

Rick Deckard

The American actor Harrison Ford, a major American movie star well known for his role in Star Wars and the Indiana Jones saga, plays the character of Rick Deckard.

Deckard, as he is referred to in the film, is the lead character in Blade Runner and most of the time during the film we are following his movements as he undertakes his assignment to hunt down and retire the replicants.

His occupation is a 'blade runner', a special kind of police officer that tracks down and retires (kills) replicants that have come back to earth from off-world colonies. *

Essentially this means that he is an assassin. Deckard is presumably part of a police squad of blade runners that includes Holden and others. When the film starts, Deckard is an ex-cop - he quit blade running because he was tired of killing, but as the movie begins he is re-assigned to track down and retire Roy Batty and his friends. This re-assignment is not an option, but compulsory, he has 'no choice' according to his police captain Bryant. We can only take this to mean that his pay and other benefits would be cut off if he refused, although there is the possibility that Bryant's threat is more sinister. So Deckard is tied to the state (or possibly private) police department as an assassin and presumably has little real freedom. We know that Deckard is the best blade runner, because Bryant had alluded to this and tells him that they need 'his magic' after Holden is nearly killed by Leon during an interrogation.

Deckard fits the role of the world-weary ex-cop. He appears to be in his mid-to-late thirties, wears plain coloured old-fashioned clothing and has a five o'clock shadow. His appearance would not be described as neat or stylish, in fact he does not appear to concern himself too much with how he looks. He displays very little emotion and certainly no enthusiasm or vibrancy, which is understandable considering the job he performs. He is single and lives alone in a standard high-rise apartment, and I believe that in the original version of the film we are made aware that he used to be married but his wife left him some time ago. No mention is made of family members, besides the black-and-white photos on his piano that reveal nothing anyway. Numerous times in the film he is shown drinking alcohol to the point of being tipsy, and we can take this as an indication that he has a daily drinking problem and probably ends up drunk most nights.

All in all Deckard remains a fairly mysterious character throughout the film. He is quiet, pensive and displays little to no emotion apart from when he is seen to be crying as Roy dies on the rooftop. It is presumed that this confrontation and his love affair with Rachael will allow Deckard to open up and become a fuller person in the future.

It is also worth noting that the existential nature of Rick Deckard remains an open question. Various times in the film it is hinted that he may in fact be a replicant, either a Nexus-6 like Roy or a higher model like Rachael. There is absolutely no confirmation either way, and it is up to the individual viewer

to reach his or her own conclusion.

**The opening written passage of the film states that replicants have been declared illegal on earth under penalty of death. We can presume that this includes all model of replicants. No information about Deckard's previous assignments is given, although we know that he has obviously retired replicants before.*