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AMERICAN CINEMA PROJECT/New York Center For Visual
History

"THE WESTERN"
Host narration open (version A)
11/14/94
1:20

Hello, Im John Lithgow. Welcome to American Cinema.

In John Ford's great film "The Man Who Shot Liberty
Valence," a newspaperman says, "When the truth becomes
legend, print the legend." That may not be good
journalism, but it sure makes for a good western.

The history of the Western is often a history of
legends. Billy the Kid. Wyatt Earp. The Gunfight at
the OK Corral. Not the real West, but a mythical
place, full of images that are uniquely American: the
open frontier, the outlaw, the solitary, often
reluctant hero.

The Western is also landscapes -- a unique stage on
which a great range of dramas from the American
experience get played out. A young man rebels against
his stepfather in "Red River;" an uncle becomes
obsessed with finding his niece in "The Searchers;" a
reformed killer is caught up in a vengeance out of
control in "Unforgiven."

Since "The Great Train Robbery" of 1903, hundreds of
westerns have been made. It's the great American form,
our equivalent of classic Greek tragedy, where we
replay and re-interpret stories of America, as Eli
Wallach recounts for us in ... The Western.

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"THE WESTERN"

Host narration open (version B)

11/17/94

1:20

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THE NEW YORK CENTER FOR VISUAL HISTORY
AMERICAN CINEMA PROJECT
THE WESTERN
Continuity Script
10/21/94

FILM CLIP - HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER

EASTWOOD (VO)

He's a .. another person that is adrift on the
great landscape of the West. That's always
been...

INTERVIEW - CLINT EASTWOOD

EASTWOOD

... part of the fun of the game is that .. that
lone figure on this huge landscape. That's....
And .. and what's it like to be out there? It's
another world out there.

FILM CLIP - HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER

EASTWOOD (VO)

Maybe he was just somebody who drifted along,
happened along, and maybe he was asked for.
It's that fantasy of a guy who's solving the
problem himself. He isn't picking up and dialing
911...

INTERVIEW - EASTWOOD

EASTWOOD

... or any other aid. He's just .. through his
own ingenuity, will work out the situation. If he
doesn't, he doesn't exist.

FILM CLIP - HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER:

ACTOR

You don't like our company?

What's the matter with you?

I'm speaking to you.

JOHN STURGES (VO)

Everybody would like to be the fellow that says,
I'll do it. I'm the one that can do it.

INTERVIEW - JOHN STURGES

STURGES

Everybody else tries, but turn to me, I can solve
it for you. They want to have the magic touch,
they want to be the legend.

INTERVIEW - BUDD BOETTICHER

BOETTICHER

You liked good Westerns and you may not have known
why you liked them, but they were wonderful to
watch.

FILM CLIP MONTAGE:

THE SEARCHERS
SHANE (2 clips)

BOETTICHER (VO)

And it's very romantic. If movies could be a
religion, I think you'd get more out of Westerns
than any other genre.

MONTAGE CONT:

WILLIAM S. HART (still photo)
RIDERS OF DESTINY (2 clips)
HIGH NOON
LEFT-HANDED GUN
STAGECOACH (2 shots)
LITTLE BIG MAN
MY DARLING CLEMENTINE
UNFORGIVEN
STAGECOACH

NARRATOR

The Western has come to symbolize American cinema, its images instantly recognizable the world over. Many of America's foremost directors, writers and actors have been drawn to its elemental moral themes and epic scale: its frontier characters - fools, charlatans, outlaws and heroes - confronting the grand themes of life and death on a simple stage, the stark background of America's West.

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

It's a Western because of the story form, because of the traditional and conventional aspects of a Western story. Isolation. One man up against it, going to resolve it by violence...

FILM CLIP - SHANE

STURGES (VO)

Nobody can help him. They're good versus evil truth, or morality tales.

ELMORE LEONARD (VO)

I thought Westerns would be easier to write ...

INTERVIEW - ELMORE LEONARD

LEONARD

... because you're writing about a time that the reader doesn't .. hasn't experienced. Places that the reader hasn't been. You make up a town -

ARCHIVE:

STREET SCENES

LEONARD (VO)

... a one-street town, with the board-front buildings down both sides. Perhaps a board sidewalk and that was easy to describe.

LEONARD

There's something about the .. the attire.

ARCHIVE STILLs:

W.S. HART POSTER

LEONARD (VO)

The six-guns worn outside, the hat. The leather. That's what Westerns are, the look and the feel.

FILM CLIP - RED RIVER:

Take 'em to Missouri, men.

BOETTICHER (VO)

You've got two stars in a western. You have your leading men and you have your location.

INTERVIEW - BOETTICHER

BOETTICHER

It's so refreshing to get outside and smell the fresh air and .. and .. and see the colors of the flowers and the trees and the mountains and the change when the sun sets. And a great deal had to do with the cinematography. You felt that you were there, you weren't cooped up. You weren't in apartments. You weren't in homes. You were outside.

FILM CLIP - STAGECOACH

BOETTICHER (VO)

You really see the vastness of the West, that lonesomeness. They want the gulp in your throat. They want your heart to beat a little when you say, my gosh that guy's in a lot of trouble, if this is Indian territory.

INTERVIEW - THOMAS MCGUANE

MCGUANE

Underpinning all this stuff is the idea that .. is this a .. a very romantic view of nature.

FILM CLIP: THE SEARCHERS

MCGUANE

And there's always that kind of elegiac quality in ... in Westerns. The idea that the land endures. And all these .. these antics of humans sort of come and go. And that's .. that's why the main

characters of great Westerns are often the landscapes. I mean the Monument Valley's been the hero of more than one movie.

INTERVIEW - RUDY WURLITZER

WURLITZER

For us, for Americans it's like the .. the great pyramids of Egypt or something in the sense that

FILM CLIP: THE SEARCHERS

WURLITZER (VO)

... there are these monumental natural sculptural forms that are much bigger than anything we can create ourselves. And that experience is kind of a vertical experience. You look up to the sky and you feel the big space and the openness of it and .. and that's sort of good for the soul.

MCGUANE (VO)

The story's always the moving on story...

INTERVIEW - MCGUANE

MCGUANE

You know, I mean what do you need to know about the Western? It's about moving on. And the trouble is, is that it was not .. even though the world is round, it's not .. it's not a .. a permanently solvable dramatic theme in that if you move on in the climate that we now live in, in .. in the .. in the Western, you hit Los Angeles, where Westerns are made.

FILM CLIP - ARCHIVE POSTERS

NARRATOR

The cowboy hero was invented by writers, many of whom had never been west of the Mississippi.

Anyone who had lived in the real West knew it wasn't very romantic.

But thousands of dime novels and comic books fed an insatiable public with thrilling tales of the frontier.

FILM CLIP - ARCHIVE

NARRATOR

The myth easily made its way into film. By the early 1930's, the Western had found a home in grade B, low-budget movies. The B movie hero was one-dimensional. A simple, moral guy who lived violently by an uncomplicated code of right and wrong. Hollywood made the movies action-heavy with elaborate stunts and chases, but paid little attention to story or character.

A favorite actor in the serial Western was John Wayne, who earned his spurs acting in dozens of low-budget formula pictures.

FILM CLIP - RANDY RIDES ALONE:

WOMAN

I was afraid you wouldn't get here.

JOHN WAYNE

Well so was I and if I'm not mistaken, the sheriff isn't very far behind.

WOMAN

We have to work fast, the gang didn't get what they were after and they'll be back.

WAYNE

Yes, and that isn't all you have to worry about, I owe you a lot. But don't you realize that in helping me get away, you made yourself a party to a crime?

WOMAN

Why, I never thought of that.

FILM CLIP - STAGECOACH (trailer)

NARRATOR

The Western rode into new territory with STAGECOACH, a powerful drama made in 1939 by veteran director John Ford. His attention to story and performance created some of the most compelling characters in cinema.

FILM CLIP - STAGECOACH

You're the notorious Ringo Kid.

WAYNE

My friends just call me, Ringo. Nickname I had as a kid. My name's Henry.

ACTOR

Seems to me I knew your family, Henry.
Didn't I fix your arm once when you were oh,
bucked off a horse?

WAYNE

Are you Doc Booth?

ACTOR

I certainly am. Oh, let's see. I'd just
been honorably discharged from the Union army
after the war of the rebellion.

ACTOR

You mean the war for the Southern
Confederacy, sir.

ACTOR

I mean nothing of the kind, sir.

WAYNE

That was my kid brother broke his arm. You
did a good job, Doc, even if you was drunk.

ACTOR

Thank you, son. Professional compliments are
always pleasing. What happened to that boy
whose arm I fixed?

WAYNE

He was murdered.

ARCHIVE:

INTERVIEW - JOHN WAYNE

JOHN WAYNE

John Ford was very careful in handling his actors, to make sure that no matter what they do, that it helps to create an emotion in the audience. Cause after all, good pictures are about people. And if he can get the right emotions out of his actors, it's naturally going to affect the audience.

PHOTO - ARCHIVE

LINDSAY ANDERSON (VO)

Ford had been a director for over twenty years. And had learned how to -

INTERVIEW - LINDSAY ANDERSON

ANDERSON

... work with actors, get performances and to achieve reality in terms of character.

FILM CLIP - STAGECOACH:

WAYNE

I watched you with that baby, that other woman's baby. It looked, well.... Well I still got a ranch across the border. And it's a nice place. A real nice place. Trees and grass and water. There's a cabin, half-built. A man could live there .. with a woman. Will you go?

WOMAN

But you don't know me. You don't know who I am.

FORD (VO)

I like to make Westerns because I get away from Hollywood for a while. And you get out in the wilds. You get fresh air in your lungs. You work hard. You sleep well at night.

NARRATOR

In 1946, John Ford returned to one of his favorite locations, Monument Valley, which was to become the setting for his next nine Westerns, and home to the ensemble of characters who populated his films.

ANDERSON (VO)

There was a period where whatever he said about himself, Ford became a conscious artist. His films evokes a story, characters, or place who...

INTERVIEW - ANDERSON

ANDERSON

... mean more than they do narratively. So that behind any story or situation, in any Ford Western, are much larger values, moral values and historical values.

FILM CLIP - MY DARLING CLEMENTINE

ANDERSON (VO)

The dance on the church site symbolizes everything. The development which is going to take place from a frontier town, into a modern city.

WAYNE

I know all I want to know.

INTERVIEW - ANDERSON

ANDERSON

Dialogue is important, but there are many sequences in STAGECOACH, which are purely told through the image. Particularly, say, the final chase.

FILM CLIP: STAGECOACH

ANDERSON (VO)

And which was a very interesting sequence. It disobeys all the rules. There's no left to right, right to left. I mean they're all going every which way. And it actually doesn't matter. Orson Welles saw STAGECOACH many times with the idea of learning in fact how to tell a story through the camera.

FILM CLIP - STAGECOACH

ARCHIVE INTERVIEW -

JOHN FORD

Well the Western is the best type of picture. It's action. Mostly true. All this has happened. But you have horses, move .. we have movement. And the background, scenery, color. And that's why they're interesting.

FILM CLIP - ARCHIVE

FILM CLIP - MY DARLING CLEMENTINE:

Oblige me, ma'am?

Thank you.

NARRATOR

Fonda's Wyatt Earp is a man of the prairie who, like the town of Tombstone, finds himself in transition. His attraction to Clementine, a refined woman of the East, pulls him away from his wilderness roots, towards culture and society.

FILM CLIP - MY DARLING CLEMENTINE:

Hold it, I said, hold it. Stand clear back and make room for our new marshall and his lady fair.

LEONARD (VO)

Just the way he combed his hair, Henry Fonda, fit the part very well. MY DARLING CLEMENTINE had a real feel, a look to it of that period.

INTERVIEW - LEONARD

LEONARD

Where he's sitting with his boots up on the .. on the rail and on the porch and someone comes by and smells his hair tonic. There are those little touches of realism that you appreciate so much.

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

If you have to tell a story with words, you're in trouble. You .. you'd better try and find...

FILM CLIP: MY DARLING CLEMENTINE

STURGES (VO)

... another story. One of the things that makes Westerns work is that they're told by images.

ACTOR

Which one of you killed James?

ACTOR

I did and the other one too.

ACTOR

I'm going to kill you.

ANDERSON (VO)

To see MY DARLING CLEMENTINE, I began to learn what filmmaking could be.

I mean he had a much better sense of camera, image, of putting the sequences together.

I'd have to use the word, poetic.

Look, he knew how to make films.

INTERVIEW - ARTHUR PENN

ARTHUR PENN

One of the marvelous things about a Western is folks ride in and ride out and ride up to each other and .. encounter each other and .. and with physical action. And of course that's .. that's almost pure cinema.

FILM CLIP MONTAGE:

THE TIN STAR

HIGH NOON (2 shots)

THE SEARCHERS

SHANE (6 shots)

RED RIVER (2 shots)

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

THE SEARCHERS

NARRATOR

When Hollywood saw the larger possibilities of the Western, the form moved into a new era, becoming a stage for a wide variety of stories and visions.

ARCHIVE STILLS:

HOWARD HAWKS, ANTHONY MANN
JOHN STURGES, JOHN FORD
JOHN WAYNE

NARRATOR

The Western began to attract some of the most innovative directors - Howard Hawks, Anthony Mann, John Sturges, John Ford - who would shape the new form, as would the man who came to personify the Western more than any single American, John Wayne.

ARCHIVE INTERVIEW

JOHN WAYNE

I've established a character on the screen that may be rough, may be cruel. May have a different code than the average person, but it's never been mean or petty or small.

FILM CLIP - RED RIVER TRAILER

NARRATOR

In 1948, Howard Hawks cast John Wayne and screen newcomer Montgomery Clift in RED RIVER, a tale of ruthless authority, written in the language of the Western.

PENN (VO)

When you get a film like RED RIVER, what you had -

INTERVIEW - PENN

PENN

... here was something where not only was the acting good, but I think Montgomery Clift even elevated John Wayne's acting, by the sheer fullness and richness of what it was he was doing, which has nuance and subtlety and change of posture.

FILM CLIP - RED RIVER:

I'm going to hang ya.

No, no you're not.

What?

You're not going to hang them.

Who'll stop me?

I will.

ARCHIVE INTERVIEW

HOWARD HAWKS

You're a lot more interested in the people and the personalities and the characters of the .. of the .. characters of the people who were in the

picture, than you are the old plots. And we don't pay much attention to plot anymore.

FILM CLIP - RED RIVER:

Get up. Come on, get up.

PENN (VO)

Another thing is that Hawks liked women and that shows up.

FILM CLIP - RED RIVER:

Stop it. Stop it. Stop making a holy....
Stop it, I said. I'm mad, good and mad and who wouldn't be? You Gus, and pretending you're going to kill him....

EASTWOOD (VO)

There's always a place for the strong woman...

INTERVIEW - EASTWOOD

EASTWOOD

... not only to be the catalyst to the male protagonist. But if the female protagonist is .. has .. the more strength she has the better it is for the whole .. for the conflict, or the situation.

FILM CLIP - RED RIVER:

Hold me, feel me in your arms. Do I feel weak, Tom? I don't, do I? Oh, you'll need

me. You'll need a woman. You need what a woman can give you to do what you have to do. Oh listen to me, Tom, listen with your head and your heart too. The sun only shines half the time, Tom. The other half is night.

I've made up my mind.

Well change your mind, Tom. Just once in your life, change your mind.

I'll send for you.

THOMAS SCHATZ (VO)

There is an incompatibility in the desire for a woman and everything she represents. The...

INTERVIEW - THOMAS SCHATZ

SCHATZ

... bearer of culture. The bearer of children. The .. the figure whose .. whose fundamental function it is to tie the man down. And the notion of an individual as someone who's utterly self-reliant.

FILM CLIP - RED RIVER:

Go please, if you're going to go, please go now. I want to be with you so much my knees feel like .. like they've knives in them.

STURGES (VO)

I would think that a happily married couple didn't

necessarily fit in to the Western form. The loner...

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

... is the perfect thing for you to identify with and pretend you're part of. It's the secret of being a hero. Reluctance and the loner.

FILM CLIP - HIGH NOON TRAILER:

A terror-stricken town left him to face four killers, single-handed.

STURGES (VO)

The Western requires a thing, call it, the reluctant hero. People don't like men who come on telling you how good they are. Whereas if you...

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

... are a brave man that says, I'm not brave. I .. I'd rather not do this, it's just that I'm stuck. And I certainly prefer not to get into this, but I'm going to have to do it. But I'm not a hero. The audience will say, oh yes you are, you're a hero.

INTERVIEW - BOETTICHER

BOETTICHER

He was thrust into a situation that he could have

walked out of and he didn't. That .. that's being a hero.

FILM CLIP - HIGH NOON:

Don't try to be a hero, you don't have to be a hero, not for me.

I'm not trying to be a hero. If you think I like this, you're crazy. Look, Amy, this is my town, I've got friends here. I'll swear in a bunch of special deputies and with a posse behind me, maybe there won't even be any trouble.

EASTWOOD (VO)

He was calling on his community to come to his aid. And he was trying to arm the community to .. to defend itself.

INTERVIEW - EASTWOOD

EASTWOOD

And the community didn't want any part of it. They were .. they were letting him stand alone, figuring after all, it was .. it was .. he was the one the villains wanted, so why .. why should they get involved? That sort of went along with the philosophies of American life.

FILM CLIP - HIGH NOON:

I guess you all know why I'm here. I need

deputies, I'll take all I can get. How about it?

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

You want the hero to stand for something, integrity. In sticking to what he believes against all odds, even if he's the one that has to do it all by himself.

FILM CLIP - HIGH NOON:

This is just plain committing suicide. And for what? Why me? I'm no lawman. I just live here. I got nothing personal against nobody. I got no stake in this.

I guess not.

There's a limit how much you can ask a man.

I got a wife and kids, what about my kids?

Go on home to your kids, Herb.

HOWARD HAWKS (VO)

I'd seen a picture called HIGH NOON, where the sheriff -

ARCHIVE INTERVIEW

HAWKS

... played by Gary Cooper, went around begging everybody to help him.

FILM CLIP - HIGH NOON

HAWKS (VO)

And eventually his Quaker wife saves his guts.
And I said, that's ridiculous. The man wasn't a
professional.

ARCHIVE INTERVIEW

HAWKS

My idea of a sheriff is a professional who doesn't
want amateurs butting in and wants to do it by
himself. And so actually, RIO BRAVO started that
way.

FILM CLIP - RIO BRAVO:

Just talking about why you hadn't asked for
any new deputies. You could get some you
know.

Yeah.

How about my drivers, you could use them?
Suppose I got 'em, what did I have? Some
well-meaning amateurs. Most of them worried
about their wives and kids. Burdette has 30
or 40 men, all professionals. Only thing
they're worried about is earning their pay.
No, Pat, all we'd be doing is giving 'em more
targets to shoot at.

INTERVIEW - SCHATZ

SCHATZ

The consummate Western hero would never think of .. of asking for help from the townspeople. The very .. you know his .. the .. the very necessity of his existence has to do with their ineptitude and their .. not that they're cowards, but they simply are unable to up .. to act in a .. in an appropriately violent manner.

FILM CLIP MONTAGE:

RIO BRAVO (all shots)

EASTWOOD (VO)

Violence is depicted in Greek tragedy. Depicted in Shakespeare. To a great degree...

INTERVIEW - EASTWOOD

EASTWOOD

violent situations, or the unusual is what most screen scenarios or plays are about.

FILM CLIP - WINCHESTER '73:

Supposin' I don't tell you? Then what?

Where is he?

ARCHIVE INTERVIEW

ANTHONY MANN

Drama needs violence because the audience is sitting there and they are experiencing things. And then in order for it to take hold, the

dramatist really needs this kind of pictorialness
or .. creativity to .. to express an emotion. For
the character to go through something that the
audience feel for.

FILM CLIP - WINCHESTER '73

STURGES (VO)

Violence is frightening. Well, being frightened
in the theatre is part of theatre.
Violent pictures will always be with us.

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

People like to see westerns like they like to see
a ballet. They like to see a thing they're
familiar with.

FILM CLIP MONTAGE:

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN
GUNFIGHT AT THE OK CORRAL (2 shots)
THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN (2 shots)
GUNFIGHT AT THE OK CORRAL (2 shots)
THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN (3 shots)
GUNFIGHT AT THE OK CORRAL (3 shots)
RIO BRAVO
THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN (2 shots)
GUNFIGHT AT THE OK CORRAL
RIO BRAVO
RED RIVER
WINCHESTER '73 (2 shots)

STURGES (VO)

See it done in the way that they anticipate it,
but meaningfully. It's a disciplined form.

INTERVIEW - WURLITZER

WURLITZER

To me, the area of the West that's really interesting is .. is when the West begins to turn sour. And ... and the frontier, the whole space starts to run out. And Ford ...

ARCHIVE - JOHN FORD

WURLITZER (VO)

... was right on the cusp of that. And towards the end of his life his questions became harder, about the Indians and the implicit racism and the brutality of the West.

FILM CLIP - THE SEARCHERS

NARRATOR

THE SEARCHERS is a tale of a man's quest to find his niece, who has been kidnapped by Indians, that explores obsession and racial hatred.

FILM CLIP - THE SEARCHERS:

There's no more time for praying, Amen.

Brad, Martin.

Amen.

SCHATZ (VO)

I think one of the things that makes THE SEARCHERS such a powerful film is the John Wayne figure,

Ethan Edwards. You know, the Western hero by definition is a fairly obsessive type.

Clearly, in THE SEARCHERS, that type of character is being pushed to absolute extremes, where it's not simply obsessive, but .. but virtually psychotic behavior.

FILM CLIP - THE SEARCHERS:

Those girls mean as much to me as though they were my own. Maybe you don't know that my Brad's been sitting up with....

WAYNE

I'd be obliged if you'd come to the point, ma'am.

ACTRESS

It's just that I know that Martha'd want you to take care of her boys as well as her girls. And if the girls are dead, don't let the boys waste their lives in vengeance. Promise me, Ethan.

WAYNE

Well come on, if you're going with us.

SCHATZ (VO)

I think one of the things that happens as we watch the film, that what we have learned to...

INTERVIEW - SCHATZ

SCHATZ

... live with in terms of a .. of a certain character's psychology and set of behaviors, if pushed just a little ways, is pretty frightening.

HENRY SHEEHAN (VO)

It becomes obvious as the film wears on that Wayne does not want to rescue his niece, he wants to kill her.

FILM CLIP - THE SEARCHERS:

WAYNE

Nope. Our turning back don't mean nothing, not in the long run. If she's alive, she's safe. For a while. They'll keep her to raise as one of their own until .. till she's of an age to....

INTERVIEW - HENRY SHEEHAN

SHEEHAN

I can't imagine a film in 1956 talking about American fears of interracial sexuality in such an explicit way, outside the bounds of the Western.

FILM CLIP - THE SEARCHERS:

WAYNE

Stand aside, Martin.

ACTOR

No you don't, Ethan. Ethan, no you don't.

WAYNE

Stand aside.

INTERVIEW - ANDERSON

ANDERSON

I think that Jean-Luc Godard is supposed to have said he always cries when Wayne chases after...

FILM CLIP - THE SEARCHERS

ANDERSON (VO)

... Natalie Wood, catches her and lifts her up and you are supposed to think that he's going to shoot her, or strangle her, or something. And he says...

JOHN WAYNE

Let's go home, Debbie.

ANDERSON (VO)

It works because Ford was a canny filmmaker and he knew how to do a sequence like that, but it doesn't mean very much.

INTERVIEW - ANDERSON

ANDERSON

My feeling is that the picture is not really a very romantic film. Not a very idealistic film and therefore is calculated to appeal to the modern audience and the modern filmmaker.

FILM CLIP - ARCHIVE

SCHATZ (VO)

The Western has dragged the past with it about fifty years in advance.

As the Western evolves, it's looking at civilization that becomes more and more sophisticated. The hero ...

INTERVIEW - SCHATZ

SCHATZ

... can no longer exercise his .. his code in a way that's acceptable to himself or to society. He becomes an outlaw or a gun for hire.

FILM STILL - THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

NARRATOR

In 1960, John Sturges made THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN, one of the first films that dealt with the closing of the West.

STURGES (VO)

What does a gunfighter do after his prime is past?

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

What do you do when you're a gunfighter? How do you retire? You're forced to change. You're forced to be somebody else. You're forced to cope. That's good story material.

FILM CLIP - THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN:

HORST BUCHOLZ

Your gun has got you everything you have,
isn't that true? Hmmm? Well isn't it true?

STEVE MCQUEEN

Yeah, sure, everything. After a while you
can call bartenders and faro dealers by their
first name, maybe 200 of them. Rented rooms
you live in, 500. Meals you eat in hash
houses, a thousand. Home, none. Wife, none.
Kids ... none. Prospects, zero.

FILM CLIP MONTAGE:

HIGH NOON

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE

SHANE (2 shots)

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE (3 shots)

AUDIO: BOB DYLAN, "KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR"

ANNICK SMITH (VO)

In the Western, there's a quest for the freedom
and individuality. But it's also a quest for...

INTERVIEW - ANNICK SMITH

SMITH

... conquering the land and conquering the people
who lived on the land before you got there. And
taking anything that is in your way without anyone
saying, no.

INTERVIEW - MCGUANE

MCGUANE

It's very hard for me to .. to see .. to see the kind of cowboy hero straight on. I mean to see him sort of un-eroded by irony.

INTERVIEW - NIVEN BUSCH

BUSCH

The Western kept on repeating its myths and legends. The Billy the Kid, the Wyatt Earp, the shootout at the O.K. corral. What they sought was a variation on it.

FILM CLIP - ARCHIVES

NARRATOR

A new, more self-conscious cycle of Westerns took a fresh look at the form. Directors such as Arthur Penn and Sam Peckinpah revised classic legends by interpreting them with modern concerns.

PENN (VO)

This was an expanding nation at that point and...

INTERVIEW - PENN

PENN

... there was the constant problem of .. of whether the deeds that were really accomplished or undertaken, really matched the images that they were creating. And that was the theme inside of LEFT-HANDED GUN.

FILM CLIP - LEFT-HANDED GUN:

Mr. Bonnet, you gave me a start. I suppose

you know your name has been prominent in the paper. I cut out the articles. Here, I think this one might interest you.

NARRATOR

The film portrays another version of William Bonnet, better known as Billy the Kid.

Your death notice.

Let me see, William Bonnet, outlaw, you're dead. Well now, how you like that? "Billy Bonnet was burned to death, leaving no surviving relatives."

That's not necessary, Mr. Bonnet.

PENN (VO)

There's a major character who idealizes Billy.

FILM CLIP - LEFT-HANDED GUN:

I knew you weren't dead.

INTERVIEW - PENN

PENN

And then as that figure of Billy begins to deviate from his expectation of him, he eventually ends up betraying him.

FILM CLIP - THE LEFT HANDED GUN

PENN (VO)

The situation got to be one of the earliest forms of it, of the media dictating the events.

ACTOR

You're not like the books. You don't want to
sell the stuff. You don't stand up to glory.
You're not him. You're not him.

STURGES (VO)

The appeal I think has to be answered with the
word legend.

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

They were legends of the West who did these
outlandish things, which if presented straight out
of nowhere, it would not be accepted. But because
this theoretically happened in the West, audiences
were prepared to accept them as real characters.

ARCHIVE SHOOTOUT

LEONARD (VO)

That meeting in the street for that showdown must
have been made up in Hollywood. A typical
gunfight out West was a man coming ...

INTERVIEW - LEONARD

LEONARD

... into a saloon with a shotgun or .. or a
revolver and seeing the .. the one he wants to
shoot at the bar and shooting at him. Then the
guy at the bar turns around and shoots at him and
follows him out .. out onto the street and shoots

a couple of more times. And maybe eight shots are .. are fired and one hits.

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

I was under the impression that the real story of these people was at least equally interesting to the various fictitious versions of what they did.

FILM CLIP - HOUR OF THE GUN (LTBX W/TEXT)

STURGES (VO)

I found it exciting, but as I've often said, if I find something exciting and the audience doesn't, then I made a big, big mistake.

FILM CLIP - HOUR OF THE GUN

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

And in that case, I was dead wrong. It was not exciting to audiences, possibly because uh, reality violated some of the rules of the legend. Billy the Kid is probably the most abused of them all. He wasn't really any kind of a character, but it was a .. a name. It conjured up an image. Had to be exciting.

INTERVIEW - WURLITZER

WURLITZER

Most outlaws, especially in the West, were

psychotic and pathological and very bad guys. But um, the myth of the outlaw, of that .. it's really the myth of freedom we're talking about. And in .. in the sense of the West, outlaws represented the myth of freedom.

STILL: Rudy Wurlitzer

NARRATOR

In 1973, Rudy Wurlitzer and Sam Peckinpah, using the myth of freedom to justify a reversal of roles, created a world where only the outlaws could be heroes.

FILM CLIP - PAT GARRETT & BILLY THE KID:

ACTOR

Sheriff Pat Garrett sold out to the Santa Fe ring.

ACTOR

How does it feel?

LEE MARVIN

It feels like times have changed.

ACTOR

Times maybe, not me.

INTERVIEW - STURGES

STURGES

Sam is a .. attacker of the ... of the establishment. Sam and I were going to do a ... a television series on THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN. Kind

of sorry we didn't. And it did come to pass, but when Sam and I met about it, he said, this is a great opportunity to rip up the soft belly of Hollywood. I'd never thought of that. I thought we were just going to make some westerns.

FILM CLIP - PAT GARRETT & BILLY THE KID:

Keep the change, Bob.

SCHATZ (VO)

The Western as it develops seems to conceive of society in more and more sophisticated terms.

INTERVIEW - SCHATZ

SCHATZ

And as it becomes more sophisticated it becomes more corrupt.

FILM CLIP - PAT GARRETT & BILLY THE KID:

Well let's get to it.

Ten steps?

Suits me.

You count 'em.

You ain't thought of another way, have you?

Naw, I can't come up with nothing.

Get to it.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight....

WURLITZER (VO)

Sam identified so much with Billy that he didn't

want him to die, you know.

INTERVIEW - WURLITZER

WURLITZER

So there was a great freak-out on the end about whether Sam was going to let him live or not.

INTERVIEW - JAMES COBURN

COBURN

He was getting pretty loaded and we were all trying to get him to stop drinking, get him to go and get some sleep and he says, I don't want to kill him. I said, what are you talking about, Sam? What if he lives, what if you don't shoot him? What if you don't ... what if we don't kill him? I said, Sam, you can't do that. I mean that ... the history's says.... He said, history! We'll create a new myth.

INTERVIEW - PENN

PENN

We know how much myth and nonsense was spun. And you can imagine what it's like after a hundred years of spinning that kind of nonsense and having it be embellished and embellished and embellished by historians and legend-tellers and story-tellers. And pretty soon it's very hard to find out any .. any center(?).

FILM STILL - ARCHIVE

PENN (VO)

Probably the most prominent level was the nature of the relationship between Native American Indian and the Western.

ORTIZ (VO)

Western films perpetuate the notion in the American mind ...

INTERVIEW - ALPHONSO ORTIZ

ORTIZ

... that the Indian is the enemy, that the Indian is the general embodiment of the "other" to the American self.

FILM CLIP - ARCHIVE

ORTIZ (VO)

... I've sat with Navaho children, watching recycled grade-B Westerns and when the cowboy or the cavalry comes over the hill, they start clapping like mad. Indians were defined, uniformly, as being in the way of the orderly march of progress and civilization. See this is how thorough the cultural conditioning has been.

FILM CLIP - LITTLE BIG MAN

PENN (VO)

The Indians had been portrayed throughout most of the Westerns as the .. these wild-blooded savages, who were given to all kinds of criminal acts and

.. and unchristian acts and un .. and dastardly deeds.

DUSTIN HOFFMAN

I don't understand it, Grandfather, why would they kill women and children?

ACTOR

Because they are strange. They do not seem to know where the center of the earth is.

INTERVIEW - PENN

PENN

The fact of the matter is that we were covering up a large part of what would be construed in modern terminology, at least, as a kind of genocide, that we were conducting.

FILM CLIP - LITTLE BIG MAN

PENN (VO)

Which was simply taking the territory away from these people. But LITTLE BIG MAN was not...

INTERVIEW - PENN

PENN

... telling the basic Indian myth the way it had been told. We were reversing that.

NARRATOR

By the mid-Seventies, other filmmakers were re-examining the role of Indians.

FILM CLIP - OUTLAW JOSEY WALES:

ACTOR

Howdy.

EASTWOOD

Howdy.

ACTOR

I'm getting better at sneaking up on you like this. Only an Indian can do something like this.

EASTWOOD

That's what I figured.

ACTOR

You figured.

EASTWOOD

Only an Indian could do something like that.

EASTWOOD (VO)

THE OUTLAW JOSEY WALES was written by an Indian, or at least he was part Indian. He was a man who spent an awful lot of time with Indian...

INTERVIEW - EASTWOOD

EASTWOOD

... issues in this particular country and had a lot of sympathy towards it. That's why .. what appealed to me with the project was that um .. is

that it was one of the first stories that really depicted Indians with a sense of humor.

FILM CLIP - OUTLAW JOSEY WALES:

It's not right this damn woman doing something like this to me. I used to have powers, now old age is creeping up on me. Well it's more like old habits than old age. Who the hell is this woman?

INTERVIEW - EASTWOOD

EASTWOOD

Chief Dan George was very funny in the film. And .. and then Will Sampson played the Indian .. Comanches that .. and .. and tribe who .. who .. and Josey Wales ends up, instead of.... They're both .. though they're both warriors, they end up understanding one another and .. because they are warriors, but they also understand the necessity for negotiation.

FILM CLIP - OUTLAW JOSEY WALES:

ACTOR

It is good that warriors such as we meet in the struggle of life, or death. It shall be life.

ACTOR

So will it be.

EASTWOOD

I reckon so.

ARCHIVE CLIP -

MAKING OF "THE SHOOTIST"

NARRATOR

The same year that Clint Eastwood directed OUTLAW JOSEY WALES, John Wayne starred in his final film, playing a gunfighter dying of cancer, whose frontier code is out of place in the turn-of-the-century West.

FILM CLIP - THE SHOOTIST:

RON HOWARD

Look out!

MCGUANE (VO)

The Western's like gruesome elements which strike you as romantic and idealized and it gets to be obsolete and dangerous. Well, they have to change spiritual plateaus or come to an end.

INTERVIEW - MCGUANE

MCGUANE

That's the test that .. that will either exterminate Westerns, or .. or change them into .. into something that can go on living.

FILM CLIP - THE SHOOTIST

SCHATZ (VO)

It's difficult not to see the Western as having run its course. It dealt with social conflicts and problems that were crucial to this country for decades.

INTERVIEW - SCHATZ

SCHATZ

And that somehow we've worked through all that and we no longer need this form to .. you know, to help us process you know, certain, you know kind of cultural concerns.

INTERVIEW -STURGES

STURGES

Our attitudes have changed. Values have changed. Clothes have changed. Plus, so many thousand Westerns were made that it just lost its punch.

INTERVIEW - EASTWOOD

EASTWOOD

Just when the Western seems like it's gone away, someone else comes along with a different twist on it.

FILM CLIP - DANCES WITH WOLVES

NARRATOR

DANCES WITH WOLVES is the story of a U.S. Cavalry officer whose encounter with the Indians leads him to question his allegiance to his own culture.

WURLITZER (VO)

The whole myth of the West that you can go out to some place and you can invent yourself.

INTERVIEW - WURLITZER

WURLITZER

The Western hero represented somebody that could take advantage of this chance and could make something of it. And that could reinvent his life. So that he could go out and become a hero, not from what he was, but something totally different, something totally new.

FILM CLIP - DANCES WITH WOLVES

NARRATOR

Kevin Costner's character emerges as a hero, but in a most unconventional situation. The audience cheers the Indians as they defeat the U.S. Cavalry.

ANDERSON (VO)

The Western hero symbolizes the man of honor...

INTERVIEW - ANDERSON

ANDERSON

... the good man, the man of action. And that rule is something that will be eternal I think in people, wherever they are. Whether in America, or in the rest of the world.

INTERVIEW - EASTWOOD

EASTWOOD

The kind of Western hero I would devise, doing one today, is .. is probably .. probably very much along traditional lines. I .. I would .. I would try to look for something different in the scenario, though, a different approach.

NARRATOR

In 1992, Clint Eastwood directed the story of a hero involved in a cycle of revenge that ultimately consumes him.

FILM CLIP - UNFORGIVEN:

GENE HACKMAN

Well sir, you are a cowardly sonofabitch.
You just shot an unarmed man.

EASTWOOD

Well he should have armed himself if he's going to decorate his saloon with my friend.

HACKMAN

You be William Munny out of Missouri, killer of women and children.

EASTWOOD

That's right. I've killed women and children. Killed just about everything that walked or crawled at one time or another.

And I'm here to kill you, Little Bill for
what you did to Ned.

SHEEHAN (VO)

UNFORGIVEN attacks virtually every notion of
heroism.

INTERVIEW - SHEEHAN

SHEEHAN

There is a big question in the movie of who
deserves to die? And if anyone deserves to die,
who's going to do the killing?

FILM CLIP - UNFORGIVEN:

GENE HACKMAN

I don't deserve this. To die like this. I
was building a house.

EASTWOOD

Deserves got nothin' to do with it.

HACKMAN

I'll see you in hell, William Munny.

EASTWOOD

Yeah.

INTERVIEW - WURLITZER

WURLITZER

To me it's the great American form, because it's
so simple and elemental and it represents all the
schizophrenia of the American experience.

FILM CLIP - ARCHIVES

WURLITZER (VO)

It's as if we're between myths. the old myth doesn't really exist anymore and what is the new one that's going to come down the road? That'll be very interesting to see.

LEONARD (VO)

I've never thought of Westerns ...

INTERVIEW - LEONARD

LEONARD

... as mythology. I've never thought of the Western hero riding in as some kind of a redeemer. I just saw them as good material for stories.

FILM CLIP MONTAGE:

HIGH NOON (2 shots)
RED RIVER
STAGECOACH
MY DARLING CLEMENTINE
SHANE (2 shots)
UNFORGIVEN
THE SEARCHERS

EASTWOOD (VO)

Well I think he was a hero eventually. Just a reticent hero you might say, which I thought gave a certain humanity to him because he didn't rush to be a hero, it just sorta was forced upon him.

END OF THE WESTERN