24 Things About Napoleon Ridley Scott's New Movie Left Out

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Whether or not you're a history enthusiast, you've almost certainly heard of Napoleon. Without question, he is one of the most famous (or infamous) historic military leaders ever to live.

Born in 1769, he would eventually crown himself emperor of France and invade countries all over Europe (and elsewhere). Napoleon's life was full

of achievements and important events, so it's tricky for a screenwriter to decide what to include. Ridley Scott left many things out of Napoleon, his 2023 movie about Napoleon's life.

1. Childhood on Corsica



Image Credit: Giulia Arrighetti – Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0/Wiki Commons.

Napoleon was born on the island of Corsica and had relatively humble origins. In 1774, 5-year-old Napoleon became a pupil at a school run by nuns on the island. Ridley Scott's movie includes nothing about this part of Napoleon's life.

2. Education in Brienne

Image Credit: Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

A scholarship allowed Napoleon to attend the Royal Military School in France when he was 9. His intellect and talents ensured he did well.

3. His Siblings

Image Credit: Godefroy Engelmann – National Library of Wales, Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

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Napoleon came from a large family. He had seven siblings: Joseph, Lucian, Elisa, Louis, Pauline, Caroline, and Jerome.

4. Childhood Bullying

Image Credit: François Gérard – Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

Fellow pupils bullied Napoleon when he was at the Royal Military School. His fellow pupils were from France's elite and scorned his background.

5. Josephine Was Older Than Napoleon

Image Credit: Baron François Gérard, Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

In *Napoleon*, Vanessa Kirby (Josephine) is much younger than star Joaquin Phoenix. By contrast, the real Josephine was six years older than her husband.

6. He Stayed Safely Behind His Soldiers

Image Credit: James Alexander Walker (British, 1841-1898) – Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

In *Napoleon*, we see the main character charging into battle with his soldiers. This isn't historically accurate. As a military general, Napoleon stayed behind his soldiers, strategizing.

7. He Was Posted in Southern France When The French Revolution Began

Image Credit: CC BY 4.0/Wiki Commons.

The movie shows a young Napoleon witnessing Marie Antoinette's execution. This is inaccurate and leaves out that he was posted in southern France with the military.

8. Put His Brothers On Thrones

Image Credit: Jean-Baptiste Wicar – Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0/Ratisbia – Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0/Wiki Commons.

The movie doesn't include his siblings, but Napoleon was always close to his brothers and sisters. After becoming emperor, he decided to put his siblings on European thrones. He managed to put his brother Joseph on the throne of Naples (and later Spain). His brother Louis acceded to the throne of Holland.

9. Survived a Bayonet Attack at Toulon

Image Credit: Édouard Detaille – Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

Napoleon doesn't include a dramatic (and almost deadly) moment in the young Napoleon's life when he was attacked with a bayonet by a British soldier. This happened when Napoleon was 24, in a battle in Toulon.

10. Obsession With Working

Image Credit: François Flameng – Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

Ridley Scott's film doesn't fully convey Napoleon's enormous energy and almost limitless ability to work. He usually slept a mere 3 or 4 hours a night.

11. Life Was More Than His Love For Josephine

Image Credit: Poro amara – Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0/Wiki Commons.

Ridley Scott's *Napoleon* focuses on the emperor's ardent love for Josephine. As we're learning, his life had many other layers and facets.

12. Enjoyed Socializing

Image Credit: Andrea Appiani – The Yorck Project, Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

Napoleon and Josephine enjoyed throwing parties. This was one of the things they were best known for among their social set.

13. Letters To Josephine

Image Credit: Pierre-Paul, Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

The many letters, some professing love and others expressing anger, from Napoleon to Josephine, are proof of their volatile relationship. They also provide a glimpse into the emperor's changeable personality.

14. Wanted To Reform Society

Image Credit: François Gérard – Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

Napoleon's interests extended far beyond just conquering and ruling. He believed in social reform, especially in the area of education.

15. He Feared Open Doors

Image Credit: Thomas1313 – Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0/Wiki Commons.

One of Napoleon's quirkiest characteristics was his fear of open doors. It would have been interesting to show more of the emperor's quirks in the movie.

16. He Headed Committees

Image Credit: Antoine-Jean Gros – Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

Napoleon was an impressive administrator. It's challenging to make this exciting in a film, so that is probably why Ridley Scott didn't focus on it.

17. He Was A Great Politician

Image Credit: Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

He was a formidable military tactician. However, Napoleon probably wouldn't have maintained power if he hadn't had political skills. *Napoleon* focuses more on military action than political maneuvering.

18. Skill At Compartmentalization

Image Credit: Victor Philippe Auguste de Jonquières (1816-1885) – Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

Napoleon was an expert at compartmentalization. He could change his mental focus wholly and immediately, at will. There is less of this kind of pivoting in the film than there could be.

19. Cruel Words To Josephine

Image Credit: No restrictions/Wiki Commons.

Ridley Scott's film shows how deeply in love Napoleon was with Josephine. In reality, though, he sometimes said shockingly hurtful things to her.

20. Learned Manners From Josephine

Image Credit: Guillaume Guillon-Lethière – Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

Josephine came from an aristocratic background and was more adept at mixing with France's elite. She guided Napoleon on how to socialize and impress.

21. He Always Had Books With Him

Image Credit: Harini2102 – Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0/Wiki Commons.

In *Napoleon*, the emperor is portrayed as rather boorish. The real Napoleon was an avid reader. In fact, he brought books with him wherever he went.

22. Josephine Used Her Social Status To Get the Upper Hand

Image Credit: No restrictions/Wiki Commons.

Josephine used the fact she was from an aristocratic background to make Napoleon feel inferior.

23. Soldiers Drowned In Small Ponds in Austerlitz

Image Credit: Michael Graham, CC BY-SA 2.0/Wiki Commons.

In *Napoleon*, many of Napoleon's soldiers drown after falling through the ice on a frozen lake during a battle. In that historic battle at Austerlitz, however, the soldiers drowned in small ponds.

24. Transformation of Law

Image Credit: Antoine-Jean Gros – Public Domain/Wiki Commons.

We don't see this in the movie, but Napoleon changed the French legal system. This was perhaps one of his most significant accomplishments.

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