

Biography: Clint Eastwood



Clinton Eastwood, Jr. (born May 31, 1930) is an American actor, film producer, composer, and Academy Award winning film director. Eastwood is famous for his "tough guy"/anti-hero roles, including Inspector Harry Callahan in the *Dirty Harry* series and the Man with No Name in Sergio Leone's Spaghetti Westerns. As a director, Eastwood has become known for high-quality dramas imbued with a pessimistic tone, such as *Unforgiven*, *Mystic River*, and *Million Dollar Baby*.

Early life

Born at St. Mary's Hospital in San Francisco, California to Clinton Eastwood Sr. and Margaret Ruth Runner; the family is of Scottish, Irish, Dutch, and English descent. Eastwood is a descendant of Mayflower passenger and Plymouth Colony Governor, William Bradford. As a child, Eastwood endured the Great Depression, which in turn left its mark on his later films.

Clint Sr., a sometime steel worker in the San Francisco Bay Area, was forced in the 1930s to seek work over a wide area of coastal and inland California. According to film scholar David Kehr, the Eastwoods, with only child Clint Jr., spent much of the decade in motion, an experience that would inform such movies as 1982's *Honkytonk Man*, with its migrant, "Okie" families. From his working-class childhood and upbringing, Eastwood the artist drew upon a perspective that was often far more archetypically middle-American than those of other California-born actors and directors. When he needed a mid-American backdrop from the 1950s for his 1988 film *Bird*, Eastwood used the elm-lined streets of central Sacramento, a distinctly un-Hollywood setting which he remembered from living there briefly as a child. That leafy cityscape, with its early 20th century clapboard houses, seems worlds removed from the hilly vistas and intellectual pretensions of the Bay Area and also from the sun-drenched glitz of Los Angeles, where Clint Jr. would live as a young man.

While attending Oakland Technical High School in Oakland, CA, one of his teachers assigned him a part in a play to try to get him to be less introverted. He did not enjoy the experience.

Eastwood was drafted into the Army, apparently in 1951, during the Korean War. He was sent to Fort Ord on the Monterey Bay, California for basic training. He was supposed to be sent to the war in Korea, but on a trip home to Seattle to visit his parents and girlfriend, Eastwood caught a ride aboard a Navy plane at Moffett Field. On the ride back aboard a Navy torpedo bomber, the plane developed engine trouble and was forced to make a water landing off San Francisco. He was forced to swim over a mile through the tide to shore. Because of this, instead of being sent to Korea, he was assigned a job as a swimming instructor and remained at Ft. Ord. He worked nights and weekends as a bouncer at the NCO club. It was while on duty at Ft. Ord that Eastwood met fellow soldiers and actors Martin Milner ("Route 66"), David Janssen ("The Fugitive"), and Richard Long ("The Big Valley").

After his discharge in 1953, Eastwood moved to Southern California and attended Los Angeles City College, studying drama and business administration under the G.I. Bill.

Film career



Eastwood began work as an actor, appearing in B-films such as *Revenge of the Creature*, *Tarantula* and *Francis in the Navy*. In 1959, he got his first break with the long-running Television series, *Rawhide*. As Rowdy Yates, he made the show his own and became a household name across the country. But Eastwood found bigger roles with Sergio Leone's *A Fistful of Dollars* (*Per un pugno di dollari*) in 1964, and soon followed it with *For a Few Dollars More* (*Per qualche dollaro in più*) (1965). In these and his third film with Leone, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (*Il Buono, il brutto, il cattivo*) (1966) he found one of his trademark roles, the mysterious *man with no name*. All three films were hits, particularly the third, and Eastwood became an instant international star, redefining the traditional image of the American cowboy (Despite the fact that he was a gunslinger). (Ironically, Eastwood is allergic to horses.)

Stardom brought more roles, though still in the "tough guy" mold. In *Where Eagles Dare* (1968) he had second billing to Richard Burton but was paid \$800,000. However, he also began to branch out. *Paint Your Wagon* (1969) was a Western, but a musical. *Kelly's Heroes* (1970) combined tough-guy action with offbeat humor. 1971 proved to be one of his best films in years. He directed and starred in the thriller *Play Misty for Me* (1971), and starred as a semi-villain in the Don Siegel film *The Beguiled* (1971), one of his few box-office flops. But it was his role that year as the hard-edged police inspector Harry Callahan in *Dirty Harry* that gave Eastwood one of his most memorable roles. The film has been

credited with inventing the "loose-cannon cop genre" that remains imitated to this day. Many have said that Eastwood's portrayal of the tough, no-nonsense cop touched a nerve with many who were just plain fed up with crime in the streets.

Eastwood continued to take cop, Western and thriller roles, including sequels to *Dirty Harry: Magnum Force* (1973), *The Enforcer* (1976), *Sudden Impact* (1983), and *The Dead Pool* (1988). *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976) was an important contribution to the western genre, along with his own *High Plains Drifter* (1973). In 1974, Eastwood teamed with a young actor named Jeff Bridges in *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot*, a heist yarn similar to *The Sting*. The movie was written and directed by Michael Cimino who would later win an Oscar for directing *The Deer Hunter*. Critics and the public alike loved the chemistry between Eastwood and Bridges, making the film one of the biggest hits of 1974. As the late '70s approached, he found more solid work in comedies such as *Every Which Way But Loose* (1978).

In 1975, Eastwood brought another talent to the screen: rock climbing. In *The Eiger Sanction*, in which he directed and starred, Eastwood--a 5.9 climber--performed his own rock climbing stunts. This film has become a cult classic in the rock climbing community. This film was done before the advent of CGI, so everything you see is real.

It was the fourth Dirty Harry film, *Sudden Impact* (1983), that made Eastwood a viable star for the '80s. President Reagan even used his famous "make my day" line in one of his speeches. Eastwood revisited the western genre directing and starring in *Pale Rider* (1985), paying homage to the western film classic *Shane*. His fifth and final Dirty Harry movie, *The Dead Pool* (1988), was a success overall, but it did not have the box office punch his previous films had achieved. After much less successful films such as *Pink Cadillac* (1989), and *The Rookie* (1990), Eastwood started taking on more personal projects such as directing *Bird* (1988), a biopic of Charlie "Bird" Parker, and starring in and directing *White Hunter, Black Heart* (1990), an uneven, loose biography of John Huston, which received some critical acclaim, although Katharine Hepburn contested the veracity of much of the material.

Eastwood rose to stardom yet again in the early 1990s. He starred in and directed the revisionist western, *Unforgiven* in 1992, taking on the role of an aging ex-gunfighter, long past his prime. The film was nominated for nine Oscars, including Best Actor for Eastwood, and won four, including Best Picture and Best Director for Eastwood. The following year, Eastwood played a guilt-ridden Secret Service agent in the thriller *In the Line of Fire* (1993). He directed and starred with Kevin Costner in *A Perfect World*. He continued to expand his repertoire with the love story, *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995), and took on more work as director, much of it well received, including *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1997), *Mystic River* (2003), and *Million Dollar Baby* (2004), for which he won a second Best Director award, and at 74 the oldest director to do so.

Eastwood developed directing as a second career, and has, indeed, generally received much greater critical acclaim for his directing than for his acting. He has chosen a wide variety of films to direct, some clearly commercial, others highly personal. Too often articles about Eastwood neglect to mention that he has directed 26 films (as of 2006). Many actors direct now and then, but Eastwood is as distinguished as many more famous directors. Unlike many actors who also direct, Eastwood frequently directs films in which he does not appear. Eastwood also produces many of his movies, and is well known in the industry for his efficient, low-cost approach to making films. Over the years, he has developed relationships with many other filmmakers, working over and over with the same crew, production designers, cinematographers, editors and other technical people. Similarly, he has a long-term relationship with the Warner Bros. studio, which finances and releases most of his films (although, in a 2004 interview appearing in *The New York Times*, Eastwood noted that he still sometimes has difficulty convincing the studio to back his films). In more recent years, Eastwood also has begun writing music for some of his films.

Eastwood will next take the director's chair in the World War II dramas, *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Red Sun, Black Sand*.

Eastwood received numerous awards, including an America Now TV Award as well as one of the 2000 Kennedy Center Honors.

Eastwood and Warner Bros. have purchased the movie rights to James Hansen's *First Man*, the authorized biography of Neil Armstrong.

Personal life

Eastwood, who has been married twice, has five daughters and two sons by five different women: Kimber (born 1964), with Roxanne Tunis; Kyle (born in 1968) and Alison (born on May 22, 1972), with ex-wife Maggie Johnson; Scott (born March 21, 1986) and Kathryn (born February 2, 1988), with airline hostess Jacelyn Reeves; Francesca Ruth (born August 7, 1993), with Frances Fisher, his co-star in *Unforgiven*; and Morgan (born December 12, 1996), with current wife Dina Ruiz. Clint Eastwood lived with actress Sondra Locke from 1976 to 1988. The relationship produced no children.

- Clint Eastwood was once arrested for a crime he didn't commit

Eastwood remains a sex symbol for many women, and the years have not made him any less virile. He once said, "I like to joke that since my children weren't giving me any grandchildren, I had two of my own. It's a terrific feeling being a dad again at my age. I am very fortunate. I realize how unfair a thing it is that men can have children at a much older age than women." This seems to ignore his grandchildren, Clinton (born 1984) and Graylen (born 1994) of Kimberly and Kyle, respectively.

The 'Stan Laurel' myth

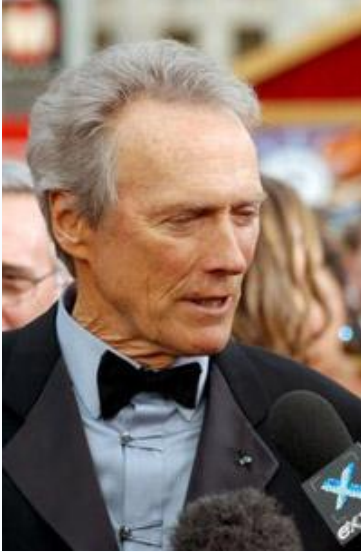
One recurrent rumour has it that Eastwood is the son (legitimate or otherwise) of British comic actor Stan Laurel. This is untrue, although a passing facial resemblance to the comedian (plus the fact that Eastwood was born on the same day as one of Laurel's children) has ensured that the legend often resurfaces.

Political career

In addition to his career as an actor, Eastwood was elected mayor of Carmel-by-the-Sea, California on April 8, 1986. Running as a Republican against local business man Paul Laub, he received 72% of the vote (voter turnout was also doubled over the previous mayoral election). He served a two-year term before declining to run for re-election. In June 2002 Eastwood was appointed Vice Chair of the California State Park and Recreation Commission. His term expires in 2008.

Neither especially conservative nor liberal, Eastwood usually describes his political beliefs as "libertarian", although he has admitted voting twice for Dwight D. Eisenhower and Richard Nixon. In his early career, he was generally considered a Republican, having openly supported Nixon in the 1968 and 1972 elections and attending Nixon's landslide re-election celebration in Los Angeles alongside John Wayne, Charlton Heston and Glenn Ford. However in 1992 he broke away from the Republican Party, not only declining an offer from President George Bush to campaign for him in that year's presidential election, but also voting for third party candidate Ross Perot. Since then he has since directed several movies which are an anathema to his conservative fans, such as *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1997) and *Million Dollar Baby* (2004). Indeed, most of the films that he has directed have clear libertarian themes in them. He has become one of the most prominent opponents of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the disability rights movement, after his restaurant in Carmel was hit with an ADA enforcement lawsuit. In May 2000, he testified before Congress in support of a bill that would have added procedural protections for small-business owners. A few disability rights activists have suggested that his decision to make *Million Dollar Baby* may have been motivated by this earlier experience.

In January 2005 at National Board of Review awards dinner in New York City, Eastwood stated that he would kill the liberal filmmaker Michael Moore if ever Moore showed up at his home with a camera, probably a reference to Moore's controversial interview with Eastwood's friend, the movie star and Second Amendment advocate Charlton Heston for the movie *Bowling for Columbine*. After the crowd laughed, Eastwood said, "I mean it." Moore's spokesman said "Michael laughed along with everyone else, and took Mr. Eastwood's comments in the lighthearted spirit in which they were given." Eastwood has not commented further publicly.



Trivia

- Eastwood was 6'4" as a young man, but due to his age and recent back problems he is now (as of 2006) closer to 6'1".
- In 2002 he sued a biographer for publishing allegations that he physically abused Sondra Locke during their relationship, and forced her to have several abortions.
- Clint Eastwood's name is an anagram for *Old West Action*.
- He is a vocal supporter of gay marriages.
- He practices vegetarianism, and once stopped his daughter from stepping on a cockroach. "I don't like killing," the actor explained, "I never saw the sport in removing a life from the planet."
- He strongly denied accusations of physical and sexual abuse made in Sondra Locke's autobiography.
- Eastwood is registered as a Republican in California.

Quotations

Some of Eastwood's lines are among the best-known movie quotations of all time. (Remembering, of course, that Eastwood himself did not write any of these lines. Eastwood has never taken a writing credit on a film.)

From *Dirty Harry*: **Harry Callahan**: - "I know what you're thinking: 'Did he fire six shots or only five?' Well, to tell you the truth, in all this excitement, I've kinda lost track myself. But being this is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world, and would blow your head clean off, you've got to ask yourself one question: 'Do I feel lucky?' Well, do ya, punk?"

From *Sudden Impact*: **Harry Callahan**: - "Go ahead, make my day."

From *Dead Pool*: **Harry Callahan talking to superior officer**: - "It's my opinion Callahan that you would be best serving the department at this time by getting off the streets." "Well, sir, opinions are like assholes, everybody's got one."

From *Dirty Harry*: **Harry Callahan talking to Chief of Police**: - "May I make a statement McKay?" "Yes." "Your mouthwash ain't makin it."

From *Sudden Impact*: **Harry Callahan talking to a hoodlum**: - "Well, we're not just going to let you walk out of here like that." "Who's we fucker?" "Smith, Wesson, and me."

From *The Enforcer*: **Harry Callahan**: - "Personnel? That's for assholes."

From *The Enforcer*: **Harry Callahan**: - "Here's my opinion on gun control. If there's a gun around, I'd better be in control."

From *The Outlaw Josey Wales*: **Josey Wales**: - "Dyin' ain't much of a living, boy."

From *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*: **Blondie (Joe in the script)**: - "You see, in this world, there are two kinds of people, my friend: Those with loaded guns, and those who dig. You dig."

From *High Plains Drifter*: **The Stranger**: - "You're going to look pretty silly with that knife sticking out of your ass."

From *High Plains Drifter*: **The Stranger**: - "It's what people know about themselves inside that makes them afraid."

From *Unforgiven*: **Will Munny**: - "It's a hell of a thing, killing a man. You take away all he's got, and all he's ever gonna have."