

John Travolta

Early Years

John Travolta was born on February 18, 1954 in Englewood, New Jersey. His father, Salvatore Travolta, was a semi-professional football player and partner in a tire company. His mother, Helen Cecilia, was an actress, singer and high school teacher. John was the youngest of six children, who all but one pursued a career in show business.

At the age of 12, John began appearing in local musicals and dinner-theater performances. He took a tap dancing class from Gene Kelly's brother, Fred. When he turned 16, he dropped out of high school and moved to Manhattan to take up acting full-time.

Early Career

In 1975, Travolta was cast as Vinnie Barbarino in "Welcome Back, Kotter," an ABC sitcom. The role led him to overnight superstardom. Also in the mid-70's he recorded a hit single entitled "Let Her In" that peaked at number ten on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. During the next few years, he appeared in his popular screen roles of Tony Manero in Saturday Night Fever (1977) and Danny Zuko in Grease (1978). These two films raised John to international stardom, earning him an Academy Award nomination for Best actor. At age 24, he became one of the youngest performers ever nominated for the Oscar for Best Actor.

Bad Choices

A string of bad decisions sidelined John's acting career during the late 70's and into the 80's. "Staying Alive" was just one of a few disasters that were chewed up by critics. His agent then led him to turn down promising acting roles, lead roles that actually became box office hits. These included "American Gigolo," "Flashdance," "An Officer and a Gentleman," "Splash" and "Fatal Attraction." Discouraged, John began pursuing a new hobby: flying. He eventually earned his license to command aircraft.

Back in Action

John's acting career was revived in 1994 when he received an Academy Award nomination for Quentin Tarantino's hit "Pulp Fiction," making one of the greatest comebacks in entertainment history. The hit movie introduced John to a new generation of movie fans. Suddenly he was again a major star, commanding a huge salary.

John went on to star in several hit movies, including "Get Shorty," "Ladder 49" and "Wild Hogs." He also played Edna Turnblad in the remake of Hairspray, his first musical since "Grease."

Dancing Ability:

John Travolta will always be remembered for his ability to dance. His stylish moves on the dance floor of "Saturday Night Fever" wowed audiences and took disco dancing to a whole new level. John's moves in "Grease" influenced a whole generation to put on their dancing shoes.

Personal Life

John married actress Kelly Preston in 1991. They have two children together, son Jett and daughter Ella Bleu. He was previously involved with actress Diana Hyland, who died of breast cancer in 1977.

John enjoys flying; he is a certified pilot and owns five aircraft. He has been a practitioner of Scientology since 1975.