



THE INTERVIEW
ARNOLD
SCHWARZENEGGER

BY DON STEINBERG

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER officially is back now. He returns to his signature role in “Terminator Genisys,” which opens on July 1. It is his first Terminator appearance since 2003, the same year he became governor of California. He skipped the fourth film in the franchise during more than seven years as the state’s chief executive.

Now 67, he’s pursuing new and familiar movie roles (at least one more “Conan the Barbarian” is in the works), staying in public life and offering fans the opportunity to blow up movie props with him to raise money for after-school programs. We spoke with him about the new “Terminator” movie and his goals for this chapter of his career. Edited from an interview.

In “Terminator Genisys” you play an older Terminator who looks like you now at age 67. Why is he getting older if he’s a robot?

The metal skeleton stays forever the way it is. But since it is human tissue above that, human tissue ages, just like any human being. Therefore the Terminator will age, but his skeleton will not. You will see in this movie different ages of Terminators. You see me as the Terminator from the 1984 “Terminator.” Totally CGI.

Does your older Terminator meet the young one?

Absolutely. It’s a huge battle.

If you could really go back in time to confront a younger version of yourself, what would you tell him?

Oh, I would definitely advise me to not do certain movies.

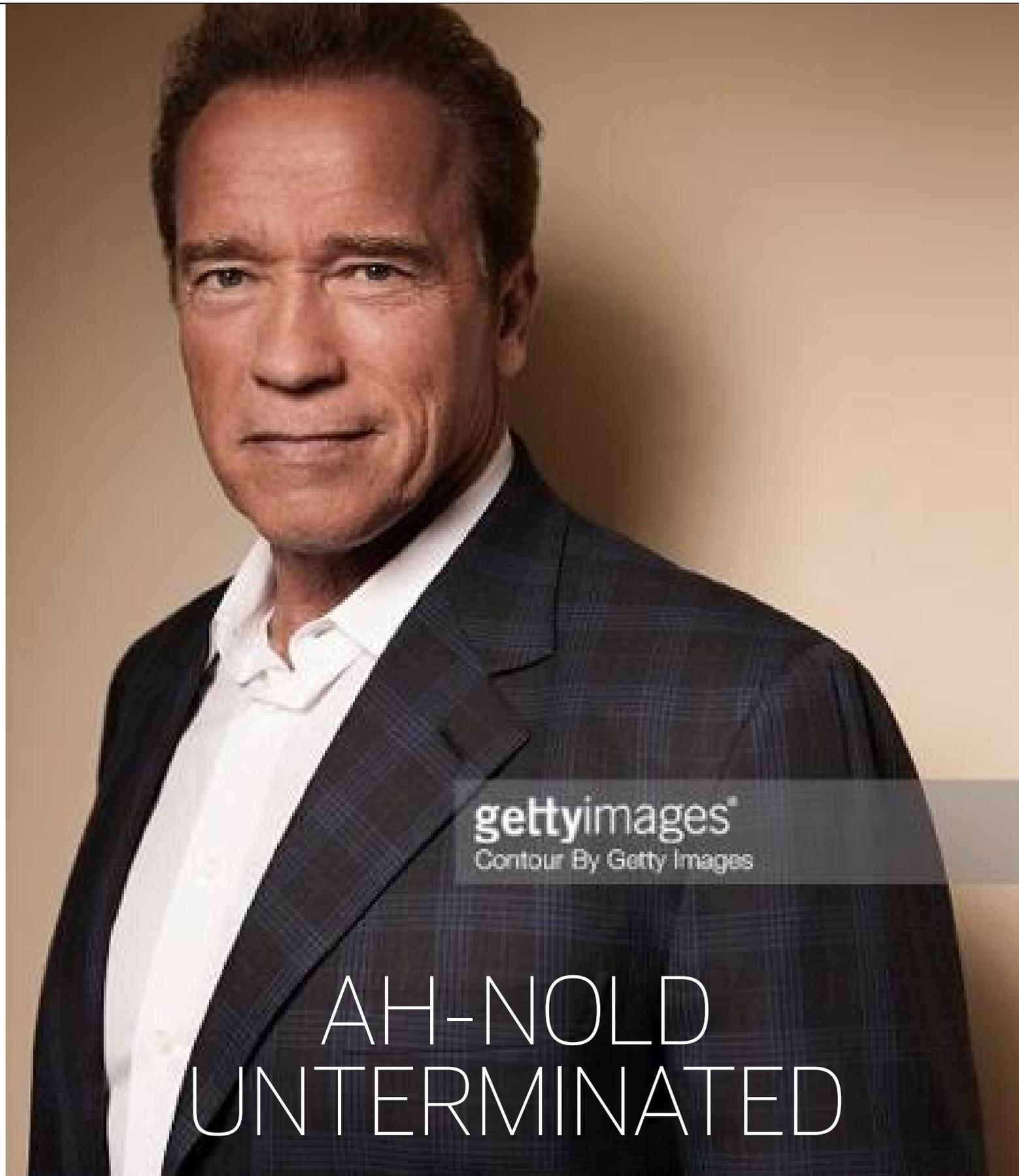
Ha. Your first movie “Hercules in New York” was bad, but it was a great showcase for your charisma, right?

It’s true these were all very important steps in my life. Imagine you’re like 21 years old, your English isn’t ready, you haven’t taken an acting class yet, and all of a sudden they ask you to be starring in a movie. I made my \$1,000 a week. I scrambled and I took English classes and acting classes. It was an important steppingstone. The only thing I would have done maybe is get the English together sooner, at the age of 10.

I definitely would have done things differently as governor. It was an on-the-job training kind of experience. I would have maybe been more collaborative right from the beginning. Certain policy things, certain choices I have made in my personal life I would have done different. There’s mistakes that I’ve made, things that I’ve failed that maybe I would have revisited. But that’s all just hypothetical.

Do you still write down your goals every year, or is that a young man’s exercise?

That really came from weightlifting. We had this huge board on the wall in the gym. When you walk in, you write down the amount of reps you’re going to do and everything. You tell people what your goal is, to be committed. I started writing everything else down. I wanted to have 45-centimeter biceps, 70-centimeter thighs, or whatever it is. Then I started doing that with career moves. I’m going to get a business degree, I want to read these kinds of books. I did the same thing when I was governor. I wrote down I wanted to increase charter schools by 350 by the time I’m finished with my term. Fifty billion dollars of infrastructure by the year 2007. In politics you’re happy when you at least accomplish



more than half of your goals. Actually we accomplished a lot—except not the budget goal. With the majority Democrats in the legislature, it was almost impossible to have them reduce the spending and put money in the rainy day fund.

California needs more rainy days. How scary is the water situation?

The only thing that’s scary is: Will the politicians use this opportunity to pass a really big water infrastructure bill? So that you can start building now for the next drought. This drought, we’re in the middle of it, and there’s nothing you can do other than conservation.

Do you have explicit goals for this chapter of your career?

My goal is to do great movies and to use my celebrity power for really having an impact on

the world on things that I feel passionate about. I feel like I was able to be successful here because this is the land of opportunity, but as an immigrant you have a responsibility to keep it the number-one country. It doesn’t stay that way with us just being spectators. The show business thing, I’m focused to make sure that I’m rebuilding again my brand, because when you’re gone for seven years, you have to rebuild it.

How much are you bench-pressing these days?

There are certain exercises you don’t do as much anymore, because I don’t need to develop a chest. I do circuit training, going from machine to machine without stopping. It’s like weight training with cardiovascular training. After we finish talking, I’m going to ride the bicycle down to Gold’s Gym and work out for an hour and ride the bicycle back.

You’re a professional actor. You’ve been in America for decades. Can we assume you could speak with a perfect American accent any time you want?

If I need to, but it’s now become such a big part of me, the accent, that people really enjoy it. The very things that they said at the beginning would make it impossible for me to be successful in acting were the things that became my assets. Number one, your name cannot be pronounced and therefore you will have to change your name. Number two, they said your accent would never work. Number three, it was very clear your body’s way too big. Those are three things that all became big assets. Never listen to the naysayers. Now I have the most imitated accent. It’s a trademark.

But you could do a New York accent, or Southern accent?

If I have to, but so far I’ve never had to.