

The Eli Wallach Centenary

By **Alexander Baron** - Dec 7, 2015



Eli Wallach in the "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" from 1966

5
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If you thought Eli Who? the gent in question, who was born December 7, 1915, was a character actor, one of those faces you see all the time on both the small screen and the silver screen but can't put a name to. A New Yorker born and bred, Wallach died only last year, in his hometown, at the age of 98.

His final film was released only this year, and until 2010 he was still in demand, in fact his output was staggering. According to the *Internet Movie Database*, he made no fewer than 103 appearances as himself, including four productions that have yet to be released. Before his film and television career, Wallach was a stage actor. His TV credits include the 1960s *Batman* series, and although he turned in many great performances in later life, the film for which he will probably be most remembered is a low budget Italian effort *Il Buono, Il Brutto, Il Cattivo*. If your Italian isn't that good, you will almost certainly recognise the English title: *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly*, the final film in a trilogy that starred Clint Eastwood, and the one that had that **classic theme**.

Spaghetti Westerns, as they were called, may not win many plaudits from serious filmgoers, but they were an enormous box office draw at the time.



Eli Herschel Wallach December 7, 1915 – June 24, 2014

In spite of his hundreds of film and TV credits, there is no dedicated Eli Wallach website. Although the big honours eluded him, in 2011 he received a lifetime award at the Academy Awards. Here he is **in 1976** with his wife explaining why he always played the bad guy. Well, almost always.

5
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