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# 1 MY NAME'S JOHN FORD. I MAKE WESTERNS

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*'Take everything you've heard,' says James Stewart, 'everything you've ever heard . . . and multiply it about a hundred times—and you still won't have a picture of John Ford.'*

'He'll be comin' over that rise any second now,' Danny Borzage said, and he looked up the road again. He was a bearded, youthful old man dressed in the yellow and blue of a trooper in the U.S. Cavalry, 1878, and he was playing 'Greensleeves' on his accordion. It was a little past 8:30 in the morning in Monument Valley, the sun was warm but the wind was chilling. Most of the huge *Cheyenne Autumn* company was preparing for the first scenes of the day, but a couple stood around listening to the accordion. 'I always play for 'im when he—'

'Here he comes, Danny!' A white jeep-station wagon had just appeared over the rise. Borzage walked quickly to the side of the road; as the car came nearer, he began to play 'Bringing in the Sheaves,' and he kept playing it as the car came to a slow stop about thirty feet from him and a hush fell over the company.

John Ford sat in the front seat, peering out of the window through thick glasses, his left eye covered with a black patch. He wore an old broad-brimmed felt hat pulled low over the left side of his face—there was a tiny orange feather

in the leather hatband—and he chewed on a short, unlit cigar.

The prop man came over and handed him a cup of coffee, which he sipped, staring silently through the windshield. Borzage played 'She Wore A Yellow Ribbon'. William Clothier (cinematographer) and Frank Beetson (wardrobe) got out of the car and stood next to the director's window; they were joined by Wingate Smith (first assistant director) and Ford's son, Patrick, who was in charge of the cavalry on the picture. A muted conference went on at the window. Borzage was playing 'The Wild Colonial Boy' as the group broke up, one by one, to carry out instructions; Beetson opened the car door.

Ford got out and stood looking around for a moment, one hand holding the cup, the other on the backside of his hip. He was thin, almost frail, but as he started toward the camera his movement was jaunty, both arms swinging, his body moving slightly from side to side—and suddenly you knew where John Wayne got his walk.

People moved out of the way as he approached. He had a stern Yankee face, almost

*Still: Montalban in Cheyenne Autumn.*

