




With a successful career in acting and a man of style, 35 year old Zachary Quinto has become one of Hollywood's hottest stars. Recently coming out to the world, not just about his sexuality, but also his desire to start a family with partner, and fellow actor, Jonathan Groff, we find out more about his roots, his rise to fame and his wish to become a dad.

ZACHARY QUINTO SEEKING THE FINAL FRONTIER



Born in Pittsburgh in June 1977, Zachary's father, a barber, died of cancer when he was just seven years old, leaving him and his brother, Joe, to be raised by their mother in a single parent family. He graduated from Central Catholic High School in 1995, and his talent for acting won him the Pittsburgh Gene Kelly Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role in Central's 1994 production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance*.

Zachary remained in Pittsburgh and enrolled at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Drama, whose alumni includes actors Patrick Wilson (*Watchmen*, *The A-Team*) and Ethan Hawke (*Gattaca*, *Training Day*) and Hollywood powerhouse Paula Wagner (one half of cinema's most profitable double-act, Cruise/Wagner Productions, responsible for the *Mission: Impossible* franchise and box office takings of \$2.9 billion).

FROM TECHIE TO TREKKIE

After graduating in 1999, Zachary took varied guest roles in TV shows such as *CSI*, *Charmed*, *Six Feet Under* and *Lizzie McGuire*. In 2003, he found some stability when cast as CTU's resident computer expert, Adam Kaufman, in *Day 3* of the pseudo real-time political thriller *24*.

Zachary received his first big break in 2006. Following a short turn as the Iranian-American gay best friend to Tom Spelling's lead in the VHI series *So NoTORious*, Zachary landed the role of super villain serial killer Sylar in the critically acclaimed NBC sci-fi show *Heroes*. Science fiction proved an easy fit for Zachary and his popularity and fan base grew with each season of *Heroes*.

His sci-fi credentials were put to the test when in 2007 he was unveiled as the actor cast to play young Spock, in JJ Abrams reboot of the *Star Trek* franchise.

As if filling Leonard Nimoy's shoes wasn't enough, Zachary also had to act alongside his predecessor, who had reprised his role as older Spock in Abrams' time-travelling retelling of the Enterprise crew's maiden voyage. Nimoy had casting approval of the actor who would inherit his role, which, Zachary explained, was liberating: '... when I got the role I knew it was with his blessing.' Earlier this year, reflecting on his time spent on set with Nimoy, Zachary told the *Huffington Post* that it was 'one of the biggest gifts of the experience,' and that he and Nimoy had 'many conversations during the first movie about the character and it was enormously helpful to have him around, certainly more helpful than it was stressful.'





Images: Paramount Pictures - Industrial Light & Magic / NBC Photo / Frank Ockenfels - FX

The movie, proved a huge success, with box office takings of more than \$385 million worldwide, making it the highest grossing *Star Trek* film of all time. Critics approved, the film was a triumph and it created a new generation of trekkies, for whom Zachary and his co-stars including Chris Pine, Zoe Saldana and Karl Urban, would become as iconic as Shatner and Nimoy were in the 60s when *Star Trek* first hit TV screens.

COMING OUT IN HOLLYWOOD

Star Trek catapulted Zachary to worldwide stardom. However, despite reaching such dizzy heights he returned to the set of *Heroes* until the show concluded its four season run in 2010.

With *Heroes* behind him, Zachary returned to theatre in an off-Broadway revival of Tony Kushner's Pulitzer Prize winning drama, *Angels in America*, examining the impact of the AIDS-crisis on Reagan-era New York. Zachary played the self-absorbed boyfriend of *Angels'* AIDS-stricken central character, Prior Walter. Zachary's involvement in the play and his inability to escape the events it grapples with (during *Angels'* run Zachary stayed in the East Village, just blocks from the now-demolished St Vincent's Catholic Medical Centre, which treated outpatient HIV+ New Yorkers and cared for many acute AIDS victims in the 1980s), had a considerable impact on him.

In an interview with *New York Magazine* in 2011, Zachary explained: 'Doing that play made me realize how lucky I was to be born when I was born and to not have to witness the decimation of an entire generation of amazingly talented and otherwise vital men.' In the the same interview, Zachary also confirmed what had long been the subject of gossip in Hollywood that 'at the same time, as a gay man, it made me feel like there's still so much work to be done...'

It was the first time that Zachary had publicly acknowledged that he is gay. When previously asked he always deflected the question. Nevertheless, even if it was an open secret in Hollywood, Zachary's

As well as his role as Spock in *Star Trek*, Quinto has also been lauded for his portraits of diverse characters such as superpowered serial killer Sylar in NBC's *Heroes* and as psychiatrist Dr. Oliver Thredson in the FX series *American Horror Story: Asylum*

coming-out was still significant. Despite the growing number of films portraying gay issues, such as award-winners; *Philadelphia* (1993: Tom Hanks, Oscar for Best Actor), *Brokeback Mountain* (2005: Ang Lee, Oscar for Best Director), and *Milk* (2008: Sean Penn, Oscar for Best Actor), Hollywood remains, perhaps, the most closeted sector of the arts industries. Many in cinema recognise that it must do more to reflect the recent US cultural and political shift on LGBT issues that sees a slow acceptance of gay and lesbian life. Amy Pascal, Chair of Columbia Tri-Star Motion Pictures (responsible for 2012 hits *Skyfall* and *Zero Dark Thirty*) asked a fundraising gala for the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center's Children and Youth Family Services in March this year: 'What kinds of images are we giving gay and lesbian kids? What are we teaching them and their families and friends about being gay? Do the images give them hope and confidence and self worth?'

GAY FAMILY LIFE

Zachary's experiences growing up in a single parent family, together with his own experiences as a gay man in Hollywood have undoubtedly influenced his outlook in life.

There is still much work to be done to secure equal legal recognition for LGBT men and women and their families. Should Zachary decide to become a parent, like many other gay men and women, he will have to tread a careful path through the legal maze and his parenting journey. The law isn't always joined up in its thinking and it can leave gay parents and their children without full legal protection, making it important to understand and manage the legal framework surrounding adult relationships, donor conception, surrogacy, co-parenting, adoption and children and parenting issues in practice.



LGBT RIGHTS ACTIVIST

In a blog post following his October 2011 interview with *New York Magazine*, Zachary reflected on the tragic reality that, in the same year gay marriage could be legalized in that state, bisexual teen and New York State native Jamey Rodemeyer could be driven to take his own life by others' homophobia. 'In light of Jamey's death,' Zachary wrote on his website, 'it became clear to me in an instant that living a gay life without publicly acknowledging it is simply not enough to make any significant contribution to the immense work that lies ahead on the road to complete equality.' It was a powerful statement of intent: '... while [Jamey's] death only makes me wish I had done this sooner, I am eternally grateful to him for being the catalyst for change within me. Now I can only hope to serve as the same catalyst for even one other person in this world.'


Zachary has long since been involved with the Trevor Project, a US based organisation set up to combat the worryingly high rates of suicide amongst LGBT teens, for which he made an 'It Gets Better' video, urging crisis-hit teens to seek help. He is also partnered-up with Jonathan Groff, of *Glee* fame, and a regular feature of the entertainment news shows and magazines, which makes him a role model for other young gay men.

LONGEVITY

Zachary chose his next role carefully, with his own production company, Before the Door Pictures, raising the initial \$3 million budget required to start filming. *Margin Call* (2011) a slick financial thriller, which charts the actions of a Wall Street firm during a 24 hour period that begins the crash of 2008. As well as his fundraising, casting and production roles, Zachary also played one of the central characters, senior risk analyst Peter Sullivan. Despite a talented cast, including Kevin Spacey, Demi Moore and Jeremy Irons, widespread critical acclaim and various awards, the film was a modest success, grossing just \$16 million.

Nevertheless, it underlined Zachary's commitment to his art and to ensuring that his work remains relevant to the World around him. *Margin Call* premiered in the Autumn of 2011, just as the Occupy Movement gathered pace. When the cast reached New York on their publicity tour, Zachary and other cast members were quick to visit Wall Street's Zucotti Park, where thousands of anti-capitalists camped out in peaceful demonstration for several months.

THE FUTURE

Zachary has enjoyed success on stage, television and on the big screen and this makes him a force to be reckoned with. Zachary stands out as an openly gay man in Hollywood. His future work and private and family life will be followed closely by many around the world in the years ahead and this gives him a platform to bring about change. Space may well be the final frontier but, if it is, Zachary's work may allow the LGBT rights movement to boldly go where it has not yet gone before. 

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