



Roman Polanski

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Rajmund Roman Thierry Polański (born 18 August 1933),^[2] known professionally as **Roman Polanski**, is a French-Polish^[3] film director, producer, writer, and actor. Having made films in Poland, the United Kingdom, France, and the United States, he is considered one of the few "truly international filmmakers".^[4] Born in Paris to Polish parents, he moved with his family back to Poland (Second Polish Republic) in 1937, shortly before the outbreak of World War II.^[5] He survived the Holocaust although his father was Jewish and mother of Jewish descent^[6], was educated in Poland (People's Republic of Poland), and became a director of both art house and commercial films.^[7]

Polanski's first feature-length film, *Knife in the Water* (1962), made in Poland, was nominated for a United States Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.^[8] He has since received five more Oscar nominations, along with two BAFTAs, four Césars, a Golden Globe Award and the Palme d'Or of the Cannes Film Festival in France. In the United Kingdom he directed three films, beginning with *Repulsion* (1965). In 1968 he moved to the United States and cemented his status by directing the horror film *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), for which Ruth Gordon won an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actress.

In 1969, Polanski's pregnant wife, Sharon Tate, was murdered by members of the Manson Family while staying at Polanski's Benedict Canyon, California home.^[9] Following Tate's death, Polanski returned to Europe and spent much of his time in Paris and Gstaad, but did not direct another film until *Macbeth* (1971) in England. The following year he went to Italy to make *What?* (1973) and subsequently spent the next five years living near Rome. However, he travelled to Hollywood to direct *Chinatown* (1974). The film was nominated for eleven Academy Awards, and was a critical and box-office success.^[10] Polanski's next film, *The Tenant* (1976), was shot in France, and completed the "Apartment Trilogy", following *Repulsion* and *Rosemary's Baby*.^[11]

In 1977, after a photo shoot in Los Angeles, Polanski was arrested for the rape of 13-year-old Samantha Geimer and pleaded guilty to the charge of statutory rape.^[12] He was released from prison after serving 42 days and was told that the prosecutors had agreed to ask for him to be put on probation. When he learned that the judge planned to reject the plea bargain, he fled to Paris before sentencing. He publicly offered his apology to Geimer, telling her that he regretted the episode.^{[13][14]} In September 2009, he was arrested by Swiss police and later released after Swiss authorities denied a U.S. request for his extradition.^{[15][16]} In October 2015, after another

Roman Polanski



Polanski at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival

Born	Rajmund Roman Thierry Polański 18 August 1933 Paris, France
Residence	France, Poland ^[1]
Occupation	Film director, producer, writer, actor
Years active	1954–present
Spouse(s)	Barbara Kwiatkowska-Lass (m. 1959; div. 1962) Sharon Tate (m. 1968; k. 1969) Emmanuelle Seigner (m. 1989)
Children	2; including Morgane Polanski

request for extradition, a judge in Poland refused the request.^[17] Geimer herself supported the Polish decision, adding, "He said he did it, he pled guilty, he went to jail. I don't know what people want from him."^[18]

Polanski continued to make films, including *The Pianist* (2002), a World War II true story drama about Jewish-Polish musician Władysław Szpilman. The film won three Academy Awards including Best Director, along with numerous international awards. He also directed other films, including *Oliver Twist* (2005), a story which parallels his own life as a "young boy attempting to triumph over adversity".^[4] In 2009 he received a lifetime-achievement award from the Zurich Film Festival,^[19] and in 2011 won Best Director at the 60th Berlin International Film Festival for *Carnage*. He was awarded Best Director for *The Ghost Writer* (2010) at the 23rd European Film Awards that year but was unable to receive it in person due to his retention by the Swiss authorities.^[20]

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Early life

Polanski was born in Paris, the son of Bula (née Katz-Przedborska)^[21] and Ryszard Polański,^[22] a painter and manufacturer of sculptures, who had changed his family name from Liebling.^[23] His mother had a daughter, Annette, by her previous husband. Annette managed to survive Auschwitz, where her mother died, and left Poland forever for France.^[24] Polański's father was Jewish and originally from Poland; Polański's mother, born in Russia, had been raised Roman Catholic and was of half-Jewish ancestry.^{[25][6][26]} Polański's parents were both agnostics.^[27] Polański, influenced by his education in the People's Republic of Poland, said "I'm an atheist" in an interview about his film, *Rosemary's Baby*.^[28]

World War II

The Polański family moved back to the Polish city of Kraków in 1936,^[22] and were living there when World War II began with the invasion of Poland. Kraków was soon occupied by the German forces, and Nazi racial purity laws made the Polańskis targets of persecution, forcing them into the Kraków Ghetto, along with thousands of the city's Jews.^[29] Around the age of five, he attended primary school for only a few weeks, until "all the Jewish children were abruptly expelled," writes biographer Christopher Sandford. That initiative was soon followed by requiring all Jewish children over the age of twelve to wear white armbands with a blue Star of David imprinted for visual identification. After he was expelled, he would not be allowed to enter another classroom for the next six years.^{[22]:18[30]} Polanski then witnessed both the ghettoization of Kraków's Jews into a compact area of the city, and the subsequent deportation of all the ghetto's Jews to concentration camps, including watching as his father was taken away. He remembers from age six, one of his first experiences of the terrors to follow:

I had just been visiting my grandmother ... when I received a foretaste of things to come. At first I didn't know what was happening. I simply saw people scattering in all directions. Then I realized why the street had emptied so quickly. Some women were being herded along it by German soldiers. Instead of running away like the rest, I felt compelled to watch.

One older woman at the rear of the column couldn't keep up. A German officer kept prodding her back into line, but she fell down on all fours, ... Suddenly a pistol appeared in the officer's hand. There was a loud bang, and blood came welling out of her back. I ran straight into the nearest building, squeezed into a smelly recess beneath some wooden stairs, and didn't come out for hours. I developed a strange habit: clenching my fists so hard that my palms became permanently calloused. I also woke up one morning to find that I had wet my bed.^[31]

His father was transferred, along with thousands of other Jews, to Mauthausen, a group of 49 German concentration camps in Austria. His mother was taken to Auschwitz and was killed soon after arriving. The forced exodus took place immediately after the German liquidation of the Kraków ghetto, a true-life backdrop to Polanski's film, *The Pianist* (2002). Polanski, who was then hiding from the Germans, remembered seeing his father being marched off with a long line of people. Polanski tried getting closer to his father to ask him what was happening, and managed to get within a few yards. His father saw him, but afraid his son might be spotted by the German soldiers, whispered (in Polish), "Get lost!"^{[22]:24}

Polański escaped the Kraków Ghetto in 1943 and survived by assuming the name Romek Wilk, with the help of some Polish Roman Catholic families including Mrs Sermak who promised his father to shelter him.^{[22]:21} He

attended church, learned to recite Catholic prayers by heart, and behaved outwardly as a Roman Catholic, although he was never baptized. His efforts to blend into a Catholic household failed miserably at least once, when the parish priest visiting the family posed questions to him one-on-one about the catechism: "You aren't one of us", he said.^[32] The punishment for helping a Jew in Poland was death.^[33]

As he roamed the countryside trying to survive in a Poland now occupied by German troops, he witnessed many horrors, such as being "forced to take part in a cruel and sadistic game in which German soldiers took shots at him for target practice."^[4] Author Ian Freer concludes that his constant childhood fears and dread of violence have contributed to the "tangible atmospheres he conjures up on film."^[4]



Polish Jews captured by Germans during the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising

By the time the war ended in 1945, a fifth of the Polish population had been killed,^[34] with the vast majority of the victims being civilians. Of those deaths, 3 million were of Polish Jews, 90% of the country's Jewish population.^[35] According to Sandford, Polanski would use the memory of his mother, her dress and makeup style, as a physical model for Faye Dunaway's character in his film *Chinatown* (1974).^{[22]:13}

After the war

After the war, he was reunited with his father and moved back to Kraków. His father remarried 21 December 1946 to Wanda Zajączkowska (a woman Polanski had never liked) and died of cancer in 1984. Time repaired the family contacts; Polanski visited them in Kraków, and relatives visited him in Hollywood and Paris. Polanski recalls the villages and families he lived with as relatively primitive by European standards:

They were really simple Catholic peasants. This Polish village was like the English village in *Tess*. Very primitive. No electricity. The kids with whom I lived didn't know about electricity ... they wouldn't believe me when I told them it was enough to turn on a switch!^[36]

He stated that "you must live in a Communist country to really understand how bad it can be. Then you will appreciate capitalism."^[36] He also remembered events at the war's end and his reintroduction to mainstream society when he was 12, forming friendships with other children, such as Roma Ligocka, Ryszard Horowitz and his family.^[37]

Introduction to movies

Polanski's fascination with cinema began very early, when he was around age four or five. He recalls this period in an interview:

Even as a child, I always loved cinema and was thrilled when my parents would take me before the war. Then we were put into the ghetto in Kraków and there was no cinema, but the Germans often showed newsreels to the people outside the ghetto, on a screen in the market place. And there was one particular corner where you could see the screen through the barbed wire. I remember watching with fascination, although all they were showing was the German army and German tanks, with occasional anti-Jewish slogans inserted on cards.^[38]

After the war, he watched films, either at school or at a local cinema, using whatever pocket money he had. Polanski writes, "Most of this went on the movies, but movie seats were dirt cheap, so a little went a long way. I lapped up every kind of film."^[39] As time went on, movies became more than an escape into entertainment, as he explains:

Movies were becoming an absolute obsession with me. I was enthralled by everything connected with the cinema—not just the movies themselves but the aura that surrounded them. I loved the luminous rectangle of the screen, the sight of the beam slicing through the darkness from the projection booth, the miraculous synchronization of sound and vision, even the dusty smell of the tip-up seats. More than anything else though, I was fascinated by the actual mechanics of the process.^[40]

He was above all influenced by *Odd Man Out* (1947) - "I still consider it as one of the best movies I've ever seen and a film which made me want to pursue this career more than anything else... I always dreamt of doing things of this sort or that style. To a certain extent I must say that I somehow perpetuate the ideas of that movie in what I do."^[41]

Early career in Poland

Polanski attended the National Film School in Łódź, the third-largest city in Poland.^[42] In the 1950s, Polanski took up acting, appearing in Andrzej Wajda's *Pokolenie* (*A Generation*, 1954) and in the same year in Siliak Sternfeld's *Zaczarowany rower* (*Enchanted Bicycle* or *Magical Bicycle*). Polanski's directorial debut was also in 1955 with a short film *Rower* (*Bicycle*). *Rower* is a semi-autobiographical feature film, believed to be lost, which also starred Polanski. It refers to his real-life violent altercation with a notorious Kraków felon, Janusz Dziuba, who arranged to sell Polanski a bicycle, but instead beat him badly and stole his money. In real life, the offender was arrested while fleeing after fracturing Polanski's skull, and executed for three murders, out of eight prior such assaults which he had committed.^[43] Several other short films made during his study at Łódź gained him considerable recognition, particularly *Two Men and a Wardrobe* (1958) and *When Angels Fall* (1959). He graduated in 1959.^[42]



Polanski's star on the Łódź walk of fame

Film director

1960s

Knife in the Water (1962)

Polanski's first feature-length film, *Knife in the Water*, was also one of the first significant Polish films after the Second World War that did not have a war theme. Scripted by Jerzy Skolimowski, Jakub Goldberg, and Polanski,^[44] *Knife in the Water* is about a wealthy, unhappily married couple who decide to take a mysterious hitchhiker with them on a weekend boating excursion. A dark and unsettling work, Polanski's debut feature subtly evinces a profound pessimism about human relationships with regard to the psychological dynamics and

moral consequences of status envy and sexual jealousy. *Knife in the Water* was a major commercial success in the West and gave Polanski an international reputation. The film also earned its director his first Academy Award nomination (Best Foreign Language Film) in 1963. Leon Niemczyk, who played Andrzej, was the only professional actor in the film. Jolanta Umecka, who played Krystyna, was discovered by Polanski at a swimming pool.^[45]

Polanski left then-communist Poland and moved to France, where he had already made two notable short films in 1961: *The Fat and the Lean* and *Mammals*. While in France, Polanski contributed one segment ("La rivière de diamants") to the French-produced omnibus film, *Les plus belles escroqueries du monde* (English title: *The Beautiful Swindlers*) in 1964. However, Polanski found that in the early 1960s, the French film industry was xenophobic and generally unwilling to support a rising filmmaker of foreign origin.^[46]

***Repulsion* (1965)**

Polanski made three feature films in England, based on original scripts written by himself and Gérard Brach, a frequent collaborator. *Repulsion* (1965) is a psychological horror film focusing on a young Belgian woman named Carol (Catherine Deneuve), who is living in London with her older sister (Yvonne Furneaux). The film's themes, situations, visual motifs, and effects clearly reflect the influence of early surrealist cinema as well as horror movies of the 1950s—particularly Luis Buñuel's *Un chien Andalou*, Jean Cocteau's *The Blood of a Poet*, Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Diabolique* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

***Cul-de-sac* (1966)**

Cul-de-sac (1966) is a bleak nihilist tragicomedy filmed on location in Northumberland. The tone and premise of the film owe a great deal to Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, along with aspects of Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party*.

***The Fearless Vampire Killers/Dance of the Vampires* (1967)**

The Fearless Vampire Killers (1967) (known by its original title, "Dance of the Vampires" in most countries outside the United States) is a parody of vampire films. The plot concerns a buffoonish professor and his clumsy assistant, Alfred (played by Polanski), who are traveling through Transylvania in search of vampires. The ironic and macabre ending is considered classic Polanski. *The Fearless Vampire Killers* was Polanski's first feature to be photographed in color with the use of Panavision lenses, and included a striking visual style with snow-covered, fairy-tale landscapes, similar to the work of Soviet fantasy filmmakers. In addition, the richly textured color schemes of the settings evoke the magical, kaleidoscopic paintings of the great Belarusian-Jewish artist Marc Chagall, who provides the namesake for the innkeeper in the film. The film was written for Jack MacGowran, who played the lead role of Professor Abronsius.

Polanski met Sharon Tate while the film was being made, where she played the role of the local innkeeper's daughter. They were married in London on 20 January 1968.^[47] Shortly after they married, Polanski, with Tate at his side during a documentary film, described the demands of young movie viewers who he said always wanted to see something "new" and "different".^[48]

***Rosemary's Baby* (1968)**

Paramount studio head Robert Evans brought Polanski to America ostensibly to direct the film *Downhill Racer*, but told Polanski that he really wanted to him to read the horror novel *Rosemary's Baby* by Ira Levin^[49] to see if a film could be made out of it.^[50] Polanski read it non-stop through the night and the following morning decided he wanted to write as well as direct it. He wrote the 272-page screenplay for the film in slightly longer

than three weeks.^[51] The film, *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), was a box-office success and became his first Hollywood production, thereby establishing his reputation as a major commercial filmmaker. The film, a horror-thriller set in trendy Manhattan, is about Rosemary Woodhouse (Mia Farrow),^[52] a young housewife who is impregnated by the devil. Polanski's screenplay adaptation earned him a second Academy Award nomination.

On 9 August 1969, while Polanski was working in London, his wife, Sharon Tate, and four other people were murdered at the Polanskis' residence in Los Angeles.^[53]

1970s

Macbeth (1971)

Polanski adapted *Macbeth* into a screenplay with the Shakespeare expert Kenneth Tynan.^[54] Jon Finch and Francesca Annis played the main characters.^[55] Hugh Hefner and Playboy Productions funded the 1971 film, which opened in New York and was screened in Playboy Theater.^[56] Hefner was credited as executive producer, and the film was listed as a "Playboy Production".^[57] It was controversial because of Lady Macbeth's being nude in a scene,^[55] and received an X rating because of its graphic violence and nudity.^[58] In his autobiography, Polanski wrote that he wanted to be true to the violent nature of the work, and that he had been aware that his first project following Tate's murder would be subject to scrutiny and probable criticism regardless of the subject matter; if he had made a comedy he would have been perceived as callous.^[59]

What? (1973)

Written by Polanski and previous collaborator Gérard Brach, *What?* (1973) is a mordant absurdist comedy loosely based on the themes of *Alice in Wonderland* and Henry James. The film is a rambling shaggy dog story about the sexual indignities that befall a winsome young American hippie woman hitchhiking through Europe.

Chinatown (1974)

Polanski returned to Hollywood in 1973 to direct *Chinatown* (1974) for Paramount Pictures. The film is widely considered to be one of the finest American mystery crime movies, inspired by the real-life California Water Wars, a series of disputes over southern California water at the beginning of the 20th century.^[61]

Polanski was an outstanding director. There was no question, after three days seeing him operate, that here was a really top talent.

co-star John Huston^[60]

It was nominated for 11 Academy Awards, including those for actors Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway. Robert Towne won for Best Original Screenplay.^[10] It also had actor-director John Huston in a supporting role,^[62] and was the last film Polanski directed in the United States. In 1991, the film was selected by the Library of Congress for preservation in the United States National Film Registry as being "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant" and it is frequently listed as among the best in world cinema.^{[16][63][64]}

The Tenant (1976)

Polanski returned to Paris for his next film, *The Tenant* (1976), which was based on a 1964 novel by Roland Topor, a French writer of Polish-Jewish origin. In addition to directing the film, Polanski also played a leading role of a timid Polish immigrant living in Paris. Together with *Repulsion* and *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Tenant* can

be seen as the third installment in a loose trilogy of films called the "Apartment Trilogy" that explore the themes of social alienation and psychic and emotional breakdown.^[11]

In 1978, Polanski became a fugitive from American justice and could no longer work in countries where he might face arrest or extradition.

***Tess* (1979)**

He dedicated his next film, *Tess* (1979), to the memory of his late wife, Sharon Tate. It was Tate who suggested to Polanski that he read *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, which she thought would make a good film. Nastassja Kinski starred opposite Peter Firth and Leigh Lawson.^[65]

[Polanski] took a lot of time, two years, preparing me for that film.... He was strict with me, but in a good way. He made me feel smart, that I could do things.

Nastassja Kinski^[66]

Tess was shot in the north of France instead of Hardy's England and became the most expensive film made in France up to that time. Ultimately, it proved a financial success and was well received by both critics and the public. Polanski won France's César Awards for Best Picture and Best Director and received his fourth Academy Award

nomination (and his second nomination for Best Director). The film received three Oscars: best cinematography, best art direction, best costume design, and was nominated for best picture.

1980s

In 1981, Polanski directed and co-starred (as Mozart) in a stage production of Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*, first in Warsaw, then in Paris.^{[67][68]} The play was again directed by Polanski, in Milan, in 1999.^[69]

***Pirates* (1986)**

Nearly seven years passed before Polanski's next film, *Pirates*, a lavish period piece starring Walter Matthau as Captain Red, which the director intended as an homage to the beloved Errol Flynn swashbucklers of his childhood. Captain Red's henchman, Jean Baptiste, was played by Cris Campion. The film is about a rebellion the two led on a ship called the *Neptune*, in the seventeenth century. The screenplay was written by Polanski, Gérard Brach, and John Brownjohn. The film was shot on location in Tunisia,^[70] using a full-sized pirate vessel constructed for the production. It was a financial and critical failure, recovering a small fraction of its production budget and garnering a single Academy Award nomination.^[71]

***Frantic* (1988)**

Frantic (1988) was a Hitchcockian suspense-thriller starring Harrison Ford^[72] and the actress/model Emmanuelle Seigner,^[73] who later became Polanski's wife. The film follows an ordinary tourist in Paris whose wife is kidnapped. He attempts, hopelessly, to go through the Byzantine bureaucratic channels to deal with her disappearance, but finally takes matters into his own hands.

1990s

Polanski followed this with the dark psycho-sexual film *Bitter Moon* (1992), followed by a film of the acclaimed play *Death and the Maiden* (1994) starring Sigourney Weaver.

In 1997, Polanski directed a stage version of his 1967 film *The Fearless Vampire Killers*, which debuted in

Vienna^[74] followed by successful runs in Stuttgart, Hamburg, Berlin, and Budapest. On 11 March 1998, Polanski was elected a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts.^[75]

***The Ninth Gate* (1999)**

The Ninth Gate is a thriller based on the novel *El Club Dumas* by Arturo Perez-Reverte and starring Johnny Depp. The movie's plot is based on the idea that an ancient text called "The Nine Gates of the Kingdom of Shadow", authored by Aristide Torchia along with Lucifer, is the key to raising Satan.^[76]

2000s



Polanski with wife Emmanuelle Seigner at the 1992 Cannes Film Festival.

***The Pianist* (2002)**

In 2001, Polanski filmed *The Pianist*, an adaptation of the World War II autobiography of the same name by Polish-Jewish musician Władysław Szpilman. Szpilman's experiences as a persecuted Jew in Poland during World War II were reminiscent of those of Polanski and his family. While Szpilman and Polanski escaped the concentration camps, their families did not, eventually perishing.

When Warsaw, Poland, was chosen for the 2002 premiere of *The Pianist*, "the country exploded with pride." According to reports, numerous former communists came to the screening and "agreed that it was a fantastic film."^[77]

In May 2002, the film won the *Palme d'Or* (Golden Palm) award at the Cannes Film Festival,^[78] as well as Césars for Best Film and Best Director, and later the 2002 Academy Award for Directing. Because Polanski would have been arrested in the United States, he did not attend the Academy Awards ceremony in Hollywood. After the announcement of the Best Director Award, Polanski received a standing ovation from most of those present in the theater. Actor

Harrison Ford accepted the award for Polanski, and then presented the Oscar to him at the Deauville Film Festival five months later in a public ceremony.^[79] Polanski later received the Crystal Globe award for outstanding artistic contribution to world cinema at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in 2004.

***Oliver Twist* (2005)**

Oliver Twist is an adaptation of Dickens's classic, written by *The Pianist*'s Ronald Harwood and shot in Prague.^[80] Polanski said in interviews that he made the film as something he could show his children, and that the life of the young scavenger mirrored his own life, fending for himself in World War II Poland.

2010s

***The Ghost Writer* (2010)**

The Ghost Writer, a thriller focusing on a ghostwriter working on the memoirs of a character based loosely on former British prime minister Tony Blair, swept the European Film Awards in 2010, winning six awards,



Polanski at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival for *The Pianist*

including best movie, director, actor and screenplay.^[81] When it premiered at the 60th Berlinale in February 2010, Polanski won a Silver Bear for Best Director,^[82] and in February 2011, it won four César Awards, France's version of the Academy Awards.^[83]

The film is based on a novel by British writer Robert Harris. Harris and Polanski had previously worked for many months on a film of Harris's earlier novel *Pompeii*, a novel that was actually inspired by Polanski's *Chinatown*.^[84] They had completed a script for *Pompeii* and were nearing production when the film was cancelled due to a looming actors' strike in September 2007.^[85] After that film fell apart, they moved on to Harris's novel, *The Ghost*, and adapted it for the screen together.

The cast includes Ewan McGregor as the writer and Pierce Brosnan as former British Prime Minister Adam Lang. The film was shot on locations in Germany.^[86]

In the United States, film critic Roger Ebert included it in his top 10 pick for 2010, and states that "this movie is the work of a man who knows how to direct a thriller. Smooth, calm, confident, it builds suspense instead of depending on shock and action."^[87] Co-star Ewan McGregor agrees, saying about Polanski that "he's a legend... I've never examined a director and the way that they work, so much before. He's brilliant, just brilliant, and absolutely warrants his reputation as a great director."^[88]

***Carnage* (2011)**

Polanski shot *Carnage* in February/March 2011. The film is a screen version of Yasmina Reza's play *God of Carnage*, a comedy about the relationship between two couples after their children get in a fight at school and the selfishness of everyone, which eventually leads to chaos. It stars Kate Winslet, Jodie Foster, Christoph Waltz and John C. Reilly. Though set in New York, it was shot in Paris.^[89] The film had its world premiere on 9 September 2011 at the Venice Film Festival and was released in the United States by Sony Pictures Classics on 16 December 2011.

Co-stars Jodie Foster and Kate Winslet commented about Polanski's directing style. According to Foster, "He has a very, very definitive style about how he likes it done. He decides everything. He decided every lens. Every prop. Everything. It's all him."^[90] Winslet adds that "Roman is one of the most extraordinary men I've ever met. The guy is 77 years old. He has an effervescent quality to him. He's very joyful about his work, which is infectious. He likes to have a small crew, to the point that, when I walked on the set, my thought was, 'My God, this is it?'"^[91] Also noting that style of directing, New York Film Festival director Richard Pena, during the American premiere of the film, called Polanski "a poet of small spaces... in just a couple of rooms he can conjure up an entire world, an entire society."^[92]

Polanski makes an uncredited cameo appearance as a neighbor.



Polanski and Spanish writer Diego Moldes, Madrid 2005



At the premiere of *Carnage* in Paris, November 2011

***Venus in Fur* (2013)**

Polanski's French-language adaptation of the award-winning play *Venus in Fur*, stars his wife Emmanuelle Seigner and Mathieu Amalric. Polanski worked with the play's author, David Ives, on the screenplay.^[93] The film was shot from December 2012 to February 2013^[94] in French and is Polanski's first non-English language feature film in forty years.^[95] The film premiered in competition at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival^[96] on 25 May 2013.

***Based on a True Story* (2017)**

Polanski's next film is an adaptation of the French novel *Based on a True Story*, by bestselling author Delphine de Vigan.^[97] The film stars Eva Green and Emmanuelle Seigner and follows a writer (Seigner) struggling to complete a new novel, while followed by an obsessed fan (Green). The film starts production in November 2016 from a script adapted by Polanski and Olivier Assayas.^[98]

***D* (2018)**

Polanski is currently preparing to direct *D*, a film about the notorious Dreyfus affair in the 19th century, in which one of the few Jewish members of the French Army's general staff was wrongly convicted of passing military secrets to the German Empire and sent to Devil's Island, only to be acquitted 12 years later. The film is written by Robert Harris, who is working with Polanski for the third time.^[99] Although set in Paris, the film was first scheduled to shoot in Warsaw in 2014, for economic reasons.^[100] However, production was postponed after Polanski moved to Poland for filming and the U.S. Government filed extradition papers. The Polish government eventually rejected them, by which point new French film tax credits had been introduced, allowing the film to shoot on location in Paris. It is budgeted at 60 million euros and was set to start production in July 2016,^[101] however its production has been postponed again until May 2017, as Polanski is waiting on the availability of his star, whose name has not yet been announced.^[102]

Marriages and relationships

Barbara Kwiatkowska-Lass

Polanski's first wife, Barbara Lass (née Kwiatkowska),^[22] was a Polish actress who also starred in Polanski's 1959 *When Angels Fall*.^[103] The couple were married in 1959 and divorced in 1961.^[22]

Sharon Tate

Polanski met rising actress Sharon Tate while filming *The Fearless Vampire Killers*, and during the production, the two of them began dating.^[104] On 20 January 1968, Polanski married Tate in London.^[105]

In August 1969, while Polanski was in Europe working on a film, Tate was murdered along with four of their friends at their home in Los Angeles by members of Charles Manson's "family," a group of young, gullible, and mostly female followers. Tate was pregnant at the time of her murder.

Manson, along with members of his "family", was arrested in late 1969, and eventually tried and found guilty in 1971 of 27 counts, including first-degree murder, an event now called the Manson murders. Because at the time it was one of the most "horrific crimes in modern history," the crime and trial of Manson and his followers became a media sensation, leading to movies, documentaries and bestselling books.^[106]



Sharon Tate in the trailer for the film *Eye of the Devil*.

Polanski has said that his absence on the night of the murders is the greatest regret of his life.^[107] In his autobiography, he wrote, "Sharon's death is the only watershed in my life that really matters", and commented that her murder changed his personality from a "boundless, untroubled sea of expectations and optimism" to one of "ingrained pessimism ... eternal dissatisfaction with life".^[108] In his autobiography, Polanski described his brief time with Tate as the best years of his life.

Polanski was also left with a very negative impression of the press, which he felt was interested in sensationalizing the lives of the victims, and indirectly himself, to attract readers. He was shocked by the lack of sympathy expressed in various news stories:

I had long known that it was impossible for a journalist to convey 100 percent of the truth, but I didn't realize to what extent the truth is distorted, both by the intentions of the journalist and by neglect. I don't mean just the interpretations of what happened; I also mean the facts. The reporting about Sharon and the murders was virtually criminal. Reading the papers, I could not believe my eyes. I could not believe my eyes! They blamed the victims for their own murders. I really despise the press. I didn't always. The press made me despise it.^[38]

Among the media-generated sensationalism were rumors that claimed Tate and her visitors were taking drugs, despite the coroner's announcing that no traces of drugs or nicotine were found after Tate's autopsy.^[109] For years afterward, notes Sandford, "reporters openly speculated about the Polanskis' home life" and their personalities in order to create more media gossip about the private lives of Hollywood celebrities.^{[22]:2}

Nastassja Kinski

In 1976, Polanski started a romantic relationship with Nastassja Kinski, who starred in *Tess*. She was between 15 and 17 years old at the time and he was 43. Their relationship ended at the completion of filming.^{[110][111]} In an interview with David Letterman in 1982, she described their relationship and gave her opinion about his sexual assault case, claiming it was "ridiculous" and his residence in France was "a loss for America."

Emmanuelle Seigner

In 1989, Polanski married French actress Emmanuelle Seigner, 33 years his junior. They have two children, daughter Morgane and son Elvis.^[112] Polanski and his children speak Polish at home.^[113]



Polanski and Emmanuelle Seigner at the César Awards 2011.

Legal history

Sexual abuse case

On 11 March 1977, three years after making *Chinatown*, Polanski was arrested at Jack Nicholson's home for the

sexual assault of 13-year-old Samantha Gailey, who was modeling for Polanski during a *Vogue* magazine photo shoot around the pool. Polanski was indicted on six counts of criminal behavior, including rape.^{[112][114]} At his arraignment, he pleaded not guilty to all charges. Many executives in Hollywood came to his defense.^[115] Gailey's attorney next arranged a plea bargain in which five of the six charges would be dismissed, and Polanski accepted.^[116]

At the time of the incident, Nicholson was out of town making a film, but his steady girlfriend, actress Anjelica Huston, had dropped by unannounced to pick up some items. She heard Polanski in the other room say "We'll be right out."^[117] Polanski then came out with Gailey and he introduced her to Huston, and they chatted about Nicholson's two large dogs which were sitting nearby. Huston recalled Gailey was wearing platform heels and appeared quite tall.^[117]

After a brief conversation, Polanski had packed up his camera gear and Huston saw them drive off in his car. Huston told police the next day, after Polanski was arrested, that she "had witnessed nothing untoward" and never saw them together in the other room.^[117] Gailey learned afterwards that Huston had recently broken up with Nicholson, but stopped by to pick up some belongings.^[118]



Polanski in 2007.

As a result of the plea bargain, Polanski pleaded guilty to the charge of "Unlawful Sexual Intercourse with a minor,"^{[119][120]} and was ordered to undergo 90 days of psychiatric evaluation at California Institution for Men at Chino.^[121] Upon release from prison after 42 days, Polanski agreed to the plea bargain, his penalty to be time served along with probation. However, he learned afterward that the judge, Laurence J. Rittenband, had told some friends that he was going to disregard the plea bargain and sentence Polanski to 50 years in prison:^{[120][122]} "I'll see this man never gets out of jail," he told Polanski's friend, screenwriter Howard E. Koch.^[123] Gailey's attorney confirmed the judge changed his mind after he personally met with the judge in his chambers:

He was going to sentence Polanski, rather than to time served, to fifty years. What the judge did was outrageous. We had agreed to a plea bargain and the judge had approved it.^{[123][124]}

Polanski's attorney told Polanski that "the judge could no longer be trusted..." that the judge's representations were "worthless".^[125] Polanski decided not to appear at his sentencing. He told his friend, director Dino De Laurentis, "I've made up my mind. I'm getting out of here."^[123] On the day before sentencing in 1978, Polanski left the country.^[126] As a French citizen, he has been protected from extradition and has lived mostly in France since then.^[127] However, since he fled the United States before final sentencing, the charges are still pending.

In an interview with Larry King, the victim, now married and going by the name Samantha Geimer, stated that the police and media had been slow at the time of the assault to believe her account, which she attributed to the social climate of the era.^[128] In 1988 she sued Polanski. Among other things, the suit alleged sexual assault, false imprisonment, seduction of a minor, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. In 1993, Polanski agreed to settle with Geimer. In August 1996, Polanski still owed her \$604,416; Geimer and her lawyers later

confirmed that the settlement was completed.^{[128][129]}

On 26 September 2009, Polanski was arrested while in Switzerland at the request of United States authorities.^[19] The arrest brought renewed attention to the case and stirred controversy, particularly in the United States and Europe.^[122] Polanski was defended by many prominent individuals, including Hollywood celebrities and European artists and politicians, who called for his release.^[130] American public opinion was reported to run against him, however,^{[131][132]} and polls in France and Poland showed that strong majorities favored his extradition to the United States.^{[133][134]}

Polanski was jailed near Zürich for two months, then put under house arrest at his home in Gstaad while awaiting decision of appeals fighting extradition.^[135] On 12 July 2010, the Swiss rejected the United States' request, declared Polanski a "free man" and released him from custody.^[136] He remains the subject of an Interpol red notice issued in 2005 at the request of the United States.^[137]

During a television interview on 10 March 2011, Geimer blamed the media, reporters, the court, and the judge for causing "way more damage to [her] and [her] family than anything Roman Polanski has ever done", and opined that the judge was using her and Polanski for the media exposure.^[138]

In January 2014, newly uncovered emails by a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge from 2008, indicated that if Polanski returned to the United States for a hearing, the conduct of the judge who had originally presided over the case might require that Polanski be freed. These emails were related to a 2008 documentary film by Marina Zenovich.^{[139][140]} In late October 2014, Polanski was questioned by prosecutors in Kraków.^[141]

On 30 October 2015, Polish judge Dariusz Mazur denied a request by the United States to extradite Polanski (a dual French-Polish citizen) for a full trial, claiming that it would be "obviously unlawful."^[142] The Krakow prosecutor's office declined to challenge the court's ruling, agreeing that Polanski had served his punishment and did not need to face a U.S. court again.^[143] However, Poland's national justice ministry took up the appeal, arguing that sexual abuse of minors should be prosecuted regardless of the suspect's accomplishments or the length of time since the suspected crime took place.^[144] In a December 2016 decision, the Supreme Court of Poland dismissed the government's appeal, holding that the prosecutor general had failed to prove misconduct or flagrant legal error on the part of the lower court.^[145]

Preparations for a movie he was working on about the Dreyfus affair had been stalled by the extradition request.^{[99][146]}

Documentary films

In 2008, the documentary film by Marina Zenovich, *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*, was released in Europe and the United States where it won numerous awards.^[147] The film focuses on the judge in the case and the possible reasons why he changed his mind. It includes interviews with people involved in the case, including the victim, Geimer, and the prosecutor, Roger Gunson. Geimer said that the judge "didn't care what happened" to her or Polanski, but "was orchestrating some little show,"^[125] while Gunson added, "I'm not surprised that Polanski left under those circumstances, ... it was going to be a real circus."^{[125][148]}

Former DA David Wells, whose statements were the most damning against Polanski, and who said he advised the judge to imprison Polanski, admitted that he lied about those statements, and said that to the press to "play up" his own role.^{[149][150]}

In December 2009, a California appellate court discussed the film's allegations as it denied Polanski's request to have the case dismissed. While saying they were "deeply concerned" the court, and were "in many cases supported by considerable evidence," it also found that "(e)ven in light of our fundamental concern about the misconduct ... flight was not Polanski's only option. It was not even his best option." It said dismissal of the case, which would erase Polanski's guilty plea, wouldn't be an "appropriate result," and that he still had other legal options.^{[122][151]}

In September 2011, the documentary film *Roman Polanski: A Film Memoir* had its world premiere in Zürich, Switzerland. During an interview in the film, he offers his apology to Geimer: "She is a double victim: My victim, and a victim of the press."^[13] On this occasion, he collected the lifetime achievement award he was to have received at the time of his arrest two years earlier.^[152]

***Vanity Fair* libel case**

In 2004, Polanski sued *Vanity Fair* magazine in London for libel. A 2002 article in the magazine claimed that Polanski promised he would "make another Sharon Tate out of you" in an attempt to seduce a Scandinavian model while he was travelling to Tate's funeral. He received supporting testimony from Mia Farrow, and *Vanity Fair* "was unable to prove that the incident occurred." Polanski was awarded £50,000 in damages plus some of his legal costs.^[153]

Filmography

Director

Year	Film	Oscar nominations	Oscar wins
1955	<i>Zaczarowany rower</i> (also as <i>Bicycle</i>)		
	<i>Morderstwo</i> (also as <i>A Murderer</i>)		
1957	<i>Uśmiech zębiczny</i> (also as <i>A Toothful Smile</i>)		
	<i>Rozbijemy zabawę</i> (also as <i>Break Up the Dance</i>)		
1958	<i>Dwaj ludzie z szafą</i> (also as <i>Two Men and a Wardrobe</i>)		
1959	<i>Lampa</i> (also as <i>The Lamp</i>)		
	<i>Gdy spadają anioły</i> (also as <i>When Angels Fall</i>)		
1961	<i>Le Gros et le maigre</i> (also as <i>The Fat and the Lean</i>)		
	<i>Ssaki</i> (also as <i>Mammals</i>)		
1962	<i>Nóż w wodzie</i> (also as <i>Knife in the Water</i>)	1	
1964	<i>Les plus belles escroqueries du monde</i> (also as <i>The Beautiful Swindlers</i>) —segment: " <i>La rivière de diamants</i> "		
1965	<i>Repulsion</i> *		
1966	<i>Cul-de-sac</i>		
1967	<i>The Fearless Vampire Killers or: Pardon Me, Madam, but Your Teeth Are in My Neck</i> (also as <i>Dance of the Vampires</i>)		
1968	<i>Rosemary's Baby</i> *	2	1
1971	<i>Macbeth</i>		
1972	<i>Weekend of a Champion</i>		
1972	<i>What?</i> (also as <i>Diary of Forbidden Dreams</i>)		
1974	<i>Chinatown</i>	11	1
1976	<i>Le Locataire</i> (also as <i>The Tenant</i>)*		
1979	<i>Tess</i>	6	3
1986	<i>Pirates</i>	1	
1988	<i>Frantic</i>		
1992	<i>Bitter Moon</i>		
1994	<i>Death and the Maiden</i>		
1999	<i>The Ninth Gate</i>		
2002	<i>The Pianist</i>	7	3
2005	<i>Oliver Twist</i>		
2007	<i>To Each His Own Cinema</i> (segment <i>Cinéma erotique</i>)		
2010	<i>The Ghost Writer</i>		
2011	<i>Carnage</i>		

2012	<i>A Therapy</i> (short film for Prada)		
2013	<i>Venus in Fur</i>		

*These movies are part of his "Apartment Trilogy".^[11]

Actor

- *Trzy opowieści* (a.k.a. *Three Stories*) as Genek 'The Little' (segment "Jacek", 1953)
- *Zaczarowany rower* (a.k.a. *Magical Bicycle*) as Adas (1955)
- *Rower* (a.k.a. *Bicycle*) as the Boy who wants to buy a bicycle (1955)
- *Pokolenie* (a.k.a. *A Generation*) as Mundek (1955)
- *Nikodem Dyzma* as the Boy at Hotel (1956)
- *Wraki* (a.k.a. *The Wrecks*, 1957)
- *Koniec nocy* (a.k.a. *End of the Night*) as the Little One (1957)
- *Dwaj ludzie z szafą* (a.k.a. *Two Men and a Wardrobe*) as the Bad boy (1958)
- *Zadzwońcie do mojej żony?* (a.k.a. *Call My Wife*) as a Dancer (1958)
- *Gdy spadają anioły* (a.k.a. *When Angels Fall Down*) as an Old woman (1959)
- *Lotna* as a Musician (1959)
- *Zezowate szczęście* (a.k.a. *Bad Luck*) as Jola's Tutor (1960)
- *Do widzenia, do jutra* (a.k.a. *Good Bye, Till Tomorrow*) as Romek (1960)
- *Niewinni czarodzieje* (a.k.a. *Innocent Sorcerers*) as Dudzio (1960)
- *Ostrożnie, Yeti!* (a.k.a. *Beware of Yeti!*, 1961)
- *Gros et le maigre, Le* (a.k.a. *The Fat and the Lean*) as The Lean (1961)
- *Samson* (1961)
- *Nóż w wodzie* (a.k.a. *Knife in the Water*) voice of Young Boy (1962)
- *Repulsion* as Spoon Player (1965)
- *The Fearless Vampire Killers* as Alfred, Abronsius' Assistant (1967)
- *The Magic Christian* as Solitary drinker (1969)
- *What?* as Mosquito (1972)
- *Chinatown* as Man with Knife (1974)
- *Blood for Dracula* (Andy Warhol) as Man in Tavern (1976)
- *Locataire, Le* (a.k.a. *The Tenant*) as Trelkovsky (1976)
- *Chassé-croisé* (1982)
- *En attendant Godot* (TV) as Lucky (1989)
- *Back in the USSR* as Kurilov (1992)
- *Una pura formalità* (a.k.a. *A Pure Formality*) as Inspector (1994)
- *Grosse fatigue* (a.k.a. *Dead Tired*) as Roman Polanski (1994)
- *Hommage à Alfred* (a.k.a. *Tribute to Alfred Lepetit*, 2000)
- *Zemsta* (a.k.a. *The Revenge*) as Papkin (2002)
- *Rush Hour 3* as Detective Revi (2007)
- *Caos calmo* (a.k.a. *Quiet Chaos (film)*) as Steiner (2007)

Writer

- Script for *A Taste for Women*,^[154] Scénario: Aimez-vous les femmes? (1964)
- Script for *A Day at the Beach* (1970) based on the 1962 novel of the same name by Simon Heere Heeresma.^[155]

- Polanski's autobiography, *Roman by Polanski* (1985), sometimes known as *Roman*.

Awards and nominations



Polanski in 2011 at the Zürich Film Festival.

Year	Award	Category	Work	Result
1965	Berlin Film Festival	Silver Berlin Bear-Extraordinary Jury Prize	<i>Repulsion</i>	Won ^[156]
1966	Berlin Film Festival	Golden Bear	<i>Cul-de-sac</i>	Won ^[157]
1968	Academy Award	Best Screenplay	<i>Rosemary's Baby</i>	Nominated
1974	Academy Award	Academy Award for Best Director	<i>Chinatown</i>	Nominated
	Golden Globe Awards	Golden Globe Award for Best Director		Won ^[158]
	British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA)	Best Direction		Won ^[159]
1979	César Award	César Award for Best Picture	<i>Tess</i>	Won ^[160]
		César Award for Best Director		Won ^[160]
	Academy Award	Best Director		Nominated
	Golden Globe Awards	Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Film		Won ^[161]
		Golden Globe Award for Best Director—Motion Picture		Nominated
2002	Cannes Film Festival	Palme d'Or	<i>The Pianist</i>	Won ^[78]
	British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA)	Best Film		Won ^[162]
		Best Director		Won ^[162]
	Academy Awards	Best Director		Won ^[163]
		Best Picture		Nominated
	César Award	César Award for Best Director		Won ^[160]
		César Award for Best Film		Won ^[160]
2004	Karlovy Vary International Film Festival	Crystal Globe for outstanding artistic contribution to world cinema		Won
	Argentine Film Critics Association	Best Foreign Film	<i>The Pianist</i>	Nominated
2009	Zürich Film Festival Golden Icon Award	Lifetime achievement		Won ^[15] [16][164]
2010	Berlin Film Festival	Silver Bear for Best Director	<i>The Ghost Writer</i>	Won ^[165]
	European Film Awards	Best Film		Won ^[81]
		Best Director		Won ^[81]
		Best Screenwriter		Won ^[81]
		Lumières Awards		Best Director

		Best Screenwriter		Won ^[166]
2011	César Award	César Award for Best Director		Won ^[160]
		César Award for Best Screenwriter		Won ^[160]
2014	César Award	César Award for Best Film		Nominated
		César Award for Best Director	<i>Venus in Fur</i>	Won ^[160]
		César Award for Best Screenwriter		Nominated

Other awards

New York Film Critics Circle Awards

- 1980: *Tess* nominated for Best Direction
- 1980: *Tess* nominated for Best Foreign Film
- 1974: *Chinatown* nominated for Best Film
- 1971: *Macbeth* nominated for Best Direction
- 1971: *Macbeth* nominated for Best Film
- 1965: *Repulsion* nominated for Best Direction
- 1965: *Repulsion* nominated for Best Screenwriting

Venice Film Festival

- 1966: *Cul De Sac* nominated for National Syndication of Italian Film Journalists
- 1962: *Knife in the Water* won for Fipresci Prize

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