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PRESS RELEASE

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...and he strikes like THUNDERBALL!

“The trouble about writing something specially for a film is that I haven’t got a single idea in my head! Ian Fleming to Kevin McClory – 29th April 1959

Fresh on the heels of the announcement that Danjaq LLC, the producer of the James Bond films, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), the long-time distributor of the Bond films, have acquired all the rights and interests relating to James Bond from the estate and family of the late Kevin McClory, after legal and business disputes that have arisen periodically for over 50 years – **December 18th 2013 will see the auction at Bonhams (Knightsbridge) of a number of unique and historically important items related to the labyrinthine story of the writing and subsequent film project that would eventually evolve into the fourth James Bond film *Thunderball* (1965) – the Biggest Bond of All!**

The legal battles began when James Bond creator Ian Fleming turned the first James Bond script, which he co-created in 1959 with Kevin McClory and respected British screenwriter Jack Whittingham, into the novel THUNDERBALL (1960) excluding the two men from any credit. In 1961, McClory (initially together with Whittingham) sued Fleming for plagiarism and after 10 days he won not only significant financial damages but also the film rights to THUNDERBALL.

In 1965 in a strained collaboration with the established Bond producers Harry Saltzman and Albert R. ‘Cubby’ Broccoli, Kevin McClory produced the film *Thunderball* starring Sean Connery as James Bond 007, directed by Terence Young with the main title theme famously sung by Tom Jones. This fourth James Bond film in the official Eon Productions series grossed \$1,014,941,117 (Gross – with inflation). Kevin McClory died in 2006 aged 80.

Jack Whittingham’s daughter, Sylvan Whittingham Mason, has decided that it is time to part with some of the James Bond-related material from her late father’s unique personal archive: “I am grateful that with the attention brought to these important and unique documents through the timeline on my website and Robert Sellers’ brilliant book, *The Battle For Bond*, it has been possible to raise awareness of the enormous and unsung contribution that my Father’s work on the screenplay of ‘Thunderball’ made in forming the filmic interpretation of James Bond. It is my belief that this historical screenplay was the pivotal piece between Fleming’s first eight books being

rejected by the major studios as movie potential, and it helped tip the scales into the overwhelming success that followed.”

Sylvan Whittingham Mason

“One could debate endlessly how much of Jack Whittingham’s first original James Bond film script made its way into the eventual 1965 film *Thunderball*, but one thing is certain, his script was the first to convert Ian Fleming’s introspective and rather cold secret agent into the more ‘user friendly’ version the world fell in love with at the cinema. Short of an actual Bond Girl painted gold and preserved naked in aspic, there is unlikely to be anything ever offered in auction more desirable and important in the history and development of the James Bond character.”

Graham Rye – Editor & Publisher 007 MAGAZINE

Listed below are the five Lots on offer at Bonhams with [comments by Robert Sellers](#) – author of the 2007 book *The Battle For Bond*.

Lot 95

IAN FLEMING/JAMES BOND: A COPY MEMORANDUM TO JACK WHITTINGHAM AND COPY FIRST DRAFT SCREEN TREATMENT TITLED *JAMES BOND OF THE SECRET SERVICE*

£3,000 - 5,000

€3,600 - 6,000

US\$ 4,800 - 8,000

"This was Fleming's first ever attempt at a film treatment and writing it did not come easily to the author as he admitted to his friend Ivar Bryce in a letter: '*I am ploughing on dutifully, but painfully with a rough James Bond script.*' Whatever the deficiencies of the result, it is remarkable how much of what Fleming would eventually recycle in his novel of THUNDERBALL that is already present in this treatment - a stolen atom bomb, characters Largo and Domino, underwater battles, and 007's signature introduction, amongst the most famous lines of dialogue in cinema history, appears for the very first time: 'My name is Bond, James Bond.'"

Lot 96

JACK WHITTINGHAM/THUNDERBALL: A FIRST DRAFT CONTINUITY TREATMENT BY JACK WHITTINGHAM FOR *JAMES BOND OF THE SECRET SERVICE*,

1959,

£3,000 - 5,000

€3,600 - 6,000

US\$ 4,800 - 8,000

"With the James Bond novels of Ian Fleming having been repeatedly turned down by film studios it was the job of Jack Whittingham, a noted and experienced screenwriter who had worked for Ealing Studios and Alexander Korda, to adapt Fleming's work into a viable script that would not only attract international backers but present the character of James Bond in a way that would find favour with a modern cinema audience. Whittingham’s script contains many elements that later surfaced in the official EON Productions Bond film *Thunderball* (1965)."

Lot 97

JACK WHITTINGHAM/JAMES BOND: A FIRST DRAFT COPY SHOOTING SCRIPT *LONGITUDE 78 WEST* THE ORIGINAL TITLE FOR *THUNDERBALL*,

circa December - February, 1960,

£3,000 - 5,000

€3,600 - 6,000

US\$ 4,800 - 8,000

"By adapting Fleming's leaden and long-winded film treatment into a highly descriptive and visually exciting screenplay, Jack Whittingham laid the foundations for what a James Bond movie should feel and look like. It's hard to imagine that Richard Maibaum, the skilled screenwriter, who producers Harry Saltzman and Albert R. Broccoli chose to bring their Bond to the screen, wasn't influenced by Whittingham's approach when he came to write the screenplay for the first filmed James Bond adventure *Dr. No* (1962)."

Lot 98

THUNDERBALL / JACK WHITTINGHAM: A FINAL EDITION BOUND SCRIPT FOR THE FIRST JAMES BOND SCREENPLAY *THUNDERBALL*,

circa 1960,

£8,000 - 12,000

€9,500 - 14,000

US\$ 13,000 - 19,000

"Written not long after Jack Whittingham returned from The Bahamas on a location recce, this script made history as the first complete James Bond theatrical screenplay ever written. It is a fascinating document, and remains one of cinema's great 'What ifs'? Trivia note: The film would have begun with a curious prologue given by former US President Harry Truman on the perils of atomic weapons."

Lot 99

THUNDERBALL: A PREMIERE 'SOUVENIR' PROGRAMME GIVEN TO JACK WHITTINGHAM,

£1,000 - 1,500

€1,200 - 1,800

US\$ 1,600 - 2,400

"The fourth James Bond film *Thunderball* was deemed such a big event that it received two simultaneous star-studded premieres – at the London Pavilion in Piccadilly Circus and the Rialto cinema in Coventry Street, Leicester Square."

***The Entertainment Memorabilia auction commences 12:00 GMT – December 18th
Bonhams, 13 Montpelier Street, London SW7 1HQ***

http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20772/##MRO_page=10&MRO_length=10&MRO_category=list&k0=95&MRO_currency=GBP&m0=0

NOTES FOR EDITORS

In order to differentiate the word Thunderball so the reader always understands *which* Thunderball is being discussed at any one time in copy please use the word in the following different typographic forms.

The key below explains how each meaning needs to be shown in the type style in any and all copy.

'Thunderball' = the 1959 film collaboration between Ian Fleming/Kevin McClory/Jack Whittingham

THUNDERBALL = Ian Fleming's book published by Jonathan Cape in 1960

Thunderball = the 1965 film made by EON Productions starring Sean Connery as James Bond 007

For further information and images please contact:

Graham Rye at 007 MAGAZINE & ARCHIVE

editor@007magazine.co.uk

01797 322 007

www.007magazine.com

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