

## LAS 100 PRIMERAS PELÍCULAS DE NICOLAS CAGE

[THE FIRST 100 MOVIES OF NICOLAS CAGE]

Writer: Torío García

Artist: Paco Alcázar

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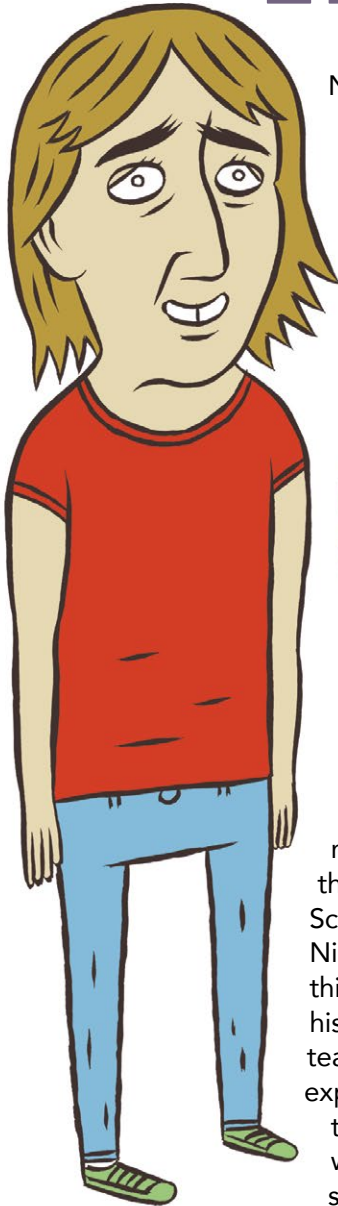
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### An hilarious tribute to Nicolas Cage

After four decades of acting career, Cage has built a filmography as spectacular as extravagant, in which masterpieces coexist with insane infra-films, the best directors with the most atrocious ones and characters full of nuances with crazy caricatures. His mythical intensity has given rise to all kinds of legends and anecdotes. Is it true that he ate a cockroach? Did he pull out some of his teeth to feel the pain better? Is his own interpretative method based on shamanic concepts? You can find all the answers in this unique book to celebrate an unrepeatable actor.

HUMOR | MOVIES | RESEARCH

# LIFE AND WORK



Nicolas Cage came into the world as Nicolas Kim Coppola on January 7, 1964 in Long Beach, California. He was apparently born with serious health problems, including a terrible allergy to breastmilk. His father has said he was a very strange baby, "like an alien."

## AT SCHOOL

From an early age, he decided to be the class clown. He ended up being suspended for a few days after giving his friends a grasshopper sandwich.



## HIS FIRST ROLE

In fourth grade, some bullies started messing with him on the school bus. One day, he stole some clothes from his older brothers and, decked out in cowboy boots, sunglasses, and hair gel, he passed himself off as his supposed cousin named Roy Richards. In this disguise, he threatened the bullies so that they would leave him alone. It seems to have worked.

## BEVERLY HILLS HIGH

When Nick and his brothers were old enough to go to high school, his father moved the family to an apartment on the outskirts of Beverly Hills, just inside the limits that would allow his sons to attend the prestigious Beverly Hills High School. The big stars of Hollywood sent their children there, which bothered Nick quite a bit because his last name made everyone think he was from a rich family, when in reality his father maintained the family on a modest teacher's salary. The good thing about that experience was that he began to receive training in acting there and get his feet wet with a few plays, even appearing in a few student films, for which he received awards.





### **"NICOLAS CAGE"**

Inspired by James Dean's acting in *Rebel without a Cause* and *East of Eden*, Nick decided that he wanted to be an actor.

His first time acting was in a school production of *Golden Boy*. Later, he studied dramatic arts at UCLA. His on-screen debut was under the name of Nicolas Coppola, but after suffering a bit of teasing by his costars, he decided to change it to Nicolas Cage so as not to be identified as his uncle's relative. According to



what he's said, the choice of that name was an homage

to the Marvel superhero Luke Cage and to the composer John Cage. Other options were Nick Faust, Nick Mascalzone, and Nicolas Blue.

### **'NOUVEAU SHAMANIC'**

Nick has coined his acting style as Nouveau Shamanic. In order to create this method, he took references from two texts by the psychologist Brian Bates: the novel *The Way of Wyrd* (about pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon shamanism) and the essay *The Way of the Actor* (about the mystic nature of acting throughout history).

Cage takes the idea that the shamans of Antiquity are the origin of the very concept of actor as a point of departure and incorporates their methods to abstract himself from reality: ritual painting, hidden talismans in his dressing room, magic stones, and other such paraphernalia. The idea is that these objects stimulate the imagination and facilitate his transformation into the character. According to what he's said, he added the nouveau part to give a "sophisticated" touch to the name.

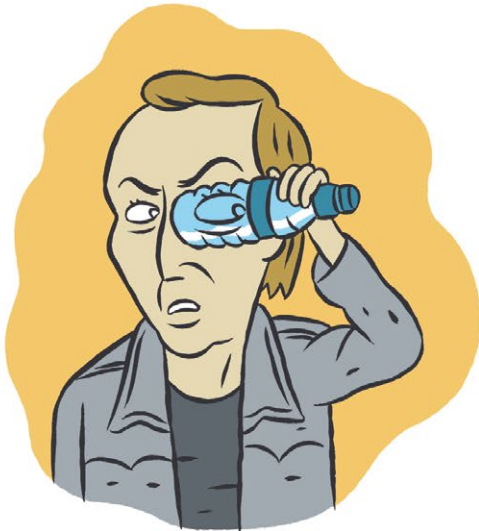
On other occasions, he has described his method of acting as Western Kabuki, in reference to traditional Japanese theater, in which the performances do not aim to be realistic.



# THE STAGES OF NIC

After debuting on screen at the age of 17, Nicolas Cage set out on a career path that has been long and fairly choppy. From his pretty strange beginnings (so exploited on the internet) to his rise to stardom up unto the crazy period marked by his tax issues, we've seen Nick transform and reinvent himself on several occasions.

As niccageologists, our obligation is to try and put order to the chaos, so we're going to differentiate at least five distinct Nicks (changes in looks aside), each according to his professional moment...



## **Crazy(ish) Nick (1981-1990)**

With one foot in independent film and another in Hollywood, Nick specializes playing extravagant characters: Peggy Sue Got Married, Birdy, Raising Arizona, Moonstruck, Vampire's Kiss... This phase would end with Wild at Heart (1990), which catapulted him to fame.



## **Dumbass Nick (1991-1994)**

The industry type-casts him in leading roles in very conventional comedies: Honeymoon in Vegas, Guarding Tess, It Could Happen to You... Bored, he decides to give his career a jolt.





### **Superstar Nick (1995-2007)**

Nick looks for more intense roles in independent productions and wins an Oscar for *Leaving Las Vegas*. From there, he starts to string together mega-productions, many in the action genre: *The Rock*, *Con Air*, *Face/Off*, *Snake Eyes*...



### **Cat-Toupée Nick (2007-2015)**

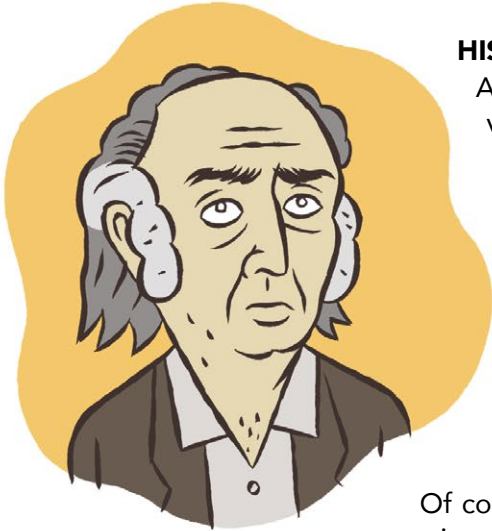
At the end of the 2000s, his financial problems force him to accept projects indiscriminately. With an unhinged approach to grooming, Nick appears in films of all types, frequently oriented towards video on demand: *Season of the Witch*, *Drive Angry*, *Next*, *Outcast*, *Stolen*, *Left Behind*...



### **Post-meme Nick (2015-...)**

A mediados de la década protagoniza varias películas independientes con buena acogida por parte de la crítica: *Joe*, *Mamá y papá*, *Mandy* o *Color Out of Space*, que le dan un nuevo impulso a su carrera. Al mismo tiempo, continúa haciendo VOD a destajo.

# FAMILY MATTERS: THE COPPOLAS



## HIS FATHER

August Floyd Coppola (1934-2009) was a literature professor at various universities. He also worked as a writer and was an executive at American Zoetrope, the studio run by his little brother, Francis Ford Coppola. Although their relationship was never contentious, it is true that Francis's success eclipsed that of August, who was considered the genius of the family. In fact, August tried to distance his children from the world of show business (ahem, not very successfully) and even forbade them from seeing Francis's films. The only exception was *The Godfather*, which he took them to see, but with the provision that they were not allowed to tell their Uncle Francis!

Of course, August never found it funny that Nicolas devoted himself to acting. His dream was that his son would be a writer. When Nick used to take acting classes, he told his father that he was taking writing classes. When he found out the truth, August chewed him out so badly that the two never seemed to get over it.

August died on October 27, 2009. Two years before his death, he had expressed his desire for his ashes to be scattered in a particular place: in a "body of water outside of America" that Nick has kept secret. After his father's death, Cage dreamed of this body of water many times until he decided to set out on a journey there that involved planes, cars, and a water taxi. Nick says that he scattered the ashes at exactly midnight and that when they touched the water, the bells of a church began to ring and an enormous full moon emerged from behind the clouds. According to what he has said, it was the best night of his life and at that moment he felt like Willem Dafoe in *The Last Temptation of Christ*, when Jesus entered into ecstasy.



## HIS MOTHER

Joy Vogelsang (1935) was a dancer and choreographer. During Nick's childhood, she suffered serious bouts of depression and schizophrenia, which caused her to spend time admitted in psychiatric institutions. Cage has shared the profound impact his mother's mental problems had on him and the times he visited her when she was hospitalized. He attributes the nightmares he suffered as a boy to these visits, along with his own behavioral problems as a boy. Joy and August divorced in 1976.

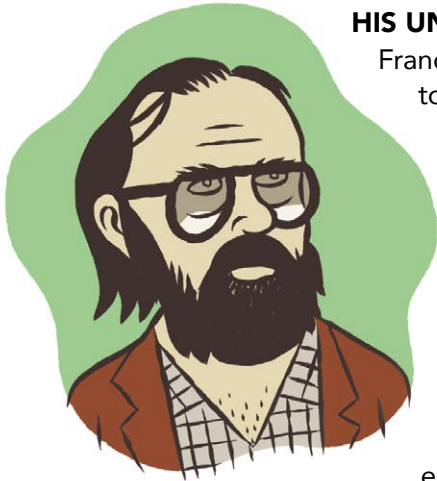


## HIS UNCLE

Francis Ford Coppola (1939) is the director of films like *The Godfather*, *Apocalypse Now*, and *The Conversation*. His figure profoundly marked the destiny of young Nic, dazzled by the success and the luxury that surrounded the director and his family. Nick spent a lot of time living with his aunt and uncle on their ranch in Napa (California), especially after his parents' divorce. There, he slept in a loft that had bats living in the walls. According to Nic, one night the door opened and a mysterious female figure advanced toward him. Nick was frozen, screamed, and threw a pillow at her. The figure vanished. Another time, when some Japanese businessmen were visiting the ranch, his uncle invited young Nick to greet them in their language, of which he had recently learned a few words. Nick came up and threw them a resounding "Yasai!". One of the Japanese businessmen responded that he had been greeted in Japanese



many times before, but never with "Vegetables!". Nick remembers that during one car ride with his uncle and cousins when he was 15, he let drop to the already-very-famous director that he had to do a test for a film for him and that he would teach him "what acting was." According to Cage, an uncomfortable silence ensued.



# LET'S TALK HAIR

Would this book exist were it not for the follicular stupidity of Nicolas Cage? We doubt it. And from the beginning of his career, Nick leaned very heavily on transforming his hair as a fundamental part of the characters he played, almost all on the more unkempt side of life. Unfortunately (for him), the great monster that is alopecia landed on his cranium during the 90s, just when, literally, all the world was looking at him. But Nick is not among those people who accept misfortune with resignation and luckily (for us) he refused to spend the rest of his days like some Bruce Willis hanging on to four sad little hairs up top. At first using extensions that were more or less discreet (ahem, less) and later moving directly to wigs, implants, and all sorts of aerospace technology applied to a head of hair, Cage astonished the world with a series of hair looks directly impossible to assimilate for the average human being. From the most sincere fascination and remembering his most spectacular hairstylists, we're going to review some milestones in his filmography in chronological order:



## **VALLEY GIRL**

(1983)

Nick kicks off the 80s with an homage to the abuse of hairspray worthy of any member of A-ha. Kathy Estocin was the stylist on set.



## **PEGGY SUE GOT MARRIED**

(1986)

Platinum blond wig with an out-of-control pompadour. It is unclear whether it was Cage's idea or Kathryn L. Blondell's, the chief hairstylist here.



## **RAISING ARIZONA**

(1987)

The crazy hair of the crazy cartoon character in this Coen brothers film is almost a character in itself. Dan Frey was charged with trying to control it.





### **WILD AT HEART**

(1991)

If there is something Nick likes more than doing his hair like Elvis, it's undoing his hair like Elvis. He did it with the help of hairstylist Frida Aradottir.



### **ZANDALEE**

(1991)

Nick's hair arrangement here literally has no name. The person responsible (so we suppose) was Angela Nogaro. To our surprise, the only exclusive hairstylist on set was for the co-star!



### **DEADFALL**

(1993)

Non-descript wig. Curiously, this is the only film in which Cage appears **WITHOUT HAIR**. Melanie Verkins styled the wig.



### **KISS OF DEATH**

(1995)

Nick's carpet is beginning to look a bit threadbare, which makes this film one of the last of Cage's "without extras." Joe Coscia did the hairstyling.



### **CON AIR**

(1997)

Mythic wig ("extensions," officially) that introduced Nick to the fantastic world of exclusive hairstylists on set. Here: Nina Kraft.



### **FACE/OFF**

(1997)

They slapped a rug on Cage and the exclusive hairstylist was taken by Travolta, another famous fugitive of baldness. Mary L. Hart-Mastro led the hairstyling on the film.

# WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Nick's filmography is pretty damn complete, but it could be more spectacular still if his presence had been solidified in any of these films.



## **'Top Gun' (1986)**

Nick has had the gall to say that he turned down Tom Cruise's role because the film seemed "too right-wing" to him, but four years later he was doing *Fire Birds*, an evident exploitation of the world's most popular film about idiotic fighter pilots.



## **'The Godfather: Part III' (1990)**

He was close to playing Vincent Mancini, the role that ultimately went to Andy García. Although he really wanted to do it, perhaps driving his *Uncle Francis* crazy during the filming of *Peggy Sue Got Married* was not his best move.

## **'Dumb and Dumber' (1994)**

Harry's role was for him at first, but after finding out that Jim Carrey was going to make 7 million dollars, he asked for a raise and the producers said no. In the end, the role went to Jeff Daniels, to whom they offered 50,000 dollars, thinking that he would ask for more, and the dummy (sorry) took it.





### **'The Thin Red Line' (1998)**

The top brass of actors at the time were crazy over appearing in Terrence Malick's return to directing. Unfortunately, Nick wasn't even considered, even though Malick and he had got along very well when they met a few years before. The reason: Malick called Nic, but the latter had his phone off the hook. The director was very annoyed and completely wrote off Cage for the film. Only God knows how this man would take texts left on read in WhatsApp.

### **'The Matrix' (1999) / 'The Lord of the Rings' (2001)**

At the end of the 90s, more offers than Nick could accept flooded in. Thus, he turned down a few things that were being filmed in Oceania because he didn't want to spend so much time apart from his family. One of the characters was called Neo and the other, Aragorn.



### **'Pulp Fiction' (1994)**

In the cast list Tarantino made after writing the script, Nick appeared as a candidate for Pumpkin (Tim Roth), Butch (Bruce Willis), and Lance (Eric Stoltz), the latter marked as a "strong possibility." Let's hope he didn't turn down the role because Trapped in Paradise seemed more interesting to him.



### **'Shrek' (2001)**

According to the British tabloid The Sun, Nick had turned down the role of Shrek because he did not want to play an ugly ogre on screen and he was regretting his decision. Nick explained it by saying that what bothered him was not the ugliness, but breaking in transmitting sympathy with the character. He did not deny the regret.





# PEGGY SUE GOT MARRIED

Dir.: Francis Coppola | Year: 1986

Synopsis: During her 25th reunion, Peggy Sue faints and is transported to her high school days.

Cage turned down the role of Charlie Bodell at least three times. He finally accepted his Uncle Francis's offer on the condition that he would be able to take the character as far as he wanted.

In this frame of mind, Cage decides that his character will talk in what he calls his "helium voice." That is, tremendously high-pitched and nasal. The idea came to him one day when, as he was channel surfing, he stumbled across The Gumby Show, a Claymation cartoon for children. In particular, he got the idea from Pokey, a horse. As could be expected, everyone hated his decision, especially Kathleen Turner, the leading actress.

Turner, in her autobiography Send Yourself Roses, said that during filming, Cage was arrested twice: once for drunk driving and again for stealing a chihuahua. Nick took her to court and in the end, Turner and the publisher had to retract.

He happened to meet Jim Carrey on set and they began what would become a long friendship..

## MEMORABLE SCENE

Peggy Sue turns Charlie on by reciting a list of nicknames for his penis. Nick makes a face of ecstasy and exclaims in his little voice: "My wang?"

PACO: The film seems a bit meh to me, but Cage makes it clear that he is not an actor like any other.

TORIÖ: It's a trip to see how young Nick with aging make up looks like old Nic.

**NICK-TENSITY: FLYING DEMON**



# RAISING ARIZONA

Dir.: Joel y Ethan Coen | Year: 1987

Synopsis: A repeat offender and his policewoman wife discover that they can't have children and decide to kidnap one of a wealthy couple's quintuplets.

Initially, the Coen brothers did not want Cage for the film because they thought he had too refined an air. He insisted and ended up getting the part.

To Nick's disappointment, many of his improvisations were cut from the film because they did not line up with the vision the directors had for the character. Even still, they got along well and the Coens recall that working with Cage was a lot of fun.

For his character, Nick took inspiration from Woody Woodpecker and silent film comedies.

The executives at 20th Century Fox had the idea to make promotional photos for the film, with Cage and Hunter posing with diapers as masks. It was the Coen brothers themselves who, horrified, caught a flight to talk with those responsible and convince them not to do it.

According to Sam McMurray (Glen in the film), one day while filming, he and Cage went out to eat. An excited fan came up to their table and asked Nick for an autograph on a napkin. Cage wrote: "Tomorrow you will die. Nicolas Cage."

## MEMORABLE SCENE

Nick gives his all in his crazy final fight with the bounty hunter, pure slapstick.

PACO: This is the film where I discovered Nick when I was a kid. An immortal classic!

TORIÖ: I'm amazed by films that translate their titles with another title in English.\*

## NICK-TENSITY: SUPERNOVA

\*Translator's Note: In Spanish, the title is translated to Arizona Baby





# VAMPIRE'S KISS

Dir.: Robert Bierman | Year: 1989

Synopsis: After a nighttime encounter with a mysterious lady, a newspaper executive begins to believe that he might be turning into a vampire.

Cage wanted to make a radical change after Moonstruck, and so he chose to do this film, turning a deaf ear to the warnings of everyone. Among them, his manager, his publicist, and even his attorney (!).

During the scene in which Jennifer Beals bites his neck, the actress bit down with quite a bit of force and Nick worried he might actually start bleeding. While the scene was filming, off camera, a masseuse was caressing Cage's feet to heighten the sense of eroticism. According to recent statements from the director, the massage consisted of flinging hot yogurt on Nick's feet.

The scene where he eats a cockroach is real. Cage wanted to do something that would impress viewers in order to lend credibility to his character despite the fact that, according to him, all of the muscles in his body told him not to do it, given that he has had an insect phobia ever since he was little. After shooting the scene, the actor disinfected his mouth with 50 proof vodka.

The director (what a jokester) made him REPEAT THE SCENE even though they ended up using the first take. Nick suspects that it was revenge for their disagreements.

## MEMORABLE SCENE

Cockroaches aside, the movie is full of unforgettable Cage moments, like when he recites the alphabet out of his wits or the crazy dance at his house.

PACO: Thanks to Nic, a stupid movie is turned into an absolutely bonkers film. Cage unleashed.

TORIÖ: You can never be done with this movie, no matter how many times you've seen it.  
It's niccageism concentrated in the purest possible form.

**NICK-TENSITY: NON PLUS ULTRA**



# NEVER ON TUESDAY

Dir.: Adam Rifkin | Year: 1989

Synopsis: Two friends crash into a woman's car.  
They wait with her for someone else to drive by and help them.

Nick makes a cameo of barely a minute playing the strange driver of a red sports car.

According to those responsible for the film, the cameo was originally going to be for Rob Lowe. When he told them he couldn't do it, they decided to offer it to Cage, who accepted on the condition that he could wear an enormous false nose.

During the summer of 2019, the scene went viral on social media. Due to this unexpected resurgence, Nick explained his character's backstory. According to his concept of the character, he was someone with a lot of money but with a physical deformity that had caused him a lot of suffering. To compensate for the trauma, his father bought him a red Ferrari. He also thought that he would have been made fun of as a kid and been called Pinocchio, which is why (even though they cut it later) Cage finished the scene by yelling: "Pinocchio! Pinocchio!"

When he arrived on set in character, the owner of the Ferrari rented for the scene began to panic upon seeing that a guy who looked like that was going to drive his car. Apparently, it seems that Cage filmed the scene, delivered his line, peeled out in the car shouting "Pinocchio!" (which nobody knew he was going to do) and disappeared..

PACO: If you're going to do a cameo, do it like this.

TORIÖ: It's a shame that Charlie Sheen's cameo wasn't for Cage, because it's quite a bit juicier (although Nick managed to get gold out of his few seconds on screen)

**NICK-TENSITY: OTHER PEOPLE LOOK LIKE ANTS**





# THE ROCK

Dir.: Michael Bay | Year: 1996

Synopsis: A scientist from the FBI and a mysterious ex-convict team up to launch an assault on Alcatraz, which has been taken by militants who threaten to attack the population with a dangerous chemical agent.

Cage took the liberty of influencing his character, even writing a few lines of dialogue. For example, the famous phrase: "How, in the name of Zeus's asshole did you get out of your cell?" He also changed the original name of his character from Bill Goodspeed to Stanley Goodspeed because it reminded him of his dentist, Stanley Golden.

Another of his contributions is that the character was a Beatle maniac (his passion for records was also Nick's idea). All formed part of his idea to change the initial concept for his character: a lab agent who wanted to enter into action. Cage said that it didn't seem honest to him to play a character like that, and that he would prefer for Stanley to be someone who liked lab work and saw himself forced to spring into action.

In one scene, Cage appears at home shirtless playing the guitar in his underwear. According to Michael Bay, the actor wanted to show off his newly buff body. According to Nic, he only wanted to show a completely relaxed attitude after a scene of maximum tension in the lab. We believe Nic, obviously..

## MEMORABLE SCENE

After a spectacular fight, Cage kills a bad guy by putting a chemical bomb in his mouth, then injecting himself in the chest with an antidote that leaves him half dead before throwing himself with a flare in each hand in front of a fighter squadron in order to try to avoid in extremis the bombing of Alcatraz. All of this in hardly two minutes of the movie, which lasts a total of 125.

PACO: A roller-coaster of a film. Nick and Sean Connery forever.

TORİO: I think there are people who don't forgive Nick for using his Oscar fame to launch himself into more commercial film, but here you have him, in one of the cornerstones of the modern blockbuster.

**NICK-TENSITY: MAXIMUM**