



SILVERSCREEN
PRIMARY
EDUCATION

1970s Cinema: The Rebirth of Hollywood

By Adam Pepper

Session 6



Welcome to Session 6 of this '1970s Cinema: The Rebirth of Hollywood' course!

Over ten weeks, we will journey through over 30 years of cinema to find the secrets behind some of the most iconic, ground-breaking, popular and culture-changing stories and movies from this, the grooviest of all decades!

Session 6:

After spending last week delving deep into the dark storytelling (and personal lives) of Roman Polanski and Woody Allen; complete with their, at the time (and still?), iconic output of films like 'Chinatown', 'Rosemary's Baby', 'Manhattan' and 'Annie Hall', this week sees us heading into the frozen streets of wintry New York and the blue waters of Amity Island.

Following the massive success of Coppola's 'The Godfather', the film studios (and in particular, Paramount) are looking for the next BIG movie, the next BIG director and the next BIG star!

But they are also, like Coppola with Mario Puzo before him, looking to existing and successful novels for their source material.

A non-fiction procedural account of busting a drugs ring in New York, and a holiday blockbuster about a family living in the midst of Great White Shark attacks provide this week's main focus.

Stepping from the confines of his TV studio work after the critical success of 'Duel', Spielberg grabs his first proper film job with relish, creating an iconic movie which, like 'The Godfather' a few years earlier, did something ground-breaking to cinema attendance and engagement.

But a new director on the block, with a background in documentary film-making, is also making the step up to features, and he is being offered movies that suit his skillset to a tee.

As we cross the threshold of 1974-5, cinema is suddenly becoming an event! It is becoming something often bigger than the films themselves! And after this year, cinema will never be the same again!

Useful information for Session 6:

William Friedkin

William David Friedkin (August 29, 1935 – August 7, 2023) was an American film, television and opera director, producer, and screenwriter who was closely identified with the "New Hollywood" movement of the 1970s.

Beginning his career in documentaries in the early 1960s, he is best known for his crime thriller film *The French Connection* (1971), which won five Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director, and the horror film *The Exorcist* (1973), which earned him another Academy Award nomination for Best Director.

Friedkin's other films in the 1970s and 1980s include the drama *The Boys in the Band* (1970), considered a milestone of queer cinema, the originally deprecated, now lauded thriller *Sorcerer* (1977), the crime comedy drama *The Brink's Job* (1978), the controversial thriller *Cruising* (1980), and the neo-noir thriller *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985).

Although Friedkin's works suffered an overall commercial and critical decline in the late 1980s, his last three feature films, all based on plays, were positively received by critics: the psychological horror film *Bug* (2006), the crime film *Killer Joe* (2011), and the legal drama film *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial* (2023), released two months after his death. He also worked extensively as an opera director from 1998 until his death, and directed various television films and series episodes for television.

Gene Hackman

Eugene Allen Hackman (born January 30, 1930) is an American retired actor. In a career that spanned more than six decades, he received two Academy Awards, two BAFTA Awards, four Golden Globes, a Screen Actors Guild Award, and the Silver Bear.

Hackman's two Academy Award wins included one for Best Actor for his role as Jimmy "Popeye" Doyle in William Friedkin's acclaimed thriller *The French Connection* (1971) and the other for Best Supporting Actor for his role as "Little" Bill Daggett in Clint Eastwood's Western film *Unforgiven* (1992). His other Oscar-nominated roles were in *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *I Never Sang for My Father* (1970), and *Mississippi Burning* (1988).

Hackman gained further fame for his portrayal of Lex Luthor in *Superman* (1978) and its sequels *Superman II* (1980) and *Superman IV: The Quest for Peace* (1987). He also acted in *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), *The Conversation* (1974), *Reds* (1981), *Hoosiers* (1986), *No Way Out* (1987), *The Firm* (1993), *Get Shorty* (1995), *Crimson Tide* (1995), *The Birdcage* (1996), *Absolute Power* (1997), and *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001).

Gene Hackman was born in San Bernardino, California, United States, the son of Eugene Ezra Hackman and Anna Lyda Elizabeth (née Gray). He has a brother named Richard. Hackman has Pennsylvania Dutch, English, and Scottish ancestry. His mother was born in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada.

Hackman's family moved frequently, finally settling in Danville, Illinois, where they lived in the house of his English-born maternal grandmother, Beatrice. His father operated the printing press for the *Commercial-News*, a local newspaper. Hackman decided that he wanted to become an actor at age 10. His parents divorced when he was 13 and his father subsequently left the family.

Hackman lived briefly in Storm Lake, Iowa, and spent his sophomore year at Storm Lake High School. He left home at age 16 and lied about his age to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. He served four and a half years as a field-radio operator. Hackman was stationed in China (Qingdao and later in Shanghai). When the Communist Revolution conquered the mainland in 1949, he was assigned to Hawaii and Japan. Following his discharge in 1951, Hackman moved to New York City and had several jobs.

In 1956, Hackman began pursuing an acting career.

His mother died in 1962 as a result of a fire she accidentally started while smoking. He began a study of journalism and television production at the University of Illinois under the G.I. Bill, but left and moved back to California.

Films to look out for:

The French Connection (1971)

The Poseidon Adventure (1972)

Scarecrow (1973)

The Exorcist (1973)

The Conversation (1974)

Jaws (1975)

