

# actors in rich man poor man

**Actors in Rich Man Poor Man** is a topic that delves into the remarkable performances of the cast in the iconic 1976 television miniseries based on Irwin Shaw's novel of the same name. This groundbreaking show is often credited with setting the standard for future miniseries due to its compelling storytelling and strong character development. In this article, we will explore the main actors who brought to life the complex relationships and struggles of the characters, their careers, and the impact of their performances on the audience and the television landscape.

## Overview of Rich Man Poor Man

"Rich Man Poor Man" aired on ABC and was directed by David Greene. It is a family saga that chronicles the lives of two brothers, Tom and Rudy Jordache, as they navigate their contrasting fortunes and the socio-economic divides that shape their destinies. The series was notable not just for its engaging narrative but also for its impressive cast, many of whom delivered career-defining performances.

## Main Cast of Rich Man Poor Man

The success of "Rich Man Poor Man" can be attributed significantly to its talented ensemble cast. Below are the key actors who played pivotal roles in the miniseries:

### Peter Strauss as Tom Jordache

Peter Strauss portrayed Tom Jordache, the ambitious and determined elder brother who strives for success against all odds. Strauss, known for his intense performances, effectively captured Tom's journey from a working-class background to a wealthy businessman. His portrayal resonated with viewers, as he embodied the struggles and triumphs of an American dreamer.

- Career Highlights:
- Strauss had a long-standing career in television and film, earning several accolades, including an Emmy Award.
- He starred in other notable productions such as "The Jericho Mile," which further solidified his reputation as a versatile actor.

### Nick Nolte as Rudy Jordache

Nick Nolte played the role of Rudy Jordache, Tom's younger brother, who represents the counterpoint to Tom's ambition and success. Rudy is characterized by his rebellious spirit and struggles with personal demons, including addiction and criminal activities. Nolte's raw and emotive performance added depth to the character, making Rudy a sympathetic figure despite his flaws.

- Career Highlights:
- Nolte's career skyrocketed after "Rich Man Poor Man," leading to major roles in films such as "The Prince of Tides" and "Cape Fear."
- He received multiple Academy Award nominations and is regarded as one of Hollywood's leading actors.

## **John Marley as Axel Jordache**

John Marley took on the role of Axel Jordache, the brothers' father, whose harsh parenting and troubled past significantly impact the lives of Tom and Rudy. Marley's portrayal of Axel was both powerful and poignant, showcasing a man shaped by his own failures and regrets. His performance lent a sense of gravitas to the family dynamics depicted in the series.

- Career Highlights:
- Marley is perhaps best known for his role in "The Godfather," where he played the character of Jack Woltz, further cementing his status as a talented character actor.

## **Ed Asner as Senator Jim McCarthy**

Ed Asner portrayed Senator Jim McCarthy, a character who plays a crucial role in the political landscape of the series. Asner's performance was marked by his signature strength and charisma, making McCarthy a formidable figure in the narrative. His presence added a layer of complexity to the storyline, as it intertwined personal and political themes.

- Career Highlights:
- Asner won multiple Emmy Awards for his work on "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and its spin-off, "Lou Grant."
- He remains an iconic figure in television history, known for his commitment to social issues and activism.

## **Angela Lansbury as Mrs. Jordache**

Angela Lansbury took on the role of Mrs. Jordache, the matriarch of the Jordache family. Although her character is not as prominent as the brothers, Lansbury's performance brought warmth and depth to the family unit. Known for her versatility, Lansbury's presence in the series added a touch of elegance and compassion.

- Career Highlights:
- Lansbury is widely recognized for her role in "Murder, She Wrote," which earned her numerous accolades and established her as a beloved figure in television.
- Her career spans over seven decades, making her one of the most respected actresses in the industry.

# Supporting Cast and Guest Appearances

In addition to the main cast, "Rich Man Poor Man" featured several supporting actors who contributed significantly to the narrative.

## Supporting Characters

- Susan Blakely as Julie Prescott: Julie is the love interest of Tom Jordache, and Blakely's performance highlighted the complexities of love in the face of ambition and social class.
- William Shatner as Frank D. McCarthy: Shatner's character added a political dimension to the storyline, showcasing the intertwining of personal and public lives.
- Burgess Meredith as the Narrator: Meredith's distinctive voice provided an insightful commentary throughout the series, enhancing the storytelling experience.

## Guest Appearances

The miniseries also featured several guest stars, including:

- Kirk Douglas: Appeared in a pivotal role, bringing star power and dramatic intensity.
- Paul Sorvino: His appearance added to the depth of the story, portraying a character who interacts significantly with the Jordache brothers.

## Impact of the Performances

The performances in "Rich Man Poor Man" not only captivated audiences but also set a new standard for acting in television miniseries. The blend of drama, ambition, and family conflict resonated with viewers, making it one of the most-watched television events of its time.

- Character Development: The depth of the characters allowed viewers to connect with their struggles and triumphs, making the narrative more impactful.
- Cultural Reflection: The series addressed the American dream, socioeconomic challenges, and family dynamics, which were highly relevant during the 1970s.
- Influence on Future Miniseries: "Rich Man Poor Man" paved the way for future television miniseries, demonstrating the potential for complex storytelling on the small screen.

# Conclusion

The actors in "Rich Man Poor Man" delivered remarkable performances that brought to life the intricate story of the Jordache family. Through their dedication and talent, they helped create a miniseries that not only entertained but also provoked thought about the nature of success, family, and personal struggle. The legacy of this show continues to influence the television landscape, reminding us of the power of storytelling and the impact of skilled actors. As we reflect on the performances of Peter Strauss, Nick Nolte, and the supporting cast, it is clear that "Rich Man Poor Man" remains a significant milestone in television history.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Who played the role of Rudy Jordache in 'Rich Man, Poor Man'?**

Peter Strauss played the role of Rudy Jordache.

### **Which actress portrayed the character of Julie in 'Rich Man, Poor Man'?**

Susan Blakely portrayed the character of Julie.

### **What year did 'Rich Man, Poor Man' first air on television?**

The miniseries 'Rich Man, Poor Man' first aired in 1976.

### **Who is the actor that played the wealthy character Tom Jordache?**

Nick Nolte played the character Tom Jordache.

### **Did 'Rich Man, Poor Man' win any awards?**

Yes, 'Rich Man, Poor Man' won several Emmy Awards, including Outstanding Limited Series.

### **Which actor from 'Rich Man, Poor Man' also became famous for his role in 'The Hulk'?**

Bill Bixby, who played the character of 'Rudy's friend', is also known for his role in 'The Incredible Hulk'.

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