



# Wayne and Ford: The Films, the Friendship, and the Forging of an American Hero

*Nancy Schoenberger*

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**John Ford and John Wayne were two titans of classic film and made some of the most enduring movies of all time. The genre they defined--the Western--still matters today.**

For over twenty years John Ford and John Wayne were a blockbuster Hollywood team, turning out many of the finest Western films ever made. Ford, a son of Irish immigrants known for his black eye patch and for his hard-drinking, brawling masculinity, was renowned for both his craftsmanship and his brutality. John "Duke" Wayne was a mere stagehand and bit player in "B" Westerns, but he was strapping and incredibly handsome, and Ford saw his potential. In 1939 Ford made Wayne a star in *Stagecoach*, and from there the two men established a close, often turbulent relationship.

Their most productive years saw the release of one iconic film after another: *Rio Grande*, *The Quiet Man*, *The Searchers*, *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*. But by 1960, the bond of their friendship had frayed, and Wayne felt he could move beyond his mentor with his first solo project, *The Alamo*. Few of Wayne's following films would have the brilliance or the cachet of a John Ford Western but, taken collectively, the careers of these two men changed movie making in ways that endure to this day.

Despite the decline of the Western in contemporary cinema, its cultural legacy, particularly the type of hero codified by Ford and Wayne--tough, self-reliant, and unafraid to fight but also honorable, trustworthy, and kind--resonates in everything from *Star Wars* to today's superhero franchises.

Drawing on previously untapped caches of letters and personal documents, Nancy Schoenberger dramatically narrates a complicated, poignant, and iconic friendship, and the lasting legacy of that friendship on American culture.

## Wayne and Ford: The Films, the Friendship, and the Forging of an American Hero Details

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# From Reader Review Wayne and Ford: The Films, the Friendship, and the Forging of an American Hero for online ebook

## Kim says

I absolutely loved this look at one of the more legendary film collaborations of the twentieth century. As someone who grew up watching John Wayne films with her parents, the ones he worked on with John Ford still stand out in my mind. I was thrilled when I spotted this book on the new book shelves in the library I work at, and I snatched it up immediately.

Schoenberger takes us through the course of Wayne and Ford's relationship, from Wayne's beginnings as a prop assistant under Ford, through Wayne's early growth as an actor, into the height of their collaborative magic as seen in the epic film *The Searchers*, to the autumn era when Wayne's box office draw opened more doors for Ford than Ford's own bonafides did. The book cites many different sources, from Ford's papers to stories told from the people that surrounded them, such as Wayne's third wife, Pilar, or his most well-known leading lady, Maureen O'Hara. The tone is light and easy to read, and I inhaled it.

I'd give it four-and-a-half stars, because there are a couple of errors here and there, but I enjoyed it so much that I just went ahead and rounded up to five. Definitely worth reading for any fan of this duo.

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## Carol says

### "I played the kind of man I'd like to have been." John Wayne

What a crazy iconic pair.....John Wayne and John Ford.

First of all, I'm a big fan of the big tough guy John (The Duke) Wayne. I liked his talk (*great voice*) and I liked his walk! As for his old westerns and war movies....many of which are discussed and dissected here....I still enjoy them.

BUT OMGOSH, John Ford, what a total shock to learn about his disgusting "brow-beating" bullying approach to directing. Often humiliating and violent, he actually punched....yes punched actors....Henry Fonda for one, and actresses....Maureen O'Hara (*if you can believe that*) in the face to "keep them on their toes" and remind them who was in charge. **AND....**he was particularly verbally abusive and cruel to Wayne on a routine basis, but the Duke's cool demeanor and soft heart respected the man and his abilities in spite of it all. (*Possible reasons for Ford's combative personality are explored in this work.*)

**WAYNE AND FORD** is a entertaining and informative behind the scenes look at a lifelong actor/director relationship that includes great old photos, interesting tidbits about their personal lives, health issues and, of course, the many movies they made together. (*Can you picture ELVIS playing the part of the Texas Ranger in TRUE GRIT or Mia Farrow playing Mattie Ross?*)

Anyway, one thing is for sure, I will never watch another John Wayne movie without remembering his true story, the reason behind the five packs of smokes a day, or that he really was very much like the man he played.

**John Wayne (born Marion Morrison) May 26, 1907 - June 11, 1979**

Many thanks to NetGalley, author Nancy Schoenberger and Doubleday Books for the ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Casey Wheeler says**

I received a free Kindle copy of Wayne and Ford by Nancy Schoenberger courtesy of Net Galley and Doubleday, the publisher. It was with the understanding that I would post a review to Net Galley, Goodreads, Amazon, Barnes and Noble and my history book review blog. I also posted it to my Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Google Plus pages.

I requested this book as I have been a fan of John Wayne movies and in particular the ones directed by John Ford. I have not read any biographies on either of them. It is the first book by the Nancy Schoenberger that I have read.

The subtitle of the book: The Films, The Friendship, and the Forging of an American Hero pretty much describes the detail in the book. That said I felt that the book itself could have been much better. The author's writing style, while okay, is not overly engaging that does not make this a book that one can't walk away from and resume at a later time.

She spends a great deal of time detailing what a pain in the a\*\* John Ford is and how he humiliated Wayne throughout their interactions, but Wayne saw him as a father figure and put up with it. As far as the descriptions of the movies, you would be better off just watching as the author makes most of them sound less interesting than they really are.

My recommendation is to watch the movies and skip the book.

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## **Roopkumar Balachandran says**

I am a fan of MGR a matinee idol from Tamil Nadu, India, actor turned politician and a philanthropist who is often compared with John Wayne's box office draw. Both the actors in their movies portrayed the same qualities needed to the people in those era. The title of the book "Wayne and Ford: The Films, the Friendship and the Forging of an American Hero" and the image of Wayne stylishly holding a gun made me to request in Net galley, and I have to thank net galley and Doubleday books for giving me an opportunity to read and review.

The author has mentioned the inspiration she got is from her father Lieutenant Commander Sigmund B.Schoenberger, who is a John Wayne and Western fan, a military officer and a test pilot and who lived the code of masculinity that John Ford and John Wayne created in the movies.

She narrates the life of both director John Ford and Marion Morrison the scenery mover later famously known as John Wayne. The author not only mentioned the life story but also exceptionally quoted their personal and professional relationship on and off screen.

Nancy also cited the psychologist Robert Brannon's markers of manhood which men must acquire to earn the

approval of other men that is what Ford and John Wayne's movie characters exhibited.

1. One may never do anything that even suggests femininity.
2. Masculinity is measured by power, success, wealth and status.
3. A man depends on never showing your emotions at all. Boys don't cry.
4. Exude an aura of manly daring and aggression.

It is their friendship that made my eyes glistened that Ford who is also a mean boss cared for John Wayne when he worked with other directors and he himself came to the shooting spot to help John Wayne in completing his directorial debut movie "The Alamo".

The author has vividly described the movies, characters and also bullying approach of director Ford how he teases Henry Fonda, John Wayne etc. on the set. She also written up to the end of their life their last days, I was amazed at their similarity that both died of stomach cancer.

The book has some beautiful images of Wayne and Ford and their movies. The articles and notes given in the end is huge resource and the book is must read for Western movie genre and John Wayne fans.

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### **Thomas says**

This book is a gem and deserves 5 stars. If you are a fan of the iconic John Ford/John Wayne westerns, then you will enjoy this book, which provides a plot summary of these westerns and places them in a larger context, relating them to American society and the role of men and women in today's society along with America from 1930 to 1979. The book provides a lot of detail about John Ford's movie making style. Ford was a bully and an alcoholic. He did not drink while making a movie and demanded that his film crew do the same. He knelt on an actor's back and broke 1 of his ribs to punish him for coming to work hungover. Henry Fonda punched Ford in the nose during the filming of "Mister Roberts."

The book also explains why Wayne did not serve in WWII. He was about to enlist and told the studio boss, Republic's Herbert Yates. Yates told Wayne that he would sue him for "... every penny that you've got."

Some quotes:

"But he was in many ways still the same old John Ford, chewing one end of a ratty handkerchief to battle his cravings for alcohol, while insisting on a sober cast and crew."

On the possibility of Ford being gay:

"Perhaps Ford's tragedy is that he lived in a time when to have come out as a gay man would have ruined his career, particularly as a man who explored and celebrated masculine heroism."

On John Wayne productions vs. Ford's:

"If John Wayne tended to make propaganda when he was at the helm of a picture, John Ford almost always made art."

John Wayne's 3rd wife Pilar:

"He would become a super patriot for the rest of his life trying to atone for staying at home."

Thanks to NetGalley and Doubleday for sending me this ebook.

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### **Elizabeth says**

Wayne and Ford: The Films, the Friendship, and the Forging of an American Hero

By: Nancy Schoenberger

Non Fiction

What's it's about:

John Ford and John Wayne were two titans of classic film and made some of the most enduring movies of all time. The genre they defined--the Western--still matters today.

For over twenty years John Ford and John Wayne were a blockbuster Hollywood team, turning out many of the finest Western films ever made. Ford, a son of Irish immigrants known for his black eye patch and for his hard-drinking, brawling masculinity, was renowned for both his craftsmanship and his brutality. John "Duke" Wayne was a mere stagehand and bit player in "B" Westerns, but he was strapping and incredibly handsome, and Ford saw his potential. In 1939 Ford made Wayne a star in Stagecoach, and from there the two men established a close, often turbulent relationship.

Their most productive years saw the release of one iconic film after another: Rio Grande, The Quiet Man, The Searchers, She Wore a Yellow Ribbon, The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence. But by 1960, the bond of their friendship had frayed, and Wayne felt he could move beyond his mentor with his first solo project, The Alamo. Few of Wayne's following films would have the brilliance or the cachet of a John Ford Western but, taken collectively, the careers of these two men changed movie making in ways that endure to this day.

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My thoughts:

DNF 100%

Sadly I'm DNF it, I just can't get in to the author's writing style at all, funny thing is I was actually hoping to like this book since it was about John Wayne, and I love his movies, grow up watching them with my dad, but the way the author talks about him ,it's like she's never seen any of his movies .It's like she's putting him and the other old Time movie actors down , so I won't be finish it. With that said I would like to say thanks to NetGalley for at least giving me a chance to give it a try in a change for my honest opinion

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## **Deborah says**

I grew up with John Wayne movies on in the house - my father is a big fan. But this book is not a biography of Wayne and Ford. It is not a list of their movies along with anecdotes about what happened during filming. This is the story of the legend they created. They created the myth of John Wayne. They gave us the ideal man and the rules for a real man to live by. Schoenberger examines their coroboration and the development of the myth. Without realizing it, we came to believe this myth they created. We grew up believing that men should act in a certain way.

A very insightful book.

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## **Valerity (Val) says**

I was interested in reading this book on John Wayne and Ford and their films. Having inherited a love of Western movies and John Wayne in particular, and having read a few articles through the years on John Wayne, I felt I knew a bit about him. John Ford was much more an unknown quantity going into it, but the author certainly did her research in this amazing double biography. I came away feeling I knew quite a bit more about both of them, historically as far as their films, and about their personal lives. Almost too much in the case of Ford, as it got rather gritty later on and I mostly read it to learn about The Duke anyway. I would recommend this book to fans of either Wayne or Ford and their films, or those interested in film history. It's certainly something reading about all they endured on locations making those movies. An ARC was provided by NetGalley and the publisher for an unbiased review.

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### **Larry Sampson says**

I really enjoyed this book. It covers all of the John Wayne/John Ford movies and also goes into some of the movies they made apart. Written with a real fan's insight the book covers a lot of territory I had already known but still had lots of new insights. They were fascinating flawed men but together they made some of the best western movies of all time. If you are a fan I highly recommend the book.

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### **Phil Thoden says**

If you love John Wayne/John Ford western films, you'll love this book. If not, then you won't. 3.5 stars. This book is an enjoyable read for classic movie fans, and perhaps some American studies majors, but of limited interest beyond.

The author explores how Wayne's giant onscreen persona continues to set a standard for American views of masculinity and patriotism. Meanwhile, his offscreen life as Marion "Duke" Morrison was less than perfect, marred by alcoholism, two broken marriages, and avoidance of military service during WWII.

Regardless of that private reality, his work on the silver screen is generally an embodiment of the classic line from The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance: "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend." Hell, they even named an airport after him. Meanwhile Ford also enjoyed Hollywood power that far outsized his humble upbringing.

Perhaps kindred souls who made their way from small town America to the bright lights of Hollywood, both Wayne and Ford combined to create iconic American films. Their cinematic work will always be looked upon as an idealized guidepost for many American men - be strong and act nobly, despite your flaws - and I have to admit to a certain fascination with this lasting contribution to the American experience. If one of their films is on TCM then I'm likely sitting and watching.

An interesting book for classic film junkies, but not a full biography of either man.

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### **Stanley McShane says**

John Wayne, a beloved actor, director, and American icon, and film director, John Ford together created the



classic western movies that continue to cement the image of a tough fighting, but triumphant masculine legacy. Wayne and Ford: The Films, the Friendship, and the Forging of an American Hero might include a misnomer in "friendship." John Ford was brutal to the point of being vicious with his actors while simultaneously wrenching from them their best work. From Wayne and Ford's collaboration comes the vision of the strong American male, capable, independent at the same time honorable. Ford first noticed the stagehand (Marion Morrison) as the tall, good-looking, and robust Wayne that he would eventually use to star in his classic "Stagecoach." Wayne had the walk and talk of a budding Hollywood star and his magnetic presence filled the screen, though Ford allowed Wayne to mature slowly into the spotlight. Their on-again/off-again relationship would churn out a collective of the western genre over a twenty-year span. John "Duke" Wayne is portrayed generally as he is remembered, even-tempered, kind, and patient, while Ford comes off as a major shock--(I mean, who knew?)--belittling even the beautiful and talented Maureen O'Hara. His abuse didn't stop with the verbal, graduating several times into the physical. If he was remembered as being a hard drinking, eye-patch wearing, often cruel taskmaster, it was because he was. However, Wayne apparently saw the genius and continued to work with him until he split and went off to direct his own picture, "Alamo." Nancy Schoenberger draws on a treasure chest of letters, personal documents, pictures, and interviews to paint the complicated picture of the turbulent relationship between the two. Wayne, the father, seemed the loving nurturer whereas Ford built a wall between him and his children, as he seemed to do with his "friends," perhaps not entirely unexpected given the information revealed regarding his own childhood. Read aloud on a cross-country trip to my husband, we often engaged in lively discussion the shocking details of Schoenberger's revelations. At the first opportunity, we rented and viewed "The Shootist" and enjoyed it all the more knowing the details behind the scenes, including the contributions made to the movie by the well-known actors anxious to be involved in what might be Wayne's farewell offering. This novel was offered as an ARC through NetGalley and Doubleday. We loved the book and now more so The Duke! More than a biography really, an exposé, and recommended to anyone who has ever wondered if what you saw was the real thing. It was.

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## **Juli says**

Over the span of more than 20 years, John Wayne and John Ford made 14 movies together. Most were westerns, and all of them featured Wayne as a tough but kind heroically masculine figure. A man's man. One of my all-time favorite movies -- The Quiet Man -- is a classic Wayne and Ford movie.

In Wayne and Ford, Nancy Schoenberger presents interesting facts and background on both men, touching on their careers, personal life, health and relationships. I was surprised to learn that it took John Wayne more than 10 years to achieve success as a leading actor. He made a lot of B westerns and serials before finally being cast in more major roles. Ford made a wide variety of movies ranging from military films to academy award winning drama Grapes of Wrath. But Schoenberger points out that Ford always returned to what he loved best -- films for men about being men. Ford loved making westerns despite knowing he would never win awards for them. Ford was passionate about his work, often pushing actors and crew to the breaking point. Schoenberger doesn't try to hide the volatility of Ford's personality. She shares tales of his temper, physical altercations with actors (he even punched Maureen O'Hara in the face for no reason! yikes!), and his sometimes ridiculous expectations.

Each film that Ford and Wayne made together is featured in the book with information on plot, casting and behind-the-scenes facts. I found this information very interesting! There are lots of photos from the movies as well.

My husband is a huge western fan. Movies, television, books ..... if it's set in the Old West, he loves it. Every Christmas I buy him a special western-themed gift. The last few years it's been Gunsmoke memorabilia, but this year I decided on books. I bought him a copy of Tom Clavin's recent book about Dodge City, and also preordered a copy of Wayne and Ford because I know he will absolutely love this book!

After reading this book, I plan to re-watch all of the films that these two cinema legends made together. It's an awesome list of great, classic films! I've seen them all before but now that I know more background details on each film, I know I will enjoy seeing them all again. I can't wait for my husband to get his copy of this book because I know he will enjoy it even more than I did!

This is definitely a great book for any western movie fan! Wayne and Ford is set for release from Doubleday Books in October 2017.

Nancy Schoenberger is the author of several other books including *Furious Love: Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton and the Marriage of the Century*.

**\*\*I voluntarily read an advance readers copy of this book from Doubleday via NetGalley. All opinions expressed in this review are entirely my own.\*\***

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## **Diana says**

Book received from NetGalley.

John Wayne and John Ford were a well-known pair in early American film. Over the course of their careers, they made 20 films together and I have definitely watched most of them. I grew up with a father who was a huge fan of John Wayne's films and there were many Saturdays where he'd go from channel to channel trying to find another of Wayne's films once the one he was watching was finished. The book gives background on both Wayne and Ford's early lives, how they became a part of the Hollywood machine and how they formed their director and actor partnership. Until reading this I had forgotten that Ford had directed *The Quiet Man* one of the few films I really loved starring John Wayne. I learned quite a few things from this book but won't likely ever give it a re-read.

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## **Douglas Fugate says**

This is a dual biography with the history of Hollywood intermingled.

John Ford started filming silent movies before 1920. He hired a crew member to move scenery and other items on and off the set – Marion Morrison. In 1939 he gave then John Wayne his first leading role in a major film – *Stagecoach*. The working relationship and friendship would endure for the next almost 40 years. Nancy Schoenberger's work is an exceptional volume on the personal and professional relationship of the two men. She relates how that relationship influenced and dictated the Western Hero in America for several decades. Nancy's research on the films, film crews, stars and extras provide not just an "insider's" view, but a feel as if you are a witness on set. As soon as I completed the book I immediately selected and viewed a

Ford / Wayne western.

For anyone studying the film industry, the bibliography of this volume is tremendous resource.

This work is very extremely well-done. For anyone interested in American movie history, especially the western genre, John Ford, or John Wayne, this book is a MUST READ.

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## Joe Kucharski says

I finished reading Nancy Schoenberger's introduction – a well-crafted, passionate account on masculinity from a woman's perspective, mostly derived through cinematic heroes, such as watching John Wayne westerns, although with the obligatory nods to her father – and immediately turned to my wife stating she had to read this primer. In this world of *Wonder Woman* and where the glass ceiling is arguably (at least?) scratched, this is the perfect time to hear from a woman on Wayne, who was truly one of those man's man, like Bogey and Mitchum whose fast-talkin' wit and sharp muscles fed the ideals of Boomers to Gen X boys nationwide, and John Ford, the man who helped forge Duke's image.

Like Schoenberger, I grew up on Duke's film's and own *The Searchers* on Blu-Ray for the sole purpose of showing the film to my own boys (full confession: I also have *Yojimbo* and *Hidden Fortress* reserved for future viewings as well) but after reading her book I learned that my knowledge only ran as deep as the big hits. Schoenberger goes deeper. *Wayne and Ford: The Films, the Friendship and the Forging of an American Hero*, Schoenberger avoids presenting a full biography on each man, acknowledging their tales have been told before. Yes, it is impossible to avoid such, but similar to what Bill Shatner recently accomplished in his 2016 recounting of his friendship with Leonard Nimoy in *Leonard: My Fifty-Year Friendship with a Remarkable Man*, Schoenberger focuses on the often-contentious working relationship between Duke Wayne and Jack Ford and the nearly twenty films they made together.

More than that, Schoenberger provides critical examinations on many of those films, including the aforementioned *Searchers*, the Cavalry trilogy (*Fort Apache*, *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon*, *Rio Grande*), *Stagecoach*, as well as Duke's directorial debut, *The Alamo*. Schoenberger ponders the essential morality lesson of these films specifically, as well as Westerns generally, and theorizes on the macho image of Hollywood heroes from the more recent past: Gibson, Schwarzenegger, Willis. What do Westerns teach us, she asks and follows up with why are we missing those lessons today?

Their personal lives are accounted for within. Duke's failed marriages and eventual cancer diagnosis. The possibility of John Ford's suppressed homosexuality. She asides into separate projects, most noticeably the final three Westerns Wayne filmed without Ford, yet deliberately avoids other independent projects, most noticeably *Rio Bravo*, one of Duke's most referenced films. She shows their relationship is more than mentor-student and truly becomes one of father-and-son.

*Wayne and Ford* is an excellent round-up and review of the work produced by two of the genre's best. Ford had his Monument Valley. Wayne his stance, his drawl. Both are missed. *Wayne and Ford* lets you remember and learn.

Thanks to NetGalley and Nan A. Talese for the chance to read and review this enjoyable ARC.

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