

## Past Perfect: Jim Carrey

### READING TEXT

When foreigners imagine Canada, they often envision pristine landscapes, abundant wildlife, ice hockey rinks scattered like acorns across the country and a penetrating blanket of frozen winter. Many people have described the severity of the Canadian winter as the element that has marked Canadian character. But, is there more to Canada than nature, beer and hockey? Ask a Canadian and they might just answer you this way: hey, what about our comedians?

For decades, Canada has produced a who's-who of comedic talent. The list of renowned Canadians is as long as the Manitoba winter. It includes Rich Little, Lorne Michaels, Leslie Nielsen, Dan Aykroyd, John Candy, Eugene Levy, Martin Short, and Mike Myers. However, the most successful, and most recognizable, of the current crop of Canadian comics must be *Mr. Plastic-Face* himself, Jim Carrey. In fact, Carrey's career has been so successful that his face has become one of the most recognizable faces in the world. Yes, that's right! Jim Carrey, star of *Ace-Venura*, *Pet Detective*, *The Mask*, *Dumb and Dumber*, *The Truman Show* and the current box-office hit *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, is indeed Canadian!

Jim Carrey was born in Newmarket, Ontario, Canada on January 17, 1962 to a working class family. In interviews, Carrey has talked candidly about his early life. He grew up poor. When he was a teenager he dropped out of school to work as a janitor when the family needed money. He had tried to balance both school and work but he discovered that balancing both was impossible. Carrey never completed his formal education. It was during this difficult time that Carrey developed his humour as a means of coping with his difficulties. Carrey was a loner. However, comedy began to redirect his life.

At 15, Carrey began performing at the famous Toronto comedy club Yuk Yuks. Once he had matured as a comedian, Carrey moved to Los Angeles in order to try his luck there. He performed in a number of comedy clubs and eventually came to the attention of legendary comedian and actor Rodney Dangerfield. At this time, he began acting and developed the strange comedy and odd behaviour for which he has since become known: his elastic face and bizarre behaviour, all of which contributed to his early fame.

In 1990, Carrey received his big break. The sketch comedy TV show "In Living Color" hired him as an actor and writer. Previously, the entire cast of the show had been African-

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American. Carrey was the first and only white actor in the group. On this show, Carrey introduced some of his most notorious characters including “Fire Marshal Bill,” who constantly set himself on fire while trying to educate people about the hazards of flammable material. But it wasn’t until 1994 that Carrey became a household name. 1994 was his real banner year as he starred in three tremendously successful movies. Carrey’s first starring role was as the eccentric detective, Ace Ventura in the film *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*. The movie was a surprise hit and highlighted Carrey’s insane physical comedy. *The Mask* followed and was also a hit. Finally, the movie *Dumb and Dumber* topped off this extraordinary year. The film was released during the Christmas season and became the biggest box office hit of the year.

By the end of 1994, Carrey had become a comedic superstar. Since then, his star has continued to rise and he has gained world-wide fame and recognition. A list of the films that he has starred in includes *Batman Forever*, *Ace Ventura 2: When Nature Calls*, *The Cable Guy*, *Liar Liar*, *Me, Myself and Irene*, *Dr. Seuss: How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *Bruce Almighty*, and *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. Besides comedy, Carrey has also received critical praise for his acting in dramas such as *The Truman Show*, *Man on the Moon*, and *The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. Carrey has proven himself to be more than another comedic genius but has grown to become one of Hollywood’s more respected actors. Highly valued, Carrey is often paid more than \$20 million dollars for a movie.

Though he has achieved an enormous amount of wealth and fame, Carrey has continued to remember his difficult and humble roots in Ontario. He has tried to nurture and support the comedy groups and theatres in which he first began his career. More importantly, he has continued to remain firmly planted in his understanding of the place from which he came. Though he has had a difficult life and his success has been meteoric, Carrey considers Canada his homeland. It has been a long road for Carrey, but his comedy and acting have continued to inspire many younger Canadian comedians.

Find any use of the PAST PERFECT in the passage above. Why was this tense used in each case?

Write a sentence with each of the following words and expressions.

1. TO ENVISION \_\_\_\_\_
  2. PRISTINE \_\_\_\_\_
- 2

- 3. **ABUNDANT** \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. **SEVERITY** \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. **A COMEDIAN** \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. **RENOWNED** \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. **TO NURTURE** \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. **FIRMLY PLANTED** \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. **METEORIC** \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. **A LONER** \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. **TO COPE** \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. **TO TRY HIS LUCK** \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. **BIZARRE** \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. **NOTORIOUS** \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. **A BANNER YEAR** \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. **TO TOP OFF** \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. **HUMBLE ROOTS** \_\_\_\_\_

*Answer the following questions.*

- 1. What was Jim Carrey’s early life like? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. What was Carrey’s big break? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Why was 1994 an important year for Carrey? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Was Carrey as successful in serious movies as he was in comedy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_