Farewell and Adieu
to you, fair Spanish ladies

Robert Shaw and his most memorable role

Robert Shaw was a roughly hewn British character actor who made his stage debut in 1949 with the RSC and Old Vic and began appearing in films in the mid-1950s, often in war-themed films.

He was born on 9th August 1927 in Lancashire then raised in Scotland. Finally settling in Cornwall and states in his biography that he was drawn to acting and writing from his youth. Shaw trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. In 1949 he debuted onstage at the Shakespeare Memorial Theater at Stratford-on-Avon. From 1951 he appeared in British and (later) American films as a character actor, frequently playing heavies such as the steely-eyed killer Grant in From Russia with Love (1963).

Shaw twice played a villain opposite a hero played by Sean Connery. The first was that of Spectre killer Grant in 'From Russia With Love' (1963) opposite Connery's secret agent James Bond 007, the second was the Sherrif of Nottingham in "Robin & Marion" (1976).

Shaw also proved his versatility with an exuberant, Oscar and Golden Globe nominated performance as Henry VIII in the fine Robert Bolt adaptation, 'A Man For All Seasons' (1966), unfortunately he won neither. In the mid '70s he suddenly became a highly paid star after his appearances in several blockbuster movies, including 'The Sting' (1973) and 'The Deep (1977). As Doyle Lonnegan he played a crooked gangster eventually 'stung' by Redford and Newman, a lovely portrayal by Shaw and the film went on to win a host of Oscars (except the main ones!).

One of his most memorable characters was as Quint, the grumpy old sea dog in Jaws. "Salty" doesn't even begin to describe the character, easily lifted from any one of hundreds of sea tales, but Shaw makes the role his own by also by adding some real drama of his own by way of one of the single greatest character moments in modern film: 'the Indianapolis monologue', which was written by Shaw himself. For all of the thrills and excitement that occur throughout the course of Jaws, this one scene proves to be the most powerful: just straight dialogue, delivered solemnly by one man sitting in a cramped room with an audience of two others. The essence of true dramatic acting could be defined with this one single scene, and cements Shaw as the film's best actor.

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An award-winning novelist and respected playwright he also adapted his novel about Adolph Eichman "The Man in the Glass Booth" for the stage and for a 1975 film. His novel The Hiding Place (1959) was the source material for the screen comedy Situation Hopeless - But Not Serious (1965).

He was also a realist and when Nick Nolte and he were discussing how bad their film, "The Deep" was going, he turned to Nolte and said, 'It's a treasure picture Nick, It's a treasure picture.'