

The Magnificent Seven – The Greatest Western Ever Made

Written by Andy Owen



Released in 1960 and I never tire of it.

And that incredible soundtrack by Elmer Bernstein is the most recognised film theme in movie history.

Stirring.

Unforgettable.

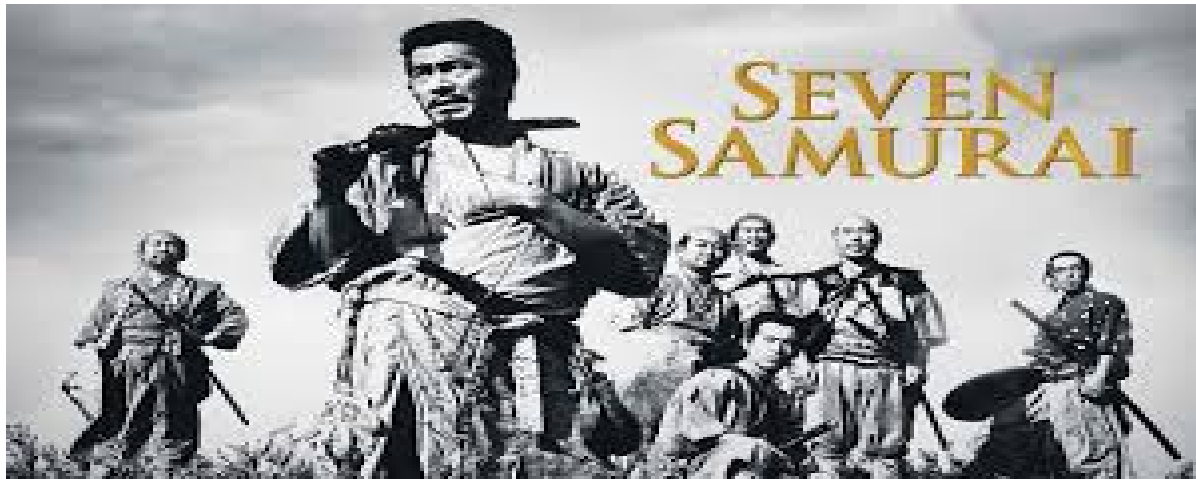
But the film nearly didn't get out of the starting gate...

It was effectively a re-imagining of a Japanese film by director Akira Kurosawa in 1954, called the Seven Samurai.

Its original title was '*Shichinin no samurai.*'

The storyline is the same. Farmers from a village exploited by bandits, hire a veteran samurai for protection, who gathers six other samurai to join him.

The action was set in 1586 and starred Toshiro Mifune, who appeared later in many other Hollywood films.



The film was released in the United States in 1955 with subtitles – and called *The Magnificent Seven*.

It won many awards and featured in numerous film festivals.

Anthony Quinn saw it and was quite taken with it.

He was pals with Yul Brynner at the time and they both thought the idea would convert quite well into a western.

Quinn wanted to star in it.



The timing appeared to be right.

Brynner was set to become a movie mogul after being handed a record \$25 million from United Artists, to make 11 pictures.

That was an awful lot of money in the late 50's.

This came after his success in *'The King and I'* in 1956 – a performance that won him the Oscar for Best Actor.

And a starring role in *'The Ten Commandments'* in the same year.

His first project was *The Gladiators* on a \$5.5 million budget.

Quinn tried to buy the rights to the *Magnificent Seven*.

But a smart producer and writer - Lou Morheim – beat him to it.

He acquired the rights to remake the film in the US. He only paid \$2,500.

This was a stroke of genius...

He was quickly approached by Brynner.

Discussions took place and Morheim signed a deal with Brynner's production company, who bought the rights from him for \$10,000 up front, plus \$1,000 a week as an associate producer - plus 5% of the net profits.

Not a bad return on investment!

Brynner approached producer Walter Mirisch with the idea.

Mirisch loved it and saw it as a great opportunity. He made Brynner an attractive offer, (unknown, but clearly profitable), bought the rights and quickly finalised a deal with United Artists.

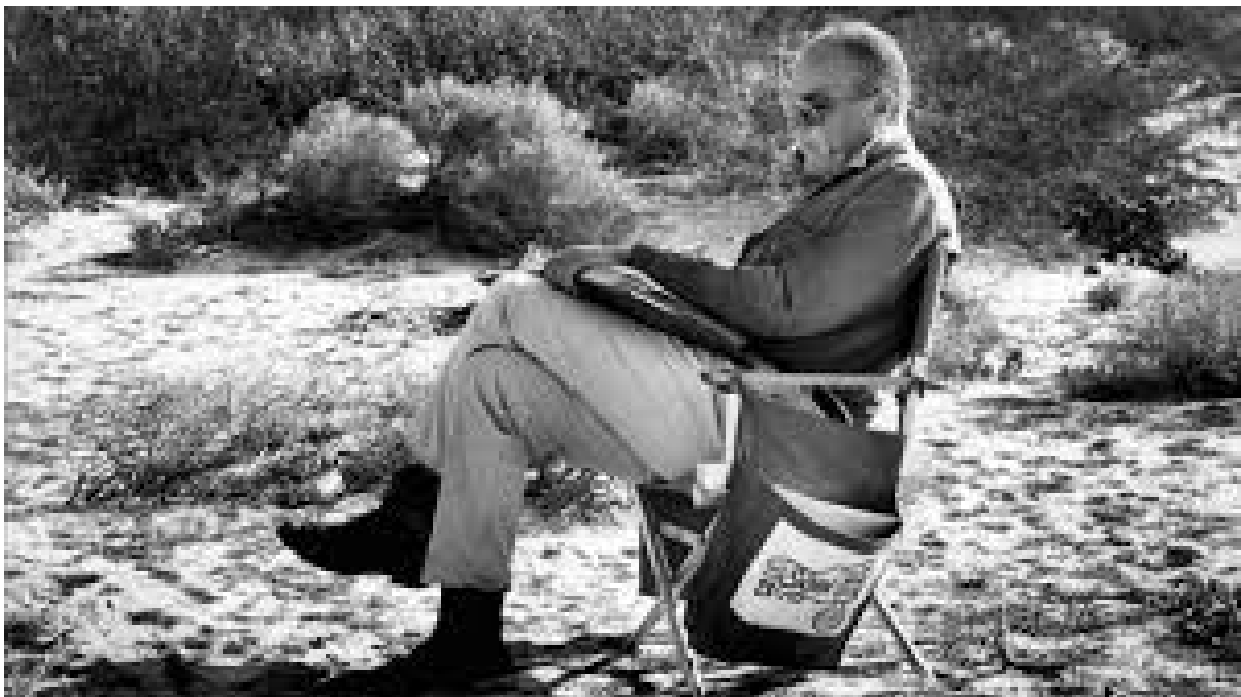
Anthony Quinn went mental.

He sued Brynner for \$650,000 for breach of contract and claimed that he and Brynner had developed the concept together and had worked out many of the film's details, before the two fell out.

Quinn ultimately lost his claim, because there was nothing in writing.

Many directors were auditioned and finally, John Sturges got the job.

He was chosen to direct, as he was well respected for his work in the genre with films like '*Bad Day at Black Rock*' and '*Gunfight at the OK Corral*'.



John Sturges

When it came to appointing a writer, things once again became rather shambolic...

It appears that originally, Morheim had commissioned Walter Bernstein to produce the first draft screenplay 'faithfully' adapted from the original Japanese script.

But when Mirisch and Brynner took over the production, this all changed.

They brought in Walter Newman, whose version is predominately what you see on screen.



Walter Newman

But when Newman was unavailable to be on set during the film's principal photography in Mexico, William Roberts – another writer, was hired, in part to make changes required by the Mexican censors.

When Roberts asked the Writers Guild of America for a co-credit, Newman got very angry.

It was his original screenplay after all – and it was his work that had been doctored – quite brutally in parts – so he asked that his name be removed from the credits.

I hope he got paid...

Entertainment writer Glen Lovell later commented on this.

"Let's set the record straight.

The wrong person received screen credit. Walter Newman, a former newspaperman best known for Ace in the Hole and Man with the Golden Arm, wrote that script. But because a guild strike had been called, he refused to go on location to Mexico for rewrites.

Sturges, desperate, called upon friend and neighbour William Roberts. The idea was that Roberts would act as glorified secretary to Sturges and not lobby for screen credit.

It didn't turn out that way; Roberts wanted credit. And Newman, outraged, asked for his name to be taken off the film. So, the credits carry only Roberts' name. I have since contacted the Screen Writers Guild about redressing this problem. They tell me that since Newman voluntarily turned down the credit there's nothing they can do."

Sturges added to this later. *"Pretty much all the good stuff in it, was in the original script by Newman.*

The whole spin of the picture, the characterisations and all that- were Newman's. Unfortunately, his stubbornness robbed him of an important credit."

Sturges began the planning of the movie.

Brynner was to play the leader - Chris Adams - a Cajun gunslinger.



That was, of course, written in stone...

And then there was one....

When casting began, because the adaptation was essentially his idea, Brynner was consulted about the casting of his companions.

Sturges was very keen to have Steve McQueen in the picture, as he had just worked with him on the 1959 film, *Never So Few*. Brynner fully agreed.

But there was a problem. McQueen was playing the leading role in a popular TV series called *'Wanted Dead or Alive'* at the time.



Producer Dick Powell understandably didn't want to lose him for months while he made the film, so refused to release him from his contract.

McQueen's agent came up with the solution.

McQueen, an experienced race car driver, staged a car accident and claimed that he could not work on his series, because he had suffered a whiplash injury and had to wear a neck brace.

During his 'recuperation', he was free to appear in *The Magnificent Seven*. He was offered the part of Vin Tanner, a drifter.

And then there were two...

The production team faced resistance from the studio in their choices to fill the other five roles.

There was extreme reluctance to cast Charles Bronson, James Coburn, Brad Dexter and Robert Vaughn, who were, at the time, all pretty much unknowns.

And Horst Buchholz was a 'European' and there were many voices saying he had no right to be in a western.

Despite all of this pressure, Sturges insisted on their inclusion, believing in their potential to contribute to the film's success.

Robert Vaughn was only a few years into his film career, when he was asked by Sturges to do a screen test. In fact, his first film appearance was in 1956, as an extra in *The Ten Commandments*. You can see him in a chariot scene behind Yul Brynner.



Vaughn remembered the audition in a book he wrote later in his life.

"The director had seen me in my first big movie, The Young Philadelphians and by then I'd done TV shows such as Dragnet and Gunsmoke.

At that time, an axe was hanging over every movie project in Hollywood, because of an actor's strike that was due to start at the end of the week at 5pm on Friday.

Unless the casting for the picture was completed by noon on that Friday, production couldn't begin".

Sturges told Vaughn he wanted to cast him, based on his performance in *The Young Philadelphians*.

Sturges said, *"We don't have a script, just Kurosawa's picture to work from. You'll have to go on faith. But we'll be filming in Cuernavaca. Ever been there? You'll love it - it's the 'Palm Springs of Mexico'."*

Vaughn told Sturges, *"I'm in"*. The role of Lee, the traumatised veteran, was filled.

And then there were three...

Sturges then asked, *"And do you know any other good young actors? I've got four other slots to fill and not a lot of time"*.

Vaughn suggested James Coburn - and told Sturges he would contact him.

That very same day, he bumped into Coburn at an L.A. supermarket.

To be faithful to the Japanese original, an expert knife-thrower was an essential character component in the film. Sturges had offered the role to Sterling Hayden and John Ireland, but they both turned it down, because the role had hardly any lines.

Vaughn suggested to Sturges that Coburn would be ideal for the role. They had actually been classmates in LA City College and were close friends.

Coburn was a great fan of the Japanese film, having seen it twelve times in twelve days and was delighted to accept the role of the knife-wielding Britt.



And then there were four...

Charles Bronson had been a pretty busy actor since 1951 and played several roles in movies towards the end of the 50's.

In 1959, he worked with Sturges, playing a supporting role in an expensive war film, 'Never So Few'

Sturges wanted him in the film and he was cast in the role of Bernardo O'Reilly, the professional in need of money.



And then there were five...

The role of Chico, the young, hot-blooded shootist, was not an easy one to fill and numerous actors were considered,

But Horst Buchholz had done well in the mid to late fifties and his stock was rising.

Because of his good looks, he was compared with James Dean – and he co-starred with Hayley Mills in Tiger Bay in 1959.



He was invited to test for the part – and he was offered the role.

And then there were six...

Brad Dexter had pretty much been a 'jobbing actor' from 1946, when he started his career playing a part in a Roy Rogers film.

He appeared in many films, then shifted largely into television. He appeared in numerous popular series, such as 'Wagon Train', '77 Sunset Strip' and many more.

Both Sturges and Mirisch had worked with Dexter before, but he wasn't front of mind for one of the seven. That is, until Frank Sinatra intervened.

Frank helped Brad all he could with his film roles. He heard that there was this character in The Seven still open and Frank asked Sturges if he would hire Brad.

So, he did...



The role of Harry Luck, the fortune seeker, became Dexter's best-known role and most famous film.

And then there were seven...

The final key role to fill was Calvera, the bandit.

Eli Wallach was approached and sent the script.

"I don't know how I was selected. I got a call. Didn't have to read.

I asked, what is the role you wanted me to play? They said the Head Bandit."

At first, however, Wallach was concerned about the relative scarcity of his screen time.

"After re-reading the script," Wallach wrote in his autobiography, "I realised that even though I only appeared in the first few minutes of the film, the natives spoke about my return for the next 45 minutes: 'Calvera's coming.' 'When is he coming back?' - so, I decided to do the part."



Sturges had his main men. And only just in time.

It was all signed, sealed and delivered, just before the strike started, so they were good to go. And, as they were filming in Mexico, there were no heavy studio issues.

Filming started on March 1st 1960 and was problematical from the start.

Both the village and the US border town were built for the film.



The location filming was in Cuernavaca, Durango and Tepoztlán -and at the Churubusco Studios in Mexico City.

The remote locations presented numerous logistical and environmental challenges, as the weather was very hot and language barriers created obstacles.

Other locations included, Tucson (USA), Bavispe (Mexico), La Presa El Novillo (Mexico), Bacanora (Mexico), Huasabas (Mexico).

The Magnificent Seven featured Mexican household names like Jorge Martínez de Hoyos, who played Hilario, Rosenda Monteros as Petra and Rico Alaniz as Sotero, among others.

Because it was filmed in Mexico, the censors were very strict.

They imposed restrictions on the portrayal of Mexicans, as they had become very unhappy about how Hollywood had portrayed Mexican people over the years.

All this greatly influenced script adjustments and character development and gave Sturges no end of problems.

The censors knew they had a strong position and they were determined to create the right image this time.

One of the key elements was that the villagers had to look clean in every scene. Because of this, production was constantly delayed to ensure costumes were always impeccably clean and ironed.



During the first scenes, Sturges realised immediately that he had cast 'six prima donnas' and would need to keep a tighter control of the actors than usual.

Brynner, who'd won an Oscar for The King And I, felt he was the biggest star – and was aloof and distant - and stayed in a private house.

He thought he deserved this - and lived the life of a Pasha on the Mexican set.

The rest of the cast, crew and director made do with a motel.

What Sturges didn't bargain for, was the one-upmanship and infighting among the cast members.

Because of Brynner's lofty attitude, he was resented by some of the others who shared trailers and did not have many amenities on location.

Right from day one, there was a great deal of rivalry on set. Especially between Brynner and McQueen.

They were constantly trying to 'outdo' each other.



McQueen had complained that his character had only originally been given seven lines of dialogue in the original shooting script.

That was extended to 75 lines, but he still wasn't happy.



McQueen – on numerous occasions - tried to upstage Brynner and draw attention to himself, including shielding his eyes with his hat, flipping a coin during one of Brynner's speeches - and rattling his shotgun shells.

Brynner would often build up a little mound of earth to make himself look as tall as McQueen, only to have McQueen kick the dirt out of place when he passed by.

When quizzed by reporters about this rivalry, Brynner issued a press statement saying, *"I never feud with actors. I feud with studios."*

They were all frantically trying to out-ride and out-shoot each other. The set was, as Steve McQueen's widow Niele put it, *"fraught with testosterone"*.

And, as Vaughn said in an interview years later, *"All of us wanted to upstage Brynner."*

The lead actors all diligently practiced their shooting, so the scenes looked as realistic as possible. In fact, Brynner took quick-draw lessons from Rodd Redwing, who was a notable Native American actor and a firearm, knife, tomahawk and whip instructor.

In addition, they all performed most of their horse-riding stunts which greatly contributed to the visual impact of the film.

One other interesting point to mention here – and a somewhat topical one following the recent tragedy in the filming of the western, *Rust* - is that live bullets were regularly used on the set.

That famous scene early on in the movie, where Brynner and McQueen took the body up to Boot Hill on a horse-drawn hearse, is particularly relevant.

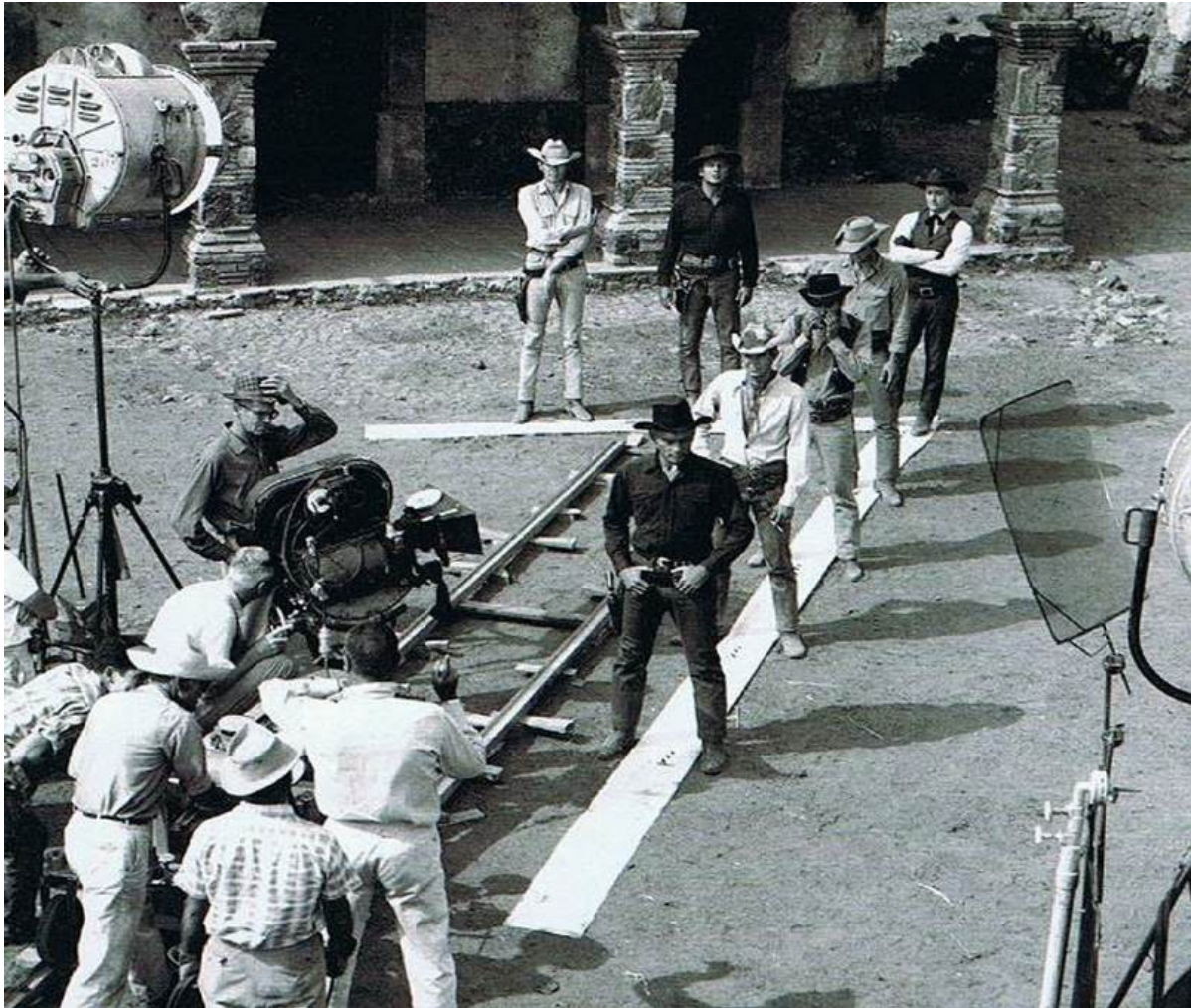
Brynner noticed a curtain moving in an upstairs window on a building and mentioned it to McQueen. He blasted the window with his rifle.



That, apparently, was a live round.

But, despite all the issues on set and off it, Sturges got it done.

It was a great achievement how he handled this bunch of diverse characters and created this masterpiece. Every shot is well planned and artistically delivered.



The film moves along at a brisk pace – and the different characters are introduced and developed masterfully.

To the delight – I’m sure – of the Mexican censors, the poor, put-upon villagers are displayed in pure white for the vast majority of the film and are sympathetically portrayed.

The film was released in the US by United Artists on October 12th 1960.

It was never really ‘launched’ and was just shown in different states at different times.

It never had a premiere and never appeared in a Broadway cinema, like other top films.

After its release, it received mixed reviews.

The film struggled at the box office and failed to make a significant impact initially. It was quickly becoming a turkey.

Then something strange happened. The movie was released in Europe and Japan and cinemagoers loved it.

It was a big hit in the UK – and French audiences, in particular, appreciated the film's stylistic elements and ensemble cast, contributing to its growing popularity.



This international acclaim and growing cult status, got back to the US and it was revived and shown on television.

It attracted record audiences.

The home video market also helped introduce the film to a new generation of viewers.

The film's transformation into a real cult classic was set.

Eventually, the film was both a critical and commercial success and by the 1980's, 'The Magnificent Seven' was widely regarded as a classic of the Western genre.

It influenced a host of subsequent films and television shows - and its themes of heroism and camaraderie continued to resonate.

The film's enduring popularity led to several sequels, a television series and a 2016 remake, all of which contributed to its lasting legacy.



Why was the film such a great success?

Well, I suppose the answer to that, is pretty simple...

It's all about the good guys beating the bad guys. Seven diverse individuals - all scallywags in their own way - joining together to form a formidable team.

It's victory of good over evil - against the odds - shown in a simplistic and understandable way.

Added to this, was the masterful direction from Sturges, high quality acting from all the cast - and that incredible score from Elmer Bernstein.

An irresistible recipe...

Of course, in the final scene, Yul Brynner sighs as he looks over the graves of his dead friends - and tells Steve McQueen that they lost - but, we all know they didn't.

It's a film full of hope rather than regret.

Truly *magnificent*...



Here's a bit more interesting information about the key players, that I managed to dig up, whilst researching this article. Worth a few more minutes of your time...

YUL BRYNNER (1920-1985)

Fluent in many languages, he was employed during World War II by the US Office of War Information, as a French-speaking radio announcer and commentator, broadcasting to occupied France.

He also worked for the Voice of America, delivering programmes in Russian in to the Soviet Union. During this time, he was also studying acting in the evenings.

The Russian actor Michael Chekhov who had a theatre company, was his tutor - and Chekhov also employed him as a truck driver and stage hand.

Although Brynner had become a naturalised U.S. citizen in 1943, aged 22, while living in New York as an actor and radio announcer - he renounced this citizenship in June 1965.

It was all because his tax exemption as an American resident working abroad was removed. Apparently, he had stayed too long in the US, meaning he would be bankrupted by his tax and penalty debts imposed by the Internal Revenue Service.

By his mid-twenties, he was a very well-travelled man. This exposed him to a wide variety of cultures and his knowledge of people and life.

Josh Brolin's father shared his memories of working with Brynner, pointing out that the Hollywood legend had also been a trapeze acrobat in the circus back in Europe during the 1930s.

"Yul Brynner 'was always in pain", Brolin said: "He fell from up high and broke his back and they said he would never walk again."

As a result, Brynner had developed a drug dependency to deal with the terrible spinal pain, which he was later treated for.

Brolin added: "When I met him he always wore black and many times a red wide patent belt against black and bright red boots. Of course, he never let his posture down because his back always hurt. He never let down; he was always Yul. He was always what he looked like in that film. An interesting guy!"

Brynner smoked up to five packs of cigarettes a day for much of his life, only stopping in 1971.

In 1983 he was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer. In January 1985, he insisted on filming a television commercial, advising everyone, *"Now that I'm gone, I tell you don't smoke."*

The commercial had a profound effect on viewing audiences, since it was released after his death. His decision to share what killed him, gained him a whole new generation of fans who respected and admired him for this unforgettable gesture.

He starred in his last performance of *The King and I* on June 30th, 1985.

He died in New York City on October 10th 1985.

STEVE McQUEEN (1930-1980)

Steve had many nicknames, Mac, McQ and Bandito, but his most famous, was *'The King of Cool.'*

He was a huge box office draw in the 60's and 70's, and starred in the likes of *'The Sand Pebbles'*, *'The Great Escape'*, *'The Cincinnati Kid'* and *'The Thomas Crown Affair.'*

He took a break from acting in the late 1970's, but returned with films like *'Tom Horn'* and *'The Hunter.'*

In 1980 he was paid \$3 million + 15% of gross for his part in *The Hunter*.

One little known fact about him, was that he was a pallbearer at the funeral of Bruce Lee.

The feud between him and Brynner that started on the set of *The Magnificent Seven*, would go on without a resolution for years.

It would take 20 years and a cancer diagnosis for McQueen and Brynner to reconcile their differences.

McQueen, dying of cancer, called Brynner to thank him.

"What for?" queried Brynner. *"You could have had me kicked off the movie when I rattled you,"* replied McQueen, *"but you let me stay and that picture made me, so thanks".*

Is it true that McQueen tried to steal the movie out from under Brynner? I don't think so.

What he tried to do was compete with him, because Steve was a competitor. And Yul didn't pay any attention to it at all, just went ahead and did his own thing.

As far as he was concerned, he was the king, and Steve was a pretender. Steve just finally accepted it.

McQueen became one of Hollywood's biggest stars and still enjoys cult status today.

Steve McQueen died on November 7, 1980, at the age of 50, from cardiac arrest, 12 hours after he had surgery to both remove and reduce metastatic tumours in his neck and abdomen.

JAMES COBURN (1928-2002)

His trademark was a deeply calm yet authoritative voice.

Coburn's first television appearance was in 1953 on Four Star Playhouse.

He was selected for a Remington Products razor commercial, where he was able to shave off 11 days of beard growth in less than 60 seconds. And he joked at the time, that he had more teeth showing on camera than the other 12 candidates for the part.

Early on in his career he played a number of cowboy roles, then appeared in many roles on television.

But he struggled a bit.

"Actors are boring when they are not working. It's a natural condition, because they don't have anything to do. They just lay around, and that's why so many of them get drunk. They really get to be boring people. My wife will attest to that."

Getting the part of knife-wielding Britt in *The Magnificent Seven* was his big breakthrough. And his knowledge of the original Japanese film, helped him enormously.

"I saw it in New York when I was studying back then.

I was absolutely thrilled and shocked; I took people to see it for a week straight.

The character of the great swordsman was the character I related to. I thought, My God, why don't they make movies like this in America?

*Cut to a year later, I'd come back to California and I ran into Robert Vaughn. I said 'What are you doing?' And he said 'I'm doing *The Magnificent Seven*.'*

I said 'What! Has it been cast?' He says 'No, I think there's still some characters.'

I went over to see John Sturges, and John said, 'Yeah, there's one of the seven that hasn't been cast yet.' I said, 'Is that the guy who's the great swordsman in Kurosawa's film?' and he says, 'Yeah, yeah, that's right. I said, 'That's the one I wanna play, John.'

He says, 'I'll let you know by 3 o'clock.' So, at 2:30 I get a call from him: 'Come on over and pick up your knives.'

Coburn's character only had 11 lines. But it was all action. He admitted he got the idea of how to play the character, from Seiji Miyaguchi, who played the part in the original.

"He didn't have to say anything. He just did it."

Coburn and Vaughn developed a lifelong friendship, forged as classmates in school, but they never made another movie together.

Coburn made over 70 films and 100 TV shows in his career.

He won an Academy Award in 1997 for Best Supporting Actor for his role in *'Affliction.'*

James Coburn died on November 18th, 2002, at the age of 74, from a heart attack while listening to music at his home in Beverly Hills.

ROBERT VAUGHN (1932-2016)

His trademark was a distinctive, smooth but often menacing voice.

His nickname was Bob.

Despite being one of the stars, he had only 16 lines in the film.

"With a modest amount of looks and talent and more than a modicum of serendipity, I've managed to stretch my 15 minutes of fame into more than half a century of good fortune."

Vaughn's first credited movie role was in 1957, playing Bob Ford, who murdered the outlaw Jesse James.

He continued to play minor roles, until his big break in *The Young Philadelphians* in 1959. And Paul Newman had a part to play in him getting that role.

"The person who launched my career into A-list movies was Paul Newman.

When my agent called and said Warner Bros. had a role for me in The Young Philadelphians, I mentioned it to Paul, who belonged to the same health club I did.

He told me it was the perfect role for me and offered to do the screen test with me. That was unheard of. In a screen test, you run your lines with a script girl who is off camera. I had never done one before, but Paul did it with me and the result was wonderful".

After his role in *The Magnificent Seven*, he went on to enjoy a stellar television career, starring as Napoleon Solo in the TV series '*The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*' which ran from 1964–1968.

Plus, he landed a notable role in the British TV series '*Hustle*', which ran for 8 years.

Robert Vaughn died on November 11th, 2016, at the age of 83, with his family around him, following a short battle with acute leukemia.

He was the last of the Seven to be transported up to the Saloon Bar in the sky.

BRAD DEXTER (1917-2002)

Brad Dexter is the guy that everybody forgets about.

He was born Boris Michel Soso to Serbian-speaking parents.

At the time of casting, he was living with his mother.

He studied acting at the Pasadena Playhouse after fighting as an amateur boxer.

He went on to star in films like Run Deep, Kings of the Sun and Vigilante Force.

His main claim to fame was that on May 10th, 1964, Dexter saved both Frank Sinatra's life and the life of Ruth Koch (wife of Producer Howard W. Koch), during production of the World War II film, None but the Brave.

They were filming in Kauai, Hawaii. The story goes that Sinatra and Koch were swimming when they were swept out to sea by the outgoing tide.

The waves had become dangerous and they were struggling.

Dexter swam out and rescued them together but he was not able to return them to shore for nearly 45 minutes. Two surfers went to help and they all eventually got back to the beach safely.

Dexter was later awarded a Red Cross medal for his bravery.

He later married singer Peggy Lee and moved into film production. He co-produced 'Lady Sings the Blues' with Diana Ross playing the part of Billie Holiday.

He later co-starred with Sinatra in Von Ryan's Express.

Brad Dexter died on December 12, 2002, at the age of 85, from emphysema.

HORST BUCHHOLZ 1933-2003)

Buchholz was a gamble by Sturges, but it paid off.

He spoke fluent German, English, French, Spanish, Italian and Russian.

He had a number of parts in German films in the 50's and his youthful good looks made him a teen favourite.

In fact, he became known as the 'James Dean of German Cinema'.

He became a big star in 'Confessions of Felix Krull' in 1957 and after The Magnificent Seven he had a successful international career.

He turned down the starring role in A Fistful of Dollars, and in 2000 he shocked his followers by publicly admitting he was bisexual.

"Yes, I also love men. Ultimately, I'm bisexual. I have always lived my life the way I wanted."

After an operation for a hip fracture in 2003, he died on March 3rd 2003, from pneumonia at the age of 69.

CHARLES BRONSON (1921-2003)

Charles Bronson once described himself as *"a rock quarry that someone has dynamited"*.

His nickname was Il Brutto. He served in World War 2.

He spoke fluent Russian, Lithuanian and Greek.

Because of his looks, he frequently played violent characters.

According to co-star Eli Wallach, during filming *"Bronson was a loner who kept to himself."*

After a stuttering acting career, his stock went through the roof after *The Magnificent Seven*.

He appeared alongside McQueen again, in *The Great Escape*.

He starred in films like *'The Mechanic'* *'Dirty Dozen'* and *'Death Wish'* which had numerous sequels.

For his role in *Death Wish 5: The Face of Death* in 1994, he was paid nearly \$6 million dollars.

He struggled with health issues in his later years.

He died on August 30th, 2003, at the age of 81, from pneumonia and complications related to Alzheimer's disease.

ELI WALLACH

His trademark was a raspy gravelly voice.

In 1945 Wallach made his Broadway debut and he won a Tony Award in 1951 for his performance alongside Maureen Stapleton in the Tennessee Williams play *'The Rose Tattoo.'*

Despite the fact that he eventually acted in over 90 films and almost as many television dramas, he continued to accept stage roles.

During the filming, Sturges teased Wallach about his horsemanship.

"Why do you always type while galloping?" he asked. *"Type?"* said Wallach. *"I don't know what you mean."*

"Your right hand is holding the reins with authority," he said. *"But your left bounces up and down as you gallop. It looks like you're typing. Cut it out."*

During the filming of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, Wallach nearly died three times.

The first time was when he accidentally drank a bottle of acid which was placed next to his pop bottle.

The second time was in a scene where he was about to be hanged, and someone fired a pistol and the horse underneath him bolted and ran while Wallach's hands were still tied behind his back

On the third occasion, in the scene, he was lying on a railroad track, and he was nearly decapitated by steps jutting out from the train.

On November 13, 2010, at the age of 94, Wallach received an Academy Honorary Award for his contribution to the film industry from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

He continued to work into his 90's, and his final film appearance was in '*Wall Street - Money Never Sleeps.*' in 2010.

Eli Wallach died on June 24th, 2014, at the age of 98.

JOHN STURGES

Although the film received initial mixed reviews, Akira Kurosawa was so impressed he sent John Sturges a ceremonial sword as a gift.

After '*The Magnificent Seven*', Sturges directed several notable films, the most famous, being *The Great Escape* in 1963.

Sturges had enjoyed working with McQueen and Bronson and, despite Bronson being a loner on set, he felt that once the camera was rolling, they clearly had great chemistry together.

So, he cast them for *The Great Escape* and asked Bernstein to compose the score.

He then went on to direct other notable movies, including '*The Hallelujah Trail*' and '*Ice Station Zebra*'

He continued working into the 1970s, but his later films did not achieve the same level of acclaim.

John Sturges passed away on August 18, 1992, at the age of 82.

Liked this article? Plenty more like this one, on my website:



www.glintoflight.com