



SILVERSCREEN
PRIMARY
EDUCATION

1980s Cinema: Mullets, Ray-Bans & Teenage Angst

By Adam Pepper

Session 8



Welcome to Session 8 of this '1980s Cinema: 'Mullets, Ray-Bans & Teenage Angst' course!

Over these ten weeks, we will journey through over 20 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 cheesiest and most action-packed of all decades!

We will study the directors, writers, actors, stories and history of the time to uncover how the 1980s created such a shift in film and storytelling, and gave us some of our most iconic film stars and characters.

We will look at their beginnings, their inspirations and the news they lived through to chart a path to some of the greatest and most rewatched films ever made.

Session 8:

Last week, in the honeymoon glow of 1984, we again followed our favourite comedians, action stars and whoever Spielberg was working with into another run of box office adventures.

Richard Donner's 'The Goonies', Chevy Chase solving crimes in 'Fletch', Stallone fighting commies and old Vietnam enemies at the same time and Bond. Oh, Mr. Bond, why so creaky?

But as we head ever closer to the 90s, and another term of Mr. Reagan, maybe cracks in the joy and hope are starting to show?

Interestingly, it's our 70s directors in resurgence this time. De Palma is back with an old Bond and one of the 80s biggest bankable stars in an iconic gangster film. And, speaking of gangsters, so too is Scorsese, cashing in on the rise of the greatest smile in Hollywood by casting Tom Cruise in a pool hall movie which follows on from a Hollywood classic. Heck, even David Lean is still bringing in the classic cinematic experience, along with ickle Richard Attenborough!

But it's Oliver Stone who leads the charge with the fightback against US jingoism; maybe Vietnam wasn't such a good idea after all! He will be back soon to question another of America's biggest secrets.

And over in the quaint little UK, we have cameras too, and we are sticking to the tried and tested formula of Maggie Smith, period pieces, Vangelis and stories of our glorious Empire! Eek!

But 1986/7 belongs to one man. And he feels the need, the need for speed...

Useful information for Session 8:

Tony Scott

Anthony David Leighton Scott (21 June 1944 – 19 August 2012) was a British film director and producer.

He made his theatrical film debut with *The Hunger* (1983) and went on to direct highly successful action and thriller films such as *Top Gun* (1986), *Beverly Hills Cop II* (1987), *Days of Thunder* (1990), *The Last Boy Scout* (1991), *Crimson Tide* (1995), *Enemy of the State* (1998), *Man on Fire* (2004), *Déjà Vu* (2006), *The Taking of Pelham 123* (2009) and *Unstoppable* (2010).

Scott was the younger brother of film director Ridley Scott. They both graduated from the Royal College of Art in London, and were among a generation of British film directors who were successful in Hollywood having started their careers making television commercials. In 1995, both Tony and Ridley received the BAFTA Award for Outstanding British Contribution To Cinema. In 2010, they received the BAFTA Britannia Award for Worldwide Contribution to Filmed Entertainment.

Scott reflected on his career in 2009:

'The '80s was a whole era. We were criticised, we being the Brits coming over, because we were out of advertising—Alan Parker, Hugh Hudson, Adrian Lyne, my brother—we were criticised about style over content. Jerry Bruckheimer was very bored of the way American films were very traditional and classically done. Jerry was always looking for difference. That's why I did six movies with Jerry. He always applauded the way I wanted to approach things. That period in the '80s was a period when I was constantly being criticised, and my press was horrible. I never read any press after The Hunger.'

Scott persisted in trying to embark on a feature film career. Among the ideas interesting to him was an adaptation of the Anne Rice novel *Interview with the Vampire* then in development. MGM was already developing the vampire film *The Hunger*, and hired Scott as director in 1982. Despite starring David Bowie, Susan Sarandon and Catherine Deneuve, and having elaborate production design, it failed to find an audience or to impress the critics although it later became a cult favourite. Finding few film opportunities in Hollywood over the next two and a half years, Scott returned to commercials and music videos.

In 1985, producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer approached Scott to direct *Top Gun*, having been impressed by *The Hunger*, and a commercial he had done for Swedish automaker Saab in 1983 featuring a Saab 900 racing a Saab 37 Viggen fighter jet. Scott, initially reluctant, finally agreed to direct *Top Gun*. While the film received mixed critical reviews, it was a box office smash, becoming the highest-grossing film of 1986, taking in more than \$350 million, and making a star of its young protagonist, Tom Cruise. Labelling *Top Gun* "the key 1980s movie made by the British ad invasion", Sam Delaney of *The Guardian* writes, "By the mid-80's, Hollywood was awash with British directors who had ushered in a new era of blockbusters using the crowd-pleasing skills they'd honed in advertising. The vast resources and freedom made available to ad directors during advertising's boom era during the 1970's enabled them to innovate and experiment with new techniques that weren't then possible in TV or film."

On 19 August 2012, at approximately 12:30 pm PDT, Scott jumped off the Vincent Thomas Bridge in the San Pedro port district of Los Angeles. Investigators from the Los Angeles Police Department's Harbor Division found contact information in a note left in his car, parked on the bridge, and a note at his office for his family. One witness said he did not hesitate before jumping, but another said he looked nervous before climbing a fence, hesitating for two seconds before jumping. He landed beside a tour boat. His body was recovered from the water by the Los Angeles Port Police. On 22 August, Los Angeles County coroner's spokesman Ed Winters said the two notes Scott left behind made no mention of any health problems, but neither the police nor the family disclosed the content of those notes.

Films to look out for:

The Long Good Friday (1980)

Lethal Weapon (1987)

Gandhi (1982)

The Untouchables (1987)

A Passage to India (1984)

Withnail & I (1987)

A Room With A View (1985)

A Fish Called Wanda (1988)

Legend (1985)

Henry V (1989)

Top Gun (1986)

The Colour Of Money (1986)

Platoon (1986)

