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Bidding farewell to Sean Connery, the true James Bond

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When asked to name a James Bond actor, Sean Connery's name will almost certainly be the first one you think of. Can you imagine anyone else saying: "Bond, James Bond"?

That timeless introduction to a character that Sean would spend his life shaking off.

Thomas Sean Connery was born in Edinburgh, Scotland on 25 August 1930. A milkman, three years in the Royal Navy, a lorry driver, lifeguard and even a coffin polisher, Connery could not be singled out as someone who just settled in to a career. He also got heavily in to bodybuilding - entering the 1953 Mr Universe contest and even turned down a professional football contract. Lucky for us, acting was just about to finally define his career path.

It was almost ten years of hard graft before the big break through, playing James Bond in the 1962 film *Dr No*. Connery was reluctant to star in a film series, but knew it was what he had to do, if he was to make a career of being an actor. After five films he had grown tired of the role, George Lazenby was hired to play Bond in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* but Connery was enticed back for *Diamonds Are Forever*. That was it though, turning down a reputed \$5m to once again play Bond in *Live and Let Die*. "Never again", that was the plan, but in 1983 he returned played the character in *Never Say Never Again*, a title allegedly suggested by his wife as a nod towards his previous statement.

Connery's Aston Martin DB5 in the 1964 film *Goldfinger* must surely be credited in the cars value and the pairing a timeless representation of 'James Bond'. There was one other car that also became iconic thanks to Connery's time playing James Bond, the Toyota 2000GT. In 2013 an example sold for a record breaking \$1.16m. Connery was too tall to fit in the Japanese coupe for the filming of *You Only Live Twice*, so Toyota set about building two roadsters. Amazingly Bond girl, Akiko 'Aki' Wakabayashi couldn't drive, so Toyota test drivers operated the pedals and gears for her!

The cars were never the stars though. Connery's on screen presence was captivating and beyond 'Bond' Connery played some excellent roles. Eventually his hard work earned him an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actor, for his role in *The Untouchables* playing a Chicago cop alongside Kevin Costner.

Away from acting, Connery was a keen golfer. Whilst training for the filming of the golf scene with *Auric Goldfinger* at Stoke Park he got the bug, taking him on a passionate journey, enjoying the sport for many years. In his later life Connery lived in Nassau, the capital of The Bahamas and retirement was exactly that, he kept himself private and chose to relax.

Without Sean Connery the James Bond franchise would not be what it is today. A strong man with strong views, who died peacefully in his sleep at home in Nassau on October 31st 2020. Thank you Mr Bond, you have left us shaken but not stirred and we are truly grateful for all that you shared with us.

Photo: Alamy

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