

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Some secrets of 'Wizard of Oz'</b>
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Source	<i>Publisher name not available</i>
Date	1973 Jul 10
Type	article
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	LeRoy, Mervyn (1900-1987), San Francisco, California, United States
Film Subjects	The wizard of Oz, Fleming, Victor, 1939



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# Some Secrets of 'Wiz

7/10/73

It has taken Mervyn Leroy, who produced "The Wizard of Oz" at MGM, 34 years to admit that some persons associated with that film wanted Shirley Temple to play the part of Dorothy. Says Mervyn, whom I lunch next to almost daily at the Polo Lounge, when I'm on the West coast, "I admired Shirley's talents, but I knew she'd be wrong for the role." Happily, this didn't hurt little Shirley's career and it certainly catapulted Judy Garland's.

to cut 'Over the Rainbow' from the movie. But I got my way when one of the brass asked me 'Who's going to believe a girl singing that song in a barnyard?' and I answered, "The same people who'll believe there are Munchkins in Munchkin land." ...

LeRoy is working on his memoirs as told to Dick Kleiner. . . . If it tells it like it really was about Lana Turner and some of the other stars he helped to stardom, it should make fascinating reading.



Mervyn Le Roy

"Another thing," says Mervyn, "I first asked Ed Wynn to play the role of the Wizard, but he turned it down because the part wasn't big enough. We signed Frank Morgan instead. Wynn later told me how much he regretted his decision. Also, George Cukor worked briefly as the director when we were in pre-production, but he didn't enjoy the project, so he quit. I practically had to beg Victor Fleming to direct this film."

Startling is LeRoy's revelation that the song, "Over The Rainbow," almost wound up on the cutting room floor. "After the first preview, the studio's top executives told me