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Superman

Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster met in 1932 while in high school in Cleveland and bonded over their mutual love of fiction as Siegel wanted to be a writer and Shuster wanted to be an illustrator. Siegel wrote amateur science fiction stories and his friend Shuster provided illustrations. In January 1933, Siegel (under the pen name of Herbert S. Fine) published a short story titled *The Reign of the Superman*. The character is a vagrant named Bill Dunn who is tricked by an evil scientist into consuming an experimental drug which gives Dunn the powers of mind-reading, mind-control, and clairvoyance. He uses these powers for profit and amusement. However when the drug wears off, he is left once again as a powerless vagrant. Shuster provided the illustrations showing Dunn as a bald man.

By June of 1934, Siegel found another partner named Russell Keaton. Their attempts at producing a successful Superman comic were unsuccessful. Siegel and Shuster then teamed up again. After a series of frustrating events with publishers, the first Superman comic was published on April 18, 1938 by Action Comics. Later in 1938, Superman was published regularly by DC Comics through the 1970's.

Superman's stance and attitude were influenced by the character of Douglas Fairbanks as Zorro. The name of Superman's home city, Metropolis, was taken from the 1927 film of the same name. Clark Kent's look and dual identity were inspired by the protagonists of movies like Don Diego de la Vega in *The Mark of Zorro*. Another inspiration was slapstick comedian Harold Lloyd.

The Lloyd character was a mild-mannered man who finds himself abused by bullies, but eventually would fight back. The love triangle between Lois Lane, Clark and Superman were a result of Siegel's own awkwardness with women.

Superman first appeared on "LIVE" radio in *The Adventures of Superman* from 1940 to 1951 for 2,088 episodes which were 15 minutes long. After 1949, they were extended to 30 minutes. Bud Collyer was the voice of for Superman in most episodes.

From 1941 to 1943, Paramount Pictures released a series of Superman theatrical animated shorts. Once again, Bud Collyer (*Beat The Clock* and *To Tell The Truth*) provided the voice of Superman. The first movie serial of Superman was a released in 1948. Kirk Alyn was the first actor to portray him. The first feature film, *Superman and The Mole Men*, was released in 1951. It starred George Reeves as Superman, intending to promote the upcoming television series.

Over the recent years, Christopher Reeve, Dean Cain and Tyler Hoechlin have played the Superman character in films and television. John Haymes Newton played Superboy in the 1988 television series.

The Adventures Of Superman - Episode Title: My Friend Superman - Aired in first run syndication on Saturday, December 26, 1953.

Some of the filming took place on the backlot at Culver Studios - 9336 W. Washington Blvd., Culver City, California. The interiors were filmed at California Studios - 5530 Melrose Avenue,

Hollywood, Los Angeles, California. SUPERMAN Productions, Adventures of Superman (made on the California Studio lot between 1953 and 1954). Superman productions were moved from the RKO-Pathé Studio in Culver City to the California Studio. Today, this location is known as the Raleigh Studios.

George Reeves - (Superman / Clark Kent) - was born George Keefer Brewer on January 5, 1914 in Woolstock, Iowa. His birthdate has been listed on some sources as April 5, 1914. This is because his real birth of January 5th was only five months after George's parents were married.

He interned as an actor at the Pasadena Playhouse where he was discovered by casting director Maxwell Arnow. His film career began in 1939 when he was cast as Stuart Tarleton (incorrectly billed as Brent Tarleton) as one of Scarlett O'Hara's suitors in *Gone with the Wind*. After making some films at Warner Brothers and 20th Century Fox, Reeves appeared in five *Hopalong Cassidy* westerns.

By June of 1951, Reeves was offered the role of Superman in a new television series. After two seasons, Reeves was unhappy with his salary and wanted to quit. The producers looked for a star to replace him. The Superman producers eventually offered him a salary increase and he returned to the series.

His death on June 16, 1959 was ruled a suicide. However, his love affair with the wife (Toni Lanier Mannix) of MGM Vice-President Eddie Mannix has led some to think Reeves was murdered by associates of Mannix.

Reeves was engaged to Leonore Lemmon, whom he met after his relationship with Toni Lanier Mannix ended, at the time of his

death. The 2006 motion picture *Hollywoodland* is based on this incident.

Some false rumors about George Reeves:

- **FALSE:** Reeves was hired to play detective Milton Arbogast in *Psycho* (1960) and filmed a few of his scenes with the rest of the cast just a week before his death. Reeves died on June 16, 1959, almost two months before Alfred Hitchcock decided to make a film of *Psycho*. Work on the script began in October, 1959, four months after Reeves' death. Filming began in November, 1959, five months after Reeves' death.
- **FALSE:** Reeves had signed a five-picture deal with Paramount studios just prior to his death, this given as evidence that his life was upbeat and he could not have been depressed enough to take his own life. There is no truth to the rumor that he had a deal of any size or number of pictures with Paramount or any other studio at the time of his death.
- **FALSE:** Reeves auditioned for the role of Samson in *Samson and Delilah* (1949), but lost the role to Victor Mature. Reeves was never under consideration for the role of Samson. The actor who auditioned for the role was Steve Reeves, *Mr. Universe*, 1950. The role eventually went to Victor Mature when Burt Lancaster was not available.
- **FALSE:** Reeves appeared as a bespectacled TV news reporter in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951). In reality, the actor playing the role bears no resemblance to Reeves. In a 1995 interview with Reeves biographer Jim Beaver, director Robert Wise stated unequivocally that it is not Reeves in the role.

John Hamilton - (Perry White) worked on Broadway and in touring theatrical companies for many before making his film debut in 1930. Hamilton was often typecast as prison wardens, judges and police chiefs.

Jack Larson - (Jimmy Olson) said that he did not want to do the role of Jimmy Olsen in the *Adventures of Superman* television series. His agent told him to do the role, take the money and that it would probably never be seen. His salary for the *Adventures of Superman* was \$350 per episode. After *Superman*, Larson found it impossible to get other acting jobs after the series went off the air. He retired a few years later and concentrated on writing.

Noel Neill - (Lois Lane) At the beginning of Season 2, Noel Neill took over the role as Lois Lane from Phyllis Coates. She appeared in two Best Picture Academy Award winning films: *An American in Paris* and *The Greatest Show on Earth*. In addition to *The Adventures of Superman*, Neill had a cameo in the 1978 feature film *Superman*, guest-starred on the television series *Superboy* and appeared in the feature film *Superman Returns* in 2006.

Terry Frost - (Spud - on left) During World War II, Frost was classified 4F. As a result, he owned and operated Terry Gene's, a coffee shop on Wilshire Blvd. in Los Angeles. With well over 200 film and television credits, Frost was seen on westerns such as *The Roy Rogers Show*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Annie Oakley* and *Adventures Of Wild Bill Hickok*.

Joseph Vitale - (Cap - center) performed on the stage in such productions as *The Gang's All Here* (1931), *George White's Scandals* (1931) and *Page Miss Glory* (1934). Some of his other

television appearances were on *Hazel*, *The Thin Man* and *The Lone Ranger*.

Paul Burke - (Ace - on right) During the 1960's, he was Colonel Joe Gallagher on *12 O'Clock High* and Detective Adam Flint on *Naked City*. In 1984, Burke was C.C. Capwell on the daytime soap opera *Santa Barbara*.

Tito Vuolo - (Tony) During the 1950's and 1960's, he usually portrayed Italian barbers, pizza makers, vendors, grocers, waiters, hotel or restaurant owners. His most memorable film appearances were in film noir classics *Kiss of Death* (1947), *The Web* (1947), *T-Men* (1947), *The Racket* (1951) and *The Enforcer* (1951). Some of his television appearances include *Peter Gunn*, *Father Knows Best* and *Lassie*.

Yvette Duguay - (Elaine) - Born Audrey L. Pearlman in France and moved to the United States with her parents when she was an infant. Made her debut on Broadway opposite Walter Huston at the age of seven. Signed by Universal-International in July 1951, eventually earning up to \$1,250 a week. Entertained U.S. soldiers during the Korean War. Duguay was married three times.

Ralph Sanford - (George) worked as an actor and stage manager on the Broadway stage in the early years of his career. Sanford appeared in the very first episode of *Leave It to Beaver* which aired on October 4, 1957. He worked with many masters of comedy such as Shemp Howard, Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle, Fritz Feld and Laurel & Hardy. Sanford also appeared in four Academy Award Best Picture nominees: *Wilson* (1944), *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), *The Heiress* (1949) and *Friendly Persuasion* (1956). *The Best Years of Our Lives* won Best Picture of 1946.

Edward Reider - (Ted) Better known as Eddie Ryder. Appeared as a regular on *The Dennis O'Keefe Show*, *Dr. Kildare* and nine episodes of *Our Miss Brooks* as Bones Snodgrass where he was billed as Eddie Riley.

Ruta Kilmonis - (Claire) is better known as Ruta Lee. Her career began in 1952. Some of her memorable performances are in the film *Witness For The Prosecution* and *A Short Drink From A Certain Fountain* on a 1963 episode of *The Twilight Zone*. She can also be seen in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* in the role of Ruth Jepson. When she received her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on October 10, 2006, it was in front of Grauman's Chinese Theatre, where she once worked as an usher and candy girl.

During the first season, the Daily Planet building was the E. Clem Wilson building (named for real estate investor and was formerly known as the Mutual of Omaha tower) at Wilshire Blvd. and La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles. By the second season, the Daily Planet building was the Los Angeles City Hall.

Jimmy Olsen (Jack Larson) is watching Ted and Claire dancing in the Diner and says "It sure must be nice to be young". In fact, Ted (Eddie Reider) is five years older than Jimmy when this was filmed.

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Zorro

The History of Zorro

A historical figure often associated with the Zorro character is **Joaquin Murrieta**. At 18 years of age, he was one of the first people in California to pan for gold. During this time, he was able to make a lot of money to support his young wife and take care of their home. In 1848, California became part of the United States. When approached by American authorities, Murrieta refused to give up his gold and his property. He was then tied to a chair as his wife was tortured and killed in front of him. His brother was also killed by Americans for unjust reasons. It was then that Murrieta sought revenge by killing off the people who killed his family. He did so in a mysterious way, disappearing into this night without being caught. Murrieta decided to devote his life to help oppressed people by simply robbing the rich and giving to the poor. His life was fictionalized in an 1854 novel by John Rollin Ridge titled *The Life and Adventures Of Joaquin Murrieta*.

Based on the extensive research of Professor Fabio Troncarelli and Dr. Francisco A. Eissa-Barosso, they found that Zorro may have originated from the writings of Vicente Riva Palacio who wrote stories based on true lives and crimes during the Spanish Inquisition of the 17th Century.

Some of Palacio's writings from the 1870's are based on the life story of **Don Guillén de Lombardo** who was actually born in 1615 as **William Lamport** in Ireland. By 1641, Lamport began formulating plans for a rebellion and independence in New Spain which is now Mexico plus the current states of California, Nevada and many others. Lamport was arrested and tried at the

Inquisition and sentenced to prison. After eight years in prison, he cleverly escaped, leaving no traces or clues as to how he made this escape. Prison officials believed this was some kind of a miracle. Lamport was later caught and executed. Historians believe that Lamport had many of the qualities of Zorro. One of the chapters of Palacio's book on Lamport is titled *Zorro y Lobo*. In another novel written by Palacio, there is a character named *El Zorro*.

In 1908, accounts of the Spanish Inquisition were published in New York by Henry Charles Lea who used some of Palacio's documents as source material. It is said by historians that Lea may have had a connection to Zorro writer Johnston McCulley

In one interview in 1923, McCulley said he read California history avidly. Among that history was the 1854 novel, *Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta: Celebrated California Bandit* by John Rollin Ridge.

McCulley's Zorro was first serialized in the story *The Curse of Capistrano* in 1919 in the *All-Story Weekly*. His first novel *The Mark of Zorro* was followed by three more Zorro novels: *The Further Adventures of Zorro* (1922), *Zorro Rides Again* (1931) and *The Sign of Zorro* (1941). In total, McCulley wrote more than 60 Zorro stories over the next 35 to 40 years.

Zorro in movies and serials

Douglas Fairbanks

- (1920) *The Mark Of Zorro* (Feature)
- (1925) *Don Q Son Of Zorro* (Feature)

Robert Livingston

- (1936) The Bold Caballero (Republic Pictures Feature)

John Carroll

- (1937) Zorro Rides Again (Republic Serial)

Reed Hadley

- (1937) Zorro's Fighting Legion (Republic Serial)

Hadley would go on to play Captain John Braddock in the television series Racket Squad from 1951 to 1953.

Tyrone Power

- (1940) The Mark Of Zorro (Feature)

Linda Stirling

- (1944) Zorro's Black Whip (Republic Serial)

Zorro type character referred to as The Black Whip is killed and his sister takes over wearing the costume and becoming the new Black Whip.

George J. Lewis, who would play Don Diego's father in the Disney television series, plays an undercover US Government agent working with The Black Whip.

George Turner

- (1947) Son Of Zorro (Republic Serial)

Turner plays a descendant of the original Zorro in an 1860's post Civil War setting.

Clayton Moore

- (1949) Ghost Of Zorro (Republic Serial) was released on March 24, 1949. On September 15, 1949, Moore debuted as The Lone Ranger.

The story takes place in 1865. Moore plays the grandson of the original Zorro. George J. Lewis plays the faithful Indian sidekick of (Moore) Ken Mason (Zorro).

Guy Williams

- (1957-1959) Zorro television series (78 episodes)
- (1958) The Sign of Zorro (Feature)
(edited from eight episodes of the television series)
- (1959) Zorro The Avenger (Feature)
(edited from six episodes of the television series)

Subsequent Zorros have been played by Frank Langella, George Hamilton, Rodolfo de Anda, Duncan Regehr, Anthony Hopkins, Antonio Banderas, Alain Delon, Christian Meier and Anthimos Ananiadis.

Zorro - Episode Title: Presenting Señor Zorro - Filming took place from July 15 - 19, 22 - 26 plus August 15 and 26, 1957. Aired on Thursday evening at 8:00PM on ABC October 10, 1957.

Location mountain scenes for this episode were filmed at the Iverson Ranch in the Santa Susanna Mountains in the northwest corner of Chatsworth, California. Other mountain locations for this series were filmed at the Bell Ranch also in the Santa Susanna Mountains between Chatsworth and Simi Valley, California.

Guy Williams - born Armand (Armando to his family) Joseph Catalano on January 14, 1924 in the Bronx, New York. He learned about fencing at a young age from his father and uncle.

During the 1940's, he changed his name professionally to All-American sounding Guy Williams due to Hollywood's practice of physically typecasting people with foreign names.

After a brief contract with MGM, Williams returned to New York, he began studying with Sanford Meisner and appeared in many stage productions. By 1952, Williams was back in California under contract to Universal-International Pictures. In the mid-1950's, he found work in television eventually leading to his audition for the role of Zorro.

After Zorro ended in 1959, Williams made only one more project with Disney, *The Prince and The Pauper*.

Gene Sheldon - was born Eugene Hume on February 1, 1908 in Columbus, Ohio. Also known as Eugene Search, he began learning how to do magic tricks and playing the banjo. His first professional job was in Toledo, Ohio on radio in 1925. From there, it was on to vaudeville and night clubs performing his comedy pantomime banjo routine. After spending some time in Europe performing his act, he returned to the United States working on stage and in films. By then, he was gaining popularity on television programs with Jackie Gleason, Julius LaRosa and Ed Sullivan. Although his performance in *Zorro* as Bernardo was a non-speaking role, he can be heard speaking in other Disney films such as *Toby Tyler* and *Babes in Toyland*. Nick Cravat, who played the mute in Burt Lancaster's films *The Flame And The Arrow* and *The Crimson Pirate*, also tried out for the role of

Bernardo. Gene Sheldon's experience as a mime and in comedy won out.

George J. Lewis - was the only member of the cast who had Spanish heritage. He was born in Guadalajara, Mexico on December 10, 1903. He began acting while in high school and made his way to Hollywood after he graduated. Lewis started working in silent films in 1923 and would make over 300 appearances in films, serials and television programs through 1969. Included on his résumé are roles in three comedy shorts with The Three Stooges. His first *Zorro* experience came at Republic Studios in *Zorro's Black Whip* (top photo) and once again a few years later in *The Ghost Of Zorro* (lower photo). *Zorro* casting director Bill Anderson knew enough about Lewis' career to the point where Lewis did not have to audition for the part of Don Alejandro, Don Diego's father.

Henry Calvin - was born Wimberly Calvin Goodman in Dallas, Texas on May 25, 1918. He studied journalism at Southern Methodist University. In 1939, he went to New York and became a bass baritone soloist at Radio City Music Hall. After military service during World War II, Calvin appeared in several Broadway plays. Along with his works in films, he also had his own radio show in 1950. It was during the 1950's that Calvin made many appearances on television programs. When he was appearing in *Kismet*, Calvin caught the attention of Disney casting director Bill Anderson. As Sergeant Demetrio Lopez Garcia, Henry Calvin appeared in every *Zorro* episode with the exception of one. **Alan Reed**, who would go on to become the voice of Fred Flintstone, was also considered for the role of Sergeant Garcia in *Zorro*.

Britt Lomond - was born on April 12, 1925 in Chicago, Illinois. Lomond received three Purple Hearts during World War II. After

the war, he attended New York University where he joined the fencing team. As an experienced swordsman who was once rated in the top 25 in the country, Lomond qualified for the 1952 Olympics, but turned professional when he started fencing in motion pictures. He auditioned for the part of the Captain Monastario and Zorro. In 1947, Lomond began appearing in several plays on stage in Connecticut and had appeared in 25 films when *Zorro* came along. While Walt Disney wanted Lomond to be Zorro, it was director Norman Foster who convinced Disney that Williams would be the better choice for Zorro and Lomond would be more convincing as the "heavy". In 2004, he wrote a memoir *Chasing After Zorro* and postage stamp depicting Britt Lomond as Captain Monastario was issued by the Netherlands that same year.

Tornado - During the first season, **Tornado** was the faithful horse that Zorro rode. Tornado's **real name was Diamond Decorator**, a seven year old quarter horse. He was a Grand Nationals Medal Class winner 14 times in a row during the 1950's. Diamond Decorator was the only horse for this series purchased by the Disney Studios and was never used again for another film or television series after *Zorro*. He was retired to Disney's Golden Oak Ranch in Newhall, California. During the second season, Zorro rode a white horse named **Phantom** whose **real name was King** and was actually used as Captain Monastario's horse in Season One.

Jan Arvin - played the part of Nacho Torres. He was a member of the Pasadena Playhouse and had worked in over 40 films. He was also a regular on *The Red Skelton Show* during the 1950's and 1960's. According to Britt Lomond (Monastario), Arvin was Jewish and had trouble remembering how to make the sign of the

cross. He appeared as Nacho Torres in the first six episodes of *Zorro*.

By the end of the second season, *Zorro* was a ratings leader winning its time slot over *December Bride* (CBS) and *The Ed Wynn Show* (NBC). The cast was planning to return for a third season. Unfortunately, a dispute between Disney and ABC brought an end to the series. The network felt the show was costing them too much to produce. Guy Williams continued to make personal appearances as Zorro for Disney.

After two *Zorro* features (comprised of edited scenes from the series episodes) and four one hour specials were filmed, the *Zorro* series came to an end.

- The town setting in the series is now the Zorro Parking Garage.

Guy Williams (continued) - In 1964, Williams was introduced in the cast of *Bonanza* as Ben Cartwright's nephew, Will Cartwright. Williams was brought in to replace Pernell Roberts who wanted to be let out of his contract and leave the show. Unfortunately, both Dan Blocker and Michael Landon wanted Williams out of the show because they felt he was getting too much screen time plus they wanted Pernell Roberts to stay. Roberts did agree to stay on for another year and Williams was written out of *Bonanza* after only five episodes.

In April of 1973, Williams was in demand to go to Buenos Aires as Zorro since the series had been popular there since 1968. The reception he received was extremely positive. He made a return appearance in July of 1973 with Henry Calvin (Sergeant Garcia).

Williams loved Buenos Aires and made several trips back and forth living in both the United States and South America.

In January of 1982, Williams suffered a near fatal aneurysm at the base of his neck. After months of therapy, he made a full recovery. There were plans to make a *Son Of Zorro* film starring Williams as Don Diego and Zorro in 1982, but due to the poor quality of the scripts, Williams declined to accept the role.

Williams made his last American television appearances on *The Family Feud* as a member of the *Lost In Space* cast. The show was taped in February of 1983 and aired in April of the same year.. Eventually, Guy Williams moved to Buenos Aires permanently where he remained for the rest of his life.

Exterior scenes in several episodes of *Zorro* were filmed at the Mission San Luis Rey de Francia in Oceanside, California. A memorial plaque for Guy Williams was placed there in 2003.

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