

= Casey Donovan (actor) =

Casey Donovan (born John Calvin Culver ; November 2 , 1943 ? August 10 , 1987) was an American male pornographic actor of the 1970s and 1980s , appearing primarily in adult films and videos catering to gay male audiences . Following a brief career as a teacher and a stint as a highly paid male model , Donovan appeared in the film that would cement his status as a gay icon , *Boys in the Sand* , in 1971 . Attempts to build on his notoriety to achieve mainstream crossover success failed , but Donovan continued to be a bankable star in the adult industry for the next 15 years .

= = Career = =

Culver attended S.U.N.Y. College at Geneseo where he was a member of Phi Sigma Epsilon Fraternity and the drama club . After graduation in 1965 he accepted a teaching position in Peekskill , New York . He went on to take a job at the private Ethical Culture Fieldston School on New York City 's Central Park West but was fired during his second year following an altercation in which he physically disciplined a female student (reportedly the daughter of actor Eli Wallach) . Following his dismissal he drifted into being an escort and relocated to New York City . He also began pursuing an acting career , appearing in summer stock theatre with the prestigious Peterborough Players .

Through one of his escorting clients , Culver landed a spot with the Wilhelmina Models modeling agency , commanding an hourly rate of US \$ 60 . He continued to pursue stage work , landing an understudy job in 1969 in the Off @-@ Broadway gay @-@ themed play *And Puppy Dog Tails* , making his Broadway debut in 1970 in the Native American @-@ themed production *Brave* and a co @-@ starring role in the off @-@ Broadway *Circle in the Water* , also in 1970 .

In 1971 , Culver played a supporting role in a low budget sexploitation thriller film , *Ginger* . While the film was a commercial and critical failure , *Variety* noted his performance positively , saying " Only Calvin Culver ... shows any indication of better things to come . " This in turn led to an offer to appear in *Casey* , a gay pornographic film in which Culver played the title role , a gay man who is visited by his fairy godmother Wanda (Culver playing a dual role in drag) , and is granted a series of wishes which make him sexually irresistible to other men . Culver later took the character 's name , Casey , and that of the popular singer Donovan to create the pseudonym under which he would appear in all his other erotic roles .

Culver first appeared as Casey Donovan in *Boys in the Sand* , directed by Wakefield Poole , in 1971 . The film was an instant success and is considered one of the great classics of male erotic cinema . With the success and celebrity he garnered from the film , Donovan believed that he would be able to cross over into mainstream film . While there were meetings with directors like John Schlesinger and Raymond St. Jacques and talk of casting him in mainstream projects including adaptations of novels by Mary Renault and Patricia Nell Warren , the only film opportunities opened for him were as the star of more erotic films . These included the bisexual porn film *Score* , *The Back Row* with George Payne , *L. A. Tool & Die* with Bob Blount and Richard Locke , *The Other Side of Aspen* with Al Parker and Dick Fisk , *Boys in the Sand II* and *Inevitable Love* , with Jon King and Jamie Wingo . Shortly before his death he starred , heavily intoxicated , in the fisting movie *Fucked Up* , of Christopher Rage . He also appeared in a number of heterosexual porn films , most notably *The Opening of Misty Beethoven* where he had a scene with Constance Money .

Outside his adult film career , Donovan continued to pursue stage work . In 1972 he was cast in a short @-@ lived Broadway revival of Captain Brassbound 's *Conversion* . Star Ingrid Bergman described him as " having the same kind and as much charisma as Robert Redford . " He then landed a small role in the 1973 Lincoln Center production of *The Merchant of Venice* , which was praised as having " vivid appeal . " Donovan had a successful national tour in the play *Tubstrip* , written and directed by Jerry Douglas . While the play was critically deemed entertaining enough to its target gay audience (having earned , in the words of one critic , a " nationwide gay housekeeping seal of approval ") Donovan himself was judged as simply " no better nor worse [an] actor than most of the others [in the cast] . " In 1983 he turned his hand to producing , with an unsuccessful Broadway revival of Terrence McNally 's play *The Ritz* in which he also appeared .

Donovan 's iconic status allowed him to build a lucrative career as a high @-@ priced prostitute although it would cost him his legitimate modeling career as more and more clients made the connection between model Culver and porn star Donovan . He wrote an advice column , " Ask Casey , " for the gay @-@ oriented Stallion magazine beginning in 1982 .

= = Personal life = =

Casey Donovan was born John Calvin Culver in East Bloomfield , New York , growing up there with his parents and older brother , Duane .

In 1973 at the height of his popularity , Donovan met actor @-@ turned writer Tom Tryon and the two entered into a long @-@ term relationship the following year . Tryon was deeply closeted and grew increasingly disturbed by Donovan 's notoriety . Their relationship ended in 1977 .

In 1978 , Donovan purchased a house in Key West , Florida to run as a bed and breakfast dubbed " Casa Donovan . " Donovan struggled to keep the house running and ultimately it failed . More successful was Donovan 's time as a celebrity tour guide , conducting all @-@ gay trips in partnership with an outfit called Star Tours to Italy , China , Peru and other destinations .

By 1985 , Donovan 's health had begun to deteriorate , as he had contracted HIV . Although he had counseled his fans through his " Ask Casey " column as early as 1982 to reduce their number of sex partners and take steps to preserve their health and urged them to be tested for HIV once the test was developed , he himself made little or no effort to change his behavior . Donovan died in 1987 of an AIDS @-@ related pulmonary infection in Inverness , Florida , aged 43 .