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Steve McQueen's Rolex Submariner to be sold by Phillips in New York

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Believed to have been lost in a Californian wildfire, this Rolex Submariner reference 5513 was owned and believed to have been worn by the Hollywood legend Steve McQueen. Now, Phillips will publicly offer the watch for sale in New York on 25 October, soot and all...

This particular watch is one of two Rolex Submariners known to have been owned by Steve McQueen, the other of which - a reference 5512 - was sold by Antiquorum back in 2009. What distinguishes this watch from any other Rolex associated with the so-called King of Cool, however, is the personal engraving on its caseback: 'To Loren, The Best Damn Stuntman In The World. Steve'. In the 1970s, McQueen personally gifted the watch to his long-time stuntman Loren Janes, who worked with him on many of his biggest films, including *Bullitt* and *The Thomas Crown Affair*.





Janes held onto the watch until 2016, when a wildfire destroyed his house and most of their personal belongings, including his prized Rolex. But aware of both its existence *and* its durability, the current consignor encouraged the Janes family to search the burned-down property. Sure enough, after some persistent digging, the watch was found and the Janes agreed to sell it. Remarkably, Rolex was able to restore the watch to working condition, while at the same time preserving its priceless caseback and even the soot wedged between the bracelet's clasp.



Now, Phillips will offer the Submariner, along with letters from both the Janes and Rolex confirming its authenticity and a period-correct dial and hands (Rolex replaced the originals at some point, when exactly is not clear). Arguably the most significant Rolex to appear at auction since Paul Newman's Daytona late last year, McQueen's Submariner is estimated to fetch 300,000–600,000 US dollars when it crossed the block in New York on 25 October. As we have all seen, however, items associated with McQueen and Newman have an allure that's both impossible to predict and almost always helps them to exceed expectations.

Photos: Phillips

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