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Description of document: US Secret Service (USSS) Records regarding Secret Service cooperation with the making of the 1993 motion picture "In the Line of Fire"
(Note: Record undated but likely 1991-1993)

Requested date: 10-March-2025

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Source of document: FOIA Request
U.S. Secret Service FOIA Office
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Washington, D.C. 20223
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FOIA.gov

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20223

Freedom of Information Act Program
Communications Center
245 Murray Lane, S.W., Building T-5, Mail Stop 8205
Washington, D.C. 20223

Date: April 17, 2025

File Number: 20250596

Dear Requester:

This is the final response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, originally received by the United States Secret Service (Secret Service) on March 10, 2025, for records regarding Secret Service involvement/cooperation/input on the motion picture film "In the Line of Fire", released in 1993 and directed by Wolfgang Petersen. The relevant Secret Service records would be during the years 1991 and 1992.

After a detailed review of all potentially responsive records, 12 pages were released and 0 pages were withheld in their entirety. After considering the "Foreseeable Harm" standard, outlined in Title 5 U.S.C § 552(a)(8)(A)(i) and Department of Justice guidance, exemptions under FOIA Statute Title 5 U.S.C. § 552, and/or the PA Statute Title 5 U.S.C. § 552a, have been applied where deemed appropriate.

Enclosed are the documents responsive to your request, as well as a document that explains the exemptions in more detail. Withheld information is pursuant to the exemptions marked below.

Section 552 (FOIA)

(b) (1)	(b) (2)	(b) (3) Statute:		
(b) (4)	(b) (5)		(b) (7) (A)	(b) (7) (B)
(b) (7) (C)	(b) (7) (D)	(b) (7) (E)	(b) (7) (F)	(b) (8)

Please be advised, in the processing of this FOIA request, no fees are being assessed.

If you deem our decision an adverse determination, you may exercise your appeal rights. Should you wish to file an administrative appeal, your appeal should be made in writing and received

within ninety (90) days of the date of this letter, by writing to: Freedom of Information Appeal, Deputy Director, U.S. Secret Service, Communications Center, 245 Murray Lane, S.W., Building T-5, Washington, D.C. 20223. If you choose to file an administrative appeal, please explain the basis of your appeal and reference the case number listed above.

Additionally, you have the right to seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) which mediates disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Please note that contacting the Secret Service's FOIA Program and/or OGIS **is not** an alternative to filing an administrative appeal and **does not** stop the 90-day appeal clock. You may contact OGIS at: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001. You may also reach OGIS via e-mail at ogis@nara.gov, telephone at 202-741-5770/toll free at (877) 684-6448, or facsimile at (202) 741-5769.

If you need any further assistance, or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, please contact our FOIA Public Liaison Kevin Tyrrell, at (202) 220-1819. Alternatively, you may send an email to foia@usss.dhs.gov.

FOIA File No. 20250596 is assigned to your request. Please refer to this file number in all future communication with this office.

Sincerely,



Kevin L. Tyrrell
Freedom of Information Act Officer
Office of Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:
FOIA and Privacy Act Exemption List

THE
U.S. SECRET SERVICE --
HAVE WE "GONE
HOLLYWOOD?"

by (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Office of Government Liaison
and Public Affairs

This is a question many people have on their minds these days. Simply turn on the television set and there you see it — the Secret Service served up to America in prime time. Weekly television series, movies, commercials, and even print advertisements are all featuring an organization that, until recently, has been shielded from the entertainment industry. You may be wondering what has caused this sudden surge in popularity — a lot of people are. The events throughout the recent presidential campaign and the inauguration are both contributing factors to the public's current fascination with this organization. Secret Service agents are being portrayed as everything from having the "cloak and dagger" mystique to the street-smart renegade officer who walks a tight rope between right and wrong. These portrayals, whether realistic or far-fetched, are whetting the creative appetites of hollywood producers...and the viewing audience is eating it up.

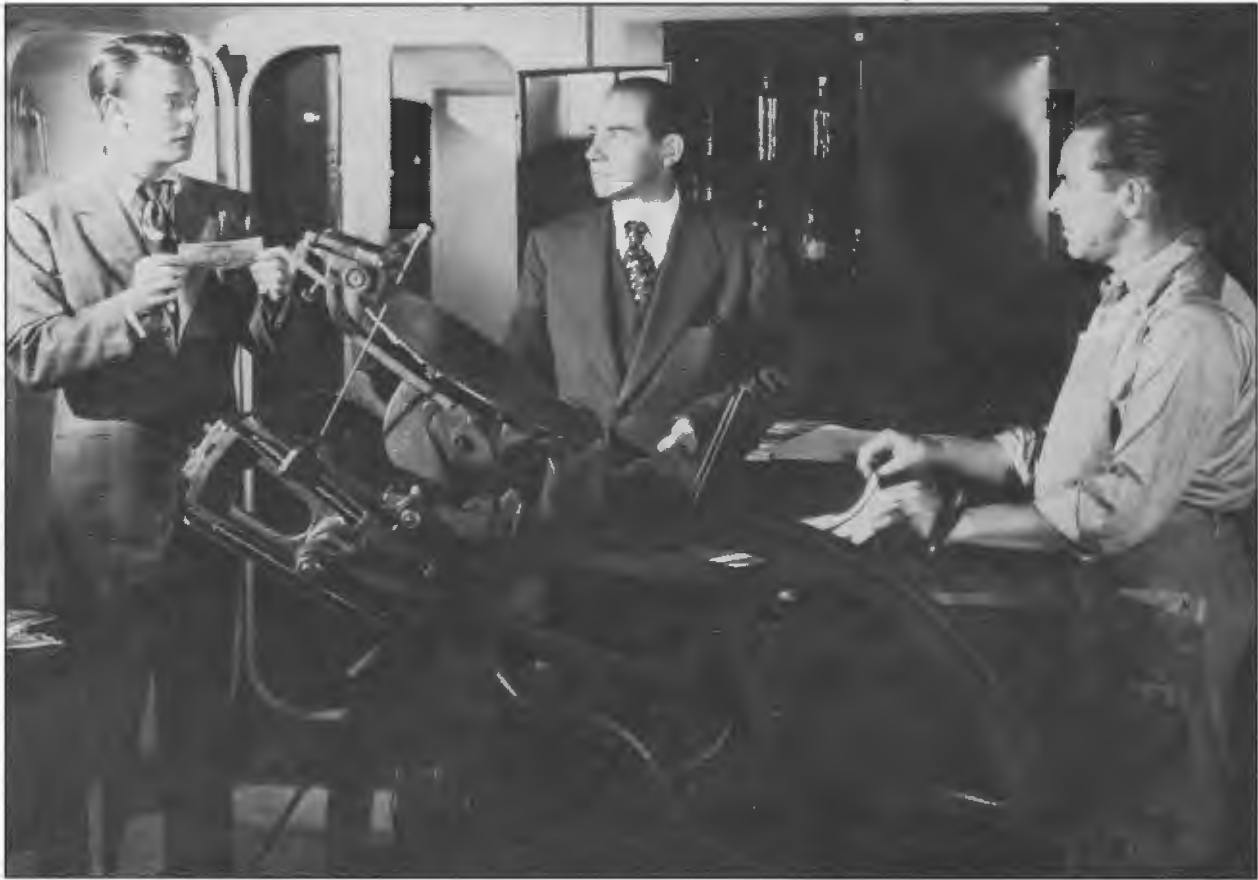


"The Counterfeiters," a film portraying the Secret Service working with Scotland Yard on a counterfeiting ring, premiered in 1948 and featured Hugh Beaumont and Lon Chaney in starring roles.

The name "Secret Service" is synonymous with several things; security...mystery...elusiveness. Just a few decades ago, entertainment moguls knew that their production proposals would have to undergo considerable scrutiny before they were even attempted. Because of the nature of our mission, this is certainly understandable. Some producers accepted this challenge, many others did not. Today, producers in New York, Los Angeles, and everywhere in between are trying to enlist the Service's cooperation and support for their projects. In determining which films and shows will receive the Service's support, several criteria are taken into consideration. "Our primary purpose is to make sure the Service and its employees are presented to the public in the best light possible," says former Deputy Assistant Director Bill Burch, Office of Government Liaison and Public

Affairs. (Bill Burch is currently the SAIC of WFO.) During SAIC Burch's tenure in Public Affairs, he responded to a substantial amount of requests from the entertainment media. "Historically, the Service has not had a lot of requests to cooperate with the movies, t.v. programs, or to come up with material for shows. Today, we are solicited quite often," says SAIC Burch.

Another reason that the Service has recently gotten involved with film and television production is to monitor the content of the scripts that are being written. Sometimes screenwriters delve too deeply into the actual operations of the Service and, for obvious security reasons, the Service exercises its own editorial authority. "Generally, the most attractive aspect of the Service is protection. We try to keep information concerning protection down to a



This is a scene from the film entitled "T-Men." This movie, circa 1947, portrayed Secret Service agents working undercover to expose an international counterfeiting ring. It featured Dennis O'Keefe in one of the starring roles.

minimum because discussing it in detail then brings you into our operational technique, numbers of people, costs, etc. These things convey the kind of information that we try to safeguard," says SAIC Burch.

Essentially, the Service's relationship with the entertainment industry is reactive. According to Public Affairs ASAIC Carl Meyer, this posture is beneficial to the agency. "The Service does not attempt to solicit any publicity, least of all from the field of entertainment. When producers develop a project that involves the Service they usually present it to us, advising that it will be produced either with our cooperation or without. We owe it to the reputation of our agency, as well as to our employees, to provide input and make recommendations to ensure the accuracy of our portrayal," says ASAIC Carl Meyer.

Judging by the number of programs about the Service, the viewing audience appears to be interested in seeing our agency portrayed dramatically. There have been two weekly programs depicting our organization, "Roundtable" and "Secret Service." "Secret Service," which appeared on NBC, was a one-hour program that began airing in August of 1992. It boasted of "opening the files of the Secret Service" and giving a realistic depiction of our protective and investigative activities. Whether the dialogue between the Service employees on the show is realistic or not is arguable; however, no one can dispute the accuracy of the closed cases that are profiled. Without the Service's contribution of credible information, creative license could have replaced this factual portrayal.

In addition to weekly dramas, many news programs seek help from the Service in producing shows depicting our



The infamous "Mr. 880." In this film, Burt Lancaster portrayed an agent out of the New York Field Office who was trying to track down a notorious counterfeiter passing phony \$1 bills.

employees in action. According to SAIC Burch, it was a "snow-ball" effect from the television series. "Once the series began airing, it was a catalyst for other programs such as '60 Minutes,' 'Street Stories,' 'Hard Copy,' and '48 hours'—one request after another," says SAIC Burch.

The television medium is not the only entity taking advantage of the Service's willingness to cooperate on projects. Movie producers have descended upon the Service from every direction with scripts in hand.

There are three recent movies whose producers have solicited assistance from the Service. "In the Line of Fire" starring Clint Eastwood was budgeted for about \$45 million. Eastwood portrays a senior agent who is reassigned to the Presidential Protective Division and prevents an assassination attempt. This action-packed

thriller premiered this summer. "Dave" is a comedy about a fictional President who suffered a stroke and is replaced by a double. "'Dave' is a whimsical motion picture that we do not feel merits our support. We offered technical assistance to the production staff but that's as far as our involvement goes," says ASAIC Carl Meyer. The third movie project that has come to the Service's attention is entitled "Guarding Tess." This film, which features Nicholas Cage and Shirley MacLaine, is about a SAIC and his experiences in protecting a former First Lady. As with "Dave," this movie has only received minimal support from the Service.

Although the volume of film and television depictions of the Service has increased tremendously, they are not entirely unprecedented. Even as far back as the 1930's, people were able to see actors bringing the Secret Service



Although not pictured here, former President Ronald Reagan was one of the central characters in this 1939 film entitled "Smashing the Money Ring."

to life on the silver screen. For example, in 1939, "Code of the Secret Service" starred former President Ronald Reagan as an agent working undercover in Mexico, trying to stem the flood of counterfeit currency into the country. "The Counterfeiters" premiered in 1948 and featured Hugh Beaumont of "Leave it to Beaver" fame. This film profiled the Secret Service working together with Scotland Yard in an attempt to crack a counterfeiting ring. Throughout the '50's and '60's, there were a variety of movies bringing the concealed operations of the Secret Service to the theater. During both decades, films were produced that exposed the viewing audience to our protective duties as well as our investigative responsibilities. Films such as "Mister 880" starring Burt Lancaster and "File of the Golden Goose" featuring Yul Brynner informed the public of the Service's jurisdiction over counterfeiting in both non-fictitious and fictitious

forms, respectively. Other pictures like "Gun of Zangara" starring Robert Stack, "Seven Days in May" featuring Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas, and "The Kidnapping of the President" starring William Shatner and Hal Holbrook gave moviegoers a make-believe glimpse of what it's like to protect our nation's leader.

The movies of the '90's are not the only ones to have forerunners dating back several decades. Today's "Secret Service" television show also had a precursor. Though the project was short-lived, "U.S. Secret Service Agent" was a pilot television program in the '50's that had Broderick Crawford in the lead role. The main objective was to create a weekly serial that would be realistic. As Crawford stated at the time, "This isn't going to be any phoney baloney cops and robbers series, this is going to be the real thing." Although the program had the Service's full

support with Chief U.E. Baughman's personal endorsement, the show never aired because of low interest from sponsors. The "Secret Service" show of today has improved on this significantly.

Even though the Service's portrayal in commercial projects in years past has largely been non-controversial, some have been rather ominous. The movie "Suddenly" that opened in 1954 is a classic example. In it, Frank Sinatra portrays an hired assassin who kills the Secret Service's Special Agent in Charge of the Presidential Protective Division and tries to assassinate the President with a high-powered rifle. For several years following President John F. Kennedy's assassination, this film was not shown because Frank Sinatra believed it had given Lee Harvey Oswald the idea to shoot the President with the same type of weapon. Another classic case that most of us are familiar with is the movie entitled "Taxi Driver," in which Robert DeNiro portrays a psychotic cabbie who tries to kill a presidential candidate. This is the motion picture that John Hinckley says motivated him to attempt to assassinate former President Ronald Reagan in 1981.

For these reasons, it is critical that the Secret Service maintain open lines of communication with the entertainment industry. The consequences of our inaction could be detrimental.

Historical information and photos were provided by:

- Archivist [(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)] U.S. Secret Service Archives
- ASAC [(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)] - personal collection, Seattle Field Office



THE MAKING OF

"In the Line of Fire"

by (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Office of Government Liaison
and Public Affairs



Dylan McDermott plays Secret Service Agent (b)(6); in "In the Line of Fire."

No...it's not another "Dirty Harry" movie. As a matter of fact, "In the Line of Fire" is a film that has the lead actor, Clint Eastwood, playing the part of a character that is pretty familiar to those of us in this agency—a Secret Service agent. To the average moviegoer, Eastwood and the Secret Service are like apples and oranges—they can't be compared. However, "In the Line of Fire" has taken Eastwood's no-nonsense action hero reputation, meshed it with the Secret Service's elite mystique, and created a formula for a successful summertime box office thriller.

By now Service employees are asking themselves, "Isn't it a little unusual to make a movie about the Secret Service?" The answer to that question is a resounding "yes." Naturally there were many issues that had to be considered before the film actually went into production. As ASAIC Carl Meyer, Office of Government Liaison and Public Affairs, states, "Since we tend to be a conservative organization, we had to consider this project and its ensuing consequences carefully. First of all, we had to realize that the project would have been done anyway. The actual choice was whether it was going to be done

with our support or without. We decided that it would be better for us to have some control over the kind of film that was produced about our agency." Retired Assistant Director Robert R. Snow concurs, "I disagree with the idea that the mystique of the Service will be harmed. It's not like the film will give anyone ideas that aren't already out there. As a matter of fact, the film can be used as a training device. We certainly can't stick our heads in the sand and hide."

For 9 years the project was in limbo, primarily because it lacked financial backing. In addition to the conflicts concerning the picture's financing, the producer also had to create an acceptable script. This was naturally a tedious and time-consuming task because of the sensitive nature of the Service's responsibilities. However, Jeff McGuire, the movie's scriptwriter, was ready for the challenge. "Jeff would sit for hours at a time and review the script with me, page by page and line by line, to determine if the material he had written was realistic," says ASAIC Carl Meyer.

Realism was the ultimate objective with this film. In order to accomplish this goal, a director was needed who would

Director Wolfgang Petersen and Clint Eastwood on the set of "In the Line of Fire"



Secret Service Agent (b)(6), (Rene Russo) and (b)(6) (Clint Eastwood) run alongside the Presidential motorcade.



be able to bring all of the Service's aspects to life for the viewing audience. Wolfgang Peterson was the answer. As with his academy award-nominated film "Das Boot," he worked to ensure the authenticity of "In the Line of Fire."

Although the movie producers wanted to create an authentic film on the Service, there were naturally many concerns about the extent to which the film should be taken. For example, questions arose concerning security

and providing too much information to the general public. In order to properly address this issue, the Office of Government Liaison and Public Affairs worked closely with the producer Dave Apple. According to Snow, "We had an agreement from the beginning that we wouldn't reveal anything that the public wouldn't normally see. We made it clear that we would not discuss numbers, procedures, or anything else that could potentially compromise our protective mission."



Rene Russo stars as Secret Service Agent (b)(6); [redacted]



Secret Service Agent (b)(6); [redacted]
(Dylan McDermott) listens in on another menacing call from Booth.

To further ensure the film's accuracy, both Snow and ASAIC Meyer were on the set during many of the shoots. Their presence helped to guard against scenes being filmed that may have been erroneous. As Snow states, "The main reason I was on the set was to answer the questions they had—whether it was from wardrobe, props, transportation, or the director. When the scene would be established, the director would call me to ask if it looked realistic. They were all technical matters such as whether Clint should

wear cuffs on his pants, the line up of motorcades, how to properly work a ropeline, etc." ASAIC Meyer also had similar experiences in consulting with the movie's production staff. "One inaccuracy in particular that stood out was that they wanted Clint to wear his infamous "Dirty Harry" revolver in a shoulder holster. After explaining our transition to semi-automatics, they did away with it," says ASAIC Meyer.

Rene Russo and Clint Eastwood star as Secret Service agents assigned to protect the President in "In the Line of Fire."



In addition to the specifics of the props, the clothes were also an important factor. "The costume designer wanted the protection agents in the movie to wear really trendy clothes and Italian loafers like they were featured in *GQ Magazine*," says ASAIC Meyer. "We had to make them aware that our clothes are functional. We have to dress appropriately in traditionally-styled business suits because of the nature of our responsibilities," states ASAIC Meyer.

Wardrobe was not the only area where the Service's expertise was required. In order for the actors to portray actual Secret Service employees, many Service-related items were needed. As Snow recalls, "The designers used actual Service materials as their models, and then they created their own. I worked with the property master to inventory the security pins, badges, and jackets on a daily basis. After filming, the badges were returned, and the items they had made were all destroyed."

Extensive preparation was done prior to the actual filming. Contrary to popular belief, filmmakers do not shoot movies in the consecutive order of the script. Hundreds of hours of footage are first gathered simply to establish the

background setting for the various scenes in the movie.

"They start out with second unit filming. This is done before the major shoot. We went out on the campaign trail with both Bush and Clinton during the summer of 1992. The crew filmed Air Force One and the C-5, as well as major rallies in Denver, Chicago, Atlanta, and Houston," says Snow.

It took 6 months to complete filming for "In the Line of Fire," and considerable arrangements had to be made to accommodate the film crew at different presidential arrivals. Along with ASAIC Carl Meyer, SA (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) was tasked with coordinating the arrangements for the film crew to have access to various sites. "Carl and I coordinated things for the special unit with PPD operations and Clinton operations. We then physically went out with them to assist them in obtaining access to general public areas where they could get the best footage. These were good opportunities for them, because they were interested in filming the crowds rather than the protectees," says SA (b)(6); (b)(7)(C). As ASAIC Meyer states, "The camera crew 'bird-dogged' the Clinton and Bush campaigns. Even in Hollywood, it would have been difficult for them to



Three of the many faces of potential assassin Mitch Leary, aka "Booth," (John Malkovich).



duplicate the enthusiasm and the amount of people at some of the stops where crowds sometimes exceeded 50,000."

Not long into the filming, it became difficult for ASAIC Meyer and SA Moore to accompany the film crew to different cities, so they decided to enlist the assistance of the Association of Former Agents of the U.S. Secret Service (AFAUSSF). The support that the Office of Government Liaison and Public Affairs received from the AFAUSSF enabled ASAIC Meyer to better handle coordinating the arrangements that were necessary. "After we called the AFAUSSF, Jerry Parr took over traveling with the special unit. His support was essential to the success of the project," says ASAIC Meyer.

Overall, the project has been a great success. The Secret Service was able to work closely with the producers to make certain that our portrayal on the big screen was a positive one. There have been several films that depicted

the Service or its employees as side issues to the story's actual plot. However, as Snow asserts, "It's a story told through the eyes of an agent, his problems, and his experiences."

All things considered, it promises to be a film that just may promote a greater interest in the Service. "In addition to possibly being nominated for an academy award, I believe this movie will be good for our recruitment effort. It just may do for us what "Top Gun" did for the Navy," says ASAIC Meyer. According to Snow, "From a recruitment standpoint, this film will be excellent. This is an exceptional movie that was researched well and portrays the Service in a positive light. If a film had to be made depicting the Service, isn't that the way it's supposed to be done?"

All photos courtesy of Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc.