Johnny Depp: A Hollywood Original

Many Hollywood actors play it safe with their careers, signing on for films that will have wide box office appeal and are sure to boost their star power. Not all actors follow this route, though. One of the most successful Hollywood mavericks is Johnny Depp, known for taking on zany roles that many other actors would consider too risky to attempt.

Early on, Depp was mesmerized by rock and roll, dropping out of high school to front various garage bands. One of his bands, The Kids, even opened for Iggy Pop! The band struggled, however, and eventually Depp turned thespian, accepting minor roles in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984) and *Platoon* (1986).

Depp’s real rise to fame began with the TV series *21 Jump Street*, which gained him unwanted “teen idol” status. Depp, on the verge of becoming a superstar, did what most actors would never dream of—he took an abrupt about-face from ritzy stardom and signed on to act in the macabre (and decidedly UN-teenybopper) flick *Edward Scissorhands* in 1990. With this unusual move, Depp took ownership of his celebrity. Since then, he has often chosen to star in films that were more likely to be critically acclaimed than gargantuan hits.

Depp’s bold path has served him well, earning him dozens of awards. He has been honored with three Oscar nominations, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and the 2010 People’s Choice Award as Favorite Movie Actor of the Decade. In recent years, Depp has come full circle by starring in much-loved popular films such as the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series (2003, 2006, 2007, and 2011) and *Alice in Wonderland* (2010). Whatever comes next for Depp, you can safely bet that his star will continue to rise.