

**The Actor with No Name: A Star Study of Clint Eastwood**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores Clint Eastwood's star text, analyzing Clint Eastwood's acting career, lawsuits, promotions, and election as mayor of Carmel, California. This thesis argues that *The Man with No Name* was a foundational part of creating and defining Clint Eastwood's celebrity status, as well as acting as a building block for his career. *The Man with No Name* was the first major role Clint Eastwood portrayed in his career. Consequently, it functioned as a reference point for the public and the industry throughout his career. The importance of his time as *The Man with No Name* is worth studying as it was a crucial part in establishing Clint Eastwood's value as an actor, director and politician.

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### **The Actor with No Name: A Star Study of Clint Eastwood**

Clint Eastwood has been a household name and familiar actor to many people. Depending on the generation a person grew up in, Eastwood is remembered for different roles. Clint can be remembered as The Man with No Name from the Dollar Trilogy, Dirty Harry from the *Dirty Harry* films, or as an old grumpy man from *El Torino*. This variety is a testament to Eastwood's ability as a star to remain relevant in each generation (Prince, et al., 2018, p. 2).

Eastwood has been acting in the film industry for the last sixty years (Potter 2024) and directing for the last forty (Foote, 2008, p. xiiv). Throughout his time in the film industry, Clint Eastwood has acted and directed in several films earning him “five Academy Awards, Five Golden Globe Awards” (National Endowments for the Arts), and several lifetime achievement awards (Box Office Report, 2020). Eastwood's latest endeavors include acting and directing in a film titled *Juror No. 2*. Which is set to be released sometime within the later year (McArdle, 2023). This thesis sets out to examine how his first role as the Man with No Name would define his public persona through the course of his career.

#### **Previous Studies on Clint Eastwood**

Previous studies of Clint Eastwood have focused specifically on the Dollar Trilogy with an emphasis on directing and storytelling from Sergio Leone (Jameson, 1973, p. 9). With this focus, Sergio Leone changed the way Western movies were made, and the three films that make up the Dollar Trilogy diverged from the traditional Hollywood lot films and have gained academic and popular consideration for their artistic merit and the precedent they set for films to come after them. Clint Eastwood also came to prominence as the actor who played the main character in all three of the Dollar Trilogy films when *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly* became a global sensation (Cumbow, 2008, p. 1) and later found its way into the United States market.

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Many sources credit these films as being the metaphorical and literal sandbox where Clint Eastwood could practice and hone his craft as both an actor and director for his later roles and films.

Further research focused on Clint Eastwood focused on two main points: the Dollar Trilogy and his directing of *Unforgiven*, both of which are considered to be significant for their creativity and originality. The research on Clint Eastwood's work directing *Unforgiven* has mainly considered how this film is indicative of what the modern Western looks like and how it reflects America and contemporary issues (Friedman et al., 1992, p. 22). The 1980s era is often a dark time for the Western genre. As the Western genre came out of the 1980s where it saw little innovation and a decrease in sales for the genre overall (McReynolds, 1998, p. 46). Although the 1990s is considered a dark period due to the storytelling elements, as well as scene choice is also seen as a revival period. This is due to the new take on realism in storytelling as well as a shift from the genre norms of the last half-century.

This research takes a different approach than previously scholars and looks at the importance of the Man with No Name as a character, its development into an archetype, and how Clint Eastwood used the character to market himself in his career and political life outside the film industry. By observing Clint Eastwood's Man with No Name through a critical lens this study can better understand the development of the persona on and off screen. By using the star text framing to understand Clint Eastwood this thesis will seek to understand how Clint Eastwood created a marketable persona on and off screen that relied on his role as the Man with No Name to construct and continually expand his celebrity.

### **Defining Celebrity and Star Text**



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This thesis draws on star text studies, also called celebrity studies or star studies, as the primary lens to examine Eastwood's career. The terminology is used interchangeably to describe the same concepts of the framework. For the sake of this thesis, they will be used interchangeably. The pursuit of celebrity status and the idea of fame is not a modern invention (Gamson, 1994). Rather, Gamson explains that the pursuit of fame has been an innate human drive since the beginning of recorded time. Only with the invention of modern technology has an audience been able to interact so closely with their celebrities. The study of fame and celebrities is perhaps more recent, and is a qualitative tradition of critically analyzing the social construction of stardom and the significance of celebrity within the media industries and culture more broadly. Star studies also focus on the impact that celebrities have on capital, investments, outlay, and the market (Dyer, 2019, p. 10-11). These categories help narrow down the understanding and functionality of star texts. When looking at a celebrity specifically McDonald defines the star text as the accumulation of what is publicly available to access a celebrity's meaning. "Because the image is not the person but rather a set of texts and meanings that signify the person" (McDonald, 2000, p. 14). The image is rather what we perceive of the celebrity and not necessarily the celebrity themselves. It is more so what we as the public create about the celebrity that makes a star text. This is important when observing Clint Eastwood's delicate care for his public persona through several lawsuits over the course of his career.

This thesis uses star text as well as an analysis of Clint Eastwood's career, lawsuits, and run for mayor to understand the importance of his role as The Man with No Name, and the effect it had on jumpstarting his career. This thesis argues that The Man with No Name was a foundational part of Clint Eastwood's public persona, as it established him in the celebrity market and was the basis for his many films in the Western genre. Star text is routinely used by

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researchers to understand both the image and person of a celebrity (Patterson, 2012, p. 235).

Often the image and person are inseparable in the eyes of the public. That is why it is important to not only analyze but question both the image and person that helped define the celebrity.

### **Star Text in the Western Genre**

Fame connected with appearing in media that belongs to the Western genre is distinct in that this sector and iconography related to the Western is based upon performers and figures in popular culture that pre-date the invention of film. The first Western celebrities were the real outlaws and sheriffs and cattlemen and cowboys whose biographies animate many of the films and television shows in this genre, though the term celebrity was not used, it still encapsulates the notoriety and fame. The late-19<sup>th</sup> century American public was fascinated with the coverage of conflicts like the shootout in Tombstone, Arizona at the OK Corral between the Clanton Brothers, and the Earp Brothers and Doc Holliday (Roberts, 1970). Other well-known real-life Western celebrities include Jesse James and the James-Younger Gang that rode into fame when they hijacked a train in Missouri—one of the first large-scale train robberies of its kind (Beights, 2005). Likewise, Billy the Kid became a national sensation when he made his daring escape from underneath the nose of Sheriff Pat Garrett's armed guards (Hutton, 2015). Towards the end of the 1800s, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, along with the Wild Bunch, outran the United States military and the well-known private security Pinkertons, even going so far as to take a photograph and send it to the newspapers to publicly taunt their pursuers (Selcer, 2011). These Wild West celebrities were a crucial part of the West's development, as well as helping build the archetype for the Western celebrity.

It is debated when the Wild West came to a close, as scholars range from arguing that it ends between 1890-1910 (Christensen, 2008, p. 312). However, its mythic legacy lived on in

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literature, film, and popular culture during the Twentieth Century. During the early era of U.S. films, Western movie stars such as Tom Mix and Gene Autry began making a name for themselves in films centered around the Wild West, making the tales of these outlaws canonical. Stars like Roy Rogers, John Wayne, Steve McQueen, and Clint Eastwood had their star text connected to the development of characters in the Western genre. This project combines a consideration of the Western genre and star studies to analyze how Clint Eastwood used his role as the Man with No Name to advance his career both within Hollywood and outside of Hollywood.

### **The Antihero Archetype**

Antiheroes are not a modern invention but rather a cyclical instillation in a cultural identity. For this thesis, this section will only look at the how Western hero is represented in the modern era. The change from hero to antihero is said to come from World War II as the “dropping of the atomic bomb, traditional martial imagery lost the last of the evocative power it has previously possessed” (Linenthal, 1980, p. 84). The world changed after World War II and the dropping of the atomic bombs and so did the hero’s imagery. With the advancement into the modern era, the hero changed to fit the times. The “modern anti-heroism captures the intellectual, moral, and cultural sensibility associated with modernism” (Neimneh, 2013, p. 76). The rise of the antihero is a deviation from the classical role of a hero. This is due to the collision of the hero and the modern world. The Western Antihero is born out of the ending of war and the rise of the modern era. This shift at the end of the 1940s causes the traditional hero archetype to be questioned and the rise of the antihero begins.

### **The Antiheroes in the Wild West**

Before there could be Clint Eastwood's antihero, there were antiheroes of the Wild West who reached celebrity status as heroes in the eyes of the public, heroes like Billy the Kid, Jesse James, and Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. Billy the Kid reached the status of antihero through the Lincoln County Wars in New Mexico Territory. These wars started over land rights as well as several unlawful killings. After the dust settled on the wars, Billy the Kid came forward to testify in court about the wrongful killings. It was here that a back-room deal was struck between the sheriff and powerful landowners and the judge leading the case. Billy the Kid was the only individual tried for murder. This verdict set Billy off on a run from the law and a manhunt of his own to set right the wrongs done by the New Mexico Territory government (Hutton, 2015). Billy the Kid was beloved by the Hispanic population of New Mexico and was sympathetically depicted in the press.

Similarly to Billy the Kid, Jesse James was a product of government neglect. Jesse James and his older brother Frank James came out of a war-torn Missouri just after the end of the Civil War. It was in these turbulent conditions that Jesse and Frank James began resorting to attacking Jayhawks, Northern sympathizers, for their money. The James Gang took to robbing banks and the railroads in this manner, believing that the money belonged to them since the government took it from them anyway during retributions in the Civil War. The public and press began portraying Jesse James and his gang with the modern-day Robin Hood. The James brothers gave money out to the needy, looking after the local population as if they were their own, and taking care of the women and children in the towns they passed through. This behavior led to a positive relationship between the public and Jesse James, so much so that the Pinkerton Agency had a difficult time getting information on the James Gang's whereabouts. The Robin Hood image

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helped create Jesse James as a living antihero. Even in the eyes of the newspapers, the public was rooting for Jesse. The public loved Jesse James and petitioned to get him pardoned by the President of the United States, stating that he was only a product of the war that they wished would end. Jesse James and his gang became celebrities in their own time. So much so, that when Robert Ford shot Jesse James in the back there was a public outcry for the cowardly killing (Woog, 2010, p. 102). Jesse was laid in an “Expensive metal coffin and protected by armed guards” (Dibble, 1931 p. 237). People came to see Jesse as his body passed through Missouri on its way to his final resting place.

Another popular set of icons that have defined fame within the Western genre are Butch Cassidy and Harry Alonzo Longabaugh—better known as the Sundance Kid. Butch Cassidy and Sundance gained notoriety through bank robbing and then train robbing. They became well known for robbing the same Union Pacific rail line multiple times (Gulliford, 2012). These attacks halted the railroads for a time and the Pinkerton Agency was called up once again to hunt down the infamous duo. The pair went to Fort Worth where they met up with the rest of the Wild Bunch Gang and took a now infamous photography that was then spotted in the window of a shop by a Pinkerton Agent and helped identify the rest of the Wild Bunch Gang. The public became fascinated with the train-robbing antics of Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid, as well as their brazen tactics taunting the Pinkerton Agency. Again, just like Jesse James, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance became antiheroes as the American public cheered on their outlaw heroes (Selcer, 2011).

My thesis builds on this connection between Western popular figures and antihero celebrities by analyzing how Clint Eastwood’s first film roles reflected these characteristics, and how he used that connotation in his film and political career. I start this analysis in chapter two,

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where I will look at the Dollar Trilogy and how it brought Clint Eastwood to fame. Then in chapter three, I will examine the films he followed the Dollar Trilogy up with in Hollywood during his contract with Warner Brothers, noting how they helped solidify his star-text persona. I then turn in chapter four to consider how the Man with No Name persona shaped Clint Eastwood's campaign for mayor of Carmel-By-The-Sea and acclaim that he received for his directing work on *Unforgiven*.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Laying the Foundation of a Western Icon: The Dollar Trilogy**

Clint Eastwood was born Clint Eastwood Jr. on “May 31, 1930, in San Francisco, California” to Clint Eastwood Sr. and Ruth Eastwood (Thompson, 2007, p. 28). Eastwood was born during the Great Depression and spent his earlier years traveling with his family as they moved place to place for his father to find work. He came from a working-class background and he has spoken of his childhood hardships, clarifying that he “[n]ever felt unloved or abandoned at any time...his parents were obviously caring and conscientious” (Snickler, 1997, p. 24). Eastwood joined the United States Army in 1950 at the age of 20 (Thompson, 2007). While Eastwood was stationed at Monterey, California, he would frequent visits to Carmel (Snickler, 1997). This fascination with Carmel would arise a lifelong goal of Eastwood's to live in the town, and these pre-acting years would become influential on Eastwood's career, as he would not only achieve this goal, but film his directorial debut, *Play Misty for Me* in Monterey and Carmel, and eventually become mayor there as well.

### **The Man, The Myth, The Legend**

It is important when looking at Clint Eastwood's rise to fame that we understand it came with his lead role as the Western hero. The myth of the cowboy is almost indestructible and malleable enough to survive decades of societal changes with little to no change to itself (McReynolds, 1998). By attaching himself to the myths of the West and the stories of the cowboys, Clint Eastwood was able to fashion his star text in the mold of famous Western actors such as John Wayne and Roy Rogers, as well as Western legends such as Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Wyatt Earp, and Billy the Kid. The lines of truth and legend blend in his celebrity as he has built and redefined the myth of the cowboy in the twentieth century.

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For the last 150 years, “the cowboy” has been an icon associated with wild untamed landscapes, hard work, and Marlboro cigarettes. According to *The Cowboy Hero: His Image in American History & Culture*, “the cowboy in various guises is popularly accepted by Americans as a symbol, indicative of his true stature as a myth” (Savage, 1979, p. 3). The American cowboy developed as a popular cultural icon inspired by the very real labor of settlers, ranch hands, and cowboys in the American West in the 1870s and 1880s. As time progressed, the image of the cowboy changed and adapted to fight the problems of the modern world. Today the symbol of “the cowboy” is circulated both through the myths of actual cowboys in the Old West and the legends Hollywood created. Both of these ideas are culturally important to the American public; indeed, the image of the cowboy became so synonymous with America that when USSR leader Nikita Khrushchev came to America, he asked to see John Wayne and not other political dignitaries (Rasmussen, 1999).

The popularity of the cowboy figure by the mid-twentieth century was no doubt the result of how the cowboy became a hero of the silver screen. Silent films for a time held up the mantle of the cowboy, but with the invention of sound films we see the cowboy grow rapidly as a popular cultural icon in a new age. There was a big move in the 1940s films when the Western hero was brought back to life through the heavy focus on storytelling and character development with actors like Gary Cooper and Roy Rogers. As movies evolved so did the depiction of the cowboy.

John Wayne is perhaps one of the best-known celebrities to connect his iconic star text persona to the Western film genre. We see him begin this work by connecting his persona to the cowboy film in *Stagecoach* (1939) in which John Wayne portrays an outlaw who has to help a stagecoach and its passengers survive in the rugged lands of the western desert. After



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*Stagecoach*, John Wayne went on to star in several Westerns which helped solidify him as an actor and the Western genre as a whole. As stated previously, John Wayne was so synonymous with cowboy movies and Westerns that Soviet Premiere Khrushchev asked to meet him when he arrived in the United States for an official visit.

Not only did the figure of “the cowboy” change throughout time from the actual West to the depictions on the silver screen, but it became a popular culture icon. Cowboys represented the bridge between the rugged West and civilization. The idea of Western expansion did not just stop with the expansion into the American West in the 19th century. It has become an established part of American society that is continually reconfigured and deployed in new forms of media and popular culture. The boom of cowboy heroes in 1950s film and television coincided with the ending of World War II and the focus on Westerns as a representative genre grew (Baker, 2014). Films like *Shane* (1953) changed the way a Western hero was depicted yet again (Stevens, 1953). *Shane*, a traveling gunfighter, comes to a town of small-time farmers who need help fighting the large landowning cattlemen. In this depiction of *Shane*, we do not know his past or where he is going. Cowboys have thus ridden along within popular culture for nearly 150 years, I felt that it was relevant to cover and discuss some of the reasons that made the image of the cowboy prevalent. The iconic “cowboy” image is almost always immediately conjured up when America or the American West is brought up.

The ongoing connection between the figure of the cowboy and the lone-riding hero continues to be a significant part of our cultural imaginary. McReynolds (1998) describes the importance of the cowboy legend in his book *Alive and Well: Western Myth in Western Movies*. McReynolds explains the difference between movies like *Hud*, which challenge the foundation of the Western myth, and stories like *Lonesome Dove* which play into the myths and tropes of

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the western cowboy hero. McReynolds notes that “It [the myth] does not matter. The myth is the same, impregnable, unassailable, only the times change. Today we remember *Hud* (1965) for its brilliant performances and tight editing, but we believe in *Lonesome Dove*” (McReynolds, 1998, p. 47). It is within this framework of the perpetuation of the mythic Western “cowboy” that Clint Eastwood was able to rise to prominence and articulate his star text.

### ***Rawhide***

I begin my study of Clint Eastwood’s star text by examining his role on the TV show *Rawhide*. Although Clint Eastwood had some minor roles in previous films such as *Lafayette Escadrille* (1958) and *Ambush at Cimarron Pass* (1958), his first major role came with the television show *Rawhide* (1959 -1965). The show was based on *Red River* (Sheehan, 1992) a book about the troubles of a group of cowboys that herd cattle across Texas. By basing the television series on the book’s stories, the series writers could create new and exciting adventures each week for the audience to enjoy centered around the premise of the cowboys herding cattle across the Texas landscape.

In *Rawhide*, we see the development of Clint Eastwood’s connection to the Western genre. Indeed, “[h]is first career breakthrough came with his casting as Rowdy Yates, the second lead on CBS-TV’s *Rawhide* Series” (Sheehan, 1992). He is not yet the Man with No Name but it is in *Rawhide* we see his ability to connect his public persona with the character Rowdy Yates, a cowboy who is friendly to those around him, yet also possesses a sense of recklessness and mysteriousness in his presence on screen. Eastwood’s role in *Rawhide* is an important contrast for his future connection to the Western genre, as “...the very fact that Eastwood achieved his lasting fame with ferocious subversions of Western conventions lends a special significance to the seven years he spent playing by the rules” (Sheehan, 1992).

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*Rawhide* marks the point at which Clint Eastwood gained traction for his acting career and developed the characteristics he would articulate with his star text in the Dollar Trilogy under Sergio Leone's directing. Characteristics such as the wide flat-brim hat, soft-spoken lines, and the slightly mysterious demeanor. As said in "Rawhide Debuts" an article about *Rawhide*, "The unadorned Eastwood style had unexpected global appeal - A Fistful of Dollars, the first spaghetti western, was made in the *Rawhide* years - and aged surprisingly well" (Allemang, 2013 p. A2). Here then, is an acknowledgment of *Rawhide's* foundations in helping Eastwood craft his public persona.

### **The Dollar Trilogy**

While working on *Rawhide*, Eastwood was cast in The Dollar Trilogy: *Fist Full of Dollars* (1964), *For A Few Dollars More* (1965), and *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly* (1966). This casting was a significant turning point for Eastwood's career. The Sergio Leone-directed movies were filmed in rapid succession in Italy and marked the beginning of the Spaghetti Westerns. Italian production companies filmed the movies in the Italian countryside rather than on Hollywood lots like American-produced Westerns. Despite their origins, these early Spaghetti Westerns were an international success and gained worldwide notoriety.

When looking at the three films individually, we get a better understanding of Clint Eastwood's progression as a star and his connection to the Western genre. The first film in the series is *Fist Full of Dollars*, where we see Clint Eastwood's first performance as The Man with No Name. The Man with No Name shows up in a town on the United States-Mexico border that has been torn apart by gangs fighting for control of the area. The Man with No Name plays both sides of the gangs in their war and pits the gangs against each other. Eventually, the Man with No Name is captured and savagely beaten by the main antagonist, Ramon, played by Gian Maria

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Volontè. While recovering from his wounds, the Man with No Name devises a plan to level the playing field and defeat Ramon's faster draw. Although the Man with No Name mainly is driven by personal gains, he sets out to free the townspeople and take revenge on Ramon and the gangs for his personal mistreatment. (Leone, 1964). This film includes the now iconic image of Clint Eastwood in a green poncho and chewing a cigar.

The second film in the series is *For A Few Dollars More*. The audience is introduced to Colonel Mortimer, played by Lee Van Cleef, and another Man with No Name character played by Clint Eastwood. The bounty hunters are on the hunt for a Mexican gang planning to rob a large bank. After the gang successfully robs the bank, both Colonel Mortimer and the Man with No Name devise a plan to infiltrate and kill the gang, allowing them to collect the bounties and return the bank's stolen money. It is later revealed that Colonel Mortimer is hunting the main villain El Indigo, played by Gian Maria Volontè, for personal revenge. All the while, the younger bounty hunter, played by Clint Eastwood, helps the colonel find the outlaws he is pursuing so he can claim the bounty on their heads (Leone, 1965). In *For A Few Dollars More*, we see Clint Eastwood's character transform and change into an honorable cowboy as he decides not to take the money and run, but instead, to assist Colonel Mortimer in getting the revenge he's been seeking.

The third and final film in the trilogy is *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly*. Eastwood's character is seen first getting his poncho and other identifying items which he wears in the later films. The film starts with three men who are set in a race against each other to find hidden Confederate gold. The Man with No Name is set in a race against the characters Angel Eyes (Lee Van Cleef) and Tuco (Eli Wallach). The story takes the men across Mexico and the United States's southern border, as well as through the ongoing Civil War as they chase clues that lead

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them closer to the hidden gold. The finale takes place in a cemetery where the gold is said to be buried, and the cemetery provides the setting for a suspenseful shootout between the three men (Leone, 1966).

The Dollar Trilogy helped project Clint Eastwood into stardom and the Man with No Name would become the archetype for Eastwood's public persona development—a lone bounty hunter who travels from town to town in search of jobs and adventures. Many of the dialogue lines that have come to be associated with Eastwood are in these three films, lines such as: “You shoot to kill, you better hit the heart” (Leone, 1964), and “You see, in this world, there's two kinds of people, my friend: those with loaded guns, and those who dig” (Leone, 1966). Although he is called the Man with No Name, Clint Eastwood's character is given different nicknames throughout the three films, such as Blondie and The Kid. Indeed, while the archetypes remain in place through the Dollar Trilogy, the characters and names change in each film, as, for example, Lee Van Cleef stars in *For A Few Dollars More* as Colonel Douglas Mortimer and later in *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly* as Angel Eyes.

Sergio Leone's Dollar Trilogy offered a new way to tell a Western story. Leone took the story of good and evil and twisted it by making the main characters bounty hunters, in doing this he made the heroes out of antiheroes who operated both within and outside the law, and separated them from the villains by their honor and adherence to a moral code (Bingham, 1990). Sergio Leone used violent scenes and suspenseful narrative to paint a picture of this gritty West. This series was a departure from the morally centered film and television Westerns of the 1950s and before, where when the bad guy was shot, he would fall down, and the audience would not see blood. Leone's Westerns stand in stark contrast to Roy Rogers or early John Wayne movies.

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McReynolds describes this change as the shift in Westerns from the “‘older’ ones which remained naively true to the myth and thus clearly separated from actual experience” (McReynolds, 1998 p. 46). McReynold’s discussion on the West explains the shift from early Westerns which contained the tropes and myth to the modern Westerns that focused more on the experience. The modern Western changed to more relatable experiences and circumstantial scenarios rather than following the traditional Western myth to the letter. After the 1960’s the more violent style of Western became a staple, and Sergio Leone’s films were at the forefront of the change in the mid-sixties.

Another part of Sergio Leone’s films is how he tells the story through the absence of a backstory or explanation, as Leone drops the audience into the middle of the story as if the audience just happened to be in the same city at the same time as our heroes. Leone reveals just enough of the story to understand what is happening in the present moment, yet leaves them guessing what will happen next and wanting more answers. This narrative structure provides a unique mode for developing characters and their backgrounds. Throughout the three films, we find out a little bit more about the Man with No Name as his backstory and persona develop, as Eastwood creates a character that is both relatable and mysterious (Murphy 1996). With every confrontation he has with a bad guy, or in passing conversation with another protagonist, we get a little more information on his backstory but never the full picture. For example, in *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, we see Eastwood pick up the poncho that he wore in *A Fist Full of Dollars* and *For A Few Dollars More*. This action ties the character to the first two Dollar movies and gives a background as to how The Man with No Name comes into the series. These subtle hints at the Man with No Name’s past give the audience the chance to speculate on the character’s history.

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With the help of Sergio Leone's films, Eastwood's public persona comes to represent a different type of hero, the antihero, as he becomes synonymous and linked to his the Man with No Name role. It is through these formative years Clint Eastwood was able to develop himself more as an actor. Roden writes in *Clint Eastwood and Archetypes: An explanation of Eastwood's Directorial Success* that, "[h]is years spent with Sergio Leone in the 'spaghetti westerns' showed him the value of the antihero—a flawed character is an interesting character. Consequently, many of Clint's heroes were far from ideal heroes. Both his television and movie roles would influence his choice of scripts and storytelling style to a degree" (Roden, 2008, p. 21). Eastwood's journey articulating his star text with the antihero began with The Dollar Trilogy, and was heavily influenced by Eastwood's collaboration with Leone. Prior to these roles, Eastwood was playing the classic Western hero archetype on *Rawhide*. Eastwood used the exposure from these films and connected his public persona to the gritty, cowboy antihero by the end of filming for The Dollar Trilogy.

### **The Man with No Name Personified**

To better understand Eastwood, we first need to understand the Dollar Trilogy and the influence that it has left on the Western genre. As McDonald reminds us, "Any study of the star system must combine an understanding of both industry and image" (McDonald, 2000 p. 3) Both Clint Eastwood and the Western genre are connected, and because Eastwood's break-out role comes from a Western film it is no surprise to see him typecast early as a Western actor. From 1964 to 1966, Clint Eastwood had the time and resources to curate his antihero persona through the directing of Sergio Leone in the Dollar Trilogy. Leone created an experimental environment for Eastwood, because of the break away from traditional Western genre styling. Eastwood was able to develop his performance and persona with a great deal of freedom from his director and

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co-stars, from the way he walks down the main street, to the dialog he presents, to the way he looks up towards the camera. While shooting in Italy, Leone gave Eastwood complete autonomy to craft how he wanted to depict the characters he portrayed, and this environment gave him the space to experiment and create The Man with No Name persona that would define his public persona (Cumbow, 2008).

### **The Appearance and Depictions**

Clint Eastwood's outfit became another identifier for his persona. The image of Clint Eastwood that many conjure up is that of a man dressed in black, with a worn green poncho draped over him, and covered by a wide flat brim hat as he walks down the middle of a street in a Western town. An account by the *London Star*, from a United Kingdom viewing of *A Fist Full of Dollars* states, “[b]ut nothing does quite so much as Clint Eastwood as The Man with No Name. The dead eyes; the cracks and furrows; the enviable facial hair; the implacable jawline . . . And then there's that poncho & Clint is the long overdue subject of this retrospective” (Godwin, 2008) [See Figure 1]. This style of costume was relatively new and different for a Western protagonist in contrast to the outfits of heroes like Roy Rogers, The Lone Ranger, and Gene Autry, who wore white gloves, white broad cowboy hats, and white horses. Their antagonist counterparts usually wore all-black clothes and black hats, and rode dark horses. This styling provided an easy identifier of the struggles of good and evil that took place in many of the early Westerns, where there was a clear distinction between good and bad. Clint Eastwood's Man with No Name is the opposite because the deviation in his outfit suggests there is also deviation in his character's persona, from the traditional Western hero to a new modern antihero.

### **The Palette of The Western Hero in Film**



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The integration of Western figures from real-life headlines into film redefined cowboys through the available technology and production code of the film industry. One way this redefinition worked was by aligning certain characters with specific colors. Within the themes of traditional Westerns, the themes surrounding color are used more frequently in the early years of Westerns. Originally, the color white represented innocence and justice. This styling was often accompanied by big white felt or straw hats, white gloves, and white horses [Figure 1]. This combination was the identifier for the good guys within the film. In Classic Westerns portraying Roy Rogers, Tom Mix, and Gene Autry we see the use of white to help identify them as the strong protagonists in the West.

*Figure 1: The Lone Ranger And Tonto*



On the other hand, the color black originally was the identifier for the bad guys or the strong antagonists of a film. Black represented the evil of the West and in a more comprehensive sense the fallen angels of society. It is here that the antagonists were dressed in all-black clothes, black gloves, black crushed felt cowboy hats, and riding on black horses (Figure 2).

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*Figure 2: Lee Marvin in The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*



These color-coordinated themes were commonly recognizable and helped the audience easily identify who was who in the early Westerns. As the genre aged, these themes became common knowledge. The color-coordination was so common in the 50s with the Singing Cowboys Generation, that it was assumed the theme would continue. It was not until the 60s when Sergio Leone experimented with adapting and changing these themes that were considered pillars of the genre.

Leone, in *The Dollars Trilogy*, played with color themes to represent different meanings and change the audience's perspective of a character. Clint Eastwood's character is a bounty hunter for the three films across the Dollars Trilogy, because of this, he is given the color black. Most of his color palettes are earth tones or subdued tones and it changes the character from a hero to an antihero. He is no longer clad in white without a speck of dust on his boots. He is dirty and covered in dust from the trail. Here we get the idea through these color choices that our hero may not be a hero in the true sense, rather he is a hero for the problem that is at hand. This analysis that is created about the Man with No Name's past is up to the audience to decide if the Man with No Name is a hero or is out to serve his own interests. The color choice and clothing

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choice are some of the big tenets that helped lay the foundation for the modern antihero we see in Westerns today, as well as developing Clint Eastwood's *Man with No Name*.

It also is reflective of Sergio Leone's mode of storytelling and his use of characters and archetypes traditionally not associated with heroes as his protagonists. In Leone's Westerns, there is no clearer-cut good or bad, there are multi-faceted ideas and people in a complex struggle for a somewhat common goal. Like the story of *For A Few Dollars More*, both Colonel Mortimer and The Kid work to capture a gang of outlaws that have robbed the El Paso bank. Colonel Mortimer is an ex-military man, with a mysterious background in his ways of his occupation. We as the audience assume that Mortimer is a bounty hunter. The Kid is also equally mysterious. The Kid looks to be younger than many of the father figure characters on screen and the only assumption about him is that he too is a bounty hunter. Typically, the roles of bounty hunters were used for antagonists and opposition to the hero of a Western. Sergio Leone uses that to his advantage as he makes them the antiheroes of his world on screen.

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*Figure 3: Clint Eastwood in The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly*



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Figure 4: *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly American Poster (1967)*



In Figure 4, we again see Clint Eastwood portrayed as a mysterious, poncho-wearing bounty hunter within the depiction of the poster. The striking image of Clint Eastwood, standing defiantly over the cannon, with the cigar in his hand, adds to the macho and charismatic antihero

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persona that the three Sergio Leone films helped him construct to portray himself as a new, gritty cowboy.

*Figure 5 The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly Italian Poster (1966)*



Across the main promotions for *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, *A Fist Full of Dollars*, and *For A Few Dollars More* Clint Eastwood is portrayed wearing the iconic green poncho and flat-brim hat, followed by the glaring glances from the young actor. We also see this iconography used uniformly in Eastwood's portrayed via worldwide promotional posters and



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advertisements used for *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*. To understand this better, this chapter compares the promotional posters from Italy, as well as America. Both posters are from the 1968 to 1970 time frame, which is when the movie originally circulated. The Italian market was the initial market with the original release date being December 23rd, 1966 (IMDb). The second poster comes from the American market, which received the movie a short time after the Italian market saw it on May 10th, 1967 (Box Office Mojo/ Way Back Machine). The American market granted Clint Eastwood the most success and worked to cement the value of his star text as a commodity articulated with the Western genre.

The two posters were designed for their respective audiences. The poncho becomes Clint Eastwood's main throughout the first three films, so much so that generations have come to identify Clint Eastwood with the green poncho, even though he has not worn it in a film since *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*. Here in Figure 5, we see another depiction of Clint Eastwood wearing the green poncho with the flat-brim hat. This is the Italian market poster, which would be one of the earlier depictions of the Man with No Name. We see Clint Eastwood standing broad-shouldered and looking off into the distance in a sort of trance-like state. This depiction echoes the design choices of the promotional photo from on set during the production of *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly* in Figure 3, where the focus is specifically on Eastwood's facial expressions and demeanor.

In the American poster [Figure 4] we again see Clint Eastwood portrayed as a mysterious, poncho-wearing bounty hunter. The striking image of Clint Eastwood, standing defiantly over the cannon, with the cigar in his hand, adds to the macho and charismatic antihero persona that the three Sergio Leone films helped him craft.



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This repetition of the portrayal of the Man with No Name across different international markets solidified in the public mind that Clint Eastwood was the embodiment of the Man with No Name and made the character and actor synonymous.

### **Association of the Man with No Name: Jolly Films Lawsuit**

The Man with No Name persona that Clint Eastwood developed became an international sensation when the final film in the Dollar Trilogy, *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly*, was released in Italy in 1966. By this point, Clint Eastwood was a star, and the Man with No Name had become a recognizable character in Western pop culture, so much so that other film companies were trying to capitalize on the success of The Man with No Name. The Man with No Name was such an important representation of Clint Eastwood that he sued both Jolly Films and PEA for misrepresentation of the Man with No Name in their film *The Stranger*. In the article “*Clint Eastwood Vs. Jolly On 2 Segs of ‘Rawhide’ Billed ‘New’ Italo Pic,*” *Variety* describes that, “[i]n a local press conference, Eastwood explained that pic, being billed as an Eastwood starred film to follow ‘Fistful,’ is actually made up of two old ‘Rawhide’ episodes, one made two, the other about five years ago, recently bought from CBS by Jolly.” (*Variety*, 1966, p. 15).

As mentioned earlier, Eastwood started in the Western TV show in the 1950s. Jolly Films bought the rights to two separate episodes done by different directors and producers and edited the two into a full-length feature film advertised as *The Magnificent Stranger* and billed it as a sequel to *A Fist Full of Dollars*. Essentially using Clint Eastwood’s Man with No Name character and the recent success of his films to profit off of him. The article in *Variety* about the suit goes on to say that, “Actor (Clint Eastwood), who flew in from Spain where he’s currently working with Leone on another oater, ‘The Good, The Ugly, and the Evil,’ for PEA and UA, recorded his principle beef as a fear that the billing of ‘Stranger’ [the film mentioned above, *The Magnificent Stranger*]

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was hoaxing the Italian public, which he said had been so good to him in his new-found career, into thinking they were about to see a brand-new film” (Variety, 1966, p. 15). This article shows that even before the release of *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly*, Clint Eastwood had become synonymous with the Man With No Name. Enough so, that small film companies set out to recycle old footage and capitalize on this recognition. Clint Eastwood states that his motives for suing Jolly Films for using *The Magnificent Stranger* in their film promotion underlie his investment in protecting the star image he had been able to craft through the Leone films. However, both Jolly Film’s marketing and Eastwood’s fight against them also demonstrate how he had become synonymous with the character at this point in his career.

By protecting the Man with No Name from being used or misrepresented by other production companies, Clint Eastwood further solidified his connection to that persona. Eastwood would go on to solidify this connection between himself and the Man with No Name in the different iterations of the character portrayed throughout his films of the 1970s. As I discuss in this next chapter, we can see how Clint Eastwood would go on to capitalize on this association with the characteristics of the Man with No Name at this juncture in his career.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Warner Brothers Films

#### Going Beyond the Man with No Name Archetype in *Paint Your Wagon* and *Two Mules for Sister Sara*

As outlined in the last chapter, Clint Eastwood's success with the Dollar Trilogy and his ability to brand his public persona with the characteristics of the gritty, modern cowboy made it possible for him to re-enter Hollywood. He would accomplish this transition by changing contracts from the Italian United Artists to Malpaso Co. and Warner Brothers. Variety covered Eastwood's business move in 1968, stating "Clint Eastwood, who attained new trade notice via United Artists imported Italo Dollar pictures, abandoned western shoot-'em-ups in favor of a nonexclusive contract with Universal and Malpaso Co" (Variety, 1968, p. 17). In this contract Clint Eastwood signed with Warner Brothers for five films which included several westerns, so clearly he did not abandon western shoot-'em-ups as Variety led readers to believe. Eastwood started a long relationship centered around films with Warner Brothers that included *Hang Em High* (1968), *Paint Your Wagon* (1969), *Two Mules For Sister Sara* (1970), *Joe Kidd* (1972), *Dirty Harry* (1971), and *High Plains Drifter* (1973). These films help solidify and maintain the image of the Man with No Name while also expanding it with comedy, romance, and contemporary narratives, while still maintaining Eastwood's star text connection with the lone gunfighter of his earlier role. This section focuses on Eastwood's roles in these films and their importance to his career and star text construction.

#### ***Hang Em High* (1968)**

*Hang Em High* follows a young cattleman who is wrongly accused of stealing cattle and murdering their owner. In the opening scenes, the character Jed Cooper, played by Clint

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Eastwood, is tracked down by a posse of vigilantes who are seeking revenge for their dead friend who owned the cattle. They hang Jed Cooper without a trial and shortly after a Marshall comes and cuts him down. Cooper is still alive and is taken to Fort Grant. It is here where Clint Eastwood's character, Jed Cooper, is let go from the charges of murder and cattle rustling and is given a measly few dollars for his troubles. Because he feels that justice was not served, he sets out to bring those men who wronged him to justice. This moment is where the audience sees Clint Eastwood don the all-black, flat-brimmed cowboy hat that has become another iconic image of Eastwood's persona in the film. The roles of hero and villain are reversed in *Hang Em High* when a Marshall who is above the law is hunting down individuals who were upstanding citizens within the community they lived in.

This reversal of the protagonist and antagonist in a role usually associated with the other character is now an archetype for Clint Eastwood films. Traditionally in Westerns, the towns folk and their elected leaders were always the good guys fighting off the bad outsiders coming to ruin the town as seen in *Shane* (1953) where the townsfolk are too scared to drive out the gunmen hired by the cattle barons. Another example of this trope of the white hat hero cowboy would be the basis for most of the *Lone Ranger* television series where the Lone Ranger and Tonto ride into situations every episode to come to the aid of a town in distress. The townspeople are usually friendly, trustworthy, and on the right side of the law. By switching this motif in *Hang Em High*, the Wild West is seen as more lawless than it has usually been portrayed, a repetition of the Spaghetti Western formula.

Throughout the film, you get a sense that Clint Eastwood's character Jed Cooper is alone. He is alone in the beginning when he is falsely accused, and throughout the film, he is alone against the law, against the men he is tracking down to bring to justice, and alone against

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the West itself. This isolation leads to Eastwood providing an antihero depiction that we had not seen before, arguably a new face to the Man with No Name. Unlike the Dollar Trilogy, *Hang Em High* is a story about revenge under the guise of righting wrongs.

### ***Paint Your Wagon* (1969)**

*Paint Your Wagon* is a comedic Western musical hybrid based on the Broadway musical of the same name. Set in California during the Gold Rush, Ben Rumson, played by Lee Marvin, finds and saves Clint Eastwood's character Pardner. After a few unfortunate events befall the two, the two unlikely friends discover gold and soon start a mining town on their claim. The town booms due to a gold rush and hundreds of men rush there to make their fortune. The town is later thrown into commotion when a Mormon comes to town and starts auctioning off his wives in a completely male populated city (Logan, 1969). The movie is the first comedy Clint Eastwood did and allowed him to use his public association with Westerns to expand the range of films and roles he could be competitive in as a protagonist.

Although *Paint Your Wagon* is a deviation from the roles in his star-making roles of the Dollar Trilogy, we still see Clint Eastwood developing his persona as a Western hero in the five films signed with Warner Brothers. Through marketing himself with Warner Brothers as the new generation of the Western hero, Clint Eastwood staked out a claim in Hollywood. Eastwood was somewhat of a maverick in Hollywood and A *Variety* article argues that Eastwood

did something else, which I think has made all the difference: He never took the traditional path. Look, he had a hit role as Rowdy Yates on 'Rawhide' and what does he do? He goes off to Italy to recharge his career in a different direction. Then, he comes back to America, and he starts working with one of the all-time pros, Don Siegel.

(Koehler, 2000, p. F12)

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The same article also would convey Eastwood as a renegade figure in both his acting and directing, further conflating him with the antihero Man with No Name character type he was now synonymous with (Koehler, 2000, p. F12).

### ***Two Mules For Sister Sara (1970)***

Unlike *Paint Your Wagon*, *Two Mules For Sister Sara* carries the same action and common themes we saw within the Dollar Trilogy. *Two Mules For Sister Sara* is gritty and dark and Eastwood is seen once again fighting for other people who cannot help themselves. We see Eastwood starring as the lone gunfighter, this time he is hired by Mexican Revolutionaries to fight against the French during the Mexican War of Independence. While traveling into Mexico, he stops and saves a nun who is being attacked by a group of bandits (Seigel, 1970). The difference between this film and The Dollar Trilogy is that Shirley MacLaine stars as Eastwood's romantic love interest, expanding the antihero into a Western with a romance element. Something not seen in Eastwood's previous films.

### **Updating the Man with No Name in *Dirty Harry (1971)***

*Dirty Harry* has arguably the most famous lines that Clint Eastwood has ever uttered on screen quoted and referenced in film and television and by fans and non-fans alike. This is, of course, the dialogue "Go ahead. Make my day" and "You gotta ask yourself one question, do I feel lucky? Well, do ya punk?" (*Dirty Harry, 1971*). *Dirty Harry* has become timeless in the resonance of its catchy one-liners and Eastwood's portrayal of the titular cop character. Although not a Western, per se, this film employs many of the characteristics associated with The Man with No Name in its depiction of Clint Eastwood as a police investigator. Clint Eastwood's character, Dirty Harry, is portrayed as a hard, mean, and unpredictable man. He is often looked at by his peers as being too blunt or too violent when working on cases or chasing the bad guys.

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Although he is rough around the edges, the film shows that Dirty Harry is working for the best interest of the common people and the good of the world.

Dirty Harry also carries a .44 Magnum, a revolver reminiscent of the cowboy pistols of old. This subtle addition to Dirty Harry's character helps reinforce the idea that he is older than his time. Dirty Harry is even called a relic of the past by a supervisor during an altercation. Alluding to the fact that Dirty Harry is a man out of time, an allusion to the correlation of his persona with the cowboy, renegade figure Eastwood was now solidly associated with. Indeed, all of this demonstrates how the portrayal of Clint Eastwood in Dirty Harry as a time-less antihero emphasizes both how this film, and Eastwood's work in it, was intended as a contemporary embodiment of the Man with No Name persona.

### **Returning to the Man with No Name archetype in *Joe Kidd* (1972), *High Plains Drifter* (1973) *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976)**

*Joe Kidd* places actor Clint Eastwood as Joe Kidd, in the middle of a territorial dispute between a group of Mexican peasants and the cattle barons. The cattle barons led by Frank Harlan, played by Robert Duval, have taken the land and the Mexicans have decided to fight back. The film focuses on the feud between the two factions, and at first Eastwood's Kidd is impartial to the issue, but as the film progresses, he is forced to pick sides and ends up making a stand with peasants. The ending comes in a big shootout as Joe Kidd goes around righting the wrongs in Western justice fashion.

*Joe Kidd* has Eastwood making the return to the Western genre playing a character who is, for all intents and purposes, another version of The Man with No Name. As this point, Eastwood's star text drew on *The Dollar Trilogy*, *Two Mules For Sister Sara*, *Paint Your Wagon*, and *Dirty Harry* under his belt. It is with *Joe Kidd* that further reaffirms that his Man with No

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Name archetype can encompass both the modern incarnation that he inhabited in *Dirty Harry* and the historical period piece Western. In a sense, the development of his onscreen persona comes full circle at Warner Brothers.

*High Plains Drifter* starts with a mysterious lone rider coming to town in an almost prophetic fashion on a dark horse and wearing all black. The audience finds out that a band of outlaws are being released from prison and are coming to make the town that convicted them pay. The first run-in with these outlaws is told in a flashback style of how the townspeople left Marshall Duncan to die at the hands of the outlaws instead of helping him fight them. Clint Eastwood's character comes to the town in the guise that he is there to assist the town in handling the outlaws when they return. He has the townspeople paint the town red in preparation for the outlaws. When the outlaws do return, Eastwood's character lets them wreck the town and torment the townspeople for a time, before he comes in and kills the outlaws. All with subtle hints at the way the outlaws murdered Marshall Duncan years before. The final fight scenes are mysterious and not your traditional Western gun battles, as Eastwood's character is a vengeful antihero who first torments the outlaws in retribution for killing Marshal Duncan. *High Plains Drifter* represents Eastwood as savior and demon, incorporating symbolic elements of heaven and hell that leaves it to the audience's interpretation to consider whether Eastwood's character is just and what relation he had to Marshal Duncan.

Subsequently, films that Clint Eastwood was a part of followed a similar track to those of the first films done with Warner Brothers as well as the Dollar Trilogy. Films like *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976) closely follow the antihero depictions that Clint Eastwood had now become synonymous with. In *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, we see Clint Eastwood play an ex-Confederate soldier, Josey Wales, who travels to Texas while seeking revenge for those he lost in the Civil



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War. The audience is not supposed to like the Josey Wales, yet we as the audience are drawn to sympathize with and relate to him. This sympathy is due to the opening scenes where the audience watches as Clint Eastwood is helpless while the Red Legs, a group of Union guerrilla fighters, kill his wife and children and burn his house to ashes. The audience feels for Josey Wales and wants him to succeed, much as they do for the other antiheroes Eastwood plays in *Joe Kidd*, *High Plains Drifter*, and of course *The Man with No Name*.

The antihero depiction develops and is put to the test through the depictions of *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, *High Plains Drifter*, and *Joe Kidd*. The techniques and influences Eastwood learned from Sergio Leone in *The Dollars Trilogy* helped define the roles that he took part in during this era of his career (Bigham, 1990). The antihero depiction has become a defining point of Clint Eastwood's star persona and has shaped the roles he has selected and embodied in the public imagination. It is also a defining characteristic of how Clint Eastwood would frame himself in later life through films and directing.

*Hang 'Em High* (1968), *Joe Kidd* (1972), *High Plains Drifter* (1973), and *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976) are all developed as narratives with main characters who are variations of the Man with No Name. Each film is about a lone drifter or gunman who is trying to find his way. He either willingly or by circumstance helps some poor unfortunate souls out of a harsh predicament, usually ending with the character portrayed by Eastwood killing the bad guy. In the end, the character almost always rides off into the sunset, a signature mark of the Man with No Name. We can see then how Eastwood's contract with Warner Brothers in the 1970s further cemented Clint Eastwood's public persona with the fictional characters he played and their recognition to audiences as variations on the Man with No Name archetype of the lone cowboy here to save the day.

### **Common Themes Representing the Man with No Name**

Throughout the films listed above, many of Clint Eastwood characters are seen sporting a cowboy hat. The most common style of these hats is the stovetop cowboy hat, with a flat brim and rounded down crown, often in the color black. We see Clint Eastwood wearing this style of hat in *Joe Kidd*, *High Plains Drifter*, and *The Dollar Trilogy*. We also see Clint Eastwood portrayed in long cloaks or coverings. “When he is shown in full figure, the figure is heavily cloaked—usually by the poncho in the Leone films, and by a nondescript long coat in the American Westerns” (Bingham, 1990, p. 34), and the use of long cloaks and broad hats works to add a sense of mystery to the character. These elements help establish Eastwood’s ominous on-camera presence and help elevate the character’s image by using classical Western genre imagery to create a unique character for each role. The long cloak and broad hat act as a cover for Eastwood, keeping him hidden from the direct line of the camera and bringing out that sense of mystery in his character.

### **Portrayal in the Press**

There are several parallels to press coverage of Clint Eastwood following the 1970s Warner Bros. films and the coverage of Eastwood in the *Dollar Trilogy* advertisements and portrayal. There is the reiteration of the imagery of Clint Eastwood as a cowboy, specifically, as the antihero in a Western. It was also during the 1970s that the press began referring to Clint Eastwood and his persona as *Dirty Harry*, a trend that would follow him into the 1980s, as “[*Dirty Harry*] offered the actor Clint Eastwood his defining role, rendering him an American Icon” (Street, 2018, p. 19). Here then, is the understanding of the conflict of both the real actor and the fictional character he played, demonstrating how much of his star text was shaped by the fictional roles he played.

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During his time at Warner Brothers, the characters Eastwood played often visually and thematically referenced the Man with No Name. The Warner Brothers Westerns portrayed Eastwood squinting his eyes, wearing the flat-brim hat pulled down low over the eyes, and used the color black in clothing and set design surrounding the characters portrayed by Eastwood. Other identifying themes across all of his films during this period were the struggle between good and evil, the imagery of a tall, cloaked figure, and course the identifiable poncho, which were earlier identifiers of the Man with No Name he found while perfecting his craft in the Italian Westerns.

In the 1960s, the European press celebrated Eastwood's emergence as a new antihero in *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*. When Eastwood returned to Europe in the 1980s, however, the European press was no longer so friendly, labeling him barbaric and disapproving of his "very American" movies and self-serving justice in *Dirty Harry* (Vinocur, 1985, p. 16). The Paris Bureau chief for the *New York Times*, John Vinocur, wrote,

Until a couple of years ago, Eastwood, actor or director, had been consistently reviled as a cinematic caveman, a lowbrow and lunkhead credited with a single, frightening trick: his *Dirty Harry* cop pictures seemed to tap straight into the part of the American psyche where the nation's brutal, simplistic and autocratic reflexes were stored (Vinocur, 1985, p. 16).

The negative media coverage of *Dirty Harry* in Europe was not the only issue Clint Eastwood faced during this time. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, the issue in question was a private life scandal that was being broadcast through a British tabloid.

Tabloid sleaze continues to boomerang delightfully, at least in Britain. Clint Eastwood is the latest celebrity victim to benefit from sex-and-scandal excesses. He's getting 'a large

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sum in damages” from Rupert Murdoch’s News of the World, which is making amends for a July article headlined, ‘Go on Clint-Make my Day (Philips, 1989, para 1).

According to PR Newswire, a press release by Clint Eastwood and News Group News Papers Limited announced the Eastwood’s acceptance of a formal apology for a personal defamation incident with Clint Eastwood’s image stating,

The writ was issued on Eastwood's behalf yesterday by solicitor Richards Butler. The partner in the firm dealing with the matter, Michael Skrein, is quoted as saying, ‘Clint Eastwood was very concerned about what the 'News of the World' published in these articles. His reputation is of great importance to him. The 'News of the World' has acknowledged that the stories which were complained of greatly wronged Eastwood and have agreed to pay him a large sum in damages. (PR Newswire, 1989, A2).

The press release goes on to relate that,

Clint Eastwood said, ‘The paper has recognized its mistake and I appreciate that.’ Eastwood, here in London completing his new film, "White Hunter, Black Heart,’ continued, ‘The apology was the most important thing to me. I didn't embark on this to make a profit and whatever money I end up with, after all of this, I shall donate to charities, including the Cinema and Television Benevolent Fund here in Great Britain. (PR Newswire, 1989, p. A2).

This exchange between Eastwood and the London tabloid *The News of The World* was a controversy over the descriptions of Clint Eastwood’s personal life. These accusations were considered slander by Clint Eastwood and were counterintuitive to the public image he was trying to keep. The extent of a sex scandal in the public sphere could greatly damage Clint Eastwood’s reputation. Since the Dollar Trilogy Clint had worked meticulously to keep a very

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clean public image. By protecting his personal image as well as he did, he was able to keep a relatively elusive private life from the public. What the public got from Clint Eastwood was rather the image he portrayed as the characters he embodied on screen.

In more recent years, interviewers and audience members alike still hold a fascination with the ideas of the roles that Clint Eastwood has accumulated. This fascination seems far removed from the scandals and negative comments Clint Eastwood received in earlier years from his persona. This change is due to the careful curation of what the public saw of Clint Eastwood, as well as what he allowed the media to publish surrounding him. An interview, by Elizabeth Day, from *The Observer*, stated that it was difficult to see Clint Eastwood without the persona. “Cowboys, cops, soldiers, boxers. . . It is difficult, when I eventually meet Eastwood in a chintzy hotel suite at the Waldorf Astoria, not to treat him as the embodiment of all that is most masculine and stoic” (Day, 2008, p.10). The interview goes on to state that, “When I ask how it feels to be a living legend of male iconography, he laughs - a throaty chuckle that sounds like the crackle of tinder burning. It makes you feel old.” (Day, 2008, p.10).

Clint Eastwood may seem nonchalant about his persona and image, but that is only a façade. Clint Eastwood has been invested in protecting the image he has cultivated. Indeed, Eastwood’s star text has become synonymous with the roles he portrays, just as much as the roles were likely written to inhabit the archetype of the lone wolf rugged cowboy he was known for. Even the reporter from *The Observer* admitted it is hard to see Clint Eastwood without imagining the roles he portrayed during the 1960s and 70s. As he progressed as an actor through the 1970s and into the 1980s, Clint Eastwood essentially doubled down on his roles and his persona. He focused on curating a sort of myth about himself that has lasted until the present day and spanned nearly 60 years.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **The Mayor with No Name**

Like Ronald Reagan and Sonny Bono, Eastwood decided to leverage his star text into a political office when he ran for and won the election for mayor of Carmel, California in 1986 (Roessing, 1987). He then presided as mayor of Carmel for a single two-year term. Clint Eastwood became interested in politics in Carmel because he saw it as a way to both protect and improve the city that he fell in love with as a young serviceman exploring California (Snickler, 1997).

Eastwood made it very clear to the media as well as other audiences that he had no intention of advancing further in the political sphere (Kiefer, 2019, p. 46). He stated that his run for mayor was simply to help better his local community and improve Carmel. Clint Eastwood's start to campaign for mayor of Carmel came when he was blocked from building The Eastwood Building, which was to add to the tourism and commerce of Carmel (Schickler, 1997 p. 1414). According to Schilcker, "Maybe it [Carmel] had not seen enough Dirty Harry movies. Clint Eastwood promptly sued the city, eventually winning an out-of-court settlement" (Schickler, 1997, p. 1414). This red tape that the city council was imposing on building projects was severely stifling the small town's ability to expand and function, as the main source of income for Carmel was tourism. Eastwood became more involved in the city council and eventually began his own campaign towards the mayor of Carmel.

Another one of Clint Eastwood's goals for Carmel was to make sure that the land surrounding it would not become just housing, but rather be put to good use for the community. When asked about the project, Alam Williams, stated that " '[Eastwood's] goal was to create enough development and economic value that it would become self-sustaining and people would

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take care of it,” (Kiefer, 2019, p. 46). Eastwood’s goals were obtainable and very reasonable for the city and its residents, and Eastwood made the city more prepared and attractive for the tourism. As well as helping turn spaces into areas that would enhance the city, rather than change or alter the quaint historic charm of Carmel. When the national news heard of Clint Eastwood’s ambitions to run for mayor the journalists descended upon the small seaside town in droves.

Clint Eastwood understood the importance of the press. As well as wanting to better his community in Carmel. Because of this Clint Eastwood was very focused on Carmel and its residence, rather than the national publicity he was receiving for the campaign. In a Clint Eastwood biography, it stated that “Reporters were reduced to covering Clint’s public appearances and to pursuing public opinion on the streets of Carmel. Not a photo op, not an exclusive interview, did he grant them” (Snickler, 1997, p. 1416). This tactic of not letting the press turn the mayor's election into a publicity stunt helped Clint Eastwood to some extent as it made it clear to the public that Clint was only focused on bettering his community, rather than seeking a career in politics.

Eastwood’s limitations did not stop the press from covering this campaign story and running with it. Journalists consistently referenced Clint Eastwood’s earlier films and the characters he portrayed. The most popular comparison observed is with his role as Dirty Harry. As seen in this article from “Clint Eastwood Becomes mayor Of Carmel, Calif. Moment In Time,” “Eastwood must have felt lucky, because he ran for, and was elected, mayor of the pretty seaside town of Carmel, Calif., (current population 4,000) on this day in 1986” (King, 2020, p. A2). The choice of what the press and public saw of Clint Eastwood was no accident and was just as controlled as Clint Eastwood’s on-screen persona.

*Figure 6 Clint Eastwood Holding Newspaper After Winning The Mayor Campaign*



### **Carmel-By-The Sea**

With Clint Eastwood winning the election for mayor of Carmel, the media covered the election, the win, and his term in office. This section will specifically analyze how Clint Eastwood was portrayed after and during the election. As well as how the persona of the Man with No Name came to hold a predominant role in the public appearance of Clint Eastwood. Again, in this coverage we see Clint Eastwood described through the lens of *Dirty Harry* with the title of the article reading, *Dirty Harry Hits the Campaign Trail*. The article went on to start as, “Carmel, Calif. - Any minute now Clint Eastwood is going to burst through those doors (probably unshaven and firing from the hip, because that's the only way you ever see him) to launch his campaign to become mayor of this town” (Pile, 1986, p. H1). This prior example from *The London Sunday Times* coverage of the campaign completely encapsulates Candidate



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Eastwood within the fictional archetype he played in the Western genre during this run for mayor. Here, we see the conflation between Eastwood's public persona and his private life were understood, and made sense of, as one and the same.

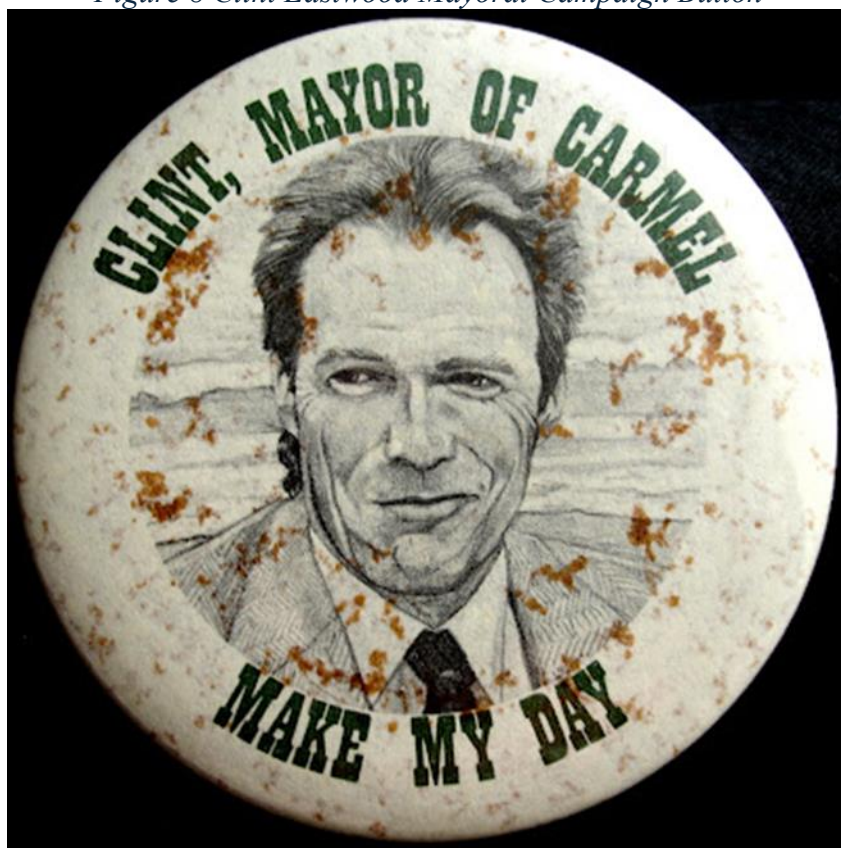
Because of years of carefully cultivating his personal image, Clint Eastwood managed to construct this narrative between fictional image and public persona. Something almost mythical and built out of the images he portrayed on the screen to millions of people. A few things to be considered are the way Clint Eastwood wanted to be portrayed to the public during his campaign and after his election. As well as how the public wanted to view Clint Eastwood no matter how bizarre, as a mayor.

*Figure 7 Clint Eastwood with the Carmel Police Force*



This promotional photograph [Figure 7] shows Clint Eastwood with the Carmel Police Department. This image is very reminiscent of the images of Clint Eastwood on the set of *Dirty Harry* as an Investigator. Eastwood's comparisons to *Dirty Harry* permeated campaign coverage and the catchy one-liner from *Dirty Harry* "Go ahead, make my day" began to be used by media and for promotions.

Figure 8 Clint Eastwood Mayoral Campaign Button



We can see how the campaign directly encouraged this with the button in Figure 8 for Clint Eastwood which uses a direct reference to the *Dirty Harry* quote, “Go ahead, make my day” in the design. This reference to *Dirty Harry* is a key connection to the modern-day Man with No Name tough guy persona Clint Eastwood built through the film. The button demonstrates the conflation of a fictional role with a public persona, as we see a drawing of Clint Eastwood depicted as himself above the *Dirty Harry* slogan. It is worth noting that the suit and tie as well as the smug grin are references to the way Eastwood was styled for the part of the *Dirty Harry* character in the film.

Throughout his campaign and his term as mayor of Carmel, Clint Eastwood would be compared to *Dirty Harry* or described through language that evoked his Western roles by the press, descriptive language such as the political campaign button and the way the press talks

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about Eastwood, as previously mentioned. There appears to be no sign that Eastwood was opposed to this style of representation, as Eastwood was very aware of his image and its effect on the public. He was no stranger to lawsuits to protect his image, as was referenced earlier in the Jolly Films incident and as well as the London tabloid incident. As lawsuits go, Clint Eastwood to this day maintains a strict hold on his public image and went as far as to sue a California company for claiming the actor endorsed the use of CBD (Benzinga.com 2022).

### **Other Political Statements**

Despite his time as mayor of Carmel, Clint Eastwood tended to stay relatively non-political, or at least aloof about his political dealings most of the time while he was acting. However, in recent years, Clint Eastwood has become more vocal about his political ideas. One of these rare occurrences happened during the 2016 election year, when Clint Eastwood was interviewed by *Esquire* and asked about the presidential candidates Clint Eastwood responded with expletives, saying,

Just f\*\*\*ing get over it. It's a sad time in history. ..We're really in a pussy generation. We see people accusing people of being racist and all kinds of stuff. When I grew up, those things weren't called racist. (Daily Record, 2016, p. 18-19)

The media took Eastwood's words and ran with it. Although this was a deviation from the typical political response we hear from Clint Eastwood, it was still very much in line with the nonsense, "shooting from the hip," tough guy persona Clint Eastwood has cultivated. In previous interactions, Clint Eastwood's political responses have been described as "[u]ncharacteristically discreet about such political transgressions" (Vinocur, 1985, p. 16). However, this response still references and evokes Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry public persona. It was short and to the point

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and could almost be a short, catchy, one-liner from one of his films that featured the tough guy, antihero image that Clint Eastwood has so carefully cultivated in the last fifty years.

It is no secret that Clint Eastwood was an open supporter of Republican politicians as early as the Reagan era. Indeed, his active relationship with President Reagan was reported on in the press (Vinocur, 1985) and he has also been seen spending time with other Republican politicians, such as the coverage of his time with future President Trump (at the time) in Las Vegas (Varadarajan, 2020). Indeed, Eastwood gave his infamous “empty chair” speech at the 2012 Republican National Convention, in which the chair was meant to symbolize President Obama in an imaginary conversation, and was the second option after possibly showing a clip from *The Outlaw Josey Wales* was nixed by the campaign (Andrews, 2016). Eastwood would attend the RNC again in 2016 to give an eleven-minute speech (Schmitt, 2016), and he has been continually courted for public political events like these because of the perceived value and correlation between what Eastwood’s star text represents and Mitt Romney’s campaign.

He did, however, especially earlier in his career, stay out of explicit political debates. By keeping his personal life somewhat out of the limelight, Clint Eastwood was able to present himself as an actor, better yet, as the characters he portrayed. We can see how Eastwood continued to be thought of and referred to as Dirty Harry in the media coverage of his statements about Trump. For instance, in one newspaper, “Eastwood, 87, who as tough cop Dirty Harry Callahan said the famous words: “Go ahead, make my day,” told those offended by the tycoon's controversial views to “get over it” (Buckti, 2016, p. 18-19). We see in the title of the news article as well as in the text itself, that Clint Eastwood is being referred to as Dirty Harry, and a tough guy. This reference accentuates Eastwood’s tough guy persona that goes along with his

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short, gruff, tough guy statement. “Get over it,” goes hand-in-hand with the same one-liners and tough gritty attitude of Dirty Harry that the public fell in love with back in 1971.

These comparisons between Dirty Harry and Clint Eastwood work to heighten this ongoing connection with Dirty Harry as an identifiable character that Clint Eastwood portrayed. In his career, the Man with No Name persona took on many names and characters. From Joe Kidd, the Pale Rider, and Dirty Harry. With his term as mayor of Carmel, Eastwood cemented his connection to his role as Dirty Harry and gave the public a point of reference to tie their ideas of Clint Eastwood to a tangible character. When the media began referencing and describing Clint Eastwood as Dirty Harry in his mayoral campaign, the line between actor and character had already been crossed. The persona and man had become one in the same.

As well as running for mayor for a two-term commitment in the city of Carmel in California, Clint Eastwood began to refine his craft throughout his later life. He focused his energy on becoming a creative director more so than just acting. The acting and directing are a direct result of the time Clint Eastwood spent in his early years with Sergio Leone and Don Seigel on the sets of the Dollar Trilogy and the early Westerns in Hollywood. Through his cultivation of his persona as the Man with No Name, Clint Eastwood was able to create a marketable impression of himself both on and off screen. We see the common themes portrayed through the way the newspapers describe Clint Eastwood during the Carmel campaign as Dirty Harry or as the Wild West gunslinger. We also see this in the choices of images used to portray Eastwood, both for movie promotions and for his mayoral campaign.

### ***Unforgiven* and Eastwood’s Recognition for Directing**

*Unforgiven*, released in 1992, ushered in a renaissance period for the Western genre in the 1990s after a decade with few Western hits. There were a few films that broke through, such as

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*Grey Fox* (1982) *Young Guns* (1988), but *Unforgiven* redefines the Western genre in reflexive, redemptive ways, much like Eastwood's Spaghetti Westerns shifted the genre toward darker, grittier antiheroes thirty years prior. This change would come from Clint Eastwood's work acting and directing *Unforgiven*. According to film historian Douglas J. McReynolds, *Unforgiven* both revitalized the dying genre and gave a new take on the cowboy (McReynolds, 1998). And journalist Amanda Henry states

Two of the best movies questioning the Western myth take as their subjects aging gunslingers. Whether the world has shifted, as in *The Grey Fox*, or the gun-for-hire himself has had a change of heart, as in *Unforgiven*, these twilight films are at once elegiac and honest about the code of the Old West. The bittersweet romance of *The Grey Fox* is an easier pill to swallow than the gloom and grime of *Unforgiven*, but they both have the sweat, valor and violence we've learned to expect from the Old West, at least as it lives on, on-screen (Henry, 2001, p. 21).

This review hints at the way *Unforgiven* is a more reflective, mature Western and reflects the ongoing symbiotic way Eastwood would continue to play an important role in defining this genre, as well as the way this genre would continue to play an important role in shaping his public persona and career.

Clint Eastwood cemented himself as a versatile individual in his career in Hollywood and solidified his persona as a Western hero through his directing work in the 1990s with films such as *Unforgiven* (1992). Sánchez-Escalonilla describes *Unforgiven* as the turning point in Clint Eastwood's authorship and career (Sánchez-Escalonilla, 2021). This shift correlates with the changing of how Westerns are filmed, and their stories told. In the 1990s, Westerns became darker and morally ambivalent,. The Western's sense of right and wrong did not always line up

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with good versus evil and the stories seem to play with the ideas of redemption and circumstance, more so than the previous depictions of the genre. The movies themselves depict very dark stories both in the scene choice as well as character development. Other movies from the 1990s use similar motifs, such as the retelling of the shootout at the O.K. Corral through *Tombstone* (1993). *Unforgiven* is no different. Clint Eastwood changes the story of the Western hero, this time telling the story of an old gunfighter coming out of retirement and having a redemption arc that helps him overcome the wrongs of his past.

This era also marked a personal shift for Clint Eastwood because he was able to fulfill his desire to direct films. McReynolds states that there is a connection between William Munny, the main character Clint Eastwood plays in *Unforgiven*, and the changes going on in Clint Eastwood's life and career, arguing that

Eastwood persists throughout the movie telling anyone who will listen, including the audience, that he 'ain't like that no more.' He isn't Rowdy Yates of TV's *Rawhide*, he isn't the Man with No Name of the Sergio Leone films, and he isn't Dirty Harry. He is a respectable movie director, the mayor of Carmel, California; his hair has thinned dramatically and bags sag under his weary eyes. He has children. He ain't like that no more. But he is, of course. He has to be. (McReynolds, 1998, p. 50).

Of course, Clint Eastwood's star text would adapt in the 1990s and the critical recognition he received from directing shifted his public persona into a mature figure of authority that he crafted to reflect the fact that was older. This change is not a break from the original Man with No Name persona but rather an extension of the persona. Clint Eastwood will never be able to get away from the lone-gunman stereotype that has followed him since the 1960s. Like Eastwood, the stereotype shifted and changed but it still imbued his star text with meaning. The Man with No

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Name, no matter how it is packaged and presented to the audience, undeniably links Clint Eastwood with the Western hero figure for audiences. Indeed, this link is an expected and cultivated aspect of how Eastwood marketed his films. Audiences expect Eastwood movies to be violent, intense films filled with action sequences just as much as they expect to see his character fight for the underdog.

As a director, Eastwood is also linked to the formative years of his career in the 1960s and 1970s. In the article “Venice Film Fest: Clint Eastwood: From Oaters to Auteur,” *Variety* covers the overall aspects of Clint Eastwood’s career as he received the Golden Lion Award. The article discusses that “*Unforgiven*” is dedicated to “Sergio and Don,” and Leone and Siegel were unquestionably the key mentors both for his acting and directing” (Koehler, 2000, p. F12). Eastwood has often said that Sergio Leone and Don Siegel made lasting impressions on him as a young actor, so much so that his acting, directing, and filmmaking give a nod to the two directors. We can see the homage to Sergio Leone in the long shots of Clint Eastwood’s films. We see the homage in violent stories told in a very casual fashion, just as Leone did in so many of his films. The influences of the directors can be seen through Clint Eastwood’s choices of films to direct like *Hacksaw Ridge* (2016) and *15:17 Paris* (2018). Although not Westerns, they hold the same sentiment as the movies Clint Eastwood starred in, in the 1960s and 1970s. The main characters hold similar qualities as the Man with No Name, such as being imperfect antiheroes who still uphold a strict moral code and seek to help people they meet seek vengeance for their wrongs.

*Unforgiven* is also important for as it is a reinterpretation of the main roles Clint Eastwood initially played in 1964-1966 with *The Man with No Name*. Clint Eastwood stars in *Unforgiven* as an old gunslinger who has settled down and given up the lifestyle of his younger



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years but is forced to come back to being a gunslinger to protect a girl and serve justice. Critics praised the film when it first was released in 1992. The film *Unforgiven* even went on to win Best Picture at the Oscars. A section titled National Critics Hop on 'Unforgiven' Bandwagon, in *Variety* states, "Best pic and best director mirrored the L.A. film critics, going to Clint Eastwood and his Warner Bros. Western 'Unforgiven,' both first-ballot victors" (*Variety*, 1993, p. 14).

The film continues to receive praise from critics for breaking and changing the traditional Western myth in films. In *Absolving the American Guilt: Forgiveness and Purification in Clint Eastwood's Cinema*, Sánchez-Escalonilla states that "The hallmark of the film, already evident from the beginning of the project, would forge a particular archetype around the Eastwood persona that would later accompany the other characters played by the actor-director"(Sánchez-Escalonilla, 2021, p. 157).

The Man with No Name archetype around Clint Eastwood's later characters is seen through films like *Unforgiven* and in his later films. Koehler notes this relationship, stating, "The expression of his violence is connected in his movies with characters belonging or not belonging," (Koehler, 2000, p. F12). The use of violence is meant to act as a way to convey the ideas and issues surrounding the circumstances involved in each movie. Clint Eastwood is often always depicted as the lone stranger coming to town. Hence the need for belonging or the disadvantage of not belonging to society.

Rather than looking at this shift as Clint Eastwood shaking off the Man with No Name, it should be understood as more work that was useful to assist Eastwood in revising and updating his star text during his mid-life years. Indeed, from the mid-1980s Eastwood selected roles with more dimension that still included the characteristics of silent, Man with No Name type, but with maturity. He played characters such as Sergeant Thomas Highway from *Heartbreak Ridge* (1986)

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and later the elderly Walt Kowalski from *Grand Torino (2008)*, as Eastwood expanded his Man with No Name persona through these roles into figures that were also prudent, reflexive, and mature. This review of Eastwood's later career hints at the way *Unforgiven* is a more reflective, mature Western and reflects the ongoing symbiotic way Eastwood would continue to play an important role in defining this genre and the way this genre would continue to play an important role in shaping his public persona and career. The change that is described is for the change in the telling of Western stories throughout the genre. Although Eastwood did not change himself or his person, rather Clint expanded upon the Man with No Name through his directing. The expansion of his persona is reflected in the critical acclaim that *Unforgiven* receives from the public audience. In these later films, Eastwood also has developed a style of movie that makes the viewers stop and think. The lines between good and bad are not always clear in his films. Good and bad are relative just like when he directed *Unforgiven*, or when he was the Man with No Name fighting the law and the lawless through the Dollar Trilogy. Through acting and directing Clint Eastwood developed the Man with No Name persona into an identity. One that could be marketed regardless of what he wanted to do within his career in Hollywood.

Eastwood began directing films in the 1970s, however, *Unforgiven* marked his first Academy Award and inaugurated an era in which he gained critical recognition for his directing work and his star text was now indelibly linked to a new reputation as an auteur, this change carried with it more power and prestige. After the 1990s, we see a shift in Clint Eastwood's persona when he attempts to move away more from in favor of directing films. After this Eastwood also broadens his directing portfolio by working on war films such as *Flags of Our Fathers (2006)* and *American Sniper (2014)* and crime films such as *Mule (2018)*. The Man with No Name persona is still prevalent throughout all his endeavors and can be seen in the way he

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directs and edits his films. These films are gritty and often violent movies, reminiscent of the Western films that made Clint Eastwood famous, and indeed, the films Clint Eastwood began making in the 1990s continued his earlier work of challenging the Western Myth that had so previously dominated the genre. The antihero had now replaced the traditional myth of the cowboy hero (McReynolds, 1998). The increase in violence in the Western genre was considered a revitalization of the genre itself. As the Western genre came full circle, many of the standards in the genre became obsolete or overused. By shifting the narrative to a more real-world view Western directors like Clint Eastwood were able to give new life to the genre.

### **Rounding out the Explanation of *Unforgiven***

Clint Eastwood was projected into fame through the Sergio Leone films of the Dollar Trilogy. Through those three Spaghetti Western films, Clint Eastwood took on the role of the Man with No Name. Where he created and developed a persona for both on and off-screen for himself. With the success of the films, Clint Eastwood made himself an identifier that was marketable and expanded into Hollywood. It is in the sixties and early seventies we see Eastwood align himself with the Man with No Name persona. His identification with the character is evident when he was prepared to sue Jolly Films for the distribution of *The Magnificent Stranger*. The Man with No Name had become synonymous with Clint Eastwood and the world knew that. Eastwood's Warner Brother films that followed the Dollar Trilogy cemented his relationship with The Man with No Name persona, providing him an archetype of a lawless and unconventional antihero he could draw on for his career. An archetype he expand into other genres as an actor and into the way he was portrayed in *Unforgiven* and understood as a director.

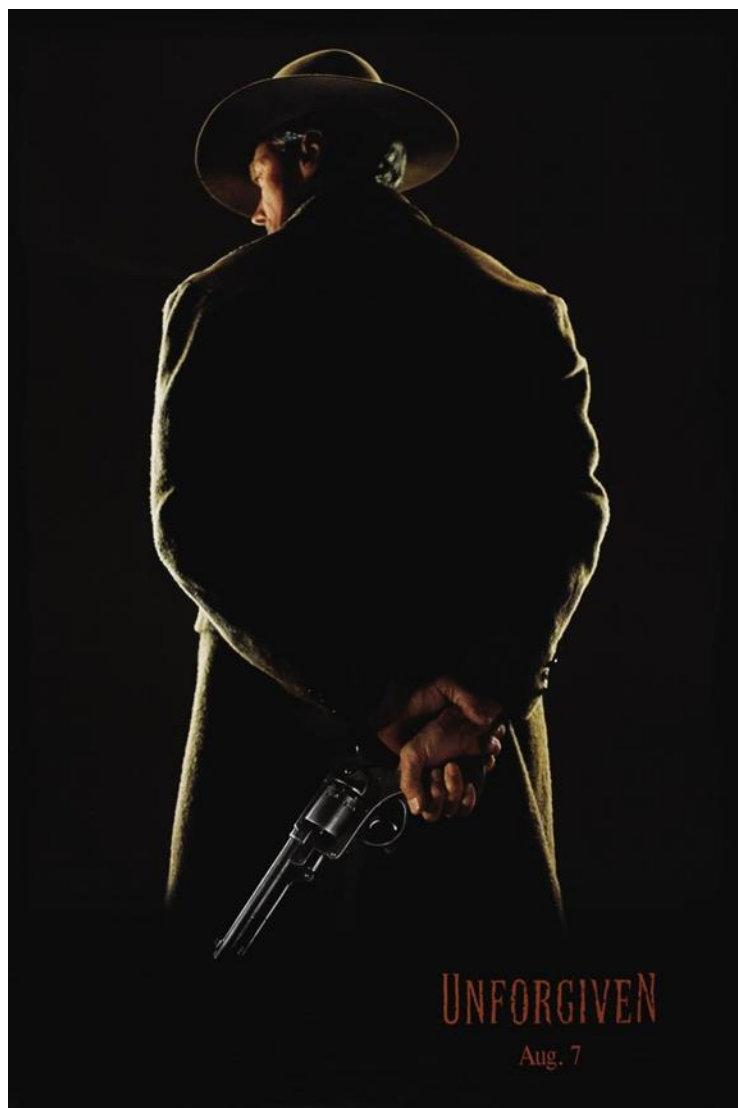
### **Portrayal in *Unforgiven* Promotions and Directing**

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Clint Eastwood's portrayal in *Unforgiven* is reminiscent of The Man with No Name Trilogy and Dirty Harry. In [Figure 9] *Unforgiven*, Clint Eastwood is portrayed again in the flat-brim cowboy hat and is wearing subdued natural colors which harken back to the Man with No Name outfit he wore in the Dollar Trilogy. Again, this color choice represents that Clint Eastwood's character comes from a checkered past. Throughout the film part of William Munny, played by Clint Eastwood, past comes to light while in dialog with Ned Logan played by Morgan Freeman. "Eastwood portrays the fictional character or Munny as a real person, and the emotional and psychological realism of the character represents a decisive shift" (Friedman, 1992). Clint Eastwood is again shown as a shadowy figure [Figure 9] where he stands tall with his revolver, alluding to the avenger arch of the character and the mysteriousness of William Munny.

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*Figure 9 Unforgiven Movie Poster (1992)*



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

Through seven decades of films, Clint Eastwood managed to build himself as a legend in the Western genre and beyond. His performance in the Dollar Trilogy redefined the Western main character as an antihero, but as I have discussed, his ability to link himself to this role also defined his star text and allowed him to expand into a host of roles that would include director and mayor. *Rawhide* provided Clint Eastwood his first break on a Western, and in turn, this connotation helped him land the role of the Man with No Name. As I have discussed, the Dollar Trilogy films had an undeniable impact on Clint Eastwood's future in the film industry and beyond. Through these films, Eastwood was able to experiment, learn, and adapt as an actor and as a character on screen. The years 1966 to 1968 were crucial in Eastwood's development as an actor and propelled him into a career where he would essentially be performing different interpretations of the Man with No Name in front of, behind, and away from the camera.

As I discussed, he played derivative versions of this character in films such as *Joe Kidd*, *High Plains Drifter*, and *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. Clint Eastwood's deviation from Westerns is also based on the early years surrounding the Man with No Name, as *Dirty Harry* is a modern rendition of the antihero persona. Clint Eastwood eventually comes full circle back to Westerns and it seems more than coincidence that this is when he finally gains recognition for his cinematic style in his 1992 film *Unforgiven*. The importance of the Western genre in Clint Eastwood's work is substantial. Clint Eastwood's acting through Western films, as well as the films he has directed draws on his star text and its connection to complex antiheroes. Eastwood's directing was shaped by the earlier years in Westerns, especially the Dollar Trilogy with Sergio

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Leone and the influence was strong enough that he dedicated the film *Unforgiven* to Sergio Leone and Don Siegel.

A testament to the Man with No Name persona is seen in how the media talks about Clint Eastwood. He is constantly referred to as Dirty Harry, The Man with No Name, or as the image of a Western antihero through the popular press coverage researched for this thesis. His persona is such an important marketing position for Clint Eastwood that it has become a moniker for him, as well as a short-hand reference for him in passing. The value of Clint Eastwood's star text association with The Dollar Trilogy became so valuable to him that he went to court and used lawsuits to protect his public image in the Jolly Films Lawsuit, the defamation lawsuit by the London tabloid, and the California CBD lawsuit.

Clint Eastwood was also able to leverage his star text to get elected as the mayor of Carmel, California. The staunch comparisons to Dirty Harry, as well as The Man with No Name, throughout the campaign, were telling signs that the media has conflated Clint Eastwood's fictional characters with his in-person likeness. Regardless of its accuracy, Eastwood and the Man with No Name had become one in the eyes of the public media.

When looking at Clint Eastwood's career as a whole, we see a successful career full of accolades and awards that show the magnitude of a multi-decade career. According to *The Star System: Hollywood's Production of Popular Identities*, "The individual is presumed to be the source and origin of stardom. Secondly, the qualities which mark out star status are innate" (McDonald, 2000, p. 1802). It would be easy, as McDonald says, to presume Clint Eastwood's career was foretold, that he just had "it," the right look, a performance derived from his innate creative talents. But McDonald is being tongue-in-cheek here, reminding us that stars are not

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born, they are made, and in Clint Eastwood's case, his star text was continually remade and expanded upon throughout his career through his body of work.

Throughout his seven-decade career, Clint Eastwood worked on perfecting his craft through the development of his type-cast roles as a Western gunslinger which developed into the tough guy Dirty Harry persona, leading into other roles like those of his war films. His career and success all started with humble beginnings in the Italian countryside working on the Dollar Trilogy films with Sergio Leone. As I demonstrated in this thesis, Clint Eastwood worked to protect and later maintain his public image through several different lawsuits, as he cites them as defamation of his person. All three cases cited, Jolly Films, the London Tabloid, and the CBD case. These lawsuits demonstrate Eastwood's recognition of the importance of his persona and the understanding of its connection to his personal life and future endeavors in movies.

Clint Eastwood's focus on protecting his persona has been effective. This is obvious in the newspaper articles following Dirty Harry and his mayoral campaign in Carmel, California. According to Paul McDonald, "Film Stars have cultural significance because they represent people and as those representations circulate in media markets, so they become figures of exchange" (McDonald, 2000, p. 1801). In the case of Clint Eastwood in his later life, he became a figure of exchange in the public market of information. His image became a representation of more than just himself and more than just his film roles. Through Clint Eastwood's image, he became relatable and admirable to the public. As the saying goes, guys wanted to be him, and girls loved him. Eastwood took the role of the Western antihero and helped bring it into the modern era, where the Westerns found a new home and resonated with a new generation.

Clint Eastwood helped define the role of the antihero in the Western genre. His interpretation and representation on screen helped establish the modern Western as well as the



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modern hero that encompasses the characteristics of the Western antihero beyond the Western genre. These representations can be seen through his directing of films from *Play Misty for Me* to *Unforgiven* to *Million Dollar Baby* to *Gran Torino* and all his subsequent films. His renegade star text as an auteur steeped in the tradition of the Western helped him gain credibility in the industry which has led him to have both financial and critical success.

Clint Eastwood's influence can also be seen in today's Western genre through films and television shows. The most popular one is *Yellowstone* with Kevin Costner. *Yellowstone*, the series, holds a lot of the same characteristics of the early antihero Westerns that Clint Eastwood made famous. Kevin Costner's character John Dutton is an antihero in and throughout the show. John Dutton follows a very similar character pattern to that of the characters of William Munny or Josey Wales. Both William Munny and Josey Wales follow an antihero pattern but use their strategies for the benefit of the people around them. Similarly, John Dutton uses his antihero attributes to protect the people nearest him. Without Clint Eastwood's influence on the genre, there would not be a revitalization of the Western genre in this way.

Clint Eastwood is currently working on his latest film *Juror No. 2* according to *People Magazine* (McArdle, 2023). He has been working and directing films and shows no sign of stopping anytime soon. Clint Eastwood's legacy is cemented in the Western genre and is established through his career of acting and directing. Although Clint Eastwood acted in so many different iconic roles, it can never be forgotten that it all started with a stranger coming to town, dressed in a green poncho, with a flat brim hat pulled low over his eyes, and chewing on a cigar. It all started with *The Man with No Name*.

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