

Condor Studios

[\[The Day After Ragnarok\]](#)

It all started when Kirk Douglas ran into Ronald Reagan in late 1945. Douglas was on the beach twice; first from getting medically invalidated out of the Navy, then secondly when the abrupt end of the Pacific War after the Serpentfall made any hope of rejoining the military futile. On the other hand, Reagan was now head of the Screen Actors Guild, thanks to the Macarthur regime (and later, the Warren administration): Douglas was interested in acting, and hoped to get in on the civilian-military heroic propaganda industry.

Reagan had a slightly different idea in mind. SAG was already proving to be a major political force in post-Serpentfall California, and Reagan was beginning to worry -- with good reason -- about possible Stalinist infiltration of the industry. Back in 1945 there was still some tattered pretence that the remains of the USA and the USSR were still allies, which meant that openly fighting Communist subversion would be just as openly resisted. What Reagan needed was a group that could operate more covertly. One run by men he could trust to be good, loyal Americans.

Kirk Douglas today runs Condor Studios, which is indeed involved in making heroic propaganda movies all over the Pacific Coast, and anywhere else that the locals will tolerate an American film crew. And the company *does* make decent movies. They're renowned for being able to put together a solid movie on short notice and at high speed, with very little in the way of overruns and no drama tolerated whatsoever. Condor makes a lot of Westerns, a lot of heroic fantasy (Reagan's Conan movie was a Condor production), and innumerable propaganda films.

However, the company also acts as a cover to a variety of unsanctioned covert domestic and foreign operations aimed at America's enemies in general, and the Soviets in particular. Douglas has an absolute flair for recruiting people with equal skill in acting and mayhem; he's also remarkably glib when it comes to deflecting suspicion. So far, his teams get the job done.

Below are the major personalities at Condor Studios. Most of the crew are veterans who suspect that something may be going on, but they don't ask questions so that they don't get told any lies. Plus, the pay is regular. A few more are aware of Condor's hidden activities, and act as shooters and raiders when necessary.

- Kirk 'Ell-Tee' Douglas (32, USN): Communications and leadership. Douglas often stars in various projects as well as running all aspects of Condor Studios. Two years of foiling Russian plots have made him extremely anti-Communist.
- John 'Charley' Carter (26, USAAF): Second in command, in both senses. Sometimes does a bit of directing. Starred in the the most successful Condor Studios production to date (*A Princess of Mars*, 1947).
- Betty Bacall (24): One of the two leading ladies of Condor Studios. Bacall was brought in by Douglas, who trusts her implicitly. She is aware of and involved in Condor Studios' true agenda, but has to keep it secret from her husband Humphrey Bogart, who is perhaps just a bit too close to questionable elements in Hollywood.
- Jack Klugman (26, USA): Klugman often gets the role of 'strong-willed survivor,' which makes sense: he was one of the few people to make it out of Pennsylvania during the Evacuation of '46, walking all the way. He has not forgotten any of those hard-learned skills, either.
- Charles Buchinsky (27, USAAF): Despite his Lithuanian origin, Buchinsky typically plays the heroic

Mexican character in Condor's films. He's also one of the heavy gunners (land and air), when one of Condor's schemes needs one.

- Hedy Lamarr (34): the other lead actress of Condor. Douglas recruited her by the simple method of promising Lamarr plenty of opportunities to play with gadgets for a good cause. Her on-again, off-again romance with Howard Hughes doesn't hurt either.
- Jason Robards (26, USN): Often acts opposite Bacall, which is sometimes awkwardly tense for both. One of Condor's 'faces' for their more covert operations: his ability to talk and drink his way of out trouble is almost legendary.
- Paul Newman (23, USN): He's usually the guy who dies halfway through so that you don't like the villains that extra bit. Newman also is the Driver. Or, these days, increasingly the Pilot. Condor Studios doesn't care that he's colorblind.
- Norman Feld (24, USAAF): does most of the major comic roles. Also considered to be the most reliable in a firefight, where he's the other one shooting the heavy machine gun.
- Jimmy "Kid" Bumgarner (20): rapidly advancing bit player, rifleman, and gunner. Very reliable, but young. Merchant marine experience, but he hates boats.

- Julia McWilliams (36): chemist and researcher. She's a spy for the OSS, of course. Everybody knows it, everybody understands it, nobody complains because Julia has a real knack at practical ophi-tech. Besides, the OSS usually agrees with Condor Studios' agenda anyway.

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