

John Travolta



“MAN, NOBODY PUSHED ME INTO showbiz,” John Travolta once said, “I was aching for it.” Travolta wanted to act so badly that he dropped out of college at the age of 16, moved to New York and began acting in New Jersey theatres.

Before long he was starring in TV commercials and getting off-Broadway work, before moving to Hollywood and joining the tour company of *Grease*, a role he later performed on screen.

In 1976, Travolta starred in the cult-classic horror film *Carrie*, but it wasn't until he stepped on the dance floor in *Saturday Night Fever* in 1977 that the superstar electrified audiences. For this role, Travolta had to spend nine months learning how to dance to disco and lose nine kilograms.

This was followed by a number of successful movies, including *Look Who's Talking*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Face/Off* and more recently *The Punisher*, *Wild Hogs*, *Hair Spray* and *From Paris with Love*, released this year.

When filming *The Punisher*, the 54-year old flew to Tampa daily to shoot scenes from the action movie. What's most interesting though, is that Travolta flew himself there. Not only does he own a multitude of planes, but according to the Federal Aviation Administration pilot database, Travolta is qualified in several types of single and multi-engine aircraft and has the highest pilot medical certification possible.

“We all know that Travolta is an accomplished pilot. A lot of people fly for the pleasure of it, and he's one of them,” said John Clabes, an FAA spokesman.

Travolta's planes include three Gulfstream jets, a Learjet and a customised Boeing 707-138. Although Travolta owns homes in California, Maine, Hawaii and Florida, the five private jets are kept at the back of his main Ocala residence in Florida, on a private runway. The avid aviator had moved to the new housing development in Florida after neighbours at his previous residence in Daytona complained of the noise that his jets caused.

This led Travolta to move to another home, complete with its own airstrip, and designed so his jets can park up close to two buildings connected to the main structure. This means that Travolta can walk out his door, under a canopied walkway and into the cockpit to be airborne in minutes.

The movie star claims that the flying he does is related to his work. “I use them as a business tool though, as others do. I think it's part of this industry,” Travolta said. ■