



OPENING HIS HEART AS NEVER BEFORE

# GEORGE CLOONEY

TALKS OF HIS DEEP LOVE FOR WIFE AMAL AND THE PASSIONS THEY SHARE

**'I have met someone whose life means more to me than my life'**

Growing up, George aspired to be a professional baseball player and even tried out for the Cincinnati Reds. He recently opened up to David Letterman (far right) about his childhood (right, with parents Nick and Nina and sister Ada), his work and his cherished

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: MAARTEN DE BOER/GETTY IMAGES; NETFLIX; JOE PUGLIESE/NETFLIX; NETFLIX

**G**eorge Clooney doesn't need to work. As one of the most versatile stars of his generation, he is equally celebrated for his numerous high-profile TV and film roles (*ER*, *Ocean's Eleven* and *Up in the Air*, to name but a few), his directorial and producer credits (for hits like *Argo* and *Suburbicon*) and his political activism. The star with the infectious smile is also a two-time Oscar winner – and the only person to ever be nominated for Academy Awards in six different categories.

That's why now, having become a first-time father – to twins, no less! – one month after he turned 56 last May, George is being selective in what he takes on.

"If I find a great part, I'll do it," the Kentucky native recently told TV personality David Letterman when asked if he'd ever act again.

Things have certainly changed in recent years for George, king of the Hollywood jungle. Not too long ago, he was Tinseltown's most eligible-but-confirmed bachelor following a short-lived marriage in the early 1990s to actress Talia Balsam (she's been married to John Slattery, her *Mad Men* co-star, for 20 years) and high-profile girlfriends such as Italian actress Elisabetta Canalis and pro-wrestler Stacy Keibler.

For a time, so much attention was focused on

his single status that he became blunt when quizzed for details. "I don't expect to ever get married again or have children," he told *People* in 2008. "I am never at home and every woman gets sick of it... If I was them, I would never put up with me for long – and they don't."

He was even less subtle as recently as January 2014 when he told reporters at a *Monuments Men* promo, "I keep saying I'll never get married again or have children – but people just don't want to believe me!"

Never say never, it seems. Since international human rights lawyer Amal Alamuddin stumbled into his life and rocked his world, there's a new George in town: husband, father and all around mushy guy. The private couple – who got engaged three months after that *Monuments Men* event and married in Venice that September – are rarely seen in public with or without eight-month-old twins Alexander and Ella.

But George recently put it all on the table in a candid tête-à-tête with David Letterman during an episode of the former TV host's new Netflix series, *My Next Guest Needs No Introduction*. Touching on the challenges of raising twins, especially getting them to sleep at the same time – "One wakes the other one," he said with a laugh – George went on to sing his wife's praises. ▶



George and Amal took their love public in Tanzania in March 2014 (above). Six months later, they married in Italy surrounded by loved ones (below) – including his actor cousin Miguel Ferrer (far R), who sadly passed away last year, and his best friend and Casamigos tequila co-founder Rande Gerber (directly behind George). The couple shared their big day with *Hello!* (right).



## 'One wakes the other one,' George says of parenting two babies at once

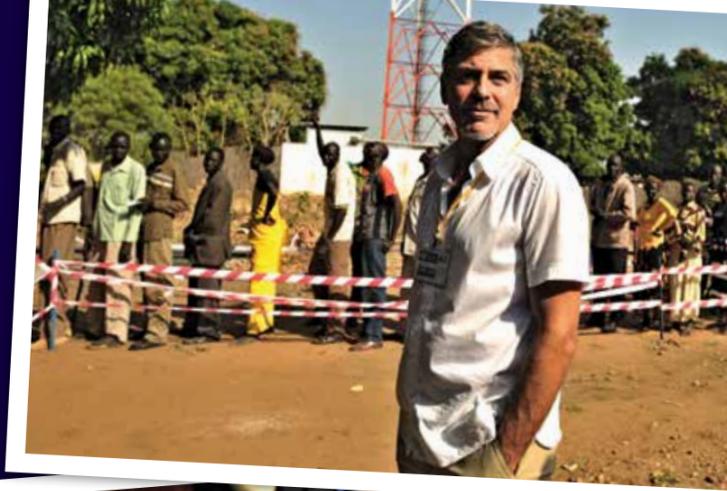
"She is this remarkable human being and now mother, which is something I suppose you should assume she would be wonderful at as well," he gushed about Amal, 40 (they met when his agent took her to his house in Italy). "When you see it in person, it makes you feel incredibly proud and also incredibly small."

Suffice to say, George's life changed forever that night.

"Before I had the twins, I felt that way about her," George told David. "I felt that I had met someone who I would absolutely trade my life for. I'd met someone that her life meant more to me than my life. And I'd never had that experience before."

A humanitarian himself, George continues to be impressed by Amal's work helping refugees, adding that she was the first to bring ISIS to court. For one of their first dates, he asked her to join him at London's famed Abbey Road recording studio where he was working on a movie score. His thought: to try to wow her with the on-site 150-piece orchestra. Though he didn't know it at the time, he invited her while she was in a meeting with an organization tied to terrorism. "She left the meeting ... and we're here just doing a dumb movie score!"

As it turns out, George didn't set out to be in the movies. He aspired to be a professional baseball player and tried out for the Cincinnati Reds two years in a row. At eight, he honed his comedy chops on his dad's radio show and at family cocktail parties, always relegated to delivering the punchlines. He wasn't close to his aunt, singer Rosemary Clooney, but credits his cousin, the late actor Miguel



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Ferrer, for getting him his first part as a film extra. His favourite actor is Spencer Tracy.

Now that George has a wife who shares his humanitarian passion – something he learned from his parents, journalist Nick Clooney and former city councillor Nina Bruce Warren – it's not surprising their world includes 23-year-old Hazim Avdal, a refugee from Iraq who has become part of the family. Amal met Hazim in court in 2016 and was so struck by his struggle – as a target of the Yazidi genocide – that the couple sponsored him to stay in the U.S. Hazim is a university student and lives at the Clooney home in Augusta, Ky. "I remember being so struck by his courage but also just his amazing spirit," Amal told David via FaceTime when he travelled to Augusta to meet Hazim and George's parents.

As George awaits that "great part" that will find him in front of the camera, he'll be behind it once again as director of the upcoming *Catch-22* TV series. Still, it's clear his favourite role is that of husband and father. "The purpose of your life is now not you," David told him. George couldn't agree more. **H**

REPORT: SUZANNE WINTROB



The dashing couple (here in 2015) are passionate humanitarians. George has been particularly outspoken about issues in Sudan (top left) and Darfur while lawyer Amal (middle, at the United Nations) was the first to bring ISIS to court, says George.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LEFT: GETTY IMAGES; LYNSEY ADDARIO/GETTY IMAGES; BILLY FARRELL/IFACOM/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK; REUTERS/LUCAS JACKSON; NO CREDIT: GETTY IMAGES