

## Paul Newman, 1925-2008: Actor, Activist and Racecar Driver

His acting skills and blue eyes captured the attention of generations of movie lovers. *Transcript of radio broadcast: 11 October 2008*

VOICE ONE:

I'm Bob Doughty.

VOICE TWO:

And I'm Shirley Griffith with People in America in VOA Special English. Today we tell about the award-winning actor Paul Newman. He was known for his striking good looks and clear blue eyes. Newman starred in over sixty-five movies during his more than fifty-year career. Some of his most famous roles were in the movies "The Hustler", "Hud", "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and "The Verdict." Paul Newman was also a social activist, racecar driver and businessman.



(MUSIC)

**Paul Newman**

COOL HAND LUKE: "I know I'm a pretty evil fellow. Killed people in the war and I got drunk and chewed up municipal property and the like. I know I got no call to ask for much, but even so you gotta admit, you ain't dealt me no cards in a long time. It's beginning to look like you got things fixed so I can't never win out. Inside, outside... all them rules and regulations and bosses. You made me like I am! And just where am I supposed to fit in?"

VOICE ONE:

That was a scene from the nineteen sixty-seven movie "Cool Hand Luke." In this movie set in a jail, Paul Newman plays the role of Luke Jackson, a smart but rebellious prisoner who gets in trouble for doing things his own way.

VOICE TWO:

The movie gives a good example of Paul Newman's intelligent style of acting. He was known for playing characters who were imperfect but very likeable. He expressed an emotional complexity and thoughtfulness in his characters that seemed effortless.

VOICE ONE:

Paul Leonard Newman was born in Cleveland, Ohio in nineteen twenty-five. His father, Arthur Newman, ran a successful sporting goods store. His mother, Theresa Newman, loved the theater. She influenced her son Paul to act in school

plays. During World War Two, Newman served as an airplane radio operator. He later studied at Kenyon College in Ohio. There, he played football and continued performing in plays.

VOICE TWO:

Arthur Newman did not think that acting was a sensible kind of job. But, he agreed to support his son for a year while Paul performed with small theater companies.

In nineteen fifty, Paul Newman returned to Cleveland with his new wife, Jacqueline, to manage the family store after his father's death. But the couple soon left Cleveland so that Paul Newman could study theater at Yale University in Connecticut.

VOICE ONE:

A few years later, Paul Newman received a role in the Broadway play "Picnic." The play ran for fourteen months. It was while working on this play that he met the actress Joanne Woodward.

During this period, Paul Newman also found roles on television shows. He studied at the Actors Studio in New York with actors who would also become famous, including James Dean and Marlon Brando.

(MUSIC)

VOICE TWO:

Paul Newman's first movie, "The Silver Chalice," came out in nineteen fifty-four. He later said that it was the worst movie ever made. Critics agreed. But his nineteen fifty-six movie, "Somebody Up There Likes Me," was a success that brought him increased public attention. Newman made many movies during the late nineteen fifties. These include "The Rack", "The Left-Handed Gun" and "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof", which starred Elizabeth Taylor.

VOICE ONE:

Paul Newman married Joanne Woodward in nineteen fifty-eight after divorcing his first wife the year before. They made ten movies together. The first was "The Long, Hot Summer." The movie is based on stories by the American writer William Faulkner.



**Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward on their wedding day**

Newman plays a strong, good-looking, young man named Ben Quick. He arrives in a small town in Mississippi after being kicked out of another town because he is accused of burning a barn. He gets a job with Will Varner, who owns just about everything in the town. Varner likes Quick so much that he arranges for him to marry his daughter, Clara, a schoolteacher. But Clara, played by Joanne Woodward, has other ideas.

CLARA: " I gave up on him when I was nine years old and I gave up on you the first time I ever looked in those cold, blue eyes."

BEN: "You got the color right."

CLARA: "I've got everything right, Mister Quick."

BEN: "Well, I can see you don't like me, but you're gonna have me. It's gonna be you and me."

CLARA: "Not the longest day I live."

BEN: "Yes, sir. They're gonna say, 'There goes that poor old Clara Varner, whose father married her off to a dirt-scratching, shiftless, no-good farmer who just happened by.' Well, let 'em talk. I'll tell you one thing, you're gonna wake up in the morning smiling."

VOICE TWO:

Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward decided not to live in Hollywood, California like most other film stars. They lived a very private life in Westport, Connecticut. They would remain married for fifty years. They raised three daughters. Newman had three other children with his first wife.

Paul Newman continued making successful movies. "The Hustler" came out in nineteen sixty-one.

EDDIE: " How should I play that one, Bert? Play it safe? That's the way you always told me to play it, safe, play the percentage. Well, here we go, fast and loose. One ball, corner pocket. Yeah, percentage players die broke too, don't they, Bert?"

In this movie, Newman plays a pool player named Fast Eddie Felson who competes for money against the expert player Minnesota Fats.

EDDIE: "I'm mean, it's not enough that you just have talent, you gotta have character too. Four ball."

VOICE ONE:

Two years later, he played the title role in "Hud." The movie is about a man who lives and works on his father's cattle farm. Newman said people were supposed to hate his character, Hud. But instead he said he created a folk hero. Paul Newman starred with Robert Redford in two very popular movies, "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and "The Sting."

He directed his wife, Joanne Woodward, in several movies that were praised by critics. These include "Rachel, Rachel" which came out in nineteen sixty-eight and "The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds" four years later.

VOICE TWO:

Over his career, Newman was nominated for ten Academy Awards. He won for his performance in the nineteen eighty-six film, "The Color of Money". This movie continues the story of Fast Eddie that began with "The Hustler." In nineteen eighty-two, Newman starred in "The Verdict".

FRANK GALVIN: "You know, so much of the time we're just lost..."

The movie is about an alcoholic lawyer named Frank Galvin who finds a chance to make up for his failing career in a medical case. Newman's performance during his character's closing argument to the jury is very powerful.

FRANK GALVIN: "But today you are the law. You are the law, not some book, not the lawyers, not a marble statue, or the trappings of the court. See, those are just symbols of our desire to be just."

(MUSIC)

VOICE ONE:

Paul Newman was not only a movie star. He was a political activist who fought for liberal causes. In nineteen sixty-eight, he campaigned for the Democratic Party presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy. Newman protested the Vietnam War in front of the American Embassy in London. He expressed great pride that he was named on President Richard Nixon's list of enemies.

VOICE TWO:

Paul Newman also worked on social issues important to him. In nineteen seventy-eight, his twenty-eight year old son Scott died of an accidental overdose

of drugs and alcohol. In response, Paul Newman created the Scott Newman Center to help educate children and families on preventing drug abuse.

VOICE ONE:

In the nineteen eighties, Newman decided to start selling a salad dressing he had created and given to many friends as gifts. The "Newman's Own" company he started with his friend A. E. Hotchner became a huge success selling different food products. Over the years, more than two hundred fifty million dollars in company profits have been donated to social causes and organizations.

VOICE TWO:

One of these is the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, started by Paul Newman in nineteen eighty-eight. Its aim is to provide a free summer camp experience to children with cancer and other serious diseases. There are now camps in the United States and several other countries. Newman said that he started the organization as a way to honor the role that luck has played in his life. He said that the camps are a way to help children who are unfairly affected by luck's cruelty.

VOICE ONE:



Paul Newman discovered his love of racing cars while making the nineteen sixty-nine movie "Winning." He even began racing professionally. In nineteen ninety-five, at the age of seventy, Newman competed and won at the Daytona races in Florida. The Guinness Book of World Records listed him as the oldest winner in his race class.

VOICE TWO:

**Paul Newman and wife, Joanne Woodward, at Lime Rock race track in Connecticut in 1983**

In the nineteen nineties he continued to act in movies, including "Mister And Missus Bridge", "Message in a Bottle" and "Nobody's Fool." And, in two thousand two he returned to Broadway one last time to perform in "Our Town" by Thornton Wilder.

Paul Newman died in two thousand eight of cancer. He was eighty-three years old. He was a true star both as an actor and a human being.

(MUSIC)

VOICE ONE:

This program was written and produced by Dana Demange. I'm Bob Doughty.

VOICE TWO:

And I'm Shirley Griffith. You can learn more about famous Americans on our Web site, [voaspecialenglish.com](http://voaspecialenglish.com). Join us again next week for People in America in VOA Special English.