

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Bruce Dern

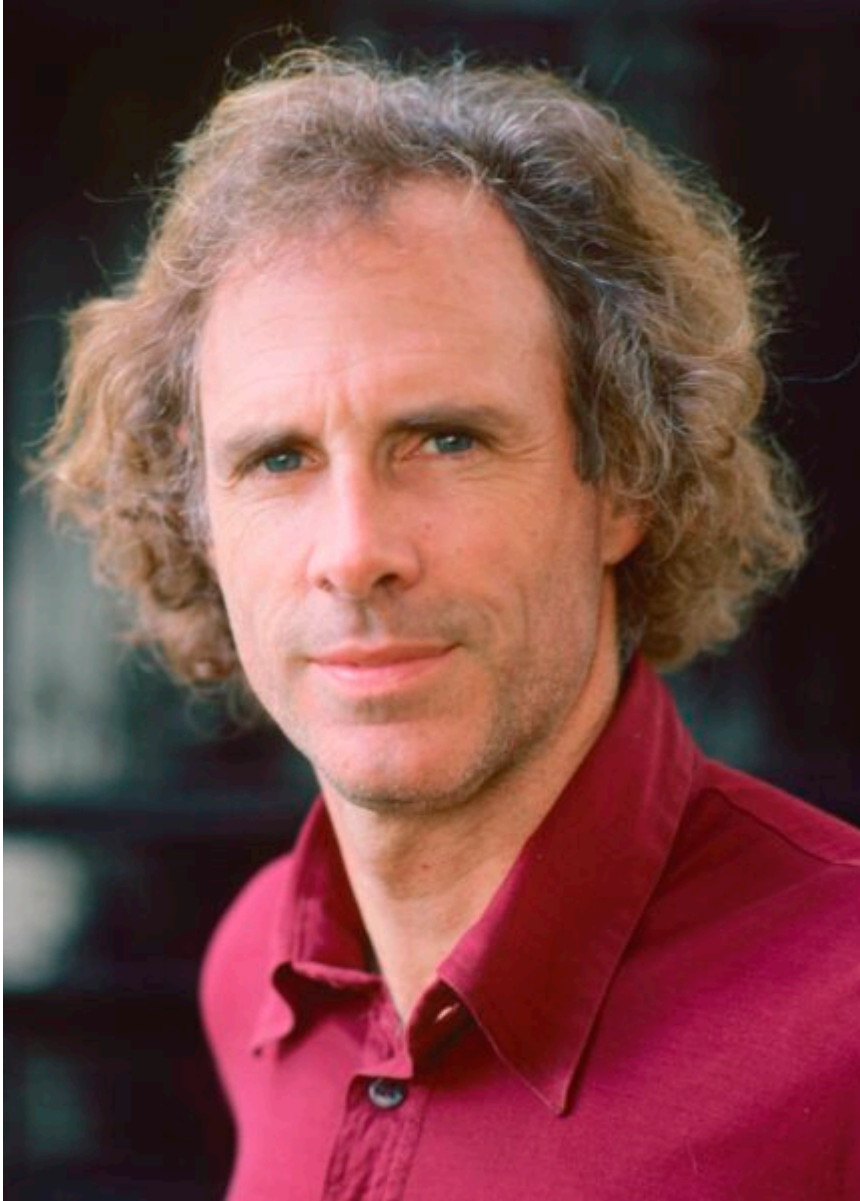
Elisa Leonelli · Monday, April 15th, 2024

[Bruce Dern](#) is acting on screen with his daughter [Laura Dern](#) for the first time in the Apple TV series *Palm Royale* playing her ailing father.

In my long career as a film journalist I interviewed both actors several times, and wrote about them, such as [a profile of Laura Dern for CIAK](#), the Italian film monthly in 1993, or an article for the Golden Globes website, "[Laura Dern on a woman's right to choose](#)," posted on June 6, 2022, when we knew that the Supreme Court would overturn *Roe v. Wade*.



I was reminded of the first time I met Bruce Dern, when I photographed him in his Beverly Hills home-office in 1978 for the Italian weekly *L'Europeo*. Here's some excerpts of what he said during our interview.



“Artists aren’t legitimate to my family unless they are Picasso, but I was influenced by Jimmy Dean, so I quit college and became an actor. I went to Lee Strasberg’s Actors Studio In Manhattan. Elia Kazan told me I would be a late bloomer.

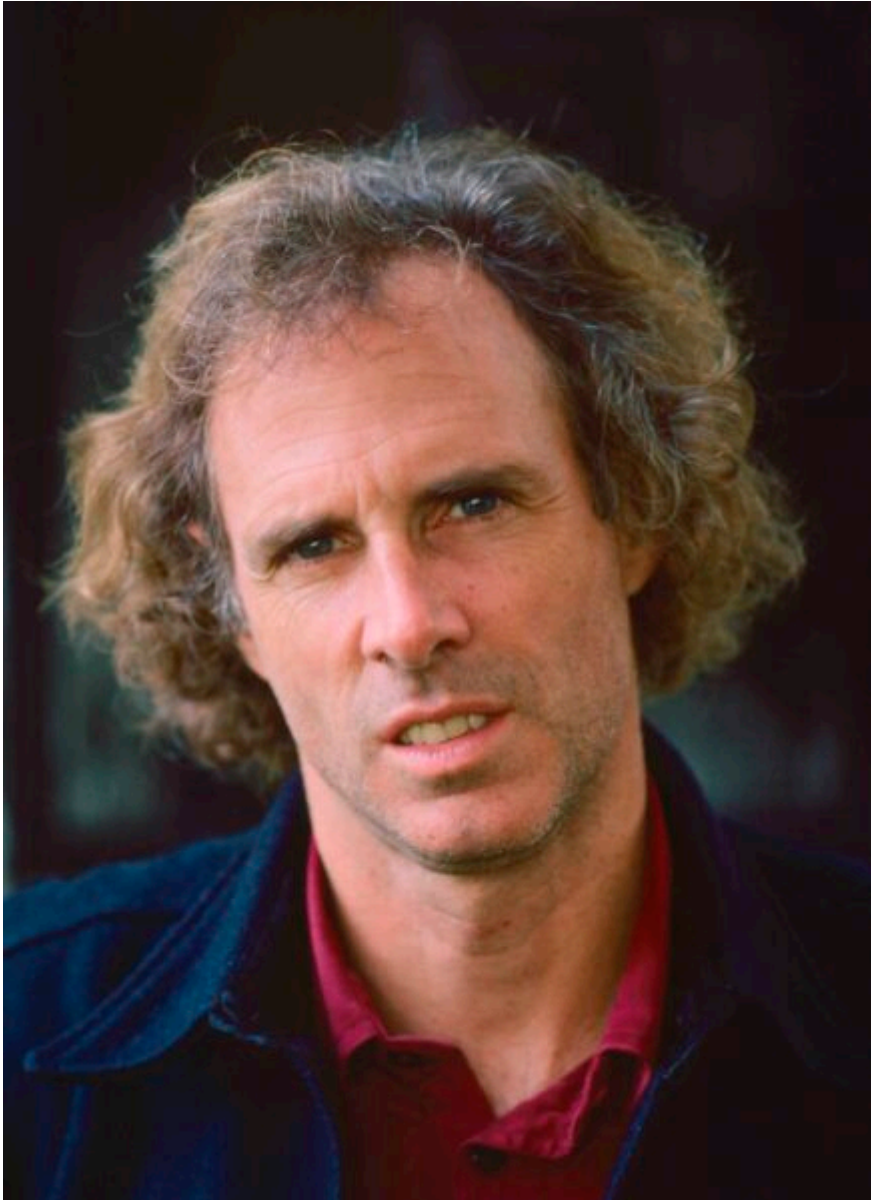
“I did *Drive, He Said* (1971) directed by Jack Nicholson, because we had been friends for a long time. Finally *Silent Running* (1972) by Douglas Trumbull was the first time that the movie was about me.

“I played Tom Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby*. Francis Ford Coppola, who wrote the screenplay, said that he would have made me Gatsby and had Robert Redford play Tom. But Redford wasn’t bad, he did a good job, he was just miscast.

“Alfred Hitchcock, after choosing me for the sailor in *Marnie* (1964), later chose me for *Family Plot* (1976), because he had seen me in *Smile* (1975), a sharp and witty film by Michael Ritchie about a teenage beauty contest, and he wanted an unpredictable guy with a sense of humor.

“*Black Sunday* (1977) by John Frankenheimer didn’t do as well as it should have, because terrorism is a touchy subject in the world today. People thought it was an anti Israeli movie, and it was not, but in America they never got the Arab point of view.

“The ending of *Coming Home* (1978), by Hal Ashby with Jane Fonda and Jon Voight, is heartbreaking, but it’s a heroic suicide, in the grand manner a la *A Star is Born*, a definitive statement about the effect that the Vietnam war had on a lot of people.”



Bruce Dern was later directed by Walter Hill in *Wild Bill* (1995), by Alexander Payne in *Nebraska* (2013), by Quentin Tarantino in *The Hateful Eight* (2015) and *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019).

Now about to turn 88, he is not ready to retire from acting, wants to go on until he’s 100.

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