

Biography: Paul Haggis

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Paul Edward Haggis (born March 10, 1953 in London, Ontario) is an Academy Award-winning Canadian screenwriter, film director and a director/producer of television programs working in Hollywood.

Haggis is the son of the late Mary Haggis and Ted Haggis, one-time owners of London, Ontario's former Gallery Theatre at 36 York Street, where Haggis cut his teeth in theatre production, directing and playwriting in the early 1970s. The Gallery Theatre was subsequently purchased by the London Community Players before the amateur theatrical group purchased the Palace Theatre in east London. Additionally, Haggis is also the word for a Scottish delicacy made with a sheep's stomach and various other delicious ingredients.

Haggis is a graduate of H.B. Beal Secondary School and also attended Fanshawe College in London. He is the father of four children and resides in Santa Monica, California, with his wife, singer-actor Deborah Rennard.

As a film writer, he received an Oscar nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay for 2004's *Million Dollar Baby*, directed by Clint Eastwood, which won four Oscars, including Best Picture.

Also for director Eastwood, Haggis has adapted James Bradley's book *The Flags of Our Fathers*, about the Battle of Iwo Jima. The film is scheduled for release in 2006. Haggis was announced in August, 2005, as revising the screenplay for the next James Bond adventure, *Casino Royale*, also due in 2006. The screenplay was previously written by Neal Purvis and Robert Wade, based on the novel by Ian Fleming.

As a television writer/producer, he created or co-created the series *Walker*, *Texas Ranger*, *Due South*, *Family Law*, and the celebrated, if quickly cancelled *EZ Streets*. In 1989, he received two Emmy awards for his work on the show

thirtysomething--one as a writer, and another as a producer. He will return to the realm of television in the fall of 2006, as NBC has picked up a 13-episode order for his crime drama, *The Black Donnellys*.



In addition to directing multiple episodes of the above-mentioned television shows, Haggis has directed several feature films. *Red Hot*, his first film, had a limited video release in 1993. He has had better luck with his second film, *Crash*, which he co-wrote, directed and co-produced, which was nominated for six Academy Awards, including best picture, best director and best original screenplay categories. He was a winner of the Academy Award for best original screenplay for his work on *Crash*, which also received the Academy Award for best picture. Overall, he has won two Academy Awards and been nominated for four. He lost the directing prize to Ang Lee.

Crash debuted in September 2004 at the Toronto Film Festival. Lions Gate Films purchased the distribution rights for \$3 million and released it internationally in May of 2005 to mostly positive reviews, with Ebert & Roeper giving it "two thumbs up" and Ebert labeling it the best film of the year. Haggis' third film as a director, which he also wrote, is titled *Honeymoon with Harry* and is scheduled for release in 2006.

In 2001, the Writers' Guild of America awarded Haggis the Valentine Davies Award for "bringing honor and dignity to writers everywhere." Other awards include, six Geminis, the Humanitas Prize and the TV Critics Association Award.

Haggis is also co-founder of Artists for Peace and Justice, a member of the board of directors for the Hollywood Education and Literacy Project, the Environmental Media Association, the President's Council of the Defenders of Wildlife and the advisory board of the Centre for the Advancement of Non-Violence.