

# Edward Norton

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**Edward Harrison Norton** (born August 18, 1969) is an American actor, filmmaker and activist. He has been nominated for three Academy Awards for his work in the films *Primal Fear* (1996), *American History X* (1998) and *Birdman* (2014). He also starred in other roles, such as *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996), *The People vs. Larry Flynt* (1996), *Fight Club* (1999), *Red Dragon* (2002), *25th Hour* (2002), *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), *The Illusionist* (2006), *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012) and *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014). He has also directed and co-written films, including his directorial debut, *Keeping the Faith* (2000). He has done uncredited work on the scripts for *The Score* (2001), *Frida* (2002), and *The Incredible Hulk* (2008).

Alongside his work in cinema, Norton is an environmental and social activist, and is a member of the board of trustees of Enterprise Community Partners, a non-profit organization for developing affordable housing founded by his grandfather James Rouse. Norton is president of the American branch of the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust.<sup>[1]</sup> He ran in the 2009 New York City Marathon to raise money for the Trust.<sup>[2]</sup> He also raises money for charity through Crowdrise, a social networking community for volunteers and a micro-donations fundraising platform.<sup>[3]</sup> In July 2010, Norton was designated as the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for Biodiversity by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. On July 2, 2014, Norton was elected chairman of the board of trustees to Signature Theatre, a not-for-profit theater company in New York.<sup>[4]</sup> Norton has been on Signature's board since 1996 and served as the co-chair of the Capital Campaign during the building of the Pershing Square Signature Center.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Early life

**Edward Norton**



Norton in March 2012

<b>Born</b>	Edward Harrison Norton August 18, 1969 Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.
<b>Alma mater</b>	Yale University, B.A. 1991
<b>Occupation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Actor</li> <li>▪ filmmaker</li> <li>▪ activist</li> </ul>
<b>Years active</b>	1996–present
<b>Home town</b>	Columbia, Maryland
<b>Spouse(s)</b>	Shauna Robertson (m. 2012)
<b>Children</b>	1

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Norton was born in Boston, Massachusetts<sup>[6]</sup> and raised in Columbia, Maryland.<sup>[7]</sup> His father, Edward Mower Norton Jr., served in Vietnam as a Marine lieutenant and was later an environmental lawyer and conservation advocate working in Asia, as well as a former federal prosecutor in the Carter administration.<sup>[8]</sup> His mother, Lydia Robinson "Robin" (née Rouse), a teacher of English, died of a brain tumor in 1997.<sup>[9][10]</sup> His maternal grandfather, James Rouse, was the founder of The Rouse Company, who developed the city of Columbia, Maryland (where Norton grew up), helped develop Baltimore's Inner Harbor, Norfolk's Waterside Festival Marketplace and Boston's Quincy Market, as well as co-founded Enterprise Community Partners with Norton's maternal step-grandmother, Patty Rouse.<sup>[9]</sup> Norton has two younger siblings, Molly and Jim, with whom he has professionally collaborated.

From 1981 to 1985, along with his brother, Norton attended Camp Pasquaney on the shores of Newfound Lake in Bristol, New Hampshire, where he won the acting cup in 1984; he returned to the camp's council for two years by directing theater, and maintains close connections with the camp.<sup>[9]</sup> Norton was raised Episcopalian.<sup>[11]</sup> He graduated in 1987 from Columbia's Wilde Lake High School, where his classmates included New York City Council member Mark Levine<sup>[12]</sup> and best-selling author Robert Kolker.<sup>[13]</sup> He attended Yale University, where he was a competitive rower<sup>[14]</sup> and acted in university productions alongside Ron Livingston and Paul Giamatti, graduating in 1991 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History.<sup>[9]</sup> After graduation, Norton worked in Osaka, Japan, consulting for his grandfather's company, Enterprise Community Partners, and speaks some Japanese.<sup>[15][16]</sup> He appeared in an EFL textbook, *Only in America*, used by Nova, a formerly major English language school in Japan.<sup>[17]</sup> He moved to New York City to star in the Off-Broadway theater, breaking through with his 1993 involvement in Edward Albee's *Fragments*, at the Signature Theatre Company.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Career

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In his film debut *Primal Fear*, Norton played Aaron Stampler, an altar boy charged with the murder of a Roman Catholic Archbishop who is defended by Martin Vail (Richard Gere). The film is an adaptation of William Diehl's novel.<sup>[18]</sup> Ken Tucker of *Entertainment Weekly* wrote: "Norton gives a performance that's fully the equal of Gere's – he's as slyly self-effacing as Gere is slyly ostentatious."<sup>[19]</sup> Alison Macor of *The Austin Chronicle*, in review of the film, wrote, "Norton's performance and the well-paced tension preceding the movie's climactic sequence provide an entertaining if slightly predictable thriller."<sup>[20]</sup> Despite the mixed reviews,<sup>[21]</sup> Norton won a Golden Globe Award and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor.<sup>[22][23]</sup> That same year, Norton played lawyer Alan Isaacman in *The People vs. Larry Flynt*. In 1998, he played Derek Vinyard, a reformed neo-Nazi, in the film *American History X*,<sup>[24]</sup> David Denby of *The New Yorker* noted that he gives

Derek "ambiguous erotic allure; he's almost appealing".<sup>[25]</sup> The film received positive reviews<sup>[26]</sup> and grossed over \$23 million worldwide at the box office.<sup>[27]</sup> His performance earned him an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor.<sup>[23]</sup> Later, Norton starred with Matt Damon in *Rounders*, that follows two friends who need to quickly earn enough cash playing poker to pay off a huge debt.<sup>[28]</sup> In David Fincher's 1999 film *Fight Club*, Norton played an unreliable narrator who feels trapped with his white-collar position in society. It is based on Chuck Palahniuk's novel of the same name.<sup>[29]</sup> To prepare for the role, Norton took lessons in boxing, taekwondo and grappling.<sup>[30]</sup> *Fight Club* premiered at the 1999 Venice International Film Festival.<sup>[31]</sup> During promotion for the film, he said, "I feel that *Fight Club* really, in a way ... probed into the despair and paralysis that people feel in the face of having inherited this value system out of advertising."<sup>[32]</sup> The film failed to meet expectations at the box office,<sup>[33]</sup> and received polarized reactions from film critics.<sup>[34]</sup> However, it became a cult classic after its DVD release.<sup>[35]</sup>

In 2002, Norton starred in Brett Ratner's *Red Dragon* as FBI profiler Will Graham and in Spike Lee's *25th Hour*. While *Red Dragon* received mixed reviews, it was commercially successful.<sup>[36]</sup> *25th Hour* was about post-9/11 New York City.<sup>[37]</sup> In 2003, Norton was forced by Paramount Studios, under threat of lawsuit having signed a three-film contract when he signed up for *Primal Fear*, to appear in *The Italian Job* (2003), for which he accordingly refused to promote upon its release.<sup>[38]</sup><sup>[39]</sup> Norton won critical praise for his role as Baldwin IV, the leper king of Jerusalem, in *Kingdom of Heaven*.<sup>[40]</sup> Norton portrayed Marvel Comics character Bruce Banner / The Hulk in the Marvel Studios film *The Incredible Hulk*, released in 2008.<sup>[41]</sup> Norton's failed attempt to rewrite the film along lines of his own choosing resulted in his refusal to promote the film.<sup>[39]</sup> He was expected to reprise his role in the 2012 film *The Avengers*,<sup>[42]</sup> but was replaced by Mark Ruffalo.<sup>[43]</sup>



Norton in March 2010

In 2006, Norton starred in three films: *Down in the Valley*, as a dangerous drifter affecting to be a cowpoke, *The Illusionist*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and later became a sleeper hit when it went into general release, and *The Painted Veil*, for each of which he won an award. In 2010, Norton appeared in two films again: in *Leaves of Grass*, as estranged identical twins (one a small-time drug dealer and the other a Harvard professor); and in *Stone*, which reunited Norton with his *The Score* cast-mate Robert De Niro, and in which Norton plays a convict trying to con his parole officer (De Niro) into an early release. In 2008, Norton starred in New Line Cinema's *Pride and Glory*, as an honest detective assigned to investigate the precinct run by his older brother. The film was not well received by critics, not strongly supported by the studio, and despite also starring Colin Farrell and Jon Voight, its worldwide grosses totaled only \$31.1 million, against a production

budget of \$30 million.<sup>[44]</sup> Norton played himself in a cameo role in the experimental comedy show *Stella*,<sup>[45]</sup> and made another comedic television appearance on the Emmy award-winning ABC show *Modern Family* in 2010, playing a fictional member of real life '80s new wave band Spandau Ballet. In *The Bourne Legacy*, he played the antagonist Eric Byer. Norton has also done uncredited script work on some of the films he appeared in specifically *The Score* and *Frida*.<sup>[46]</sup> In 2000, Norton made his directorial debut, *Keeping the Faith*. He had a reputation of being a perfectionist and managed to receive final cut of *American History X*, clashed with the director while shooting *Red Dragon*, and (with the director) clashed with the studio during the shooting of *The Incredible Hulk* (and refused to do promotion for it).<sup>[47]</sup> In 2013, Norton starred in The Lonely Island's music video, "Spring Break Anthem," alongside Andy Samberg, Zach Galifinakis, James Franco, Akiva Schaffer and Jorma Taccone. The video premiered on Funny or Die's *Between Two Ferns* during a segment between Galifinakis and Franco.<sup>[48]</sup> In 2014, Norton played Mike Shiner, a prickly Broadway actor in the black comedy film *Birdman* and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for the role. On February 20, 2014, it was announced that Norton was directing *Motherless Brooklyn*.<sup>[49]</sup> In June 2014, Norton's Class 5 Films and RatPac Entertainment acquired the film rights to the non-fiction article *American Hippopotamus*, by Jon Mooallem, about the meat shortage in the U.S. in 1910 and the attempts made by Major Frederick Russell Burnham, Captain Fritz Joubert Duquesne and Congressman Robert Broussard to import hippopotamuses into the Louisiana bayous and to convince Americans to eat them. The film will highlight the Burnham - Duquesne rivalry, two famous spies who had previous been under orders to assassinate each other. Norton, William Migliore and Brett Ratner will produce this feature film.<sup>[50]</sup>

## Personal life

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After six years of dating, Norton proposed to Canadian film producer Shauna Robertson in 2011 and they married in 2012.

<sup>[51]</sup> They have one son (born 2013).<sup>[52]</sup>

Norton is generally known for his reluctance to embrace his celebrity status and says, "If I ever have to stop taking the subway, I'm gonna have a heart attack."<sup>[53]</sup>

Norton has stated in interviews that he is a fan of the Baltimore Orioles,<sup>[54]</sup> and was involved in many of Cal Ripken Jr.'s retirement activities in 2001 when he was asked to be a part of Ripken's biography for Major League Baseball (MLB).<sup>[54]</sup> He attended Ripken's ceremony at the Hall of Fame in July 2007.

<sup>[55]</sup>



Norton at the premiere of the Metropolitan Opera's 2009 season

Norton has a private pilot license and discussed his flight

Year ↕	Title	Role	Director	Notes
				training when interviewed on episode of the <i>Late Show with David Letterman</i> and <i>Inside the Actor's Studio</i> . <sup>[56]</sup> One of his personal aircraft was a Cessna 206 substantially modified by the AOPA. <sup>[57]</sup>

Norton was a strong supporter of former New York State Governor Eliot Spitzer.<sup>[58]</sup> Norton is a member of the board of trustees of Enterprise Community Partners, a non-profit developer of affordable housing based in his hometown. He is also well known for his support for environmental causes and renewable energy projects, such as Enterprise's Green Communities Initiative and BP's *Solar Neighbors* program.<sup>[59][60][61]</sup> He also put time and money toward social activist causes, including improving the quality of living in low-income communities.<sup>[62][63]</sup>

Norton's work with the HBO documentary *By the People: The Election of Barack Obama* led to a soundtrack, with proceeds going to Enterprise Community Partners and United Way. Norton also participated in a 2008 *Fast Company* story about Enterprise's green affordable housing.<sup>[64]</sup> Norton is the president of the American branch of the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust.<sup>[65]</sup> To raise money for the trust, Norton fielded a team of thirty runners in the New York City Marathon on November 1, 2009.<sup>[66]</sup> The team included Alanis Morissette and David Blaine.<sup>[67]</sup> Norton finished the event first among celebrities with a time of 3 hours, 48 minutes.<sup>[2]</sup> Norton and his team raised over \$1 million for the Trust.<sup>[2][68]</sup>

In addition to his involvement with the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust, Norton supports African Wildlife Foundation, appearing in a public awareness ad about the dangers of buying elephant ivory as part of the "Say No" campaign.<sup>[69]</sup> He is also a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador, as well as a spokesperson for the Convention on Biological Diversity.<sup>[70]</sup> In May 2010, Norton launched a website called Crowdrise,<sup>[71]</sup> which uses a social networking platform to help raise funds for charity.<sup>[72]</sup> In May 2012, Norton played football for an 'England vs. The Rest of the World' match the charity event *Soccer Aid*, along with James McAvoy and Woody Harrelson. The event eventually raised over £4,000,000 for UNICEF UK.<sup>[73]</sup>

## Filmography

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### Actor

Film				
Year ↕	Title	Role	Director	Notes
1996	<i>Primal Fear</i>	Aaron Stampler / Roy	Gregory Hoblit	

Year	Title	Role	Director	Notes
1996	<i>Everyone Says I Love You</i>	Holden Spence	Woody Allen	
1996	<i>The People vs. Larry Flynt</i>	Alan Isaacman	Miloš Forman	
1998	<i>Rounders</i>	Lester "Worm" Murphy	John Dahl	
1998	<i>American History X</i>	Derek Vinyard	Tony Kaye	
1999	<i>Fight Club</i>	The Narrator	David Fincher	
2000	<i>Keeping the Faith</i>	Father Brian Finn	Edward Norton	Directorial debut
2001	<i>The Score</i>	Jack Teller	Frank Oz	
2002	<i>Death to Smoochy</i>	Sheldon Mopes / Smoochy the Rhino	Danny DeVito	
2002	<i>Frida</i>	Nelson Rockefeller	Julie Taymor	
2002	<i>Red Dragon</i>	Will Graham	Brett Ratner	
2002	<i>25th Hour</i>	Monty Brogan	Spike Lee	Also producer
2003	<i>The Italian Job</i>	Steve Frazelli	F. Gary Gray	
2005	<i>Kingdom of Heaven</i>	King Baldwin IV	Ridley Scott	
2005	<i>Down in the Valley</i>	Harlan Fairfax Carruthers	David Jacobson	
2006	<i>The Illusionist</i>	Eisenheim	Neil Burger	
2006	<i>The Painted Veil</i>	Walter Fane	John Curran	Also producer
2008	<i>The Incredible Hulk</i>	Bruce Banner / The Hulk	Louis Leterrier	Also re-wrote the script (Uncredited); and provides likeness and vocal performance in the video game adaption.
2008	<i>Pride and Glory</i>	Ray Tierney	Gavin O'Connor	Also producer
2009	<i>The Invention of Lying</i>	Traffic Cop	Ricky Gervais, Matthew Robinson	Cameo
2010	<i>Leaves of Grass</i>	Bill Kincaid / Brady Kincaid	Tim Blake Nelson	Also producer
2010	<i>Stone</i>	Gerald "Stone" Creeson	John Curran	
2012	<i>Moonrise Kingdom</i>	Scout Master Randy Ward	Wes Anderson	
2012	<i>The Bourne Legacy</i>	Eric Byer	Tony Gilroy	

Year	Title	Role	Director	Notes
2014	<i>The Grand Budapest Hotel</i>	Henckels	Anderson	
2014	<i>Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)</i>	Mike Shiner	Alejandro G. Iñárritu	
2016	<i>Sausage Party</i>	Sammy Bagel Jr. (voice)	Greg Tiernan, Conrad Vernon	
2016	<i>Collateral Beauty</i>	Whit Yardsham	David Frankel	Filming

#### Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes
2000 2013	<i>The Simpsons</i>	Devon Bradley Reverend Elijah Hooper (voices)	"The Great Money Caper" "Pulpit Friction" <sup>[74][75]</sup>
2005	<i>Stella</i>	Himself	Episode: "Pilot"
2009	<i>Modern Family</i>	Izzy LaFontaine	Episode: "Great Expectations"
2013	<i>Saturday Night Live</i>	Host	Episode: "Edward Norton/Janelle Monáe"
2015	<i>Last Week Tonight with John Oliver</i>	Himself	Episode 28

#### Music video

Year	Title	Role	Notes
2013	"Spring Break Anthem"	Himself	The Lonely Island song

## Producer

- 2009: *By the People: The Election of Barack Obama*
- 2012: *Thanks for Sharing*

## Awards and nominations

Year	Nominated work	Association	Category	Result
	<i>Primal Fear</i>	Boston Society of Film Critics	Best Supporting Actor	Won
		Los Angeles Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	Won
		Society of Texas Film Critics	Best Supporting Actor	Won
		Boston Society of Film Critics	Best Supporting Actor	Won

1996	<i>Everyone Says I Love You</i>	Florida Film Critics Circle	Best Supporting Actor	Won	
		Los Angeles Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	Won	
		National Board of Review	Best Supporting Actor	Won	
	<i>The People vs. Larry Flynt</i>	Boston Society of Film Critics	Best Supporting Actor	Won	
		Los Angeles Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	Won	
		Society of Texas Film Critics	Best Supporting Actor	Won	
1997	<i>Primal Fear</i>	Academy Awards	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated	
		Golden Globe Awards	Best Supporting Actor - Motion Picture	Won	
		BAFTA Awards	Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Nominated	
		Saturn Awards	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated	
		Broadcast Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	2nd Place	
		Chicago Film Critics Association	Most Promising Actor	Won	
		Chicago Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated	
		Florida Film Critics Circle	Best Supporting Actor	Won	
		MTV Movie Awards	Best Villain	Nominated	
		National Society of Film Critics	Best Supporting Actor	3rd Place	
		Online Film Critics Society	Best Supporting Actor	Won	
		<i>Everyone Says I Love You</i>	Broadcast Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	2nd Place
			Chicago Film Critics Association	Most Promising Actor	Won
			Florida Film Critics Circle	Best Supporting Actor	Won
		<i>The People vs. Larry Flynt</i>	Broadcast Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	2nd Place
Florida Film Critics Circle	Best Supporting Actor		Won		
National Society of Film Critics	Best Supporting Actor		3rd Place		
		Academy Awards	Best Actor	Nominated	

1999	<i>American History X</i>	Online Film Critics Society	Best Actor	Nominated
		Satellite Awards Saturn Awards	Best Actor – Motion Picture Best Actor	Nominated Nominated
2000	<i>Fight Club</i>	MTV Movie Awards	Best Fight	Nominated
		Online Film Critics Society	Best Actor	Nominated
2001	<i>Keeping the Faith</i>	Satellite Awards	Best Actor – Comedy or Musical	Nominated
2003	<i>25th Hour</i>	Satellite Awards	Best Actor – Drama	Nominated
2005	<i>Kingdom of Heaven</i>	Satellite Awards	Best Supporting Actor – Motion Picture	Nominated
2006	<i>The Painted Veil</i>	St. Louis Gateway Film Critics Association	Best Actor	Nominated
2007	<i>The Painted Veil</i>	Independent Spirit Awards	Best Lead Male	Nominated
2012	<i>Moonrise Kingdom</i>	Boston Society of Film Critics	Best Ensemble Cast	2nd Place
		Gotham Awards	Best Ensemble Cast	Nominated
2014	<i>The Grand Budapest Hotel</i>	San Diego Film Critics Society	Best Performance by an Ensemble	Nominated
		Dallas–Fort Worth Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	2nd Place
	<i>Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)</i>	Detroit Film Critics Society	Best Ensemble	Nominated
		Florida Film Critics Circle	Best Supporting Actor	2nd Place
		Houston Film Critics Society	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated
		Los Angeles Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	2nd Place
		National Board of Review	Best Supporting Actor	Won
		San Diego Film Critics Society	Best Performance by an Ensemble	Won
		San Diego Film Critics Society	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated
		San Francisco Film Critics Circle	Best Supporting Actor	Won
		St. Louis Gateway Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated
Washington D.C. Area Film Critics	Best Ensemble	Nominated		

		Association		
		Washington D.C. Area Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated
	<i>The Grand Budapest Hotel</i>	Critics' Choice Movie Awards	Best Acting Ensemble	Nominated
		Screen Actors Guild Awards	Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture	Nominated
2015	<i>Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)</i>	AACTA International Awards	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated
		Academy Awards	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated
		Golden Globe Awards	Best Supporting Actor – Motion Picture	Nominated
		BAFTA Awards	Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Nominated
		Screen Actors Guild	Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture	Won
		Screen Actors Guild	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role	Nominated
		Australian Film Institute	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated
		Critics' Choice Movie Awards	Best Acting Ensemble	Won
		Critics' Choice Movie Awards	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated
		Independent Spirit Awards	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated
		Satellite Awards	Best Supporting Actor – Motion Picture	Nominated
		London Film Critics' Circle	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated
		National Society of Film Critics	Best Supporting Actor	3rd Place
		Toronto Film Critics Association	Best Supporting Actor	3rd Place
		Vancouver Film Critics Circle	Best Supporting Actor	Nominated

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## External links

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- [Edward Norton at the Internet Movie Database](#)
  - [Larry Flynt interviews Ed Norton](#)
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