

= M (James Bond) =

M is a fictional character in Ian Fleming 's James Bond book and film series ; the character is the Head of the Secret Intelligence Service ? also known as MI6 ? and is Bond 's superior . Fleming based the character on a number of people he knew who commanded sections of British intelligence . M has appeared in the novels by Fleming and seven continuation authors , as well as appearing in twenty @-@ four films . In the Eon Productions series of films , M has been portrayed by four actors : Bernard Lee , Robert Brown , Judi Dench and Ralph Fiennes , the incumbent ; in the two independent productions , M was played by John Huston , David Niven and Edward Fox .

= = Background = =

Fleming based much of M 's character on Rear Admiral John Godfrey , who was Fleming 's superior at the Naval Intelligence Division during the Second World War . After Fleming 's death , Godfrey complained " He turned me into that unsavoury character , M. "

Other possible inspirations include Lieutenant Colonel Sir Claude Dansey , the deputy head of MI6 and head of the wartime Z network , who achieved different interpretations of his character from those who knew him : Malcolm Muggeridge thought him " the only professional in MI6 " , while Hugh Trevor @-@ Roper considered Dansey to be " an utter shit , corrupt , incompetent , but with a certain low cunning " . A further inspiration for M was Maxwell Knight , the head of MI5 , who signed his memos as " M " and whom Fleming knew well . The tradition of the head of MI6 signing their name with a single letter came from Mansfield Smith @-@ Cumming , who would sign his initial " C " with green ink .

Another possibility for the model of M was William Melville , an Irishman who became the head of the Secret Service Bureau , the forerunner to both MI5 and MI6 : Melville was referred to within government circles as M. Melville recruited Sidney Reilly into government service and foiled an assassination plot against Queen Victoria on her 1887 Golden Jubilee . Fleming 's biographer John Pearson also hypothesised that Fleming 's characterisation of M reflects memories of his mother :

= = Novels = =

Fleming 's third Bond novel , Moonraker , establishes M 's initials as " M * * * * M * * * * * " and his first name is subsequently revealed to be Miles . In the final novel of the series , The Man with the Golden Gun , M 's full identity is revealed as Vice Admiral Sir Miles Messervy KCMG ; Messervy had been appointed to head of MI6 after his predecessor had been assassinated at his desk .

A naval theme runs throughout Fleming 's description of M and his surroundings , and his character was described by journalist and Bond scholar Ben Macintyre as " every inch the naval martinet " . Macintyre also notes that in his study of Fleming 's work , Kingsley Amis outlined the way Fleming had described M 's voice , being : angry (three times) ; brutal , cold (seven times) ; curt , dry (five times) ; gruff (seven times) ; stern , testy (five times) .

Over the course of twelve novels and two collections of short stories , Fleming provided a number of details relating to M 's background and character . In On Her Majesty 's Secret Service it is revealed that M 's pay as head of the Secret Service is £ 6 @, @ 500 a year , (£ 122 @, @ 749 in 2016 pounds) £ 1 @, @ 500 of which comes from retired naval pay . Although his pay is good for the 1950s and 1960s , it is never explained how M received or can afford his membership at Blades , an upscale private club for gentlemen he frequents in London to gamble and dine . Blades has a restricted membership of only 200 gentlemen and all must be able to show £ 100 @, @ 000 (£ 1 @, @ 888 @, @ 453 in 2016 pounds) in cash or gilt @-@ edged securities . Kingsley Amis noted in his study , The James Bond Dossier , that on M 's salary his membership of the club would have been puzzling . As a personal favour to M , the staff at Blades keeps a supply of cheap red wine from Algeria on hand but does not include it on the wine list . M refers to it as " Infuriator " and tends only to drink it in moderate quantities unless he is in a very bad mood .

The academic Paul Stock argues that M 's office is a metonym for England and a stable point from

which Bond departs on a mission , whilst he sees M as being an iconic representative of England and Englishness .

In the first post @-@ Fleming book , Colonel Sun , M is kidnapped from Quarterdeck , his home , and Bond goes to great lengths to rescue him . The later continuation books , written by John Gardner , retain Sir Miles Messervy as M , who protects Bond from the new , less aggressive climate in the Secret Service , saying that at some point Britain will need " a blunt instrument " . In Gardner 's final novel , COLD , M is kidnapped and rescued by Bond and finishes the book by retiring from MI6 . Continuation Bond author Raymond Benson 's 1998 novel The Facts of Death continued Messervy 's retirement , where he still resides in Quarterdeck . The book also introduces a new M , Barbara Mawdsley .

= = Films = =

= = = Eon Productions films = = =

= = = = Bernard Lee : 1962 ? 79 = = = =

M was played by Bernard Lee from the first Bond film , Dr. No , until Moonraker (1979) . In Dr. No , M refers to his record of reducing the number of operative casualties since taking the job , implying someone else held the job recently before him . The film also saw M refer to himself as head of MI7 ; Lee had originally said MI6 , but was overdubbed with the name MI7 prior to the film 's release . Earlier in the film , the department had been referred to as MI6 by a radio operator .

A number of Bond scholars have noted that Lee 's interpretation of the character was in line with the original literary representation ; Cork and Stutz observed that Lee was " very close to Fleming 's version of the character " , while Rubin commented on the serious , efficient , no @-@ nonsense authority figure . Smith and Lavington , meanwhile , remarked that Lee was " the very incarnation of Fleming 's crusty admiral . "

Lee died of cancer in January 1981 , four months into the filming of For Your Eyes Only and before any of his scenes could be filmed . Out of respect , no new actor was hired to assume the role , due to Broccoli refusing to have the character recast and , instead , the script was re @-@ written so that the character is said to be on leave , with his lines given to either his Chief of Staff Bill Tanner or the Minister of Defence , Sir Frederick Gray . Later films referred to Lee 's tenure as head of the service , with a painting of him as M in MI6 's Scottish headquarters during the 1999 instalment The World Is Not Enough .

Featured in

The likeness of Lee was used in the 2005 James Bond video game adaptation of James Bond 007 : From Russia with Love for the role of M by EA Games .

= = = = Robert Brown : 1983 ? 89 = = = =

After Lee 's death in 1981 , the producers hired actor Robert Brown to play M in Octopussy . Brown had previously played Admiral Hargreaves , Flag Officer Submarines , in the 1977 film , The Spy Who Loved Me . Bond scholars Steven Jay Rubin , John Cork , and Collin Stutz all consider Admiral Hargreaves would have been appointed to the role of M , rather than Brown playing a different character as M.

Pfeiffer and Worrall considered that whilst Brown looks perfect , the role had been softened from that of Lee ; they also considered him " far too avuncular " , although in Licence to Kill they remarked that he came across as being very effective as he removed Bond 's double @-@ 0 licence . Continuation author Raymond Benson agrees , noting that the M role was " once again under written , and Brown is not allowed the opportunity to explore and reveal his character traits " ; Benson also considered the character to be " too nice " .

Featured in

===== Judi Dench : 1995 ? 2012 =====

After the long period between Licence to Kill and GoldenEye , the producers brought in Dame Judi Dench to take over as the new M replacing Robert Brown . The character is based on Stella Rimington , the real @-@ life head of MI5 between 1992 and 1996 . For GoldenEye , Dench 's M is cold , blunt and initially dislikes Bond , whom she calls a " sexist , misogynist dinosaur , a relic of the Cold War . " Tanner , her Chief of Staff , refers to her during the film as " the Evil Queen of Numbers " , given her reputation at that stage for relying on statistics and analysis rather than impulse and initiative .

Following Pierce Brosnan 's departure from the role , Dench continued playing M for the 2006 film Casino Royale , which rebooted the series with Daniel Craig playing Bond . In this new continuity , M has worked for MI6 for some time , at one point muttering , " Christ , I miss the Cold War " . According to Skyfall , M was previously in charge of MI6 's operations in Hong Kong during the 1990s . Her ability to run MI6 has been questioned several times ; in Casino Royale , she is the subject of a review when Bond is caught shooting an unarmed prisoner and blowing up a foreign embassy on camera ; in Quantum of Solace , the Foreign Secretary orders her to personally withdraw Bond from the field in Bolivia and to stop any investigations into Dominic Greene 's eco @-@ terrorist organisation ; and in Skyfall , she is the subject of a public inquiry when MI6 loses a computer hard drive containing the identities of undercover agents around the world . Skyfall marks Dench 's final appearance as M , where she is targeted by former MI6 agent Raoul Silva , whom she left to die during a mission in order to save six other agents . She is shot and killed in the film , making her the only M to die in the Eon Bond films . Dench 's M makes a cameo appearance in Spectre in a video will , giving Bond a final order to hunt down and terminate someone , which ultimately leads him to the film 's titular criminal organisation .

There have also been brief references to M 's family : in GoldenEye , she responds to Tanner 's " Evil Queen of Numbers " jibe by telling him that when she wants to hear sarcasm she will listen to her children . Quantum of Solace director Marc Forster suggested that Dench 's casting gave the character maternal overtones in her relationship with Bond , overtones made overt in Skyfall , in which Silva repeatedly refers to her as " Mother " and " Mommy " [sic] . In Skyfall she is also revealed to be a widow .

Unlike the M played by other actors , Dench 's M was never referred to by name on @-@ screen . However , a prop from the final scene of Skyfall , where M bequeaths some of her possessions to Bond following her death , revealed that her character was given the name " Olivia Mansfield " . As the character was never directly referred to by this name , its canonicity is unresolved .

Featured in

===== Ralph Fiennes : 2012 ? =====

After the death of Judi Dench 's M at the end of Skyfall , she is succeeded by Gareth Mallory , played by Ralph Fiennes . Mallory had been the Chairman of the Intelligence and Security Committee prior to heading up MI6 , and is a former lieutenant colonel in the British Army . He served in Northern Ireland with the Special Air Service during the Troubles , where he had been held hostage by the Irish Republican Army for three months . In Spectre , the 00 Section of MI6 is briefly dismantled and Mallory demoted . He assists Bond in the field when it is revealed that the Nine Eyes initiative is part of Spectre 's plan for world domination .

Featured in

===== Non @-@ Eon films =====

===== John Huston / David Niven : 1967 =====

The 1967 satire *Casino Royale* featured not one but two Ms. The first is played by John Huston , who also co -@-@ directed . In this film , M 's real name is McTarry and he is accidentally killed when , in order to get Bond out of retirement , he orders the military to fire mortars at Bond 's mansion when the retired spy refuses to return to duty . The first quarter of the film features Bond 's subsequent visit to McTarry Castle in Scotland , on a quest to return the only piece of M 's remains recovered after the attack ? his bright red toupée . Subsequently , Bond ? played by David Niven ? becomes the new M and proceeds to order that all MI6 agents , male and female , be renamed " James Bond 007 " in order to confuse the enemy .

= = = = Edward Fox : 1983 = = = =

In 1983 's *Never Say Never Again* , Edward Fox played M as a bureaucrat , contemptuous of Bond ? far removed from the relationship shared between Bernard Lee 's M and Sean Connery 's Bond ; the academic Jeremy Black notes that the contempt felt for the 00 section by Fox 's M was reciprocated by Connery 's Bond . Fox 's M is also younger than any of the previous incarnations . The media historian James Chapman notes that whilst M considers Bond to be an out @-@ dated relic , the Foreign Secretary orders the 00 section to be re @-@ activated .

= = Outside the regular Bond @-@ continuity = =

Alan Moore and Kevin O 'Neill 's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* comic series establishes that the 1898 @-@ era League (led by Mina Harker) was directed by Champion Bond (James Bond 's grandfather) , who served under a master called M. This M was later revealed to be none other than James Moriarty in disguise , using the League to win a gang war against Fu Manchu . After the death of Moriarty , Sherlock Holmes 's older brother Mycroft Holmes assumed the role of M. In the sequel volume *The Black Dossier* , set during a moribund and dystopian 1950s post @-@ war Britain , the head of the British secret service , M , is Harry Lime , from Graham Greene 's *The Third Man* . In the final volume of *Century* , spanning from 1910 to 2009 , the M of 2009 is an elderly Emma Peel from *The Avengers* . In the 2003 film adaptation of the series , M is once again Moriarty , and played by Richard Roxburgh .