

Gunfight Expert Takes Bead On Old-Timers, Concludes They Not So Hot

By RICK DU BROW

HOLLYWOOD (UPI)—This may come as a blow to movie and TV western fans, but most of the nation's legendary gunfighters were slow on the draw and usually shot their victims in the back.

So contends Rodd Redwing, a 34-year-old full-blooded Chickasaw Indian who has taught the art of gunfighting to most of Hollywood's western heroes. He claims to be the fastest gun alive.

"The old-timers wouldn't hold a candle to at least a dozen of our actors in a fast draw," said the handsome, soft-spoken Indian.

"Most of the famous gunmen didn't go in for speed. They got their reputations by waiting in ambush and shooting their enemies in the back. And they usually died the way they lived."

Redwing, technical adviser for the western film "Warlock," explained:

"All this 'business about face-

to-face showdowns is strictly Hollywood. It's a hoax. You can rest assured that if a guy is gunning for you and you know you might be killed, you're going to get him any way you can."

"Undertakers have a layaway plan for fools who give their opponents an advantage and say, 'Okay, pardner, go for your gun.'"

Redwing, who has been an actor and adviser in more than 2,000 movies, can hit an object the size of a quarter at 26 feet in two-tenths of a second.

His favorite trick is to throw a knife at a board several paces away, then draw his gun from its holster and fire so fast that the bullet makes a hole in the board for the knife to pass through.

Of the actors he has coached, Redwing said Jerry Lewis learns fastest.

"But," he added, "Glenn Ford is fastest on the draw. He can do it in about four-tenths of a second. Most of the old gunfighters could scarcely break a second, if you read authoritative sources."

Some other fast-draw actors, Redwing said, are Audie Murphy, Kirk Douglas, Henry Fonda, Hugh O'Brian and Duncan Renaldo (TV's Cisco Kid).

Redwing's personal background is almost as startling as his speed with a gun.

He was born in New York,

where his mother had gone from the Chickasaw reservation in Oklahoma to study hair styling.

"Until the depression ruined everything," said Redwing, "Mother and her four sisters built up a chain of 22 beauty parlors from New York to Miami. She died in 1953 on the Cherokee reservation in North Carolina."

As a child, Redwing was sent abroad to attend the fashionable Westminster Grammar School in

London. When he returned, he was enrolled in Herron High School in the tough "Hell's Kitchen" area of New York City.

"It was going from the sublime to the ridiculous," he said. "They really gave me the business at Herron—an American Indian with an English accent."

After graduating from New York University with a major in history, Redwing met Cecil B. De-

Mille while appearing on the Broadway stage and began his screen career in the great showman's third version of "The Squaw Man."

"I've been in every one of his pictures since then except 'The Greatest Show on Earth,'" he said.

Redwing has been married for 21 years to his German-born wife, Erika. "She's a good shot too," he said.

South Seas Paradise Up Against Population Pains

By REG STOWART

United Press International

SUVA, Fiji Islands (UPI)—Britain's South Pacific paradise, the Crown Colony of Fiji, is worried that her population will spill over into the sea in the next two or three decades unless its current baby boom is reversed.

With 3,000 square miles of arable land—out of a total area of some 7,000 square miles—the islands are jammed with 300,000 persons, and the population is growing fast.

What annoys Fijians most is that their two big neighbors—Australia and New Zealand—are clamoring for migrants to fill up their wide open spaces. The catch is that these nations are seeking to build a "white" bastion against Asia's teeming millions, and this excluded Fijians.

The facts surrounding this problem of Britain's loyal and southernmost crown colony are simple.

When the islands were ceded to Queen Victoria in 1874, many Europeans were already established settlers. They either "jumped" whaling ships, naval vessels or cargo clipper or were shipwrecked on the colony's then uncharted and treacherous coastline.

At the turn of the century, sugar companies took advantage of Fiji's excellent climate for the growing of sugar cane. But the sugar czars were not sure that the carefree, fun-loving Fijians would be suitable for plantation work, so they proposed to recruit laborers from parts of India on a contractual basis.

The colonial office in London agreed to the proposal and the first of the coolie ships, as they were referred to in those days, arrived in Fiji from India. The majority of the migrants were completely destitute, and many had no belongings other than their skimpy loin cloths.

Unfortunately, the indenture system did not work out as planned. The migrants, many of whom brought wives, reared families in spite of their poverty. They worked in the sugar cane plantations and mills from dawn to dusk for a few shillings a week. Conditions were harsh and even the Indian women in the cane fields frequently came under the lash.

But children born in Fiji claimed rights as British citizens, having been born in a British country. The government gave them the choice of going back to India or of remaining in Fiji. Most chose to remain in the colony with their children.

In the early 1920's, the Indians started to demand education for their children. Gradually, the government, which had earlier turned a deaf ear to such demands, paid heed.

While the native Fijian's attitude—typical of the South Seas—was to look after today and "let

the devil take tomorrow," the Indian looked ahead for his children.

His rate of propagation was exceedingly high and within a few years he caught up with the Fijians in numbers. Today Indians outnumber the Fijian population—160,000 to 140,000.

This rate of increase has been so great that the government of Fiji asked the colonial office in London to appoint a commission of inquiry to survey the colony's natural resources and population trends.

London appointed Sir Alan Burns, a former governor of British Honduras and the African Gold Coast, as chairman of the commission. The inquiry will be held in Fiji during 1959.

The Indians, meanwhile, feel that appointment of the commission means the finger is being pointed at them, an opinion shared by most people in the colony.

Chandra Prakash Bidesi, Indian president of the Fiji Workers' Congress and a Suva city councillor, said:

"Instead of crying out about population problems, why not open up lands lying idle in the interior of the main islands? Give farmers (most of whom are Indians) secure tenures and leases so that they can establish more food crop for local needs."



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Olivier Was Once Fired By Selznik

By BOB THOMAS

HOLLYWOOD (AP)—He was dropped by David Selznick when he refused a pay cut. Greta Garbo fired him as her leading man. Now he's back in the Hollywood which acclaims him the world's greatest living actor.

Sir Laurence Olivier would doubtless scoff at the billing. He steadfastly refuses to be pompous. Even the "Sir" seems out of place, and his co-workers soon start calling him Larry.

The British actor is here to play in "Spartacus," his first Hollywood film in eight years and only his second since before the war.

"I first came here for a contract at RKO in 1931," he said. "The business was in terrible shape and we had several changes in management."

"Then David Selznick became head of the studio. He made some fine pictures. He also made some fine pay cuts. I refused to take one and was summarily dropped. I went back to England."

He returned to play opposite Greta Garbo in "Queen Christina." He was abruptly replaced with John Gilbert. The legend is that Garbo wanted a comeback for her old flame Gilbert, the silent star who had been laughed out of talkies because his voice didn't fit his appearance.

"The truth is that she fired me," Olivier said. "And I must say that she was absolutely right. I was 33 or 34 at the time, and I simply wasn't up to it. I went back to England again."

His failure to click in Hollywood during this period was partly due to his resemblance to the reigning favorite, Ronald Colman.

Meanwhile he was learning his craft on the stage and in pictures in England. He came back to make the classic "Wuthering Heights." He followed with "Rebecca," "Pride and Prejudice" and "That Hamilton Woman," then returned to England during the war.

Fifteen years ago he directed and starred in "Henry V," first of the Shakespearean films that were to place him at the top of the acting world.

He seems inclined to perform strictly as actor and give up producing and directing. He was disappointed over collapse of his proposed "Macbeth" film. This may well signal the end of the Olivier Shakespearean films.

Wagon Train Goes Without Many Items

By FRED DANZIG

NEW YORK (UPI)—The rules for TV survival being what they are, the rugged characters in the "Wagon Train" western no longer can smoke cigarettes or drink coffee.

Handsome Robert Horton, who plays Flint McCullough on the show, explained the ban during a recent visit to New York. "We heard that a tea company was interested in sponsoring the show, so we gave up coffee-drinking. The cigarettes went when someone decided it could hurt a future sale of the show—say, to a cigar company," said Horton.

By this line of reasoning, those horses may have to go. Auto sponsors, you know.

Anyhow, such prohibitions cause one to wonder what the "Wagon Train" actors do with their hands.

"Well," said Horton, "that's where the acting comes in. Ward Bond will be talking to me and I'll be picking splinters out of my hand. It's very casual-looking. Or else I'll tighten a saddle strap. We keep our hands occupied with realistic movements of one sort or another. It calls for a little more imagination, that's all."

A UCLA graduate who majored in dramatic literature, Horton is working on his master's thesis—a paper on modern theater. He is a native of Los Angeles and grew to his present-day proportions despite an apparently shaky start.

"By the time I was 14," he said, "I had three major operations, five broken arms, plus the usual childhood sicknesses. I was always laid up with something. But I've been lucky on 'Wagon Train.' No accidents to speak of—except the other day, when a horse fell on me. I was knocked out for a few seconds, but that was all. No broken bones."

To avoid being type-cast as a cowboy actor, Horton exercises his contractual right to appear on one "outside" show a month.

"I've been on variety shows, seven Alfred Hitchcock mysteries, the G-E Theater, and in March, I hope to be on a 'U.S. Steel Hour.' That's enough to make me think producers aren't typing me," said Horton, who also studies voice in hopes of appearing in a Broadway musical some day.

"I know this," he added, "I'm glad I'm not Zorro, or Wyatt Earp, or the Lone Ranger. If you play the central figure and the show is named after you, it becomes a tremendous problem to break away."

"You take a part in a modern play and deliver a straight line and the audience is used to you as Zorro, or Earp, or one of those guys. You're very likely going to jar the audience," said Horton—or Flint—as he lifted a cup of coffee to his lips. (No TV camera was around.)

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