



**American**  
**MASTERS**



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***American Masters***  
***Plimpton! Starring George Plimpton as Himself***

*Premieres nationally Friday, May 16, 9-10:30 p.m. on PBS (check local listings)*

**George Plimpton Bio & Career Timeline**

**George Plimpton** (bio courtesy of [The Paris Review](#))

George Plimpton (1927–2003) was the editor of *The Paris Review* from its founding in 1953 until his death in 2003. A graduate of Harvard University and Kings College, Cambridge, Plimpton was recruited to Paris by Peter Matthiessen in 1952 and signed onto the project shortly thereafter. “I’ve decided to stay over here in Paris and run this magazine,” he wrote to his parents. “I think I’d be a fool not to.”

Aside from his lifelong commitment to *The Paris Review*, Plimpton is best known for his forays into the world of professional athletics: he earned a bloody nose while sparring with Archie Moore in 1959; he exhausted himself during an outing as a pitcher against a series of MLB All Stars in 1960; he lost thirty yards during a stint as quarterback for the Detroit Lions in 1963; and he was trounced in golf by Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus in 1967...despite a personal handicap of 18. His knack for participatory journalism also led him to test his acrobatics as an aerialist for the Clyde Beatty-Cole Brothers Circus—he failed miserably—and to try his hand as a percussionist with the New York Philharmonic (where a miss-hit on the gong earned him the immediate applause of conductor Leonard Bernstein).

All told, Plimpton authored more than fifteen books, including *Paper Lion*, *Out of My League*, and *The Bogey Man*. He also appeared in more than thirty films, including *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Rio Robo*, and *Good Will Hunting*. Plimpton was made an officier of the L'Ordre des Artes et des Lettres and a *chevalier* of the Legion d'honneur, and was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

## Timeline

- 1927 George Plimpton born (March 18)
- 1940 Attends Exeter Academy
- 1944 Kicked out of Exeter Academy; attends Harvard University
- 1948 Joins Army, stationed in Italy
- 1950 Graduates from Harvard; attends Cambridge University
- 1952 Peter Matthiessen calls, offers editing job
- 1953 First issue of *The Paris Review* published
- 1957 Plimpton moves back to New York; starts writing for *Sports Illustrated*
- 1958 Pitches against All-Stars at Yankee Stadium
- 1959 Boxes Archie Moore
- 1961 *Out of My League* published
- 1963 Joins Detroit Lions and writes about Lions for *Sports Illustrated*
- 1966 Swims against Olympian Don Scholander; *Paper Lion* published
- 1967 Plays in PGA, writes *The Bogey Man*
- 1968 Plays with the New York Philharmonic; marries Freddy Espy; Robert F. Kennedy is killed
- 1969 Plays with Boston Celtics
- 1970-72 *Plimpton!* TV specials air (stand-up comedy, car racing, football, African photography, trapeze in the circus, playing with New York Philharmonic, and acting with John Wayne)
- 1971 Appears as punchline in *New Yorker* cartoon; daughter Medora Ames Plimpton is born
- 1975 Works as photographer for *Playboy*
- 1977 Son Taylor Ames Plimpton is born; plays with Boston Bruins
- 1981 Appears in *Reds*
- 1984 *Open Net* published
- 1985 "The Curious Case of Sidd Finch" article appears in *Sports Illustrated* (April 1)
- 1988 Freddy files for divorce
- 1991 Plimpton marries Sarah Dudley
- 1994 Twin daughters Laura and Olivia are born
- 2002 Plimpton inducted into American Academy of Arts and Letters
- 2003 *The Paris Review* celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary; Plimpton reunites with *Paper Lion* team for 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary; dies in his sleep at age 76 on September 25

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