

The Eastwood Factor

Written by Dave Howard



The word consistency isn't one you hear very often around town. Well, unless you are talking about Clint Eastwood. In a time of ankling, shingling and other snap dappery, Eastwood has maintained an office on the Warner Bros lot for the last 35 years. Even more impressive, in that time span he has managed to churn out more great product than mediocre. Eastwood has never made a bad film. He puts out about one movie every year, which is quite a feat.

In celebration of Clint's 35th anniversary Warner Brothers has released a box set of every film he has worked on from "Dirty Harry" to "Invictus." Turner Classic Movies will be featuring these films for this entire month of June, with a marathon going on today, May 31. Included in the box set and airing on TCM tonight, is the very adequate yet intimate documentary "The Eastwood Factor."

Richard Shickel, the long-time TIME magazine reviewer, author and documentary filmmaker is for the second time turning his cameras on Eastwood. His other work includes "Scorsese on Scorsese" and "Woody Allen: A Life in Film." In 1997, he directed the special feature "Eastwood On Eastwood."

There aren't many movie stars that fans refer to by their first name. Despite the silent bad ass he has often played, Clint has always come off as a comfortable and inclusive kind of guy. For an actor and director so drawn to violence, Clint is definitely a quieter guy who keeps what he is thinking in his head. If he got into a conversation about filmmaking with Martin Scorsese, I think it would be terribly one sided. Despite having his long tenure on the Warner Lot, Eastwood seems downright uncomfortable there. There is a building on the lot that only holds costumes from Eastwood movies. When taken down memory lane, a gracious Clint appeases the filmmaker but seems like he would rather be at The Smoke House down the street. Eastwood is more open in his home of Carmel, CA. This is the real gem sequence of the film as we get to a rare look into his inner workings.

Through a series of conversation with Eastwood and additional commentary by Morgan Freeman, the documentary winds down the edgy river of Eastwood's movies. Schickel naturally touches on the "Dirty Harry" series and Oscar favorites "Unforgiven" and "Mystic River." For "The Eastwood Factor" Schickel has chosen to emphasize his quieter, more personal works in "Honkey Tonk Man," "Bird" and the overlooked "Perfect World." These are smaller films that definitely deserve a first or second look. Smart move by Schickel

However!

Schickel then manages to show the ENDING of every one of these classics. The documentary turns into a spoiler fest. Haven't gotten around to "Grand Torino" or "Invictus" yet? Here's what happens at the end! Sure we all know that Charlie Parker is gonna die at the end of "Bird" but

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the how and the why are just plain laid out in this documentary.

If you have seen all of Eastwood's films this is an intimate portrait of the man behind the camera and a VERY fun watch.. If you are just discovering the legendary actor/director, skip "The Eastwood Factor" until you have seen the movies!