

Timothy Blake Nelson (born May 11, 1964) is an American actor and playwright. Described as a "modern character actor",^[1] his roles include Delmar O'Donnell in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000), Gideon in *Minority Report* (2002), Dr. Pendanski in *Holes* (2003), Danny Dalton Jr. in *Syriana* (2005), Samuel Sterns in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Richard Schell in *Lincoln* (2012), the title character in *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* (2018), and Henry McCarty in *Old Henry* (2021). He portrayed Wade Tillman / Looking Glass in the HBO limited series *Watchmen* (2019), for which he received a Critics' Choice Television Awards nomination for Best Supporting Actor in a Drama Series in 2020.

Nelson's directorial credits include *Eye of God* (1997), which was nominated for the Sundance Grand Jury Prize and an Independent Spirit Award; *O* (2001), a modern-day adaptation of *Othello*; and the Holocaust drama *The Grey Zone* (2001). *Eye of God* and *The Grey Zone* were both adapted from Nelson's own plays. Nelson has also co-directed music videos for billy woods and Kenny Segal including "Babylon by Bus" and "Soft Landing". He also co-directed the music video for Armand Hammer feat. Pink Siifu's "Trauma Mic".

Nelson recently published his debut novel, *City of Blows* (2023), an epic group portrait of four men grappling for control of a script in a radically changing Hollywood.

Early life

Nelson was born to a Jewish family^{[2][3]} in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the son of Ruth Nelson (*née* Kaiser),^{[4][5]} a noted Tulsa social activist and philanthropist, and Don Nelson, a geologist and wildcatter.^{[6][7]} His maternal uncle is businessman George Kaiser.^[8]

His maternal grandparents Herman Geo. Kaiser and Kate Kaiser, daughter of businessman Max Samuel, were from Germany, and escaped the Nazis shortly before World War II. They moved to Britain in 1938,^{[9]:96seq.} where Nelson's mother was born,^{[9]:87seq.[10]} and immigrated to the United States in 1941.^{[11][12][13]} His father's family were Russian-Jewish emigrants.^[14]

Nelson attended the Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain Resort Arts and Conference Center in Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.^[15]

Tim Blake Nelson



Nelson at the 2016 Fantastic Fest

Born	Timothy Blake Nelson <div>May 11, 1964</div> <div>Tulsa, Oklahoma, U.S.</div>
Education	<u>Brown University</u> (BA) <div><u>Juilliard School</u> (GrDip)</div>
Occupations	Actor · director · writer
Years active	1989–present
Spouse	Lisa Benavides (m. 1994)
Children	3

Nelson is a 1982 graduate of Holland Hall School in Tulsa,^[4] and a graduate of Brown University, where he was a classics major as well as senior orator for his class of 1986. At Brown, he studied under philosopher Martha Nussbaum.^[16] He is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society. He won the Workman/Driskoll award for excellence in classical studies.^[17] He graduated from Juilliard in 1990, a member of Group 19.^[18]

Career



Nelson with Ahna O'Reilly in 2012

Nelson's debut play, *Eye of God*, was produced at Seattle Repertory Theatre in 1992. *The Grey Zone* premiered at MCC Theater in New York in 1996, where his 1998 work *Anadarko* was produced. He was a co-star of the sketch comedy show *The Unnaturals*, which ran on HA! (later CTV, and would turn into Comedy Central) between 1989 and 1991, alongside Paul Zaloom, John Mariano and Siobhan Fallon Hogan.^[19]

Nelson has appeared as an actor in film, TV and theatre. He had a featured role as Delmar in the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* According to directors Joel and Ethan Coen, he was the only one in the cast or crew who had read Homer's *Odyssey*, a story upon which the film is loosely based.^[20] He sang "In the Jailhouse Now" on the film's soundtrack (which received a Grammy Award for Album of the Year in 2002). He has had a number of supporting performances in feature films such as *Holes*, *Minority Report*, *Syriana* and *Lincoln*. He also appeared in Marvel Comics

adaptations *The Incredible Hulk* and *Fantastic Four*.

Nelson narrated the 2001 audiobook *At the Altar of Speed: The Fast Life and Tragic Death of Dale Earnhardt, Sr.* He appeared on stage extensively off-Broadway in New York at theatres including Manhattan Theater Club, Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan Class Company, Soho Repertory Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, and Central Park's Open Air Theater in the Shakespeare plays *Richard III*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

He has directed film versions of his plays *The Grey Zone* and *Eye of God* (for which he received an Independent Spirit Awards nomination for the Someone to Watch Award), and directed two of his original screenplays: *Kansas* (1998) and *Leaves of Grass* (2009). He directed the film *O*, based on *Othello* and set in a modern-day high school. For *Eye of God*, he received the Tokyo Bronze Prize at the Tokyo International Film Festival (1997) and the American Independent Award at the Seattle International Film Festival (1997); for *O*, the Best Director Award at the Seattle International Film Festival (2001); and for *The Grey Zone*, the National Board of Review's Freedom of Expression Award (2002). He is on the boards of directors of The Actors Center in New York City and the Soho Rep Theatre.^[21]

Nelson guest-starred on the *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* season 10 episode "Working Stiffs". In the episode "My Brother's Bomber" (aired September 29, 2015) of the PBS investigative series *Frontline*, he talked about the loss of his friend David Dornstein in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.^[22]

In 2018, Nelson played the title character in *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*, a western anthology film by Joel and Ethan Coen,^[23] after receiving the original script 16 years prior, in 2002. The film was released on Netflix on November 16, after a limited theatrical run,^[24] and received positive reviews,^{[25][26]} with many highlighting Nelson's performance and his overall segment. He portrayed Ralph Myers in the drama/legal drama *Just Mercy* (2019). In January 2023, he joined the cast of *Dune: Part Two*,^[27] though his role was ultimately cut out of the film.^[28]

Playwright

Nelson's play *Socrates* opened at The Public Theater in 2019, starring Michael Stuhlbarg.^[29] It was favorably received by numerous publications, including the *New York Times*.^[30]

Personal life

Nelson resides in New York City with his wife, Lisa Benavides, and their three sons.^[4] On May 8, 2009, he was inducted as an honorary member of the University of Tulsa's Beta of Oklahoma chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa national collegiate honor society.^[31]

Filmography

Film

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1992	<i><u>This Is My Life</u></i>	Dennis	
1993	<i>Motel Blue 19</i>	Adult Luther (voice)	Uncredited
1994	<i><u>Amateur</u></i>	Young Detective	
1995	<i><u>Heavyweights</u></i>	Roger Johnson	
1996	<i><u>Joe's Apartment</u></i>	Cockroach (voice)	
1997	<i><u>Eye of God</u></i>	—	Director and writer
	<i><u>Donnie Brasco</u></i>	FBI Technician	
	<i><u>Prix Fixe</u></i>	Busboy	Short film
1998	<i><u>The Thin Red Line</u></i>	Pvt. Lysander Tills	
	<i><u>Kansas</u></i>	—	Short film; director and writer
2000	<i><u>Hamlet</u></i>	Flight captain	
	<i><u>O Brother, Where Art Thou?</u></i>	Delmar O'Donnell	
2001	<i><u>O</u></i>	—	Director
	<i><u>The Grey Zone</u></i>	—	Director, writer, producer and editor
2002	<i><u>The Good Girl</u></i>	Bubba	
	<i><u>Cherish</u></i>	Daly	
	<i><u>Minority Report</u></i>	Gideon	
2003	<i><u>A Foreign Affair</u></i>	Jake Adams	Also executive producer
	<i><u>Holes</u></i>	Dr. Kiowa "Mom" Pendanski	
	<i><u>Wonderland</u></i>	Billy Deverell	
2004	<i><u>Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed</u></i>	Dr. Jonathan Jacobo	
	<i><u>The Last Shot</u></i>	Marshal Paris	
	<i><u>Bereft</u></i>	Dennis	
	<i><u>Meet the Fockers</u></i>	Officer Vern LeFlore	
2005	<i><u>The Amateurs</u></i>	Barney Macklehatton	
	<i><u>My Suicidal Sweetheart</u></i>	Various	
	<i><u>The Big White</u></i>	Gary	
	<i><u>Syriana</u></i>	Danny Dalton	
2006	<i><u>Come Early Morning</u></i>	Uncle Tim	

	<u><i>The Darwin Awards</i></u>	Perp	
	<u><i>Hoot</i></u>	Curly	
	<u><i>Fido</i></u>	Mr. Theopolis	
2007	<u><i>The Astronaut Farmer</i></u>	Kevin Munchak	
2008	<u><i>The Incredible Hulk</i></u>	<u>Samuel Sterns</u>	
	<u><i>American Violet</i></u>	David Cohen	
2009	<u><i>Saint John of Las Vegas</i></u>	Militant Ned	
	<u><i>Leaves of Grass</i></u>	Bolger	Also director, writer and producer
2011	<u><i>Flypaper</i></u>	Peanut Butter	
	<u><i>Yelling to the Sky</i></u>	Coleman	
	<u><i>Detachment</i></u>	Mr. Wiatt	
	<u><i>The Big Year</i></u>	Fuchs	
2012	<u><i>Big Miracle</i></u>	Pat Lafayette	
	<u><i>Lincoln</i></u>	<u>Richard Schell</u>	
2013	<u><i>Blue Caprice</i></u>	Ray	
	<u><i>As I Lay Dying</i></u>	Anse	
	<u><i>Child of God</i></u>	Sheriff Fate	
	<u><i>Snake and Mongoose</i></u>	Mike McAllister	
2014	<u><i>The Homesman</i></u>	Freighter	
	<u><i>The Sound and the Fury</i></u>	Father	
	<u><i>Kill the Messenger</i></u>	Alan Fenster	
	<u><i>Rickover: The Birth of Nuclear Power</i></u> ^[32]	<u>Admiral Hyman Rickover</u>	Documentary
2015	<u><i>Anesthesia</i></u>	Adam Zarrow	Also director, writer and producer
	<u><i>Fantastic Four</i></u>	<u>Dr. Harvey Allen</u>	
2016	<u><i>The Confirmation</i></u>	Vaughn	
	<u><i>Colossal</i></u>	Garth	
	<u><i>Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk</i></u>	Wayne Pfister	
2017	<u><i>Deidra & Laney Rob a Train</i></u>	Truman	
	<u><i>The Vanishing of Sidney Hall</i></u>	Johan Tidemand	
	<u><i>The Institute</i></u>	Dr. Lemelle	
2018	<u><i>Monster</i></u>	Leroy Sawicki	
	<u><i>The Ballad of Buster Scruggs</i></u>	Buster Scruggs	Segment: "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs"
2019	<u><i>The Report</i></u>	Raymond Nathan	
	<u><i>Arara</i></u>	Thomas	
	<u><i>The Hustle</i></u>	Portnoy	Uncredited
	<u><i>Angel Has Fallen</i></u>	<u>Vice President Martin</u>	

		Kirby	
	<i><u>Just Mercy</u></i>	Ralph Myers	
	<i><u>Zeroville</u></i>	Professor Kohn	
	<i><u>The True Don Quixote</u></i>	<u>Don Quixote</u>	
	<i><u>The Jesus Rolls</u></i>	Doctor	
2021	<i><u>Naked Singularity</u></i>	Angus	
	<i><u>Old Henry</u></i>	Henry	Also executive producer
	<i><u>Ghosts of the Ozarks</u></i>	Torb	
	<i><u>National Champions</u></i>	Rodger Cummings	
	<i><u>Nightmare Alley</u></i>	Carny Boss	
2022	<i><u>Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio</u></i>	The Black Rabbits (voice)	
2023	<i><u>Ghosted</u></i>	Borislov	
	<i><u>Ninety-Five Senses</u></i>	Coy (voice)	Short film
	<i><u>Asleep in My Palm</u></i>	Tom	
2024	<i><u>The Bricklayer</u></i>	O'Malley	
	<i><u>Dune: Part Two</u></i>		<u>Deleted scene</u>
	<i><u>Bang Bang</u></i>	Bernard 'Bang Bang' Rozyski	Post-production
	<i><u>Greedy People</u></i>	TBA	Post-production
2025	<i><u>Captain America: Brave New World</u></i>	Samuel Sterns / Leader	Post-production
TBA	<i><u>The Long Home</u></i>	Hovington	Completed

Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1989–1991	<i><u>The Unnaturals</u></i>	Recurring characters	
1995	<i><u>House of Buggin'</u></i>	Kidnapper	Episode: "The Paco Vasquez Story"
1996	<i><u>Dead Man's Walk</u></i>	Johnny Carthage	3 episodes
2005	<i><u>Stella</u></i>	Mountain Man	Episode: "Camping"
	<i><u>Warm Springs</u></i>	Tom Loyless	Television film
2006	<i><u>Haskett's Chance</u></i>	—	Pilot; director
2009	<i><u>CSI: Crime Scene Investigation</u></i>	Paulie Krill	Episode: " <u>Working Stiffs</u> "
2011	<i><u>CHAOS</u></i>	Casey Malick	13 episodes
	<i><u>Modern Family</u></i>	Hank	Episode: " <u>Dude Ranch</u> "
2012–2015	<i><u>Black Dynamite</u></i>	Chief Humphrey Magillahorn / Donald Sterling / PBS Executive / XXX Film Director (voice)	4 episodes

2014	<i>Klondike</i>	Meeker	6 episodes
2015, 2019	<i>Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt</i>	Randy	4 episodes
2015	<i>Z: The Beginning of Everything</i>	—	Episode: "Pilot"; director
	<i>For Justice</i>	Ochs Rainey	Pilot
2017	<i>Wormwood</i>	<u>Sidney Gottlieb</u>	4 episodes
2018	<i>Dallas & Robo</i>	The Woodsman (voice)	8 episodes
2019	<i>Watchmen</i>	Wade Tillman / Looking Glass	6 episodes
2020	<i>Big City Greens</i>	Grampa Ernest Green (voice)	Episode: "Garage Tales"
2022	<i>Lost Ollie</i>	Zozo (voice)	4 episodes
	<i>Guillermo del Toro's Cabinet of Curiosities</i>	Nick Appleton	Episode: "Lot 36"
	<i>George & Tammy</i>	<u>Roy Acuff</u>	Episode: "The Race Is On"
2023	<i>Poker Face</i>	Keith Owens	Episode: " <u>The Future of the Sport</u> "

Video games

Year	Game	Role
2008	<i>The Incredible Hulk</i>	<u>Samuel Sterns</u> (voice)

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