



# The Making of the Magnificent Seven: Behind the Scenes of the Pivotal Western

*Brian Hannan*

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The story behind *The Magnificent Seven* could have been a movie in itself. It had everything--actors' strike, writers' strike, Mexican government interference and a row between the screenwriters that left one removing his name from the credits, all under the lingering gloom of post-McCarthy era Hollywood. A flop on release, it later became a box office hit.

This book tells the behind-the-scenes story: how Yul Brynner became the biggest independent producer in Hollywood; why John Sturges was not the first choice after Brynner surrendered the director's chair; why Sturges quit; the truth about the Mirisch Company (producers); the details of the film's botched release and unlikely redemption; the creation of Elmer Bernstein's classic score; and how internecine fighting prevented the making of the television series in 1963.

Myths about Steve McQueen, his feud with Brynner and the scene-stealing antics of the cast are debunked. A close examination of the various screenplay drafts and the writers' source material--Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*--shows who wrote what. Extensive analysis of Sturges' directorial work is provided.

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