

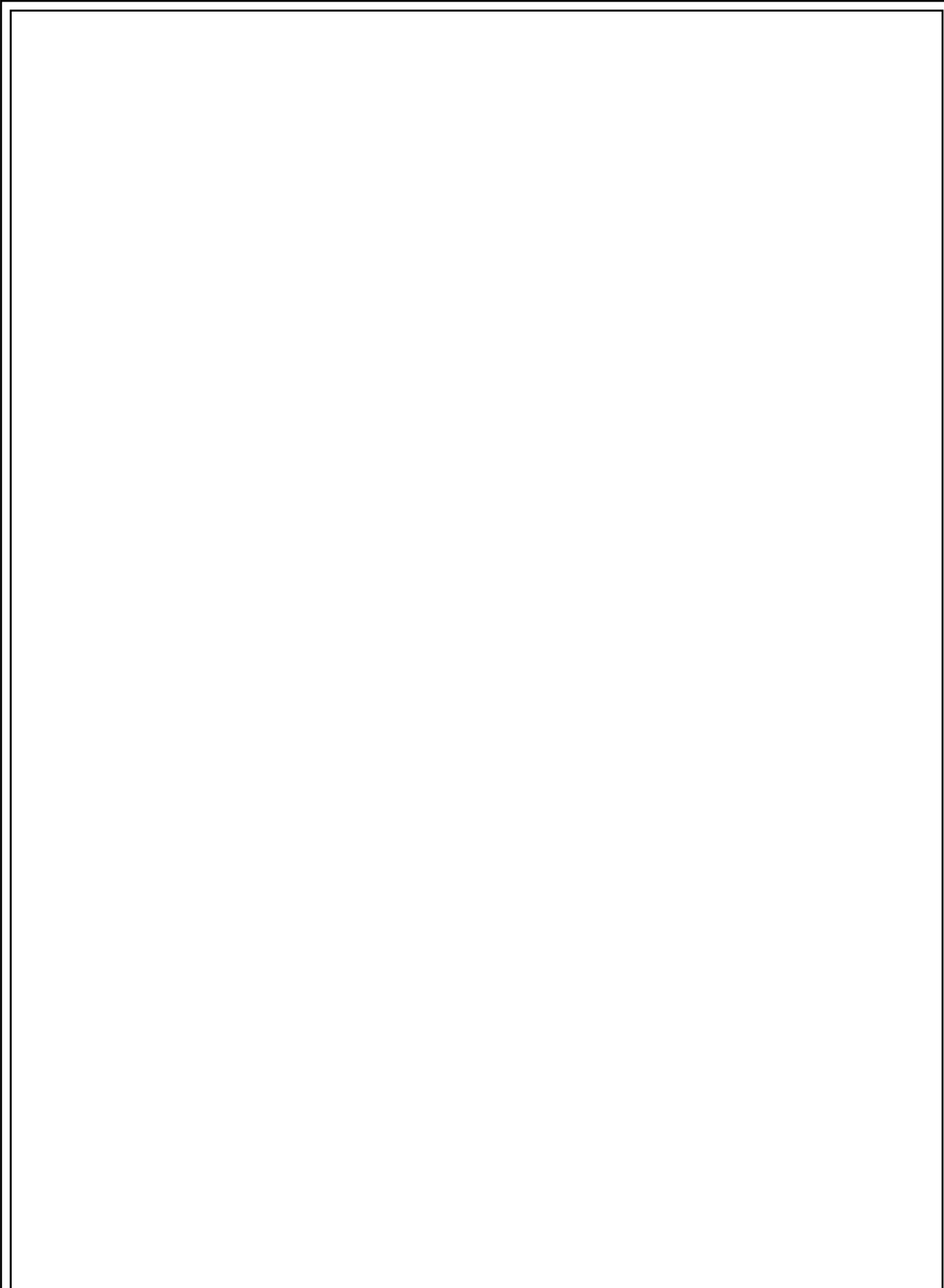
Honoring Oscar-Winning Actor Ernest Borgnine: An Appreciation

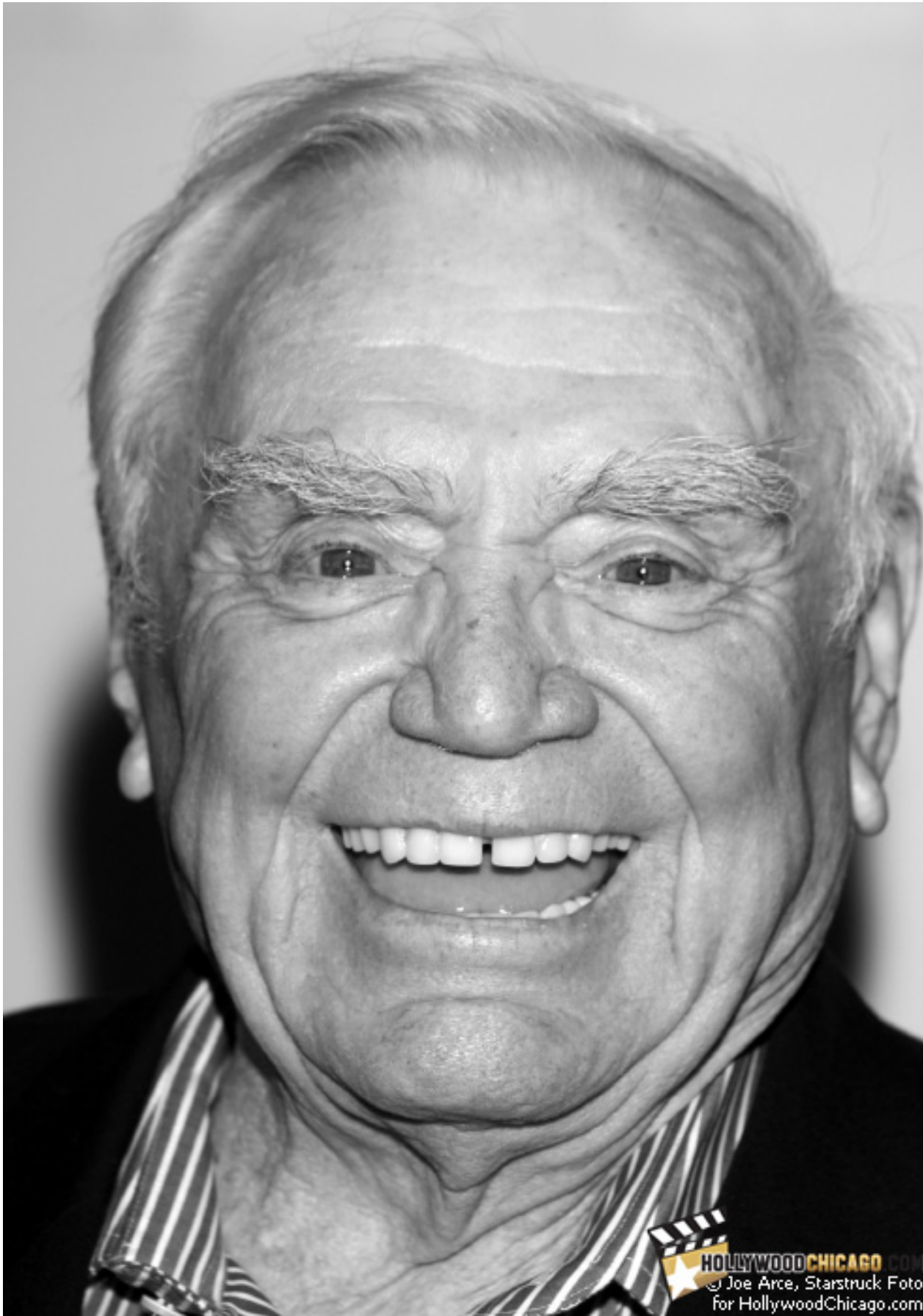
Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 28, 2009 - 12:17pm

- [Article](#) [2]
- [Ernest Borgnine](#) [3]
- [Ernie: An Autobiography](#) [4]
- [From Here to Eternity](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Joe Arce](#) [7]
- [Marty](#) [8]
- [McHale's Navy](#) [9]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [10]
- [Poseidon Adventure](#) [11]
- [Sean Penn](#) [12]
- [September 11](#) [13]
- [SpongeBob Squarepants](#) [14]

CHICAGO – HollywoodChicago.com's ace photographer, Joe Arce, recently photographed the Academy Award winning actor Ernest Borgnine at a book signing event in Chicago. The 92 year-old survivor was in excellent spirits, telling many rich anecdotes to the gathered crowd.

As a kid, I first came upon Ernie as the rascally Lt. Commander Quinton McHale in "McHale's Navy" (1962-66), heavy in afternoon reruns at the time. I was surprised to see him re-appear in the cult disaster film "The Poseidon Adventure" (1972) as the loud and abrasive Mike Rogo, the cop that never believed Gene Hackman's preacher-to-the-promised-land of rescue.



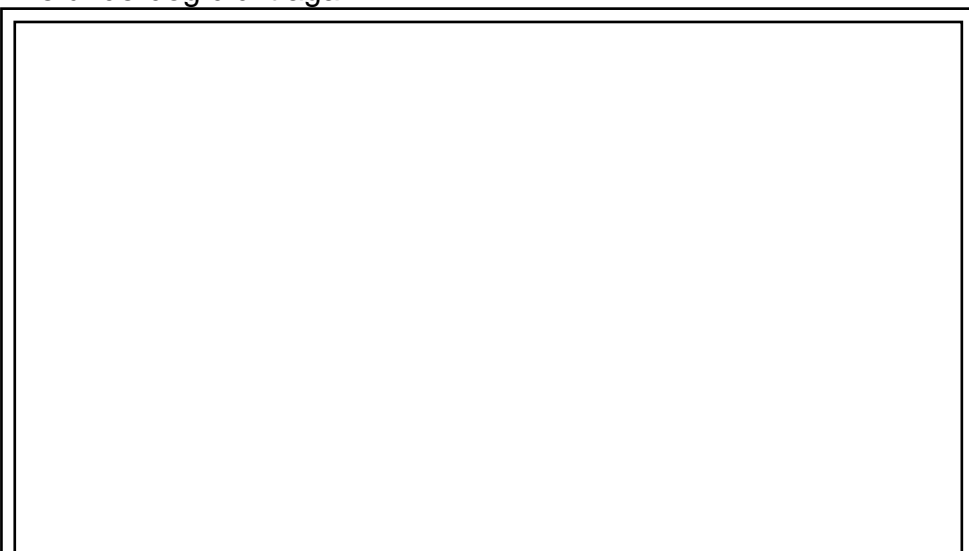


92 year-old Oscar winning actor Ernest Borgnine flashes his famous smile for the HollywoodChicago.com lens at the signing of his book 'Ernie: The Autobiography' on July 20, 2009 at Borders North Michigan Avenue in Chicago.

Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

But Borgnine was much more than those two famous roles, as I soon discovered. His amazing turn as the butcher desperate for partnership in "Marty" (1955) is universal. Everyone is the underdog Marty at some point in their lives, and the sheer joy that Borgnine expresses at the end of the film is as clear an expression of love as an actor can hopefully conceive.

He won the Best Actor Oscar for that film, beating out such heavyweights as Spencer Tracy, Jimmy Cagney, Frank Sinatra and James Dean. The underdog did it again.





Ernest Borgnine as a lonely widower in 'Segment USA' as part of '11'09'01 - September 11'
Photo credit: Studio Canal

He has filled out his career channeling characters, from playing an Asian character named Hu Chang in his debut film ("China Corsair" 1951) to fulfilling the voice of the Mermaid Man on "SpongeBob Squarepants." His characters were usually beefy guys who either had a chip on their shoulder or were sensitively brittle.

But one of my favorites came under the radar, and is relatively recent. In the 2002 anthology entitled "11'09'01 - September 11" – in which 11 international directors made interpretive stories out of that fateful day – Ernie was the lead in Sean Penn's short film representing the USA.

In it, he plays an old man who is a recent widower. He is a ghost in Manhattan, acknowledging few people and known by even less. He is living out the rest of his life sentence alone without the love of his life. When the towers fall, there is a sense of redemption that he and Penn succinctly interprets. It is perfect casting and a poignant late career performance.

Borgnine – Underdog. Winner. Character. Actor. Carry on, Ernie.

Ernest Borgnine's new memoir is entitled "Ernie, The Autobiography" and is available wherever books are sold.



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Source URL (retrieved on Sep 21 2024 - 10:07pm):

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- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/article>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ernest-borgnine>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ernie-an-autobiography>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/from-here-to-eternity>
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