

= Matt Damon =

Matthew Paige " Matt " Damon ( / ˈdeɪmən / ; born October 8 , 1970 ) is an American actor , film producer and screenwriter . He is ranked among Forbes magazine 's most bankable stars and is one of the highest @-@ grossing actors of all time . Damon has received several accolades , including an Academy Award from four nominations , two Golden Globe Awards , and has been nominated for two British Academy Film Awards and five Emmy Awards .

Born and raised in Cambridge , Massachusetts , Damon began his acting career by appearing in high school theater productions and he made his professional acting debut in the film *Mystic Pizza* ( 1988 ) . He came to prominence in 1997 when he wrote and starred in *Good Will Hunting* alongside Ben Affleck , which won them the Academy and Golden Globe awards for Best Screenplay , and earned Damon a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Actor . He continued to garner praise from critics for his roles as the eponymous character in *Saving Private Ryan* ( 1998 ) , the antihero in *The Talented Mr. Ripley* ( 1999 ) , a fallen angel in *Dogma* ( 1999 ) , an energy analyst in *Syriana* ( 2005 ) , and an Irish @-@ American criminal in *The Departed* ( 2006 ) .

Damon is also known for his starring roles as Jason Bourne in the Bourne franchise ( 2002 ? 16 ) and as a con man in the *Ocean 's Trilogy* ( 2001 ? 07 ) . For his supporting role as the rugby player Francois Pienaar in *Invictus* ( 2009 ) and his leading role as an astronaut stranded on Mars in *The Martian* ( 2015 ) , Damon received Oscar nominations for Best Supporting Actor and Best Actor , respectively . The latter also won him a Golden Globe Award for Best Actor . Damon has received Emmy Award nominations for his portrayal of Scott Thorson in the biopic *Behind the Candelabra* ( 2013 ) and for producing the reality series *Project Greenlight* .

In addition to acting in films , Damon has performed voice @-@ over work in both animated and documentary films , and has established two production companies with Affleck . He has been actively involved in charitable work , including the ONE Campaign , H2O Africa Foundation , Feeding America , and Water.org. With his wife , Luciana Bozán Barroso , he has three daughters and a stepdaughter from Barroso 's prior marriage .

= = Early life = =

Damon was born in Cambridge , Massachusetts , the second son of Kent Telfer Damon ( born 1942 ) , a stockbroker , and Nancy Carlsson @-@ Paige ( born 1944 ) , an early childhood education professor at Lesley University . His father is of three @-@ fourths English and one @-@ fourth Scottish descent , and his mother is of five @-@ eighths Finnish and three @-@ eighths Swedish ancestry ( his mother 's family surname had been changed from the Finnish " Pajari " to " Paige " ) . Damon and his family moved to Newton for two years . His parents divorced when he was two years old , and Damon and his brother returned with their mother to Cambridge , where they lived in a six @-@ family communal house . His brother Kyle is now an accomplished sculptor and artist .

As a lonely adolescent , Damon has said that he felt that he did not belong . Due to his mother 's " by the book " approach to child @-@ rearing , he had a hard time defining a self identity . He attended Cambridge Alternative School ( now Graham and Parks ) and then Cambridge Rindge and Latin School , where he was a good student , but had a " terrifying " first two years due to his short stature . Damon performed as an actor in several high school theater productions . He credited his drama teacher , Gerry Specia , as an important artistic influence , though Ben Affleck , his good friend and schoolmate , got the " biggest roles and longest speeches " .

Damon attended Harvard University , where he was a resident of Lowell House ( Harvard College ) and a member of the class of 1992 , but left before receiving his degree to take a lead role in the film *Geronimo : An American Legend* . While at Harvard , he wrote an early treatment of the screenplay for *Good Will Hunting* as an exercise for an English class . Damon was a member of the Delphic Club , one of the University 's select Final Clubs . In 2013 , he was awarded the Harvard Arts Medal . Damon received an Academy Award for the screenplay of *Good Will Hunting* in 1998 , which was handed to him by Harvard alumnus Jack Lemmon , who had also been a member of Harvard 's Delphic Club .

= = Acting career = =

= = = Early years : 1988 ? 1996 = = =

Damon entered Harvard in 1988 , where he appeared in student theater plays , such as *Burn This* and *A ... My Name is Alice* . Later , he made his film debut at the age of 18 , with a single line of dialogue in the romantic comedy *Mystic Pizza* . As a student at Harvard , he acted in small roles such as in the TNT original film *Rising Son* and the ensemble prep @-@ school drama *School Ties* . He left the university in 1992 , a semester - 12 credits - shy of completion of his Bachelor of Arts in English to feature in *Geronimo : An American Legend* in Los Angeles , erroneously expecting the movie to become a big success . Damon next appeared as an opiate @-@ addicted soldier in 1996 's *Courage Under Fire* , for which he lost 40 pounds ( 18 kg ) in 100 days on a self @-@ prescribed diet and fitness regimen . *Courage Under Fire* gained him critical notice , when *The Washington Post* labeled his performance " impressive " .

= = = Breakthrough roles : 1997 ? 2000 = = =

During the early 1990s , Damon and Affleck wrote *Good Will Hunting* ( 1997 ) , a screenplay about a young math genius , an extension of a screenplay he wrote for an assignment at Harvard , having integrated advice from director Rob Reiner , screenwriter William Goldman , and writer / director Kevin Smith . It received nine Academy Awards nominations , earning Damon and Affleck Oscars and Golden Globes for Best Screenplay . Damon was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actor for the same film , which netted an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for co @-@ star Robin Williams . He and Affleck were each paid salaries of \$ 600 @,@ 000 , while the film grossed over \$ 225 million at the worldwide box office . The two later parodied their roles from the film in Kevin Smith 's 2001 movie *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back* .

Also in 1997 , Damon was the lead in the critically acclaimed drama *The Rainmaker* , where he was recognized by the *Los Angeles Times* as " a talented young actor on the brink of stardom . " After meeting Damon on the set of *Good Will Hunting* , director Steven Spielberg cast him as the titular character in the 1998 World War II film *Saving Private Ryan* . He co @-@ starred with Edward Norton in the poker film " *Rounders* " where he plays a reformed gambler in law school who must return to playing big stakes poker to help a friend pay off loan sharks . Then he portrayed Patricia Highsmith 's antihero Tom Ripley in *The Talented Mr. Ripley* ( 1999 ) , in which " Damon outstandingly conveys his character 's slide from innocent enthusiasm into cold calculation " , according to *Variety* magazine . He played a fallen angel who discusses pop culture as intellectual subject matter with Affleck in *Dogma* ( 1999 ) .

Damon 's attempts at essaying leading characters in romantic dramas such as 2000 's *All the Pretty Horses* and *The Legend of Bagger Vance* were commercially and critically unsuccessful . *Variety* said of his work in *All the Pretty Horses* : " [ Damon ] just doesn 't quite seem like a young man who 's spent his life amidst the dust and dung of a Texas cattle ranch . Nor does he strike any sparks with [ Penelope ] Cruz . " He was similarly deemed " uncomfortable being the center " of Robert Redford 's *The Legend of Bagger Vance* .

= = = Hollywood star : 2001 ? 2007 = = =

From 2001 to 2007 , Damon gained wider international recognition as part of two major film franchises . He co @-@ starred as thief Linus Caldwell in Steven Soderbergh 's 2001 film *Ocean 's Eleven* , a remake of the Rat Pack 's 1960 film *Ocean 's 11* ; the successful crime dramedy spawned two sequels , *Ocean 's Twelve* ( 2004 ) and *Ocean 's Thirteen* ( 2007 ) . He played amnesiac assassin Jason Bourne / David Webb in the hit action thrillers , *The Bourne Identity* ( 2002 ) , *The Bourne Supremacy* ( 2004 ) , and *The Bourne Ultimatum* ( 2007 ) , for which *Entertainment Weekly*

named Damon among " the decade 's best mixer of brawn and brains . "

Damon did the voice of Spirit in the animated movie Spirit Stallion of the Cimarron ( 2002 ) and later played a conjoined twin in Stuck on You ( 2003 ) , which received a 60 % Rotten Tomatoes score and mixed critical reception . He played a fictionalized version of Wilhelm Grimm in Terry Gilliam 's fantasy adventure The Brothers Grimm ( 2005 ) , which was a critically panned commercial failure ; The Washington Post concluded , " Damon , constantly flashing his newscaster 's teeth and flaunting a fake , ' Masterpiece Theatre ' dialect , comes across like someone who got lost on the way to an audition for a high school production of The Pirates of Penzance . " Later that year , he appeared as an energy analyst in Syriana .

In 2006 , Damon joined Robert De Niro in The Good Shepherd as a career CIA officer , and played an undercover mobster working for the Massachusetts State Police in Martin Scorsese 's The Departed , a remake of the Hong Kong police thriller Infernal Affairs . Assessing his work in the two films , Manohla Dargis of The New York Times wrote that Damon has the unique " ability to recede into a film while also being fully present , a recessed intensity , that distinguishes how he holds the screen . " The Departed has a score of 92 % on Rotten Tomatoes , and critical reception was very good . According to Forbes in August 2007 , Damon was the most bankable star of the actors reviewed , his last three films at that time averaged US \$ 29 at the box office for every dollar he earned . Damon had an uncredited cameo in Francis Ford Coppola 's Youth Without Youth ( 2007 ) and another cameo in the 2008 Che Guevara biopic Che .

= = = Critically acclaimed roles : 2009 ? present = = =

He made a guest appearance in 2009 on the sixth @-@ season finale of Entourage as himself , where he tries to pressure Vincent Chase ( Adrian Grenier ) into donating to his real foundation ONEXONE . His next role was Steven Soderbergh 's dark comedy The Informant ! ( 2009 ) , in which his Golden Globe @-@ nominated work was described by Entertainment Weekly as such : " The star ? who has quietly and steadily turned into a great Everyman actor ? is in nimble control as he reveals his character 's deep crazies . " Also in 2009 , Damon portrayed South Africa national rugby union team captain François Pienaar in the Clint Eastwood @-@ directed film Invictus , which is based on the 2008 John Carlin book Playing the Enemy : Nelson Mandela and the Game That Changed a Nation and features Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela . Invictus earned Damon an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor . The New Republic observed that he brought " it off with low @-@ key charm and integrity . "

In 2010 , he reteamed with director Paul Greengrass , who directed him in the Bourne Supremacy and Bourne Ultimatum , for the action thriller Green Zone , which flopped commercially and received a score of 53 % on Rotten Tomatoes and ambivalent reception from critics . He has appeared as a guest star in an episode of Arthur , titled " The Making of Arthur " , as himself . During season 5 of 30 Rock , he appeared as guest star in the role of Liz Lemon 's boyfriend in the episodes " I Do Do " , " The Fabian Strategy " , " Live Show " , and " Double @-@ edged Sword " . Damon 's 2010 projects included Clint Eastwood 's Hereafter and the Coen brothers ' remake of the 1969 John Wayne @-@ starring Western True Grit .

In 2011 , he starred in The Adjustment Bureau , Contagion , and We Bought a Zoo . In April 2012 , Damon filmed Promised Land , directed by Gus Van Sant , which he co @-@ wrote with John Krasinski . Damon 's next film with frequent collaborator Steven Soderbergh was Behind the Candelabra , a drama about the life of pianist / entertainer Liberace ( played by Michael Douglas ) with Damon playing Liberace 's longtime partner Scott Thorson . The film premiered on HBO on May 26 , 2013 .

Damon starred in the science fiction film Elysium ( 2013 ) , where he played former car @-@ thief @-@ turned @-@ factory @-@ worker Max DeCosta . He also appeared in the science fiction movie The Zero Theorem by Terry Gilliam in 2013 . In 2014 , he starred in George Clooney 's The Monuments Men , and played the minor role of scientist Dr. Mann , in Christopher Nolan 's Interstellar . In 2014 , Affleck appeared as a celebrity correspondent for Years of Living Dangerously . He played the main character , astronaut Mark Watney , in Ridley Scott 's The Martian ( 2015 ) ,

based on Andy Weir 's best @-@ selling novel of the same name , a role that earned him the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor ? Motion Picture Musical or Comedy and his second Academy Award nomination for Best Actor . Having not returned for the fourth film in the Bourne film series , Damon reprised his role as Jason Bourne in the series fifth instalment Jason Bourne . He has signed to star in Alexander Payne 's upcoming film , Downsizing , and Zhang Yimou 's , The Great Wall .

= = Producing career = =

Along with Affleck and producers Chris Moore and Sean Bailey , Damon founded the production company LivePlanet , through which the four created the Emmy @-@ nominated documentary series Project Greenlight to find and fund worthwhile film projects from novice filmmakers . The company produced and founded the short @-@ lived mystery @-@ hybrid series Push , Nevada , as well as other projects . In March 2010 , Damon and Affleck teamed up again to create Pearl Street Films , a Warner Bros. based production company .

= = Voice @-@ over career = =

He lent his voice to the English version of the animated film Ponyo , which was released in the United States in August 2009 . The documentary which he narrated , American Teacher , opened in New York in 2011 prior to national screening . He also voiced the lead character Cale Tucker in Titan A.E. , took the narrative voice of the Stallion Spirit in Spirit : Stallion of the Cimarron , and voiced a krill named Bill in Happy Feet Two .

In January 2012 , it was announced that Damon had signed a multiyear deal to be the voice of TD Ameritrade advertisements , replacing Sam Waterston as the discount brokerage 's spokesman . Damon donates all fees from the advertisements to charity . In 2013 , Damon appeared in a 20 @-@ second advertisement for Nespresso , directed by Grant Heslov , with whom he worked on The Monuments Men . The deal earned Damon \$ 3 million .

Damon also provided voice @-@ over for United Airlines 's resurrected " Fly the Friendly Skies " advertisement campaign in 2013 .

= = Humanitarian work = =

Damon was the founder of H2O Africa Foundation , the charitable arm of the Running the Sahara expedition , which merged with WaterPartners to create Water.org in July 2009 . He , along with George Clooney , Brad Pitt , Don Cheadle , David Pressman , and Jerry Weintraub , is one of the founders of Not On Our Watch Project , an organization that focuses global attention and resources to stop and prevent mass atrocities such as in Darfur . Damon supports the ONE Campaign , which is aimed at fighting AIDS and poverty in Third World countries . He has appeared in their print and television advertising .

Damon is also an ambassador for ONEXONE , a nonprofit foundation committed to supporting , preserving and improving the lives of children at home in Canada , the United States , and around the world . Damon is also a spokesperson for Feeding America , a hunger @-@ relief organization , and a member of their Entertainment Council , participating in their Ad Council public service announcements . Damon is a board member of Tonic Mailstopper ( formerly GreenDimes ) , a company that attempts to halt junk mail delivered to American homes each day .

= = In the media = =

= = = Jimmy Kimmel Live ! = = =

Comedian Jimmy Kimmel had a running gag at the end of his ABC television show , Jimmy Kimmel

Live ! , where he apologized for not being able to interview Damon at the end of each show . It culminated in a planned skit on September 12 , 2006 , when Damon stormed off after having his interview cut short . Damon appeared in several of E ! Entertainment 's top ten Jimmy Kimmel Live ! spoofs . On January 24 , 2013 , Damon took over his show and mentioned the long @-@ standing feud and having been bumped from years of shows . It involved celebrities who were previously involved in the " feud " , including Robin Williams , Ben Affleck , and Sarah Silverman .

= = = Political views = = =

Damon appeared on Hardball with Chris Matthews in December 2006 , and while discussing the ongoing war in Iraq , expressed concern about inequities across socioeconomic classes with regards to who in the United States is tasked with the responsibility of fighting wars . Damon is a supporter of the Democratic Party , and has made several critical statements against Republican Party figures , but has also expressed his disillusionment with the policies of President Barack Obama . In 2012 Damon , Ben Affleck , and John Krasinski hosted a fundraiser for Democratic Senate nominee Elizabeth Warren .

In 2010 , Matt Damon narrated the documentary film Inside Job about the part played by financial deregulation in the late @-@ 2000s financial crisis .

= = Personal life = =

Damon dated his Good Will Hunting co @-@ star Minnie Driver . He later had a two @-@ year relationship with actress Winona Ryder . From 2001 to 2003 , he dated Odessa Whitmire , the former personal assistant of Billy Bob Thornton and Ben Affleck .

Damon met Argentine Luciana Bozán Barroso ( born 1976 ) in April , 2003 , while filming Stuck on You in Miami . They became engaged in September , 2005 , and married in a private civil ceremony on December 9 , 2005 , at the Manhattan Marriage Bureau . The couple have three daughters : Isabella ( b . 2006 ) , Gia Zavala ( b . 2008 ) and Stella Zavala ( b . 2010 ) . He also has a step @-@ daughter , Alexia Barroso ( b . 1998 ) , from Luciana 's previous marriage . Since 2012 , they have lived in Pacific Palisades , Los Angeles , having previously lived in Miami and New York .

Damon is a fan of the Boston Red Sox . After the team won the 2007 World Series , he narrated the commemorative DVD release of the event . He has competed in several World Series of Poker ( WSOP ) events , including the 2010 World Series of Poker main event . He was busted out of the 1998 WSOP by poker professional Doyle Brunson .

= = Awards and honors = =

Aside from awards he has garnered for his role as actor and producer , Damon became the 2,343rd person to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on July 25 , 2007 . He reacted to the award by stating : " A few times in my life I 've had these experiences that are just kind of too big to process and this looks like it 's going to be one of those times . "

= = Filmography = =

Films that garnered Damon the most recognition or awards include :