

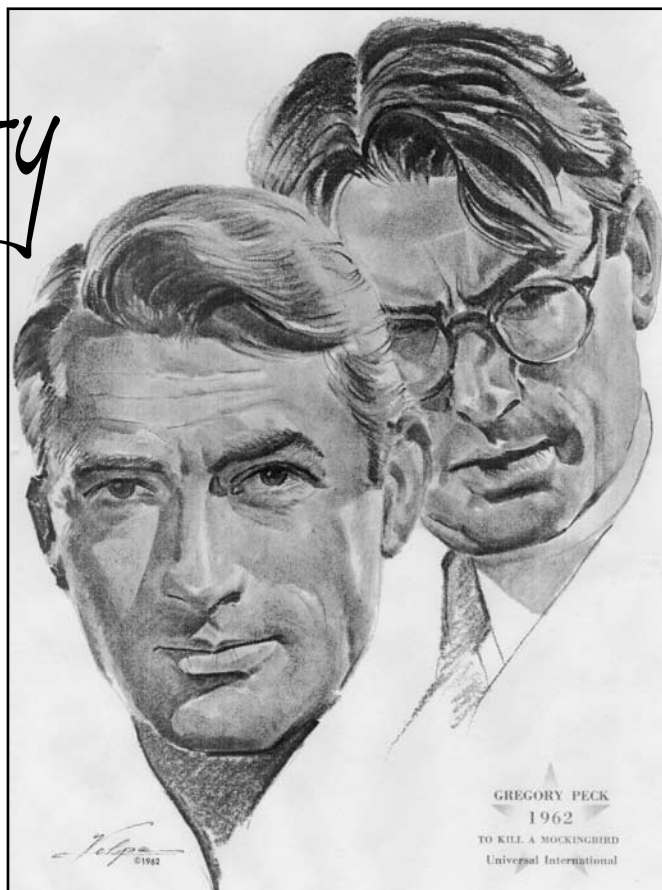
Gregory

By Randy Carter

Gregory Peck has always been a leading man. He never played a waiter with two lines or a police officer who gets killed in the first reel. A California boy from La Jolla, he went to San Diego State and Cal, did some college theatre and headed to New York. A student of Sanford Meisner, he played the lead in his first Broadway production, "The Morning Star", a New York version of a London hit by the

Welsh actor/playwright Emlyn Williams. This was 1942 and a few good notices, a round of Hollywood meetings set up by his agent Leland Hayward, set the stage for his first film role in the RKO production of *Days of Glory* (1944).

The film about Russian partisans battling the Germans didn't make much of a dent at the box office, but 20th Century Fox production chief Darryl F. Zanuck looked at some of the rushes and cast the newcomer in his production of A. J. Cronin's best seller THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM. Zanuck paid over \$100,000 for the film rights, planned a prestige production, but found that all of his contract stars, Tyrone Power, Henry Fonda, Victor Mature, Richard Greene and John Payne were serving in the Armed Forces. The Scottish priest



Peck

has to age six decades over the course of the film and Zanuck thought Peck could carry it off. Although the film did well at the box office it didn't recoup Zanuck's \$3 million dollar investment. But Peck got an Oscar® nomination for Best Actor and his position as a top leading man was minted in only his second film. He would be nominated three more times in the next four years for *The Yearling* (1946), *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947) and *Twelve O' Clock High* (1950).

Gentleman's Agreement teamed Peck with New Yorker Elia Kazan in a film about Anti-Semitism. Peck actually played a gentile impersonating a Jew to observe the depth of prejudice in America. The film hasn't aged well with critics, but in its day it was a bold attempt to bring social issues to the big screen. Gary Fishgall in his biography of the actor says that Kazan and Peck didn't mesh and the intense New Yorker found Peck aloof and workmanlike, quite different from the tightly wound Brandos and Steigers he preferred to work with. They both shared a love of theatre and it was in the late 40's that Peck devoted a great part of his free time to the creation and operation of the La Jolla Playhouse. Together with Dorothy McGuire (his co-star in *Gentleman's Agreement*) and Mel Ferrer they

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GREGORY PECK Cont'd from page 1



presented a subscription series that over the years mounted productions of "Born Yesterday", "Summer and Smoke", "Arsenic and Old Lace", "The Front Page" and "Our Town" and the roster of stars included Robert Ryan, Pat O'Brien, Ann Blyth, Jose Ferrer, Charlton Heston and Teresa Wright. Peck's actual involvement with the company ended in 1964 but he remained a patron of the arts in La Jolla.

The 1950's opened with Henry King's *The Gunfighter*, an adult version of the genre and one of the best westerns ever produced. He would return to the outdoors for *The Bravados*, a somber tale of revenge



The Gunfighter (1950)

and co-produce *The Big Country* with William Wyler both released in 1958. *Captain Horatio Hornblower*

(1950), *Roman Holiday* (1953), *Moby Dick* (1956) and *On the Beach* (1959) were popular titles as he churned out one or two major productions per year, some co-produced with his partner, writer Sy Bartlett under their Melville Productions banner.

Gregory Peck was by all accounts a thoughtful well-prepared actor who loved to research his characters,



Moby Dick (1956)

often scribbling copious notes on his script pages and researching the history of people and events. Some directors appreciated this deliberate approach, others preferred actors who hit their mark, said their words and went to the bar for a drink. In postproduction he would have pages of notes on the edit, with suggestions for his character and the film as a whole. He was often wearing a producer hat so his notes had to be taken seriously. Peck was deeply interested in his own portrayals, but never at the expense of his fellow cast or the production. He was opinionated, but generous and open to other points of view.



12 O'Clock High (1950)

The 1961 production of *The Guns of Navarone* was a big financial hit and garnered Greg yet another Oscar® nomination but it was merely a prelude to the film that became his personal favorite.

Harper Lee's best selling novel TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, a portrait of life in a 1930's southern town still under the steaming thrall of racial bigotry was filmed entirely on the Universal back lot where Art Director Henry Bumstead salvaged 30 homes set for destruction by eminent domain and built the courthouse, town square and home of Atticus Finch.



Roman Holiday (1953)

Gregory Peck recounts that he rehearsed the final courtroom scene

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Peck recounted that he rehearsed the final courtroom scene at home... "perhaps over two to three hundred times."

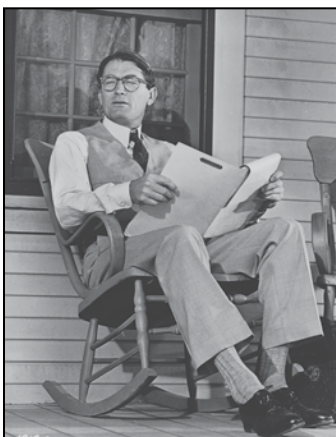
at home... "perhaps over two to three hundred times." When the cameras rolled, many of the extras and defendant Tom Robinson (Brock Peters) were in tears. It was an emotional experience and the cast and crew realized that they had just watched an award winning performance.



Wife Veronique and Peck in 1963.

Sophia Loren was at the podium in the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium as the nominees were announced and it was a tough year. Burt Lancaster (*Birdman of Alcatraz*), Jack Lemmon (*The Days of Wine and Roses*), Peter O'Toole (*Lawrence of Arabia*), Marcello Mastroianni (*Divorce-Italian Style*) were all nominated, but Gregory Peck walked away with the Oscar®.

A decade that opened with such success and fame became more problematic as the turbulent sixties wore on. Gregory Peck like the other leading men of his age (Burt Lancaster, Robert Mitchum, Kirk Douglas, Marlon Brando) suddenly seemed out of step with



the "James Bond, Beatles, Bob Dylan generation". They tried to be topical but most efforts came off as ponderous and lame. Westerns no longer passed muster and attempts at comedy often lead to disaster. From 1964 to 1973 Peck appeared in a long string of box office failures: *Captain Newman M.D.*, *Behold a Pale Horse*, *Mirage*, *Arabesque*, *The Stalking Moon*, *Mackenna's Gold*, *The Chairman*, *Marooned*, *I Walk the Line*, *Shoot Out*, and *Billy Two Hats*. He stopped appearing in films and produced two pictures, *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*



Capt. Horatio Hornblower (1950)

(1972) and *The Dove* (1974), neither made money and the account of

the Rev. Daniel Berrigan's trial earned him a prominent place on Richard Nixon's enemies list.

Peck was not really an enemy of the state and his work as President of the Motion Picture Academy and Chairman of the Motion Picture Relief Fund were earnest commitments that raised millions of dollars for industry charities.



The Guns of Navarone (1961)

In 1973 Gregory Peck returned to the studio where his career had begun thirty years before under the tutelage of Darryl Zanuck. A deal had just fallen through with Charlton Heston to appear in a feature for director Richard Donner. Lee Remick was on board for the female lead and Peck signed to appear as her husband in *The Omen*. He took a modest fee in exchange for 20% of the gross profits of what turned out to be one of the biggest grossing films of the decade. Hollywood respects nothing as much as blockbuster and Gregory Peck found himself back where he started. He was once again a bankable star and he would ride this phase of his career into the sunset. ■

Research for this article drawn from
GREGORY PECK: A BIOGRAPHY by
Gary Fisgall (Scribner 2002).



Robert Mulligan's

TO KILL A Mockingbird

Black and White – 1962 – 129 minutes
A Brentwood, Pakula-Mulligan Production
Print Courtesy of Universal Pictures

Cast

Gregory Peck..... Atticus Finch
Mary Badham..... Scout
Phillip Alford..... Jem
John Megna Charles Baker 'Dill' Harris
Frank Overton..... Sheriff Heck Tate
Rosemary Murphy..... Maudie Atkinson
Ruth White..... Mrs. Dubose
Brock Peters..... Tom Robinson
Estelle Evans..... Calpurnia
Paul Fix..... Judge Taylor
Collin Wilcox..... Mayella Violet Ewell
James Anderson..... Robert E. Lee 'Bob' Ewell
Alice Ghostley..... Aunt Stephanie Crawford
Robert Duvall..... Arthur 'Boo' Radley
William Windom..... Mr. Gilmer, Prosecutor
Crahan Denton..... Walter Cunningham Sr.
Richard Hale..... Nathan Radley

R.L. Armstrong..... Man*
Bobby Barber..... Courtroom Spectator*
Steve Condit..... Walter Cunningham Jr.*
David Crawford..... David Robinson - Tom's Son*
Jamie Forster..... Hiram Townsend - Courthouse Steps*
Charles E. Fredericks..... Court Clerk*
Jester Hairston..... Spence Robinson, Tom's Father*
Chuck Hamilton..... Courtroom Spectator*
Kim Hamilton..... Helen Robinson, Tom's wife*
Kim Hector..... Cecil Jacobs*
Colin Kenny..... Courtroom Spectator*
Nancy Marshall..... Schoolteacher*
Paulene Myers..... Jesse - Dubose Servant Girl*
William H. O'Brien..... Courtroom Spectator*
Gil Perkins..... Man in Mob*
Hugh Sanders..... Dr. Reynolds*
Barry Seltzer..... Schoolboy*
Kim Stanley..... Scout as an Adult - Narrator (voice)*
Jay Sullivan..... Court Reporter*
Kelly Thordsen..... Burly Mob Member*
Max Wagner..... Courtroom Spectator*
Bill Walker..... Rev. Sykes*
Dan White..... Mob Leader*
Guy Wilkerson..... Jury Foreman*

* (uncredited)

Directed by..... **Robert Mulligan**
Produced by..... **Alan J. Pakula**
Written By..... Harper Lee (novel)
..... **Horton Foote** (screenplay)
Director Of Photography..... **Russell Harlan**

Original Music by..... **Elmer Bernstein**
Editor..... Aaron Stell
Assistant Editor..... J. Terry Williams*
Art Directors..... **Henry Bumstead**
..... **Alexander Golitzen***
Set Decorator..... **Oliver Emert**
Props..... Frank Nifong*, Julius Rosenkrantz*
Costume Designer..... Rosemary Odell
Men's Wardrobe..... Seth Banks
..... John Lucas*
Women's Wardrobe..... Viola Thompson*
Exec. In Charge Of Production ... Edward Muhl
Production Manager..... Ernest B. Wehmeyer
Asst. Production Manager..... Dick Gallegly*
Assistant Director..... Joseph Kenny
2nd Assistant Director..... Terry Morse Jr.*
Script Supervisor..... Meta Rebner
Makeup Artists..... Bud Westmore
..... Franz Prehoda*
Hair Stylists..... Larry Germain
..... Lavaughn Speer*
Sound..... Corson Jowett, Waldon O. Watson
Assistant Camera..... William Egan*, Frank Stanley*
Camera Operator..... Jack Whitman*
Still Photographers..... Rollie Lane*, Léo L. Fuchs*
Gaffer..... Bill Neff*
Grips..... Carl Gibson*, Walter Woodworth*
Title Designer: Main Titles..... Stephen Frankfurt
Assistant To Producer..... Isabel Halliburton

Academy Award® Nominated: **Bold**; won: **Green**



Photo Gallery



Mary Badham and Robert Duvall.



Collin Wilcox was working on Broadway when she was cast as the alleged victim Mayella Ewell.



Frank Overton (behind) appeared on nearly every network dramatic series before his death in 1967.



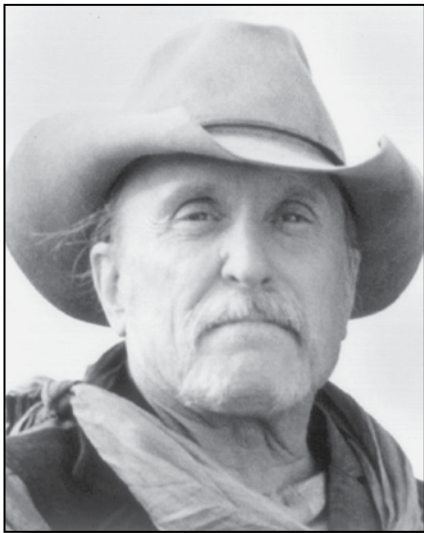
Badham was ten years old when nominated as best supporting actress. Her brother is noted director John Badham (Saturday Night Fever).



John Megna (behind) was singer Connie Stevens brother and appeared in The Godfather, Part II.



Brock Peters (Tom Robinson) the accused, delivered the eulogy at Gregory Peck's funeral.



Open Range (2003)

If you asked Robert Duvall what he would like to be doing at any given moment, he might give you an answer that would surprise most people. In spite of a stellar career in acting, where he has garnered many awards, I believe he might say to his startled fans at his latest premiere—"I'd rather be dancing". Robert Duvall is a true connoisseur of... the Tango.

Robert Selden Duvall was born in San Diego, California on January 5, 1931. His mother was an amateur actress and his father was a US Naval Admiral. After a stint in the Army, Duvall began studying acting at the Neighborhood Playhouse School of Theatre in New York with teacher Sanford Meisner. In New York, Duvall met and became good friends with fellow actors Dustin Hoffman and Gene Hackman when all three actors were unknowns struggling to find work.

In 1958 Duvall acted in the Off Broadway one act play, "The Midnight Caller" by Horton Foote. Soon, Duvall began acting on television in such shows as, "The Outer Limits" and "The Twilight Zone". I first remember seeing

Duvall's screen debut was as Arthur 'Boo' Radley

Robert Duvall playing a German army officer on the television show, "Combat". His portrayal was so measured, even and thoughtful, quietly drawing the viewer in that I made sure that I remembered his face and name because I felt we would be seeing much more of this actor in the future and, indeed, luckily we have.

Duvall's screen debut was as Arthur 'Boo' Radley in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) at the age of 31. He has appeared in such movies as, *The Chase* (1966), *True Grit* (1969) and *MASH* (1970).

His portrayal of lawyer Tom Hagen in *The Godfather* (1972) gave Duvall what some would call his breakout role.

Duvall's stage and television appearances became somewhat sporadic as his film career took off. In 1979 he starred as Lt. Colonel Bull Meechum in the film, *The Great Santini* and he was nominated for the Best Actor Oscar™ for his work. His re-teaming with Francis Ford Coppola in *Apocalypse Now* (1979) as the 'I love the smell of napalm in the morning' Colonel Kilgore was yet another highlight in Duvall's career.

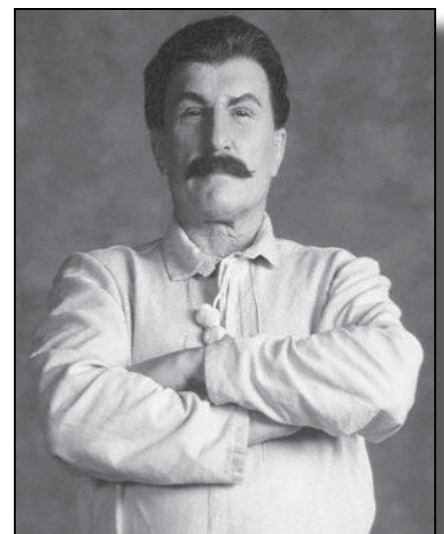
In 1983, Duvall won his first Best Actor Oscar™ for the film *Tender Mercies*, and it remains one of his favorite film roles.

In 1997 Duvall finally got his film *The Apostle*, which he wrote, directed and starred in, completed. He received yet another Best Actor nomination for his work.

In 1996 Robert Duvall, who has been married and divorced three times before, met his current wife Luciana Pedraza in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Together they share a love of tango dancing. Duvall has even worked this passion into a movie he wrote, co-produced (with Francis Ford Coppola), directed and starred in called, *Assassination Tango* (2002).

Recently, Duvall found himself back on the television screen portraying yet another wise old cowboy in the western, *Broken Trail* (2006). After a long career, Robert Duvall shows no signs of slowing down. He has a number of projects in the works that are in production or development. Having just turned 76, Robert Duvall remains one of film's treasures and now, probably, one heck of a tango dancer. ■

This is Dean Briggs' first contribution to the VOT. He recently joined the AFS Board of Directors.



Duvall as Josef Stalin, an HBO production about the brutal Soviet dictator. (1992)



Harper Lee grew up as a rebellious tomboy in Monroeville, Alabama. Born in 1926 and the youngest of four children, her father was a lawyer and state legislator. Lee was a voracious reader, and enjoyed the company of her schoolmate and neighbor, Truman Capote.

After graduating from high school, she attended college in Montgomery and then pursued a law degree at the University of Alabama. While there, she wrote for several student publications. Deciding against a law degree, she moved to New York City in 1950, where she worked as an airline reservation clerk, but her real devotion was to her writing. She wrote short stories but none were published. Her agent encouraged her to develop one short story into a novel.

In 1957, she submitted the manuscript to J. B. Lippincott Company. Although editors found the work too episodic, they saw promise in the book and encouraged Lee to rewrite it. In 1960, TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD was published.

Despite the initial warnings her editors gave to Lee that the book might not sell well, TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD was a sensation. It made Lee very famous and quite wealthy in a very short period of time. A year after the novel was published, 500,000 copies had been sold and it had been translated into ten languages. Lee went on to win the Pulitzer Prize™ in 1961.

In 1962, she spent three weeks watching the 10-week filming of the movie adaptation of her book, then “took off when she realized everything would be fine without her.” Lee was pleased with the film version of her novel saying that the film was a “work of art.” So impressed with Gregory Peck’s performance, she gave him her father’s pocket watch, which he had with him the evening he was awarded the Oscar™ for best actor.

Lee has published only a few short essays in popular magazines since her literary debut. For decades, Lee has remained fiercely mindful of her privacy and never discussed why she never wrote another book. But in the last few years, she has emerged from her comfortable cocoon. Last year, Oprah Winfrey convinced her to write for her “O” Magazine on how she became an avid reader. At the end of the letter, she laments 21st century gadgetry. “Now, 75 years later in an abundant society where people have laptops, cell phones, iPods, and minds like empty rooms, I still plod along with books,”

Later, she granted a brief interview with the New York Times, made an appearance at the Los Angeles Public Library and this November she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Bush. In his remarks, Bush stated, “...TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD has influenced the character of our country for the better. It’s been a gift to the entire world. As a model of good writing and humane sensibility, this book will be read and studied forever.”

By 1982, over 15 million copies of the book had been sold; ten years later, the sales figures had climbed to 18 million copies of the paperback version alone. The book has never been out of print in hardcover or paperback. Today, it has sold over 30 million copies and been translated into over 40 languages. TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD is still taught in over 70% of schools in the United States.

At 81 years old, Lee lives in her hometown of Monroeville, Alabama with her 96-year-old sister, Alice, a practicing lawyer, while keeping an apartment in New York City. ■

Including Short Subjects

To Catch A Woodpecker

Woody Woodpecker Cartoon, Technicolor – 1957 – 6 minutes
Print courtesy of Universal Studios

Produced by.....Walter Lantz
Directed byAlex Lovy
Story byHomer Brightman
Sets byRaymond Jacobs
Animation byLaverne Harding, Ray Abrams
Voices.....Dal McKennon, Grace Stafford (Woody)
Music.....Clarence Wheeler
Prod. Manager.....William E. Garity



The Miracle Telephone Company attempts to stop Woody Woodpecker from pecking holes in its telephone poles.

Research on short subjects courtesy of the Cine-Loa Archives.

Society News

AFS ELECTS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Members in attendance at a general meeting on Saturday, October 27, 2007 voted to expand the Board of Directors to 13 members.

At the same meeting two new Board members were elected. New members Linda Harris and Dean Briggs join our existing Board: Ronald Bonk, V.P.; Randy Carter, President; George Crittenden; Brian Ellis, Treasurer; Pamela Ellis, Secretary; Jim Elyea; Frank Gladstone; Andrea Humberger, V.P. Volunteers & Membership; Daryl Maxwell and Beth Werling.

Board members serve staggered 2 year terms and officers are elected annually by the Board.

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☐ Senior/Student \$15
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Please list your two favorite films:

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Tickets: 818.243.2539

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Saturday, July 26, 2008 at 1 pm and 7 pm

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David Lean's 1962 film, based on T.E. Lawrence's autobiography, "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom", is one of the greatest epic films ever made. Shot for nearly two years on location, the film introduced us to newcomers Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif. Freddie Young's cinematography raised the bar for all films to follow. Lawrence of Arabia won seven Oscars® and is listed seventh on the American Film Institute's top 100 films of all time. The Alex Film Society will screen the restored original cut in 35mm. (Columbia 1962)

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Saturday, October 25, 2008 at 2 and 8 pm

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The classic monster picture that spawned the rest is not simply a cinematic relic. King Kong was created to grip and thrill like no movie before, and these basic principles hold surprisingly true today. From Willis O'Brien's amazing technical effects to Max Steiner's score, the details add up to more than the pieces. King Kong has been remade, but never made better. As is usual, our Halloween show will be sure to delight both fans and families.

VOICE of the THEATRE

Published by and for members of the Alex Film Society

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