

Huston was married to wife number four Enrica Soma until she died in a car accident in 1969 aged 39. They had two children Tony and Angelica



Filmmaking DYNASTY

For four generations, from Walter, through John, Angelica, Danny and now Jack, the Huston family has dominated Hollywood. Steve O'Brien takes a look at the film world's answer to the Kennedys



There was a strong physical resemblance between father Walter and his son John



Walter and John both received Oscars in 1949 for their work on *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*



Angelica Huston's breakthrough role was in *Prizzi's Honor* alongside Jack Nicholson

DID YOU KNOW?

Walter played Dr Edward G Armstrong in Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* in 1945. 80 years later, Angelica starred as Lady Tressilian in the BBC's adaptation of Christie's *Towards Zero*.

If there's any family that is to filmmaking what the Kennedys are to politics, it's the Hustons. Over the past century, this dynasty, made up of a succession of actors, directors and screenwriters, has amassed four Academy Awards across three generations, from Walter and son John's trio of wins for 1948's *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (Walter picked up Best Supporting Actor, while John walked away with Best Screenplay and Best Director) to John's daughter Angelica scooping Best Supporting Actress for his 1985 movie *Prizzi's Honor*. Then there's Angelica's brother Danny, a lauded actor and director in his own right, plus their siblings Allegra (writer and producer) and Tony (actor and screenwriter), as well as Tony's 43-year-old son Jack, an actor (*Boardwalk Empire*, 2010-14, *Fargo*, 2020, *American Hustle*, 2013) who directed his first feature, *Day of the Fight*, in 2023.

HUSTON LIFT-OFF

But it was Walter, Jack's great-grandfather, who was the first of the Hustons to enter the film business. Born in 1883 he moved from construction work and vaudeville into Broadway and then Hollywood talkies, garnering plaudits for his role as the 16th President of the United States in *Abraham Lincoln* (1930), and the morally complex title character of 1936's *Dodsworth*. But his most acclaimed role would come via his only son.

John was born in 1906 and, although acting wasn't something he was interested in (at least not yet), he did harbour dreams of working behind the camera. Starting in the script department of Samuel Goldwyn Productions and later Universal, he was employed as a dialogue writer for such films as *A House Divided* (1931) and *Law and Order* (1932), both of which happened to headline his father. After moving to Warner Bros, John moved into directing, creating an instant classic with his first film, *The Maltese Falcon* (1941). Walter makes an uncredited cameo in that movie, but their first major collaboration would be on 1948's *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, not only a critical and commercial success, but an awards guzzler too.

Its various Oscars made Walter and John the first father and son to win Academy Awards at the same ceremony. 'Many, many years ago,' Walter said on stage, 'I raised a son and I said to him, "Son, if you ever become a director or a writer, please try to find a good part for your old man." He did all right!'

PROLIFIC TALENT

It's hard to name a more prolific and successful filmmaker in the Golden Age of Hollywood than John Huston. Those hits came thick and fast during the Forties and Fifties – *Across the Pacific* (1942), *Key Largo* (1948), *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950), *The African Queen* (1951), *Moby Dick* (1956). But though writing and directing was

John's primary passion, he had also inherited his father's talent in front of the camera. He'd awarded himself small roles in several of his own films, but by the Sixties was taking on bigger and meatier parts, including James Bond's boss M in 1967's *Casino Royale* and as an ancient, wise orangutan in 1973's *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*. But it was director Roman Polanski who gave Huston Jr his most memorable big-screen character in 1974's *Chinatown*. In Noah Cross, Huston created one of the great movie monsters, a wealthy, ruthless industrialist who, it's discovered, raped and impregnated his own daughter.

GROWING REPUTATION

Despite John's growing reputation as an actor, his directing career was still going strong. He won praise for the Michael Caine/Sean Connery drama *The Man Who Would Be King* (1975) and for his sole foray into musicals with 1982's *Annie*. During this time, his daughter Angelica was carving a name for herself as an actress. She'd made her debut in John's 1969 film *A Walk with Love and Death*, a role she was unhappy with, telling the *Los Angeles Times*, 'He miscast me... and I think he realised that. I was ready to act, but I wasn't ready to act for him.'

By 1985, however, Angelica Huston was ready. Her performance as a mobster's moll in her father's black comedy ➤

Prizzi's Honor (1985) earned her an Academy Award, 27 years on from her grandfather's win. That Oscar propelled the actress onto Hollywood's A-list, and her Eighties and Nineties output includes some of the era's most enduring movies, including Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989), The Witches (1990) and The Addams Family (1991). She also had a starring role in 1988's Mr North, a film that marked the directorial debut of her brother.

NEW GENERATION

Born in 1962, Danny Huston's directing career has been more sporadic than his father's, with just a handful of movies over a 30-year period, but it's as an actor that he's best known, from roles in such films as X-Men Origins: Wolverine (2009) and Wonder Woman (2017) through to last year's Naked Gun reboot. While Angelica and Danny remain the best known of John's children, there are two more siblings who have connections to the film world... Tony, born in 1950, was Oscar nominated for screenwriting The Dead (1987) for



John Huston played one of cinema's greatest monsters, Noah Cross, in the Roman Polanski directed Chinatown

his father, while adoptive sister Allegra (born 1964) wrote the award-winning short Good Luck, Mr Gorski (2011).

But it's Tony's son Jack who is, so far, the only fourth-generation Huston to follow his family to Tinseltown. Born in the UK to Tony and Lady Margot Cholmondeley he broke big with his role as disfigured gangster Richard Harrow in HBO's Boardwalk Empire, later starring as Bobby

Kennedy in the Martin Scorsese epic The Irishman (2019).

'I feel completely honoured to be able to say, "My God, that was my grandfather, that was my great-grandfather, that was my aunt, that was my uncle, that was my father",' Jack told news agency UPI in 2024, while promoting his first film as director, the boxing drama Day of the Fight. 'Thank God that I had some great footsteps to follow.'

Dynasties like the Hustons are rare in the entertainment industry. But what's even less common is four consecutive generations tasting success like Walter, John, Angelica, Danny and Jack. Nepotism will only get you so far – there are countless examples of actors and directors with famous parents who never got anywhere. That John, his children and grandchild did, is testament to their talent and drive. Whether Jack will be the last of the line to make their mark in Hollywood remains to be seen. He has two children himself, so who knows what lies in their futures. One thing is certain... cinema history would look very different had it not been for the Hustons.

Danny and Jack Huston have an acting and directing legacy that has had a lasting impact in Hollywood



DID YOU KNOW?

Angelica's partner in the Seventies and Eighties was her father's Chinatown co-star Jack Nicholson. In her 2014 memoir Watch Me, Huston revealed she'd also enjoyed relationships with James Fox and David Bailey.



On a dark desert HIGHWAY...

Beneath the sumptuous harmonies and endless guitar breaks of Hotel California lay a damning verdict on Seventies decadence – and The Eagles didn't spare themselves, reveals Sean Egan



July 2017. The debate about how Britain is going to leave the European Union to fulfil the result of the country's 2016 referendum is still raging. Some Brexiteers suspect that Remainers want to perform a sleight of hand whereby the country is still signed up to EU rules with the illusion of departure. MP Charlie Elphicke sums up their misgivings by saying, 'People will worry that we will end up in a Hotel California situation: you can check out but you can never leave.' Whatever the rights and wrongs of the Brexit

DID YOU KNOW?

The song Life in the Fast Lane was inspired by a hair-raising 90mph car trip Glenn Frey took with a drug dealer, who gleefully told him, 'What do you mean slow down? This is life in the fast lane!'