



Clint: The Life and Legend

By Patrick McGilligan



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Like *The Man With No Name*, one of his most famous roles, Clint Eastwood has always had an aura of tight-lipped mystery. He has long been an internationally famous star, first of television and then of the movies, and he has more recently joined a select group of Oscar-winning actor-directors, including Orson Welles, Charlie Chaplin and Woody Allen.

But the real Clint has always been an enigma-until now. With this gripping and scrupulously researched biography, Patrick McGilligan, one of America's top film writers, has revealed the man behind the indelible image.

Throughout his remarkable near-half century career, Eastwood has tended to play characters who are cold, hard and morally ambiguous-from Sergio Leone's "spaghetti westerns" through *Hang Em High* and *Dirty Harry* to *In the Line of Fire* and *Unforgiven*. No star is more the hero to his audience: a symbol of simple solutions, law & order, and rebellion against bureaucracy. But offscreen, Clint Eastwood has always been an arch manipulator: of women, friends and colleagues, publicity and finance.

Always even-handed, managing to steer clear of both fawning over and unfair excoriation of its fascinating subject, this biography sheds definitive light on Clint as actor, director and human being.



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

As celebrity biographer McGilligan tells it in *Clint*, Eastwood's career is the classic tale of power and fame corrupting: a small-town boy (who actually grew up in San Francisco) comes to L.A. with a wide grin and an easy manner; is remade by agents and directors (Sergio Leone said, that at first, "Eastwood had only two expressions: with or without a hat"); becomes one of the richest stars in Hollywood; and stops smiling--except wolfishly. McGilligan depicts him as a master of betrayal, casually discarded friendships, and alleged extramarital affairs (which seem to shock the author), complete with alleged children out of wedlock.

Readable though kiss-and-tell breathless, McGilligan's book sometimes overlooks Clint's full significance as a crafter of classics. He should remember the sage words of the French critic who observed, "If you love the films, nothing else matters." --*Gregory McNamee*

From Publishers Weekly

Certain stars encourage our appetite for scandal, but Clint Eastwood is an actor people identify with and want to like. This presents an acute problem for those who read McGilligan's carefully researched and well-written but highly unflattering unauthorized portrait of the icon's life. McGilligan vilifies Eastwood as a womanizer with two priorities: "fast cars and easy women." The author takes potshots at Eastwood's lack of education, suggesting he lied about finishing high school, then slanders his patriotism by speculating that he romanced a general's daughter to escape service in Korea. When a girlfriend became pregnant and had an abortion, Eastwood claims it "crushed his heart," provoking McGilligan to question whether he was simply trying to evoke sympathy for himself. The book is entertaining when it describes Eastwood's early period as a contract player, thrown into such potboilers as *Ambush* at Cimarron Pass. His TV years in *Rawhide* are comprehensively covered, as is his association with director Sergio Leone in the series of spaghetti westerns that launched him to superstardom. McGilligan's analysis of Eastwood's moviemaking points out that he "rips the masks off women and they are revealed as murderous harpies" in such films as *Play Misty for Me* and *High Plains Drifter*. His much publicized relationship with Sondra Locke spotlights a streak of cruelty, along with competitive behavior toward directors because "Clint hated anybody who was weak." McGilligan's tome is worth reading, however, when it delves into Eastwood's contributions as an artist who has produced a body of work that's won two Oscars and an AFI Lifetime Achievement Award. Illus. not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

Film historian McGilligan has written about Cagney, Cukor, and Nicholson, and now he turns his pen to Clint Eastwood, who has scrupulously protected his privacy over his long career. McGilligan has produced a well-researched biography that shatters the aura of mystery around Eastwood. Starting with his subject's first ancestors to arrive in America in the 17th century, McGilligan traces Eastwood's life and career from his birth to his army stint on California's Monterey Peninsula (where he now resides) through the Sandra Locke years to his current status as Hollywood superstar. McGilligan paints a picture that belies Clint's image of the easy-going, taciturn, honorable law-and-order guy. In fact, McGilligan contends that Clint is really a womanizer who is a master of manipulation when it comes to protecting his image, and says he found many friends and associates who would not speak to him for fear of Eastwood's wrath. Until the actor/director writes his autobiography, this will stand as the definitive portrait. Over 30 biographies have been written about Eastwood over as many years, from trivia books to analyses of his films, but none has been as detailed as this work. Highly recommended. Rosellen Brewer, Monterey Cty. Free Libs., Salinas, CA

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