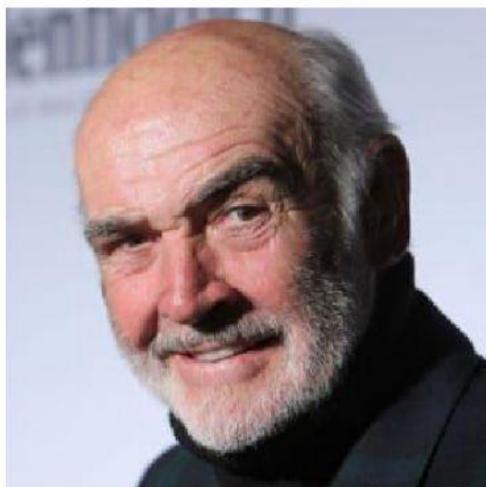


Sean Connery Biography



Academy Award-winning Scottish actor Sean Connery was best known for playing 007 in the early 'James Bond' spy movies. He has also starred in films like 'Robin and Marian,' 'The Name of the Rose,' 'The Untouchables,' 'The Hunt for Red October' and 'Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.'

Who Was Sean Connery?

In the 1950s, Sean Connery was cast in numerous U.K. films and television programs. In the early '60s, he landed the lead role of James Bond in *Dr. No*, continuing the role in followups like *Goldfinger* and *Thunderball* while gaining massive popularity. He worked regularly in film thereafter, and in 1988 won an Academy Award in the category of supporting actor for *The Untouchables*. Connery later starred in the adventure films *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* and *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, before retiring from acting.

Early Life

Connery was born Thomas Sean Connery on August 25, 1930, in Fountainbridge, Scotland. The son of Joe, a truck driver, and Euphamia, a laundress, Connery had a modest upbringing in a neighborhood known as "the street of a thousand smells" for the stench of the local rubber mill and several breweries that filled the air. His home was a two-room flat where the infant slept in a bureau drawer because his parents couldn't afford a crib. "We were very poor," Connery has commented, "but I never knew how poor because that's how everyone was there." Joe brought home only a few shillings a week, and those were often spent on whiskey or gambling.

Known during his youth as "Tommy," Connery grew up on the streets along with the Fountainbridge youth, playing tag or soccer. The local gangs dubbed him "Big Tam" because of his size and his ability to pummel most of his playmates. He attended Tollcross elementary school and amazed his teachers with a lightning-quick mathematical aptitude. From the day he could read, he devoured every comic book he could get his hands on and dreamed up his own imaginative tales of Martians and madmen. Even then, he had a fascination with film: "I would play hooky and go to Blue Halls, the local movie house, to watch the pictures," he recalled.

When Connery was 8 years old, his parents had a second child: Neil. Young Tom delighted in the role of big brother and, as they grew up, the Connery boys were inseparable. They fished in nearby Union Canal (using their mother's stockings for line) and skipped school to fit in more amusing extracurricular activities—including running with "the wrong element."

Young Drifter and Bodybuilder

At the age of 13, Connery quit school to work full time at the local dairy. Three years later, he joined the Royal Navy. He received two tattoos on his arm, reading: "MUM AND DAD" and "SCOTLAND FOREVER." Unfortunately, the artwork lasted longer than his naval career. Though he signed up for a seven-year stint, he was released from service after three years due to stomach ulcers.

Back home, Connery took assorted jobs shoveling coal, laying bricks, polishing coffins and posing as a model at the Edinburgh Art School. For months, he skimped and saved shillings to become a member of the Dunedin Weightlifting Club. "It was not so much to be fit but to look good for the girls," he once admitted. The local ladies were impressed—but so were his fellow gym mates, who nominated him for the Mr. Universe contest.

In 1953, Connery traveled the nine hours to London, where the competitions were held. He boldly introduced himself to the contest judges as "Mr. Scotland," pointedly showcasing his 6' 2" frame. He was chosen third in the tall men's division and given a medal—but that wasn't all. A local casting director in attendance liked the hammy Scottish kid and asked him to join the chorus of a new production, the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *South Pacific*, playing on Drury Lane in London's theater district. "I didn't have a voice, couldn't dance," Connery admitted. "But I could look good standing there."

Start of Acting Career

One rehearsal was all it took: "I decided then and there to make acting my career." He chose the stage name Sean Connery because Sean, besides being his middle name, reminded him of his favorite movie hero, Shane, as played by Alan Ladd. "It seemed to go more with my image than Tom or Tommy," he recalled. "Sean Connery" was thus listed as a chorus member in the *South Pacific* program.

Over the next few years, Connery was cast in numerous films and television programs, including a much-acclaimed BBC staging of *Requiem for a Heavyweight*. But his lack of education worried him, and he thus began reading the classics, including Proust, Tolstoy and Joyce. The book-learning, however, did not soften his street instincts. While filming *Another Time, Another Place* (1958) with Lana Turner, Connery was involved in a brawl on the set with Turner's boyfriend Johnny Stompanato. (The Hollywood tabloids reported that Connery and Turner were having an affair.)

Big Break as James Bond

Connery liked the reputation of being a rugged ladies' man. But that changed in August 1957 when, while filming a TV show for Britain's ATV Playhouse, he met a beautiful blond Australian actress named Diane Cilento. She was married at the time, but Connery's attraction to her was undeniable.

At first Cilento felt nothing for her cast mate except friendship: "He seemed like a man with a tremendous chip on his shoulder," she remarked. In 1959, just as Connery's career was taking off, Cilento contracted tuberculosis, and the actor realized how devastated he would be if he lost her. He turned down a big break in the Charlton Heston film *El Cid* to be close to her while she recovered. The decision didn't hurt his career; in fact, Twentieth-Century Fox studios came calling with a contract, and Connery made several films in Hollywood.

When the contract was up, he had another stroke of luck. Producers Harry Saltzman and Albert "Cubby" Broccoli cast him as the lead in a spy movie based on one of a series of Ian Fleming novels. Bond—James Bond—was born. The 1962 film *Dr. No* showcased the spy contending with the arch-villain title character and his quest to control American launched rockets. Two sequels were released immediately: *From Russia With Love* (1963) and the international blockbuster *Goldfinger* (1964). *Thunderball* (1965) fared even better at the box office, and *You Only Live Twice* (1967) followed.

Sly, sexy and confident with questionable scruples, Connery as Bond was the embodiment of the British secret agent to many (even if he did have to wear a toupee to cover his prematurely balding head). "We all knew this guy had something," Saltzman would recall. "We signed him without a screen test. We all agreed, he was 007." Connery had a notable non-Bond role in Alfred Hitchcock's psychological thriller *Marnie* (1964), along with other projects like *The Hill* (1965), *A Fine Madness* (1966), *Shalako* (1968) and *The Molly Maguires* (1970). He declared his last role as Bond in 1971's *Diamonds Are Forever*, with the part taken over by Roger Moore in 1973's *Live and Let Die*.



Personal Conflict and Controversy

His acting career now cemented, Connery decided it was time to settle his personal affairs as well. Diane was now divorced, and the pair wed secretly at the Rock of Gibraltar in November 1962 while Connery was filming *From Russia With Love*. They honeymooned briefly in Spain before the actor returned to the States for a flood of publicity. Connery thrived on the attention and adoration: "Now, I can kill any s.o.b. in the world and get away with it," he bragged to *The Saturday Evening Post*. "I eat and drink nothing but the very best, and I also get the loveliest ladies in the world."

But Connery had a tendency to go too far in interviews and openly advocated abusive behavior. For example, he told a London newspaper his opinion on hitting women: "An open-handed slap is justified. So is putting your hand over her mouth." He later told *Playboy*, "I don't think there's anything particularly wrong about hitting a woman ... if all other alternatives fail and there's plenty of warning."

The comments came back to haunt him when, in 1973, 10 years after his son Jason was born, he and Cilento divorced amidst a flurry of tabloid rumors that he was physically abusive. Connery denied them all, and married French-Moroccan artist Micheline Roquebrune in 1975—again at Gibraltar. The pair met in a golf tournament in Morocco, a sport that was a shared passion. He won the men's award; she took the women's.

Bored of Being 007

By this time, Connery had made a total of six Bond pictures, but the man who once reveled in notoriety now shrank from the spotlight. He retreated from Hollywood, moving his wife and her three children from her first marriage into mansions in England and Marbella, Spain. It would be more than a decade before he reluctantly agreed to reprise his Bond role one last time, in 1983's *Never Say Never Again*. For this, he was paid a salary of several million dollars—a far cry from the reported \$16,000 he earned for *Dr. No*.

Despite the money, Connery was bitter and criticized Broccoli and Saltzman for stifling his talent. "This Bond image is a problem in a way, and a bit of a bore," he said of his last performance. He donated a large portion of his earnings to the Scottish International Education Trust to help students from poor backgrounds like his own. But his critics wondered if he was motivated by generosity or politics: Connery fervently supports Scotland's independence from the United Kingdom, including backing the failed 2014 referendum to have the country leave Great Britain, and gave a great deal of his own money to the secessionist Scottish National Party. For more than two decades, he and Micheline lived in Marbella.

Prestigious Projects and Oscar Win

After Bond, Connery continued to work regularly—*Murder on the Orient Express* (1974), *The Man Who Would Be King* (1975), *Robin and Marian* (1976), with Audrey Hepburn, *The Great Train Robbery* (1979), *Time Bandits* (1981), *Highlander* (1986) and *The Name of the Rose* (1986), winning a British Film Academy award for the latter project, which was based on the book by Umberto Eco. Connery finally won an Academy Award (best supporting actor), for his role as a Chicago cop on the trail of Al Capone in 1987's *The Untouchables*, co-starring Kevin Costner, Andy Garcia and Robert De Niro.



Knight (1995), *Dragonheart* (1996) and *The Avengers* (1998), with Ralph Fiennes and Uma Thurman.

Connery's career continued

forward with no signs of slowing down. He played the father of the title character in Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), opposite Harrison Ford, and, in 1990, played defecting Russian submarine captain Marko Ramius in *The Hunt for Red October*, a commercially successful outing that earned more than \$200 million globally. Other films included *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), with Costner, *Highlander II: The Quickening* (1991), *Medicine Man* (1992), with Lorraine Bracco, *The Rock* (1996), his prison action-adventure with Nicolas Cage, *First*



'Entrapment' and Knighthood

Connery then played a cat burglar in the love story/thriller *Entrapment* (1999), which he also produced. The project co-starred young actress Catherine Zeta-Jones, and controversy was generated by the 40-year age difference between the stars. In 2000, Connery had a starring role in the drama *Finding Forrester*, followed by 2003's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, a comic book adaptation in which he depicted fictional explorer Allan Quatermain.

Connery was called "the rogue with the brogue," and in 1989, at almost 60 years of age, he was named *People* magazine's "Sexiest Man Alive." But while his professional work was applauded, his personal choices were often under fire. "I'm not shy about voicing what I believe to be true," he said in 1998, after being denied a British knighthood due to his active support for the Scottish National Party. (He would be knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2000, for which he wore traditional Highland attire.) In 1999, Connery received a Kennedy Center Honor for Lifetime Achievement, and in 2006 received the American Film Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award.

In 2008 Connery released the book *Being a Scot*, a work which was billed as an exploration of the actor's native country and its ideologies more so than a traditional autobiography. Around this time, Connery revealed that he had fielded an offer to appear in that year's *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, though he decided it wasn't worth following through with the minor role.

Connery publicly retired from acting, though he has lent his voice to the animated film *Sir Billi* (2012). In 2015, Connery's wife Micheline was charged with tax fraud in relation to the sale of the couple's large Marbella estate in 1998. The couple subsequently relocated to the Bahamas and has become involved in environmental protection efforts there.

Death

Connery passed away in his sleep while in the Bahamas on October 31, 2020. According to the death certificate, he died from pneumonia, old age and atrial fibrillation.

Tick the right option

1. His first James Bond film was ...

Goldfinger *Dr No*

2. His real name was ...

Thomas Sean Sean Thomas

3. As a baby, he slept in a ...

drawer crib

4. His father spent his earnings on ...

women gambling

5. He was ...

robust medium-built

6. At school he was good at ...

Maths Science

7. He loved ... books.

adventure comic

8. He ... school at 13.

finished quit

9. He had a ... brother.

twin younger

10. They went ... together.

fishing swimming

11. His first job was ...

at a dairy as a bricklayer

12. His good looks gained him a role in the ... *South Pacific*.

comedy musical

13. He read the classics, including ...

Plato Joyce

14. His first wife was an ... actress.

Austrian Australian

15. He met his second wife in a ... tournament.

tennis golf

16. His last James Bond film was ...

Diamonds Are Forever *Never Say Never Again*

17. He won a British Film Academy Award for ...

Highlander *The Name of the Rose*

18. His role in *The Untouchables* won him an Academy Award for ...

best leading actor best supporting actor

19. He played the father of Indiana Jones in ...

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*

20. He ... in 2000.

was denied a British knighthood was knighted

21. His book *Being a Scot* was ...

an autobiography about Scotland

22. He spent his last years in ...

The Bahamas Marbella

Answer these questions

1. Where was Sean Connery born?

2. What did his parents do for a living?

3. What was his relationship with his brother like?

4. Why was he released from the Royal Navy?

5. Why did he choose the stage name Sean Connery?

6. How did he feel about hitting women?

7. What did he die of? How old was he?