

Film News: ‘Lawrence of Arabia’ Star Peter O’Toole Dies at 81

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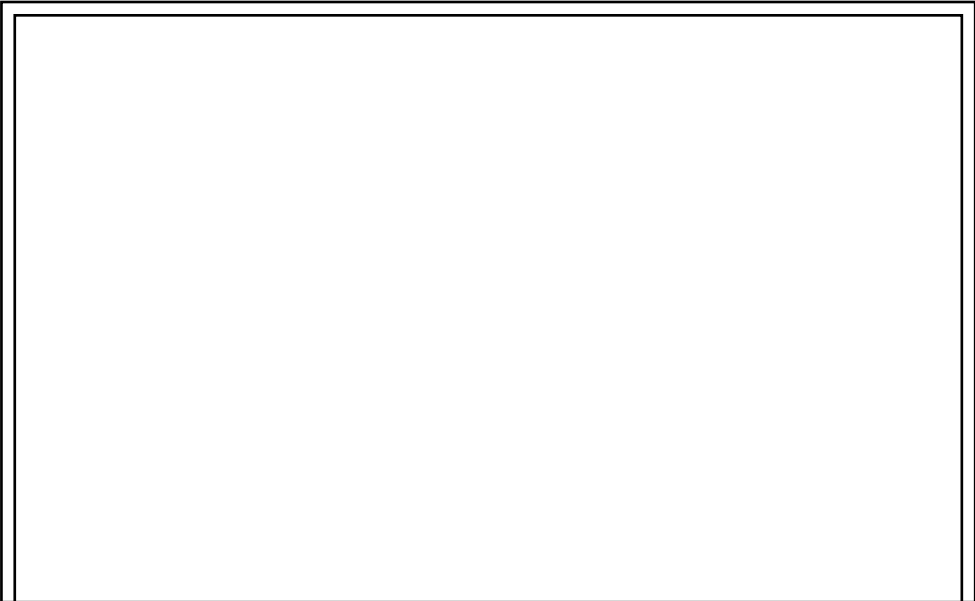
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“I’m not an actor, I’m a movie star.” Peter O’Toole intoned that line as Alan Swann in 1982 farce, “My Favorite Year.” This was the truth as irony, because the Irish born O’Toole was both a movie star and one of the notable actors of the British stage. His memorable role as T.E. Lawrence in the Oscar winning Best Picture of 1962, “Lawrence of Arabia.” solidified his legend. Mr. O’Toole died Saturday in London after a long illness, according to his daughter Kate.



Peter O'Toole in 'Venus' (2006)
Photo credit: Miramax Films

While his birthplace in 1932 was in dispute – O’Toole himself was not sure of the location – his place as a lion of British theater and film is undisputed. After a stint in the Royal Navy, he joined the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in 1952, within the same class as Albert Finney and Alan Bates. He began his career as a Shakespearian actor with two stage companies, before debuting on television in 1954. Although he played 3 minor film roles in 1960, his first major role as “Lawrence of Arabia” got him a nomination for Best Actor at the Oscars, his first of a record eight Best Actor nominations without a win. He was given an honorary Oscar in 2003, and turned around and was nominated for a performance one last time in “Venus” (2006).





Peter O'Toole in 'Lawrence of Arabia'
Photo credit: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

He was adept in all styles of acting, from romantic comedy (“How to Steal a Million”), to Shakespearian seriousness (“Becket), to farce (“The Ruling Class”). He even did two musicals, an adaptation of “Goodbye Mr. Chips” (1969) and the maligned “Man of La Mancha” (1972). He had three late career Oscar Best Actor nominations for “The Stunt Man” (1980), “My Favorite Year” (1982) and the before mentioned “Venus” (2006).

In his personal life, O'Toole was a infamous imbibor, in the realm of the two Richards, Harris and Burton. He never remarried after divorcing Sian Phillips in 1972, had two children by her, and one from his companion Karen Brown. He is survived by all three children.

The famously witty O'Toole once said, “Many years ago I sent an old, beloved jacket to a cleaner, the Sycamore Cleaners. It was a leather jacket covered in Guinness and blood and marmalade, one of those jobs... and it came back with a little note pinned to it, and on the note it said, ‘It distresses us to return work which is not perfect.’ So that will do for me. That can go on my tombstone.”

Source material for this article came from the New York Times, Wikipedia and CNN.com. Peter O'Toole, 1932-2013.



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By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [16]
Senior Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [15]

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