

Ian Fleming: Licence to Kill

Nigel Cawthorne

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There have been many different James Bonds. Seven actors have played him in the official movies alone, and everyone has their favourite.

But there was only one Ian Fleming.

He is always pictured wearing a bow tie and usually with a cigarette holder or a gun in his hand.

Suave, sophisticated, Ian Fleming wanted to be James Bond, but when he was Naval Intelligence during World War II his plans to be a man of action were constantly thwarted by his superiors who thought he was too valuable to risk losing.

Yet he still smoked, drank and womanized, and shared many other characteristics with his famous hero.

Of his James Bond books, Ian Fleming said: "Everything I write has a precedent in truth."

While Fleming was very conscious that his Bond books were pure fantasy, he insisted that everything withing them had its foundation in reality.

All the gadgets – in the books at least – he had come across in the war. The contacts he had made in the British intelligence services and the CIA also proved vital, and many of the plotlines mimic wartime operations he himself had planned.

James Bond is a remarkable creation, infested with many of the demons that plagued the remarkable man who created him.

But how true is James Bond's character to Ian Fleming?

And what shaped the man who created the stories that have thriller the world for the last fifty years?

'Ian Fleming: License To Kill' is an essential biography of one of the greatest popular story-tellers of the last century.

Nigel Cawthorne is the author of some eighty books - and a major contributor to at least twenty more, including 'Jeremy Clarkson: Motormouth', 'Che Guevara: The Last Conquistador' and 'Harry: A Prince Among Men'. He lives in Bloomsbury, London's literary area.

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