



Arnold Schwarzenegger

Birth Name: Arnold Alois Schwarzenegger

Birthday: Wednesday, July 30, 1947

Sign: [Leo](#) [1]

Birth Place: Thal, Styria, Austria

Height: 6'2"

With an almost unpronounceable surname and a thick Austrian accent, who would have ever believed that a brash, quick talking bodybuilder from a small European village would become one of Hollywood's biggest stars, marry into the prestigious Kennedy family, amass a fortune via shrewd investments and one day be the Governor of California!?

The amazing story of uber-star Arnold Schwarzenegger is a true "rags to riches" story of the penniless immigrant making it in the land of opportunity, the United States of America. Arnold was born on July 30th, 1947 in the town of Thal, Austria and, from a young age, he took a keen interest in physical fitness and bodybuilding, going on to compete in several minor contests in Europe. However, it was when he emigrated to the United States in 1968 at the tender age of 21 that his star began to rise. Up until the early 1970's, bodybuilding had been viewed as a rather oddball sport, or even a mis-understood "freak show" by the general public, however two entrepreneurial Canadian brothers Ben Weider and Joe Weider set about broadening the appeal of "pumping iron" and getting the sport respect, and what better poster boy could they have to lead the charge, then the incredible "Austrian Oak", Arnold Schwarzenegger. Over roughly the next decade, beginning in 1970, Schwarzenegger dominated the sport of competitive bodybuilding winning five Mr. Universe titles and seven Mr. Olympia titles and, with it, he made himself a major sports icon, he generated a new international audience for bodybuilding, gym memberships worldwide swelled by the tens of



thousands and the Weider sports business empire flourished beyond belief and reached out to all corners of the globe.

However, Schwarzenegger's horizons were bigger than just the landscape of bodybuilding and he debuted on screen as "Arnold Strong" in the low budget Hercules in New York (1969), then director Bob Rafelson cast Arnold in Stay Hungry (1976) alongside Jeff Bridges and Sally Field, for which Arnold won a Golden Globe Award for "Best Acting Debut in a Motion Picture". The mesmerizing Pumping Iron (1977) covering the 1975 Mr Olympia contest in South Africa has since gone on to become one of the key sports documentaries of the 20th century, plus Arnold landed other acting roles in the comedy The Villain (1979) opposite Kirk Douglas, and he portrayed Mickey Hargitay in the well-received TV movie The Jayne Mansfield Story (1980) (TV). But, what Arnold really needed was a super hero / warrior style role in a lavish production that utilized his chiseled physique, and gave him room to show off his growing acting talents and quirky humor.

Conan the Barbarian (1982) was just that role. Inspired by the Robert E. Howard short stories of the "Hyborean Age" and directed by gung ho director John Milius, and with a largely unknown cast, save Max von Sydow and James Earl Jones, "Conan" was a smash hit worldwide and an inferior, although still enjoyable sequel titled Conan the Destroyer (1984) quickly followed. If "Conan" was the kick start to Arnold's movie career, then his next role was to put the pedal to the floor and accelerate his star status into overdrive. Director James Cameron had until that time only previously directed one earlier feature film titled Piranha Part Two: The Spawning (1981), - which stank of rotten fish from start to finish - however Cameron had penned a fast paced, science fiction themed film script that called for an actor to play an unstoppable, ruthless predator - The Terminator (1984). Made on a relatively modest budget, the high voltage action / science fiction thriller The Terminator (1984) was incredibly successful worldwide, and began one of the most profitable film franchises in history. The dead pan phrase "I'll be back" quickly became part of popular culture across the globe.

Schwarzenegger was in vogue with action movie fans, and the next few years were to see Arnold reap box office gold in roles portraying tough, no-nonsense individuals who used their fists, guns and witty one-liners to get the job done. The testosterone laden Commando (1985), Raw Deal (1986), Predator (1987), The Running Man (1987) and Red Heat (1988) were all box office hits and Arnold could seemingly do no wrong when it came to picking winning scripts. The tongue-in-cheek comedy Twins (1988) with co-star Danny DeVito was a smash and won Arnold new fans who saw a more comedic side to the muscle-bound actor once described by Australian author / TV host Clive James as "a condom stuffed with walnuts".

The spectacular Total Recall (1990) and "feel good" Kindergarten Cop (1990) were both solid box office performers for Arnold, plus he was about to return to familiar territory with director James Cameron in Terminator 2: Judgment Day (1991). The second time around for the futuristic robot, the production budget had grown from the initial film's \$6.5 million to an alleged \$100 million for the sequel, and it clearly showed as the stunning sequel bristled with amazing special effects, bone-crunching chases & stunt sequences, plus state of the art computer-generated imagery. Terminator 2: Judgment Day (1991) was arguably the zenith of Arnold's film career to date and he was voted "International Star of the Decade" by the National Association of Theatre Owners. Remarkably, his next film Last Action Hero (1993) brought Arnold back to Earth with a hard thud as the self-satirizing, but confusing plot line of a young boy entering into a mythical Hollywood action film confused movie fans even more and they stayed away in droves making the film an initial financial disaster. Arnold turned back to good friend, director James Cameron and the chemistry was definitely still there as the "James Bond" style spy thriller True Lies (1994) co-starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Tom Arnold was the surprise hit of 1994!

Following the broad audience appeal of True Lies (1994), Schwarzenegger decided to lean towards more family-themed entertainment with Junior (1994) and Jingle All the Way (1996), but he still found time to satisfy his hard-core fan base with Eraser (1996), as the chilling "Mr. Freeze" in Batman & Robin (1997) and battling dark forces in the supernatural action of End of Days (1999). The science fiction / conspiracy tale The 6th Day (2000) played to only mediocre fan interest, and Collateral Damage (2002) had its theatrical release held over for nearly a year after the tragic events of Sept 11th 2001, but it still only received a lukewarm reception. It was time again to resurrect Arnold's most successful franchise and, in 2003, Schwarzenegger pulled on the biker leathers for the third time for Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines (2003). Unfortunately, directorial



duties passed from James Cameron to Jonathan Mostow and the deletion of the character of "Sarah Connor" aka Linda Hamilton and a change in the actor playing "John Connor" - Nick Stahl took over from Edward Furlong - making the third entry in the "Terminator" series the weakest to date.

Schwarzenegger contributed cameo roles to *The Rundown* (2003), *Around the World in 80 Days* (2004) and *The Kid & I* (2005) and took political office in 2003 as the Governor of California, effectively suspending his film career for the foreseeable future. ([IMDb](#) [2])

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