

Elijah Wood

Titles: 15 Sources: 2 Stills: 30+

Born: Cedar Rapids, Iowa; January 28th 1981

With those huge, expressive eyes and small delicate mouth, always good-mannered but never to the suspicion of “prissiness”, Elijah Wood embodied the “perfect” American son in the misfired fantasy comedy “**NORTH**”, where he scours the globe in search of his ideal parents. But it was a role he’d been playing since he first entered the movies. He was the devoted grandson of “**AVALON**”, the protective older brother of “**RADIO FLYER**” (and upstaged by Joseph Mazzello), the grieving nephew of “**THE GOOD SON**”, but always he was the textbook example of a dutiful, attentive, alert and life-hungry boy, an adornment to any all-American family. Wood’s screen persona made a piquant contrast to his contemporary and undisputed Top Child Star Macaulay Culkin. Where Culkin was abrasive,



*Feeling distinctly underwhelmed by parental attention as the eponymous “**NORTH**” Source: indeterminate website*



Source: indeterminate website

smug and insufferably self-assured – a true progeny of the rapacious 80s mindset - the doe-eyed Wood never made audiences pine for the days of the woodshed. Even when cast as archetypal renegade Huck Finn, he contrived to radiate decency, decorum and nobility of spirit, without the merest twinkle of devilment in his eye (unlike, say, TV contemporary Jonathan Taylor Thomas). Unquestionably a better actor than Culkin, more becomingly modest, and certainly better looking, Wood somehow always registered far lower on the personality meter. When the two of them went head-to-head in **“THE GOOD SON”** (93), it was Wood who gave the better performance, but the eyes of the audience were on Culkin. He found himself doing a Joan Crawford role to Culkin's Bette Davis. Critics in general were kind to him, even when (as with **“NORTH”**) the films were roundly panned. Only when, at 16, he essayed a disastrous Cockney accent as the Artful Dodger in a truly awful remake of **“OLIVER TWIST”** did his limitations become painfully apparent. At the time of writing, he is about to stake his future prospects on the role of Frodo Baggins in a new, CGI-assisted three-part filming of Tolkien's epic **“LORD OF THE RINGS”**. It will be interesting to see if there remains a healthy public appetite for that tale, thirty years after its heyday with the post-hippy culture. Personally I doubt it. As his boyish charms pale into adulthood, it's to be hoped that Elijah Wood will be one of those child actors to weather the transition successfully, but the fate of Mark Hamill post-**“STAR WARS”** does not make an encouraging precedent.



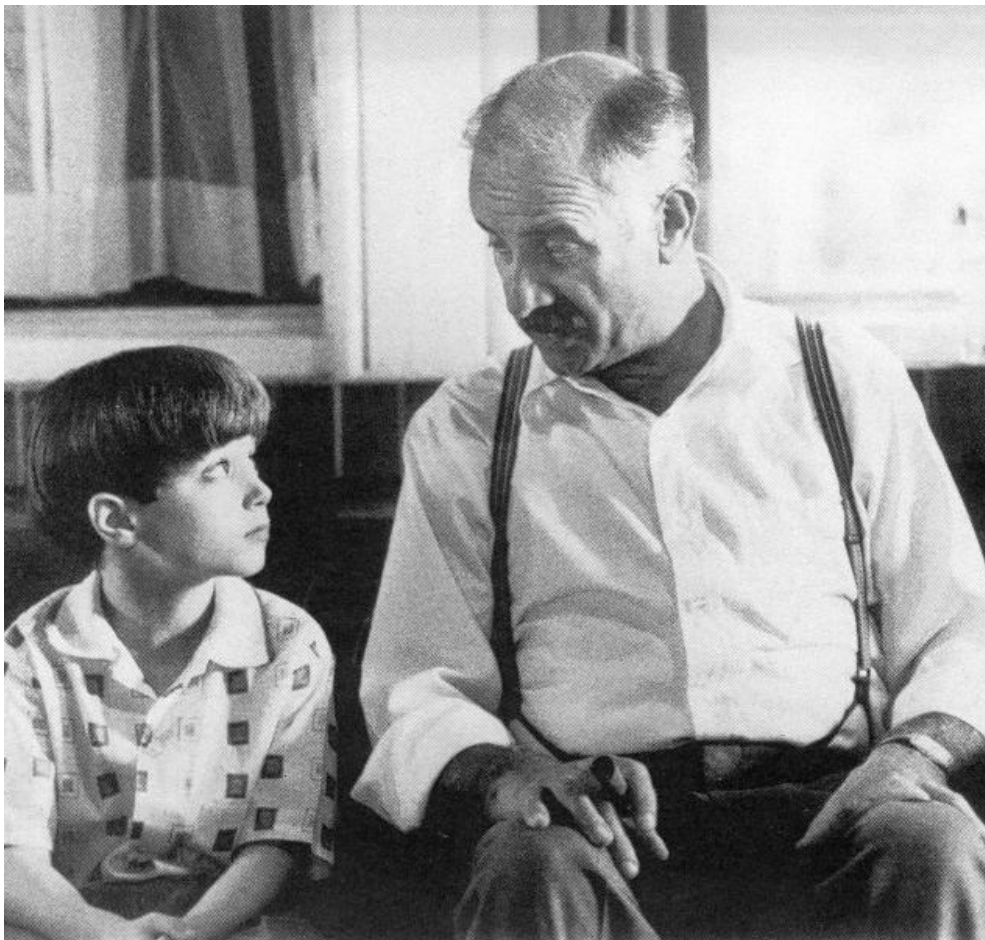
Top left: Elijah as adolescent pin-up – source: Official Elijah Wood website

Top right: Candy-box cuteness – source: indeterminate website

Bottom left: Looking more feisty than feral in **“THE ADVENTURES OF HUCK FINN”**, a Mississippi urchin with a better hair-stylist than most – source: indeterminate website

Bottom right: having resurrected a deep-frozen new friend for ma in **“FOREVER YOUNG”**

- source: indeterminate website



With grandpa Armin Mueller-Stahl in "AVALON"

Source: Film Review 1991-92

The Motion Picture Almanac entry:

"Started in commercial modelling. Landed first acting job in the Paula Abdul video "Forever Your Girl" "

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

"A genuine actor, intelligent and emotional, though no Huck. (Leonardo DiCaprio of "THIS BOY'S LIFE" would have been near-perfect.)"

What the Critics said:

In "AVALON":

"...Jules (Aidan Quinn) does not follow in his father's footsteps as a manual labourer. Instead he becomes a door-to-door salesman, sometimes taking along his young son, Michael (Elijah Wood). During one of these outings, Michael watches in terror as his father is stabbed by a mugger... The film is graced with a flawless ensemble cast. Quinn's pivotal character... is matched in touching displays by Mueller-Stahl and Joan Plowright as patriarch and matriarch and Elijah Wood as Jules and Ann's son."
- Virgin Film Guide

"...Levinson's alter ego is little Michael (Elijah Wood), Krichinsky's grandson, who soaks up his family's history through big soulful eyes."
- Film Review 1991-92

In "CHILD IN THE NIGHT":

"...Of all the young stars who've emerged in the nineties, Elijah Wood, to be seen this summer in the new big screen version of **"FLIPPER"** with Paul Hogan is arguably the most talented. Here, as the only witness to his father's murder, he does well to convey something of the fear and confusion a child would feel in such a situation."

- Radio Times

In "PARADISE":

"Elijah Wood is outstanding as a young boy sent to spend summer with friends of his mother.."

- Daily Mirror

In "THE ADVENTURES OF HUCK FINN":

"..The trouble is that the normally reliable Elijah Wood is wildly miscast as Huck.."

- Film Review 94/95

In "NORTH":

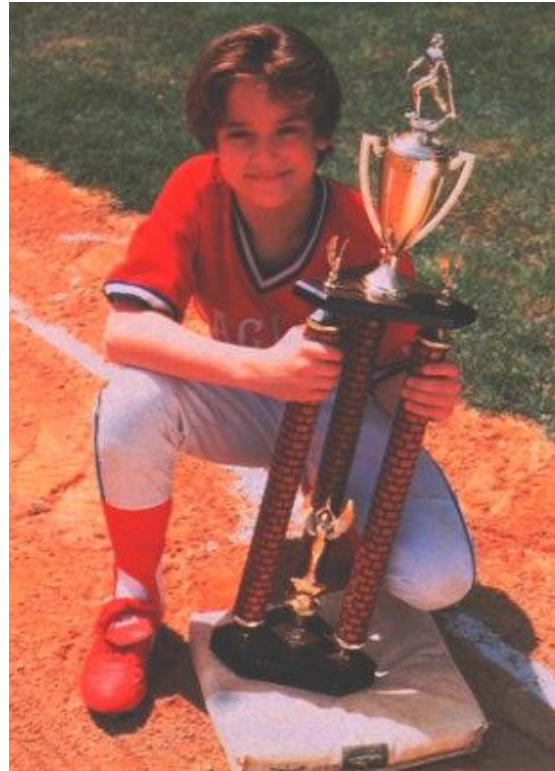
"..Wood, hot from **"THE GOOD SON"**, is the 11-year old called North who, feeling less than appreciated by his parents, sets himself up as a "free agent" and begins a global search for his "perfect parents" with Bruce Willis along for the ride as his guardian angel."

- Empire

In "THE WAR":

"Five years ago Kevin Costner might well have been aghast to hear that by Christmas 94 he would be taking second billing to a 12-year old in a film about a tree-house. But that is happening now, in **"THE WAR"**, which stars Culkin's chief rival for the mantle of Tinseltown's leading boy, Elijah Wood. Wood, after a much-admired stand-in performance as a presenter at the Oscars, now commands \$1 million a movie.."

- Sunday Times



*Top: A scene from **"NORTH"** – but deleted from the prints I've seen. Presumably a segment that wound up on the cutting room floor.*

*Centre: **"THE ADVENTURES OF HUCK FINN"**, with a Jim who neither looked nor sounded like anyone remotely familiar with slavery.*

*Bottom: Age 15 now, and playing second fiddle to a tricky dolphin and a washed-up Crocodile Dundee. Did the world really need another **"FLIPPER"**?*

FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Age	Title	Role
deb 89	8	BACK TO THE FUTURE PART II	
90	9	AVALON	as Michael Kaye
90		CHILD IN THE NIGHT	US TV
90		INTERNAL AFFAIRS	
91	10	PARADISE	
91		RADIO FLYER	
		<i>with Joseph Mazzello</i>	
92	11	FOREVER YOUNG	
92		DAY-O	US TV
93	12	THE GOOD SON	
		<i>with Macaulay Culkin</i>	
93		THE ADVENTURES OF HUCK FINN	Disney, in title role (11)
		<i>with Laura Bundy</i>	
94	13	NORTH	in title role
94		THE WAR	
96	15	FLIPPER	in lead role, Sandy Ricks (14)
97	16	OLIVER TWIST	US TV, as the Artful Dodger
98	17	DEEP IMPACT	
01	20	THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING	as Frodo Baggins

[additionally, he featured in a short for TV – “THE WITNESS”? – as a holocaust victim whose silent gaze haunts one of the death camp guards. Shot c92]