

## FORD MUSTANG MAKES MOVIE MAGIC FOR 45 YEARS

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DEARBORN, Mich., April 16, 2009 – Perhaps nowhere is the Mustang mystique felt more than in Hollywood, where Ford's iconic pony car has been lighting up the silver screen – and the small screen – for the past 45 years.

Who could forget Steve McQueen as the hardened police detective chasing down killers in a 1968 Mustang GT390 in the 1968 film *Bullitt*? Or Will Smith as the sole survivor of an apocalypse racing around the gray, deserted streets of New York behind the wheel of a red and white 2007 Shelby Mustang GT500 in the 2007 feature film *I am Legend*?

Those are just two examples of the more than 500 movies and hundreds of television programs that the Ford Mustang has appeared in since 1964.

“Mustang has had the most roles of any Ford vehicle, and there are no competing cars that come close,” said Bob Witter, of Ford Global Brand Entertainment (FGBE), the Ford office in Beverly Hills that works to “cast” Ford-branded vehicles in movies, television and other entertainment media. “From a product placement perspective, Mustang is the gift that keeps giving and giving.”

Witter says Mustang has been a hot property in Hollywood ever since its introduction at the World's Fair in New York four and a half decades ago.

“The Mustang set off a revolution almost to the level of the Model T in terms of making a cool sports car affordable to the average person,” he said. “When you were driving a Mustang, you were special. You were noticed. You stood out. And today the Mustang delivers the same attributes.”

Filmmakers often use the Mustang as a way to help define a character because there is something about its styling and what the brand means that symbolizes quintessential American cool. If a filmmaker wants a character to look cool, clever and tough, a great way to convey that is by putting him behind the wheel of a Mustang.

Steve McQueen's *Bullitt* and Will Smith's Robert Neville certainly were perceived as cool driving their Mustangs in *Bullitt* and *I am Legend*. In some instances, however, America's iconic pony car doesn't just help define a character; it *is* one of the characters. For example, in the television series *Knight Rider*, the Shelby Mustang GT500KR stars as KITT, a computerized, talking super car.

“KITT is all about technology and speed. He's a quick thinker, and he's overly intelligent,” said Al Uzielli, senior advisor to FGBE. “Mustang is the king of cool and one of the most recognized vehicles in cinema history. There's also an intelligence and sleekness to the car. For all of those reasons and more, the Shelby GT500KR was a perfect choice for the role.”

In some movies, the Mustang is cast as the ideal aspirational vehicle for one of the characters, such as in the 2007 film *The Bucket List*, starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. Given only a few months to live, Freeman's character lists “Drive a Shelby Mustang” as one of the things he longs to do before he kicks the proverbial bucket. And in the recently released film, *Race to Witch Mountain*, a Mustang *Bullitt* plays an integral role in the plot. Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson's character fantasizes about owning the “car from *Bullitt*,” and at the end of the film his dream comes true.

“The Mustang *Bullitt* has a very prominent placement in the film,” said Witter. “There is a million dollar shot of Johnson's character getting into the car and driving away.”

When asked what accounts for Hollywood's fascination with the Mustang over the past 45 years, Witter responded, "It's all-American. It's a sports car. It's fun. It's fast. Mustang makes that kind of statement, and it has been engrained into the American psyche since 1964."

Examples of some memorable Mustang movie moments include:

*Goldfinger* (1964) – This Bond film gets high Mustang marks for being the first movie to show off Ford's new sporty car, a white 1964½ convertible driven by a beautiful woman assassin. After a brief chase in the Swiss Alps, Sean Connery in his Aston Martin DB5 borrows a trick from a chariot racer in *Ben Hur* to shred the Mustang's tires and its rocker panel.

*Bullitt* (1968) – Steve McQueen is the hardened police detective who drives a 1968 Mustang GT390 in a nine-minute, 42-second car chase against killers in a black Dodge charger through the hilly streets in and around San Francisco.

*Diamonds Are Forever* (1971) – Reprising his role as James Bond, Sean Connery eludes police pursuit in a red 1971 Mustang Mach I fastback on two wheels to squeeze down a narrow alley in downtown Las Vegas. The car tilts up on the passenger side wheels entering the alley and exits the alley on the driver's side wheels, a pretty neat trick.

*Gone in 60 Seconds* (1974) – For slam bang action, it's hard to beat this B-movie about an insurance-man-turned-car-thief forced to steal 48 cars which have been given women's names to foil eavesdroppers. The second half of the movie is a 40-minute car chase that destroys 93 cars, leaving the getaway vehicle, an orange 1973 Mustang Mach I much worse for wear.

*Bull Durham* (1988) – Kevin Costner is the fading ballplayer in this sports comedy love triangle with Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins. Since Costner's character once tasted glory for a brief time in the major league's "show," it's only fitting that he picked up a 1968 Shelby Mustang GT350 convertible along the way.

*True Crime* (1999) – Clint Eastwood plays a reporter with a messy personal life who gets one more chance to get it right after something doesn't add up in the case of a Death Row inmate facing imminent execution. His car matches the man – a 1983 Mustang convertible with more than a few miles on it.

*Gone in Sixty Seconds* (2000) – In this remake of the earlier film, retired car thief Nicolas Cage has to boost 50 cars in 24 hours to save his kid brother from killers. The ultimate prize is Eleanor, a silver and black 1967 Shelby GT500 styled by car builder Chip Foose. The original script called for Eleanor to be a Ford GT40 but getting a fleet of those to thrash around would have been a little too pricey.

*The Princess Diaries* (2001) – The lovely Anne Hathaway stars as Mia, an awkward 15-year-old who learns that she's actually a princess by her royal grandmother, played by Julie Andrews. Initially, all Mia wants to do is stay unnoticed at school and get her 1966 Mustang fixed up in time for her 16th birthday.

*Hollywood Homicide* (2002) – Josh Hartnett and Harrison Ford star as detectives in this action "dramedy." Their car of choice? A 2003 silver Saleen S281 supercharged Mustang. The chances a cop could afford a \$63,000 on his salary? Pretty slim, even in Beverly Hills.

*Cinderella Story* (2004) – An unpopular girl, played by Hillary Duff, is exploited by her wicked stepmother. She loses her cell phone instead of a glass slipper at the ball, but she gains a prince. Her car of choice: a sky blue 1965 Mustang convertible.

*I Am Legend* (2007) – Years after a plague kills most of humanity and transforms the rest into

monsters, the sole survivor in New York City, played by Will Smith, struggles valiantly to find a cure. Smith's co-star in the movie? A red and white 2007 Shelby Mustang.

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### **About Ford Motor Company**

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