



**Steven Allan Spielberg** (born December 18, 1946) is an American film director, screenwriter, film producer, video game designer and studio executive. In a career spanning four decades, Spielberg's films have covered many themes and genres. Spielberg's early science-fiction and adventure films were seen as an archetype of modern Hollywood blockbuster filmmaking. In later years, his films began addressing such issues as the Holocaust, slavery, war and terrorism. He is considered one of the most influential filmmakers in the history of cinema. He is also one of the founders of DreamWorks movie studio.

Spielberg won the Academy Award for Best Director for *Schindler's List* (1993) and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). Three of Spielberg's films; *Jaws* (1975), *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), and *Jurassic Park* (1993), achieved box office records, each becoming the highest-grossing film made at the time. To date, the unadjusted gross of all Spielberg-directed films exceeds \$8.5 billion worldwide. Forbes puts Spielberg's wealth at \$3.0 billion.

### Early life

Spielberg was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, to a Jewish family. His mother Leah Adler was a restaurateur and concert pianist, and father Arnold Spielberg was an electrical engineer involved in the development of computers. He spent his childhood in Haddon Heights, New

Jersey and Scottsdale, Arizona. Throughout his early teens, Spielberg made amateur 8 mm "adventure" films with his friends, the first of which he shot at the Pinnacle Peak Patio restaurant in Scottsdale. He charged admission (25 cents) to his home films (which involved the wrecks he staged with his Lionel train set) while his sister sold popcorn.

In 1958, he became a Boy Scout, and fulfilled a requirement for the photography merit badge by making a nine-minute 8 mm film entitled *The Last Gunfight*. Spielberg recalled years later to a magazine interviewer, "My dad's still-camera was broken, so I asked the scoutmaster if I could tell a story with my father's movie camera. He said yes, and I got an idea to do a Western. I made it and got my merit badge. That was how it all started". At age 13, Spielberg won a prize for a 40-minute war film he titled

*Es*  
*cape to Nowhere*

which was based on a battle in east Africa. In 1963, at age 16, Spielberg wrote and directed his first independent film, a 140-minute science fiction adventure called

*Firelight*

(which would later inspire

*Close Encounters*

). The film, which had a budget of US\$500, was shown in his local cinema and generated a profit of \$100. He also made several WWII films inspired by his father's war stories.

After his parents divorced, he moved to Saratoga, California with his father. His three sisters and mother remained in Arizona, where he attended Passover Seders at the home of Zalman and Pearl Segal on an annual basis. Although he attended Arcadia High School in Phoenix, Arizona for three years, Spielberg ended up graduating from Saratoga High School in 1965. It was during this time Spielberg attained the rank of Eagle Scout.

Spielberg attended synagogue as a young boy in Haddon Heights, NJ, an area which did not allow Jews before World War II. He attended Hebrew school from 1953 to 1957, in classes taught by Rabbi Albert L. Lewis, who would later be memorialized as the main character in Mitch Albom's,

*Have a Little Faith*.

As a child, Spielberg has faced difficulty assimilating. "It isn't something I enjoy admitting", he once said, "but when I was 7, 8, 9 years old, God forgive me, I was embarrassed because we were Orthodox Jews. I was embarrassed by the outward perception of my parents' Jewish practices. I was never really ashamed to be Jewish, but I was uneasy at times. My grandfather always wore a long black coat, black hat and long white beard. I was embarrassed to invite my friends over to the house, because he might be in a corner davening [praying], and I wouldn't know how to explain this to my WASP friends." Spielberg also said he suffered from acts of

anti-Semitic prejudice in his early life: he later said, "In high school, I got smacked and kicked around. Two bloody noses. It was horrible."

After moving to California, he applied to attend the film school at University of Southern California School of Theater, Film and Television three separate times, but was unsuccessful. He was a student subsequently of California State University, Long Beach. While attending Long Beach State in the 1960s, Spielberg became member of Theta Chi Fraternity. His actual career began when he returned to Universal Studios as an unpaid, seven-day-a-week intern and guest of the editing department. After Spielberg became famous, USC awarded him an honorary degree in 1994, and in 1996 he became a trustee of the university. In 2002, thirty-five years after starting college, Spielberg finished his degree via independent projects at CSULB, and was awarded a B.A. in Film Production and Electronic Arts with an option in Film/Video Production.

As an intern and guest of Universal Studios, Spielberg made his first short film for theatrical release, the 24 minute film *Amblin'* (1968), the title of which Spielberg later took as the name of his production company, Amblin Entertainment. After Sidney Sheinberg, then the vice-president of production for Universal's TV arm, saw the film, Spielberg became the youngest director ever to be signed for a long-term deal with a major Hollywood studio (Universal). He dropped out of Long Beach State in 1969 to take up the television director contract at Universal Studios and began his career as a professional director. In 1969, *Variety*

announced that Spielberg would direct his first full length film, *Malcolm Winkler*

, written by Claudia Salter, produced by John Orland, with Frank Price being the executive producer. However, because of the difficulty in casting the key male role, the film was not made. Steven Spielberg attended Brookdale Community College for undergrad.

## Career

### Early career (1968–1975)

His first professional TV job came when he was hired to do one of the segments for the 1969 pilot episode of *Night Gallery*. The segment, "Eyes," starred Joan Crawford, and she and Spielberg were reportedly close friends until her death. The episode is unusual in his body of work, in that the camerawork is more highly stylized than his later, more "mature" films. After this, and an episode of *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, Spielberg got his first feature-length assignment: an episode of

*The Name of the Game*

called "L.A. 2017". This futuristic science fiction episode impressed Universal Studios and they signed him to a short contract. He did another segment on

*Night Gallery*

and did some work for shows such as  
*Owen Marshall: Counselor at Law*  
and  
*The Psychiatrist*  
before landing the first series episode of  
*Columbo*  
(previous episodes were actually TV films).

Based on the strength of his work, Universal signed Spielberg to do four TV films. The first was a Richard Matheson adaptation called *Duel*. The film is about a psychotic Peterbilt 281 tanker truck driver who chases a terrified driver (Dennis Weaver) of a small Plymouth Valiant and tries to run him off the road. *Duel* was his first feature film and major hit when it was released into theaters. Special praise of this film by the influential British critic Dilys Powell was highly significant to Spielberg's career. Another TV film (*Something Evil*) was made and released to capitalize on the popularity of *The Exorcist*, then a major best-selling book which had not yet been released as a film. He fulfilled his contract by directing the TV film length pilot of a show called *Savage*, starring Martin Landau. Spielberg's debut theatrical feature film was *The Sugarland Express*, about a married couple who are chased by police as the couple tries to regain custody of their baby. Spielberg's cinematography for the police chase was praised by reviewers, and *The Hollywood Reporter* stated that "a major new director is on the horizon." However, the film fared poorly at the box office and received a limited release.

Studio producers Richard D. Zanuck and David Brown offered Spielberg the director's chair for *Jaws*, a thriller-horror film based on the Peter Benchley novel about an enormous killer shark. Spielberg has often referred to the gruelling shoot as his professional crucible. Despite the film's ultimate, enormous success, it was nearly shut down due to delays and budget over-runs.

But Spielberg persevered and finished the film. It was an enormous hit, winning three Academy Awards (for editing, original score and sound) and grossing \$470,653,000 worldwide at the box office. It also set the domestic record for box office gross, leading to what the press described as "Jawsmania." *Jaws* made him a household name, as well as one of America's youngest multi-millionaires, and allowed Spielberg a great deal of autonomy for his future projects. It was nominated for Best Picture and featured Spielberg's first of three collaborations with actor

Richard Dreyfuss.

### Mainstream breakthrough (1975–93)

Rejecting offers to direct *Jaws 2*, *King Kong* and *Superman*, Spielberg and actor Richard Dreyfuss re-convened to work on a film about UFOs, which became *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*

(1977). One of the rare films both written and directed by Spielberg,

*Close Encounters*

was a critical and box office hit, giving Spielberg his first Best Director nomination from the Academy as well as earning six other Academy Awards nominations. It won Oscars in two categories (Cinematography, Vilmos Zsigmond, and a Special Achievement Award for Sound Effects Editing, Frank E. Warner). This second blockbuster helped to secure Spielberg's rise.

His next film,

*1941*

, a big-budgeted World War II farce wasn't nearly as successful and though it grossed over \$92.4 million dollars worldwide (and did make a small profit for co-producing studios Columbia and Universal) it was seen as a disappointment, mainly with the critics. It has since become a cult classic thanks to television showings and home video releases.

Spielberg then revisited his *Close Encounters* project and, with financial backing from Columbia Pictures, released

*Edition*

*Close Encounters: The Special Edition* in 1980. For this,

Spielberg fixed some of the flaws he thought impeded the original 1977 version of the film and also, at the behest of Columbia, and as a condition of Spielberg revising the film, shot additional footage showing the audience the interior of the mothership seen at the end of the film (a decision Spielberg would later regret as he felt the interior of the mothership should have remained a mystery). Nevertheless, the re-release was a moderate success, while the 2001 DVD release of the film restored the original ending.

Next, Spielberg teamed with *Star Wars* creator and friend George Lucas on an action adventure film,

*Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the first of the Indiana Jones films. The archaeologist and adventurer hero Indiana Jones was played by Harrison Ford (whom Lucas had previously cast in his

*Star Wars*

films as Han Solo). The film was considered a homage to the cliffhanger serials of the Golden Age of Hollywood. It became the biggest film at the box office in 1981, and the recipient of numerous Oscar nominations including Best Director (Spielberg's second nomination) and Best Picture (the second Spielberg film to be nominated for Best Picture).

*Raiders*

is still considered a landmark example of the action-adventure genre.

A year later, Spielberg returned to the science fiction genre with *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. It was the story of a young boy and the alien he befriends, who was accidentally left behind by his people and is trying to get back home.

*E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*

went on to become the top-grossing film of all time.

*E.T.*

was also nominated for nine Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Director.

Between 1982 and 1985, Spielberg produced three high-grossing films: *Poltergeist* (for which he also co-wrote the screenplay), a big-screen adaptation of

*The Twilight Zone*

(for which he directed the segment "Kick The Can"), and

*The Goonies*

(Spielberg, executive producer, also wrote the story on which the screenplay was based).

His next directorial feature was the *Raiders* sequel *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

Teaming up once again with Lucas and Ford, the film was plagued with uncertainty for the material and script. This film and the Spielberg-produced

*Gremlins*

led to the creation of the PG-13 rating due to the high level of violence in films targeted at younger audiences. In spite of this,

*Temple of Doom*

is rated PG by the MPAA, even though it is the darkest and, possibly, most violent Indy film.

Nonetheless, the film was still a huge blockbuster hit in 1984. It was on this project that Spielberg also met his future wife, actress Kate Capshaw.

In 1985, Spielberg released *The Color Purple*, an adaptation of Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same name, about a generation of empowered African-American women during depression-era America. Starring Whoopi Goldberg and future talk-show superstar Oprah Winfrey, the film was a box office smash and critics hailed Spielberg's successful foray into the dramatic genre. Roger Ebert proclaimed it the best film of the year and later entered it into his Great Films archive. The film received eleven Academy Award nominations, including two for Whoopi Goldberg and Oprah Winfrey. However, much to the surprise of many, Spielberg did not get a Best Director nomination.

*The Color Purple*

is the second of two Spielberg films not to be scored by John Williams, the first being

*Duel*

.

In 1987, as China began opening to the world, Spielberg shot the first American film in Shanghai since the 1930s, an adaptation of J. G. Ballard's autobiographical novel *Empire of the Sun*, starring John Malkovich and a young Christian Bale. The film garnered much praise from critics and was nominated for several Oscars, but did not yield substantial box office revenues. Reviewer Andrew Sarris called it the best film of the year and later included it among the best films of the decade.

After two forays into more serious dramatic films, Spielberg then directed the third Indiana Jones film, 1989's *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Once again teaming up with Lucas and Ford, Spielberg also cast actor Sean Connery in a supporting role as Indy's father. The film earned generally positive reviews and was another box office success, becoming the highest grossing film worldwide that year; its total box office receipts even topped those of Tim Burton's much-anticipated film *Batman*, which had been the bigger hit domestically. Also in 1989, he re-united with actor Richard Dreyfuss for the romantic comedy-drama *Always*, about a daredevil pilot who extinguishes forest fires. Spielberg's first romantic film, *Always* was only a moderate success and had mixed reviews.

In 1991, Spielberg directed *Hook*, about a middle-aged Peter Pan, played by Robin Williams, who returns to Neverland. Despite innumerable rewrites and creative changes coupled with mixed reviews, the film made over \$300 million worldwide (from a \$70 million budget).

In 1993, Spielberg returned to the adventure genre with the film version of Michael Crichton's novel *Jurassic Park*, about a theme park with genetically engineered dinosaurs. With revolutionary special effects provided by friend George Lucas's Industrial Light & Magic company, the film would eventually become the highest grossing film of all time (at the worldwide box office) with \$914.7 million. This would be the third time that one of Spielberg's films became the highest grossing film ever.

Spielberg's next film, *Schindler's List*, was based on the true story of Oskar Schindler, a man who risked his life to save 1,100 Jews from the Holocaust.

*Schindler's List*

earned Spielberg his first Academy Award for Best Director (it also won Best Picture). With the film a huge success at the box office, Spielberg used the profits to set up the Shoah Foundation, a non-profit organization that archives filmed testimony of Holocaust survivors. In

1997, the American Film Institute listed it among the 10 Greatest American Films ever Made (#9) which moved up to (#8) when the list was remade in 2007.

### Since 1994

In 1994, Spielberg took a hiatus from directing to spend more time with his family and build his new studio, DreamWorks, with partners Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen. In 1997, he helmed the sequel to 1993's *Jurassic Park* with *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*, which generated over \$618 million worldwide despite mixed reviews, and was the second biggest hit of 1997 behind James Cameron's

*Titanic*

(which topped the original

*Jurassic Park*

to become the new recordholder for box office receipts).

His next film, *Amistad*, was based on a true story (like *Schindler's List*), specifically about an African slave rebellion. Despite decent reviews from critics, it did not do well at the box office.

Spielberg released

*Amistad*

*ad*

under DreamWorks Pictures, which issued all of his films from

*Amistad*

until

*Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*

in May 2008 (see below).

In 1998, Spielberg re-visited *Close Encounters* yet again, this time for a more definitive 137-minute "Collector's Edition" that puts more emphasis on the original 1977 release, while adding some elements of the previous 1980 "Special Edition," but deleting the latter version's "Mothership Finale," which Spielberg regretted shooting in the first place, feeling it should have remained ambiguous in the minds of viewers.

His next theatrical release in that same year was the World War II film *Saving Private Ryan*, about a group of U.S. soldiers led by Capt. Miller (Tom Hanks) sent to bring home a paratrooper whose three older brothers were killed in the last twenty four hours of action in France. The film was a huge box office success, grossing over \$481 million worldwide and was the biggest film of the year at the North American box office (worldwide it made second place after Michael Bay's

*Armageddon*

). Spielberg won his second Academy Award for his direction. The film's graphic, realistic depiction of combat violence influenced later war films such as

*Black Hawk Down*

and



### *Enemy at the Gates*

. The film was also the first major hit for DreamWorks, which co-produced the film with Paramount Pictures (as such, it was Spielberg's first release from the latter that was not part of the

### *Indiana Jones*

series). Later, Spielberg and Hanks produced a TV mini-series based on Stephen Ambrose's book

### *Band of Brothers*

. The ten-part HBO mini-series follows Easy Company of the 101st Airborne Division's 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The series won a number of awards at the Golden Globes and the Emmys.

In 2001, Spielberg filmed fellow director and friend Stanley Kubrick's final project, *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*

which Kubrick was unable to begin during his lifetime. A futuristic film about a humanoid android longing for love,

### *A.I.*

featured groundbreaking visual effects and a multi-layered, allegorical storyline, adapted by Spielberg himself. Though the film's reception in the US was relatively muted, it performed better overseas for a worldwide total box office gross of \$236 million.

Spielberg and actor Tom Cruise collaborated for the first time for the futuristic neo-noir *Minority Report*,

based upon the sci-fi short story written by Philip K. Dick about a Washington D.C. police captain in the year 2054 who has been foreseen to murder a man he has not yet met. The film received strong reviews with the review tallying website Rotten Tomatoes giving it a 92% approval rating, reporting that 200 out of the 218 reviews they tallied were positive. The film earned over \$358 million worldwide. Roger Ebert, who named it the best film of 2002, praised its breathtaking vision of the future as well as for the way Spielberg blended CGI with live-action.

Spielberg's 2002 film *Catch Me If You Can* is about the daring adventures of a youthful con artist (played by Leonardo DiCaprio). It earned Christopher Walken an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor. The film is known for John Williams' score and its unique title sequence. It was a hit both commercially and critically.

Spielberg collaborated again with Tom Hanks along with Catherine Zeta-Jones and Stanley Tucci in 2004's *The Terminal*, a warm-hearted comedy about a man of Eastern European

descent who is stranded in an airport. It received mixed reviews but performed relatively well at the box office. In 2005, *Empire* magazine ranked Spielberg number one on a list of the greatest film directors of all time.

Also in 2005, Spielberg directed a modern adaptation of *War of the Worlds* (a co-production of Paramount and DreamWorks), based on the H. G. Wells book of the same name (Spielberg had been a huge fan of the book and the original 1953 film). It starred Tom Cruise and Dakota Fanning, and, as with past Spielberg films, Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) provided the visual effects. Unlike *E.T.*

and

*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*

, which depicted friendly alien visitors,

*War of the Worlds*

featured violent invaders. The film was another huge box office smash, grossing over \$591 million worldwide.

Spielberg's film *Munich*, about the events following the 1972 Munich Massacre of Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games, was his second film essaying Jewish relations in the world (the first being *Schindler's List*). The film is based on *Vengeance: The True Story of an Israeli Counter-Terrorist Team*, a book by Canadian journalist George Jonas. It was previously adapted into the 1986 made-for-TV film *Sword of Gideon*. The film received strong critical praise, but underperformed at the U.S. and world box-office; it remains one of Spielberg's most controversial films to date. One of the flaws in the film is that it failed to maintain historical accuracy in relation to the "execution" of the alleged Palestinian terrorist in Norway, instead killing an innocent Moroccan waiter Ahmed Bouchiki in Lillehammer Norway. *Munich* received five Academy Awards nominations, including Best Picture, Film Editing, Original Music Score (by John Williams), Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Director for Spielberg. It was Spielberg's sixth Best Director nomination and fifth Best Picture nomination.

Spielberg directed *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, which wrapped filming in October 2007 and was released on May 22, 2008. This was his first film not to be released by DreamWorks since 1997. The film received generally positive reviews from critics, and has performed very well in theaters. As of May 10, 2010, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* has grossed \$317 million domestically, and over \$786 million worldwide.

## Production credits

Since the mid-1980s Spielberg has increased his role as a film producer. He headed up the production team for several cartoons, including the Warner Brothers hits *Tiny Toon Adventures*, *Animani*

*acs*  
*ky and the Brain*

, *Pin*

,  
*Toonsylvania*  
, and  
*Freakazoid!*

, for which he collaborated with Jean MacCurdy and Tom Ruegger. Due to his work on these series, in the official titles, most of them say, "Steven Spielberg presents" as well as making numerous cameos on the shows. Spielberg also produced the Don Bluth animated features, *An American Tail*

and  
*The Land Before Time*

, which were released by Universal Studios. He also served as one of the executive producers of

*Who Framed Roger Rabbit*

and its three related shorts (Tummy Trouble, Roller Coaster Rabbit, Trail Mix-Up), which were all released by Disney, under both the Touchstone Pictures and the Walt Disney Pictures banners. He was furthermore, for a short time, the executive producer of the long-running medical drama

*ER*

. In 1989, he brought the concept of

*The Dig*

to LucasArts. He contributed to the project from that time until 1995 when the game was released. He also collaborated with software publishers Knowledge Adventure on the multimedia game

*Steven Spielberg's Director's Chair*

, which was released in 1996. Spielberg appears, as himself, in the game to direct the player. The Spielberg name provided branding for a Lego Moviemaker kit, the proceeds of which went to the Starbright Foundation.

In 1993, Spielberg acted as executive producer for the highly anticipated television series *seaQuest DS*

; a science fiction series set "in the near future" starring Roy Scheider (who Spielberg had directed in

*Jaws*

) and Jonathan Brandis akin to

*Star Trek: The Next Generation*

that aired on Sundays at 8:00 pm. on NBC. While the first season was moderately successful, the second season did less well. Spielberg's name no longer appeared in the third season and the show was cancelled mid way through it.

Spielberg served as an uncredited executive producer on *The Haunting*, *The Prince of Egypt*, *S*  
*hrek*

, and

*Evolution*

. In 2005, he served as a producer of

*Memoirs of a Geisha*

, an adaptation of the novel by Arthur Golden, a film he was previously attached to as director.

In 2006 Spielberg co-executive produced with famed filmmaker Robert Zemeckis a CGI children's film called

*Monster House*

, marking their first collaboration together since 1990's

*Back to the Future Part III*

. He also teamed with Clint Eastwood for the first time in their careers, co-producing Eastwood's

*Flags of Our Fathers*

and

*Letters from Iwo Jima*

with Robert Lorenz and Eastwood himself. He earned his twelfth Academy Award nomination for the latter film as it was nominated for Best Picture. Spielberg served as executive producer for

*Disturbia*

and the

*Transformers*

live action film with Brian Goldner, an employee of Hasbro. The film was directed by Michael Bay and written by Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman, and Spielberg continues to collaborate on the sequels,

*Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*

and

*Transformers: The Dark of the Moon*

.

Other major television series Spielberg produced were *Band of Brothers*, *Taken* and *The Pacific*

. He

was an executive producer on the critically acclaimed 2005 TV miniseries

*Into the West*

which won two Emmy awards, including one for Geoff Zanelli's score. For his 2010 miniseries

*The Pacific*

he teamed up once again with co-producer Tom Hanks, with Gary Goetzman also co-producing'. The miniseries is believed to have cost \$250 million and is a 10-part war miniseries centered on the battles in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Writer Bruce McKenna, who penned several installments of (

*Band of Brothers*

), was the head writer.

*The Pacific*

was filmed at locations mostly in Australia, including Far North Queensland, Melbourne, and the Northern Territory and at Melbourne's Central City Studios.

In 2007, Steven Spielberg and Mark Burnett co-produced *On the Lot* a short-lived TV reality show about filmmaking.

### Acting credits

Steven Spielberg had cameo roles in *The Blues Brothers*, *Gremlins*, *Vanilla Sky*, and *Austin Powers in Goldmember*

, as well as small uncredited cameos in a handful of other films. He also made numerous cameo roles in the Warner Brothers cartoons he produced, such as *Animaniacs*, and even made reference to some of his films. Spielberg voiced himself on one episode of

*Tiny Toon Adventures*

titled

*Buster and Babs Go Hawaiian*

.

### Involvement in video games

Apart from being an ardent gamer Spielberg has had a long history of involvement in video games. In 2005 the director signed with Electronic Arts to collaborate on three games including an action game and an award winning puzzle game for the Wii called *Boom Blox* (and its 2009 sequel: *Boom*

*Blox Bash Party*

). Previously, he was involved in creating the scenario for the adventure game

*The Dig*

. In 1996, Spielberg worked on and shot original footage for a movie-making simulation game called "Steven Spielberg's Director's Chair". He is the creator of the

*Medal of Honor*

series by Electronic Arts. He is credited in the special thanks section of the 1998 video game

*Trespasser*

.

### Upcoming projects

Spielberg is planning a motion capture film trilogy based on *The Adventures of Tintin* written by Belgian artist Hergé, with Peter Jackson. He will direct the first film

*The Adventures of Tintin: Secret of the Unicorn*

, which will not be theatrically released until December 23, 2011 due to the necessary computer animation, while Jackson will direct the second which Spielberg will produce.

Spielberg will also be producing a Fox TV series titled *Terra Nova*. *Terra Nova* will be originally set in the year 2149 when all life on the planet Earth is threatened with extinction resulting in scientists opening a door that allows people to travel back 150 million years to prehistoric times.

In May 2009, Steven Spielberg bought the rights to the life story of Martin Luther King, Jr. Spielberg will be involved not only as producer but also as a director. However, the purchase was made from the King estate, led by son Dexter, while the two other surviving children, the Reverend Bernice and Martin III, immediately threatened to sue, not having given their approvals to the project.

Director Michael Bay announced that *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* produced by Spielberg is set to be released on July 1, 2011.

He will produce the upcoming J. J. Abrams science fiction thriller film *Super 8* for Paramount Pictures.

Spielberg and DreamWorks Studios are reported in December 2009 to have bought the rights to the book *War Horse*, about the long friendship between a British boy and his horse Joey before and during World War I—a novel that was adapted into a hit play now running in London and expected in New York in 2011. It will be released and distributed by Disney, with whom DreamWorks has made a 30-picture deal. The novel was written by Michael Morpurgo and published in 1982. Filming of *War Horse* started in the UK in August 2010.

Spielberg is to produce a new science fiction series titled *Falling Skies* in collaboration with the TNT television network.

*Falling Skies*

is based on the aftermath of an alien invasion.

*Falling Skies*

will premiere on TNT sometime in the Summer of 2011. He will direct and produce the 12-hour miniseries

*Nine Lives*

for Syfy and will also create the science fiction film

*Robopocalypse*

.

Spielberg is reportedly trying to obtain the screen rights to make a film based on Microsoft's Halo series.