

LOUIS GOSSETT, JR.  
Biography

Louis Gossett, Jr. is one of the most sought after and busiest actors working in theatrical feature films and television today.

Mr. Gossett's current production, "The Inspectors," tells the story of a seasoned postal inspector who is teamed with a young investigator on a case involving a fatal letter bombing. Executive Produced by Gossett and his production company, Logo Entertainment, this original drama premiered on the Showtime Network in the fall of 1998.

Another recent Logo production, "In His Father's Shoes," aired on Showtime in June 1997. Also Executive Produced by Gossett and Logo Entertainment, this original family film deals with a young boy's journey into his father's past by using a pair of magical shoes that enable him to inhabit his father's body.

The film was nominated for an Achievement in Cable Excellence (ACE) Award and was honored with the Parents' Choice Gold Award. "In His Father's Shoes" also recently received an Emmy Award for Best Children's Special.

Mr. Gossett has also appeared in numerous network television films including the CBS movie of the week "To Dance with Olivia." In addition to starring in the project, Gossett served as Executive Producer with Logo Entertainment. The story centers on a lawyer, husband and father whose wife has become a recluse after the shooting death of their young son. This family movie aired on CBS in March 1997.

Just before "To Dance with Olivia," Mr. Gossett completed an original film for Showtime entitled "Run for the Dream: The Gail Dever's story." This film is based on the actual story of coach Bob Kersee who helped his star runner, Gail Devers, overcome a crippling disease in time to win a gold medal at the 1994 Olympics. Gossett's production company, Logo Entertainment, Co-Executive Produced the film. "Run for the Dream" aired on Showtime and the USA Network in the summer of 1996.

Only a few weeks prior to beginning production on "Run for the Dream," Gossett had just completed shooting and Executive Producing the feature film "Inside." This taut and engrossing drama recounts the treatment of political prisoners in South Africa during Apartheid. Mr. Gossett co-starred along with Nigel Hawthorne and Eric Stoltz in this film directed by Arthur Penn. The film was presented at the Cannes Film Festival in 1997 and Gossett was nominated for an Achievement in Cable Excellence (ACE) award for his role as "The Questioner."

In 1995, Gossett starred in "Zooman," written by Charles Fuller for Showtime. Fuller adapted the screenplay from his award winning Broadway play, "Zooman and the Sign." That same year, Gossett filmed the CBS movie "Captive Heart: The James Mink Story." As well as starring in the lead role, Gossett served as Executive Consultant on the film, which aired on the network in April, 1996.

In the fall of 1994, Gossett shot "Ray Alexander: A Menu for Murder," the second film in a series of movies for NBC. The series was Co-Produced by Dean Hargrove and Logo Entertainment. Prior to this, he starred in "A Father for Charlie," which was also Executive Produced by Logo Entertainment. This film aired in January of 1995 on CBS.

Gossett portrayed the character of Walter Osgood, a man who insists on remaining on his family farm in the Depression-era Ozarks despite long, ongoing attempts by bigoted locals to drive him out. The story revolves around Osgood forming an unlikely bond with Charlie Cantwell, a ten-year-old boy who has been abandoned by his racist, abusive father.

At the beginning of the year, Gossett completed filming "Curse of the Starving Class," co-starring James Woods and Kathy Bates. In this movie written by Sam Shepard, he plays the owner of a club who comes to the aid of a farmer about to lose his land.

Also in 1994, Gossett was seen in a starring role in the mini-series "Return to Lonesome Dove," a continuation of the critically acclaimed "Lonesome Dove." In "Return to Lonesome Dove," Gossett played Isom Dart, a trail-wise cowboy who, together with his brother, is enlisted to lead a trail of mustangs cross country to Lonesome Dove. The show also starred Jon Voight, Rick Schroeder, Oliver Reed and Barbara Hershey.

Early in 1993, Gossett traveled to South Africa where he co-starred with Sean Connery in "A Goodman in Africa." In this film, Gossett plays a U.S. educated politician who is running what seems to be a victorious campaign for the presidency of South Africa. The film was released in 1994.

In March 1993, another Logo Entertainment production for NBC, "Father & Son; Dangerous Relations" premiered to top ratings in its time slot and was one of the highest rated shows of the week. Also starring Blair Underwood, the story was of a father and son who have not seen each other in twenty years and meet again in jail. They are then pardoned into each other's custody.

The physical demands of playing a tough, hardened con in "Father & Son" was tempered somewhat by Gossett's top notch physical condition. Just prior to shooting, Gossett completed a most physically demanding role as "Honey Roy Palmer" in the MGM feature film, "Diggstown." It was a role that sent Gossett back into the gym for the first time in years where he lost more than 35 pounds. For eight weeks, he trained six hours a day, six days a week. Equally important to this training was a cutting diet, which consisted of very little solid food and high quantities of special vitamins.

Gossett has received critical acclaim and commercial success over the years for his body of work. He won a Los Angeles Drama Critic Award for his performance in the play "Murderous Angles." In 1977, Gossett won an Emmy, television's highest honor, for his portrayal of "Fiddler" in the historic television mini-series, "Roots." His great grandmother, a strong willed former slave who lived to be 117, provided him with part of the inspiration for his role.

In 1982, he electrified the world when he won an Oscar for his role of "Sergeant Foley" in the hit film, "An Officer and a Gentleman." In 1992, he won a Golden Globe award for his role in HBO's The Josephine Baker Story. In 1998, he was awarded the NAACP Image Award for his guest-starring role in the critically acclaimed and popular CBS series, "Touched by an Angel."

Gossett has also received seven additional Emmy nominations for his performances in "Sadat" (Operation Prime Time Network), "A Gathering of Old Men" (CBS), "Palmer 's Town" (CBS), "The Century Collection Presents Ben Vereen-His Roots" (ARC), "Backstage at the White House" (NBC) the CBS drama "Touched by an Angel" and, most recently, for "In His Father 's Shoes" (SHOWTIME. ) He has also received Achievement in Cable Excellence (ACE) award nominations for his performances in "Studie & Simpson," "Inside and In His Father 's Shoes." In addition, he has given critically acclaimed performances in many other films including "The Deep," "The River Niger," "The Landlord," "The Laughing Policeman," "Enemy Mine," the "Iron Eagle" films, "The Principle," "Toy Soldiers," "Diggstown" and "Tucker & Flynn."

Gossett has also starred in the acclaimed television movies "Roots: The Gift" (ABC), "The Father Clements Story" (NBC), "Goodbye Miss Fourth of July" (DisneyChannel), "El Diablo" (HBO), "Zora is My Name" (PBS), "The Guardian" (HBO), "Carolina Skeletons" (NBC) and "Keeper of the City" (Showtime). He appeared on television in "Don't Look Back" as the legendary baseball pitcher, Satchel Paige. He has also starred in NBC's "Gideon Oliver," a two-hour wheel produced by the Emmy winner, William Sackheim.

Born in the Coney Island section of Brooklyn, New York, Gossett attended Abraham Lincoln High School where he was a top student and class president, as well as an athlete who won letters in three sports, including basketball, where he won all-city honors.

While sidelined from high school sports with an injury, a Lincoln High drama teacher suggested that Gossett take a stab at acting in a school production of "You Can't Take It With You." He proved to be so

riveting on stage that the same teacher suggested he try out for an open casting call on Broadway. It was for the production of "Take a Giant Step." At 16 years old, Gossett won the role over 400 others.

His performance won for him the Donaldson award as "Best Newcomer in the Theatre" and got him thinking about his priorities: basketball or acting? He decided on both.

He went to New York University on a basketball and drama scholarship. He starred not only on the court but also in dozens of theatrical productions including The Desk Set opposite Shirley Booth, Kurt Wiell 's Lost in The Stars and a musical version of Golden Boy.

At an age when most young men are just starting out, Gossett was well on his way towards making his mark. Being the star basketball player in college, he was invited to try out for the New York Knicks. At the same time, he won a coveted Broadway role opposite Sidney Poitier in "A Raisin In The Sun."

Gossett reported to the Knicks but decided to pursue Broadway after catching several shots in the mouth under the basket hoop. "I knew right then I wasn't hungry enough and I had an option, " he says.

Following his acclaimed Broadway performance, he came to California to recreate his role in "Raisin In The Sun" for the film version directed by Dan Petrie. He has alternated between film and television ever since, going back to the stage whenever he can.

Besides being one of the most talented and versatile actors working in Hollywood, Gossett maintains a strong commitment to helping others by giving back to the community both as a spokesperson and as a behind-the-scenes leader of a number of organizations.

One of Gossett's community projects is "The Family Tree," geared to bonding youngsters throughout the U.S. who do not have a very solid family foundation. This project is very close to Gossett because it relates to his experiences growing up in Brooklyn where he had a childhood filled with love as well as discipline and strong community morals.

Mr. Gossett's father was a hard working man who rose from being a porter to becoming the head of the billing department of the local gas company. His mother worked as a domestic and then went on to complete her education. As a result, she could not always be there for him. Neighbors took him in to make sure he was fed and looked after until his parents came home from their jobs. Through his efforts, Gossett hopes to instill the same kind of family/neighbor bonding in cities across America.

He was also very active in United Way's past fund-raising campaigns, including television appeals nationwide. In 1991, he starred in "Something to Believe In," United Way's campaign film, which outlined how the organization continues to work for all of us.

Additionally, Gossett has given his time and energy to help The Muscular Dystrophy Association, The United Negro College Fund, the United Nations "World Summit for Children, " The Creative Community for Non-Violence, Boy's Hope, Housing Now, Brothers Against Drugs, The End Hunger Network, Shaka Franklin Foundation, National Rainbow Coalition, Theatre Authority, Inc., Artists for a Free South Africa, Coalition to Stop the Violence and he serves on the Board of Trustees for the Challengers Boys and Girls Clubs of Los Angeles.

He has been garnered with similar acclaim for his work on behalf of the less fortunate including the Wings of Hope Ant-Drug Award, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Alumni Award, an Honorary Big Brother Award and Indiana state's Senator Carolina Mosby's Above and Beyond Award.

Nearly fifteen years ago while watching ABC's "Good Morning, America," he saw a segment about the children in America who are victims of poverty. One boy, age seven, who lived in St. Louis, Missouri caught his eye. With the help of the segment producer from Good Morning, America, Gossett tracked down the youngster and his family and offered to adopt him. Today, this young man has a promising future and continues to see his natural family on a regular basis. Mr. Gossett's first son also lives in the Los Angeles

area.

Louis Gossett, Jr. has had an extraordinary career by any standards but he is not resting on his laurels. If anything, he's out looking for the next mountain to climb.