

## Film Feature: HollywoodChicago.com Remembers Bill Paxton

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LOS ANGELES – A shock occurred on Oscar Sunday when it was announced that popular actor Bill Paxton had died after complications during surgery. He had appeared in classic films like “The Terminator,” “Weird Science” “Aliens” “One False Move,” “True Lies,” “Apollo 13” and “Titanic,” and the HBO series “Big Love.” He was 61.

He was born in Fort Worth, Texas, and as an eight year old appeared in pictures as John F. Kennedy came out of Hotel Texas there on the morning of November 22th, 1963. His film debut was in Jonathan Demme’s “Crazy Mama,” (1975), followed by small roles in “Stripes” (1981), “Streets of Fire” and “The Terminator” (both 1984). After a cult appearance as Chet in “Weird Science” (1985), he had prominent roles as Private Hudson in “Aliens” (1986), Dale “Hurricane” Dixon in “One False Move” (1992), clueless Simon in “True Lies” (1994), Astronaut Fred Haise in “Apollo 13” (1995), Brock Lovett in the modern part of “Titanic” (1997) and a recent memorable turn in “Edge of Tomorrow” (2014) as Master Sgt. Farrell. Fans of HBO’s “Big Love” (2006-11) was also always remember him as Bill Henrickson, the Mormon husband of multiple wives.



Bill Paxton as Brock Lovett in ‘Titanic’

*Photo credit: Paramount Home Video*

He once said of his approach to acting, “Anyone who’s worked very hard on a craft or an art to get a certain precision in terms of execution and performance wants to get past all that stuff that holds you up - like your ego, or all the doubts.”

Instead of a just the usual obituary, the film critic contributors of HollywoodChicago.com – Spike Walters, Patrick McDonald, and Jon Lennon Espino – have prepared short appreciations based on their favorite Bill Paxton performances. And as the capper, the BEST B-PAX MOMENT in each of their assessments.



#### **ALIENS (1986) by Spike Walters**



Game Over: Bill Paxton is Memorable as Private Hudson in ‘Aliens’

*Photo credit: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment*

One of Bill Paxton’s first major supporting roles where he made an impact was in “Aliens.” He gets major points for turning the role into so much more than just chum to be devoured by special effects. Paxton’s memorable turn as the gung-ho private is even more notable, since it proved to be an outlier for the steady “working man’s Kevin Costner” he would become. He holds the unique honor of being the only actor to be killed by a Terminator, an Alien, and a Predator all in the space of about 6 years.

**BEST B-PAX MOMENT:** My favorite Bill Paxton moment is the one everyone remembers. It gets the point across in language any 12-year-old video game nerd can understand. “Game Over man, Game Over.”



#### **ONE FALSE MOVE (1992) by Patrick McDonald**



No False Moves: Bill Paxton as Dale 'Hurricane' Dixon in 'One False Move'

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

Bill Paxton was the energy of this searing independent film of the early 1990s – hot on the heels of “sex, lies and videotape,” “Clerks” and the first days of the Sundance Film Festival. The original screenplay was co-written by Billy Bob Thornton (who also has a role) and the film itself had a reverse release...it's word of mouth from videotape viewings was so dynamic, that it went into theaters afterward. It's the story of Dale “Hurricane” Dixon (Paxton), a small-town sheriff who is long past his glory days. When a Los Angeles drug deal goes bad, one of the dealer team tries to escape back to Dixon's small town, and she has a connection to the sheriff. This is a terrific Bill Paxton performance, full of empathy and grace under fire, and it has an unforgettably quiet ending. Download it, get it on DVD or play it in the chip in your brain, but see this amazing indie effort, with a young Bill and Billy Bob leading the way.

**BEST B-PAX MOMENT:** Two cynical L.A. detectives pursue the dealers back to Dixon's territory, and make fun of the sheriff and his ways behind his back, not knowing that he has heard their insults. The way Paxton works that moment is definitive of his skill as a character actor.



#### **BIG LOVE (2006-11) by Jon Espino**

Bill Paxton was always a man of many talents, and he excelled at playing larger-than-life characters. Whether he was a soldier, a storm chaser or even an astronaut, Paxton committed to every character no matter how over the top the portrayal. The one role that fully showcased Bill Paxton's true range came in the form of religious drama “Big Love.” As Bill Henrickson, a polygamist Mormon, we get to see the true range of Paxton and get a greater appreciation for the intensity of his character work.

**BEST B-PAX MOMENT:** One of the most powerful scenes – and the most tragic – happens in the series finale when Paxton's character's journey comes full circle, and his message of love echoes out beyond his character and has stuck with me to this day.

*Source material for this article was from Wikipedia and IMDB. Bill Paxton, 1955-2017.*



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