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411 Heuer Monaco Watch Formerly Owned by Steve McQueen

Tag Heuer, "Monaco," Automatic, Chronograph. Made in the late 1960s.

Fine and unusual, square convex, self-winding, water-resistant, stainless steel wristwatch with round button chronograph, registers and date. Accompanied by a letter of authenticity by Bill Maher, Corporate Vice President of Solar Productions and Financial Advisor to Steve McQueen from 1969 onwards.

C. Two-body, polished and brushed, dedicated case back, lapidated straight lugs. **D.** Black with applied steel baton indexes and luminous dots, outer 1/5th seconds track with 5-minute/seconds red markers, subsidiary silver dials for the 12-hour and 30-minute registers, aperture for the date at 6. Luminous steel and red baton hands. **M.** Cal. 11^{'''}, rhodium-plated, 17 jewels, straight-line lever escapement, monometallic balance, shock-absorber, self-compensating flat balance spring.

Dial, case and movement signed.

Dim. 40 x 45 mm. Thickness 14 mm.

C 3 **D** 3-01 **M** 3* **AA**

\$: 10,000 - 20,000 • €: 7,500 - 15,000 • SFr: 11,000 - 23,000

This "Monaco" wristwatch was previously owned by Steve McQueen and worn by him during the filming of the 1971 movie "Le Mans."

The photograph of Steve McQueen wearing the Heuer Monaco during filming the movie "Le Mans" is one of the most iconic images of both actor and watch. He is not seen wearing the watch again in any candid photographs taken post filming, yet those that worked with him and recall his penchant for leaving the set with souvenir "goodies" will testify he would never have returned the watch to the property master at the close of filming. This has always led to the question: what happened to his Monaco?

Although McQueen chose to wear the Monaco model during the filming of the movie (he was offered a number of watches from among the Heuer production of the era) he can clearly be seen wearing his favorite watch, the Rolex Submariner, in a number of photographs taken while relaxing on set (his Rolex is offered as lot 416 in the sale) and we can presume he returned to wearing his Rolex as soon as filming ended.

Prior to leaving for France to film his "passion project" movie "24 hours of Le Mans" Steve McQueen contacted W.J. (Bill) Maher, a management consultant in New York, for advice on his business operations and personal financial management. After a few months' auditing, and only days before Steve was to leave for France, Bill told Steve he (Steve) was financially insolvent and he (Bill) preferred to return to his well-paid job rather than try to unravel his finances in LA. At this time Steve was a heavyweight in the film industry and probably not used to taking no for an answer. Realizing he was in trouble and desperate to begin filming in France, he convinced Bill to stay on and help him resolve his immediate financial problems while he was away.

Bill visited Steve on the Le Mans set to inform him and his wife Neile that the immediate cash problems were solved. He agreed to stay on to restructure the management of Steve's career and Steve's production company, Solar Productions, Inc. During filming at Le Mans, Bill returned once more along with Freddie Fields, whom he had retained on Steve's behalf to manage his career. Freddie was the leading movie star talent agent of the time and head of CMA, the major talent agency. Bill restructured Solar Productions, Inc., probably saving it from bankruptcy. He also reorganized the management of Steve's personal finances, hiring a new team of professional service providers. He became a friend of Steve and Neile and proved an honest and trustworthy advisor, something Steve admired and no doubt a rarity in Hollywood.



(Terry McQueen, Steve McQueen's daughter, Neile McQueen with Bill Maher and Steve McQueen in the background)



(Neile McQueen and Bill Maher)
Photo courtesy of Neile McQueen Toffel



(detail of the case back engraving)

When he returned to Los Angeles, Steve McQueen felt he was beginning a new chapter in his life. Visiting Bill at the Solar offices, he ceremoniously removed his Heuer Monaco watch and presented it to Bill in appreciation of his friendship and loyal services during what had been perhaps the most troubled time of his adult life. Thanking him, Bill remarked that the timing was perfect, since he had just lost a gold Girard Perregaux. Steve promised to have Bill's name engraved on the reverse of the watch, and a week later a small box arrived containing the newly engraved Heuer Monaco. Bill was Steve's primary advisor for eleven years and after Steve's untimely death he was trustee of the estate.

Bill kept the watch until he gifted it to his seven year-old nephew. His nephew's mother had the boy's name and birth date engraved on the reverse. The nephew took great care of the watch. It has been serviced at Heuer US three times since 1974.

The Tag Heuer archives reveal that four Monacos (three blue watches and a gray one) were given by Heuer for the filming of "Le Mans". This is the first time one has appeared at auction. Its indisputable provenance - it was not a back-up watch kept on the set, but was worn by Steve McQueen personally - makes it highly important and desirable.

This is a unique opportunity to own a true icon of horological, automotive, and cinematic history.