



Tippi Hedren

Biography

“Beyond The Birds”

Webster’s defines a lady as “A woman of authority, refinement and genteel manor, deserving of homage.” Tippi Hedren is in every aspect of the word a lady. Among an exclusive list of Hollywood elite including Grace Kelly, Eva Marie Saint, Janet Leigh, Doris Day, Julie Harris, Ingrid Bergman and Kim Novak, Tippi holds an elevated status on the legendary list of Hitchcock women. Her performances in the classics “The Birds” and “Marnie” have guaranteed her a seat in cinematic history. But it is her humanitarian and philanthropic endeavors that win her place in the hearts of millions.

A career that spans over half a century From Chaplin and Hitchcock to Ed Wood, Jr., Tippi has mastered drama and terror to light and dark comedy. In 2002, Tippi received the second of two “Best Actress” awards in a year for John Fahn’s “Tea with Grandma” at the New York Film Festival.

Tippi became a household name after only a few weeks of filming **The Birds** with Rod Taylor, when director Alfred Hitchcock told Associated Press reporter Bob Thomas, "Tippi Hedren is really remarkable. She's already reaching the lows and highs of terror." The former New York fashion model was making her debut as an actress in a starring role in **The Birds**, and such high praise from the enigmatic master of cinema shock and suspense was rare indeed. "Like a dormant volcano we know one day is going to erupt," Hitchcock described her. "Get a look at that girl, she's going to be good. I think Svengali Hitch rides again." In a cover article about **The Birds** in *LOOK* magazine (Dec. 4, 1962), Hitchcock continued to rave, "Tippi has a faster tempo, city glibness, more humor [than Grace Kelly]. She displayed jaunty assuredness, pertness, with an attractive throw of the head. And she memorized and read lines extraordinarily well and is sharper in expression." **The Birds**, premiered at The Cannes Film Festival, was a sensation earning over \$11,000,000 in the first few months, and is now a classic. Saturday Review's Arthur Knight wrote, "Hitchcock's newest 'find', Tippi Hedren is a decidedly lovely blonde." Her performance in the film earned her a Golden Globe award. Hitchcock "discovered" the cover girl while viewing a commercial on NBC's "Today Show" and summoned her to Hollywood under personal contract. After the release of **The Birds**, he starred her in **Marnie**, with Sean Connery. Judith Crist wrote, "Alfred Hitchcock had given us one Grace Kelly in our generation and seems intent on giving us another in the person of Tippi Hedren, a classically beautiful, regally poised blonde." **Marnie** has achieved cult status as an offbeat psychological thriller, years ahead of its time.

Camille Paglia, Professor of Humanities at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and author of several acclaimed books about women in film, wrote— "It's so unfair that Tippi Hedren has never had the credit she deserves ... The interplay between Hedren and [Suzanne] Pleshette in **The Birds** tells me more about women than any number of articles on feminist theory, capturing the subtleties of females warring with each other; all those nuances of knives and guns conducted in looks and body language. The way Hedren handles cigarettes and a martini glass with such remarkable sophistication. It is gesturalism raised to the level of choreography."

After two unparalleled Hitchcock success's Tippi filmed, **The Countess From Hong Kong** with Marlon Brando and Sophia Loren, directed by Chaplin, in what was to be the "Little Tramp's" final film. The three films, back to back, were an auspicious start for the Minnesota

girl of Scandinavian parentage. Between over thirty films, including Pacific Heights (in which she co-starred with daughter Melanie Griffith), and numerous television appearances from "Perry Mason" to "Chicago Hope" and HBO's current hit series "Arli\$\$," she's been involved in a variety of humanitarian and environmental causes, almost overshadowing her screen work.

As volunteer International Relief Coordinator for "FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY", she traveled worldwide to set up relief programs following earthquakes, hurricanes, famine and war. She aided "boat people" in the South China Sea from a "FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY" rescue ship. Lobbying efforts on behalf of Asian refugees have taken her before Congress and have earned her numerous awards including the "Humanitarian Award" presented to her by the B'hai Faith. She has been honored by the USO for entertaining troops in Vietnam and by the CELEBRITY OUTREACH FOUNDATION for her charitable work.

She began her long love affair with wild animals in 1969 while doing a film, **Satan's Harvest**, in Africa. She "met" a mellow lion, and much of her life since then has been devoted to the big cats. Deeply involved with international conservation groups to save wildlife, and an outspoken voice against cruelty to animals, both wild and domestic, she's a board member of "The Wildlife Safari", founded by her friend, Frank Hart, in Winston, Oregon. She also served on the board of "The Elsa Wild Animal Appeal" founded by her friend, the late Joy Adamson. Her other charity work includes serving on The Board of Directors of The Women's Council of KCET (Channel 28), The Minnesota Film Council, The American Heart Association, The March of Dimes, Multiple Sclerosis, International Orphans, Inc., and several AIDS causes.

Perhaps Tippi Hedren's most unique endeavor is being "den mother" and close friend to sixty-odd big cats - lion, tiger, leopard, cougar, serval and two African elephants at **The Roar Foundation's Shambala Preserve** near Acton, California.

The high desert game preserve is home to the felines and pachyderms and was first established as an African-type set for the motion picture, **Roar**, which Tippi co-produced and starred in with her daughter, film actress Melanie Griffith. After the five-year filming was completed, it became the current, non-profit center for big cat care and research. In keeping with her outlook on the environment and conservation, many of Shambala's residents are cast-offs from private owners, zoos and circuses. "They're living out their lives in safety and comfort." The Preserve is open to the public on a reservation basis. Tippi is founder and President of "**THE ROAR FOUNDATION**" and resides at Shambala in a cottage surrounded by big cat compounds. "I awaken to their roars." The story of Tippi's life and the animals "dearest to her heart" was told in Simon & Schuster's **The Cats of Shambala** (1985). No longer in print, this marvelous story is in the process of being updated. This updated and revised edition (2000) will soon be available in paperback. All proceeds are used to support the Shambala cats. Copies of *the Cats of Shambala* are available through the Shambala website for \$25 at <http://www.shambala.org/>, in Adobe pdf formats only.

Several documentaries have been produced about the Shambala Preserve including, **Lions: Kings of the Serengeti** by the Richard Diercks Co, Inc. which won the Telly Award in 1995 for outstanding video documentary; and **Life With Big Cats** (1998), produced for Animal Planet which won the **Genesis Award** for best documentary in 1999.

Tippi continues to work frequently in motion pictures, theatre, episodic and cable television, and her contributions to world cinema have been honored with Life Achievement awards in France at The Beauvais Film Festival Cinemalia 1994, and in Spain by The Fundacion Municipal De Cine in 1995. In 1999, Tippi was honored as "Woman of Vision" by Women in Film and Video in Washington, D.C., and received the Presidential Medal for her work in film from Hofstra University.

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