

## Movie News: In Memoriam, An Appreciation of Richard Kiel

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 11, 2014 - 8:55pm

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LOS ANGELES – He was 7 foot 2 inches tall, an imposing figure that made for one of the most memorable James Bond villains. Richard Kiel portrayed “Jaws” in two Bond films – “The Spy Who Loved Me” and “Moonraker” – and left an unforgettable mark as a character actor with a distinctive look and persona. Richard Kiel died at age 74 on September 10th, 2014.



Richard Kiel in 2010

*Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com*

Richard Kiel was born in Detroit, Michigan, and made his first appearance in the TV show “Laramie” in 1960. Throughout the 1960s, he made appearances in low budget horror movies and television, most notably in a famous episode of “The Twilight Zone,” entitled “To Serve Man,” and in the TV series “The Wild, Wild West.” It was a western series in the 1970s, “The Barbary Coast,” that caught the attention of the Bond producers, and the villain Jaws was born.

After his Bond escapades, Kiel made character appearances in “Cannonball Run II” (1984), “Pale Rider” (1985) and “Happy Gilmore” (1996). He co-wrote and produced a family film called “The Giant of Thunder Mountain” in 1991, and did some voiceover work in 2010 for the Disney film, “Tangled.”

HollywoodChicago.com interviewed Richard Kiel in 2010, and the intelligent character actor goes beyond his image of the imposing giant.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Since you did one of the most recognizable episodes of ‘The Twilight Zone,’ what did you admire about Rod Serling, as the writer and producer of that show?

**Richard Kiel:** He’s a great writer, but I never met him. I don’t think anyone who ever did a Twilight Zone ever met him. But he was smart, a great businessman and a great writer. I also want to note the casting on the show, because if you look at the line-up of the actors who did the Twilight Zone, they became TV and movie stars, from William Shatner to Robert Redford.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You seemed to have a great relationship with Roger Moore in the James Bond movies. What are some of the incidents you remember that best characterizes Roger as Bond?

**Kiel:** Roger Moore is a wonderful person. The best way to describe Sir Roger now is that his heart is bigger than his ego. He is a team player,

and he never cared if I stole a scene as long as it was entertaining.

I also loved his ad-libs. Like in 'The Spy Who Loved Me' when he's standing on the running board of a car, and giving [co-star] Barbara Bach someone to look at, while she is driving and grinding the gears. [makes gear grinding noises] Roger just looked at her and said, 'do you want me to drive?' The look on her face, since it wasn't a line in the movie, was shock. So the director asked for a close-up of Roger saying that, just because the look on her face was priceless.

In 'Moonraker,' when I'm chasing Roger and Lois Chiles [co-star] on the cable car, and they drop off their car and escape, Lois says 'who is that?' and Roger as Bond said, 'his name is Jaws.' Chiles line back was 'do you know him?' And Roger's ad-lib was 'not socially.' [laughs] I love Roger's sense of humor.

**HollywoodChicago.com** You authored a book about the abolitionist Cassius Marcellus Clay. What was the motivation behind choosing that subject?

**Kiel:** My wife is from the South, and the whole South has been broadbrushed with racism by shows like 'Roots,' the perception that all Southerners were whip wielders and nasty. The reality was that only seven percent of white people in the South owned slaves. The other 93% were victimized by slavery, in that they couldn't make a living competing with free labor. The typical cook, painter and gardener were categorized as 'poor white trash' simply because they couldn't make any money.

Cassius Clay realized this, became a legislator and published a paper called 'The True America' to convince the voters of Kentucky to put a moratorium on slavery. To prove his point, he taught his best friend growing up, an African American named George. how to read, write and play chess. He also made a very prophetic statement. He said that blacks need to be educated, because one day they are going to be part of our governing society. But at that time, he was considered a madman. His story is full of drama.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Later, one of the more interesting films on your resume is 'The Giant of Thunder Mountain' [1991], which you wrote and produced. What motivated you to do this film?

**Kiel:** Well, I've experienced the prejudice of giants, so to speak, from mothers in supermarket lines, for example. If a little girl smiles at me, and I smile back, her mother would immediately pull her away. I thought it was all a product of stereotype casting. In real life, generally big guys are easy going and docile. The real bad guys are pretty short, like Adolph Hitler, Napoleon. [laughs] I thought it was a strange phenomenon, and I wanted to bring it out in the film.

Where we shot, Yosemite National Park, with the huge redwood trees, was an example of that. It really humbled me and and we thought it would be a neat thing to use in a film to measure how big creation really is.

*Source for this article from Wikipedia and LATimes.com. Richard Kiel, 1939-2014.*



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