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Richard Brooks THE PROFESSIONALS 1966, (119 min.)



Produced, written and directed by Richard Brooks

Original Music by Maurice Jarre

Cinematography by Conrad L. Hall

Film Editing by Peter Zinner

Burt Lancaster... Bill Dolworth

Lee Marvin... Henry 'Rico' Fardan

Robert Ryan... Hans Ehrengard

Woody Strode... Jake Sharp

Jack Palance... Jesus Raza

Claudia Cardinale... Mrs. Maria Grant

Ralph Bellamy... Joe Grant

Joe De Santis... Ortega

Nominated for Best Cinematography, color, Best Director and Best writing, screenplay based on material from another medium Oscars

RICHARD BROOKS (18 May 1912, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—11 March 1992, Beverly Hills, California, congestive heart failure) wrote 36 screenplays and directed 24 films. Some of the films he wrote and directed were *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977), *In Cold Blood* (1967), *The Professionals* (1966), *Lord Jim* (1965), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1962), *Elmer Gantry* (1960), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), *The Brothers Karamazov* (1958), *Something of Value* (1957), and *Blackboard Jungle* (1955). He was nominated for 5 Best Screenplay and 3 Best Director Oscars (*In Cold Blood*, *The Professionals* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*).

CONRAD L. HALL (21 June 1926, Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia—4 January 2003, Santa Monica, California, bladder cancer), shot 39 films, among them *Declaration of Independence* (2003), *Road to Perdition* (2002), *American Beauty* (1999), *A Civil Action* (1998), *Tequila Sunrise* (1988), *Black Widow* (1987), *Marathon Man* (1976), *The Day of the Locust* (1975), *Electra Glide in Blue* (1973), *Fat City* (1972), *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here* (1969), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), *Cool Hand Luke* (1967), *The Professionals* (1966), *Harper* (1966) and *Nature's Half Acre* (1951). He won Oscars for *Road to Perdition* (posthumous), *American Beauty*, and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, and was nominated for seven others.

BURT LANCASTER (2 November 1913, NYC—20 October 1994, Century City, California, heart attack) was nominated for three

PROFESSIONALS



BURT LANCASTER

LEE MARVIN · ROBERT RYAN · JACK PALANCE

RALPH BELLAMY · with CLAUDIA CARDINALE
as Maria

BASED ON A NOVEL BY FRANK O'CONNOR · MUSIC BY MAURICE JARRE
A COLUMBIA PICTURES RELEASE



WRITTEN FOR THE SCREEN AND DIRECTED BY
RICHARD BROOKS



Oscars (*Atlantic City*, 1980, *Birdman of Alcatraz* 1962, *From Here to Eternity* 1953) and won one (*Elmer Gantry* 1960). Some of his other 86 films were *Field of Dreams* (1989), *Zulu Dawn* (1979), *Go Tell the Spartans* (1978), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1977), *Twilight's Last Gleaming* (1977), *The Cassandra Crossing* (1976), *Victory at Entebbe* (1976—as Shimon Peres), *Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull's History Lesson* (1976), *Ulzana's Raid* (1972), *Valdez Is Coming* (1971), *Airport* (1970), *The Gypsy Moths* (1969), *Castle Keep* (1969), *The Swimmer* (1968), *The Professionals* (1966), *The Hallelujah Trail* (1965), *The Train* (1964), *Seven Days in May* (1964), *Il Gattopardo/The Leopard* (1963), *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961), *The Unforgiven* (1960), *Separate Tables* (1958), *Run Silent Run Deep* (1958), *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957), *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* (1957), *The Rainmaker* (1956), *Trapeze* (1956), *The Rose Tattoo* (1955), *Apache* (1954), *From Here to Eternity* (1953), *Come Back, Little Sheba* (1952), *Jim Thorpe—All-American* (1951), *Sorry, Wrong Number* (1948), *All My Sons* (1948), *Brute Force* (1947), *The Killers* (1946).

LEE MARVIN (19 February 1924, New York, New York—29 August 1987, Tucson, Arizona, heart attack) acted in 43 films and numerous TV programs. His last film was *The Delta Force* (1986). Some of the others were *Gorky Park* (1983), *The Big Red One* (1980), *Great Scout and Cathouse Thursday* (1976), *The Klansman* (1974), *The Iceman Cometh* (1973), *Emperor of the*

North Pole (1973), *Prime Cut* (1972), *Monte Walsh* (1970), *Paint Your Wagon* (1969), *Hell in the Pacific* (1968), *Sergeant Ryker* (1968), *Point Blank* (1967), *The Dirty Dozen* (1967), *The Professionals* (1966), *Ship of Fools* (1965), *The Killers* (1964), *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), and *The Caine Mutiny* (1954). He appeared in nearly all the major television dramatic series in the 1950s and 1960s. He won an Oscar for his portrayal of twin brothers, one a falling-down drunk, the other a dapper gunslinger with a silver nose, in *Cat Ballou* (1965).

ROBERT RYAN (11 November 1909, Chicago, Illinois—11 July 1973, New York, cancer) was equally adept at playing cool heroes and vicious creeps. Some of his films: *The Iceman Cometh* (1973), *The Wild Bunch* (1969), *The Dirty Dozen* (1967), *The Professionals* (1966), *Battle of the Bulge* (1965), *The Longest Day* (1962), *Billy Budd* (1962), *God's Little Acre* (1958), *Lonelyhearts* (1958), *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955), *Flying Leathernecks* (1951), *I Married a Communist* (1949), *Marine Raiders* (1944), and *Golden Gloves* (1939). He was a Marine DI who became a founder of SANE, a pacifist, a civil rights activist and an open opponent of McCarthyism.

CLAUDIA CARDINALE (15 April 1938, Tunis, Tunisia) She appeared in more than 100 films, beginning with *Soliti ignoti/Big Deal On Madonna Street* (1958). Some of the others: *Un homme amoureux/A Man in Love* (1987), *Princess Daisy* (1983), *Burden of Dreams* (1982), *Fitzcarraldo* (1982), *La Pelle/The Skin* (1981), *Krasnaya palatka/The Red Tent* (1971), *C'era una volta il West/Once Upon a Time in the West* (1969), *The Professionals* (1966), *The Pink Panther* (1963), *8½* (1963), *Il Gattopardo/The Leopard* (1963) (whattayear that was for her!), *Rocco e i suoi fratelli/Rocco and His Brothers* 1960.

WOODY STRODE (25 July 1914, Los Angeles, California—31 December 1994, Glendora, California, lung cancer), 6'5", was one of the first four black athletes who integrated profootball in 1946 (he played for the LA Rams). He was the only person John Ford wanted to see regularly when he was dying of cancer. Appeared in about 90 films and tv series, among them *The Quick and the Dead* (1995), *Lust in the Dust* (1985), *The Cotton Club* (1984), *Horror Safari* (1982), "Fantasy Island," "The Dukes of Hazzard," *Kingdom of the Spiders* (1977) *Scipione detto anche l'africano/Scipio the African* (1971), *C'era una volta il West/Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968), "Batman," *The Professionals* (1966), *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), *Spartacus* (1960), *Sergeant Rutledge* (1960), *Pork Chop Hill* (1959), *Tarzan's Fight for Life* (1958), *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *Mandrake the Magician* (1954, tv), *Androcles and the Lion* (1952), and *Sundown* (1941). He was a stunt archer in *The Gatling Gun* (1973).

JACK PALANCE (18 February 1919, Lattimer Mines, Pennsylvania—10 November 2006, Montecito, California, natural causes) won a best supporting actor Oscar for his role as the old cowboy in *City Slickers* (1991). He was nominated for two other best supporting actor Oscars: *Shane* (1953) and *Sudden Fear* (1952). Some of his other 100 or so films were *Back When We Were Grownups* (2004, tv), *Treasure Island* (1999), *Buffalo Girls* (1995, tv), *City Slickers II: The Legend of Curly's Gold* (1994), *Cyborg 2* (1993), *Tango & Cash* (1989), *Batman* (1989), *Young Guns* (1988), *Cocaine Cowboys* (1979), *Portrait of a Hitman* (1977), *Oklahoma Crude* (1973), *Chato's Land* (1972), *Monte*

Walsh (1970), *Che!* (1969, as Fidel), *The Professionals* (1966), *Le Mépris/Contempt* (1963), *Barabba/Barrabas* (1961), *The Barbarians* (1960), *I Died a Thousand Times* (1955), *The Big Knife* (1955), *The Silver Chalice* (1954), *Sign of the Pagan* (1954), *Sudden Fear* (1952), *Halls of Montezuma* (1950), and *Panic in the Streets* (1950).

RALPH BELLAMY (17 June 1904, Chicago, Illinois – 29 November 1991, Santa Monica, California, lung ailment) won an honorary Oscar in 1987. He appeared in nearly 200 films and tv series, among them: *Pretty Woman* (1990), "War and Remembrance," *Coming to America* (1988), "Hotel," "The Twilight Zone," "The Love Boat," "The Winds of War," "Little House on the Prairie," *The Boy in the Plastic Bubble* (1976, tv), "Cannon," "The F.B.I.," "The Virginian," *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), "Gunsmoke," "12 O'Clock High," *The Professionals* (1966), "Rawhide," "Death Valley Days," *Sunrise at Campobello* (1960), "Hallmark Hall of Fame," "Studio One," "Playhouse 90," *The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell* (1955), *Lady on a Train* (1945), *The Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942), *Ellery Queen and the Murder Ring* (1941), *Ellery Queen and the Perfect Crime* (1941), *Dive Bomber* (1941), *Dance, Girl, Dance* (1940), *Queen of the Mob* (1940), *His Girl Friday* (1940), *The Crime of Dr. Hallet* (1938), *Air Hawks* (1935), *This Man Is Mine* (1934), *Ace of Aces* (1933), *Air Mail* (1932), *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1932), *Disorderly Conduct* (1932) and *The Secret Six* (1931).



Richard Brooks from *World Film Directors V. II*. Ed. John Wakeman. The H.W. Wilson Co. NY 1988

American director, scenarist, and producer, was born in Philadelphia, the son of an insurance agent. He was educated at Philadelphia public schools and Temple University, envisaging a career in journalism. Such jobs were hard to come by in the Depression, when Brooks graduated, and it seemed to him that he might as well take a look at the country. He went to Pittsburgh, Kansas City, New Orleans, and Texas, living for a time in each place, and eking out his meager savings by writing on space rates for local papers and at other odd jobs.

Returning home after this American walkabout, Brooks found a job as a sportswriter with the *Philadelphia Record*. After two years there he joined the Atlantic City Press Union, then moved on to New York to take up a post with the *World Telegram*. Before he reported for work he landed a better-paying job with Radio WNEW, New York, editing four news broadcasts a day and writing one. This led after a year and a half to an

appointment as newswriter, commentator, and announcer with NBC, where he remained until 1940.

Brooks was already attracted to the idea of directing, and in 1940 he and his friend David Loew, later a well-known producer, launched the Mill Pond Theatre in Roslyn, New York, taking turns directing the plays they staged that summer. In October of that same year Brooks went to California on vacation and wound up in Hollywood—not as a filmmaker but as a writer for a local radio station. For a year he wrote a short story almost every day and read it over the air. At length, finding that he was beginning to repeat himself, he decided to try his hand as a screenwriter. In 1942 he provided additional dialogue for a Jon Hall drama called *White Savage* but this failed to ring any bells (let alone open any doors) and Brooks returned to radio writing—including some parts for Orson Welles—until the spring of 1943, when he joined the US Marine Corps.

During his three years in the Marines, Brooks wrote his first novel, *The Brick Foxhole* (1945), a tough thriller in which a group of bored and frustrated enlisted men, away from combat, become involved in the murder of a homosexual. Since homosexuality was not then an acceptable Hollywood theme, the story was transformed by scenarist John Paxton into a study of anti-Semitism in the armed forces and filmed by Edward Dmytryk as *Crossfire* (1947), one of the first American dramas about prejudice, and a very powerful and intelligent one.

Brooks had not abandoned his ambition to write for the movies himself. While still in the Marines he contributed to the scripts of Anthony Mann's *My Best Gal* (1944) and Robert Siodmak's *Cobra Woman* (1945), and after the war he began to emerge as one of Hollywood's best realist writers, scripting Jules Dassin's *Brute Force* (1947) and working on the stories of Robert Siodmak's *The Killers* (1946) and Dassin's *Naked City* (1948). All three were produced by Mark Hellinger, whom Brooks admired and who provided the model for the hero of Brooks' 1951 novel, *The Producer*. Other scripts that he wrote or co-authored at this time included Frank Tuttle's *Swell Guy* (1947), Delmer Daves' *To the Victor* (1948), Mervyn LeRoy's *Any Number Can Play* (1949), John Sturges' *Mystery Street* (1950), and Stuart Heisler's *Storm Warning* (1950).

Brooks' first film as a director was *Crisis* (MGM, 1950), adapted by the director from a George Tabori story. It deals with a famous brain surgeon (Cary Grant) who is kidnapped to an imaginary Latin American country to operate on its dying dictator. Gavin Lambert called it "predominantly a writer's film: its principal strength resides in the dialogue," though Brooks "has composed a shrewd and persuasive picture of a minor fascist state on the brink of civil war...The main emphasis is on the prolonged duel between the surgeon and the dictator: between the humane, civilized liberal and the savage authoritarian. These are portraits of an incisiveness and density rare in the cinema, and the actors, Cary Grant and José Ferrer realise them perfectly.... The film as a whole is original, arresting and considered—and so far probably the most striking example of Dore Schary's policy at MGM of encouraging the development of new talents."

After this promising beginning came a turgid comedy about skulduggery in the art world, inappropriately called *The*

Light Touch (MGM, 1951), and then *Deadline USA* (1952), made for 20th Century-Fox. The latter has Humphrey Bogart as a crusading newspaper editor who struggles to expose a powerful racketeer (Martin Gabel) and at the same time prevent his publishing heirs from selling the paper to a rival, who will close it down. Cheered on by the publisher's tough old widow (Ethel Barrymore), Bogart gets the story out—the fate of the newspaper is not resolved. Kim Hunter plays the ex-wife that the hero still pines for. Most critics found *Deadline USA* a strong and exciting drama, unusually authentic in its portrayal of the newspaper background but somewhat marred by preaching about the importance of a free and independent press.



Back at MGM where he remained for the next ten years, Brooks found himself bogged down for a time in a series of glib and synthetic studio assignments. *Battle Circus* (1953), with Bogart and June Allyson, billed as "a story of the indomitable human spirit," seemed to one reviewer an "unconvincing mixture of love, war, and studio heroics." At least *Battle Circus* was made from Brooks' own script, like its predecessors; his next three films were not, and were consequently even less personal—another war

movie called *Take the High Ground* (1953); a Lana Turner weepie, *The Flame and the Flesh* (1954), which even Brooks calls "a terrible movie"; and *The Last Time I Saw Paris* (1954), a disappointingly sentimental adaptation of Scott Fitzgerald's story "Babylon Revisited," with Elizabeth Taylor and Van Johnson.

Brooks' first real success was *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955), which he adapted from Evan Hunter's novel about a schoolteacher, Richard Dadier (Glenn Ford), in a New York slum and his struggle to communicate with his hostile pupils (and indeed to survive). It shocked contemporary audiences with its revelations of teenage violence, sexuality, and racial antagonism, and was widely discussed. It was this film that established Sidney Poitier as a major new screen personality, and Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock," played over the credits, virtually introduced rock 'n roll to the screen.

An interesting ecological Western followed, *The Last Hunt* (1955), again with a Brooks script (from the novel by Milton Loft). Robert Taylor plays Charlie Gilson, a buffalo hunter in South Dakota at the end of the nineteenth century, when the great herds on which the Indians depended for survival had already been wiped out by greedy white men. A perverse, half-heroic anachronism, Gilson seems determined to massacre the few thousand head that remain, in spite of the efforts of his right-minded friend Sandy (Stewart Granger), and dies in the attempt. Some critics regard this as one of Brooks' finest films, but the scenes of slaughter (filmed during the annual cull of the surviving buffalo herds) were too "authentically gory" for public acceptance. Brooks says that "the intention of the film was to make the public so sick [of hunting] that they would say that it was a crime. But they got so sick they never went to see the picture. It was a financial disaster."

In a startling display of versatility, Brooks then switched from the endless plains and elemental emotions of *The Last Hunt* to an almost Dickensian portrait of contemporary family life in the Bronx. In *A Catered Affair* (1956), adapted by Gore Vidal from

Paddy Chayefsky's television play, a Catholic girl (Debbie Reynolds), daughter of a taxi driver (Ernest Borgnine), announces that she and her schoolteacher fiancé want a quick, quiet wedding. The neighbors assume (wrongly) that she is pregnant, and her mother, partly for this reason and partly because her own married life has been unremittingly drab, decides that, on the contrary, the wedding will be the most ostentatious and elaborate that money can buy—even if it costs every penny her husband has saved towards a cab of his own. Bette Davis gives a tour-de-force performance as the mother, and the movie seemed to Isabel Quigley “a small and satisfying masterpiece....Heart-warming without sentimentality, at once funny and persuasive, lyrical (at times), yet refreshingly down-to-earth.”

Scarcely pausing for breath, Brooks was off to the wide open spaces again (albeit African ones) for his adaptation of Robert Ruark's Mau-Mau novel, *Something of Value*. A number of Brooks' movies (including *The Last Hunt*) explore the relationship between two men who are drawn to each other emotionally but divided ideologically; the sympathy that develops between a black man (Sidney Poitier) and a white (Rock Hudson) in *Something of Value* is the most interesting aspect of an otherwise meretricious film.

Richard Brooks, who is nothing if not ambitious, then attempted an adaptation of Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, reducing that large and complex work to a movie of just under two and a half hours. Brooks' screenplay concentrates on the most obviously dramatic elements in the book—the murder of the rich and libidinous Fyodor Karamazov (Lee J. Cobb) and the love affairs of his wild son Dimitri (Yul Brynner) with the chilly Katya (Claire Bloom) and the prostitute Grushenka (Maria Schell). The other brothers—Ivan (Richard Basehart) and Alexei (William Shatner)—who in the novel are the chief spokesmen for Dostoyevsky's philosophical and religious ideas and agonies, play only minor parts in the movie.

“What is lost,” wrote C.A. Lejeune, “is just the world that Dostoyevsky wrote about, a world of violence enlaced with mysticism.... What remains is a murder story in bizarre settings, with more respect than understanding for classical style.... *The Brothers Karamazov* is not a bad film really. It tries to do what it has to do without deliberate uglification. It isn't obstreperously noisy, its dialogue is not inordinately foolish, and I don't suppose that anybody stopped for a minute to consider that the colour effect was vile.”

C. A. Lejeune was wrong to suppose that the film's color effects were accidental. In fact Brooks, with his cinematographer John Alton, had set out to use strong primary colors to symbolize particular states of mind, hoping in this way to evoke some of the moods and passions that could not be accommodated in the dialogue. The experiment failed, and as Paul Mayersberg says, “the result is a strange split between words and images. The colours stand out like shouted phrases or subtitles.” Nevertheless, Mayersberg maintains that this purely visual device marks “the turning point in Brooks' development” from a writer into a true filmmaker.

A series of adaptations followed of more or less estimable literary works, all of them scripted by Brooks alone except his version of Tennessee Williams' play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), which he wrote in collaboration with James Poe.... In this, Elizabeth Taylor gives one of her better performances as Maggie. Paul Newman is her husband Brick, a latent homosexual who would rather booze than confront his condition, and Burl Ives plays the terrifying patriarch Big Daddy, who develops

confrontation problems of his own when he learns that he is terminally ill....

Brooks established his own production company to make his version of Sinclair Lewis' novel *Elmer Gantry*, perhaps the most widely admired of his films. Burt Lancaster is likably shameless as the religious charlatan, while Jean Simmons (whom Brooks married as his third wife in 1960) plays the sincere evangelist Sister Sharon Falconer. Some critics thought that when, after the fatal fire, Elmer retrieves Sharon's charred Bible, he is adopting her faith, but his jaunty last words—“See you in hell”—believe this view. Raymond Durnat, discussing Brooks' use of fire symbolism throughout the movie, suggests that “the fire is that of earthly passion, and whatever respects Brooks pays to Christianity, his film celebrates a far deeper love for that passionate, fierce generosity.” Color symbolism is used far more effectively here than in *The Brothers Karamazov*, achieving “a successfully balanced synthesis of words and images,” and one critic wrote that “fast cutting and several shock dissolves suit well the thrashing rhythm of Gantry's progress.” Brooks received an Oscar for best screenplay based on material from another medium.

Sweet Bird of Youth followed in 1962, another Tennessee Williams adaptation, and then Brooks' ambitious and expensive version of Conrad's *Lord Jim*, made by his own production company, Pax Enterprises (releasing through Columbia). Peter O'Toole plays Jim, wandering the Malay Archipelago in search of redemption for a single act of cowardice, and the cast of thousands also includes James Mason, Jack Hawkins, Eli Wallach, Dahlia Levi, Paul Lukas, Curt Jurgens, and Akim Tamiroff. Robert Hatch wrote that “Brooks' offense is that he does not cope with the [true] theme of the great work whose name he has appropriated, but that is really his only offense. Otherwise he has made a rousing tropical adventure tale, about at the level of *Treasure Island*.”

Brooks, who has continued to serve as his own producer, went on to a somewhat more modest project, *The Professionals* (1965), a Western more in the tradition of *The Magnificent Seven*. The professionals are Burt Lancaster, Lee Marvin, Woody Strode, and Robert Ryan. Each a specialist in some form of mayhem, they are hired by a wealthy rancher to retrieve his wife (Claudia Cardinale), kidnapped by “the bloodiest cutthroat in Mexico” (Jack Palance). There is a nice twist at the end of the story, and it seemed to Philip Hartung that Brooks had made “not only a lively action film that uses the rugged scenery well in Technicolor, but has also come through with a strong movie of vivid characterization.”



Truman Capote's controversial “nonfiction novel” *In Cold Blood*, about the pointless murder of a Kansas farm family and the eventual execution of the young killers, became a somewhat less controversial film in Brooks' careful adaptation, splendidly photographed by Conrad Hall. Seeking a severe documentary effect, Brooks filmed at the scene of the crime,

casting relatively unknown actors in the principal roles and using the actual neighbors of the murdered family. Brooks' otherwise faithful adaptation differs from Capote's determinedly objective account in that a liberal journalist is inserted to voice an opposition to capital punishment that is presumably the director's own.

"The first half of the film looks promising; the second half becomes boring," wrote Andrew Sarris. "The trouble is that Brooks has focused almost entirely on the killers and their sick minds and childhood dreams. Consequently the movie is motivated by the kind of facile Freudianism that is supposed to have gone out in the forties....The whiplash documentary style of much of the photography clashes with the tired German Expressionism of dreams and hallucinations, and the mixture is a bit dishonest besides, in that it places an aura of subjectivity around the killers and around no one else."

After *The Happy Ending* (1969), in which Jean Simmons plays a woman who takes a vacation alone to reassess her sixteen-year-old marriage, came two genre films, *\$ (Dollars/The Heist*, 1971), an overlong but generally enjoyable caper movie starring Warren Beatty and Goldie Hawn, and *Bite the Bullet* (1975), a Western in which Gene Hackman, James Coburn, Ben Johnson, Ian Bannen and others compete in a seven-hundred-mile horserace....

Nor was there great enthusiasm for Brooks' adaptation of *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, though most critics like Diane Keaton's performance as Terry Dunn, the gifted young teacher whose growing addiction to the rough sexual trade of singles bars ends in a squalid, strobe-lit room with her murder by a bisexual psychopath (Richard Gere)....*Wrong is Right* (1982), a black comedy with Sean Connery as a globetrotting TV newscaster, flailed away at an assortment of targets, including Arab terrorism and CIA skulduggery, with more heat than wit....

A highly uneven director, Brooks is responsible for two or three excellent films (*A Catered Affair*, *Elmer Gantry*), a string of intelligent entertainments, and several brave and interesting failures—a creditable record that should earn him more respect than often comes his way. The critical hostility to his work is due partly to what is seen as his effrontery in tackling subjects (like *The Brothers Karamazov*) that are beyond his range, partly to his habit of larding his scripts with sermons in favor of free speech or

against capital punishment, hunting, etc. Paul Mayersberg, who in 1965 described him as "arguably the best screenwriter in America," calls Brooks "an idealist, but a conservative idealist...in the sense that his beliefs are reasoned not inspired. His attitudes are evolutionary and not utopian....I can't help feeling that Brooks sees the world

divided into teachers and the taught, the leaders and the followers." Bob Blake thinks him an artist "whose deepest instinct is to improve...[his] audience...but whose whole training and background is in the field of super-slick entertainment."



from *Conversations with the Great Moviemakers of Hollywood's Golden Age at the American Film Institute*. Ed. George Stevens, Jr.. Knopf, NY, 2006.

...Three years in the marines during World War II interrupted his writing, but gave him a chance to learn editing with Frank Capra on the *Why We Fight* series. His service experience inspired a novel, *The Brick Foxhole*, which was made into the film *Crossfire*, in 1947.

Working as a writer of B pictures after the war, Brooks seized the opportunity to collaborate with John Huston on the script of *Key Largo*. By now the young writer saw that directing was where the action was, and he asked Huston how to become a director. "If you've got a script," Huston said, "don't give it to the studios unless they let you direct it." Brooks did exactly that in 1950 with *Crisis*, starring Cary Grant. This was at MGM, where they kept directors in the bullpen who could come in at a moment's notice and replace directors who fell behind schedule. Brooks had his eyes fixed on the actors' performances one day when a heavy camera dolly ran over his foot. He called for a second take, and his leading man said, "Take two? You've got a shoe full of blood!" "Cary," Brooks said, "if I leave this stage, there'll be another director here in five minutes to finish the picture—they didn't want me to direct it in the first place." "Really?" Grant said. "Then I'll go to the hospital with you."

Thus Brooks survived his first picture. He claimed that Louis B. Mayer told him that he never liked any movie Brooks made but figured that something new was coming and that Brooks might be it....Brooks was cantankerous and irascible. Peter O'Toole, who worked with Brooks on *Lord Jim*, called him "the man who lived at the top of his voice."

May 25, 1977

You started out as a screenwriter. How did you move into directing?

The way it happened with me was that I was at Warner Bros. and Jerry Wald was one of the big producers there. He had a lot of pictures under way, though that doesn't mean that he was going to make them all. One day he said that he had a great idea to make a movie called *Key Largo*, based on a play—I think with Paul Muni—which was about the Spanish Civil War. John Huston wanted to direct it and Humphrey Bogart wanted to be in it. Jerry Wald asked me if I would rewrite the script. I said, "I'd be delighted."...

Your emphasis is always on the actor.

You shouldn't be aware of the director. If anybody at any time says, "Wow, what a shot," then you've lost the audience. They should never know there's a director in it. They should never know

where the music starts or ends. They should never see the camera move. They should never have to say, "Isn't that interesting?" They should be lost in the story. That's all you're telling them. That's where the camera is....

Do you have any advice for our students here?

You're going to make mistakes. You're going to make them every time. Now, I hope you won't make the same ones every time. Once you try to repeat your previous success—if

you're lucky enough to have one—you're going to have trouble. If you're worried about failing, you ought to get into a different business, because statistics will tell you that sixty or seventy percent of the time you're going to fail. By *fail* I mean that it won't make money. Just do the best you can every time. And if you're going to stay in movies, and you like movies—and I love them—you better love them a lot, because it's going to take all your time. If you want to be in movies, it's going to break your heart.

Mexican Revolution (*Handbook of Texas Online*):

The Mexican Revolution began in November 1910. That year, Mexico went through the motions of another presidential election to unseat the incumbent, Porfirio Díaz, who had served since 1876. This time, however, Francisco I. Madero, from Coahuila, campaigning on a platform of effective suffrage and no reelection, made the race a more serious one. Early, Díaz dismissed Madero's chances but arrested and imprisoned him when he gained popular support. Madero's family quickly posted bail, and in October 1910 the erstwhile presidential contestant fled to San Antonio, where he established his headquarters and issued, through the Plan de San Luis Potosí, a call to arms for November 20, 1910. From the end of that year until 1920, the events surrounding the Mexican Revolution influenced life along the Texas border from Brownsville to El Paso.

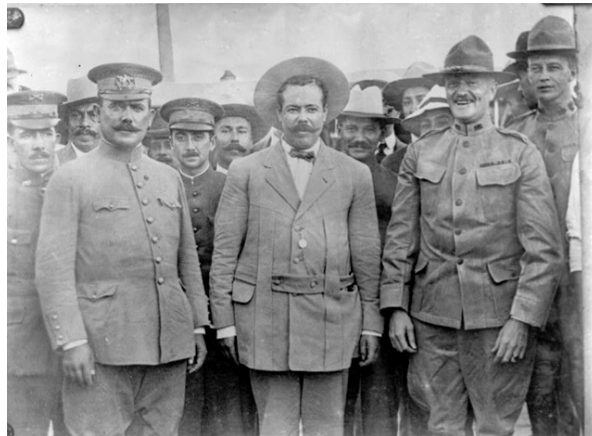
Actually, the Mexican Revolution was an outgrowth of the resentment that had built up during Díaz's thirty-four-year regime. Among those that spoke out against his dictatorship were Ricardo Flores Magón and his brother Enrique, who founded the newspaper *Regeneración* in 1900. Through it, they denounced the dictatorship and unacceptable conditions of the masses in Mexico. Since Díaz allowed little dissent, Ricardo and Enrique fled to Laredo,

Texas, in 1904. The Flores Magón brothers moved *Regeneración* to San Antonio later that year. Many of the newspaper's issues from San Antonio recount injustice suffered by the rural and urban workers in Mexico, the corruption and venality of government officials in that country, the collusion of foreign-based capital with the Díaz regime, and the necessity of ending the dictatorship. The activities of the Flores Magón brothers soon attracted the attention of local as well as national authorities in the United States. Agents of Díaz also made their way to San Antonio, where they harassed the Magonistas under the "watchful neglect" of local authorities. After continued harassment, Ricardo Flores Magón moved to St. Louis, Missouri, in early 1905.

There, the Magonistas founded the Partido Liberal Mexicano. This party, which worked in different parts of the United States, called for changes in the way Mexico was ruled. It demanded that Díaz open up the electoral process and institute changes that would bring significant improvement to the lower classes through land reform and to the urban proletariat through improved wages and working conditions. Party objectives also included organizing Mexican-American laborers. Furthermore, the PLM encouraged female participation in its chapters. Sara Estela Ramírez of Laredo worked to help women achieve

emancipation from stereotypical roles. Women served as speakers and participated in rallies and fund-raisers held in different areas of Texas, including EL Paso and Frio county. The impact of the PLM in Texas is difficult to judge, but chapters existed as far north as Central Texas. Many Tejanos, fearing to appear too radical, did not become actively involved with the PLM. The dread of extradition also caused many to stay at arm's length from the activities of the PLM.

Continued pressure from both the United States and Mexican authorities made the PLM increasingly weaker, and even the overthrow of Díaz in 1911 produced no respite from the party's opponents on both sides of the border. (The United States argued that PLM activities violated the national policy of neutrality that the country had adopted toward the Mexican Revolution.) By 1914 the PLM consisted only of a small number of supporters throughout the United States, and *Regeneración* had ceased to be effective. But despite its declining fortunes and the imprisonment of Ricardo Flores Magón, the more committed members of the PLM continued to speak out on the foreign policy of the United States, the murder of Tejanos in South Texas, and the continued Wall Street domination of Mexican affairs. Many others besides the Flores Magón brothers and their supporters had fled Mexico for the safety of the Texas. After Madero's Plan de San Luis Potosí, a floodtide of refugees



Pancho Villa & the generals, El Paso 1914

inundated the state. An exile community took root in many South Texas counties, and it maintained nationalist sentiments toward Mexico. The Mexican Revolution evolved into a struggle among rival chieftains, each of whom had his backers among the political and military figures—including Pascual Orozco, Jr., Victoriano Huerta, Francisco (Pancho) Villa, Francisco Madero, Venustiano Carranza, and Álvaro Obregón. Still others within the exiled ranks sided with Díaz and his ideological heirs and criticized from

Texas the various revolutionary governments that served in Mexico from 1910 to 1920. Other refugees became integrated into Mexican-

American communities, and their lives became intertwined with those of Mexican Americans already living in Texas. They read Spanish-language newspapers, some of which were owned by immigrants or refugees. *La Prensa*, founded in 1913, had the widest circulation. The Spanish-language press reported on events in Mexico, denounced the repression of immigrants and the abuse of Tejanos, and encouraged a maintenance of the culture of *la patria* (Mexico). Newspapers assisted in the preservation of the old way of life by giving space to various religious and secular celebrations, publishing works of literature, and encouraging various artists, writers, and musicians.

Both immigrants and Mexican Americans participated in the activities undertaken by labor organizations. The American Federation of Labor typically spurned Mexican-descent workers and saw them as potential strikebreakers, but Tejano workers found other alternatives. The membership of *La Agrupación Protectora*, founded in 1911, included farm renters and laborers. *La Agrupación* called for the protection of its members from illegal repossession of property. Tejanos also joined various Socialist organizations such as the different affiliates of the

Socialist party in Texas. Some Tejano workmen joined craft unions but found themselves segregated from Caucasian laborers. Even so, the era of the revolution and World War I produced an upswing in organizational awareness.

Politically, Tejanos participated in protest activities to bring attention to the problems of everyday life. One issue that confronted many was the education of their children. In such communities as Del Rio and San Angelo, parents pressured the local school boards for change, though not very successfully. Other issues of concern included lynching, labor exploitation, and changing land ownership. To highlight those problems, several hundred delegates convened in Laredo in September 1911 at what was called the Congreso Mexicanista. Participants addressed the problems that afflicted Mexican Americans as a whole, while women presented their own agenda dealing with the social and political status of women. The Congreso started the Liga Femenil Mexicanista and entrusted it with being an educational advocate for Tejanos.

Motivated by anger against decades-old discrimination and contempt, Tejanos joined in a movement of armed resistance against oppression in 1915. Specifically, they joined in support of the Plan of San Diego, a call to arms apparently hatched in San Diego, Texas, by individuals who called for the establishment of a new nation of Mexican Americans and other oppressed minorities in the lands lost by Mexico in 1836 and 1848. Luis De la Rosa and Aniceto Pizaña led the PSD uprising with recruits from South Texas as well as from the Mexican states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila. The conspirators conducted raids on both sides of the border; targets on the Texas side included newly developed farms, irrigation systems, and railroad lines. With these raids, widespread panic enveloped much of South Texas. Non-Hispanic whites organized vigilante groups to administer justice. The Texas Rangers, their ranks increased for border duty, arrived in the region to carry out law-enforcement activity—but their actions degenerated into repression and violence against both immigrants and Mexican Americans. Ricardo Flores Magón spoke out in *Regeneración* against what he perceived as genocide directed against Tejanos. Conditions became so volatile that Governor James E. Ferguson threatened to send forces into Mexico after the raiders. In November 1915, however, the governor and Mexican president Carranza met in Nuevo Laredo and agreed that they would take whatever steps were needed to stop the border troubles. Soon after this meeting, activities associated with the PSD subsided.

Others events surrounding the Mexican Revolution wrought havoc upon Tejanos. When the revolutionary chieftain Pancho Villa murdered sixteen Americans in Mexico in January 1916, clashes between the white and Mexican populations of several border towns broke out. El Paso became the scene of several days of racial conflict. When Villista raiders struck Columbus, New Mexico, in March 1916 and the United States authorized Gen. John J. Pershing to undertake a punitive expedition into Mexico, Carranza threatened counterinvasions of the United States. From the Rio Grande valley to the Big Bend, local residents kept watch for attacks from across the border. In May 1916 raids occurred at Boquillas and Glenn Spring, and shortly thereafter the United States federalized the Texas National Guard. Small clashes along the border fueled further reports of imminent invasion by Carrancista forces. Border incidents continued to occur long after 1916, especially in the Big Bend country.

The Mexican Revolution affected Tejanos variously. On the one hand, it left deep psychological and physical scars. No one can calculate the losses incurred by reaction to the PSD and Carrancista activity. Numerous Mexicans or Mexican Americans during the era were killed while "resisting arrest" or "escaping." Homes were burned and many rural Tejanos were forced to move to urban areas where they could be watched. On the other hand, increased immigration from Mexico augmented the size of the Tejano community and invigorated it with unadulterated doses of Mexican culture. The offspring of the immigrants, who grew to adulthood by the 1930s, went on to constitute part of the leadership in the Mexican-American political movements of the 1930s.

From Bruce Jackson, *The Story is True: The Art and Meaning of Telling Stories* (Temple University Press 2007):

Before the American west was explored European painters imagined it as a "New Golden Land," full of spectacular landscapes and wonderful animals. Some of America's most important 19th and early 20th century artists focused on the West and the people who inhabited it: George Catlin, Frederick Remington, Charles Russell.

In print, dime Westerns were best sellers in the 19th century and now you'll find their equivalent—Louis Lamour's novels, for examples – in any large airport newsstand right next to the section of romance paperbacks. Cormac McCarthy began writing novels set in Tennessee but he now lives in Laredo and writes novels set in Texas and Mexico: *All the Pretty Horses*, *The Crossing*, *Blood Meridian*. Larry McMurtry's best-selling novel *Lonesome Dove*, was also an Emmy-winning TV miniseries. The image of the manly Westerner is so powerful that it continues to be used by Marlboro to peddle cancer, no longer permissible on billboards or television, but a frequent image still in magazines and bars.

One of the first narrative films and what is often cited as the first film with real editing was a Western: *The Great Train Robbery*, ten minutes long and made in Fort Lee, New Jersey, in 1903. More than 7000 Westerns followed. In the early 1950s nearly 25% of American film production was Westerns. There were hundreds of western serials back in the days when going to the movies on Saturday afternoons mean two features, up to fifteen cartoons, Movietone News, coming attractions (it would be years before anyone outside the film industry called them 'trailers') and episodes of one or more serials. And there were dozens of television series set in the imaginative 19th century American west. One of them—"Gunsmoke"—ran for two full decades (1955 – 1975). Clint Eastwood's first important role was Rowdy Yates in "Rawhide," a series about a cattle drive that was always en route but never seemed to get anywhere. Sergio Leone saw those programs and hired Eastwood for the trilogy that rejuvenated the theatrical western and made Eastwood an international star: *A Fistful of Dollars* (*Per un pugno di dollari*, 1964), *For a Few Dollars More* (*Per qualche dollaro in più*, 1965), and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (*Il Buono, il brutto, il cattivo*, 1966). "Gunsmoke," "Bonanza" and "Rawhide" still appear on cable.

The action of most films advertised or characterized as "westerns" was situated in the American southwest, but they were also set in Florida, Alaska, California, Washington, and the Adirondacks. Some westerns are about cowboys, but others are about farmers, shepherders, migrants, miners, pimps and whores.

Some are about war and some about love. Some are about whites, some about blacks, some about Mexicans, some about Indians; some are about relations between any or all of them. Some are about space. Some are up-close, like classical drama; some are broad, like classical epic. In some the battles were enormous and in others the battles were intimate. The American west was a great canvas upon which myriads of stories got told. It was a very large real place, and it was and remains a much larger imaginative space.

Peter Fonda tells about being on location in Peru with Dennis Hopper in 1971, filming *The Last Movie*. A horse fell off a cliff, landed on a ledge and broke its back. It was screaming in pain, so one of the stunt men climbed down and shot it with the chrome-plated .44 revolver Peter carried with him everywhere in those days. The gun had originally belonged to the famous western actor Tom Mix and had been given to Peter by his father, Henry.

Within a few hours two helicopters of heavily armed police arrived and lined up the entire film crew. The officer in charge demanded the gun. They were in a remote town, a full day's drive from the nearest city, and there were no telephones, but somehow that police official had found out about the gun and had arrived with his troops to get it and to arrest its owner. Real pistols were illegal there for anyone but police and military, Peter said. Except for "Old Tom," all the guns used by the film crew were made of rubber.

At first Peter insisted there was no gun, but when it was clear that they were all going to be taken away and the production shut down, he got it out of his bag and gave it to the officer. Now only he and Hopper were to be taken away. Peter told the policeman to be careful with the gun, that it was valuable, it had belonged to Tom Mix.

The policeman froze, looked at the gun, then asked Hopper, "Is true, jefe? The gun of Tom Mix?" Hopper said it was indeed true, it was the gun of Tom Mix. The policeman, Peter said, walked along the two rows of his men, all of whom still had automatic weapons pointing at the film crew, holding the pistol in the palms of his two outstretched hands as if it were religious object, saying again and again, "The gun of Tom Mix. The gun of Tom Mix. The gun of Tom Mix." Then he gave the gun back to Peter, herded his men into the helicopters, and they all flew away.

Tom Mix hadn't made a film since 1935 and had been dead since 1940. Yet the iconic power of Tom Mix as western hero and the real gun he had held in those fictive silent and sound films was powerful enough to turn a serious criminal incident into a sacred moment.

All art is in some measure about other art. Like other artists, filmmakers are aware of the workers and work they follow. In 1961, the great Japanese director Akira Kurosawa, a fan of western films, made *Yojimbo*, which is about a samurai who comes to a small town where there are two warring gangs. He

hires out to both of them and, by the time he leaves, nearly everyone in both gangs is dead. Three years later, the Italian director Sergio Leone plagiarized the plot for *A Fistful of Dollars*. In 1995 Walter Hill used Kurosawa's plot, with full acknowledgement, for *Last Man Standing* with Bruce Willis.



Schlock filmmaker Roger Corman used the plot to make a sword-fighting movie starring David Carradine, *The Warrior and the Sorceress* (1984). It differed from the others in two primary regards: the location was a mythical planet with two suns, and the leading lady plays the entire film naked from the hips up. In his autobiography, Carradine says he called Corman to say he liked the script but was worried about the similarity to *Yojimbo*.

Roger said, "Yes, it is rather like *Yojimbo*."

I said, "It's not like *Yojimbo*. It IS *Yojimbo*."

Roger said, "Let me tell you a story. When *Fist Full of Dollars* opened in Tokyo, Kurosawa's friends called him up and said, 'You must see this picture.' Kurosawa replied, 'Yes, I understand it's rather like *Yojimbo*.' His friends corrected him, 'No, it's not like *Yojimbo*, it IS *Yojimbo*. You have to sue these people.' 'I can't sue them,' he responded. 'Why not?' 'Because,' Kurosawa confessed, '*Yojimbo* IS Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest*.'" (*Carradine*, Boston and Tokyo: Journey, 1995, p. 539)

Coming up in the Buffalo Film Seminars:

- Oct 7 Károly Makk LOVE (SZERELEM) 1971
- Oct 14 Francis Ford Coppola THE CONVERSATION 1974
- Oct 21 Lina Wertmüller SEVEN BEAUTIES (PASQUALINO SETTEBELLEZZE) 1975
- Oct 28 Elia Kazan A FACE IN THE CROWD 1957
- Nov 4 Krzysztof Kieslowski BLIND CHANCE (PRZYPADEK) 1981
- Nov 11 Wim Wenders PARIS, TEXAS 1984
- Nov 18 Wong Kar-Wai IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE (FA YEUNG NIN WA) 2000
- Nov 25 Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck THE LIVES OF OTHERS (DAS LEBEN DER ANDEREN) 2006
- Dec 2 Stanley Kubrick 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY 1968

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