



SILVERSCREEN
PRIMARY
EDUCATION

1970s Cinema: The Rebirth of Hollywood

By Adam Pepper

Session 8



Welcome to Session 8 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 8:

Last week, we saw the true arrival of Martin Scorsese, as his dark, seedy, grimy, city-set 'Taxi Driver' shocked and mesmerised cinema audiences worldwide! But we also saw the beginnings of a subtle shift towards hope and positivity in the cinema.

Using tools learned under the tutelage of Lee Strasberg, our new acting superstars, alongside these incredibly creative (inspired by the work of European film-makers) directors, began to represent good characters; not the anti-heroes and glamorous bad guys of the early 70s.

Whether it was the integrity of Al Pacino's 'Serpico', the naïve loyalty of Pacino's character in 'Dog Day Afternoon', or Sylvester Stallone's underdog in 'Rocky', maybe it WAS time for a shift to the brighter, lighter, more hopeful style of storytelling and character.

And with 'Jaws' still making its box office dollars, what would be the NEXT big movie?

Since '2001: A Space Odyssey' came out in 1968, and in the midst of a very exciting real-life space race, sci-fi seems to be back in style.

George Lucas has been busy honing and refining his next big sci-fi story (clearly not put off by his experience of the disastrous 'THX-1138'), and his good friend Francis Ford Coppola is there with advice (and cash) to keep the idea alive!

And, amidst a slew of politically-charged thrillers and original science fiction, his 'Star Wars' tale might just be the next big thing!

Let's find out as we head into 1977...

Useful information for Session 8:

Douglas Trumbull

Douglas Hunt Trumbull (April 8, 1942 – February 7, 2022) was an American film director and visual effects supervisor, who pioneered innovative methods in special effects. He created scenes for *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *Blade Runner* and *The Tree of Life*, and directed the movies *Silent Running* and *Brainstorm*.

Trumbull was born in Los Angeles. His father was an aerospace engineer who had briefly worked in Hollywood creating visual effects for the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz*; his mother, who died when Trumbull was 7, was an artist. As a child, he liked to construct mechanical and electrical devices such as crystal-set radios, and enjoyed watching alien invasion movies. He initially wanted to be an architect, leading him to take classes in illustration. He

studied technical drawing at El Camino Junior College and joined the Screen Cartoonists Guild upon graduating. However, Hollywood initially rejected his portfolio of spaceships and planetary drawings. Though his abilities in creating photorealistic art led to a job at Graphic Films, which produced short films for NASA and the Air Force.

Douglas Trumbull's early work was at Graphic Films in Los Angeles. The small animation and graphic arts studio produced a film called *To the Moon and Beyond* about spaceflight for the 1964 New York World's Fair. Trumbull, the son of a mechanical engineer and an artist, worked at Graphic Films as an illustrator and airbrush artist. He painted a rotating spiral galaxy, and using a fish eye lens, projected the film onto a custom-built dome. The effect was groundbreaking for its time and the film caught the attention of director Stanley Kubrick, who was beginning work on the project that would become *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Kubrick hired director Con Pederson from Graphic Films and the company was to work on visual effects for the film. When Kubrick decided to move all production to England, he cancelled the contract with Graphic Films. Trumbull wanted to keep working on the film as he had already done considerable pre-production work, so he cold-called Kubrick after obtaining the director's home phone number from Pederson. Kubrick hired Trumbull and flew him to London for the production of *2001*.

The Watergate Scandal

The Watergate scandal was a major political controversy in the United States during the presidency of Richard Nixon from 1972 to 1974, ultimately resulting in Nixon's resignation. It originated from attempts by the Nixon administration to conceal its involvement in the June 17, 1972, break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters located in the Watergate Office Building in Washington, D.C.

Following the apprehension of the five individuals involved in the break-in, both the press and the Department of Justice connected the funds found on those involved to the CRP (the fundraising organization of Richard Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign). Subsequent investigations and revelations during trials prompted the U.S. House of Representatives to grant the House Judiciary Committee expanded investigative authority. Additionally, the Senate established the U.S. Senate Watergate Committee, which conducted hearings.

Witnesses testified that Nixon had sanctioned plans to cover up his administration's involvement in the burglary and that there was a voice-activated taping system in the Oval Office. Nixon's administration resisted the investigations, leading to a constitutional crisis. The televised Senate Watergate hearings garnered nationwide attention and public interest.

Numerous revelations and Nixon's efforts to impede the investigation in 1973 led the House to initiate impeachment proceedings against him. The Supreme Court's ruling in *United States v. Nixon* (1974) compelled Nixon to surrender the Oval Office tapes, which revealed his complicity in the cover-up. The House Judiciary Committee approved three articles of impeachment against Nixon, who subsequently resigned from office on August 9, 1974, becoming the only U.S. president to do so.

Films to look out for:

The Hidden Fortress (1958)

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)

Silent Running (1972)

Soylent Green (1973)

Three Days of The Condor (1975)

All The President's Men (1976)

Capricorn One (1977)

Star Wars (1977)

Invasion of the Bodysnatchers (1978)



