



**BIG SCREEN CLASSICS**

# Dirty Harry

+ pre-recorded intro by film scholar Hannah Hamad, Cardiff University  
(Wednesday 27 October only)

Inspector Harry Callahan, aka Dirty Harry, came along as the conclusive step on Clint Eastwood's path to global superstardom. He'd first made his name on the TV western series *Rawhide* (1959-65), which led him to Italy and his iconic roles as the Man with No Name in Sergio Leone's *Dollars* trilogy (1964-66). As Quentin Tarantino pointed out in *Once upon a Time... in Hollywood* (2019), appearing in Italian genre flicks was seen as an elephant's graveyard for America's faded stars. For Eastwood, it was the exact opposite.

The sojourn to Rome was the making of him. More crucially, master stylist Leone laid the groundwork for Eastwood's persona as a new type of masculine hero in the post-studio age. *A Fistful of Dollars*' 'My mule...' speech is the precursor of every Eastwood one-liner or retort heard since.

A new breed of cop thriller, *Dirty Harry* (1971) was originally touted as a project for Paul Newman, and then Frank Sinatra. When the script landed on Eastwood's desk via Warners, it marked the beginnings of a beautiful friendship between star and studio. He made the canny decision to again hire rebel talent Don Siegel, who he'd worked with on *Coogan's Bluff* (1968), *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970) and *The Beguiled* (1971). The rest is violence.

Script rewrites followed, which tailored Harry Callahan for the leading man's comfort zone as a laconic type – Clint's stare is worth a thousand words. If the *Dollars* movies founded key tenets of what became the Eastwood brand – the poker face, action over dialogue, coolness under pressure, ruthless behaviour, aloofness, black humour, roguish charm – it's Siegel's edgy thriller that turned the 6'4 ft Californian into a household name.

The character remains Eastwood's popular legacy. Dirty Harry, with his .44 Magnum, 'that can blow your head clean off', was hero-worshipped by audiences worldwide. Watching Inspector Callahan shoot down baddies became as American as apple pie.

Charged by critics with sensationalising violence, the films were also seen as revelling in reactionary politics. The term 'fascist' has followed Harry around like a stink since 1971. This aspect has been overcooked by both liberals and conservatives. Pauline Kael, in her famous review, 'Dirty Harry: Saint Cop', for *The New Yorker*, declared the film a grotesque right-wing fantasy about the SFPD being 'emasculated by unrealistic liberals'. Yet Callahan is essentially an apolitical antihero. He's an urbanised continuation of the lonesome gunfighter and beleaguered sheriff of countless westerns – the kind often charged with cleaning up a town, with little thanks from the locals.

In his debut outing, Harry was in combat against a madman known as Scorpio (played by angelic-looking Andy Robinson). Director Siegel had cinematographer Bruce Surtees predominantly use long shots and medium shots, going to close-up only sparingly, to emphasise Eastwood's strapping build and Harry's mythic status as an outsider cop, but also to artfully put across the man's inherent loneliness.

Dirty Harry lives for his job. He doesn't have friends. His wife is deceased. Partners are routinely injured or killed in the line of duty. He appears to live on junk food and dresses in cheap suits. John Milius, who worked on an early draft of the script and later penned *Magnum Force* (1973) along with Michael Cimino, called Harry Callahan 'God's lonely man'.

With *Dirty Harry* a box office smash, another movie was inevitable. In an attempt to address controversies over the original, the follow-ups softened the cop a little bit, putting him in action sequences that emphasised the comedy of his grumpy, no-shits-given approach to policing.

Audiences approved. *Magnum Force* also pitted Harry against unambiguously fascist goons: clean-cut SFPD motorcycle cops executing villains without a trial, in broad daylight. The group believe Harry to be their spiritual guru, but they're sorely mistaken. In a great bit of irony, the maverick ends up sticking up for a system he loathes. The film's key line, 'A man's got to know his limitations', is heard several times. Like 'Do you feel lucky?' it's initially a manly taunt, but also serves to underscore the film's subtext elegantly. Even Harry has a line he won't cross.

By the time of 1976's *The Enforcer*, Callahan is paired with a female inspector, as part of a PR stunt cooked up by bureaucrats. Far from a chauvinist, his irritation springs from her total lack of experience and her being used as political football. Yet Kate Moore (Tyne Daly) grows in his estimations, as they take down a bogus leftwing revolutionary outfit tearing up Harry's town. Showing a lighter side to his persona, *The Enforcer* is the funniest entry in the series, seeing an element of self-parody mixed into the formula.

*Sudden Impact* (1983) sprang from an audience survey demanding to see Callahan back on the beat. Eastwood returned, however, with the least typical of Dirty Harry's screen outings, even though it gave viewers one of the most iconic lines in cinema history – 'Go ahead, make my day' – to recite to their hearts' content. The moral dilemma at the centre of the picture is unexpectedly complex and lends a grim mood to proceedings, further heightened by Surtees' inky black night-time photography, reminiscent of his work on the original. On the hunt for another serial killer, this time in a small town, Harry is surprised to learn the culprit is a local female artist (Sondra Locke), avenging a gang rape incident years previous. The law clearly having failed, Callahan must decide whether to take her in or let her walk.

*The Dead Pool* (1988) is a limp adieu, concerned with Dirty Harry's place in modern American cinema. What made the cop so compelling in the 1970s was looking creaky by 1988, and Eastwood knew it. He was Harry Callahan in a world of Stallone and Schwarzenegger vehicles, living in a time of Martin Riggs and John McClane.

Inspector Harry Callahan allowed us to participate in the make believe thrill of the righteous kill. The deeply American 'a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do' credo, the stoicism mixed with bursts of brutality, the gallows humour and quips, the sheer potent image of the big man with the big gun, Dirty Harry operated as a wish-fulfilment figure. And is there not something dryly subversive at work, in Eastwood's persona, in Dirty Harry's stance? In our imperfect world, Harry Callahan is about as much of a hero as we deserve. And his costly rampages? Well, what do you expect? Dirty Harry, arm raised with the barrel of his .44 Magnum pointed right at us, is a hero to cheer and a man to fear.

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**DIRTY HARRY**

*Directed by:* Don Siegel  
*©:* Warner Bros, Inc., Malpas Company  
*A Malpas Company production*  
*Distributed by:* Warner Bros.  
*Executive Producer:* Robert Daley  
*Produced by:* Don Siegel  
*Associate Producer:* Carl Pingitore  
*Unit Production Manager:* Jim Henderling  
*Assistant to the Producer:* George Fargo  
*Assistant Director:* Robert Rubin  
*Screenplay by:* Harry Julian Fink, R.M. Fink, Dean Riesner  
*Screenplay by:* John Milius \*  
*Story by:* Harry Julian Fink, R.M. Fink  
*Director of Photography:* Bruce Surtees  
*Editor:* Carl Pingitore  
*Art Director:* Dale Hennesy  
*Set Decorator:* Robert DeVestel  
*Wardrobe:* Glenn Wright  
*Make-up Supervisor:* Gordon Bau  
*Supervising Hairstylist:* Jean Burt Reilly  
*Filmed in:* Panavision, Technicolor  
*Music:* Lalo Schifrin  
*Sound by:* William Randall  
*Dialogue Supervisor:* Scott Hale  
*Publicist:* Carl Combs \*

**Cast**

Clint Eastwood (*Harry Callahan*)  
Harry Guardino (*Lieutenant Bressler*)  
Reni Santoni (*Chico Gonzales*)  
Andy Robinson (*'Scorpio', the killer*)  
John Larch (*the chief*)  
John Mitchum (*DeGeorgio*)  
Lyn Edgington (*Norma*)  
Mae Mercer (*Mrs Russell*)  
Ruth Kobart (*Marcella Platt, bus driver*)  
Woodrow Parfrey (*Mr Jaffe*)  
Josef Sommer (*William T. Rothko, the D.A.*)  
Maurice S. Argent (*Sid Kleinman*)  
William Paterson (*Judge Bannerman*)  
Jo De Winter (*Miss Willis*)  
James Nolan (*liquor shop owner*)  
Craig G. Kelly (*Sergeant Reineke*)  
John Vernon (*the mayor*)  
Kristoffer Tabori (*hippie*)\*  
Diana Davidson (*girl swimmer*)\*  
Raymond Johnson (*huge black man*)\*  
Diane Darnell (*mayor's secretary*)\*  
James Joyce (*thug*)\*  
Bill Couch (*building jumper*)\*

USA 1971©  
102 mins

\* Uncredited

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**BIG SCREEN CLASSICS****Dirty Harry**

Wed 27 Oct 18:00 (+ pre-recorded intro by film scholar Hannah Hamad, Cardiff University); Sun 14 Nov 18:20; Fri 26 Nov 20:45

**Devil in a Blue Dress**

Thu 28 Oct 20:50; Wed 17 Nov 18:00 (+ intro by *Empire Magazine* Contributing Editor Amon Warmann)

**The Silence of the Lambs**

Fri 29 Oct 20:40; Wed 3 Nov 19:00 (+ pre-recorded intro by Professor Yvonne Tasker, author of BFI Film Classics *The Silence of the Lambs*); Thu 18 Nov 14:40

**No Country for Old Men**

Sat 30 Oct 11:00; Mon 1 Nov 20:30;  
Wed 24 Nov 18:00 (+ intro by Geoff Andrew, Programmer-at-Large)

**In the Cut**

Sun 31 Oct 18:30; Tue 30 Nov 18:10

**Blue Velvet**

Tue 2 Nov 18:00; Sat 13 Nov 20:45; Sun 21 Nov 17:40

**House of Bamboo**

Thu 4 Nov 20:50; Thu 11 Nov 14:30; Mon 15 Nov 18:10

**Kiss Me Deadly**

Fri 5 Nov 20:40; Sat 20 Nov 18:00; Sat 28 Nov 12:15

**Zero Dark Thirty**

Sat 6 Nov 17:30; Tue 9 Nov 14:15; Sun 28 Nov 15:20

**Murder on the Orient Express**

Sun 7 Nov 18:10; Tue 16 Nov 14:15

**Inside Man**

Mon 8 Nov 20:30; Thu 25 Nov 14:30; Tue 30 Nov 20:20

**The Long Goodbye**

Wed 10 Nov 17:50 (+ intro by Geoff Andrew, Programmer-at-Large);  
Sat 27 Nov 20:40

**Shaft**

Fri 12 Nov 20:50; Tue 23 Nov 18:20

**Heat**

Sat 13 Nov 16:30; Mon 15 Nov 13:40

**Illustrious Corpses (Cadaveri eccellenti)**

Fri 19 Nov 20:40; Sat 27 Nov 18:10

**Chinatown**

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**The Manchurian Candidate**

Sun 21 Nov 14:50

**Un Flic**

Tue 23 Nov 20:45; Mon 29 Nov 20:55

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