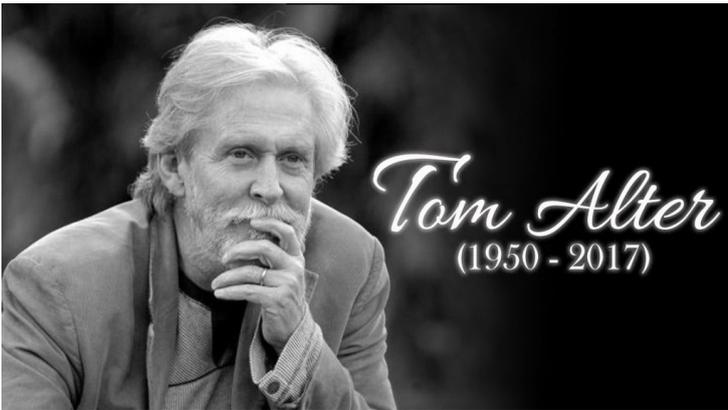


## Remembering Tom Alter, reviving an artistic legacy



Tom Alter, the 67-year-old Padma Shri Awardee and veteran film actor, director and writer - passed away on Friday night, after a long battle against skin cancer - leaving an unforgettable artistic legacy for future generations.

Born on June 22, 1950 to an American family, living in the hilly regions of Mussoorie, Uttarakhand - Tom Alter pursued a remarkable career in Indian film industry as an American descent actor. With suave Caucasian looks, Tom Alter's presence was hard to miss; his tall physique, regal personality, tight grip over multiple languages including Hindi and Urdu, and his commanding screen presence made him a man who created impression at first glance. His physical features and piercing blue eyes may be American giveaways, but he was an Indian by heart.

With having acted in over 300 films and numerous other television shows and theatres, Tom Alter is undeniably an important pillar of Bollywood and Hindi cinema. His cinematic journey started with the film Charas, back in 1976 but he was mostly famed as the gangster Keshav Kalsi in the hit soap opera Junoon which ran for a record five years during the 1990s. Other most celebrated film in which Alter acted are Satyajit Ray's "Shatranj Ke Khilari" (1977) based on Munshi Premchand's short story of the same name, Manoj Kumar's "Kranti" (1981) and Raj Kapoor's "Ram Teri Ganga Maili" (1985). His acting credits also include "Aashiqui", "Parinda", "Sardar Patel" and "Gandhi".

On television, Alter worked in popular shows like "Junoon", "Zabaan Sambhalke", "Bharat EK Khoj", "Shaktimaan", "Captain Vyom" and "Yahaan Ke Hum Sikandar". Being one of the finest artists in his era, Alter was often stereotyped in Bollywood as the perennial British man and he was last seen on screen in the ongoing TV series "Rishton Ka Chakravayuh". The Padma Shri awardee has also written three books - one non-fictional and other two fictions. In addition to that, Alter has also ventured in directing movies and was also a recognised sports journalist in 80s and 90s.

Beyond on-screen life with seemingly negative roles, Alter maintained a very positive halo off-screen. His benevolent eyes, like that of a family head, perhaps made people believe that he was a different person beneath this tough exterior. He was the kind of actor who looked straight into the eyes of his audience and connect with them with his zeal of offbeat characters. He will be seen in one last film - San 75, an Emergency period thriller which was released few months ago. Alter's death will leave a vacuum in the field of Indian cinema, but for ardent admirers of Tom Alter, they will keep going back to old videotapes of the benevolent actor - enlivening his artistic legacy, every single time. May his soul rest in peace.