

— THE LEGACY OF —

# JAMES BOND

## 007 THROUGH THE YEARS

THE PHENOMENON THAT IS JAMES BOND DATES BACK TO THE 1950S, STARTING FIRST WITH A BOOK SERIES AND THEN BRANCHING OUT INTO A BLOCKBUSTER FILM FRANCHISE. ACTORS HAVE CREATED SUCCESSFUL CAREERS FOR THEMSELVES AND SONGS HAVE BECOME CLASSIC AFTER THEIR ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE MOVIES. THE BOND HALLMARKS ARE SO WELL KNOWN THAT THEY ARE EASILY IDENTIFIABLE: THE MARTINI—SHAKEN NOT STIRRED—THE GLAMOROUS CLOTHES, WOMEN, GADGETS, ASTON MARTIN CAR, AND ACTION SEQUENCES ARE UNMISTAKABLE.

*by Elisa Jordan*



Popperfoto/Getty Images



## IAN FLEMING: BIRTH OF A SPY

Before Bond became the cultural touchstone it is today, it started out the brainchild of British writer Ian Fleming. Fleming's life was pretty much what one would expect of an author capable of writing the James Bond series. He was born on May 28, 1908, to a father who was part of the Fleming & Co. banking fortune and a Member of Parliament. When Valentine Fleming died in 1917 during World War I, none other than Winston Churchill wrote his obituary for *The Times*.

It was the beginning an arduous childhood for Ian Fleming. Mother Evelyn favored eldest son Peter, (there were also two younger brothers and younger half-sister) and Ian continually felt like the family black sheep. The threat of disinheritance always loomed.

Although Fleming's upbringing could be characterized as privileged, he was hardly typical of his peers. At various points he attended exclusive schools Eton and Sandhurst only for Evelyn Fleming to remove him due to "fast" behavior associated with lower classes.

Later, Fleming attended Munich University and University of Geneva. He was not an outstanding student, but displayed an aptitude for learning foreign languages. He spoke German, Russian and French fluently. Upon embarking on a professional life, he worked as a stockbroker before switching to journalism. His talent for languages served him well while working for international news agency Reuters, which sent him on assignments to Berlin and Moscow. "I had a wonderful time in Reuters," Fleming said later. "I learnt there the straightforward writing style that everybody wants to have if they're going to write books."

When World War II broke out, Fleming served in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve. His war record has been exaggerated over the years, but his military service provided fertile ground for the stories that would later inspire his fiction.

**FLEMING WAS A COMPLICATED MAN SCARRED BY HIS PAST AND RIDDLED WITH CONTRADICTIONS. FRIENDS NOTED HIS MELANCHOLY TENDENCIES AND DARK SENSE OF HUMOR, BUT HE WAS ALSO WITTY AND FUN.**

Fleming, for example, worked his way up from lieutenant to commander—a rank he later assigned to James Bond. He also served as assistant to the Director of Naval Intelligence, John Godfrey. Through his work with the Naval Intelligence Division—called Room 39—Fleming was exposed to top-secret missions and confidential operations. He excelled in his work and thrived.

After the war, he returned to journalism. His reputation as a womanizer was also developing, which resulted in a marriage to Ann Charteris after she became pregnant. It proved to be an unhappy marriage, with both partners repeatedly engaging in extramarital affairs.

## THE BIRTH OF BOND

When Fleming began writing James Bond books, the process allowed him to escape into fantasy. In addition to a miserable marriage, he still battled childhood demons. Favored brother Peter, a highly successful travel writer, led a glamorous, excitement-filled life, much to mother Evelyn's delight. In contrast, Evelyn dismissed the James Bond series as an embarrassment.

Ann similarly remained unimpressed with James Bond, no matter how popular the fictional spy became. Ann surrounded herself with intellectuals and reportedly referred to Bond novels as mere "pornography." Fleming was deeply hurt.

Fleming channeled his frustration into Bond. Observers noted many similar personality traits between author and character. Fleming was a complicated man scarred by his past and riddled with contradictions. Friends noted his melancholy tendencies and dark sense of humor, but he was also witty and fun. He was insatiably curious about everything, yet rarely discussed his personal feelings or life. Like Bond, Fleming was a womanizer who drank and smoked—often to excess.

## A LASTING LEGACY

Fleming's lifestyle caused him to struggle with heart disease. Declining health prematurely aged the once handsome author. At age 56, Ian Fleming died of a heart attack on August 12, 1964—his son Caspar's twelfth birthday. Years of stress and hard living had taken their toll.

Though young when he died, Ian Fleming lived long enough to see James Bond achieve great success. The books received a huge boost in credibility when John F. Kennedy listed *From Russia with Love* as one of his 10 favorite books. With the release of the movie *Dr. No* in 1962, Fleming's legacy was firmly in place.



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## IAN FLEMING, ONCE CONVINCED THAT SEAN CONNERY WASN'T RIGHT FOR JAMES BOND, ACTUALLY ADJUSTED BOND'S HERITAGE IN THE BOOKS TO MAKE HIM PART SCOTTISH.

### LOOKING FOR BOND

When EON Productions, founded by Cubby Broccoli and Harry Saltzman, acquired the film rights to Ian Fleming's books in the early 1960s, the search for the perfect James Bond was on.

It was no easy task. A number of actors were discussed, including Richard Burton, George Baker, Patrick Allen, Michael Redgrave, Trevor Howard and Richard Johnson. Cary Grant was seriously considered.

Finally, the name Sean Connery was thrown around. Connery was physically fit enough to play 007, but producers didn't believe he possessed raw sexuality. Ian Fleming had similar doubts and dismissed Connery as "an overgrown stuntman." He suggested a young actor named Roger Moore instead. There was another problem: Sean Connery is Scottish. James Bond is English.

Fortunately, Cubby Broccoli listened to someone with a better eye for men's sexual allure—his wife. "Cubby," Dana Broccoli exclaimed, "he's fabulous!"

### FLESH AND BLOOD BOND

Director Terence Young was certain he could mold Sean Connery into the perfect secret agent.

Like Fleming and Connery, Young had served in the military. Unlike them, he had seen combat and experienced true danger—like Bond. He had also developed tastes for beautiful women, fine wine, good food and tailored clothes.

Sean Connery had the good sense to observe Young, absorbing the director's persona. Young responded by mentoring Connery on Bond's (and his own) finer points. He took Connery to his personal tailor in London and then instructed him to sleep in the custom suit. The goal was to be comfortable in fine clothing under any circumstance.

Young also worked with Connery on his mannerisms, forbidding him from talking with his hands. Young influenced Connery's performance so profoundly that cast and crew wondered if he was simply imitating the director.

"Terence took Sean under his wing," said Lois Maxwell, who played Miss Moneypenny. "He took him to dinner, showed him how to walk, how to talk, even how to eat."

### SEAN CONNERY: SETTING THE STANDARD THE QUINTESSENTIAL JAMES BOND

The man who created James Bond and the man who first embodied him had something very significant in common. Like Ian Fleming, actor Sean Connery was a Royal Navy veteran. Their service allowed both men to bring their military experience to the Bond character, but the similarities end there.

While Fleming was born into an upper class English banking family, Thomas Sean Connery was born in 1930 to working class parents in Scotland. Life for the Connery family was modest. In addition to his military service, Connery worked a variety of jobs, including lifeguard, milkman, truck driver and coffin polisher.

As a teen, Connery developed a keen interest in weight training, a habit that eventually led to modeling and Mr. Universe competitions.

### PIVOTAL MOMENT

At 23, Connery's athleticism led to an offer to play professional football. After weighing his options, he realized a football career would never last past the age of 30. "I decided to become an actor and it turned out to be one of my more intelligent moves," he said years later.

Bit parts followed as he steadily learned his craft. But it wasn't until casting for a new movie based on a series of spy novels that big change came. It was the role of a lifetime and one Sean Connery almost didn't get.



## PRODUCERS DECIDED ON A RELATIVELY UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN MODEL NAMED GEORGE LAZENBY, WHOSE BIGGEST CLAIM TO FAME WAS A CHOCOLATE COMMERCIAL.

### GEORGE LAZENBY: ONE-TIME ONLY

When Sean Connery decided not to return after *You Only Live Twice*, EON Productions was placed in the unenviable position of trying to fill Sean Connery's now-iconic tuxedo. The search for Bond was of such interest to the public that Life magazine documented the entire process.

Producers decided on a relatively unknown Australian model named George Lazenby, whose biggest claim to fame was a chocolate commercial. As Terence Young had once done with Sean Connery, director Peter Hunt believed he could mold Lazenby into the perfect 007. "We wanted someone who oozed sexual assurance, and we think this fellow has just that," Hunt said at the time.

Efforts were made to make the Connery-to-Lazenby transition as smooth as possible for both actor and audience. For *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, many of the familiar James Bond elements returned: the shaken martini, the cigarettes (Lazenby uses the same cigarette case seen in *Dr. No*), the acerbic relationship with M, flirting with Miss Moneypenny. There are also references alluding to earlier plots, signaling that this is the same character and man.

But Lazenby was not to last. He accused producers of not showing him enough respect; in turn, he was accused of arrogance. Co-star Diana Rigg called him "bloody impossible" and Desmond Llewelyn, who played Q, said, "I draw a veil over the chap. How can you expect someone who's never acted before to take on a leading role?"

Despite Lazenby's inexperience and difficulties on the set, EON Productions offered him a seven movie contract. Lazenby's agent was convinced James Bond's popularity would never last into the 1970s and advised his client against the contract. Lazenby took the advice and announced his departure from the series before *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* had been released.

### CONNERY FORMS THE TEMPLATE

Though more gentlemanly than in the books, cinema Bond is not without flaws. He makes occasional mistakes and although he smokes and drinks with a debonair ease, he also does so to excess. In *You Only Live Twice*, for instance, Bond's X-ray shows damage from smoking, as noted by Tanaka. It was a balance of elegance, intelligence and anti-hero. Those nuances made Connery a star and propelled James Bond to a cultural phenomenon. Ian Fleming, once convinced that Sean Connery wasn't right for James Bond, actually adjusted Bond's heritage in the books to make him part Scottish.

After 1962's *Dr. No*, Connery returned as Bond for *From Russia with Love* (1963), *Goldfinger* (1964), *Thunderball* (1965) and *You Only Live Twice* (1967).

### BIDDING FAREWELL

James Bond became box office gold, but Sean Connery was tiring of the role. He complained of the character's limited dimensions and longed for more complicated parts. It was only a matter of time before producers would have to start thinking of a replacement.

Connery's instincts to back away from the character that made him famous were correct. Instead of a career typecast as Bond, he went on to success that spanned decades until retiring in 2012. Not only did Sean Connery turn himself into the quintessential spy—he turned himself into one of the best and well-known actors of his generation. But he is never far from his legacy. He is still the embodiment of James Bond for a great number of fans. He is the gold standard by which all other Bonds are measured.





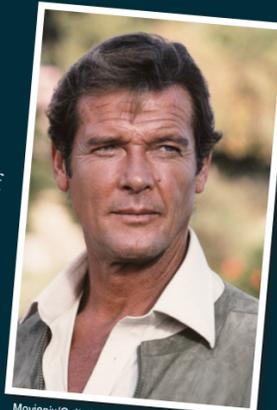
**THE 007 CHARACTER EVOLVED CONSIDERABLY DURING MOORE'S LONG TENURE. JOKES WERE INSERTED TO CATER TO MOORE'S ABILITY TO DELIVER ONE-LINERS. BOND'S GRITTIER QUALITIES WERE SMOOTHED OVER IN FAVOR OF MORE REFINEMENT.**

**ROGER MOORE: NEXT GENERATION**

Roger Moore's name had first been mentioned during the pre-production of *Dr. No*. The time wasn't right for Moore then, but when it came time to cast a new Bond for *Live and Let Die* (1973), EON soon narrowed in on him.

The 007 character evolved considerably during Moore's long tenure. Scripts were tailored to Moore's acting abilities. Jokes were inserted to cater to Moore's ability to deliver one-liners. Bond's grittier qualities were smoothed over in favor of more refinement.

Bond's life becomes increasingly luxurious and the stunts more outrageous. Instead of cigarettes, Moore's Bond flamboyantly smokes cigars. Even his relationship with M softens to the point of respectful.



Moviepix/Getty Images

Before the 1980s began, Moore talked of retiring from the series, though he continued until 1985's *A View to a Kill*. When the movie was released, Moore was 58 and it was clear it was time for a new, younger Bond. But Moore's elegant Bond goes down in history as one of the most iconic and to a generation of fans, it's his portrayal that represents 007.

**TIMOTHY DALTON: THE DARK BOND**

Theater actor Timothy Dalton had first considered as a possible Bond in 1968. Then only 24, Dalton believed himself too young for the character, and did not want to follow Connery.

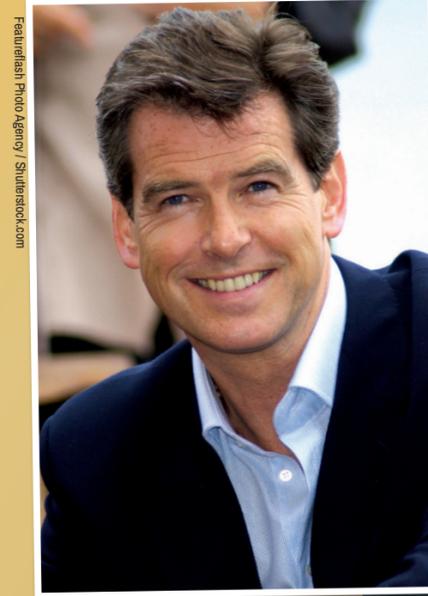
He was considered again in 1980, until Moore decided to continue the role. After Moore's retirement, producers were serious about Dalton as a candidate. Now a more seasoned actor, Dalton was finally ready.

**DALTON MADE IT CLEAR THAT HIS VISION FOR JAMES BOND WAS A DARKER INTERPRETATION CLOSER TO IAN FLEMING'S BOOKS. BOND ONCE AGAIN SHOWED HIS FLAWS.**

From the beginning, Dalton made it clear that his vision for James Bond was a darker interpretation closer to Ian Fleming's books. Bond once again showed his flaws. He was verging on burnout and occasionally needed chemical assistance to get him through his duties. He also returned to smoking cigarettes instead of cigars.

Dalton's time as Bond was a bumpy one. Audiences had trouble adjusting to the grittier characterization and realistic violence. Legal issues also held up production, including the 1990 sale of MGM and a dispute over television rights.

Pre-production finally started again in 1993, but Dalton opted out of his contract. After being associated with the James Bond character for eight years, he decided he needed a change and resigned on April 11, 1994.



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**PIERCE BROSNAN: MAN OF STEELE**

When Pierce Brosnan was officially offered the role of James Bond on June 1, 1994, he didn't need to screen test, having already tested nearly a decade earlier. Producers were certain they had found a new Bond in Brosnan, whose TV detective show *Remington Steele* was ending and freeing up his schedule. The excitement over his portrayal of Bond backfired, however. *Remington Steele* producers decided the publicity surrounding Brosnan would benefit their own agenda. Instead of canceling *Remington Steele* as planned, they ordered a new season, effectively ending Brosnan's playing Bond. Until 1994.

Gone was Timothy Dalton's realism. Brosnan's Bond more closely resembled Roger Moore's portrayal. Although every Bond movie requires suspension of disbelief, the Brosnan era was especially fantastical.

Still, Pierce Brosnan perfectly embodied the quintessential James Bond confidence and sexual swagger. Ultimately, though, EON decided it was time to scrap the old format and go with something completely new. That also meant a new actor. It was time for a reboot.

**FOR THE FIRST TIME IN JAMES BOND MOVIE HISTORY, THE PRODUCERS WANTED TO START COMPLETELY FRESH. NO REFERENCES TO THE PAST OR UPDATED VERSIONS OF OLD CHARACTERS.**



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>> Daniel Craig and Olga Kurylenko in Spain at the official presentation of the film *Quantum of Solace*.

**DANIEL CRAIG: A REBIRTH**

For the first time in James Bond movie history, the producers wanted to start completely fresh. No references to the past or updated versions of old characters.

Another factor caused a big change in how James Bond would be portrayed—the Austin Powers movies. The comedies had so successfully spoofed James Bond that lightheartedness and jokey one-liners were no longer an option. The time hadn't been right to show a grittier Bond during the Timothy Dalton tenure. Now it was.

Producers wanted Daniel Craig to play this new version of Bond as soon as they decided to reboot the series. Craig himself was not interested and wanted no part of the jokey, sometimes hokey, Bond that Austin Powers so effectively mocked. It wasn't until producers showed Craig the script and assured him of the new, darker direction that he finally agreed to play the legendary British spy.

The news of Daniel Craig was not received well by James Bond fans. He did not match the physical expectations of what audiences had come to expect. He was more muscular, shorter and his hair blonder. The fiercely loyal Bond fan base was harsh.

When Craig's first Bond movie, *Casino Royale*, was released, fans not only changed their minds but they eagerly embraced the new 007. The new Bond, as it turns out, was exactly what fans had wanted. They just hadn't realized it yet. Daniel Craig's current status as Bond has not yet been decided, but he is due credit for breathing life back into James Bond. •

*Elisa Jordan is a freelance writer living in Southern California and writes for a variety of media outlets. She specializes in cultural history, architecture and pets.*