Raft's signature coin toss debuted in *Scarface* (1932). It was suggested by director Howard Hawks to distract from the actor's inexperience. 'When he didn't have anything else to do, he would flip a coin,' Hawks told Raft's biographer.

news of it broke, leaving a strong implication there had been a leak from the Home Office.

'This is a great blow to me,' Raft told the Associated Press. 'After all, what if I wanted to make a film in London and I couldn't go there. That would be horrible.'

While his concern about potential career damage was arguably overplayed – although he'd already shot a cameo for the imminent James Bond spoof *Casino Royale* (1967), Raft's only significant recent film role had been in the comedy thriller *Five Golden Dragons* (1967), when he joined Christopher Lee and Dan Duryea on location in Hong Kong as members of a secret crime syndicate – it's certain that weighing more heavily upon Raft's mind was his appointment the previous spring as live-in host of the Colony Club, a casino in London's Berkeley Square.

In return for exploiting his particular brand of Hollywood glamour to attract such frequent guests as Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, Charlie Chaplin, Ari Onassis and Jackie Kennedy, Raft was supplied with a two-bedroom apartment in Marble Arch, with a full-time maid and a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce, plus \$200 per week and a five-point share in the eventual profits. Better still, other than a daily check of the lounge, bar and kitchen, there were

no additional management duties to distract him from his new role.

## LEST OLD ACQUAINTANCE

No wonder this 'perfect set-up' had the actor riding high when he flew back to California in late 1966 to enjoy the Christmas and new year holiday on home turf. But those celebrations were short-lived, as he told the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner the following March: 'Somebody put the finger on me. They haven't accused me of anything; they've just barred me from the country without charges, without a trial or anything.'

Responding to the Home Office ruling that his continued presence in the UK 'would not be conducive to the public good', Raft stressed: 'I'm not a member of any mob, never have been. Sure, I know some guys that are, but I know a lot of people.'

It would later emerge that he was one of eight Americans banned that year, all without a hearing; others included Dino Cellini (a shareholder in the Colony Club), Morris Lansburgh (owner of the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas – once the property of 'Bugsy' Siegel, gunned down by rival mobsters in 1947) and Meyer Lansky (Siegel's former partner in crime and rumoured majority owner of the Colony Club, although the actor claimed to be unaware of any such connection).

While Raft readily admitted knowing both Siegel and Lansky, and had been photographed with London gangsters Ronnie and Reggie Kray, he always denied any participation in their criminal activities: 'The only reason I believe I was barred is guilt by association.'

Legendary broadcaster and columnist Walter Winchell, a friend of FBI director J Edgar Hoover, even suggested the film star might have been too successful a front man, writing in June 1967: 'One of the many gambling places [in London] allegedly used influence with certain people close to the British government to get rid of Raft, because his place was packing them in. A certain competitor feared his business would suffer. The latter, the story alleges, paid \$12,000 for Raft's ban.'

## BEYOND THE PALE

'I love England and I love the English people', a bewildered Raft had told *The Daily Telegraph*, 'That's why it hurts so much.' Years later, when interviewed for Lewis Yablonsky's 1974 biography, the hurt remained: 'I'll never forget what happened to me in England. I look back at my life and wonder what the hell I had done to deserve that kind of a kick in the balls. Sure, I was a rough kid, but you had to be in those days – or you wouldn't have survived.'

'Sure I worked the speakeasies, the clubs, and any place else I could. So the clubs were owned by bootleggers and even a few killers. Most entertainers in those days got their start in the New York clubs, and I'm grateful for those years. The clubs were fun and a proving ground for talent. They're part of the history of this country.'

Raft wanted to promote the biography in Britain and appealed for the ban to be lifted, but was refused – once again, without explanation.

He died in November 1980, aged 79 (or 85, if you accept the birth date he'd given during his final screen appearance, on *The Mike Douglas Show* that April). What remains certain is that he never returned to what he'd hoped would be his final home.



Being pictured with London gangsters the Kray twins, Ronnie (second from left) and Reggie (third from right) with their brother Charlie (far right) sealed Raft's fate



The series was shot in  
Callander in Perthshire

# The doctor will see you now!

Lin Bensley books in for a check-up to explore the enduring charm of Dr Finlay's Casebook, the beloved series where heartwarming – and sometimes heartbreaking – stories helped paint a vivid picture of Twenties Scotland



The series was revived in 1993-96, with David Rintoul as Dr Finlay, Ian Bannen as Dr Cameron, and Annette Crosbie as Janet. Set in the Forties, the story follows Dr Finlay after he returns from war service and plays a significant part in the setting up of the NHS.

**F**irst broadcast in 1962, Dr Finlay's Casebook was based on the writings of Scottish physician and novelist, AJ Cronin, and focused on a general medical practice in the fictitious West Highland town of Tannochbrae.

It was the start of the Swinging Sixties and the BBC's decision to make a programme set in the Twenties appeared out of step, and yet it resonated with an audience evidently hungry for nostalgia and an age of unambiguous moral rectitude.

After auditioning several native Scots, seasoned producer Campbell Logan finally cast the little-known actor Bill Simpson in the title role. Simpson had begun his career as a newsreader for Scottish Television before trying his hand at acting and landing the role of Hastie in the BBC's adaptation of *The Master of Ballantrae* (1962).

Simpson was supported by Andrew Cruickshank as the querulous Dr Cameron and Barbara Mullen, who played Janet, their dependable housekeeper and receptionist.

As the capable but headstrong and opinionated junior partner of the practice, Finlay had much to learn, not only about the etiquette of medical practice, but also about the nature of his patients; many of whom held entrenched superstitions and a hardened scepticism regarding the benefits of modern medicine. His progressive

views were often at odds with those of Dr Cameron, whose crabbiness led to many confrontations, though they soon developed a mutual, if unspoken, admiration.

Invariably, the pair united to fend off the obstreperous public health inspector, Dr Snoddie (Eric Woodburn), who frequently crossed swords with Finlay and purposely sought to make his life difficult through his bureaucratic posturing and adherence to the rules.

And to make matters worse for both Finlay and Cameron, Dr Snoddie also had amorous designs upon Janet, whom he showered with compliments and occasional gifts. Undeterred in his wooing by any subtle rebuffs from his domestic Aphrodite, Snoddie forged on, ever hopeful of disturbing the tranquillity of Arden House.

But the rapport generated between the two doctors dedicated to their profession and their housekeeper proved a formidable combination, almost impervious to disruptive outside influences.

## SOCIAL ILLS

While there was always an underlying current of humour in each episode, the series addressed serious topics; from an outbreak of smallpox, salmonella poisoning and the emotional trauma of terminal cancer to the ethics of euthanasia.

Time and again, the storyline featured the inadequate diet and substandard living conditions in both the home and workplace that beset so many of Tannochbrae's inhabitants, highlighting how little had changed since before the war to alleviate their suffering.

Invariably, the series drew on Cronin's personal experiences as a GP between the two world wars, serving in the remote Scottish town of Garelochhead and the south Wales mining town of Tredegar, where

he had witnessed poverty and hardship. An idealist at heart, his sympathies lay with the poorer members of society who could ill-afford to pay doctors' fees, let alone buy the prescribed medicine, and he was one of the first to advocate for a free public health service.

## MEDICINE AND MORALITY

From the first transmission, the series won the acclaim of the public and critics alike. Even playwright Dennis Potter, who was then working as a TV critic for the *Daily Herald*, praised its sense of authenticity and period detail, and the fine acting of Cruickshank and Simpson.

Cruickshank had enjoyed a chequered career long before he joined the cast of Dr Finlay. An established theatre actor, he'd had roles in many films, including *The Cruel Sea* (1953), *The Battle of the River Plate* (1956), and *Kidnapped* (1960).

He revelled in his role as Dr Cameron and was ever thankful for the security and pleasure it brought him. After the series finished, he returned to the stage and found further success until his death in 1988, aged 80.

Simpson fared less well when the series ended in 1971, after 191 episodes. Seemingly typecast, he found it hard to find suitable work, and his health began to decline as his alleged drinking problems increased. Facing bankruptcy after two failed marriages that both ended in acrimonious divorce took a further toll. Four weeks after being admitted to hospital he died on 21 December 1986 from bronchopneumonia – a sad and sorry end for such an accomplished actor.

A revival of the series would not go amiss today. Another chapter from the GP's casebook recalling the further adventures of the Scottish medic may be just what the doctor ordered to soothe our tech-infested lives.

Andrew Cruickshank turned down £200,000 to appear in a whisky commercial because he didn't want Dr Cameron to be seen promoting alcohol







**RETRO**

*Star story*

# The divine bitch

Susan Hayward found fame playing beautiful women with a nasty edge. Charles Rollings takes a look at the bumpy career of the original Mean Girl



In the Fifties, Susan took home more money than Elizabeth Taylor. She was proclaimed 'Queen of Glamour' by the Motion Picture Photographers' Association in 1951 and voted the world's favourite film actress by two movie magazines.

She made 65 movies over 35 years, but Susan Hayward is now almost forgotten. No biography appeared until the early Eighties, and the last was in 2002. Yet hers is the classic tale of rags to riches to tragedy.

Born in a Brooklyn slum on 30 June 1917 as Edythe Marrenner, she grew up in grinding poverty with her older siblings Wally and Florence. In 1924 Edythe was hit by a speeding car, breaking her hip and both legs. She ended up with her left leg slightly shorter than the right, leaving her with a distinctive – and provocative – hip-swivelling walk.

A curvaceous, ivory skinned, hazel-eyed red-head, Edythe became a fashion model. Following a spread in *The Saturday Evening Post* she was tested for the part of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind* (1939). She looked perfect of course, but she lacked experience, and was eventually told to go home. Determined to succeed, however, she stayed in Hollywood with her sister Florence – who later tried to freeload, leading to lifelong estrangement.

Hollywood agent Benny Medford was so smitten with Edythe that he touted her screen test round the studios until Warner Bros offered her a contract. Warners changed her name to Susan Hayward but, having enough feisty leading ladies, only threw her bit-parts, which were either uncredited or cut, with one exception: 1938's *Girls on Probation*, in which she had the first of the many 'bitchy' roles that would become her trademark.

Warners dropped her after six months. Medford then secured a deal with Paramount, who gave her a significant role in *Beau Geste* (1939); but Paramount's contract actresses feared being outshone by her, so she was often loaned to other studios. When Cecil B DeMille cast her in his Technicolor seafaring epic *Reap the Wild Wind*, a box-office hit in 1942, she cruelly dumped Medford for a top-flight agent. But her strident demands for better

roles irked Paramount's execs, and she wouldn't schmooze, so stardom didn't beckon. It wasn't until 1946 that she received top billing, in *Deadline at Dawn* – and that was for RKO.

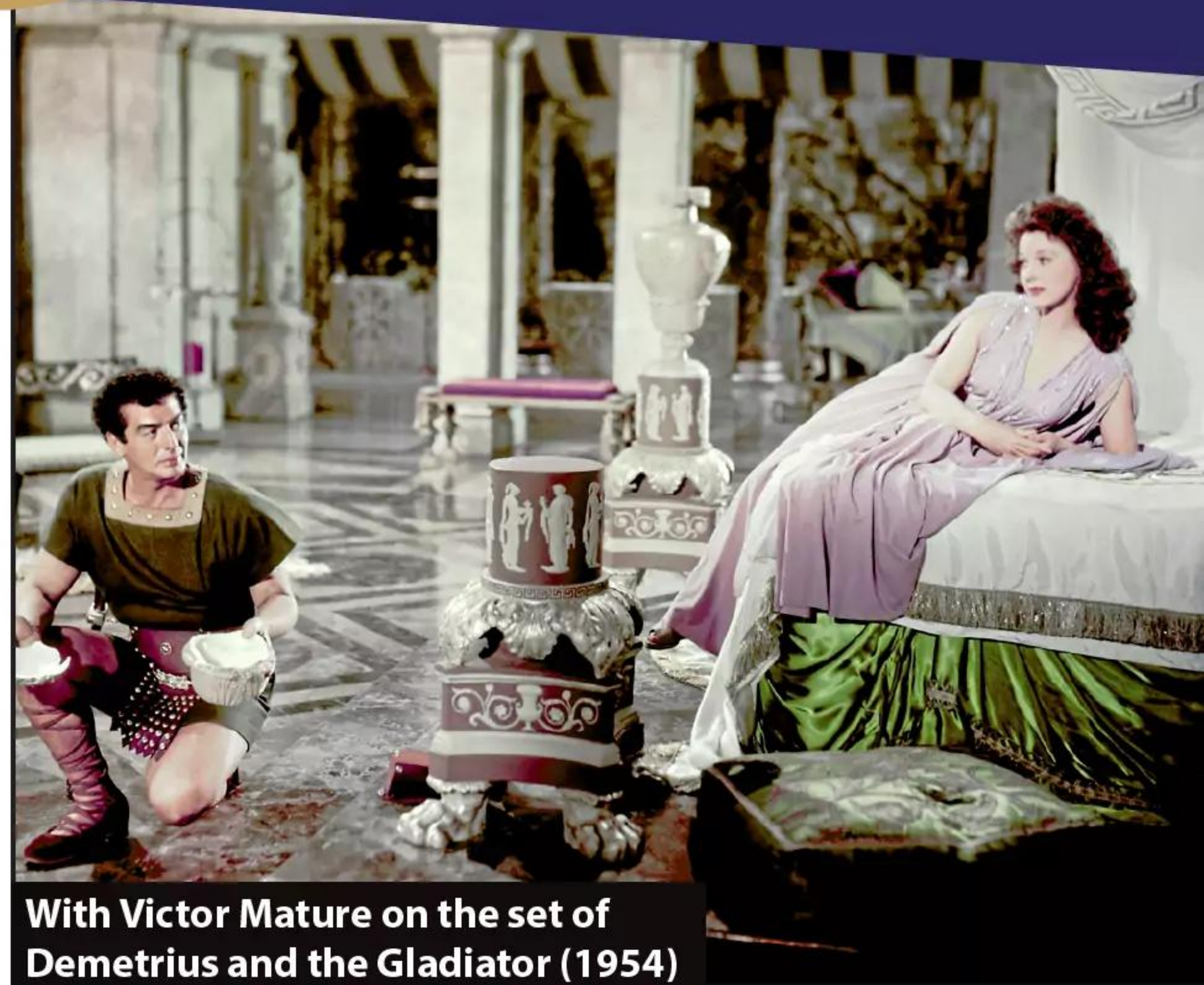
Susan fantasised about a *Gone with the Wind* lifestyle and when, on 23 July 1944, she married actor Jess Barker, a tall, charming Southerner, it seemed a dream come true. But his studio dropped him an, in February 1945, Susan gave birth to twins, putting the brakes on her career. The couple now boozed and fought almost non-stop.

## A DIFFICULT LIFE

In 1945, Susan signed with producer Walter Wanger who, although married to Joan Bennett, desired her too. Thwarted, he gave Joan the best roles and in 1948 sold Hayward's contract to 20th Century-Fox. Between playing sultry seductresses in biblical epics and stoic wives in literary adaptations and biopics, she created characters that reflected her own life: an alcoholic in *Smash-Up: The Story of a Woman* (1947); an embittered (and again bibulous) wife in *My Foolish Heart* (1949); Jane Froman, the crippled singer, in *With a Song in My Heart* (1952); and Broadway star Lillian Roth (more liquor!) in *I'll Cry Tomorrow* (1955).

For each of these she was Oscar-nominated, but her squalid 'domestics', an acrimonious divorce in 1954, a messy custody battle, and a suicide attempt in April 1955 shocked Hollywood and she lost every time. She tarnished her reputation again when she assaulted the ex-fiancée of one of her lovers.

After a fling with RKO mogul Howard Hughes, who cast her in such films as *The Lusty Men* (1952) and *The Conqueror* (1956), she met Floyd Eaton Chalkley, who owned a vast ranch in Carrollton, Georgia.



With Victor Mature on the set of *Demetrius and the Gladiator* (1954)

They married on 8 February 1957. Finally living the *Gone with the Wind* lifestyle, she rejected several scripts before accepting the role of convicted murderer Barbara Graham in *I Want to Live!* (1958) – and at last won an Oscar.

But a shadow hung over this idyll. Eaton was a Catholic divorcee. The bishops wouldn't recognise his divorce or his remarriage. Susan considered converting to Catholicism, but it clashed with her belief in astrology.

Then tragedy. Eaton had bleeding ulcers and hepatitis. When his son died in a car accident in September 1964, he hit the bottle, exacerbating his condition. He died, aged 56, on 9 January 1966 – and Susan finally embraced Catholicism. She hadn't made a film since 1964, but resurfaced in 1967, notably in the campy *Valley of the Dolls*. Then, in March 1972, she was diagnosed with lung cancer, which spread until she had 20 inoperable brain tumours.

Her battle with cancer was as epic as Humphrey Bogart's and John Wayne's, but unlike theirs never became legendary. After her death on 14 March 1975, some 500 mourners attended her funeral, but misty-eyed eulogies were few.

Tellingly, one biography of her was subtitled *The Divine Bitch* – and it is for her divine screen bitches, more than anything else, that she should be remembered.



Mr Smith Goes to Washington was nominated for 11 Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor (James Stewart), and Best Supporting Actor (Claude Rains). It won one Oscar (Best Story)



Frank  
Capra's

WOND



## DID YOU KNOW?

Capra, in association with directors William Wyler and George Stevens, founded Liberty Films so they could work without studio interference. Sadly, after *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) and *State of the Union* (1948) the forward-thinking venture soon faltered.



**C**inema was an almost mystical experience for Frank Capra, who is often hailed as the screen champion of the common man. In his memoir, *The Name Above the Title* (1971), the celebrated director compared a trip to the movies with, 'a magic carpet from which the abracadabra of science conjured hopes, fears and dreams!' while also admitting he, 'vaulted to fame on its witchery'.

Born near Palermo, Italy in 1897, Capra's ascent to stardom was extraordinary. Seeking a better life overseas, his impoverished family came to America when he was aged just six. Traumatized by a long sea journey in steerage, he felt adrift, later acknowledging that he hated 'being a scrounging new kid in a Sicilian ghetto of LA. My family couldn't read or write. I wanted out. I looked for a device, a pole to catapult myself across the tracks'.

Capra swiftly realised that his best route out was through education. Filled with drive, confidence and keen ambition, he gained a degree in chemical engineering but soon found himself beguiled by the fledgling

world of film and dedicated himself to acquiring comprehensive knowledge of the business. His natural talent, bolstered by technical aptitude, was a winning combination and his flair for visual gags quickly proved indispensable while working on silent films for the likes of Mack Sennett.

By 1927, Capra had gravitated to Columbia Studios. Tough boss Harry Cohn respected Capra, giving him free rein to become a star director. Known for his versatility, Capra's comedic touch was perfectly demonstrated in his first major hit, screwball comedy *It Happened One Night* (1934). Starring Clark

Gable and Claudette Colbert, this embryonic romcom portraying an heiress entangled with a rogue reporter would go on to win all five main categories at the Oscars.

This success firmly established Columbia – and Capra's reputation too – but ironically it also triggered an unexpected crisis of faith in the 37-year-old director. 'All roads from Everest led downwards,' he declared and, feeling somewhat depressed and confused, he took a break.

Then serendipity intervened. While ill in bed and running a fever, he later described how a mysterious, unnamed figure paid him a visit, ➤

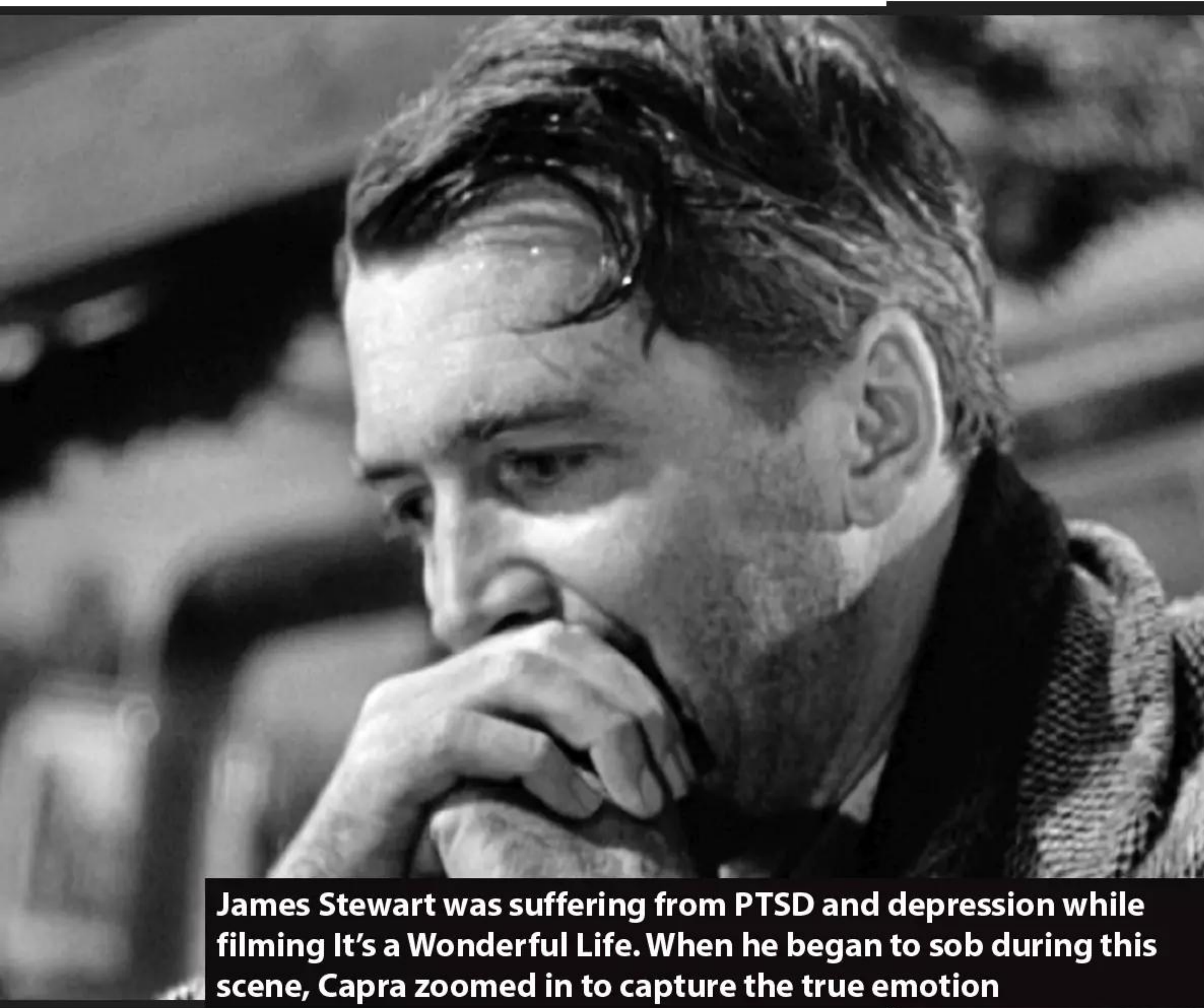
**He's the man who created the feel-good film and gave Hollywood its heart. Amanda Hodges reveals how the iconic director made magic happen in the movies**



Despite her confident persona, Jean Arthur suffered from chronic stage fright, often vomiting between takes

# ERFUL LIFE





warning him sternly to stop wasting his God-given gifts and to share his vision with the world. This strange experience proved a turning point for Capra who came to realise the enormous power and potential of cinema, saying, 'You can speak to millions for two hours and in the dark, lift the human spirit.'

### FOR THE LITTLE GUY

Pure entertainment no longer sufficed. 'My films had to say something,' Capra decided. So he'd trust his gut instinct, his creed, 'one man, one film' (sometimes alienating screenwriters such as Robert Riskin who provided much material) and putting his name above the title in distinctive fashion.

The signature Capraesque style evolved: uplifting, compassionate films depicting an ordinary man of conviction striving to maintain integrity in the face of misfortune or manipulation. Cynics called it 'Capra-corn', but they misunderstood the inherent sentiment native to such stories.

Mr Deeds Goes to Town (1936) was the first to showcase Capra's new breed of film. Part-time poet Longfellow Deeds inherits a fortune, deflecting unscrupulous individuals while safeguarding his beliefs. Capra knew his leading



man immediately. 'It had to be Gary Cooper... every line in his face spelled honesty.'

This film epitomised the moral foundation upon which Capra's successes were built. Jean Arthur, Capra's favourite actress, played the wily reporter who succumbs to Cooper's homespun charm, a role that brought her stardom. Arthur said of the director's behaviour on set, 'you won't hear him, he never raises his voice. Sometimes he'll ask electricians, "How did it look?" But he's invisible. He's so tiny you could almost not see him [Capra was a short, stocky man]. He's a great director and does it seemingly without effort.'

Capra, by now a happily married family man, enjoyed creating convivial environments for cast and crew, a director at home in the company of actors; his favourites – leads like Cooper and James Stewart, and character actors such as Lionel Barrymore or Edward Arnold, regularly appearing in his

films. He became one of the most influential directors of the Thirties, winning three Academy Awards for Best Director from six nominations.

The delightful *You Can't Take It with You* (1938) was a deft, enormously popular comedy, offering a beacon of optimism as America navigated the Depression years. Emphasising the power of dreams and the importance of kindness, its plot follows the eccentric Sycamore family led by its patriarch (Lionel Barrymore) who thwarts society's obsession with material success.

### MR CAPRA GOES TO TOWN

His next triumph saw Jimmy Stewart and Jean Arthur star in the enduringly powerful *Mr Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) – a potent screen statement of Capra's patriotic beliefs (something he also explored later in 1941's *Meet John Doe*). Released just as Hitler invaded Poland, Mr Smith gave Americans, and all who championed liberty,



some hope in the power of an individual to transcend overwhelming adversity.

Youth leader Jefferson Smith (Stewart) is nominally appointed a Senator, but the prevailing powers reckon without his determined integrity. Refusing to countenance widespread corruption, Smith finds himself framed but bravely fights on, compelling attention in a marathon filibuster engineered by his disillusioned but competent secretary Saunders. 'I wouldn't give you two cents for all your fancy rules if, behind them, they didn't have a little bit of plain, everyday kindness,' he says, 'and a little looking out for the other fella, too!'

Jefferson Smith's unfailing belief in the philosophy of America's Founding Fathers echoes young Capra's awe when, arriving in New York harbour as a child and first witnessing the Statue of Liberty, his father heralded 'the light of freedom' it represented. Given the tone of his films, many considered Capra liberal, but he was a complex man who actually remained a lifelong and conservative Republican.

During the Second World War, Capra volunteered for duty, later writing, 'I had a guilty conscience. In my films I championed the gentle, the poor, the downtrodden. Yet [extravagantly rewarded by Hollywood] I'd begun to live like the Aga Khan.' Refused active duty, he became a Major and produced acclaimed morale-boosting material for America, initiating a series of short films, *Why We Fight*.

## MAGIC MOMENTS

Post-war years brought the film that ensured his screen longevity, namely *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), now perceived as a Christmas staple although made during a summer heatwave. 'It was the story I'd been looking for all my life,' said Capra, 'my favourite because it epitomises everything I tried to say in all other films in one package'; his belief being that life was wonderful, despite all inherent challenges. But who could embody George Bailey, the film's altruistic hero who finds unexpected redemption courtesy of guardian angel, Clarence? 'I knew one man who could play it. From an enlisted private he'd worked his way up to colonel, leading a squadron of B24 bombers. James Stewart,' said Capra.

Tentatively readjusting to civilian life, Stewart accepted the role, sight unseen, producing one of his greatest performances, an *Everyman* with whom many can identify. When George breaks down in a bar after an exceptionally bad day, Stewart felt engulfed by real experience and started crying, unscripted. 'I felt the loneliness, the hopelessness of people who'd nowhere to turn and my eyes filled with tears,' he said.

So much about *It's a Wonderful Life* resonates today, its emphasis on the richness of friendship and community eternally important. But, although successful, it was a box office disappointment and lost out to the more topical post-war romance, *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), at the Oscars. It also received mixed reviews from critics

who called it 'sentimental hogwash' and sneered at its 'Pollyanna platitudes'. It wasn't until three decades after its release, when it started being shown on TV, that the film became an established classic.

## AHEAD OF HIS TIME

Capra, meanwhile, continued working intermittently until the Sixties, but found himself out of step in more freewheeling times. Until his death in 1991, he'd spend later life cultivating avocados and collecting rare books in California, briefly buoyed by the stellar success of his Seventies autobiography which reintroduced his work to a new and appreciative generation.

Contemporary director, Alexander Payne, believes that comedy was crucial within Capra's world, creating a strong bond with his audience. 'If you entertain with laughter they might sit still for a message. Comedy is born from pain and anguish.'

In much of Capra's work there is a distinctly dark underbelly, many major characters reaching a spiritual nadir or contemplating suicide before redemption beckons. What most mattered was Capra's deep, life-affirming humanity and his ability to connect. 'I was adopted by the world's average guy,' he said, 'because I could communicate in the universal language of the heart.'

Of Capra's legacy, film historian Ian Freer says, 'He created feel-good entertainment before the phrase was invented. His influence – from Steven Spielberg to David Lynch – is simply too huge to calculate.' And, accepting a Lifetime Achievement award in 1982, Capra summarised his guiding philosophy. 'It's the love of people. Add two simple ideals to this: the freedom of each individual and the equal importance of each individual, and you have the principle upon which I based all my films.'

Capra and Stewart pictured in 1985 at a lunch to celebrate the director's work



**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

Capra's engineering background meant he adapted more easily to the new era of sound technology than many of his contemporaries who felt it might be a passing fad. Capra welcomed the innovation, recalling, 'I wasn't at home in silent films.'





# Reel obsession

Winnie Innes of Oldham in Lancashire reveals her seven favourite films of all time

**F**or my first choice, I'd have to say **BEN-HUR (1959) (1)** for the sheer scale of the production. It was made during a time when Hollywood used massive sets, thousands of extras, and real stunts to create breathtaking spectacles. It may be the story of Jesus, but it also shows the excess and pageantry of Rome. Added to that, there's macho stars Charlton Heston as Judah Ben-Hur and Stephen Boyd as his former friend, Messala, delivering dramatic and emotionally charged performances.

For its brilliantly complex blend of comedy and drama **THE APARTMENT (1960) (2)** is a film I often return to. I love the innocence of CC Baxter, the pitch-perfect humour, the powerful black and white photography and, last but not least, two great actors, Shirley MacLaine and Jack Lemmon.

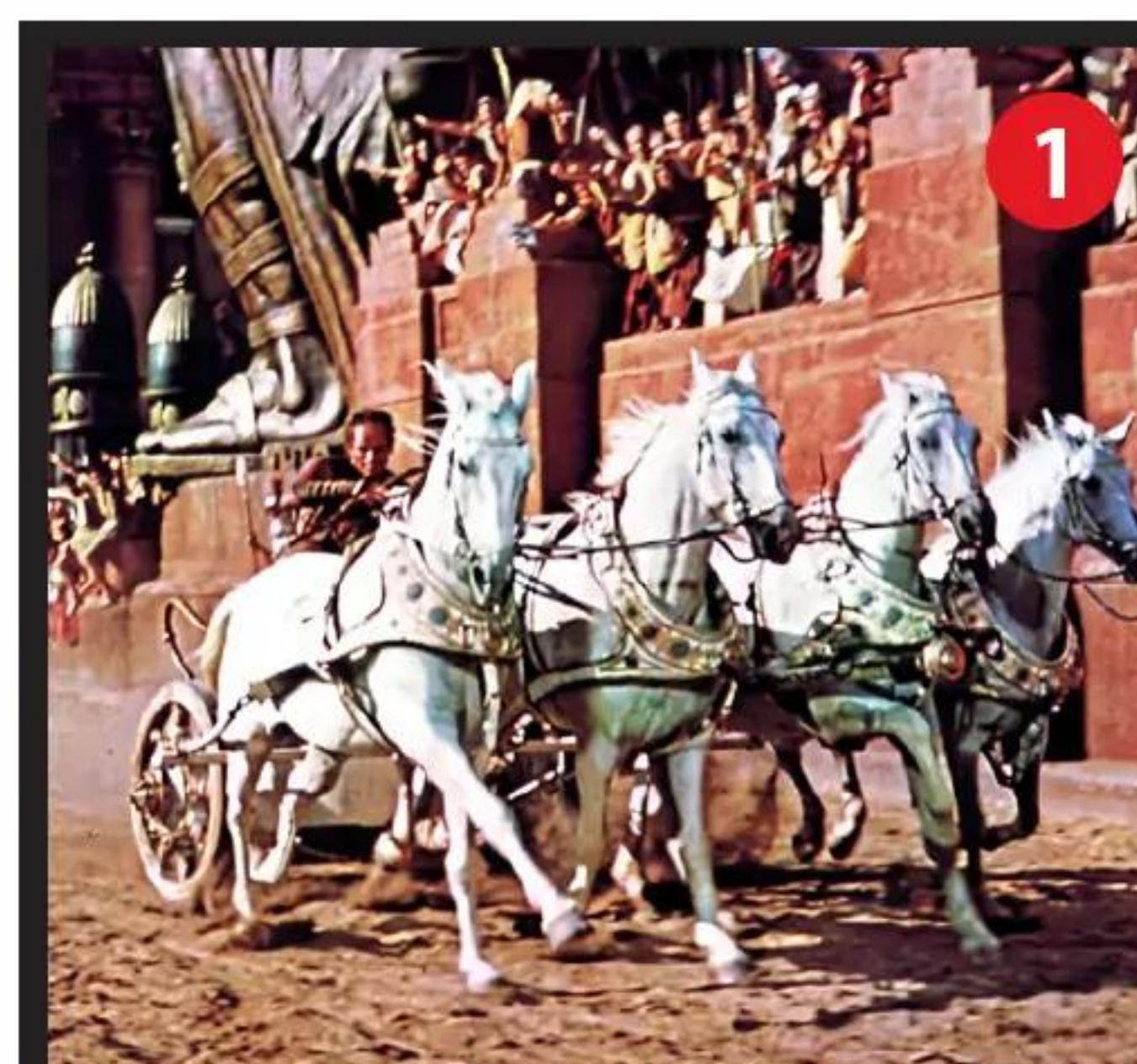
**SPRING AND PORT WINE (1970) (3)** is a downbeat drama focused on the life of a Lancashire family in the Fifties. James Mason plays the patriarch who goes into battle with his teenage daughter over whether she will or will not eat a herring. Supporting Mason is an excellent

cast including Hannah Gordon, Susan George and Rodney Bewes.

Depicting the rise of the mob in early 20th Century **ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA (1984) (4)** begins with four young boys behaving badly who ultimately turn to a life of crime as full-time gangsters. Sergio Leone directs, and Robert De Niro heads up a cast that includes James Woods and his future *Goodfellas* (1990) and *Casino* (1995) co-star, Joe Pesci.

The beautiful voices of Shirley Jones as Julie Jordan and Gordon MacRae as Billy Bigelow alone are enough to recommend **CAROUSEL (1956) (5)**, but it also boasts beautiful New England coastal scenery (shot in glorious CinemaScope) and a wonderful Rodgers and Hammerstein soundtrack which became a national best seller.

If I want guaranteed belly laughs, I turn again and again to the UK's greatest comedian, George Formby. **LET GEORGE DO IT! (1940) (6)** is a particular favourite of mine, in which George, with his ukulele, teams up with



Phyllis Calvert to try to foil a Nazi plot.

Lastly, the film that introduced the world to Julia Roberts' acting talent, **PRETTY WOMAN (1990) (7)**, is a feel-good romcom. Richard Gere is charming and it's clear he and Julia had a natural chemistry together.



Tell us your magnificent seven films and why they mean so much to you. Contact details on page 3



ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S REBECCA PREMIERED OVER 80 YEARS AGO. HOW WELL DO YOU REMEMBER THIS HAUNTING GOTHIC ROMANCE?

**Are you a movie buff?**



- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>1</b> Rebecca is based on a novel by which British author? | <b>3</b> What is the name of the grand estate where much of the film takes place? | housekeeper, Mrs Danvers?   | producer was closely involved in the film and often clashed with Hitchcock? |
| <b>2</b> Who played the unnamed second Mrs de Winter?         | <b>4</b> Who portrayed the cold and sinister                                      | <b>5</b> What tragic event is revealed to have happened to Rebecca? | <b>7</b> How many Oscars did Rebecca win?                                   |
|   |   | <b>6</b> Which Hollywood  |   |

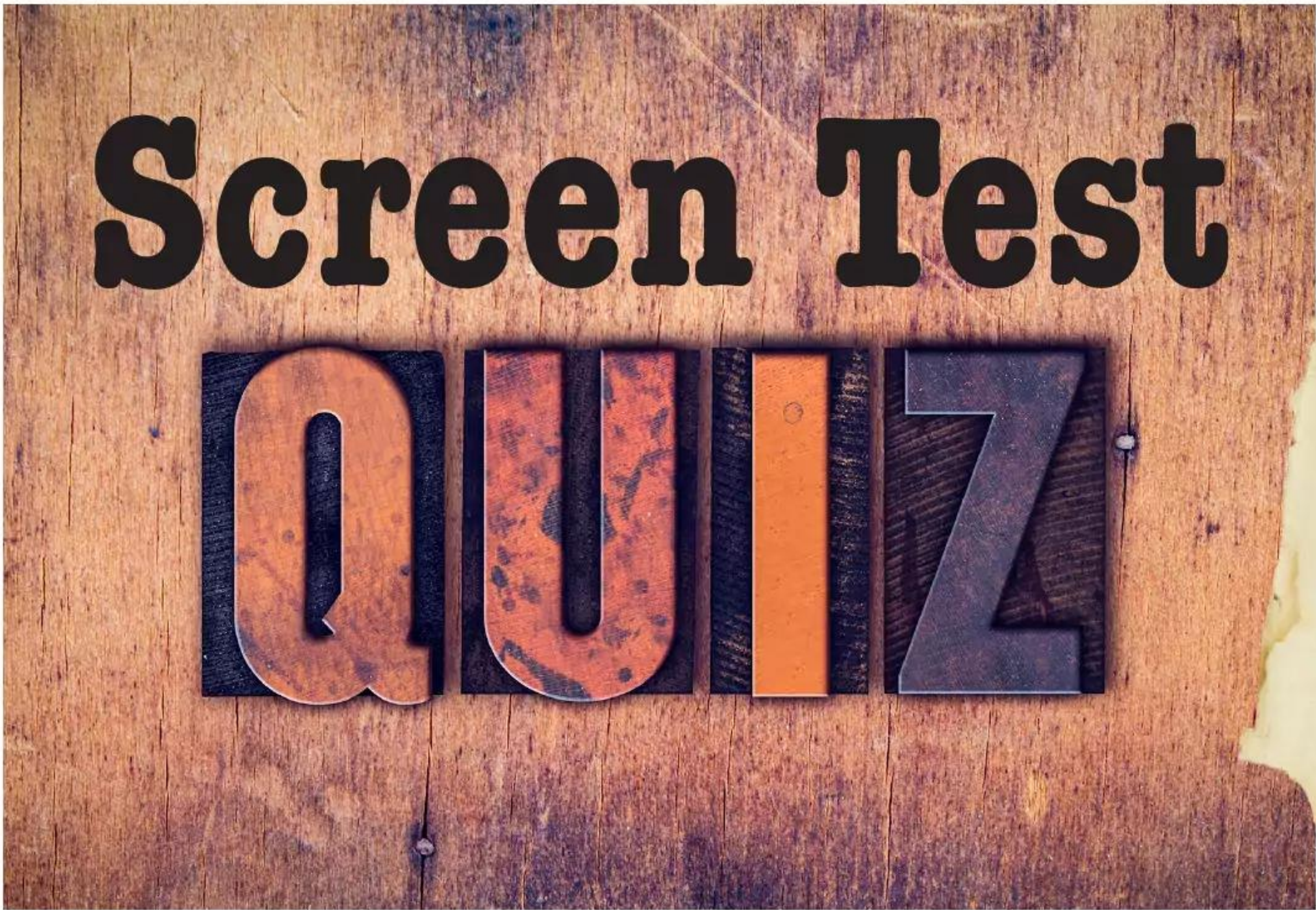
**Who am I?**

How many clues do you need to identify this star?

- 1** I was born in London in 1927 and spent part of the Second World War serving in the Royal Army Service Corps.
- 2** I worked as a model and briefly studied at RADA.
- 3** In the late Fifties and early Sixties, I gained popularity starring in British TV adventure series such as Ivanhoe and The Saint.
- 4** I took over one of cinema's most iconic roles in the Seventies, bringing a smoother, more humorous tone to the character.
- 5** I was an activist for children and became a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in 1991.

**PIXELLATE**  
Which of Elizabeth Taylor's seven husbands is she photographed with here and when were they married?

Time to test your film knowledge.  
It may be just for fun but pride is at stake...



**IN A SPIN**  
Can you unravel these anagrams to reveal the titles of five Frank Sinatra films?  
**1** POSH HIYA  
**2** PEST EVILLY  
**3** AGONY EA TRUTH  
**4** ADDS UNS GOLLY  
**5** YOGI HITCHES



**Answers**  
Are you a movie buff?  
1 Daphne du Maurier. 2 Joan Fontaine. 3 Manderley. 4 Judith Anderson. 5 She died in a boating accident, which is later revealed to be more complex and suspicious. 6 David O Selznick. 7 Two – Best Picture and Best Cinematography (black and white).  
Who am I? Roger Moore. Pixellate: Eddie Fisher, 1959-64  
In a Spin. 1 Ship Ahoy. 2 Step Lively. 3 Young at Heart. 4 Guys and Dolls. 5 High Society.



Gene opened Gilda's Club in New York to offer support for cancer patients and their families



Gene Wilder and Gilda Radner were a match made in heaven. But this union of two of comedy's biggest names would be horribly short-lived, as Steve O'Brien explains...

# A love gone too



**W**hen Gene Wilder set eyes on the woman who would become his third wife, he was – by his own admission – looking pretty dapper. ‘The day Gilda and I met,’ the actor reflected in his 2005 memoir, *Kiss Me Like a Stranger*, ‘I was in my make-up and dressed in a tuxedo when I walked up to her to say hello.’

It was Sidney Poitier he had to thank for initiating this meeting. As director of the big-screen comedy *Hanky Panky* (1982), it was the actor-turned-filmmaker who had hired this effervescent veteran of TV’s *Saturday Night Live* (SNL) as Gene’s co-star.

There’s a touching video of Wilder being interviewed by talk show host Bobbie Wygant, around the time of *Hanky Panky*’s release in June 1982, and the look of pure joy on his face when Wygant mentions Radner is priceless. ‘Isn’t she wonderful?’ the interviewer says, as Wilder beams from ear to ear. ‘Why are you smiling?’ Wygant asks. ‘If you wanna know what I think of her,’ Wilder replies, coyly, ‘it’d be more than wonderful.’

Though it’s a heartwarming clip, it’s also heartbreaking, knowing that, within just seven years, Radner would be gone.

### DEADLY DIAGNOSIS

To the outside world, this was a union forged in comedy heaven. Unlike the actor’s first two wives, Gilda, who, at 35, was 13 years Wilder’s junior, was a fellow performer and almost as famous

as her latest squeeze. As one of the original *Saturday Night Live* players, she’d won an Emmy and had appeared in a successful and critically acclaimed one-woman show on Broadway, titled *Gilda Radner: Live from New York*.

While her career was going from strength to strength, things weren’t so blissful at home. Her marriage to SNL’s musical director GE Smith was on the rocks at the same time as she was battling an eating disorder. But, according to the actress, it was ‘love at first sight’ that day in August 1981 when Gene walked up to her in the 007-like tux.

In her autobiography, *It’s Always Something* (a catchphrase of her SNL character Roseanne Roseannadanna), Gilda wrote movingly of those first impressions of her 48-year-old co-star. ‘My heart fluttered – I was hooked,’ she remembered. ‘It felt like my life went from black and white to Technicolor.’

The two were married on 18 September 1984, in the south of France. The next year, while the couple were filming the movie *Haunted Honeymoon* in London, Gilda suffered a miscarriage. But losing a baby wasn’t the only health concern in the actress’s life – she had long struggled with her weight and eating disorders.

So when she experienced chronic fatigue one Sunday in 1986, both assumed it was to do with her bulimia nervosa. But while the exhaustion continued, other symptoms emerged – stomach and bowel problems as well as leg pain. After months of misdiagnoses, Gilda was diagnosed with stage IV ovarian cancer. She endured months of chemotherapy and was told the treatment was a success – the cancer had gone into remission.

### HEARTBREAK AND LOSS

With her strength returning, she wrote her autobiography, detailing her struggles with

bulimia and cancer, and was well enough to film a guest spot on the sitcom, *It’s Garry Shandling’s Show*, in 1988. But in December that year the cancer had returned. She died on 20 May 1989, aged just 42, with Wilder by her side.

‘When I got there, a night nurse, whom I still want to thank, had washed Gilda and taken out all the tubes,’ the actor told *People* magazine shortly after his wife’s death. ‘She put a pretty, yellow barrette in her hair. She looked like an angel. So peaceful. She was still alive and, as she lay there, I kissed her. But then her breathing became irregular, and there were long gaps and little gasps. Two hours after I arrived, Gilda was gone.’

Though Wilder would go on to marry Karen Boyer in 1991, his relationship with Gilda would continue to influence his life. In 1995, he co-founded the cancer support network *Gilda’s Club* and, three years later, collaborated on the book *Gilda’s Disease* with oncologist Steven Piver. He became a passionate advocate for cancer research, even testifying before Congress, where he recounted Radner’s decline.

Wilder himself was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma in 1999, though it was successfully treated. He lived with Alzheimer’s in the last years of his life, dying on 29 August 2016, aged 83.

Gene Wilder and Gilda Radner were, for a tragically short time, Hollywood’s golden couple, two supremely talented and beloved comedians at the peak of their creative powers.

In 2005 Wilder explained to CNN how he was honouring his late partner by not dwelling on the past. ‘If you asked Gilda, she’d say, don’t be a jerk,’ he said. ‘You know, go out, have fun. Would I want to erase the memories I have, the good memories? No, of course not. But I wouldn’t want to mourn for the rest of my life.’

# SOON



## NEXT ISSUE



**The Magnificent Seven** An epic Western with an incredible cast assembled by Yul Brynner. But did he regret signing Steve McQueen?

**Rebels with a curse?** Why did the young cast of *Rebel Without a Cause* all die in such tragic circumstances?

**The 'lost' interview** Famed Swiss beauty Ursula Andress chats about friendships, passion and love.

**Doctor Who companions** The Time Lord's top 10 sidekicks.

**Plus remembering...** Katharine Hepburn, John Ford, David Soul, Orson Welles, Ray Milland, Vivien Leigh and Richard Beckinsale.

**On sale 25 September**

**Cut-out-and-keep posters to collect...**

## FREE CLASSIC POSTER

**W**alt Disney had been planning to make a film of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* since the Thirties. An animators' strike in the early Forties had led Disney to successfully experiment with mixing live action and animation. Now, with post-war financial restrictions in place, Disney had money tied up in Europe, and saw an opportunity to use it to shoot his first fully live-action film in Britain.

Partnering with RKO, who also had revenues 'frozen' in the UK, they secured an all-British cast including Robert Newton as Long John Silver, Basil Sydney as Captain Smollett and the likes of Sam Kydd, John Gregson and John Laurie as the ship's crew.

The one exception was 13-year-old American Bobby Driscoll as Jim Hawkins. Driscoll had been acting since the age of five and had an Oscar for outstanding juvenile actor for the thriller *The Window* (1949) – what he didn't have, however, was a permit to work in Britain. Disney, Driscoll and his father were fined £100 each and he was prohibited to work on the film, but Disney pressed on, completing Driscoll's scenes while the court case was under appeal.

The most memorable performance was that of Newton as Long John Silver. His portrayal, and exaggerated West Country accent, became the template for all future pirates. So much so there is an annual International Talk Like a Pirate Day, held on 19 September.

**The ship, built in 1887, was sold to RKO in 1948. After serving as the *Hispaniola* in *Treasure Island* it was repurposed as the *Pequod* in *Moby Dick* (1956) and again for the TV series *The Buccaneers* (1956). It was destroyed by fire in 1972.**



Shakespearean actor Geoffrey Wilkinson made his one and only big-screen appearance as Ben Gunn



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**ROBERT  
NEWTON**  
as Long John Silver



**BOBBY  
DRISCOLL**  
as Jim Hawkins



**BASIL  
SYDNEY**  
as Captain Smollett

Walt Disney's

*Presentation of*

**ROBERT LOUIS  
STEVENSON'S**

# Treasure Island

*Color by* **TECHNICOLOR**

Produced by PERCE PEARCE Directed by BYRON HASKIN  
Screenplay by LAWRENCE E. WATKIN Distributed by RKO Radio Pictures, Inc.



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