

to English and Russian, she speaks French. While she has told interviewers that she would love to one day dance to the roles of Juliet and Carmen, her non-dance goals include having a family, earning a graduate degree, and owning a business.

Asked by the BBC what she hopes the future will look like, she replied: “My hope for the future is that more and more people engage with the arts. I’d like as many people as possible to find the same joy, freedom, and fulfillment from the arts that I have.”

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—Mari Rich

Tomi Adeyemi

Born: August 1, 1993

Occupation: Novelist

When Tomi Adeyemi’s debut young adult (YA) novel, *Children of Blood and Bone*, the first in a projected trilogy, was published in 2018, it immediately caused a major buzz in the literary world. Not only did the volume earn the first-time author a reported seven-figure deal, but it debuted at number one on the New York Times Best Sellers list and remained within the top ten for more than two years. Additionally, it garnered several major awards and was quickly optioned for the big screen. Adeyemi’s eagerly awaited sophomore effort, *Children of Virtue and Vengeance*, followed in late 2019.

Adeyemi drew upon West African history and mythology to create the richly textured fantasy world of Orisha, where the light-skinned ruling class brutally controls the country’s dark-skinned Maji. However, she was also inspired to write by more contemporary, proximate concerns: systemic racism, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the police killings of unarmed Black people. “Fantasy is such a wonderful lens because every obstacle in the book is tied to an obstacle that black people are facing as recent as today,” Adeyemi told Melanie Kembrey for the *Sydney Morning Herald* (9 Mar. 2018).

Adeyemi believes that reading about characters who look like them is important for Black youth and that empathizing with protagonists of color can broaden the minds of other audiences. “I had a lot of different reasons for writing



Photo by Tomi Adeyemi via Wikimedia Commons

Everything changed, however, when she became acquainted with filmmaker Billy Woodberry. Best known for his feature film *Bless Their Little Hearts* (1983), Woodberry had been part of a movement of Black Americans working in film in the 1970s and 1980s known as the LA Rebellion. Woodberry had Bradley screen some of the LA Rebellion films with him, and she quickly found herself feeling inspired. Unlike mainstream cinema, filmmakers from this movement used experimental narratives, often focused on stories about working-class Black American families, and typically cast nonprofessional actors. Bradley, who already had an unconventional filmmaking style, recognized her own artistic inclinations in their work.

While attending UCLA and creating a number of short films, Bradley began spending her summers in New Orleans. In 2010, an article titled “What Is It about 20-Somethings?” was published in the *New York Times Magazine* that criticized her generation for not reaching traditional adult milestones quickly enough. The article angered Bradley, who felt it focused too much on privileged young people and ignored the fact that there was a spectrum of experiences among millennials. During the thirty-seven-hour bus rides between New York City and New Orleans, she had begun interviewing other people in their twenties about their lives, aspirations, and challenges, and the article’s subject made her want to turn the conversations into a feature-length film for her thesis; however, UCLA was not willing to support it, so she moved to New Orleans in 2010 to make it herself. The city would become her home base and muse for the next decade.

In an interview with Mekado Murphy for the *New York Times* (17 Apr. 2014), Bradley explained why she was drawn to New Orleans, stating, “My father’s black, my mom is white. I’ve been torn between two very separate cultures my whole life. . . . There’s a visceral feeling where I feel like I’m in the beginning of my history down there, and there’s a lot of material to work with.”

EARLY CAREER

In addition to receiving her MFA from UCLA in 2012, Bradley eventually began production on *Below Dreams*, a scripted feature film that was inspired by the bus conversations she had had over the previous years. To find her actors, she posted an advertisement on Craigslist looking for people who were similar to the film’s characters. She ultimately cast a single mother named Leann, an unemployed man who had been convicted of a felony and is trying to secure work named Jamaine, and a recent arrival to New Orleans named Elliott.

Bradley worked with the actors over six months, rehearsing and fine-tuning the script

so that it better reflected their personal experiences and language. In an interview with Scott Macaulay for *Filmmaker* magazine (22 Apr. 2014), she commented on why the process was so successful: “I think parts of myself are certainly revealed in the film—as a black person, as a woman, as a transplant . . . these are all aspects of my experience which are present in the narrative but maybe more importantly these things are what helped me connect and communicate effectively with Leann (a single mother), Jamaine (a black male trying to get a job in New Orleans), and Elliott (a NYC tourist).”

Bradley shot the film over sixteen days on a small budget. In many ways, *Below Dreams* reflected the LA Rebellion films she had watched with Woodberry in that it has nonprofessional actors, an experimental narrative, and a vérité aesthetic. The film, which was accepted into and premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2014, received mostly positive reviews from critics.

EXAMINING MASS INCARCERATION

For years, Bradley’s work explored a broad range of themes and subject matters but focused primarily on the Black American experience. In the second half of the 2010s, following her direction of the 2015 film *Cover Me*, which premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, she turned her attention to the issue of mass incarceration in America. Her foray into this specific subject matter was not planned, as she had at first set out to make a short film about loneliness focusing on her friend Aloné Watts, whose boyfriend, Desmond, was imprisoned for nonviolent crimes. As Bradley began shooting, however, a narrative began to form around Watts’s decision regarding whether to accept Desmond’s marriage proposal despite her not knowing when he would be released. In a 2017 op-ed for the *New York Times*, which had supported the project, Bradley wrote that Watts’s heartbreaking experience reflected a reality that had been started before the Civil War, when African American families were torn apart through slavery. She stated, “I hope this film can propose a way of thinking about marriage as a symbol, one with the power to contradict our legacy of historical exclusion. Marriage as a right, not a privilege.” The resulting short documentary film, *Alone* (2017), won the Short Film Jury Award in nonfiction at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Meanwhile, in 2017 Bradley had also begun teaching production management and documentary filmmaking at Loyola University in New Orleans. Two years later, another documentary short, *America*, this time revolving around and reimagining Black American history, was screened at the Sundance Film Festival before

number six on the Regional Mexican Albums chart. In addition to the lead singles, hit tracks included “¿Por que no te enamoras? (Why Don’t You Fall in Love)” and “Bonita (Pretty).” *Hecho a mano* earned Favela two Latin Grammy nominations, for best norteño album and best new artist. It was also nominated for a Grammy Award for best regional Mexican album. Though he did not ultimately win in any of those categories, the nominations bolstered Favela’s confidence as a solo artist. “This album is me. It represents who I am,” he told Griselda Flores for *Billboard* (7 Dec. 2016). “A lot of people tried telling me what songs I should add or not add but at the end of the day, it’s my album. There’s no right ‘formula’ to make a good album.”

CAMINANDO (WALKING)

After *Hecho a mano*, Favela toured in support of the album, further building his profile as a performer, and continued writing material for other artists. His follow-up album, *Caminando* (Walking), finally came in 2019. Building on his previous success, it debuted at number one on the Billboard Regional Mexican Albums chart. Once again, he wrote all the songs and handled production duties as well, helping his personal approach to music come through. This was also reflected in the album’s title, as he explained in a press release quoted by *Magazine PR* (11 June 2019) and translated by Google: “I’m walking towards what I have always wanted to be since I was a child. I’m walking towards music, towards being an artist, being on stage and sharing what I feel with my audience.”

Caminando includes several tracks that became hits. “La magia de tus ojos” (The Magic of Your Eyes), is a romantic ballad about a man who falls in love with a woman when he looks into her eyes. (Favela later recorded a pop version of the song as a duet with Colombian artist Greeicy in 2020.) The album also features “Piensa en ti” (I Think of You) a duet with Chicana pop star Becky G, and “Me hubieras dicho (You Should Have Told Me),” a top ten hit on the Billboard Latin charts. Two songs on the album—the sweeping “Dije (Said),” and “Tu aroma (Your Scent)” —feature the famed folk ensemble Mariachi Vargas De Tecalitlán. Like its predecessor, *Caminando* was nominated for a Grammy Award for best regional Mexican album.

Also in 2019, Favela was included on the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list of influential young people, in the music category. That same year he served as a judge on the Univision reality competition show *Reina de la canción* (Song Queen). He also toured steadily, though he noted that he tried to return to his family ranch regularly. “The longest I’ve been away is a month,” he told Guerra. “Sometimes it’s 10, 15 days and that works.

That way it doesn’t hurt as much. A month and I miss lots of things.”

LLEGANDO AL RANCHO (ARRIVING AT THE RANCH)

The family ranch would play prominently into Favela’s next project, as he soon began work on an album called *Llegando al rancho* (Arriving at the Ranch). He recorded at a studio he built right on his family’s property, in part to retain the sense of authenticity he had become known for. “I know there are a lot of clichés if you’re from the ranch,” he told Guerra. “I didn’t want my record to sound like I did it on purpose, that I made an album called ‘Llegando al Rancho’ just to say I’m from a ranch.” The record was originally slated for release in 2020 but was delayed by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

While his own album was pushed back, Favela’s compositions continued to be recorded and released by other artists through 2020. Notable tracks he penned that appeared that year included “¿Quién pierde más? (Who Loses the Most?)” by Banda MS and “¿A qué sabe el olvido? (What Does Oblivion Taste Like?)” by Alejandro Fernández. Some singles from *Llegando al rancho* also were released in the summer of 2020, including “Te dije (I Told You)” and “Ya no quiero andar contigo (I Don’t Want to Hang Out with You Anymore).” In January 2021, Favela released a nostalgic mariachi song called “El alumno” (The Student) with the Colombian singer Jessi Uribe. Another single, “Alguien especial (Someone Special),” was released in March 2021. Favela expressed gratitude to fans who tuned in and offered support despite the challenging pandemic. As he told Guerra, “In the midst of all this, that someone still listens and gives it a like on social media is a blessing. It’s a clear sign that our work is not finished, that we should continue doing things, that despite so many things that can occupy people’s minds, they’ve allocated a bit of space for us to keep putting out music.”

PERSONAL LIFE

Favela often talked about his close connection to his family and especially their way of life on a rural ranch. “I’m a ranch person 100 percent! I love riding horses,” he told LaRoiz. He also enjoys riding motorcycles and reading.

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LANDING A ROLE IN HARRY POTTER

When Lewis saw a notice for a local open audition for the cast of the first Harry Potter film, he jumped at the chance, hoping to be involved in any way. His experience auditioning for television roles had taught him to wait typically a few days before hearing back from the casting team, and he had been one of several people to line up there and around the United Kingdom and wait for hours for a short reading in front of the camera. So, when the unexpected call came two months later asking him to audition in London for the part of Neville Longbottom, he was beyond thrilled. “It was exciting stuff!” he told *Victoria Quarter*, before continuing, “I knew all about Neville, as I’d read the books. So I went for the audition, and I got the part.”

When *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, directed by Chris Columbus, premiered in 2001, twelve-year-old Lewis was seen as Neville, a shy, fearful, and often awkward wizard whose nature greatly contrasts that of the titular character (played by Daniel Radcliffe). Nonetheless, his kind-heartedness earns him a spot among Harry’s closest allies as they embark on their first year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

This first film started a global phenomenon, as it gave millions of readers of all ages a visualization of the fantastical stories that had long lived only in their imaginations. Soon, the actor was called to reprise his role as Neville in the next two installments, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, which hit theaters in 2002 and 2004, respectively.

GROWING UP WITH NEVILLE

When not on set filming, Lewis was a student at St. Mary’s, a Catholic school in Menston. There, the actor says, he exhibited some of the personality traits of his famous Harry Potter character. “I wasn’t bullied or anything at school, but I was quite shy and didn’t speak up too much in class,” he told Ryan Love for *Digital Spy* (28 June 2011). Nevertheless, as his character grew up in the films, Lewis did so, too, albeit in the public eye. As he explained to Love, “I grew with my role in the film—doing press, interacting with adults on a daily basis, and then I started to just grow in myself. I’m not at the frontline of any wars but I’ve definitely grown up with Neville and become a lot more confident in myself.”

The actor next appeared in the fourth installment of the series, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, which debuted in theaters worldwide in 2005. At the same time, a persistent fear that his character was going to be recast still entered his thoughts; at sixteen, the actor had grown even taller and slimmer—traits drastically opposed to his character’s description in the books. Luckily,

a bodysuit-like undergarment had continued to come to his aid to thicken his appearance, and he was equipped with false teeth, allowing him to remain truthful to the Neville that Rowling had envisioned while penning the tale. When the fifth installment, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, premiered in 2007 to continued commercial and critical success, Lewis was, once more, part of it all.

After returning for the sixth entry of the film series, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009), Lewis made a brief appearance in the first part of the seventh film, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* (2010). However, it was not until the final installment, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (2011), that his character took on a more prominent role, highlighting his growth throughout the story as he became a key component in the demise of Lord Voldemort, a dark force who had been terrorizing the magic world for decades. With the conclusion of the beloved fantasy film franchise that had dominated the global box office over its ten-year lifespan, Lewis was among the few cast members to have appeared in all eight films. “The character of Neville, I owe so much to,” the actor told Love. “I couldn’t have thought of a better character to play. I got to do so much. I’m happy with the story arc and the way it finished.”

DELVING INTO THEATER

By 2011 Lewis was already well acquainted with the TV and film industries. Thinking that theater could expand his acting repertoire, he joined the cast of a production of Agatha Christie’s 1958 play *Verdict*, portraying a youth named Lester Cole. As he embarked on a national tour—with his onstage debut at Windsor’s Theatre Royal—it took him some time to get used to the theater atmosphere, as it differed greatly from his previous work. “You really need to project the voice all the time, and I just didn’t enjoy it initially,” he told *Victoria Quarter*. “Then the theatre company helped me and I eventually ‘got it.’ I realize now why so many film actors want to go back to theatre and I’m so glad I did it.”

In addition to appearing on the small screen once more, this time in the first season of BBC One’s *The Syndicate* (also written by Mellor), in 2012, Lewis was awarded an honorary master’s degree during the graduation ceremony at Leeds Metropolitan University. That same year, the actor continued his quest to exercise his theatrical abilities, appearing as Mick in an acclaimed production of *Our Boys*, written by Jonathan Lewis, and making his London West End debut at the Duchess Theatre.

PLAYING LEADS

After Lewis made his passage through theater, he largely went back to television. He guest-starred

sworn in on January 12, 2009, as the fifty-fifth governor of Missouri.

Nixon's achievements as governor include investments in education, job creation, and the passage of the Missouri Manufacturing Jobs Act, which gave auto manufacturers incentives to stay in the state. He also showed leadership in his handling of natural disasters, such as a catastrophic tornado that struck the city of Joplin on May 22, 2011.

On November 6, 2012, Nixon was reelected to a second term, defeating Republican challenger Dave Spence with 54.7 percent of the vote.

IMPACT

Having gained recognition as a politician who united people and breached partisan divides, Nixon stated that if Hillary Clinton did not run for president in 2016, he might consider doing so. However, his chances of positioning himself as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the presidential election were shot down in 2014 following his handling of the violent protests that followed a police shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed African American teenager, in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014. Many people were critical of Nixon's lack of decisiveness during the crisis and felt he had demonstrated a lack of leadership needed for higher office. In 2017, Nixon joined Dowd Bennett law firm of St. Louis, where he is presently involved in the training of junior litigators and chiefly engages in pro bono work.

PERSONAL LIFE

Jay Nixon and his wife, Georganne Wheeler Nixon, have two adult sons, Jeremiah and Willson.

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—Barb Lightner

George Noory

Born: June 4, 1950

Occupation: Radio broadcaster

In 2003, George Noory began hosting the national radio show *Coast to Coast AM*, which is syndicated on more than 640 stations across the United States and heard by some three million listeners each week. The show, which airs from 1 A.M. to 5 A.M. Eastern time, is consistently the highest rated in that time slot and draws a passionate audience of insomniacs, shift workers, and others who stay awake simply to listen to Noory's calm voice and open-minded take on topics like alien abduction, September 11 conspiracy theories, and telepathy.

The show, Timothy Lavin wrote for the *Atlantic* (Jan./Feb. 2010), "is more than a curiosity: it has propelled overnight radio from commercial obscurity into radiant profitability, and has helped set a tone that, both thematically and rhetorically, now pervades American media. In the process, it has become perhaps the most complete chronicle of our strange national anxieties ever agglomerated." While *Coast to Coast AM* often comes under fire from those who feel it promotes pseudoscience and a skewed view of the world, Noory defends himself and his listeners. "We're a seeker of answers to mysteries on this planet and the universe," he asserted to David Ferrell for the *Los Angeles Times* (21 Feb. 2010). "We may not find the answers. We may not find Bigfoot. We may not find a chupacabra. We may not find out who was responsible for killing JFK, but we're going to keep looking, asking, probing. And one day—you know what?—we may get some of those answers."

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

George Ralph Noory was born on June 4, 1950, in Detroit, Michigan. His father, Gabriel, worked at the Ford Motor Company and was of Egyptian descent; his mother, Georgette, was Lebanese American. Noory and his two younger sisters, Gail and Glinda, were raised Roman Catholic. As a child, he was a fan of the newscasters of the day, including Edward R. Murrow and Walter

Jean-Paul Belmondo

Born: April 9, 1933, Neuilly-sur-Seine, France

Died: September 6, 2021, Paris, France

Occupation: French actor

Often compared to such iconoclastic American actors as James Dean and Humphrey Bogart, Jean-Paul Belmondo burst onto the scene with his portrayal of the antihero of the key French New Wave film *Breathless* (released in the United States in 1961).

Jean-Paul Charles Belmondo was born on April 9, 1933, in Neuilly-sur-Seine, a middle-class suburb of Paris, France. He is the son and namesake of a sculptor who moved the family to the Left Bank of Paris when Jean-Paul was an infant. His mother, Sarah (Rainaud-Richard), was an artist. An indifferent student, Belmondo failed in one school after another, and quit altogether in early adolescence. At 16 he began his much publicized, but short-lived venture into the boxing ring. (Publicity reports to the contrary, his craggy nose was not broken in the ring, but in a school brawl.)

Belmondo stopped boxing after 23 amateur bouts partly because he feared that an injury or disfigurement might impede his newfound ambition: to become an actor. In 1956, he graduated from the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique, and his first real break came with the role of László Kovács, a freewheeling Hungarian attached to a French family, and in particular to its daughter, in Claude Chabrol's *Les Tricheurs* (1958; *A Double Tour*, 1959). On the strength of that forceful portrayal, he was given his first starring role, in *A Bout de Souffle* (1960; *Breathless*, 1961), by auteur Jean-Luc Godard.

In *Breathless*, Belmondo portrayed an amoral small-time criminal named Michael who impulsively kills a policeman and tries to persuade his American love interest (Jean Seberg) to flee with him to Italy. Shot using a handheld camera and with a largely improvised script, the film was considered revolutionary in its verisimilitude and gritty appeal. Belmondo, forging a reputation as disaffected but charming, next starred in works by other New Wave directors, including playing a steelworker in Peter Brook's *Moderato Cantabile* (1960), a young cleric in Jean-Pierre Melville's *Léon Morin, Priest* (1961), and a Communist intellectual in Vittorio De Sica's *Two Women* (1960).

Wary of being stereotyped as an antihero, in 1964 he starred in the mainstream spy thriller *That Man from Rio*, performing his own stunts and disappointing fans of his more intellectually challenging work. That film marked a new phase of his career, and over the next several decades Belmondo gained a reputation for making

crowd-pleasing comedies, war movies, action pictures, and thrillers. In 1989, he garnered a best-actor César Award (the French equivalent of the Oscar), for playing a wealthy industrialist who fakes his own death in the comedy-adventure *Itinéraire d'un enfant gâté* (*Itinerary of a Spoiled Child*).

Belmondo suffered a stroke in 2001 that severely limited his ability to work. His final role came in 2009, with *Un homme et son chien* (*A Man and His Dog*), about an elderly man who finds himself homeless. He died on September 6, 2021, at his home in Paris. He was survived by his daughter, Florence, and son, Paul, the offspring of a youthful marriage to ballerina Elodie Constantin. He is also survived by a daughter, Stella, from his second marriage to the actress Nathalie Tardivel.

See *Current Biography* 1965

Abdelaziz Bouteflika

Born: March 2, 1937, Oujda, Morocco

Died: September 17, 2021, Zeralda, Algeria

Occupation: Former Algerian president

By the time Abdelaziz Bouteflika was ousted in 2019, he had served for two decades as Algeria's president, longer than any of his predecessors.

Information about Abdelaziz Bouteflika's early life is scant and often contradictory. According to some reputable sources, he was born on March 2, 1937, in Tlemcen, Oran district, Algeria, but others place his birth across the Moroccan border, in Oujda, then a French protectorate. At about age 20 he abandoned his formal education to enlist in Algeria's fight for independence from France.

Bouteflika became a personal assistant to the guerilla leader Houari Boumédiène, and after Algeria won its independence in 1962, he was named minister of youth and sports by Ahmed Ben Bella, Algeria's first elected president. The following year he was appointed foreign minister. In 1965, Bouteflika participated in the Boumédiène-led bloodless coup that resulted in Ben Bella's ouster.

Under Boumédiène, Bouteflika remained foreign minister, helping shepherd Algeria as a founding member of the African Union. Although he seemed a likely successor to Boumédiène, his prospects dimmed in 1981, when he was accused of misappropriating millions of dollars and forced into exile. Upon his return in 1987, he remained in the background as the Algerian military battled with insurgents from the Islamic Salvation Front.

man, he entertained family and friends with his singing, concertina playing, and storytelling. At the same time, he was a harsh disciplinarian who regularly administered spankings, most often not as punishments but as warnings to his sons—a curious practice from which Lasorda derived his own disciplinary philosophy in managing, which he expressed to interviewers: “You anticipate mistakes; get your teaching done before they happen, rather than criticizing after the fact.”

Lasorda’s dream was to play in Yankee Stadium. By his own, oft-repeated account, he was only a third-string pitcher on the Norristown High School baseball team. Undaunted by that lowly status, he tried out successfully with the Philadelphia Phillies in his senior year (1944–45) and dropped out of high school before graduation to sign a minor-league contract with the team.

Drafted into the Dodger farm system at his own request, Lasorda pitched 7-7 with the Class A Greenville Spinners in 1949. The following year the Dodgers moved him up to their AAA farm club in Montreal, Canada. He became determined not only to devote himself to that organization, but to move up to its mother club, which was then in Brooklyn, New York. (It moved to Los Angeles in 1958.)

Lasorda pitched 13 innings for Brooklyn during the 1954 and 1955 seasons but was then cut to make room for up-and-comer Sandy Koufax. Sent back to the minors, he retired as a pitcher in 1960 and subsequently became a Dodgers scout, a farm system manager, and finally a coach.

Lasorda took over as manager of the Dodgers for the last four games of the 1976 season and remained in that post until 1996. During that time he managed the Dodgers to pennants in 1977, 1978, 1981, and 1988—and in 1981 and 1988 the team went on to become World Series champions. He had amassed a career record of 1,599 victories by the time of his retirement—as well as a larger-than-life reputation.

Lasorda, who was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1997 and coached the U.S. baseball team that won gold at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, was named a Dodgers vice president after he stepped down as manager, and he represented the team until his death, on January 7, 2021. (Upon his demise, Willy Mays took his place as the oldest living member of the Baseball Hall of Fame.) He was survived by his wife of more than six decades, Joan (“Jo”); a daughter, Laura; and a granddaughter. He was predeceased by his son, Thomas Jr., in 1991.

See *Current Biography* 1996

John le Carré

Born: October 19, 1931, Poole, Dorset, England

Died: December 12, 2020, Cornwall, England

Occupation: British novelist

John le Carré’s spy novels transcend the conventions of the genre, elevating his protagonists into the ranks of true literary figures.

David John Moore Cornwell, who began using the pen name John le Carré when his first book was published, was born on October 19, 1931, in Poole, Dorset, England, the son of Ronald Thomas Archibald Cornwell and the former Olive Moore Glassey. Although Ronald put forth the image of a wealthy and successful businessman, he was a fraud and conman, in and out of prison, and often on the run from creditors. Olive left the family when her son was five.

With Ronald trying to apply a veneer of respectability to the family, le Carré was sent to Sherborne, a prestigious boarding school he disliked so much he simply walked out one day. He then lived for a year with relatives in Switzerland and studied French and German at the University of Bern. (He would later study modern languages at Oxford, as well, graduating in 1956.) It was in Switzerland that he was recruited into Great Britain’s intelligence services, according to most sources, and while he taught briefly at Eton, he spent most of his early adulthood working as an agent for MI6, and its domestic counterpart, MI5.

Le Carré published his first book, *Call for the Dead*, in England, in 1961. (He took the pseudonym from a sign in a London storefront because it was not considered proper for Foreign Service officials to publish books under their own names.) The book featured George Smiley, a deceptively unassuming Foreign Service agent who later appeared in several more of le Carré’s books and became the iconic pop culture antithesis to the more swashbuckling (and unrealistic) James Bond.

His third book, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1963), catapulted le Carré onto international bestseller lists and won him renown. Its protagonist, Alec Leamas, is a world-weary Cold War-era spy who must contend with the realization that intelligence services on both sides of the conflict engage in ethically murky practices—considered a radical theme in a world where Western forces were assumed to occupy the moral high ground.

In the wake of *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*’s massive success, le Carré resigned from the Foreign Service and began writing full time. Among the enormously popular books he wrote over his half-century career are: *A Small Town in Germany* (1968), *Tinker Tailor Soldier*