

This Day in History... January 18, 1904

Happy Birthday Cary Grant

Actor Cary Grant was born Archibald Alexander Leach on January 18, 1904, in Bristol, United Kingdom.

Although his speech and demeanor suggested something quite different, Grant came from a blue-collar working-class family. Life was not always easy for the star. When he was nine years old, he came home from school one day to find his mother gone. Told she was visiting a seaside resort, the truth was that she was in a mental institution, and Cary would not see her again until his late 20s.

Coming to the United States in 1920 to play in the Broadway show *Good Times*, Grant stayed on when the show closed. He joined Paramount Studios in 1932, but when his contract was up, he became an independent. This allowed him to pick his own scripts and he chose wisely. What followed was a long succession of tremendously successful screwball comedies like *Bringing Up Baby*, with Katharine Hepburn and *My Favorite Wife* with Irene Dunne.



Grant was the eighth honoree in the Legends of Hollywood Series.



Hitchcock said Grant was "the only actor I ever loved in my whole life."

In the 1940s and '50s, Grant also developed a close relationship with Alfred Hitchcock. He appeared in several highly acclaimed Hitchcock films such as *Suspicion*, *Notorious*, *To Catch a Thief*, and *North by Northwest*.

Starring in over 70 films, Grant was as good in comedy as he was in thriller dramas. Nominated for Academy Awards in 1941 and 1944, Grant was overlooked both times. The Academy finally gave him a well-deserved honorary Oscar in 1970. In 2005, *Premiere Magazine* ranked him as the #1 Movie Star of All Time.

Even though Grant had become an American citizen in 1942, England's King George VI gave him the King's Medal for Service in the Cause of Freedom on April 18, 1947. During World War II, Grant had donated his entire earnings from the hit movie, *The Philadelphia Story*, to the British War effort. Then, after the United States entered the war, the star donated his earnings from *Arsenic and Old Lace* to the US War Relief Fund.

Grant was married five times and had one child, Jennifer, with his fourth wife, Dyan Cannon. After her birth, Grant retired from acting to become a full-time dad, though he did pursue a number of business interests. Grant died on November 29, 1986, in Davenport, Iowa, when he suffered a stroke while on tour with his one-man show *An Evening with Cary Grant*.

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