

The Show that demystifies Economics
Cinema Industry – part 3

Actors©

by Max Farrington and Michael Hirsch



In the cinema industry, an actor is a person that portrays a character in a film production. The type of acting on a stage in a live performance in a theater, and acting in front of a camera for a film, are not at all the same. According to D.W. Griffith, an American director most famous for his film *The Birth of a Nation*, theatrical acting does not look good on film, as the actors have to learn to get used to the camera, and not to move too much as there is usually a mark on the ground, a taped "X", indicating the area where the actor will be at the optimum point for the sake of lighting. As there are many world famous actors we won't have the time to go through them all, so we will try to talk about the actors from an economic and financial point of view, such as who are the best paid actors?

In 2014, for example, Robert Downey Jr. earned a total of \$75 million. This huge sum of money is understandable when you realize that he is also one of the actors who have had the most top 10 box office hits. He appeared in three movies in the top 10 as Iron Man in *Avengers*, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, and *Iron Man 3*.

However, in terms of earnings for one film or a specific franchise, Tom Cruise is the actor who takes the top spot with the *Mission Impossible* franchise. He was paid a total of \$290 million for four films. He comes out in front of Keanu Reeves who was paid \$262 million for the *Matrix Trilogy*. Finally, Johnny Depp closes the podium in third place with \$185 million earned for his role as Jack Sparrow in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films. A special mention goes to Tom Cruise who also appears a second time in 5th place, having been paid \$100 million for his role in the *War of the Worlds*.

Over on the actress side, in 2014 it was Sandra Bullock and her role in *Gravity* that made her the best-paid actress for one single movie. It is estimated that she earned \$51 million for this role. The film also went on to win 7 Oscars, and Sandra Bullock received a nomination for Best Actress. Throughout the whole year, however, it was Angelina Jolie who took the top spot with estimated earnings of \$145 million.

The most prestigious and sought-after award in the film industry is of course the Oscar, which has its equivalent prizes in the Emmy Awards for television, the Tony Awards for theater performance, and the Grammy Awards in Music. Since the début of the Academy Awards in 1929, a total of 2957 golden statuettes have been awarded.

In terms of acting records, the most awards for a leading female role goes to Katharine Hepburn who won 4: in 1933, 1967, 1968 and 1981. For the leading male role it is Daniel Day Lewis who has the most with 3 Oscars. But Katharine Hepburn's record might soon be broken as Meryl Streep holds the record for most nominations, with 19, and she has already won three times.