



Tribeca Film in Partnership with American Express presents

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A Cowboy Films/Passion Pictures production

A Film by Stevan Riley



'They came in peace, to start a war'

Producers

Charles Steel
John Battsek

Executive Producers

Ben Goldsmith
Ben Elliot

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SYNOPSIS

FIRE IN BABYLON celebrates the emancipation of a people through the sport of cricket and tells the captivating story of the glorious domination of the West Indian cricket team, who, with a combination of phenomenal skill and fearless spirit, became the one of the greatest teams in sports history.

Set in the turbulent era of apartheid in South Africa, race-riots in England, and civil unrest in the Caribbean, told in the words of legendary and revered players of the time, including Sir Viv Richards, Michael Holding, and Sir Clive Lloyd, **FIRE IN BABYLON** illustrates how this exceptional team fundamentally changed the sport forever. With their mastery of 'fast-bowling' with pitches that sometimes reached a deadly 90 miles per hour, they hijacked the genteel game of the privileged elite and played it on their own terms.

With impressive archival footage and a robust soundtrack that includes the likes of Bob Marley and the Wailers, Gregory Issacs, Faithless and Horace Andy, **FIRE IN BABYLON** celebrates the emancipation of a people through sport, whilst painting a fascinating picture of this extraordinary era of sporting dominance and its roots in politics, pride, anti-colonial fury and music.

Directed by Stevan Riley and produced by award-winning filmmakers Charles Steel and John Battsek, **FIRE IN BABYLON** recently had its US Premiere at the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival and screened at AFI Silverdocs.

DIRECTORS STATEMENT

As a youngster I was always gripped by TV coverage when the reggae-backed, West Indian cricketing juggernaut steamed into town. Their terrifying innovation of the four-man fast bowling attack, gave cricket a sharp shot of adrenalin, flair and cool. Suddenly it was a danger sport; English batsman contorting and twisting to avoid lethal missiles flying close to 100mph. The West Indians hospitalized over 50 batsmen in their heyday, 1975-1995. But do not confuse awesome power with lack of skill or finesse. Their few scattered Caribbean islands - with a combined population of Sydney - produced a string of superstars to match the combined output of England and Australia.

From the ancient Greek Olympiads to the present day, never has a team reigned so supreme for so long. The battle with bat and ball only scratches the significance of this untold epic of sporting history. The West Indian's glorious reign marks the final chapter in a freedom fight stretching back 500 years to the African slave ships. As inheritors of 60s Rastafarianism and Black Power, the example of this talented generation was clear - to release black people worldwide from the modern yoke of mental slavery. Whether in Harare, Trenchtown, Handsworth or Soweto - the system of oppression they confronted had one name. That name was 'Babylon'. The story is told from a West Indian perspective and entirely in their own words. It wears the smile and spontaneity of the West Indian people and has a trademark soundtrack to match. Their message and spirit is I hope something that will inspire, entertain and galvanize people of all backgrounds and ages.



Featured interview participants include:

Sir Vivian Richards

Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards, KGN, OBE, better known by his second name, Vivian or more popularly, simply as Viv, Richards is a former West Indian cricketer and was voted one of the five Cricketers of the Century in 2000 by a 100-member panel of experts. Richards captained the West Indies team from 1984 - 1991 and is the only Test captain never to lose a Test Series.

The man who gave "swagger" new meaning in cricket, Richards was the most destructive batsman of his era and in December 2002, he was chosen by Wisden as the greatest ODI batsman of all time, as well as the third greatest Test batsman of all time, after Sir Don Bradman and Sachin Tendulkar.

Sir Clive Lloyd

6'5" with stooped shoulders, a large moustache and thick glasses, Clive Lloyd was the crucial ingredient in the rise of West Indian cricket. He was a hard-hitting batsmen and one of the most successful captains in history.

He captained the West Indies between 1974 and 1985 and oversaw their rise to become the dominant Test-playing nation, a position that was only relinquished in the latter half of the 1990s. He is one of the most successful Test captains of all time: during his captaincy the side had a run of 27 matches without defeat, which included 11 wins in succession. He was the first West Indian player to earn 100 international caps. Lloyd captained the West Indies in three World Cups.

An almost ponderous, lazy gait belied the speed and power at his command and the astute tactical brain that led the West Indies to the top of world cricket for two decades.

Michael Holding

Nicknamed 'Whispering Death' by umpires due to his quiet approach to the bowling crease, Holding was an outstanding athlete as a teenager and used skills acquired from running the 400 metres on the cricket pitch, with one of the longest and most rhythmic run-ups in world cricket. His bowling for West Indies was smooth and very fast, and he used his height to generate large amounts of bounce and zip off the pitch.

Now in the commentary box, he is gentle but fearless, a rational critic who beguiles with his deep fruity measured Jamaican twang.

Joel Garner

"Big Bird" Joel is another former West Indian Cricketer. A fast bowler, batsmen would say that the overriding feeling when first confronted by the Big Bird was that he would trample on them; seemingly delivered from the clouds, such was the foreshortening effect of his 6ft 8 inches height.

In conjunction with fellow fast bowlers Michael Holding, Andy Roberts and Colin Croft the West Indies reached unprecedented heights in the Test and one-day cricket arenas, not losing a Test series in 15 years. He is one of the tallest bowlers ever to play Test cricket.

Desmond Haynes

Haynes formed a formidable partnership with Gordon Greenidge for the West Indies cricket team in Test cricket during 1980s. Between them they managed 16-century stands, four in excess of 200. The pair made 6,482 runs while batting together in partnerships, the highest total for a batting partnership in Test cricket history.

Happiness pervaded his cricket but it was joy underpinned by a ruthless streak best illustrated by the cynical way in which, on his captaincy debut, he used delaying tactics to deny England a win in Trinidad in 1989-90. You did not become as good as he was by being a softie. His batting possessed a solid muscularity and all round nature to it.

He compiled 7,487 runs in 116 Test matches at an average of 42.29, his highest Test innings coming against England in 1984 with 184 off 395 balls.

Gordon Greenidge

Brooding and massively destructive, the power of Gordon Greenidge's strokeplay on any given day appeared to bear a direct relationship to the degree that he limped when running between the wickets. He began his Test career against India at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bangalore in 1974 and continued playing internationally until 1991.

He was a superb technician, who learned solid defensive techniques on the pudding pitches of his childhood in England and then allied them to an uninhibited Caribbean heritage. Attacking was in his genes. Never in the game has there been a more withering and dismissive square-cut, nor a more willing and able hooker and puller, but he drove mightily too on both sides of the wicket. With Desmond Haynes the pair made 6,482 runs while batting together in partnerships, the highest total for a batting partnership in Test cricket history.

Colin Croft

"Crofty," a West Indian team-mate once said, "would bounce his grandmother if he thought there was a wicket in it." Croft was part of the potent West Indian quartet of fast bowlers from the late 70s and early 80s. With his height, he bowled bouncers and was very aggressive. He was renowned for bowling wide of the crease over the wicket and angling the ball in to right-handers.

In a relatively brief career lasting just five years, he established a reputation as one of the most chilling of fast men, with no compunction whatsoever about inflicting pain. Croft's figures of 8/29 against Pakistan in 1977 are still the best Test innings figures by a fast bowler from the West Indies.

Deryk Murray

A wicketkeeper and right-handed batsman, Murray kept wicket to the potent West Indian fast bowling attacks of the 1970s; his efficient glove work effected 189 Test dismissals and greatly enhanced the potency of the bowling attack.

Murray captained Trinidad and Tobago 1976–1981, and was vice-captain of the sides which won the 1975 World Cup and the 1979 World Cup. He deputised for Clive Lloyd as West Indies captain in one Test match in 1979.

Andy Roberts

Andy formed part of the "quartet" of West Indian fast bowlers from the mid-Seventies to the early Eighties (with Holding, Garner and Croft) that had such a devastating effect on opposition batsmen at both Test and One Day International level. The modern West Indian game based on the heavy artillery of fast bowlers began with him. Here was a bowler whose pace came from timing, with power from a huge pair of shoulders. Wicket or boundary, not a flicker of emotion would be evident save a gunslinger's narrowing of the eyes. Andy Roberts kept his emotions in check. But under the veneer was an intelligent cricketer

with a fertile brain, plotting and planning the downfall of batsmen as if it were a military campaign. His bouncer was regarded as one of the most dangerous. He varied its pace, often setting batsmen up with a slower one and then crushing them when they were late on the quickie.

Roberts was part of the West Indies team that won the first two Prudential World Cups in England in 1975 and 1979.

Bunny Wailer

Born Neville O'Riley Livingston in Jamaica, also known as Bunny Livingston and affectionately as Jah B, is a singer songwriter and percussionist and was an original member of reggae group The Wailers along with Bob Marley and Peter Tosh. He is widely regarded as a musical legend and is considered as one of the longtime standard bearers of reggae music. He has been named by Newsweek as one of the three most important musicians in world music. Bunny Wailer and Bob Marley were raised in the same household as stepbrothers.

Frank I

Sir Frank Mortimer Maglinne Worrell was a West Indies cricketer and Jamaican senator. The West Indies' first appointed black captain was also their most charismatic and influential. Though a fine, stylish batsman, it is as a strong captain and a uniting force that he will be remembered. The affection with which his team was received in Australia during the landmark tour of 1960-61 is enshrined in the trophy named after him, which the two teams play for to date. Frank is the only batsman to have been involved in two 500-run partnerships in first-class cricket.

Colin Cumberbatch

Colin Cumberbatch is a lifelong cricket supporter and a highly respected photographer in the Caribbean. He travelled with the West Indies team to every cricket-playing nation in the 1970's and 80's. As a boy he was very keen to watch the Test against Pakistan at Georgetown but could not afford a ticket. So, he placed himself on a tree, giving him a vantage view of the match. Hanif Mohammed walked in and soon Charlie Griffith sent his stump cartwheeling. In the euphoria that followed the Pakistani's dismissal, Cumberbatch came crashing down the tree. It bled and pained but he quickly tied a piece of cloth around the wound and was back to his position. He was perched precariously but it was cricket that engaged his attention. At the end of the day, he came down the tree and fainted. When he opened his eyes, he was on a hospital bed. His love for cricket became stronger that day.

Prof. Hilary M Beckles

Professor Beckles is a keen cricketer and researcher of cricket history and culture. He is the founder and Director of the CLR James Centre for Cricket Research at Cave Hill Campus; and was a Director of Caribbean Cricket World Cup 2007 Inc. He is overall coordinator of sports for the four campuses at the University of the West Indies (UWI). In 1994 he won the first UWI Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence in the field of research.

"...we are going to win and whatever it takes to win within the rules of the game we are going to do it to win. With cricket you are playing for your country!"

- Michael Holding AKA Whispering Death

Interview

Sir Vivian Richards

West Indies Cricketing Team: 1974 - 1991 (Team Captain: 1984 - 1991)

The West Indies cricketing team of the '70s/'80s will forever be recognised in history as one of the greatest teams in the world, performing on the field at an outstanding level, playing with a symbolic declaration against racism and fighting for equality. Did you ever put down the success on the field to luck?

I can tell you, we worked hard enough to get where we wanted to get at that time. It wasn't a luck thing. This was all about the fact that we were fitter, [had a] sense of professionalism and also there was a sense of all that pride, and putting that combination of all those things together created that team.

Your team's success was during a time of race-riots, civil unrest and Apartheid. Did you feel all that happening when you were on the field and how did you use the game to not just overcome it, however help other people suffering this injustice?

You are conscious [of it], everywhere where you had suffering of people of your colour, South Africa, wherever, I always felt conscious about it. For anyone in the team who wasn't aware of some of this stuff that was going on worldwide and where we, as people were on the wrong end of the stick most times, it was pretty common for me to try as an individual, to try and instil some of this belief – what we are here for and what we can achieve. We have an avenue to accomplish that and that avenue is the god-given talent we were given through the game of cricket.

So that was one way of sending that message that I think we are on an equal par in here, not superior or inferior in any way but on a level par.

As well as your cricketing talent, you are held in great esteem for refusing to play in South Africa during the apartheid, despite them offering you a 'blank cheque.' How important was it for you to take a stand as a West Indian Cricketer and publically reject the regime?

At that time they were rather desperate because they were starved of international cricketers or sportsmen of high standards.

I think [they] felt confident that I would sign but I wanted to find out a few things - one of the things that was on the table was being an 'honorary white'. How can a black man be an honorary white man? No money in this world would help me go to South Africa in that sense. If I was to give them my natural status. I was going to sit anywhere on a train I wanted to sit. I was going to go anywhere that I wanted to go. That is the privilege of human beings so there were a few things on the table that just didn't feel right.

When we look at the South Africa situation, I was offered a lot of money to tour that part of the world [but] because of what was going on in South Africa in terms of the apartheid regime... all that to me whatever you achieve as a cricketer, I would like to think that is one of my greatest innings – rather than scoring that at Lords or the ARG - to have made such a significant contribution, it may be tiny, but having said no to the apartheid regime in South Africa, not going, that to me is worth more than any triple century, double century whatever, the fastest century. And that is outside the border of cricket of where cricket is concerned – cricket gave me the platform for that.

The West Indies is a collection of several islands, however when people talk about it, they often refer to the nations represented in the West Indies Cricket team. As citizens of different countries, did you feel united on the field not only playing the game, but also representing unity and fighting against persecution?

I can tell you one thing is [that] when we are playing and got on that field we put aside all the differences and the issues that the islands had, and to me I felt at the time what our politicians couldn't achieve we could... and did actually, in the end. Bringing that force together, uniting that region together itself. Wherever the West Indies were performing, wherever we were, the closeness of all the islands, all in partnership wanting to know what went on. I think our team played a lot in the so-called integrating factor. Whoever said sport is not a powerful force?

I can tell you that sport is seriously powerful because I have been involved in that to see the transformation of individuals who come speaking to you, individuals who are passionately tell you how much they enjoy what you guys are doing out there because collectively everyone could speak as a unit. The West Indies cricket did that more than anything else in my opinion.

I felt that, I felt a huge responsibility. Because whenever you perform, I could always imagine the noise of the various islands. I could see, just visually see the passion and how people felt about the achievement.

With colonialism, the English also brought over cricket, which essentially the West Indies used to battle them. Did it make you and the team feel proud by beating them at their own game?

Well you shouldn't have been the colonial master that you did, then by coming and giving us an opportunity to [learn]. So we were fortunate to be given an opportunity and help through our colonial past to play the game – and this is the opportunity that you gave us! How I look at it in this light is that having invaded our land you left a game and we became reasonably good at it. That's one benefit! [smiles]

You should look at it that way, that you actually had a foot in it. Rather than be totally ignorant to the fact of what are these guys doing in this game of cricket and been doing this and doing that. You should be satisfied you gave us the opportunity – these are things you expected to do especially when you were colonial masters then and these are the things you should have done and did and should feel proud of.

How do you remember that pivotal tour in Australia in 1976?

The things that amazed me about Australia and I know only from sporting tours, there seems to be this 50% and I have always drawn that equation when it comes to almost anything. 50% of Australians are as wonderful as you could get, down to earth and then there is that other side! That sends that message that WOW, we don't know these people, we don't want to be close to these people but yet still you are in these indigenous people's land, because ever since we lost that series I can remember we went home to the series against India and then we went to England after that in '76 and we never looked back. You know, never looked back then and I felt that was a lesson we needed to learn.

Some folks look at it as a friendly game – yes it is a game but it is a fight and I first encountered [that] when we went to Australia, how much it meant to the opposition and I think we, as Caribbean folks never saw it that way. It was all fun-loving stuff, being from the islands and WOW, have a great time. We did not see [it]. Some of us were amazed when we heard some of the stuff coming from the opposition. So it was a new light. In so many ways you learned to just harden your act up a little bit.

And it just gave you another avenue telling you how serious it is.

At the time, did you feel your role as a representative of the West Indies on an International level? Did you feel a responsibility to the people?

Yes because these folks do need a voice and someone who can show them the path. My father left me with an old saying, "He who knows the way, leads the way, go all the way." So I felt I was in that position. It's a position that is attractive enough to some because it is a sport and you are able to relate to so many folks. I have always felt that ones who are downtrodden, who are down and out, that I have got a job to help and uplift.

It's important that you do share that success because that is where the attentive side of things came into play, the so-called downtrodden, you were able to address that because you were now reasonably privileged to pass help on to those individuals, those who did not take that journey with you but you know who are there in mind and spirit. Those were some of the thoughts. These were some of the positive things – the happiness you bring to folks. It may not be with a dollar or 2 cents but just that inspirational “Wow, I just saw the West Indies team perform the other night man and how proud they make me feel.” They can get up and feel that way.

The game became a sort of war against racism and the West Indies cricket team at the time were on the front line fighting for the people. Did you feel it was a war, therefore imperative to win every game?

You may lose some battles but I am pretty much serious about winning the war and losing battles sometimes helps you to win the war, and I always wanted to win the war. I made my whole thing very simple whether in the racial or cricketing side of things I always wanted to be in the winning battle zone.

If I got seriously injured on the field, the passion I had for the game, so much, I didn't mind if I went there you know. The message that I sent was that I would rather die out there. A lot of people took me seriously when it came to that and I was serious about it. A lot of them looked at it as a sport but it was a step beyond sport, where there was a whole lot of things needed defending, rather than the cricket ball itself. So, I was happy to be in that role.

My bat that was the thing you need. God gave me this talent to express myself and bat in hand was the tool to accomplish that.

My bat could have been my sword at that time and that's the way I operated.

As well as the world of sport, music was also very influential. Did any of the music at the time help to inspire you on the field?

I can remember a Calypsonian here who sung a song – I love that song so much - and it says words like, “If you don't stand up for something, you end up dying for nothing”. Seriously though, so he said “stand up, stand up” and you have to stand up for something and this I believe is about standing up for what you believe in. It is about human dignity and pride and everything I would like to think we as human beings believe in.

There were so many individuals who had songs, I think around the 60s and 70s.

It wasn't much about the loving side of things, I guess there were some love songs that smooching sort of stuff, but there was some conscious side of things, and Bob Marley for sure had that, Bob Marley and the Wailers. You had people like Jimmie Cliff who had that.

Bob Marley and all the other artists you know who were just sounding the protest bell, so when I was playing I always made sure I pack my conscious stuff with me –you know Bob Marley “Get up, stand up, stand up for your right”.

You know all these tunes where, “Jah live children yeah, Selassie I live”. You know all these tunes totally inspiring stuff. Bunny Wailer, you know, Dennis Brown, Toots and the Maytals, I could go on and on.

All these individuals played a part in terms of the stuff that you wanted to listen to get yourself in a frame of mind - you could call it your battlefield music, you know.

Music and sport, and everything else I suppose, music can give you the conscious side of things as well because some of these guys were so brilliant with there lyrics sometimes.

When you look and see some of the stuff that he spoke about like and sang about, it told you that, the songs because of the protest side of things, not protest but singing about the rights of human beings, you know. Bob Marley, when you heard those lyrics, those lyrics to me you could sing some of those lyrics where it gave you a sense that you know – it was like a poem then – you recited that on so many occasions. And you walk onto the field, you leave your hotel, you put your earphones, and that thing is just blaring like, “Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights, we know and we understand, almighty god is a living man, you can fool the people sometimes but you can’t fool all the people all the time” – all that sort of stuff and that to me is like a poem. A poem, that I feel so strong [about] when you get these lyrics and it’s totally embedded in your mind. You feel very very powerful. And hearing them from people like Bob Marley man, you just felt that WOW, it’s not that you know the inspirational factor on that side of things and knowing that there’s someone out there who feels the same way that you do and vice-versa. We were going to try and express [it.] I think in that music side of things Bob did a magnificent job and I like to think I did ok with my bat!

Interview

Michael Holding

West Indies Cricketing team: 1975-1987

As with all sports, there can only be one team to win a game. Did you feel the pressure to win for your team and more so for your country?

When the West Indies play against anyone we are out there to win. Win as quickly as we possibly can, be as convincing as we possibly can, while winning. I’m not sure if there are any individuals in the West Indies team where I played with who would have said, “Oh I feel sorry for the opposition” – your job is to win. You are talking about your country versus another country. This is not me versus you and if you beat me it’s me alone that’s being affected. The entire West Indian nation gets affected when the West Indies lose.

The team is certainly unique as the players come from various branches of the West Indies, uncommon with other sports in the Caribbean. Although you each come from your own country, when you came together as a cricket team, did you feel the pressure of representing ALL the people of the West Indies?

Well the West Indies is made up of a host of different islands. Some of them aren’t even English speaking so we don’t even refer to them as the West Indies, so when we talk about the West Indies, although there are other islands geographically entwined, we are usually talking about the cricket playing islands and those islands only come together under the banner of the West Indian cricket team.

If they go to the Olympics they go as separate islands. If they play football, if they play netball, whatever sport they play, they do it as separate islands. We come together only under the cricketing banner, and whether your island has produced a test cricket or not, you feel a part of it. So a test cricketer in the West Indies knows, or in my day in particular certainly did know that they were representing all West Indians – and not just the West Indians who lived in the West Indies.

What did you think were the greatest effects of the team winning, for the people of the West Indies?

I don’t think it had a great effect on the West Indies, I think it had a great effect on West Indians living outside the West Indies. Because West Indians outside of the West Indies would have felt some sort of pressure on themselves to belong. But when the West Indies team won, they identified with the West Indies team and they felt as if they belong. When I was in England during the Olympics when the Jamaica team did so well, walking on the streets knowing I’m from Jamaica people come up to congratulate me. That is what happened to people from the West Indies when we were winning. They felt as if they belong. They felt as if they were part of something successful.

You are talking about West Indians who had migrated years ago, you are talking about West Indians who have never even been to the West Indies. Their parents were West Indians, they migrated to some foreign country, they were born in those countries but they still feel attached to the West Indies, they still support the West Indies and when the West Indies win they feel good. So you are talking about all those people spread all over the world. So you want to make sure that when you go out there, you represent yourself and the entire West Indies nation very well.

How do you remember that first tour in Australia in 1976?

Well the Australians are fanatical about sport, they are a great sporting nation and take sports very seriously. My first tour of '75/6, the stadiums were full every day... and of course 99.9% of them were cheering for Australia. That first tour really woke me up and opened my eyes about what hard test cricket is all about. That first tour of Australia had a lot of different emotions flowing through the West Indian team.

The umpiring wasn't the best to put it mildly so that got our backs as well. We were playing against a very good team, a very highly motivated Australian team, some great fast bowlers, and great batsmen under conditions that most of us weren't familiar with. Big grounds, huge crowds, very partisan – so it was like war yes.

Unfortunately the West Indies were unsuccessful at that time...

We got beaten badly yes, and look at the 5-1 thrashing and say that we didn't compete. But that is not quite true. After 3 tests the score was 2-1, we were about to win the 4th Test to level the series 2-2... then the umpires got a little bit involved and from there it all went downhill.

You go with this preconceived idea or naivety that cricket was a gentleman's game, when you're out you're just out and that's the way it was. Going to Australia and finding that is not quite the game it was and then to be involved in such a hard fought test series.

As you mentioned, the crowds during that first tour were supremely patriotic, how did you handle the derogatory comments in the stands?

My job is to try and get people out and to try and do my best for the West Indies. I don't worry what people in the stands are doing.

I tell you what, when you are in Australia and all that is taking place... you cannot afford to be concentrating on it. You have to be concentrating on your job. So it is not as effective or it doesn't have as much of an impact as when you are fighting and hustling and doing whatever you have to do. In between balls, yes you here the murmuring whatever they are saying when you are walking to fine leg and third man or whatever – it is in your face. But your job is so important you have to concentrate on what you are doing. When you are out there working you have to try and forget it.

Following that first encounter with the Australians, were you ever left disheartened or did it prompt a surge of ambition to play better?

The Australian tour was a rough tour. As a matter of fact at the end of that tour I said to myself that "if that is test cricket I don't want any part of it," not because of the way the Australians played the game... but because I was naïve in thinking that cricket at the highest level was this gentlemanly thing that when people were out they were out – it was a fair game. Fair in the sense that the rules were obeyed and the umpires did what was necessary; they did the right thing. And that is not the way it was. And being 22 years old and naïve I thought I don't need that – I wasn't looking to be a pro cricketer and if that's what test cricket was about I didn't need it. And I had second thoughts about continuing my career.

But most of the youngsters on that tour had never come across anything like that and it wasn't easy to deal with. We did well up to a point then everything fell apart. I think a lot of us grew up on that tour – we became better cricketers and we understood what was required at that level and the results of the tours for the next 20 years after that proved that.

Of course, that initial visit to play Australia proved pivotal as you say, the results of your subsequent tours were all significantly successful and by your last tour of Australia in the '80s, the Crowds had completely changed attitude.

The crowds flocked in to watch the West Indies because I think they appreciated the type of cricket that we played – attacking cricket, entertaining cricket and at the same time we went out there and won. And I think people appreciated that.

By the time I went on my last tour of Australia in the '80s there were a lot of supporters who supported the West Indies – not just hoping we would do well and compete – but wanted the West Indies to beat Australia, [because] they appreciated the way we played cricket. We felt great about that wherever we went people appreciated us coming to their country and even when we beat them, [because] in the 12 year career that I had the West Indies never lost a test series except in '75/6 series, and we kept on beating people.

They turned up [because] they appreciated us as a good cricketing playing nation. Highly talented and they appreciated the way we played the game.

For the fact the British had enforced their Colonialism upon the islands of the West Indies in the previous years, did this place extra worth and determination to defeat England?

In general the West Indies just wanted to make sure that they beat England because of the whole colonial master theory of years gone by. The people who taught the game and brought the game to the Caribbean and of course natives of the Caribbean, the afro-Caribbean people weren't really allowed to play too much cricket. It was more the people from England who played cricket here. Eventually of course afro-Caribbeans began to play a lot more and we wanted to show everyone that you brought the game here to us and eventually now we have become so good that we will beat you and we will beat you every time.

That feeling that you are talking about, that feeling of worth, that is why the West Indians wanted to beat the English so much, because it was the English who colonised the Caribbean. No-one else did.

It was the English who colonised those islands that play cricket so that is why everyone thought it was so important to beat England [because] they colonised the islands so we are going to show you now that we are better than you.

1976 was bang in the middle of a period of racial upheaval in England - a time when people from many other countries began to settle in Britain. When you finally arrived to play against England, in contrast to Australia, did you feel or receive any support from the crowds?

On that '76 tour we got very good support through most of England, even the county matches, we had West Indians turning up and supporting us, but at the Oval, because it's in London and is so close to Brixton, a highly-populated West Indian area, people turned up in their droves. And one section of the ground was all West Indian with their music and drums and having a ball. So you felt almost at home, not quite but you knew that you had a very good support, big support, on one side of the ground, and it was great there. But we knew in England and it was brought home to me very early, from the first test we played at the Oval that we were going to get good support throughout that England tour.

We cannot fail to mention that during these years, the team were noted for your four-man fast bowling attack, backed up by some of the best batsmen in the world. Consequently, because of your quiet approach to the bowling crease, you fast become known for your nick-name, 'Whispering Death.'

How furious were these attacks?

For people who don't grasp what it is like to bat against a really fast bowler, I would suggest they stand by the side of the road and get a car to drive past at 90mph and they will understand what speed is all about, and that ball is only travelling 22 yards. Or even less. And if it's coming at you at 90mph... it is not a long time from when it is released to when it gets to you. So your reaction in time is completely different.

As a fast bowler, you know that you can do damage, but you can't afford to let that affect how you go about your job. You still have to go and do what you think is necessary to get people out. It is up to the batsman to have enough skill, to hit the ball and defend himself to see he doesn't get hurt. You are there using whatever you have got... and you try to get them out to the best of your ability. You don't want to hurt someone, inevitably someone will get hurt. Inevitably a batsman will have a bad decision, error of judgement and he will get hurt. And you will regret that but at the same time you cannot afford to let that affect the way you do your job. You have got to do what is necessary to get the batsman out.

The name 'Whispering Death' I don't think everyone thinks it is a flattering name. The very fact death is associated with it means some shy away. I'm not too worried about it. Dickie Bird is the one who gave me that name and I'm very happy someone of the stature of Dickie Bird thought to give me that nickname – he said when I was running he couldn't hear me coming and he had to keep looking behind him to see if I was actually running in. And I suppose Death came from the pace at which I bowled [because] it could create death.

Do you think playing Cricket for the West Indies still has the same significance as it did when you played?

I'm not sure the Caribbean cricketers of today are thinking the same way Caribbean cricketers of 30-40 years ago thought. As a matter of fact I'm absolutely sure that they don't. Caribbean cricketers of today just look upon themselves as professional cricketers. They are there trying to win games for the team and the Caribbean, yes but it doesn't have the social meaning that it had of years ago. They go out there and they play cricket.

Years ago it wasn't just playing cricket, it was representing a region, representing something more significant than just cricket. I don't think that is something that is the same today.

Just the fact that the people you are representing, even those outside the region feel as if they belong and felt as if they are someone when the West Indies team win, because they can identify with the West Indies team, and you felt that. You wanted to do it for them.

Times change. West Indians still want to win but I don't think it makes as deep an impact today. It's history.

We just had the elections in the USA. An African-American is now president in the USA. A lot of African-Americans in the States now believe that they can achieve just like anyone else. 50 years time it ain't going to be as significant. It's the same thing with cricket here in the Caribbean. Focus has changed, you cannot prevent that.

Do you think the domination of the West Indies team in the '70s and '80s will ever be replicated today?

Well who knows if things like that will be repeated? The game has changed so much. When I played for the West Indies, results that you got on the cricket field depended 80-90% on talent. Today, talent alone is not going to take you as far as it did in the '70s or '80s. The opposition is analysed and studied so much today with computer graphics, VT replays, whatever is available. It is difficult for any team to dominate as we did in the 70s and 80s as it is a lot more technical now. It is not how good you are or how talented you are. We still have, in my opinion, a lot of talent here in the Caribbean but they are not performing anywhere near other teams of similar talent [because] of the preparation and the technical aspects that are in the game that we have not developed fully... we have stood still to a large degree. In the 70s and 80s, talent alone took you a long, long, long way. Today it doesn't.

BIOGRAPHIES

DIRECTOR/WRITER – STEVAN RILEY

Stevan's most recent film *Blue Blood* (2007) dramatically portrayed the historic boxing rivalry between Oxford and Cambridge Universities. It premiered at the NY's Tribeca Film Festival and was released in UK cinemas by Warner to widespread critical acclaim. *Blue Blood* earned Stevan a nomination for Best Film at the Evening Standard Awards as well as Best British Newcomer at the London Critic's Circle. ("One of the best sports movies in recent memory" -*Variety*). Another of his films, *Rave Against the Machine*, uncovered the story of musical youth in war-torn Sarajevo. It was awarded at nine international festivals.

PRODUCER – CHARLES STEEL

Charles is a BAFTA winning film producer and managing director of Cowboy Films. Produced films include *Amy Foster* (aka Swept From the Sea); Nick Love's debut film *Goodbye Charlie Bright* (2002), and Kevin MacDonald's *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) which won numerous awards including an Oscar for Best Actor and a BAFTA for Best British Film. In 2008 Charles produced *Poppy Shakespeare*, for which Anna Maxwell Martin won the BAFTA for Best Actress. Charles co-produced *The Soul Keeper*, *New Year's Day* and *The Lost Lover*, and is currently producing a thriller written by Ronan Bennett for Channel 4, entitled *Top Boy*.

PRODUCER – JOHN BATTSEK

John Battsek conceived and produced Passion Pictures' first feature, *One Day in September*, which went on to win an Academy Award for Best Feature Documentary and an Emmy in 2000. John has since accrued a slate of over twenty acclaimed documentary films including *Once in a Lifetime*, *Black Sun*, *In the Shadow of the Moon*, *My Kid Could Paint That* and *Sergio*. Sundance 2010 saw the premiere of two new films: *Restrepo*, which opened the festival and went on to win the Grand Jury Prize, along with *The Tillman Story* which was acquired by The Weinstein Company. Both films were released theatrically in the U.S. this summer. Passion's most recently completed film, *Stones in Exile* premiered at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival in Director's Fortnight.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER – BEN GOLDSMITH

With nine years' clean technology investment experience, from originating, analyzing and executing venture investments to ongoing value addition to investee companies, Ben Goldsmith is recognized as a leading clean technology investor and a pioneer in the sector. In 2002, Ben co-founded WHEB with Rob Wylie and Kim Heyworth with the intention of building Europe's leading specialist green investment business. Ben is also actively involved in supporting the environmental movement as a donor, through the JMG Foundation which funds campaigning and advocacy work around a small number of key environmental issues. In 2003, Ben founded the Environmental Funders' Network which now brings together more than 80 grant-making organizations with a combined annual budget of more than \$80m.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER – BEN ELLIOT

Ben Elliot co-founded Quintessentially in 2000, and prior to its launch, co-founded several other companies including K-Bar Plc, a prestigious group of bars and nightclubs along with stylish clubs Rock and Kabaret. Ben graduated with a Bsc in Politics and Economics from the University of Bristol. He works tirelessly with Quintessentially to raise funds for charities around the world including UNICEF, the aids charity AmfAR, and The Soil Association. Most recently Ben launched the Quintessentially Foundation and has been a pioneering force behind the hugely successful Quintessentially Soho at The House of St Barnabas. His prestigious global network, creative flair and commitment to excellence have positioned him as a true connoisseur of world trends, at the forefront of the luxury market.

HARGITAY & HARGITAY PICTURES IN MOTION

"Stevie G D Hargitay heads "Hargitay&Hargitay Pictures in Motion", an international production company which focuses on sports documentaries and feature films with a sports content. Formerly trading as "ECN Motion Pictures", the company played a role as Executive Producers of the football based trilogy "GOAL", (BVI and Disney), Michael Apted's acclaimed documentary "The Power of the Game" (Pathe Films), as Producers of "The Grand Finale" (SONY), the official film of the 2006 FIFA World Cup (M.Apted/narrated by Pierce Brosnan) and most recently as EPs and investors of the socio-critical cricket documentary "Fire in Babylon" (Cowboy Films/Passion Pictures/Stevan Riley). With their in-depth knowledge of the Caribbean region, and in particular Jamaica, where they have long-standing relationships with the Reggae industry, opinion-leaders and sports personalities, H&H, in addition to their EP and financing role, have assisted with the Caribbean distribution and launch of "Fire in Babylon", a documentary that focuses on 'West Indies cricket at its best'."

CREDITS

Director: Stevan Riley
Written by: Stevan Riley
Producers: Charles Steel/John Battsek
Executive producers: Ben Goldsmith/Ben Elliott
E&G Productions
In association with
Hargitay & Hargitay Pictures in Motion
Presents
A Cowboy Films/Passion Pictures production
Co-executive producers: Brendan Drake/Balthazar Fabricius/Sir David Frost/Zac Goldsmith
Peter Hargitay/Stevie Hargitay/James Hooper/George Ingledew/Dhires Ladva/Nick Luck/Iain Russell
James Tollemache/Mark Von Westenholz/Ben Whatley
Co-producers: George Chignell/Jess Ludgrove
Executive producer for Passion Pictures: Andrew Ruhemann
Associate producer for Cowboy Films: Alasdair Flind
Director of Photography: Stuart Bentley
Film Editor: Peter Haddon
Additional photography: Balazs Bolygo/Nick Bennett
Motion Graphics: Allison Moore
Music supervision: Adrian Sherwood & Bobby Marshall
Music consultant: Steve Barrow/Chris Covert
Recce Associate Producer: Mike Wakely
Post production supervisor: Chris Rayner
Online Editor: Adam Grant/Fred Balliod
Colourist: Jonathan Lieb
Dubbing Mixer: Matt Skilton
Assistant producer: David Moore
Assistant editor: Jamie Stones/Daniel Yenken
Location manager, Antigua: Alan Russell
Location manager, Barbados: Sarita Pile
Fixer, Barbados: Carl Best
Antigua/Barbados production services: Caribbean Crews
Jamaican production services: Maxine Walters
Transcription services: Catherine Madden/Alison Coutts
Jamaican Fixer: Colin Smikle
Archive producers: Mary Carson/Nick Sessions/Rick Elgood
Production Assistants: Serena Catapano/Joseph Coulson/Richard Haines/Michaela Helliwell/Greg Hemes
Archive researcher: Toby Knight
Production Executive for Passion Pictures: Nicole Stott
Archive footage: ABC News, Apex Film and Video, BBC Motion Gallery,
BBC Sport, Channel 9/IMG, Darcus Howe, ITN Source, Movietone, Jeremy Marre, Pathe, Menelik
Shabbazz,
Universal Pictures, Bunny Wailer, West Indian Cricket Board

Stills Archive: Backpage Images, Gordon Brooks, Corbis Images, Colin 'Bones' Cumberbatch, Patrick
Eager,
David Frith, Joel Garner, Viv Jenkins,
Ken Kelly, Getty Images, Mirrorpix, Graham Morris, Newspix, PA Photographs, Sydney Herald.
Production Accounting Services: Passion Pictures (Films) Ltd/Malde & Co/Unicorn Administration
Production Legal Services: Reed Smith LLP
Special thanks:
The Hon L Michael HENRY CD MP
The Hon Olivia "Babsy" Grange MP
Mrs Rita Marley - One Love
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Geoffrey Boycott
Allan Lamb
David Frith

John Woodcock
Curtley Ambrose
Richie Richardson
Jeff Dujon
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Mac Fingall
Collis King
Dickie Bird
Hallam Moseley
Imran Khan
Brian Close
Richard Austin
Mike Selvey
Rex Nettleford
Trevor Marshall
Mayfield
Gravy
Greybeard
Orville
Captain Peter Short

FEATURED INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

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Sir Clive Lloyd
Michael Holding
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Desmond Haynes
Prof. Hilary McD Beckles
Andy Roberts
Bunny Wailer
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Colin Cumberbatch