

THE *Bluffer's*<sup>®</sup> GUIDE TO

# BOND

THE  
5 MILLION  
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BESTSELLING  
SERIES

NEW EDITION

The cover features a central silhouette of a man in a suit holding a handgun, with a wisp of smoke rising from it. The background is a vibrant red with a pattern of overlapping, semi-transparent circles. On either side of the central figure are large, dark blue, stylized shapes that resemble the legs of a person in a tuxedo, framing the central scene.



Bond is what every man would  
like to be, and what every woman  
would like between her sheets.

*The Sunday Times* book review of  
*On Her Majesty's Secret Service*

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## THE NAME'S BOND...

**B**ond, as they say with each new film, is back. Nonsense. Bond never went away.

And what's more, he never will, because James Bond is more than just a man, more even than a secret agent. James Bond is an eternal truth. To quote *The Sunday Times* book review of *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, 'Bond is what every man would like to be, and what every woman would like between her sheets.' As Bond's creator, Ian Fleming, himself said: 'The target of my books lay somewhere between the solar plexus and the upper thigh.'

Bond is always in the collective consciousness, whether or not he's gracing the screen (silver or small), and whether or not we know what he'll look like next time. Each time a man approaches a bar to order a pint of beer, a tiny fragment of him fights the urge to make it a vodka martini. Each time a woman sitting at that bar senses the man turning to her, she dreams he will open with: 'The name's Bond, James Bond.'

Bond's life is the dream, the aspiration, the impossible goal. The tedious realities of everyday life make us yearn

for a world like his, with exotic destinations, gambling, gold and girls; beaches instead of bosses, cocktails instead of cornflakes, spying instead of school-runs, adventure instead of alimony. And, when stuck behind a car that won't get out of the motorway's middle lane, who hasn't longed for a button on the dashboard that can fire a rocket up its exhaust?

But where others see an impossible goal as torture, the bluffer sees an opportunity. Educate yourself in 007 and you will always be guaranteed an audience. They will know his name; you can tell them how he got that name. They will know that his martini is shaken, not stirred; you can tell them why. Arm yourself with the right facts, opinions and insider knowledge and you will become as irresistible as Bond himself. For when it comes to holding people's rapt attention, a Bond snippet is almost as effective as the business end of a Walther PPK.

## THE MAN

**T**he weird thing about conversations concerning James Bond is that people talk about everything *except* James Bond. They rabbit on about his cars, his gadgets, his girls, his cocktails – everything, it seems, apart from the man himself. This is not to say that all the stuff surrounding him isn't interesting; of course it is. But if you really want to stand out in the Bond business, your secret weapon has to be the little-tackled question of 007's identity. Master this and you will deservedly be acknowledged as an aficionado of rare insight and expertise.

You must introduce the subject carefully though. Psycho-literary analysis of a fictional character and his derivation is fascinating, but launch straight into it when everyone else is talking about Roger Moore driving a car underwater and you'll sound like a nerd. A useful way to raise the topic is to mention one of 007's great paradoxes: the man billed as the world's most successful secret agent seems intent on 'preserving' that secrecy by announcing his surname to anyone who will listen, then repeating it

(along with his first name) just in case they didn't catch it the first time.

When leading a conversation about Bond's character, you should always remember your central thesis: the books are better than the films. The most intriguing elements of Bond's character are those portrayed in the novels. Everyone else will be floundering in Sean Connery, Roger Moore, Pierce Brosnan and Daniel Craig; you can impress them with the man who created Bond: Ian Fleming. Who was his inspiration? The short answer (and a bluffer always values a short answer) seems to be: Ian Fleming.

### **BOND AS FLEMING (OR FLEMING AS BOND)**

The similarities between author and creation are just too striking to ignore. A small selection will make the point for you:

- Both are the same height (6') and share the same eye colour (blue-grey).
- One of Fleming's mother's first names was St Croix; Bond's mother's maiden name was Delacroix.
- Both lost their father at a young age.
- Both went to Eton (although Bond was expelled in his first year).
- Both served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, rising from lieutenant to commander during the Second World War.

- Both smoked copiously. Fleming got through 70 a day, Bond 60–70, as in ‘Bond lit his 34th cigarette of the day...’ And not just any old cigarettes, but ones made by Morland & Co of Grosvenor Street with a specific mixture of Turkish and Balkan tobacco, decorated with three gold bands (to mirror a commander’s stripes).
- Both Fleming and Bond carried a battered black oxidised Ronson lighter.
- Both wore a Rolex (although Fleming never specified which model).
- Both adored scrambled eggs and Béarnaise sauce.
- Bond fraternises at an exclusive and expensive club called Blades, based on Fleming’s own club, Boodle’s.
- Both had the same golf handicap (nine). You might well have expected Bond to be a scratch player; it’s reassuring to know he has some imperfections.

One curious exception is that Fleming gave his birthday, 28 May 1908, to Bond’s arch-enemy, Blofeld. Perhaps we all dream of being a villain sometimes.

Fleming began writing the first Bond novel, *Casino Royale*, at the age of 43, as he was about to marry Ann Rothermere, the ex-wife of *Daily Mail* owner Viscount Rothermere. He claimed that Bond provided distraction from the horror of his impending marriage. It’s little wonder, you can point out, that Bond’s attitude to women should draw so deeply on the personality of his creator.

Fleming wanted his hero to have 'the simplest, dullest, plainest-sounding name I could find. "James Bond" was much better than something more interesting, like "Peregrine Maltravers".' The name was actually taken from an ornithological book, James Bond's *Field Guide to Birds of the West Indies*, that Ian Fleming kept at his Jamaican home. On no account, however, should you be tempted to make any of the obvious jokes about Bond and birds.

Why did Fleming want such a plain name? Because he envisaged Bond as a very human hero: 'a neutral figure – an anonymous blunt instrument wielded by a government department'. It's best to give your audience time to reflect on this fact. Men in particular will understand the concept of a blunt instrument, though in most cases it will be that chisel they keep meaning to replace.

Quite why Fleming chose '007' as Bond's Secret Service number has been the subject of considerable speculation over the years. Much of this has (as speculation is wont to do) strayed into the realms of the fanciful, with theories about the seven deadly sins, the seven virtues, the seven wonders of the world...

Some refer to the fact that, during the war, the Royal Navy used a 'double-0' prefix in its top-secret coded signals. However, you can go even further back and refer to mathematician John Dee, a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I, who was instructed to spy on King Philip II during her war against Spain. He marked his messages to her '007' – the seven denoting luck and the two zeros denoting eyes

(as in ‘for yours only’). There’s no more evidence for this than for any of the other theories, but by quoting some history, you’ll at least stand out.

## **BOND’S LOOKS**

There’s nothing better than going to the original source material. Hit your audience with this quote from *Casino Royale*:

*It was a dark, clean-cut face, with a three-inch scar showing whitely down the sunburned skin of the right cheek. The eyes were wide and level under straight, rather long, black brows. The hair was black, parted on the left, and carelessly brushed so that a thick black comma fell down over the right eyebrow. The longish straight nose ran down to a short upper lip below which was a wide and finely drawn but cruel mouth.*

## **BOND’S CHARACTER**

The best way of tackling James Bond’s character is to concentrate on his essential unknowability. As Ian Fleming himself said:

*The odd thing about Bond is that I didn’t think of him as a ‘character’ at all... He’s a cipher, in fact. What’s happened over the years is that he has become a ‘character’ largely exaggerated in the public mind... He’s a man of action primarily, and he’s not a person of much social attractiveness. But then I never intended him to be a particularly likeable person...*

## BOND'S LIFESTYLE

Bond, like Fleming, is very particular in his tastes. The mass of detail Fleming used in the novels gives a real flavour of 007's world, especially the small luxuries with which he likes to surround himself. There's a strong notion of the comfort to be gained from old favourites, such as these:

- He wears Floris No 89 Eau de Toilette (the 89 comes from the number of the Floris shop in Jermyn Street, London). The citrus fragrance has shades of sandalwood, rose, orris and oakmoss.
- He washes his hair with Pinaud's Elixir ('that prince among shampoos').
- He always wears 'dark blues and blacks and whites, the colours that betray an underlying melancholy'. His shirts are Sea Island cotton, his trousers worsted. He wears black silk knitted ties.
- His newspaper ('the only paper he ever read') is *The Times*.
- His only hobby is his car – a 4.5 litre Bentley coupé, which he drives 'hard and well and with an almost sensual pleasure' (*Casino Royale*).

When a man takes such care over his own comfort, it's easy to suspect that he's not really bothered about other people. Bond certainly seems to confirm this suspicion. In the end, he is always his own man, never giving too much of himself to others, and definitely not to women.

One of the most famous passages about Bond's character (which you'd be well advised to memorise) appears in the first novel, *Casino Royale*:

*The lengthy approaches to a seduction bored him almost as much as the subsequent mess of disentanglement. He found something grisly in the inevitability of the pattern of each affair. The conventional parabola – sentiment, the touch of the hand, the kiss, the passionate kiss, the feel of the body, the climax in bed, then more bed, then less bed, then the boredom, the tears, and the final bitterness – was to him shameful and hypocritical.*

It was just as well for his women that Bond avoided relationships with them. If any of them had moved in with him, they'd only have got into trouble for using his Pinaud's Elixir.

## **BOND'S FOOD AND DRINK**

### **EGGS-ACTLY SO**

Breakfast is Bond's favourite meal of the day. Given his 60-a-day smoking habit, you might expect him to consume a full English breakfast. Instead, when at home in his Chelsea flat, it is a solitary egg, cooked for three-and-a-third minutes, followed by wholewheat toast with Jersey butter and a choice of Frank Cooper's Vintage Oxford marmalade, Tiptree 'Little Scarlet' strawberry jam or Norwegian heather honey from Fortnum's, along with very strong coffee, *not tea*. Bond, to use his own

word, 'hates' tea. In *Goldfinger*, a Secret Service canteen girl commits the heinous crime of bringing him a cup. He calls it 'mud', and cites it as a primary reason for the downfall of the British Empire.

While we're on the subject of eggs, Bond will eat one virtually any time, day or night, with or without orange juice, vodka and tonic, or Champagne. A proofreader at Ian Fleming's publishing company was alarmed at how often 007 consumed scrambled eggs in an early draft of *Live and Let Die*; all an enemy would need do to track him is ask in each restaurant if a man had been there eating that particular dish.



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The proofreader was too polite to mention another problem: how could Bond possibly complete his duties as a go-get-'em super-spy, given the effect so many eggs would have had on his digestion?

It gives fresh meaning to his response in *Octopussy* when, in pursuit of the fake Fabergé egg, Magda (*Octopussy*'s right-hand woman) says: 'He suggests a trade. The egg for your life.' And Bond replies: 'Well, I'd heard the price of eggs was going up, but isn't that a little high?'

Bond may well like the simple stuff, but insists that it is of the highest quality. Not just any eggs, but deep-brown eggs with a rich, yellow yolk laid by French hens of the Marans breed. Not just smoked salmon, but Scottish smoked salmon, cured in the Highlands. Sean Connery would have approved.

## **PLAIN BUT PERFECT**

On the whole, unless in exotic locations, Bond is not that adventurous with food. In *Moonraker*, he and M dine together on asparagus with hollandaise sauce, then lamb cutlets with peas and new potatoes, followed by a plain slice of pineapple.

In Bond's life, far more importance seems to be placed on the drink, rather than on the food that happens to accompany it. For example, with caviar or smoked salmon he enjoys neat and ice-cold vodka, on top of which he drops a pinch of black pepper (which then sinks to the bottom) to rid the vodka of impurities – a trick he learned in Russia.

He is not averse to gin and tonic with Angostura bitters and the juice of fresh lime; Bourbon (three fingers) in a tumbler half-filled with ice; or brandy and ginger on a long flight. But Champagne is his favourite, whether Black Velvet (Champagne and Guinness) alongside dressed crab, or rosé fizz with roast grouse.

In the film *Goldfinger*, Bond advises Jill Masterson that there are some things you just don't do, such as drinking Dom Pérignon 1953 above 38° Fahrenheit. It's a great

detail, but if you ever find yourself repeating it without your tongue firmly in your cheek, you might as well get your coat and leave immediately. And although he likes Dom Pérignon and Veuve Clicquot, Bond's real label of choice is Taittinger.

In truth, there really isn't much that Bond *won't* drink (apart from tea). During the course of *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (the book), he manages to down an impressive 46 drinks, including wine, Champagne (Taittinger, naturally), whisky, Bourbon, vodka, brandy, schnapps, gin, and four full *steins* of German beer. Miraculously, none of this appears to impair his ability to drive or operate machinery.

## **ALL SHOOK UP**

Bond's most famous idiosyncrasy, of course, is his preference as to how a vodka martini should be served. But why? Bond orders his martini this way in chapter nine of *Diamonds Are Forever*, but gives no reason for it. You can have fun with the following reasons suggested by others:

1. Shaking the drink dilutes it and enables Bond to keep a clear head.
2. The shaken version contains stronger antioxidant properties that remove harmful substances from the blood and body.
3. The explanation Ian Fleming gave in real life: shaking the drink makes it colder.

Bond's recipe for the martini, known as the 'Vesper', is given in *Casino Royale* (the book, not the film). In this highly potent formula, you mix gin with vodka, and a splash of Lillet Blanc\*, an aromatic apéritif with a dark undertone of orange, made in the French town of Podensac. It could be a nifty gambit to purchase a bottle and offer the cocktail to guests while quoting Bond's own words: 'Three measures of Gordon's, one of vodka, half a measure of Kina Lillet\*, shake it very well until it's ice-cold, then add a large, thin slice of lemon peel.'

\* Pronounced *lee-lay*. *Kina* was its original name. According to Kingsley Amis, Fleming made an error with this martini because the quinine content (now reduced) in this fortified wine would have made the mixture far too bitter to enjoy.