



SILVERSCREEN  
PRIMARY  
EDUCATION

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

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### Session 9



Welcome to Session 9 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 9:**

Last week saw the final confirmation of Tom Cruise as the World's Greatest Movie Star (discuss?) with the release of Tony Scott's 'Top Gun'. Fresh from the advertising world, Scott made his movies like extended ads, with dreamy shots, fast cuts and a kick ass soundtrack. He 'sold' you the movie!

This week, the shiny hope we have long been riding on begins to look a little scuffed.

As Reagan gets embroiled in controversies in Iran and Nicaragua, so too does cinema start to reframe itself in terms of a 'darkness under the surface' much like we had seen in the late 70s with Vietnam and The Watergate Affair.

And those kinds of directors, who love a darker story and have been side-lined a little since the turn of the decade, start to get their mojo back too.

Movies now bring in a little darkness with their bold colours and pop soundtracks. Lynch is leading the way, but there is corporate greed in 'Robocop', family infidelity in 'Fatal Attraction' and brotherly conflict in 'Rain Man', once again starring Cruise.

That 70s vibe continues, with a 'Towering Inferno'-like 'Die Hard' making a new star out of TV's Bruce Willis. The 'everyman action hero' is here, and he is here to stay!

We are flirting with the 90s now, and cynicism, new tech and politically motivated directors are back at the forefront of Hollywood's movie-making.

#### **Useful information for Session 9:**

##### **Tim Burton**

Timothy Walter Burton (born August 25, 1958) is an American film director and producer, Known for popularizing Goth culture in the American film industry, Burton is famous for his gothic horror and dark fantasy films. He has received numerous accolades including an Emmy Award as well as nominations for two Academy Awards, a Golden Globe Award and three BAFTA Awards. He was honoured with the Venice International Film Festival's Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in 2007 and was given the Order of Arts and Letters by Culture Minister of France in 2010.

Burton made his directorial film debut with the comedy *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (1985) and gained prominence for *Beetlejuice* (1988) and *Edward Scissorhands* (1990). Burton also directed the superhero films *Batman* (1989) and *Batman Returns* (1992); the animated films *Corpse Bride* (2005) and *Frankenweenie* (2012); the science fiction films *Mars Attacks!* (1996) and *Planet of the Apes* (2001); the supernatural horror film *Sleepy Hollow* (1999); the fantasy films *Big Fish* (2003), *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), *Dark Shadows* (2012) and *Dumbo* (2019); the musicals *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005) and *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007); and the biographical dramas *Ed Wood* (1994) and *Big Eyes* (2014). Starting in 2022, Burton has directed several episodes for the Netflix series *Wednesday*, for which he received a nomination for the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Directing for a Comedy Series. He also directed *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* (2024), the sequel to the 1988 film. Burton has frequently collaborated with composer Danny Elfman, who scored all but three of his films. He has released several books including *The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories* (1997).

As a preteen, Burton made short films in his backyard at 2101 North Evergreen Street, using crude stop motion animation techniques or shooting on 8 mm film without sound (one of his oldest known juvenile films is *The Island of Doctor Agor*, adapted from the H. G. Wells novel *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, which he made when he was 13 years old).

Burton attended Providencia Elementary School, Luther Burbank Middle School, and Burbank High School, but was not a particularly good student. He played on the water polo team at Burbank High. Burton was an introspective person and found pleasure in artwork, painting, drawing, and watching movies. His future work would be heavily influenced by the books of such childhood heroes as Dr. Seuss and Roald Dahl, and of the visual aesthetics of silent gothic horror films, Universal Monsters movies such as *Frankenstein* which he would continuously tribute throughout his career, Hammer Horror films starring Christopher Lee and the horror films of Vincent Price, both of whom would star in his films, and with the latter being paid tribute in his 1982 short film *Vincent*.

In a *Hollywood Reporter* article, Burton states: "I grew up watching the Universal horror movies, Japanese monster movies, and pretty much any kind of monster movie. That was my genre." Burton also said that his love of Ray Harryhausen's work got him interested in stop-motion animation at a young age.

After graduating from Burbank High School in 1976, Burton attended the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, Santa Clarita, to study character animation, until 1979. As a student at CalArts, Burton made the shorts *Stalk of the Celery Monster* and *King and Octopus*.

*Stalk of the Celery Monster* attracted the attention of Walt Disney Productions, who offered Burton an animator's apprenticeship at its animation division. He worked as an animator, storyboard artist, graphic designer, art director, and concept artist on films such as *The Fox and the Hound* (1981), *Tron* (1982), and *The Black Cauldron* (1985). His concept art never made it into the finished films.

#### **Films to look out for:**

*Blue Velvet* (1986)

*Twin Peaks* (1990-91)

*Fatal Attraction* (1987)

*Robocop* (1987)

*Beetlejuice* (1988)

*Cocktail* (1988)

*Rain Man* (1988)

*Die Hard* (1988)

*Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (1988)

