

Cruise, Tom (1962-) Encyclopedia Article

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Cruise, Tom (1962—)

Tom Cruise is perhaps the most charismatic actor of the 1980s and 1990s. Although initially dismissed as little more than a pretty face with a million dollar smile when he made his screen debut as a member of Hollywood's "Brat Pack" generation of youthful leading men in the early 1980s, he has demonstrated considerable staying power and fan appeal. At one point between 1987 and 1989, four of his films combined to post more than one billion dollars in box office receipts. Yet, at the same time, he has proven to be a very serious actor earning Academy Award nominations for "Best Actor" in 1989 in *Born on the Fourth of July*, in which he portrayed disabled Vietnam Vet Ron Kovic, and again in 1996 for a high energy performance in *Jerry Maguire*. The latter film, in fact, served as an extremely insightful commentary on many of the cocky, swaggering characters he had portrayed in such exuberant films as *Top Gun* (1986), *The Color of Money* (1986), *Cocktail* (1988), and *Days of Thunder* (1990).

Cruise made the jump to producer in 1996 with the blockbuster *Mission Impossible*, a big screen remake of the popular 1960s television series. In 1999, he took on his most challenging leading role in Stanley Kubrick's sexual thriller *Eyes Wide Shut*, teaming with his wife, Nicole Kidman.

Further Reading:

Broeske, Pat H. "Cruising in the Media Stratosphere." *Los Angeles Times Calendar*. May 25, 1986, 19-20.

Corliss, Richard. "Tom Terrific." *Time*. December 25, 1989, 74-9.

Greene, Ray. "Man with a Mission." *Boxoffice*. April, 1996, 12-16.

Tom Cruise in a scene from the film *Mission: Impossible*.