HAGERTY

MOVIES AND CARS ISSUE

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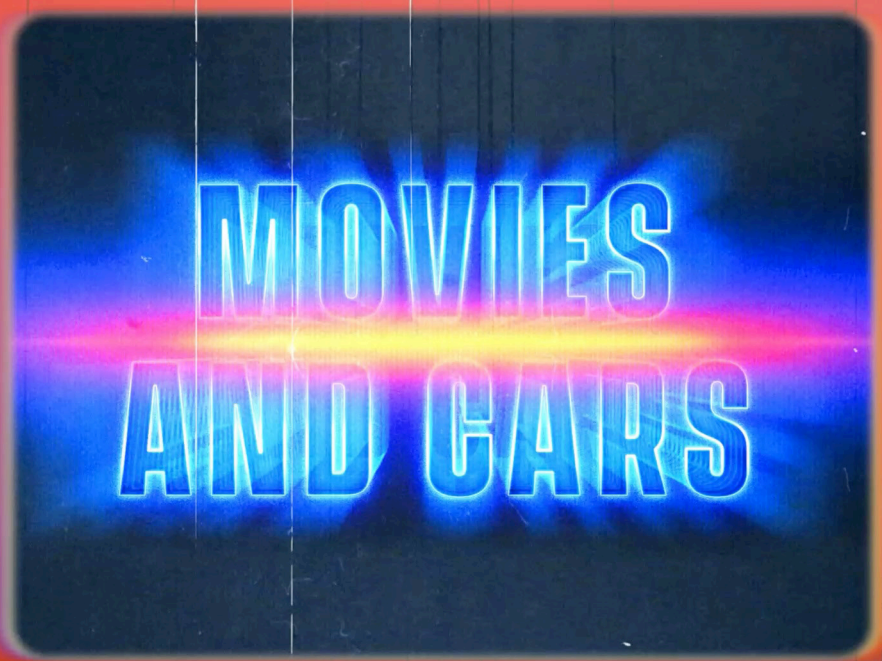

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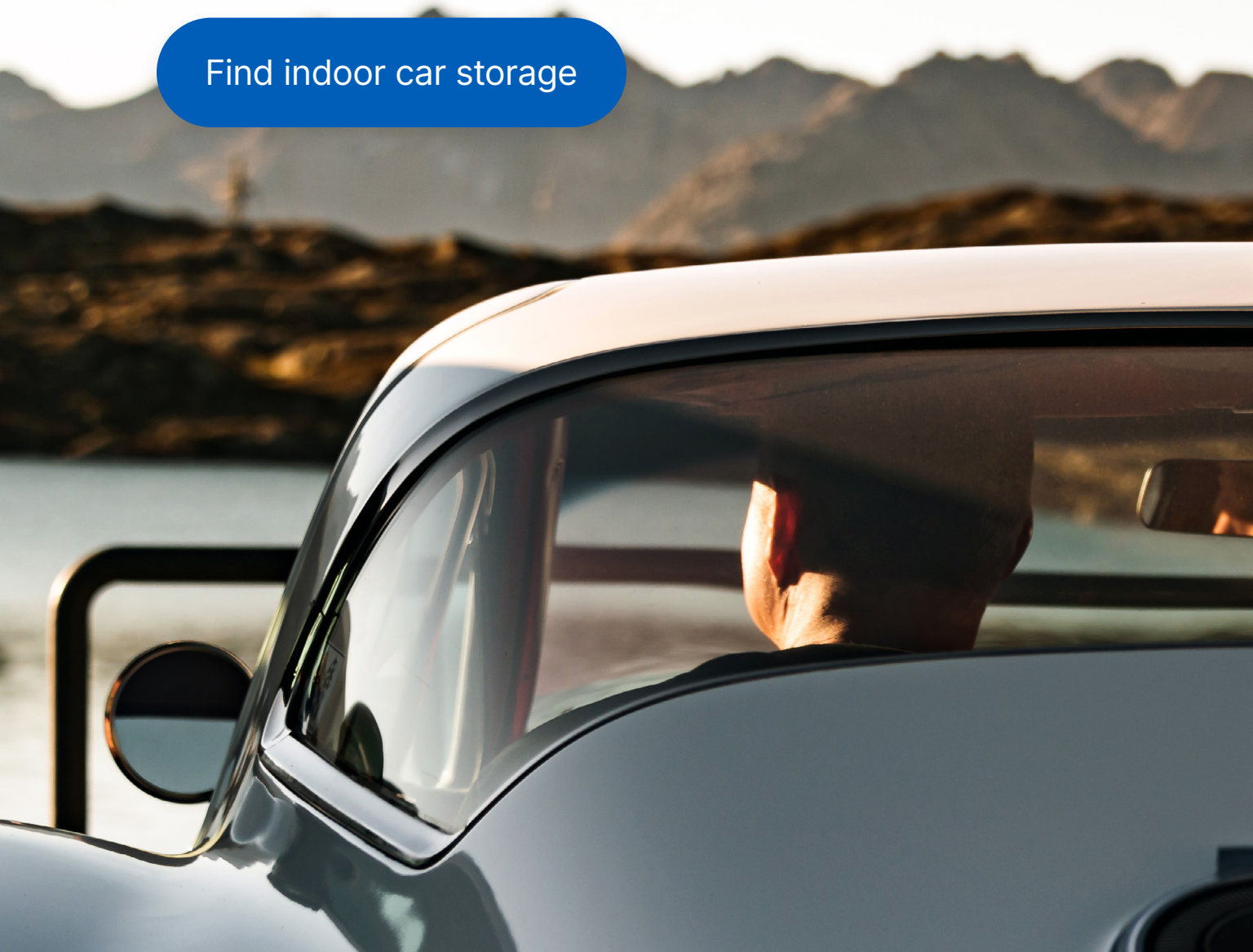

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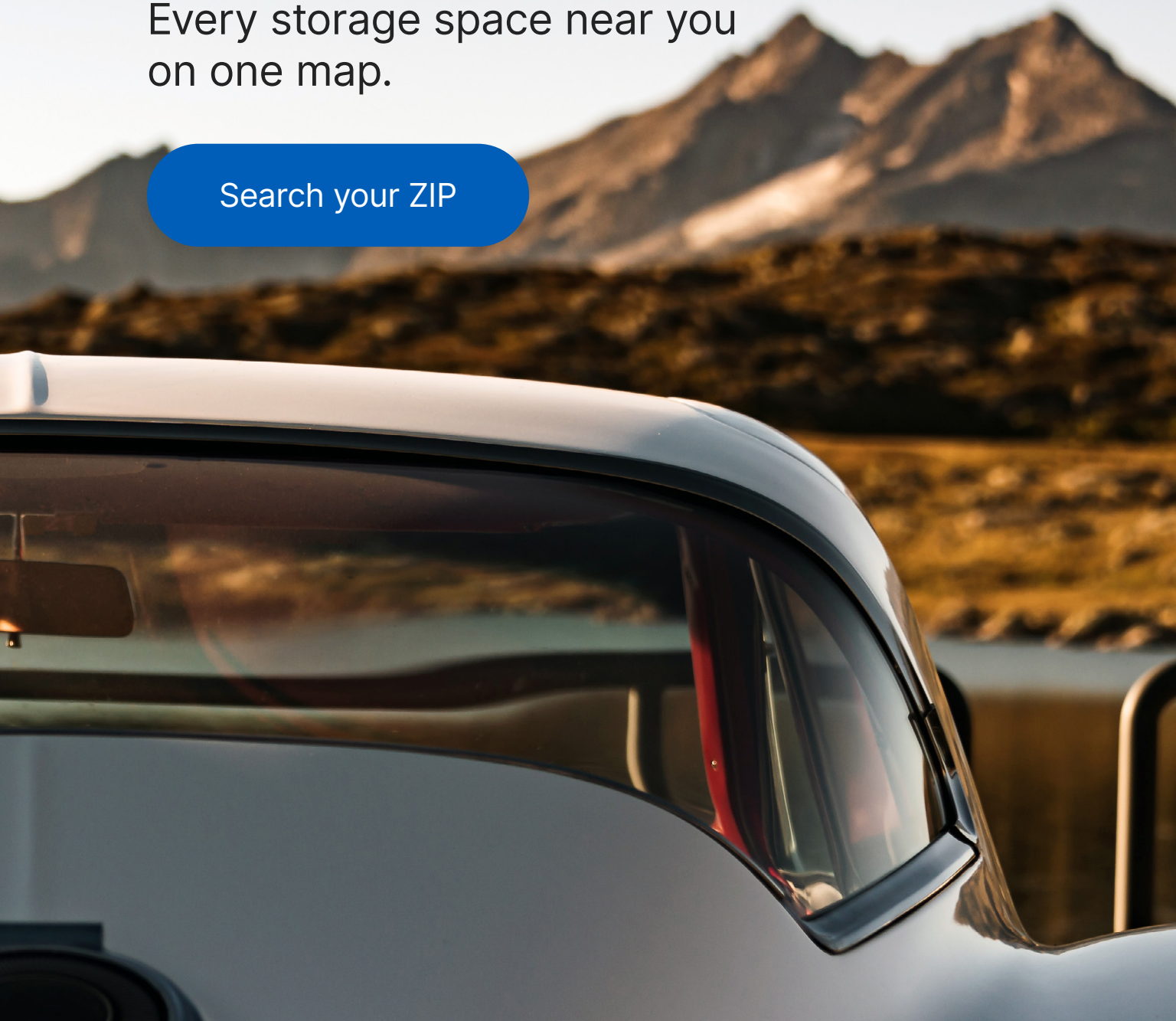

WELCOME

The best car movies, like the best cars, tend to stick with us. For Webster, one of them is the promotional film *Faszination on the Nürburgring*.

IN 1989, THE BOUTIQUE German car manufacturer Ruf released a 20-minute movie to promote a 200-mph version of the Porsche 911 Turbo called the CTR. The car world knew the machine by its nickname: Yellowbird.

The film, called *Faszination on the Nürburgring*, was the first of its kind, showcasing driver Stefan Roser hooning the Yellowbird around Germany's racetrack. Most of the shots are what's called point-of-view angle, so the viewer feels like they're behind the wheel as Roser drifts the car through every corner. Ruf and Roser's influence can be seen in Ken Block videos, the golden era of *Top Gear*, and even the slidefests on Hagerty's own YouTube channel.

Since Ruf's film came out before the internet, it went viral primarily via word of mouth and VHS tapes. I didn't get my hands on a grainy copy until many years after its introduction. I must have watched it 10 times straight. There on the screen was seemingly everything I loved about cars: the speed, the danger, the aggression one could apply behind the wheel. I've never forgotten it.

That emotional connection between movies and cars is the reason we dedicated this entire issue to the topic.

Just like the directors who make those movies, we had a hard time deciding what to include in this issue and what to leave on the cutting room floor.

At first, we couldn't even agree on what counted as a car movie. Is a documentary about another car movie itself a car movie? I decided it was and wrote about *Steve McQueen, The Man & Le Mans*. You can read that here.

What about McQueen's famous flick, *Bullitt*? "Not a car movie!" declared editor-at-large Aaron Robinson. Before you get out your pitchforks, read his argument here. Note that our own McKeel Hagerty wasn't quite convinced—he talks about why *Bullitt* is one of his favorites here.

We wound up compiling a list of our editors' personal favorite car movies. You'll surely recognize many. A few might surprise you (Hint: One is French). You can read them all starting here. Think we left out a clear winner? Send me an email and tell me why.

That's the fun and the madness of a topic like the one we've tackled here. There are no wrong answers. What's certain is that cars often make movies better and that the right movie, like *Faszination*, stirs and enhances our own love for cars.

Thanks to modern technology, we've never had more movies at our fingertips. In fact, you can watch plenty of clips right in this digital issue. If you're reading on a computer or tablet, click on the "Play Here" icons. If you're on your phone, simply tap on the embedded video players.

Another benefit of technology: It's never been easier to make movies. Phones now film in high definition, and with a few easy techniques, you can be your own Steven Spielberg. To help you get started, we've included tips from our resident short-form video expert, Isaac Shapiro. Read it here. I've experimented myself: You can view my first attempts on Instagram @lwebster19. We hope you enjoy the issue—then get out there on your own.

Larry

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Editor-in-Chief
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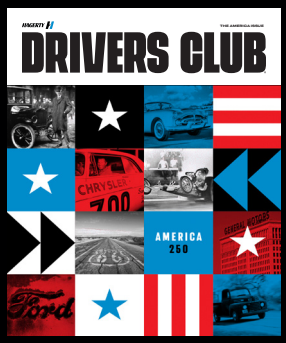

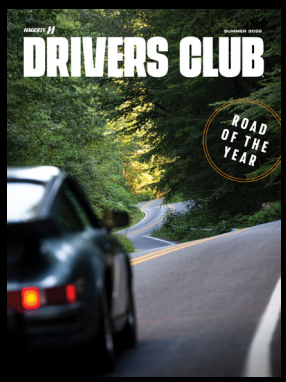

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All issues of *Hagerty Drivers Club* magazine are now available in a digital format that you can read on a desktop computer, tablet, or phone. Our ***America 250 Issue,*** available exclusively in digital form, boasts a huge assortment of stories celebrating our automotive heritage. Settle in for some great reads.

Our ***Summer 2026*** issue, featuring the third annual Hagerty Road of the Year, landed in mailboxes back in July, and we hope it inspired you to hit the road during prime driving season. The Fall 2026 issue will also be printed and will arrive in November.

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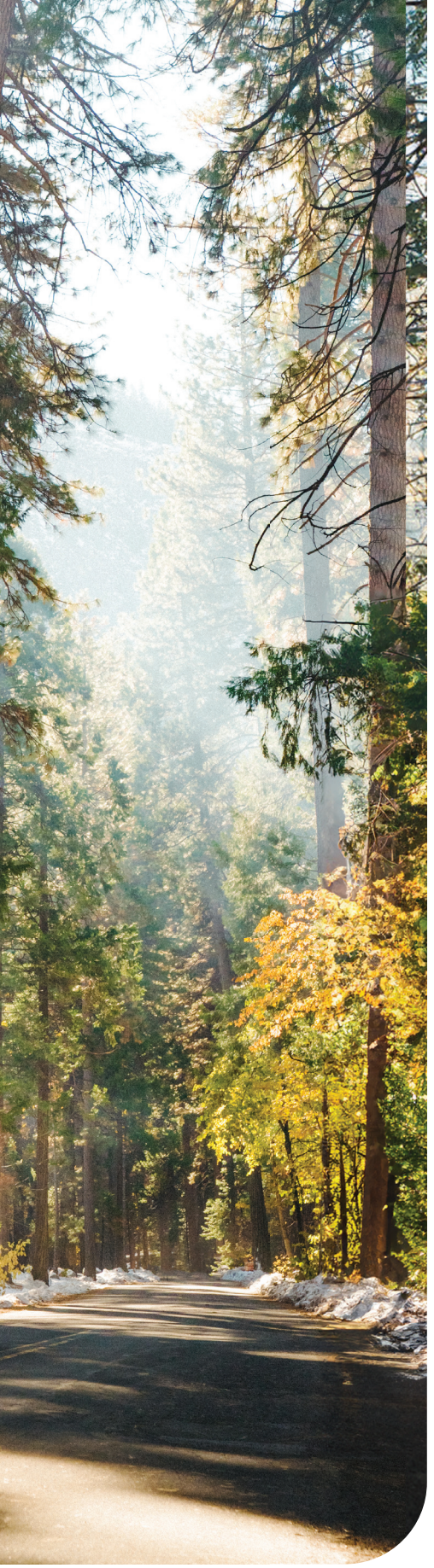

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BAD CAR MOVIES I'VE LOVED

Jay Leno
aka The Comedian

Elvis was great, but his record of making realistic car movies wasn't. Here crammed in an Elva with Ann-Margret in *Viva Las Vegas* (1964).

HERE AT THE garage, we used to do bad-car-movie nights in which we'd show *The Car* with James Brolin or *Hot Rods to Hell* or terrible films like that. Fact is, there are far more bad car movies to choose from than good ones. I guess my favorite is *Grand Prix*—it's a great car movie, and when you remember they did it with cameras the size of suitcases strapped to Formula 1 cars, it's even more amazing. But for the most part, cars are misunderstood or badly depicted in film. Even Steve McQueen's *Le Mans*, which we all love, isn't a great movie. There is nothing funnier than trying to get your wife to watch it. "They're just driving in a circle! What's going on!?" They're furious because there's no plot to it at all.

Maybe my favorite bad racing movie is *Driven*, the Sly Stallone movie from 2001. First of all, someone gets the keys to the race car, as if race cars have keys. And then they're racing on the streets of Chicago, like a race car would last five minutes on regular streets, and women's dresses are blowing up and they go by a cop who's got the radar going and it reads 195. It's just so stupid. It reminded me of the Elvis movie *Spinout*, where he's racing a Cobra and it goes into a lake and comes out a Triumph TR3. Then there's *Goldfinger*, where he's driving a brand-new Aston Martin DB5 and he can't outrun a Mercedes 220 full of Koreans.

Part of the problem is that the people who make movies either don't know anything about cars or don't care. Back in 1989, I did a terrible movie called *Collision Course*, and I had big arguments with the director. The movie is about this magic Japanese turbocharger that gets stolen, and the late, great Pat Morita plays a Japanese detective who comes looking for it while I play his partner on the Detroit police force. There's this chase scene, and the director said, "OK, you pull over, open the hood, put the turbocharger on, and then take off." I argued that you can't put a turbocharger on like that and he said, "Just do it!" I guess he thought you can simply lay a turbo on the air cleaner and it works.

I remember they called me to read for another movie, and my line was, "Hey, what kind of magic carpet ride you guys taking out tonight?" I said to the director, "You know, I don't know any car guy who would talk like that." Then there was that Jimmy Fallon and Queen Latifah movie, *Taxi*, where she pushes a button and a supercharger rises out of the hood. How does that work?? Even the great Martin Scorsese gets it wrong: In *The Irishman*, Robert De Niro plays a truck driver who has broken down, and Joe Pesci comes up, takes a look, fiddles with a wire, and says, "Timing chain, there's a cap on it. This cap is loose and it ain't supposed to be loose, so they get worn out." Oh, OK.

I think my biggest disappointment was *Ferrari*. Michael Mann is an amazing director, but OK, Ferrari is a guy and he's cheating on his wife and I don't care, can we please get back to the cars? It's a fabulous movie—I just didn't care about his personal relationships. It's funny because I think that's where women and men split on *Ford v Ferrari*, which is an excellent film and actually made money, which is kind of unusual for a car flick. The women I talked to didn't like it because there's no love interest in the story and it's only about cars and racing, and the men liked it because there's no love interest in the story and it's only about cars and racing. Oh well, everyone's a critic. *H*

JAY LENO hosted *The Tonight Show* from 1992 to 2014 and remains on the comic circuit. He shares his personal car collection with enthusiasts on his TV show, *Jay Leno's Garage*.

Photo by FilmPublicityArchive/United Archives via Getty Images

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MOVIES AND A MANGUSTA

Wayne Carini
aka The Hunter

Faye Dunaway poses with this gorgeous Ferrari 275 NART Spider in 1968's *The Thomas Crown Affair*. Years later, Carini painted the car.

I'VE OWNED or worked on several movie cars in my career. Cars can be a character in a movie, and I think the 1949 Buick Roadmaster in *Rain Man* is a good example. It's a pivotal part of the movie and as much a star as Tom Cruise or Dustin Hoffman. *Rain Man* is my favorite film, but I'm biased because I've worked on this Roadmaster, and I have a daughter who is autistic, like Hoffman's character, Raymond. The director, Barry Levinson, owns the Roadmaster, and my shop did a major restoration on it for him back in 2015.

Then there's the Ferrari 275 NART Spider that Faye Dunaway drove in the original 1968 version of *The Thomas Crown Affair*, co-starring Steve McQueen. Most people don't know how famous this 275 is, but Denise McCluggage and Marianne "Pinkie" Rollo raced it at Sebring in 1967. The pair were visiting Manhattan and stopped by to see Luigi Chinetti Sr., who was Ferrari's U.S. importer at the time. This 275 had sat in the showroom for a while and Chinetti couldn't sell it. When asked if he had a car they could race at Sebring, Chinetti said, "Take this piece of junk. Just bring it back!"

McCluggage and Rollo drove the 275 from New York to the race at Sebring in Florida. The car was completely stock except for a rollbar and fire extinguisher. McCluggage and Rollo placed second in their class and 17th overall—an amazing result. For the pit board, Denise and Pinkie used the piece of plywood that covered the spare tire in the 275's trunk. I painted the car many years later, and the pit board was still in there with the chalk marks.

Shifting gears from film to real life, I had a great time at the Greenwich Concours showing a 1969 DeTomaso Mangusta my shop restored. I was there with the owner, Trent Newcomer. The Mangusta was built in Italy by Alejandro de Tomaso from 1967-1971. Mangusta is Italian for mongoose, which is supposedly the only animal that can kill a cobra. The name was meant to send a message to Carroll Shelby, as de Tomaso had fallen out with the creator of the Shelby Cobra.

Newcomer called me two years ago. "I inherited a Mangusta from my father, who recently passed away," he told me. "I've known this car since I was 12 years old. It was the love of Dad's life, and I'd like you to restore it." We took on the car and did the restoration. When we finished, I called up Newcomer, told him I was going to show the Mangusta at Greenwich, and that I'd love for him to join me. He came and we unveiled the car for him right there on the show field. When the judges came to us, I told Newcomer, "Now it's up to you. Explain what this car means to you. If the car has great family history and a great story, you have a good chance of winning." Newcomer started telling the judges his story, tears rolling down his cheeks and he was choking up. The judges were very patient. They said, "Collect yourself for a bit." He'd pause and then start up again. When the awards were later announced, I was right: The Mangusta won best in class.

Moments like these are why I love my job. First, Newcomer was thrilled just to be at the concours. Then to take best in class the first time he showed his Mangusta, well, he was over the moon. Obviously, restoring cars is my business. For me, though, my reward is a customer's reaction when they first see their restored car and how much they love it. It's also a big reward when I see the owner or talk to them years later and they still love the car as much as the day it rolled out of our shop. //

WAYNE CARINI is a master restorer and a collection adviser and manager for clients around the world. He is the host of *Chasing Classic Cars*.

Photo courtesy of United Artists

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ROAD TRIPPIN' '70S STYLE

Aaron Robinson
aka The Pundit

The Big Bus teeters on the brink of being completely forgotten, but this silly film from 1976 had one of the best vehicle props ever made.

"YOU EAT ONE lousy foot and they call you a cannibal. What a world." With that, washed-up busman Dan Torrance seems to be at his end. But it is only the beginning. Everyone remembers *Airplane!*, the hilariously quotable 1980 sendup of Hollywood disaster flicks that launched a whole genre of movies serving slapstick on a conveyor belt. Today it's considered a work of comedic genius. And yet, in certain moments, *Airplane!* looks like a shot-for-shot remake of *The Big Bus*, which appeared four years earlier and which hardly anyone remembers.

Movies are all about the metaphor, and in the early '70s, the time was apparently ripe for films in which inflation, the energy crisis, the pollution crisis, Watergate, and the demise of convertibles in favor of vinyl landau tops got translated on-screen as so many crashing airplanes, burning skyscrapers, capsizing ocean liners, and city-shaking temblors. The hackneyed formula—an ensemble cast of Hollywood B-listers playing hysterical schlubs with melodramatic backstories clawing their way through one climactic set piece after another—was made for parody. *Airplane!* gets credit for doing it the best, but *The Big Bus* did it first.

In case you missed it—or, more likely, were high when you saw it—*The Big Bus* follows the star-crossed journey of the nuclear-powered, double-decked Cyclops as it attempts to set a nonstop record from New York to, ahem, Denver (both of which look suspiciously like the mountains around Los Angeles). Dark forces conspire against it on behalf of oil sheiks who fear the replacement of fossil fuels with nukes. The cast was suitably ensemble-y, with Lynn Redgrave, Ned Beatty, Larry Hagman, Stockard Channing, Ruth Gordon, José Ferrer, *WKRP*'s Howard Hesseman, Sally Kellerman, and *Rockford Files*' Stuart Margolin all riding the crazy bus. It wasn't an easy shoot: Channing's character, Kitty Baxter, at one point backstrokes through a flood of soda pop pumped into the galley to keep the Cyclops from going over a cliff.

As with *Airplane!*, the movie works (sort of) because the cast is full-send, playing out the batty screenplay with faces as straight as a Nebraska interstate. But 50 years on, the signature achievement of *The Big Bus* is arguably the Cyclops itself, a 110-foot-long, 32-wheel, 65-mph full-scale bus built by Paramount's Construction and Special Effects Department. As in the movie, it had dual working controls and was piloted by costumed stunt drivers communicating through headsets. The cockpit and the upstairs piano lounge were the only finished bits of the interior, the rest being running gear and empty space. The onboard bowling alley and swimming pool were soundstage sets (all that plus the lounge, the kitchen, a private dining room, and seats for 180 passengers fitting into the bus is one of the quiet jokes of the movie).

The first appearance of the Cyclops in the film is appropriately grandiose, the mega-bus being pulled from its hangar to the thundering tones of Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra*. It remains the second and second-best cinematic use of that piece after *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Nowadays, when anything larger than a Toyota Corolla is faked in CGI, the Cyclops fully earns its bombastic entrance as one of the greatest roadgoing, in-real-life vehicle props ever constructed, a relic from a bygone era when the big studios built big things to fill big screens. Even for dumb movies. *H*

AARON ROBINSON has written about cars and the car industry for more than 25 years, including a 17-year stint as technical editor and executive editor at *Car and Driver* magazine.

Photo courtesy of Everett Collection

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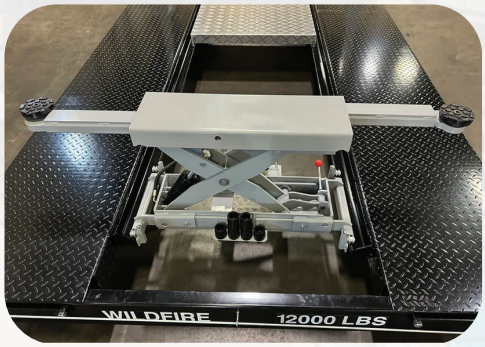

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MEMBER STORIES

FROM THE HAGERTY DRIVERS CLUB

01

ROSS CAMERON

CALGARY, ALBERTA

MEMBER SINCE 2020

FAST & FURIOUS COLLECTION

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS

Elsewhere in this issue, we celebrate the original 2001 *The Fast and the Furious* as one of the greatest car movies. HDC member Cameron clearly concurs.

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS changed everything for me. I was always into cars, but I remember coming out of the theater after seeing the first movie and wanting to get my car sideways and just be part of that world. It wasn't only the cars—it was the feeling. It reminds you of being younger, having fun, hanging out with friends, and doing dumb stuff with cars.

I've been collecting cars since I was a kid. At 15, I already had three cars. I had been a hardcore muscle car guy. I loved Chargers, GTOs, Camaros, Chevelles—all that stuff, American muscle. I always appreciated imports, but they weren't really my thing until I started collecting them. Then I realized how fast the imports actually are.

All that said, I ended up going down the rabbit hole of collecting *Fast & Furious* replicas by chance. I was contacted by a guy who had inherited a collection of such cars from his business partner who passed away. He didn't want them, so I ended up buying 15 cars all at once. The first one I loaded up was the gray Skyline GT-R from the beginning of *2 Fast 2 Furious.* I absolutely love that car. From there, things kind of snowballed.

People found out that I had these cars, and suddenly I was getting calls and emails offering me more. Now I have several vehicles actually used on-screen, including Don Omar and Tego Calderón's six-wheel heist truck, the Chevelle wheelie car driven by Vin Diesel, and the BMW 5 Series from the fourth film. I also have the *Fast Five* Charger, and another Charger that was used as a green-screen crash car. For me, the iconic cars are mostly from the first five movies. After that, the franchise became more superhero than street racing. I wanted the cars people really remembered.

The screen-used cars are a bit of a mixed bag as far as condition goes, but they are nonetheless the crown jewels of my collection. The BMW hero car, for example, looks great—the interior is nice and the body is solid. But it's a 528i six-cylinder dressed up to look like an M5. The stunt cars are usually the opposite. They'll have rough interiors, but bigger engines needed for burnouts and action scenes.

The Chevelle wheelie car was a surprise. I imagined it being this incredible machine, but when I got it, it had a 350-cubic-inch V-8 making maybe 250 horsepower. The wheelie effect

Photos by Alex McInnes | The Car Creative

SKYLINE
TOYO TIRES

RDS PROGRAM 2.0
STAGE 1
STAGE 2
STAGE 3
Warning !!!
Danger to Manifold
COMPAQ PRESARIO

NITROUS

Cameron dived headfirst into his *Fast & Furious* obsession by purchasing a collection of 15 cars. From there, "things just snowballed," he recalls.

Above: Cameron leans against the Nissan Skyline GT-R from *2 Fast 2 Furious,* which he identifies as his favorite, if he were forced to pick just one.

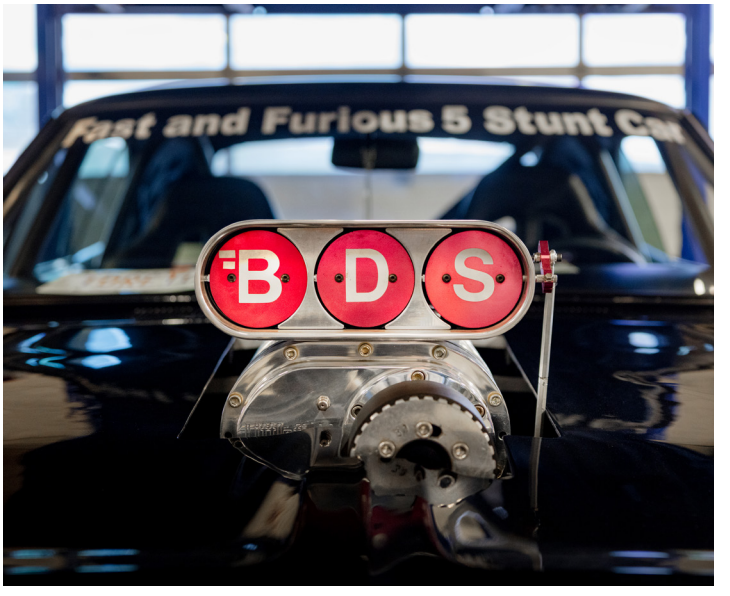
came from weights welded to the back of the frame. That's how they do it. They throw the weights on there, and literally all you had to do was touch the gas.

I couldn't leave it like that. We tore it apart, installed a 620-hp 572-cubic-inch V-8, added a six-speed transmission, upgraded the suspension, and restored everything. It still looks exactly like it did in the movie, but now it's a genuinely badass car. That's my philosophy. I want to drive these things. I want to take it to a show or do burnouts with it. And that's what people want to see too. They don't want to see a car rolled off the trailer and surrounded by stanchions.

If you look at my Instagram, you'll see the Chargers doing burnouts. I don't treat these cars like museum pieces. I take them out, break them, fix them, and enjoy them. We recently finished a replica of the Supra from the first movie. I took it out, did burnouts and donuts, and blew up the clutch. Now I have to fix it.

For my replicas, all the cars use proper components: original-style wheels, correct wings, seats, body kits—everything. It's a ton of work. Take Sun Kang's Mazda RX-7 from *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*. Finding the correct wheels took me two years. You'll occasionally find a set, but people want 20 grand for 30-year-old wheels. The silver-and-purple Skyline from *Tokyo Drift* was the same story: six months to find the right wheels. I paid around $3500 for a beat-up set, restored them, added tires, and suddenly I was $8500 into the wheels. But it makes all the difference. People notice.

Every time I get into a car from my collection, I think, "This is my favorite." But if I had to choose one, I'd pick the gray *2 Fast 2 Furious*



Skyline GT-R. There's just something about it. It wasn't even in the movie for that long, but it's so connected to Paul Walker. People absolutely love that car. The Charger is right up there too. It's just iconic. For a long time, people said *Tokyo Drift* was one of the weaker movies in the franchise (not me—I always liked it). Now those cars are some of the most popular ones I own. People go crazy when they see Kang's RX-7, the Hulk van, the drift Evo. That movie really came into its own over the past 10 years.

If I could get one car, it'd be the original, screen-used Charger from the first movie. The car that started it all. I've had opportunities to buy Chargers from later movies, and I passed on a few that I probably shouldn't have. But if I could get the actual first-movie Charger, that would be incredible. And if I can't get it? I'll build one. *H*

02

JOHN MUHLENKAMP

MAPLETON, UTAH

MEMBER SINCE 2016

1968 FORD MUSTANG

BULLITT

MY DAD WAS always into Mustangs. Growing up, he had a 1970 Shelby GT500 in the garage, and naturally, he showed me *Bullitt* when I was a kid. I thought it was the coolest movie I'd ever seen. We lived in Northern California, not far from San Francisco, so I was familiar with the city's steep streets where the famous chase scene took place.

It definitely influenced me, and when I was older, I started looking for a 1967 or 1968 Mustang fastback that I could turn into a Bullitt replica. It took me a few years of searching, but in 2010, I found a 1968 S-code fastback that was as close to one of the movie cars as I was going to get. It was a factory Highland Green car with a 390-cubic-inch V-8 and a four-speed manual. Remarkably, it came from the same ordering district and San Jose assembly plant as the original movie cars. It had been purchased new from Lodi Ford in California and had stayed within the same family since 1968. On paper, I think I'm only the second owner.

The main catch was that it needed a complete restoration. The original 390 was long gone, replaced by a 289, and the body was not in the best shape. With the help of a family friend who ran a Mustang restoration shop out of Grants Pass, Oregon, we performed a full rotisserie restoration. It wasn't a fast process—it was 2020 by the time the car was finished.

During the restoration, I figured if I was going through all the effort, I might as well get the details right. I did a lot of research, which involved taking screenshots of the movie Mustang at different angles and joining online communities dedicated to Bullitt replicas. I had the reverse lights deleted to match the movie car and a fresh 390 built to put into the engine bay. One of the hardest parts to find was the driver's-side mirror used in the movie. The original Ford part was removed in favor of an aftermarket one. Someone online identified exactly which mirror was used, so I started searching for one. When one finally appeared on eBay, I ended up in a bidding war with everyone else building a Bullitt replica and spent around $700 for it. It seemed crazy, but my car was already so close to the original that I felt like I had to have it.

Now that it's done, I love to take my Mustang to shows and for drives through the canyons here in Utah. Some people recognize it immediately as Steve McQueen's Bullitt Mustang—others just see a beautiful green fastback. Either way, I'm so glad I was able to save this car and turn it into the Bullitt car I always dreamed about.

HDC member Muhlenkamp spent years looking for the right Mustang fastback with which to create a Bullitt replica and then executed a full restoration.

Photos courtesy of John Muhlenkamp

68BL ITT

03

BRANDON HANKE

VISALIA, CALIFORNIA

MEMBER SINCE 2023

1963 SHELBY COBRA

VIVA LAS VEGAS, THE KILLERS

MY COBRA HAS ALWAYS been a part of my life. Dad purchased it in 1975, the same year I was born. Before he owned it, the car, serial number CSX2038, had been rented by MGM Studios for the Elvis movie *Viva Las Vegas* and *The Killers* with Ronald Reagan, and was also used by the Carroll Shelby School of High Performance Driving.

The Cobra wasn't in great shape when he bought it—it was in gray primer, with a sparse racing dash, short windshield, and side pipes. Dad owned a successful automotive repair shop in Fresno, California, so he and his crew restored and customized the car. He painted it Rangoon Red, fitted flared fenders and chrome 6-inch-wide wire wheels. He added a chrome roll bar and a custom-made chrome front bumper. By that time, the original 260-cubic-inch V-8 was long gone, replaced by a 289 with Cobra valve covers, Ford blue engine paint, and lots of chrome. Dad showed the car in 1978 and '79 and won concours events in Fresno and Palo Alto.

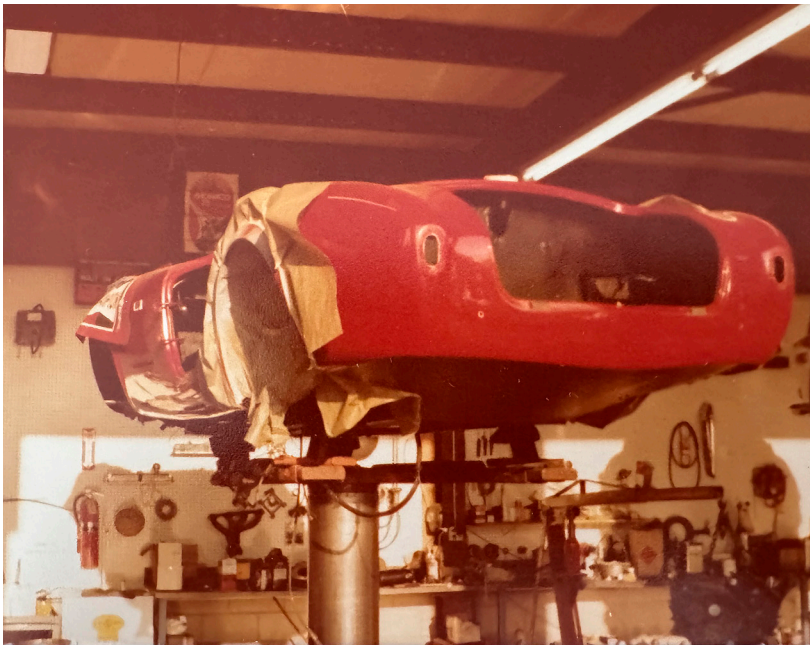
In 1980, I was riding in the passenger seat and we were speeding down Belmont to Dad's shop for work. I remember a bang, then smoke began pouring into the passenger compartment.

Photos courtesy of Brandon Hanke

Hanke's Cobra has been in his family for a half-century, since his father purchased it and repainted it in Rangoon Red (right).

Hanke's father showed the Cobra at concours events in the late 1970s (middle right).

A full recent restoration returned the Cobra to its original white-over-red livery.



The 289 blew a rod. For the next 45 years, the car sat in the garage. My brother and I used to take turns sitting in the black leather seats, pretending to drive. We begged Dad to build a motor and bring the Cobra back to life, but he always had something more important to do. In 2003, Dad was invited to Carroll Shelby's 80th birthday at the Petersen Museum in Los Angeles, so we polished the Cobra and trailered it down. That was a great day; I had never imagined I'd get to see so many Cobras in one place.

Dad unexpectedly passed in fall 2022, and my brother and I were left with his incredible collection of cars, motorcycles, and automotive memorabilia. Since I was the oldest son, I was always promised the Cobra by Dad. I wanted to get the car back on the road, so I did a little research and decided to bring the car to Drew Serb, a Shelby expert and owner of the Cobra Experience museum in Martinez, California.

The car had hidden damage from its time at MGM Studios and Shelby's racing school, so Serb and I decided it was best to strip the car to its frame for a full nut-and-bolt restoration. We decided to take the car back to its original condition, too: slab-side fenders, five painted wire wheels, white exterior with red interior. One exception we did make was with the engine. We decided to install a 289, exactly as Dad had. (I do have a 260 in the garage just in case.)

Three anxious years later, the car was complete. Now the car is stunning. My wife and I have taken it to a few local shows and are hoping to attend some concours events soon. The best is when someone asks if it's real. My reply is always a confident, "Yes, it is." *H*

04

KAY WELSH

TAMPA, FLORIDA

MEMBER SINCE 2025

1970 PONTIAC FIREBIRD

AMERICAN BEAUTY

IN 1989, I bought a white 1970 Pontiac Firebird, which my 10-year-old daughter, Roseann, and I affectionately named "Baby." Being a single mother at the time was hard, but we had tons of fun tooling around Miami in that car. The Firebird served us well until I decided to sell it in 1994 for something a little more modern.

Roseann unfortunately passed in 2014. I was looking for ways to keep connected with Roseann's memory and I started looking for a good 1970 Firebird, which turned out to be a lot harder than I thought. After nine years of searching, I found a mint red 1970 Firebird for sale that happened to be a few miles away from home. The car was featured in *American Beauty*, which won five Academy Awards. It's prominently featured in the film when Kevin Spacey's character undergoes a midlife crisis and buys the Pontiac pony car. I went to see the car, and after a full endorsement from some of my car-savvy friends, I purchased the Firebird in 2023. Paperwork from the sale included documentation from DreamWorks SKG certifying the authenticity of the car that appeared in the movie.

In 2024, I moved to Tampa and brought my new "Baby" with me. Today, it rests in my garage where I visit it every day, reliving the fond memories of riding around Miami with Roseann. "Baby" gets a short drive about once a month, and I love to bring it to small, local car shows.

HDC member Welsh purchased this Firebird in homage to her daughter Roseann. The fact that it was featured in an Oscar-winning film was a bonus.

Photo courtesy of Kay Welsh

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Power is supplied by a supercharged 5.4-liter V8 linked with a six-speed manual gearbox and a helical limited-slip differential. It was factory optioned with forged aluminum BBS wheels, red-finished brake calipers and a McIntosh stereo system. Additional equipment includes Brembo brakes, HID headlights, a front splitter, a rear diffuser and air conditioning.

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05

PETE ENGEL

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

MEMBER SINCE 2019

1993 MERCEDES-BENZ 190E

THE DELIVERANCE

OVER THE LAST 20 years, I've had the opportunity to have many of my collector cars used in various movies and studio productions. One day during Covid, a call came in from a picture car coordinator I had previously worked with, asking me about renting my 1993 Mercedes-Benz 190E—one of 700 limited editions sold in the U.S.

He wanted this car to be driven by one of the main characters in a horror movie being shot by Netflix in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, called *The Deliverance*. This meant a long rental, good exposure for the car, and ultimately, a fat check at the end. After being reassured that my car would be treated well, I signed the contract, and away my 190E went on a flatbed.

I didn't hear about my Benz for a long time, until out of the blue, I received a message from the picture car guy. Apparently, one of the actresses accidentally put her high heel through the leather upholstery in the rear seat. There was also paint damage from where the cameras were mounted. I insisted on towing the car over to the body shop recommended by Pittsburgh's Mercedes-Benz dealership to have an estimate prepared.

The day came when local filming was over and the production no longer needed my car. The picture car guy called and told me that the studio ran overbudget and couldn't afford to tow my 190E home. I took a day off work and drove five hours to retrieve the car. I was less than enthused, but I felt better when the check arrived in the mail for the rental plus the body shop estimate a couple of weeks later.

I was dying to see how much airtime the car would get. Finally, almost two years after the shoot wrapped, the movie came out. My Mercedes looked great among Glenn Close and the other stars. But after all the difficulties, I think *The Deliverance* will be the final act of my adventures with picture cars.

Engel's excitement about having his car in a Netflix movie was tempered when it was damaged during filming, but all was well in the end.

Photo courtesy of Pete Engel

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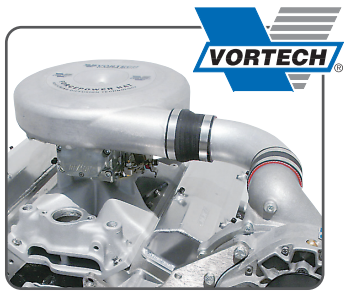

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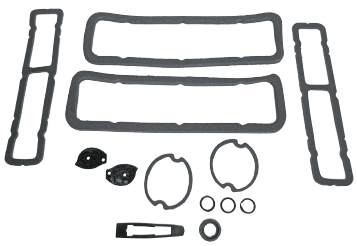

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SCOTT PREGONT

MECHANICVILLE, NEW YORK

2023 FACTORY FIVE DAYTONA

I loved the movie *Ford v Ferrari*. I was 15 years old around the time the movie depicted, and I always dreamed of driving a Shelby Daytona Coupe. Never in my wildest dreams would I ever be able to own one. In April 2022, at the age of 69, I decided to fulfill my dream in a different way. I purchased and built a Factory Five Racing Type 65 Coupe. For a fraction of the cost of an original, I can now say I own and drive a replica of the Shelby Daytona Coupe. I am so proud that I was able to build it from the ground up.

JARRETT YODER

TULSA, OKLAHOMA

1992 FORD EXPLORER

My dad and I are both fans of the *Jurassic Park* movie series. For my first car, I thought it would be fun to drive around a replica of the Ford Explorer seen in the first movie. We searched online through hundreds of listings, and my mom found a decent candidate halfway across the state. After we caught up on maintenance, including rebuilding the rear differential, it was time for paint. Relatives in another state let us use their booth, and after a week of helping my dad with the body work, prep, and painting, it was finished.

LES STEGH

ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS

1961 CHEVROLET CORVETTE

My highly optioned Jewel Blue two-tone Corvette made a cameo appearance in the 1978 movie *The Deer Hunter*—with a stellar cast including Robert De Niro—near the start of the film. It was on set for three days. After filming, the car mostly sat in the previous owner's garage until I bought it in 1997. The car is largely original, though the factory 283-cubic-inch V-8 was swapped for a 327 in 1975 and the car was repainted in 1994. It still looks presentable today and gets a trophy now and then from showgoers and scrutineers at local and regional events.

Photos courtesy of respective members

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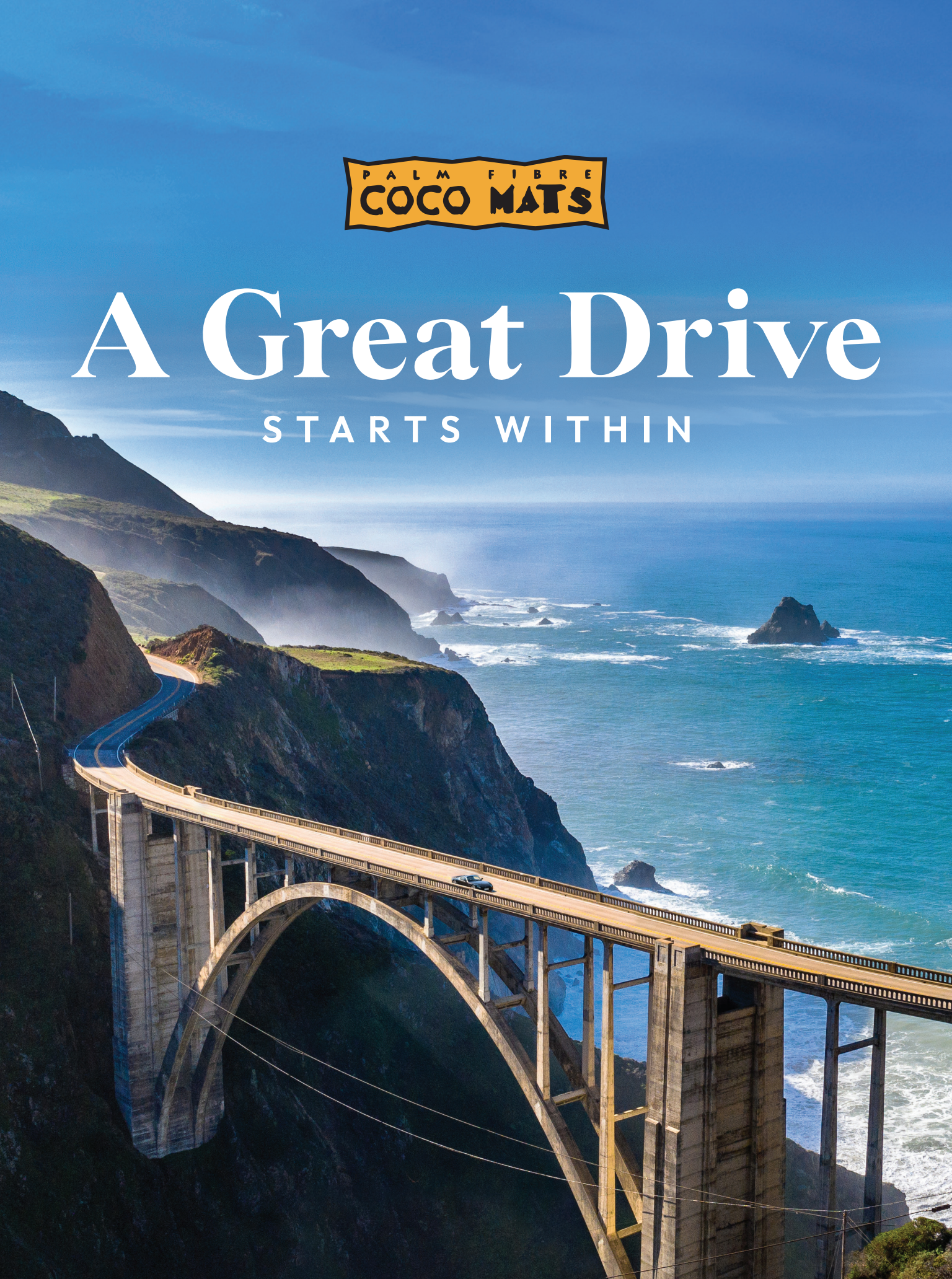
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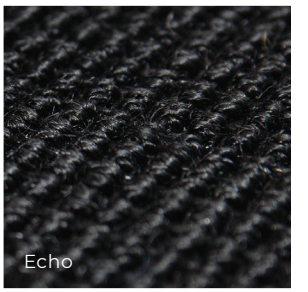

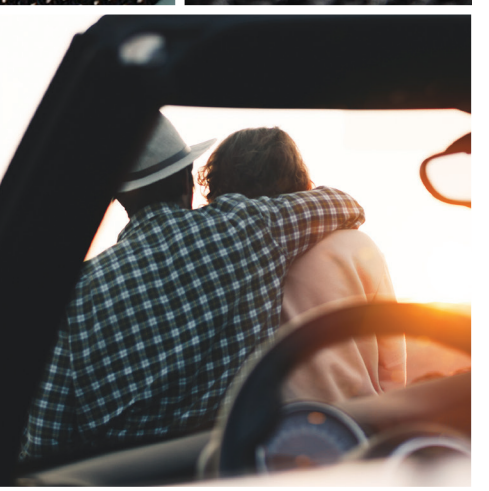

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**Movies need cars,
and cars need movies.**

Words by **Aaron Robinson**

IT IS NO COSMIC coincidence that the first practical automobile and the first motion picture came into being within three years of each other. Both the 1885 Benz Patent-Motorwagen and Louis Le Prince's 1888 3-second film of his family on vacation, known as *Roundhay Garden Scene*, were sibling offspring of the Industrial Revolution. The same gears and sprockets and springs and cams that drove a car and, increasingly, the world, could propel a reel of cellulose nitrate film through a mechanically operated shutter to produce sequential images. Which, when developed and fed back through a similarly mechanized projector, created humanity's first moving pictures of itself.

Those earliest cinematographers were, not surprisingly, obsessed with motion—bustling street scenes, mounted horses in full stride, trains departing and arriving, and, inevitably, speeding cars. The first celluloid car chase is thought to be 1903's *Runaway Match*, a 4.5-minute silent melodrama in which an apoplectic father pursues his eloping daughter and her lover in a pair of brass-era horseless carriages of the day. It has a number of hallmarks of much later films, including mounted cameras for car-to-car action, zooms, point-of-view shots, and establishing and pan shots. There's even an explosion.

Since then, we've bought tickets and popcorn and sat down to watch jumping cars, swimming cars, flying cars, talking cars, killer cars, exploding cars, and cars that can travel through time. There have been cars that can drive themselves, cars that can fix themselves, cars that can shoot everything from grease to flames to missiles, and cars that can morph into robots. We've watched *Pink Cadillac*, *Cadillac Man*, *The Lincoln Lawyer*, *Corvette Summer*, *Car Wash*, *Duel*, *Dude, Where's My Car?*, *The Car*, *Used Cars*, *Drive*, *Taxi Driver*, *Baby Driver*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Grand Prix*, *Gran Torino*, *Grand Theft Auto*,

"Cars have such a profound experience in film because we connect them emotionally to so much stuff in our lives."

Two-Lane Blacktop, *The Road Warrior*, *The Cannonball Run*, *The Fast and the Furious*, and, of course, *Speed*.

Cars could probably exist without movies, but it's questionable whether movies could exist as a viable industry without cars. "Cars are symbolic to the audience, particularly an American audience where cars have long been a symbol of freedom and change," Steve Morris told me. He's a Los Angeles–based film director, instructor, and writer who co-hosts a movie-analysis podcast called *The Cine-Files*, of which I happen to be a fan. "You go from Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* to the Joads loading up the truck in *The Grapes of Wrath* to Marty McFly in the DeLorean, and in all of those, the vehicle is a symbol of the journey, of the change in life, of the transformation. That's why cars have such a profound experience in the world of film, because we connect them emotionally to so much stuff in our lives."

Making a movie takes writers, producers, and an army of production people. Plus, a troupe of actors and a director working together over months and sometimes years in a grueling multimillion-dollar enterprise that at times resembles a military campaign. Morris, who has also taught directing and is writing a book on the subject (the first chapter of which discourages people from entering the profession), says all of that effort is expended just to grab the audience's attention for a short time and tell a story. With some movies costing more than a million dollars a minute, screen time is precious. Thus, as Morris often says on his podcast, everything you see on screen represents a choice.

Meaning that each frame of film—all 24 frames per second, or 130,000 frames in a 90-minute feature—has been painstakingly constructed and curated like a museum diorama to advance a story. If a tree is blocking part of a shot, it's for a reason. If a shadow falls across part of an actor's face, it's for a reason. If the hero drives a souped-up Trans Am, it's for a reason. In the 1996 comedy hit *Swingers*, when struggling actor Mike Peters, played by Jon Favreau, bashfully approaches an attractive woman at a Hollywood Hills party, she bluntly asks him, "What kind of a car do you drive?" It's an existential question in film; what you drive is frequently who you are in a movie.

Nick Nolte in *48 Hrs.* clanks through San Francisco in a rusty, trash-strewn '64 Caddy because he's an old, broken-down cop whose life, like the car, is a disorganized mess. Kevin Bacon rocks a battered VW Beetle in *Footloose* because he's poor but also an outsider in a rural American town where everyone else drives pickups. The director doesn't even need to show the car for the car to be important to advancing the story. In *Swingers*, that 15-second exchange early in the film is packed with information: The question, "what kind of a car do you drive," shows the audience how shallow and materialistic Hollywood can be, while the mumbled answer, a red Chevy Cavalier, indicates that Peters is dull and practical and not exactly up to L.A. spec, and he knows it.

"When humans meet other humans," explains Morris, "they don't get handed a résumé bio and important facts about that person. You assess a person based on their appearance, on their attitude, on their movement, on everything that they do." Ditto the human audience meeting a new character in a movie. The car, particularly if it's a good choice, "tells you way more emotionally about a character than a description, or words, or facts," says Morris.

If what you drive in a movie is who you are, then what everyone else drives is typically where you are. In one single shot of a street, a director can evoke the era in which the film is set. If the cars have spoked wheels and bustle-back trunks, it's the 1930s. Art deco streamlining, the 1940s. Fins and chrome,

Picture cars roll down the Queensboro Bridge during production of *The Great Gatsby* in New York City on July 15, 1973.

Photo by Fairchild Archive/WWD/Penske Media via Getty Images

the ’50s, and so on. And it’s not simply the time period being established with that one shot; it’s the clothes, the politics, the gender roles, the race relations, the music and popular culture, the rules of language—indeed, the whole immersive environment in which the ensuing story will play out. The cars on the street often go a long way toward prepping the audience for what is to come in the rest of the film. Over the past 125 years, cars have proven vital to cinematic storytelling even when the story isn’t about cars at all.

Sometimes the story is about cars—or, at least, it revolves around cars. Morris told me the only true movie about cars is *Cars*, the Pixar animated comedy from 2006. And, as he points out, that film isn’t really about cars, it’s about people played by anthropomorphized cars. The same goes for the jealous, vindictive lover played by a 1958 Plymouth Fury in *Christine*. Or the pitiless serial killer played by a George Barris–customized 1971 Lincoln in *The Car*. Or the lovable scamp played by Herbie the Volkswagen in the titular comedy franchise.

Though the cars in those movies are undeniably prominent characters in their stories, they tend not to be our favorite car movies. That’s because a sentient, self-driving car with the emotions of a human is unrealistic (and probably will continue to be for at least a few more years). In the car movies we love the most, the cars need the humans to perform, yet they are more than just props—they are characters themselves. The definition of a “character,” says Morris, isn’t limited to people or animals. It can be any entity that has a personality, has quirks, and to which the audience develops an emotional attachment. If a vehicle does all that, then “at that point, it has become a character,” he says.

In *Star Trek*, for example, “the Starship *Enterprise* is a character, and we know it’s a character because we’re emotionally moved in *Star Trek III*, where Kirk is supposed to blow up the love of his life.” In the *Mad Max* series, the black Interceptor has relatively little screen time, yet we are sad when it sacrifices itself to save Max. Who doesn’t cheer the Trans Am in *Smokey and the Bandit* as it jumps and careens to keep the caper rolling toward its impossible deadline? James Bond usually works alone—except for his faithful Aston Martin packing hidden machine guns and an ejector seat. The car is his partner.

Which is why celluloid cars are so frequently more than mere props. They can define the main characters, set the background for the story, and even become characters themselves. In other words, just like the cars in your garage, the ones that define you, that tell your backstory and have sparked an emotional connection. What kind of car do you drive? It’s as important a question in your own personal movie as it is on the silver screen. *H* arobinson@hagerty.com

Actor Al Pacino sitting in a motor racing car, filming scenes for the movie *Bobby Deerfield*, Le Mans, France, circa 1977.

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(11 of)

the best car movie

(according to us)

es

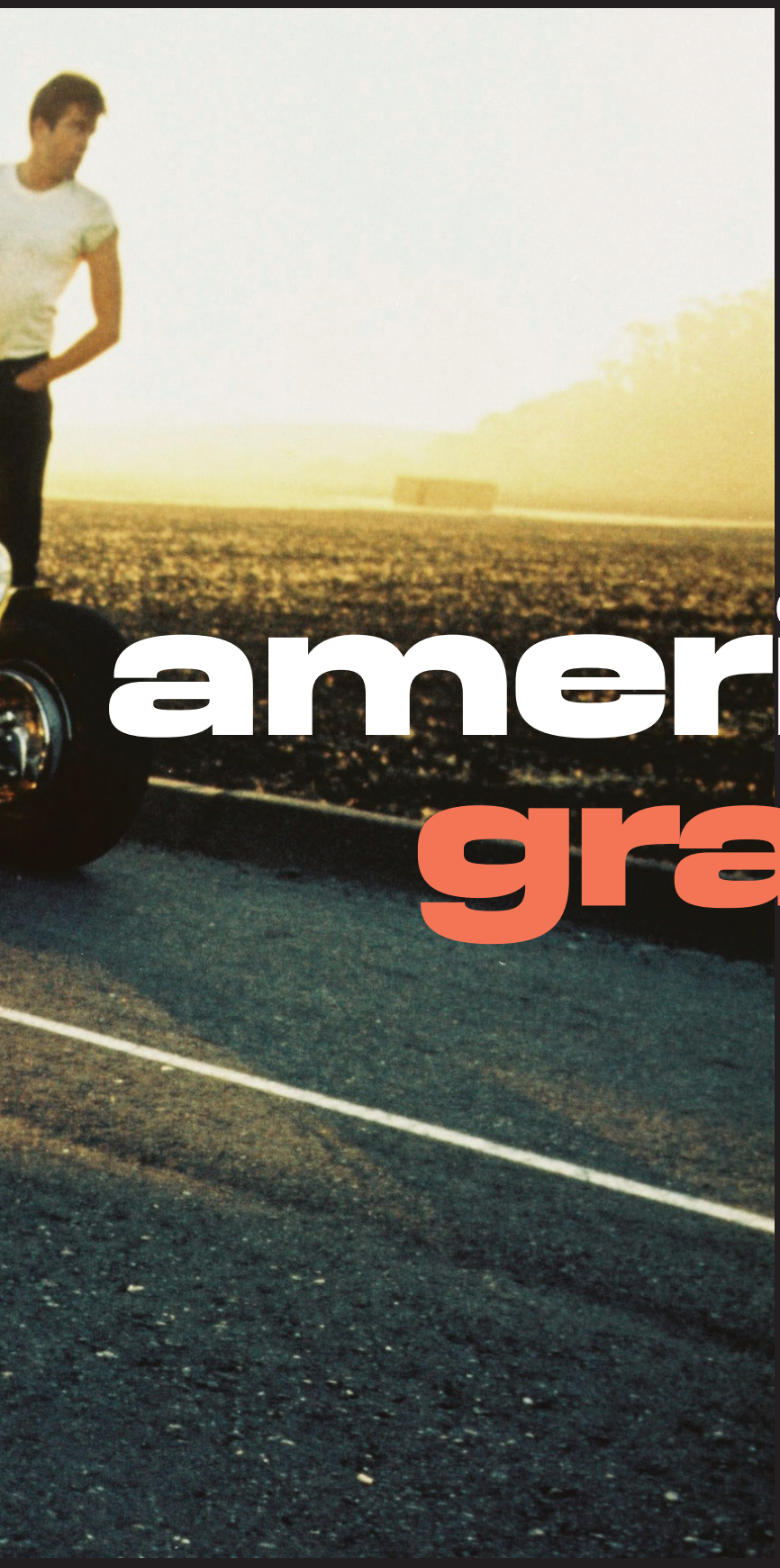
We run down 11 great car movies. Are they the best? Greatest of all time?

Hit play and decide for yourself.

Photo courtesy of H.B. Halicki Mercantile Company

CLICK TO WATCH!

One of the most iconic film cars ever, John Milner's '32 Ford from *American Graffiti*. As other characters in the coming-of-age flick move on, the yellow coupe and Milner (played by Paul Le Mat) stay forever young.



RELEASED
1973

DIRECTED BY
GEORGE LUCAS

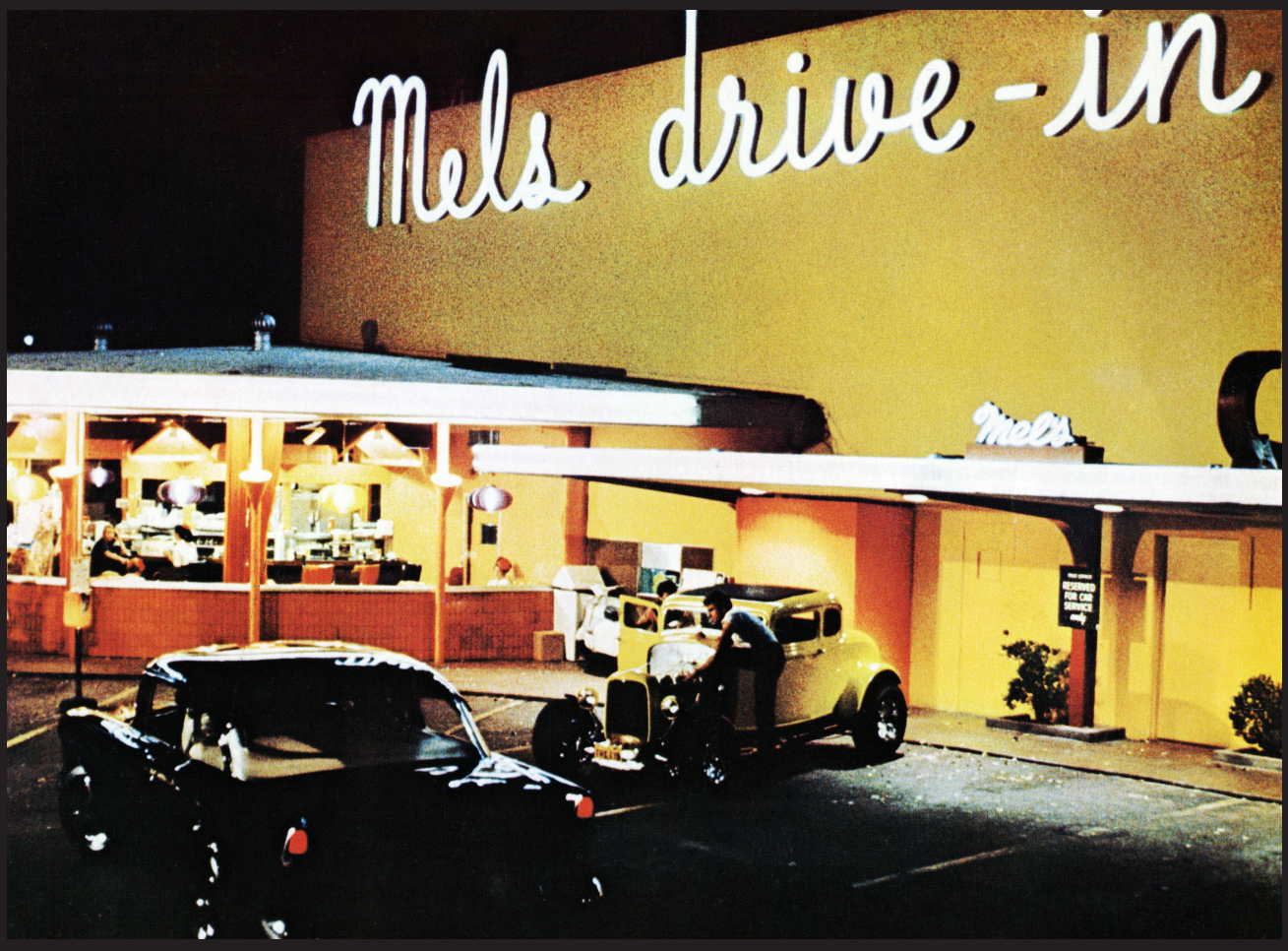
STARRING
RON HOWARD. RICHARD DREYFUSS.
PAUL LE MAT. CHARLES MARTIN SMITH

american graffiti

SO MUCH OF the action happens in or around cars in George Lucas' 1973 nostalgia play about his teenage years in Modesto, California, that the film couldn't exist without them. The cars are the co-stars in this coming-of-age tale set amid the middle-American cruising culture of one late-summer night in 1962. Lucas, a cruiser and racer himself before suffering a horrific crash on the eve of his high school graduation, made an inspired choice casting a souped-up '32 Ford and a b*tchin' '58 Impala as his star cars. They play vital supporting roles to his four protagonists as they shuffle their way toward adulthood, accompanied by a nearly nonstop soundtrack of period doo-wop standards.

In film, cars often signify transition for the characters through both space and time. But in *American Graffiti*, it's almost the opposite;

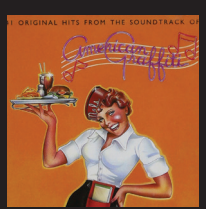
Photo by Silver Screen Collection via Getty Images



The cars are the co-stars in this coming-of-age tale set amid the middle-American cruising culture of one late-summer night in 1962.

the cars circle Modesto endlessly as if they are just a chrome-and-tailfin carousel, and it's up to Steve and Curt and John and Toad to decide when to jump off, if ever. Curt, played by an as-yet-undiscovered Richard Dreyfuss, eventually realizes that both it and the white Thunderbird he has been chasing are illusions, and that it's time to move on. As Ron Howard's character Steve says in the opening of the film, "You just can't stay 17 forever."

American Graffiti was an enormous hit, fully charming a post-Vietnam audience that was perhaps pining for those innocent days of teenage boredom and motorized restlessness fueled by 30-cent gasoline, and it kicked off a decades-long love affair with '50s cars and culture that is still with us today. Lucas soon departed, quite famously, for a galaxy far, far away, but many of us are very happy to return to Mel's Diner over and over to sip cherry Cokes and milkshakes, jive to the Wolfman, and keep an eye out for the cops and that badass Chevy. *H* **Aaron Robinson** arobinson@hagerty.com



In need of a commercial hit, George Lucas wrote *Graffiti* while spinning old 45s on his sister's record player. The soundtrack is all doo-wop standards.

Photo by Screen Archives via Getty Images

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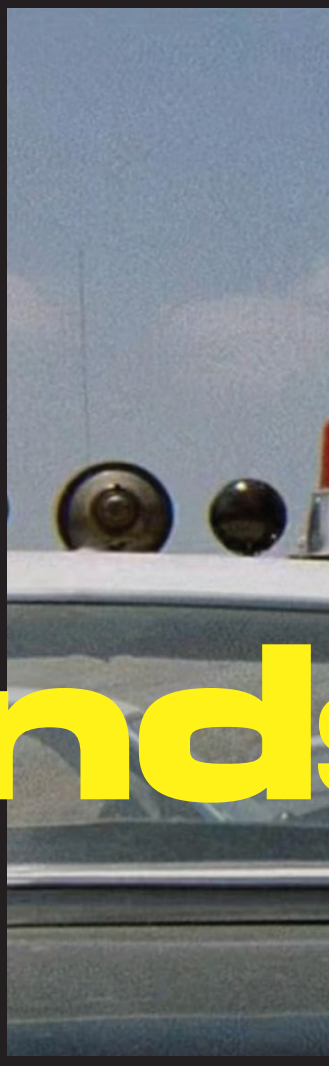
RELEASED
1974

DIRECTED BY
H.B. HALICKI

STARRING
H.B. HALICKI, MARION BUSIA, JERRY DAUGIRDA, RONALD HALICKI



WITH ALL DUE respect to Nicolas Cage and his 2000 remake, we are giving the nod here to H.B. "Toby" Halicki's original, the car crash epic to end all car crash epics. The "plot" of the original *GI60S* is clearly an afterthought. Protagonist Maindrian Pace (played by Halicki himself) is leading two lives: one as a suave and self-assured insurance adjuster and the other as a savvy chop-shop magnate. (Halicki in real life ran an impound/demolition yard.) For no apparent reason, Argentine gangsters make it worth his while to steal 48 high-end cars over the course of five days. Each of the cars on the shopping list is given a woman's name as a code, lest the cops listen in and find out what's going on.

One of these cars is, of course, Eleanor, played by a yellow '71 Mustang SportsRoof visually updated to portray a '73 Mach 1. There were two Eleanors: the stunt car, which was extensively modified with a full NASCAR roll cage, the transmission welded to the frame, individual rear locking brakes, and a 3-inch-thick steel skid plate on the undercarriage to help it survive the film's climactic 128-foot jump. The second Eleanor, basically stock and used for interior shots, survives to this day.

The movie was shot, for the most part, without official sanction, often on Sundays when filming permit inspectors were sleeping late and local police enforcement was at a low ebb. Apart from the fact that 93 cars were wrecked or heavily damaged over the course of the filming, it's worth seeing the movie as a real-life period piece. The cars, both in action and parked, are stock (excluding the stunt Eleanor) and offer a picture of Southern California automotive life a half-century ago.

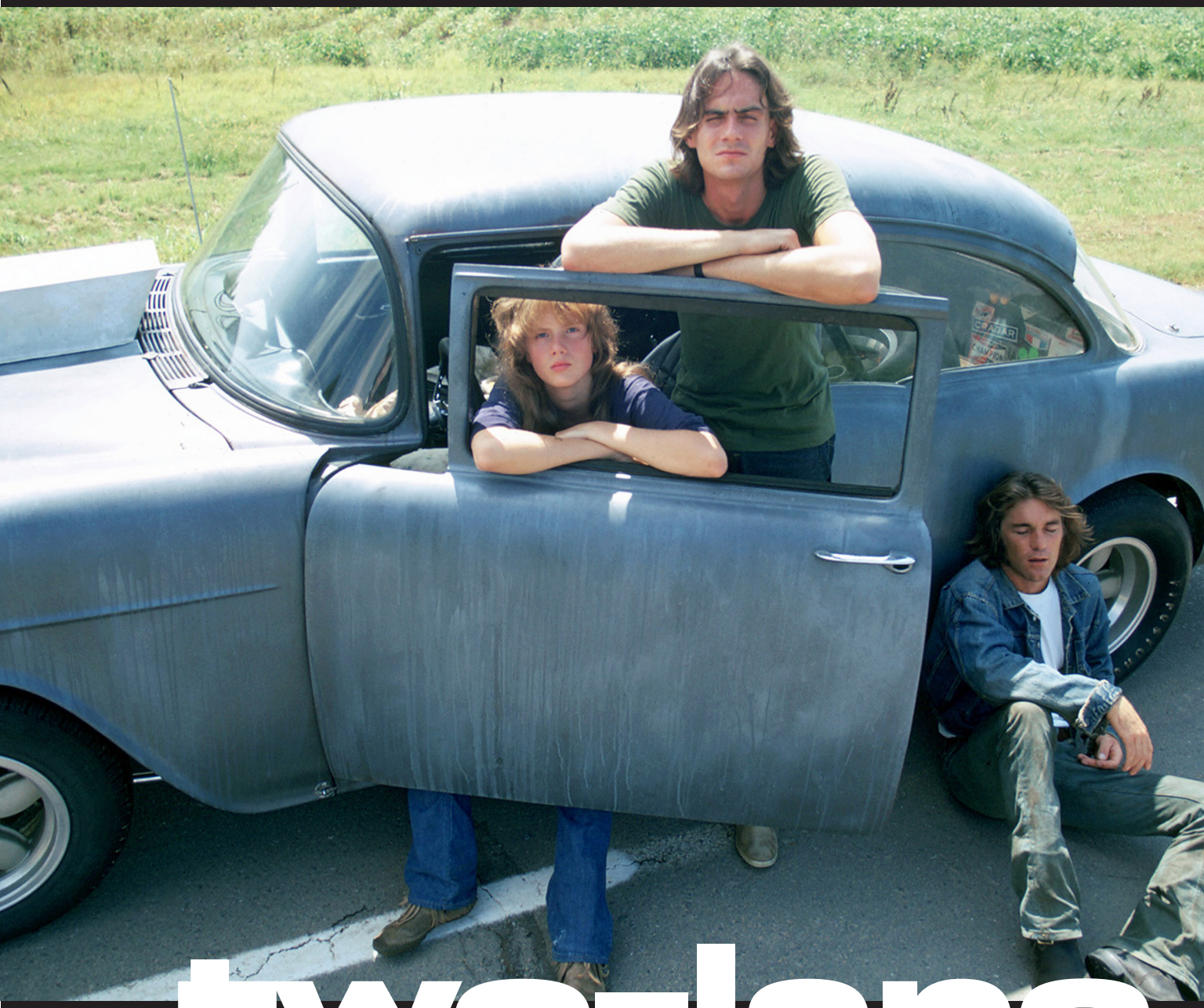
The vehicular mayhem that Halicki pioneered—the combination of massive crashes, chases, and pileups on the big screen—is now considered an earmark of a film genre unto itself. Even films with scripts written by actual screenwriters like *Smokey and the Bandit*, *Mad Max*, *To Live and Die in L.A.*, *Ronin*, and *The Blues Brothers* owe a huge debt to Halicki, now recognized as a man of vision despite his dispensing with narrative norms. *H* **Bob Merlis**
editor@hagerty.com

Excerpted from "50 Years Ago, Gone in 60 Seconds Broke All the Rules—and 93 Cars"

In the original *Gone in 60 Seconds,* one of the greatest (and longest) car chase scenes in film history played out over the suburban Los Angeles streetscapes of the early 1970s, with period dress and grooming to match.

Photos courtesy of H.B. Halicki Mercantile Company

Laurie Bird plays a troubled teenager who tags along on the road trip and racing journey of the Driver (James Taylor, center) and the Mechanic (Dennis Wilson).



two-lane blackto

Photo by Silver Screen Collection via Getty Images

RELEASED
1971

DIRECTED BY
MONTE HELLMAN

STARRING
JAMES TAYLOR, WARREN OATES
LAURIE BIRD, DENNIS WILSON

THE AMERICAN COUNTER-CULTURE coming-of-age movie was a familiar conceit by 1971. *The Graduate* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969) had paved the way both artistically and commercially, leaving director Monte Hellman an opportunity to take the genre down the road of deep car geekdom. His tribute to muscle cars and street racing clearly speaks the language of postwar car culture even as it recognizes that the wider environment is convulsing. The empty spaces of the American Southwest symbolize the loneliness of modern America as a new generation seeks meaning.

Two-Lane Blacktop opens at night, on an industrial street in South Los Angeles. A primer gray 1955 Chevy two-door and a red Dodge Charger Hemi edge into position, then peel off. At the wheel of the Chevy—heavily modified with a 454 V-8 and M22 Muncie Rock Crusher four-speed—is the Driver, played by James Taylor. Yes, that James Taylor, flush with youth and fresh off the success of his breakthrough album *Sweet Baby James*. Riding shotgun is Beach Boys drummer Dennis Wilson, playing the Mechanic.

Their mission is clear: roaming state to state to pick street-racing battles and win enough bread to keep driving, eating, drinking, racing. Maybe loving. To keep moving. Hellman filmed his movie sequentially, over the course of an actual road trip from California to North Carolina, allowing his cast of mostly amateur actors to seize on the spare prose of Rudolph Wurlitzer's script.

At a Route 66 cafe in Arizona, a love interest emerges from a 1949 Diamond T Model 306 ice truck painted with flower power images. "What kind of car is this, anyway?" asks the Girl, played by Laurie Bird, as she climbs into the Chevy and rests her head against the roll bar.

The viewer by this point might reasonably ask, "What kind of flick is this, anyway?" A road-trip movie with a tortured love triangle? Or an American New Wave love triangle with a street-racing subplot? Regardless, the trio is eastbound and down, the desert valleys of Arizona unfolding outside the Chevy's windows.

A yellow GTO eventually pulls alongside. At a dusty service station, the Driver and the Mechanic face down the Pontiac's driver, known as GTO, brilliantly played by Warren Oates. The three men spread out a map on a hood, tracing a route to Washington, D.C., in a cross-country race for pink slips. To this peacocking, the Girl says, simply, "You bore me."

The loquacious GTO, who has a habit of slamming the Pontiac's brakes and screeching to a sudden halt to pick up any hitchhiker he sees, is not boring. "I'm racing a Chevy," he enthuses to one of his rides. "Detroit set it up." Uh huh. If GTO is an amalgam of every carnival barker, vacuum salesman, and con artist in the American canon, he's also merely desperate for human connection.

He's not the only one. The so-called race quickly becomes a sort of mutually supportive, two-car rally. The Mechanic fixes a gas leak in the Pontiac's carburetors. GTO offers drinks from the wet bar in his trunk.

The enigmatic Girl hops from one car to the other, seemingly trying to figure out which one of these men might be able to deliver her to something, somewhere, she hasn't described and we can only imagine. GTO dreamily talks about taking her to "Miami, Montreal, and Mexico" after the race is over.

"If I'm not grounded pretty soon," he tells the Girl as she rides shotgun in the Pontiac, "I'm gonna go into orbit." That's one statement from GTO that's easy to believe. *H* **Joe DeMatio** jdematio@hagerty.com

The Bandit's (an impressively mustachioed Burt Reynolds) black and gold 1977 Pontiac Trans Am became the real star of the movie—after the film's release, sales for the model nearly doubled.

RELEASED
1977

DIRECTED BY
HAL NEEDHAM

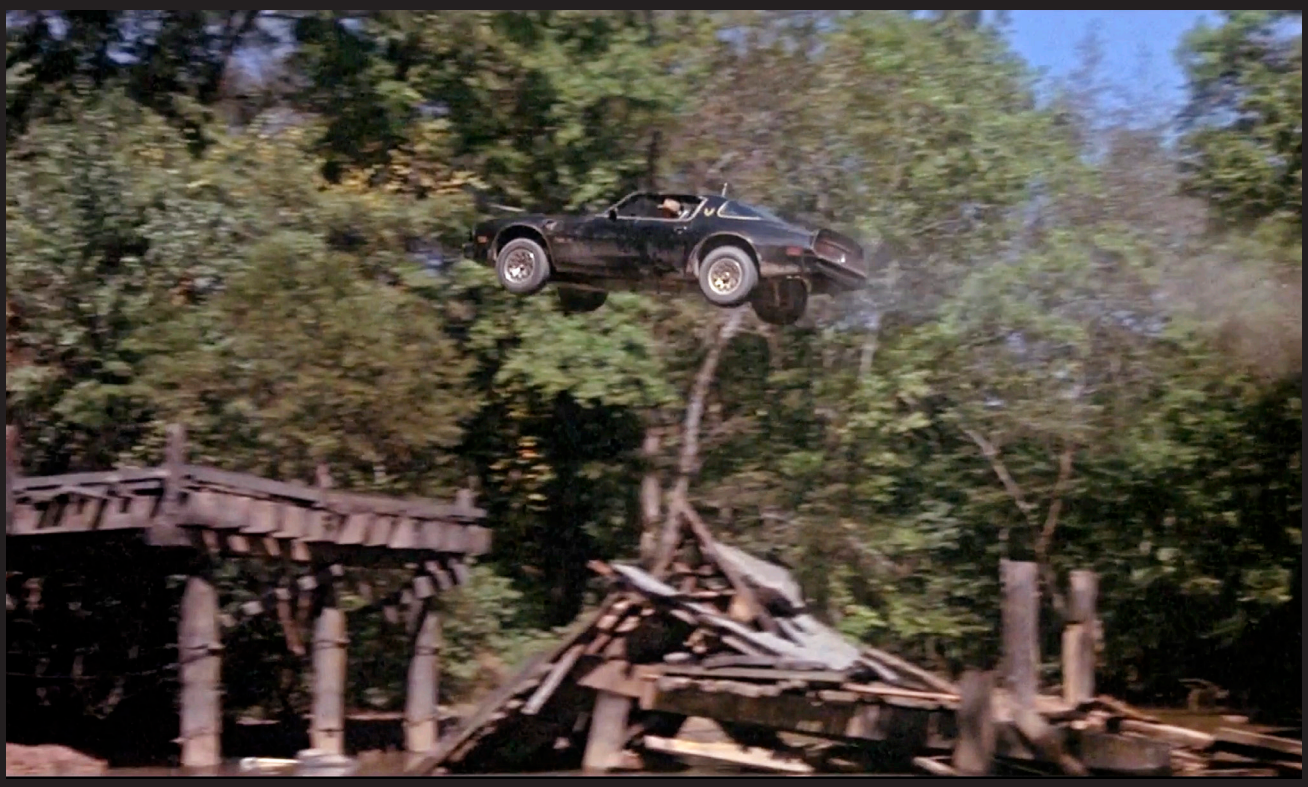
STARRING
BURT REYNOLDS, SALLY FIELD,
JERRY REED, JACKIE GLEASON

smokey and the bandit

Keep your foot hard on the pedal
Son, never mind them brakes
Let it all hang out 'cause we've got a run to make
The boys are thirsty in Atlanta
And there's beer in Texarkana
And we'll bring it back no matter what it takes

IN THE SUMMER of 1977, a black and gold Pontiac Trans Am, adorned with a screaming chicken on the hood, blasted onto movie screens with Burt Reynolds and his iconic mustache behind the wheel. *Smokey and the Bandit*, directed by stuntman-turned-filmmaker Hal Needham, is a 1.5-hour car chase that stops only briefly to collect a runaway bride, played by Sally Field. But the Trans Am is the real star—Needham cast it as a key character after seeing a single advertisement for the soon-to-be-released '77 model.

Photos courtesy of Universal Pictures



It was freedom and rebellion with a V-8 engine, and that was exactly what America wanted to see.

Needham and Reynolds were old friends long before cameras rolled. Reynolds championed the project at Universal so his buddy could make his directorial debut, even though he told Needham it was the worst script he'd ever read. Needham, a former Hollywood stuntman with a flair for on-screen action, stretched a $4.3 million budget across the rural Georgia roads standing in for Texarkana. With high-speed driving as the only real plot, most of the dialogue was simply improvised along the way. The two went on to make *Hooper* (1978) and *The Cannonball Run* (1981) together, but *Smokey and the Bandit* is where their collaboration really came alive.

CB radios and 18-wheelers were already hugely popular in 1977, and Needham fed both into the mix here. Jerry Reed, as trucker Cledus Snow, delivered the film's iconic theme, "East Bound and Down"—a song so perfectly suited to the open road that the director reportedly said he'd "choke him" if he changed a single word.

But the Trans Am delivered the film's most iconic moment: a jump over a missing bridge, with Jackie Gleason's hilariously outmatched Sheriff Buford T. Justice in hot pursuit. Landing the escape was Reynolds, cowboy hat dipped low, breaking the fourth wall with that famous laugh—as if he and the audience were in on the same unbelievable joke.

The Bandit's Trans Am transcends mere transportation. It was freedom and rebellion with a V-8 engine, and in 1977, that was exactly what America wanted to see on the silver screen. **Todd Kraemer** bkraemer@hagerty.com

East bound and down, loaded up and truckin'
We gonna do what they say can't be done
We've got a long way to go and a short
time to get there
I'm east bound, just watch ol' Bandit run

With his trademark laugh and cowboy hat, the Bandit and his iconic Trans Am land a massive jump over a missing bridge—and into the annals of car movie history.

Video courtesy of Universal Pictures

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RELEASED
1979

DIRECTED BY
GEORGE MILLER

STARRING
MEL GIBSON, HUGH KEAYS-BYRNE,
JOANNE SAMUEL, STEVE BISLEY

mad max

BETWEEN THE pounding score, the quick glimpses of a crumbling Hall of Justice and a debris-littered road, and a cop salaciously spying on two naked canoodlers, less than a minute of *Mad Max* has lapsed before you know the world that you're entering is thoroughly bent. George Miller and Byron Kennedy's original 1979 masterpiece is one tight work of indie filmmaking; there isn't a wasted frame in the 93 sizzling minutes to follow. As we have learned ad nauseam from superhero movies, origin stories are often the best films within a franchise, and *Mad Max* is no exception.

What makes the original *Max* stand apart from the postapocalyptic blockbusters that followed—besides the low-budget graininess and bandit style to its cinematography—is the nervous uncertainty of the setting. In the film, society as we know it, with bureaucrats and courts

From family man to stone-cold killer, Mel Gibson's *Mad Max* is the story of a cop's descent into darkness as the world collapses with him. The black Interceptor, a '73 Ford Falcon, becomes his personal Angel of Death.

Photo courtesy of Everett Collection

and policemen in uniforms, is still functioning, if fractured. A world on a knife's edge is, particularly in our own time, far more interesting than one that has already tipped into chaos, with all the predictable clichés of nihilistic cruelty and violence that follow. With the original *Max*, you're left to wonder who the good guys are and if there are indeed consequences for any of it. "You're really gonna get it this time," bleats one of the cops after his partner rams a van during the opening calamitous chase. "He had his indicator on!" Nobody worries about turn indicators after the bomb drops.

In *Mad Max*, the law wears black and delights in carnage, while the leaders of the biker gang are erudite and highly philosophical, spouting poetry on the fly. Max is a dedicated family man, but also the most ruthless cop on the force. None of it is predictable, which makes it riveting. These subtle story nuances get increasingly lost in the big-budget crash-fests that come after, as dazzling as they are. And, let's face it, the action in the original *Max* is one of a kind, the actors and stuntpeople shot at actual speed by fearless, helmetless camerapeople strapped to fenders and astride motorcycle back seats, all seemingly lacking any self-preservation instincts. You just can't get this intensity with computer cartoons—not yet, anyway.

The cars (and bikes) in *Mad Max* are vital to the story. As Mel Gibson's Max slips from the light into the darkness, a metaphor for the collapsing world around him, he abandons his gaily colored yellow patrol car for the black Interceptor. The car is his murderous partner going forward, effectively becoming the Angel of Death. Or, as one of the bikers says prophetically at the beginning, "the mighty hand of vengeance, sent down to smite the un-roadworthy." Having made his bloody bargain, Max is doomed to spend the next three movies seeking redemption in increasingly bizarre and outlandish spectacles. Meanwhile, his avenging car, the "last of the V-8 Interceptors, a piece of history," sacrifices itself to save Max early in the series' next (and next best) installment, *The Road Warrior*. All of which makes it one cop and one cop car that we will never forget, even as the rest of it is easily forgotten. *H*

Aaron Robinson
arobinson@hagerty.com

The first 10 minutes of this low-budget indie thriller leave you breathless. Shot in real time with no special effects, it somehow seems way more exciting than today's digital offerings.

Photo courtesy of Everett Collection

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c'était un rendez-

RELEASED
1976

DIRECTED BY
CLAUDE LELOUCH

STARRING
CLAUDE LELOUCH, GUNILLA FRIDEN

French director Claude Lelouch terrorized the streets of Paris in his Mercedes 450 SEL for 8 minutes, 39 seconds and filmed it all. Watch out, pigeons!

Photo courtesy of Spirit Level Film

-VOUS

THE WORDS FLASH across the screen: "The film you are about to see was made without any special effects or speed manipulation." The words fade, followed by the sound of a beating heart. As the scream of an engine reverberates against concrete walls, we realize we are rocketing out of a tunnel onto the streets and that we are in Paris. What follows is an unhinged vehicular attack on the streets of the City of Light, viewed from the nose of an unseen car.

The route takes us up the Avenue Foch and past the famous landmarks of the city, including the Arc de Triomphe, the Luxor Obelisk, and the Louvre. The tires squeal over the cobblestones, and the driver shifts maniacally up and down the gears. What is that exhaust note? It's a Ferrari V-12, isn't it? This driver is insane, blasting through red lights, driving up on the sidewalk, and almost colliding with a city bus. Hey, he almost hit that woman walking her dog! What the heck is he doing? Then with a final series of beautifully blipped downshifts, we pass the Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre. The brakes screech and as we come to a stop at the curb, we have our answer: A woman runs up the stairs and out jumps the driver to embrace her. The church bells ring, we see the words "It was a date" and the credit "Filmed by Claude Lelouch." Distance traveled: 6.5 miles. Red lights blown: 18. Pigeons maimed/killed: 0 (hopefully). Time elapsed: 8 minutes, 39 seconds. For decades, that is all anyone knew about *Rendezvous*.

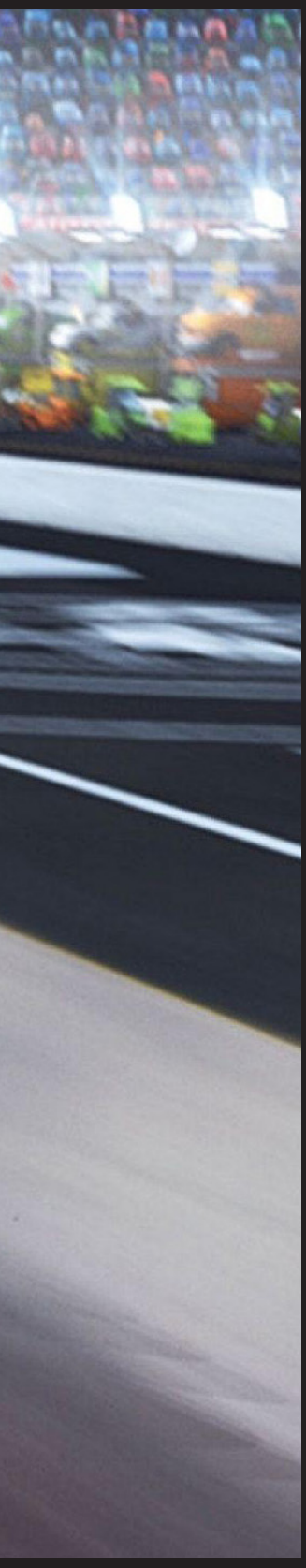
Rumors circulated that Formula 1 driver Jean-Pierre Beltoise performed the stunt in a Matra Le Mans sports prototype. Another held it was Jacques Laffite in a Ferrari 275 GTB. A cottage industry of sorts sprang up to solve the mystery, analyzing every frame as if it were the Zapruder film. Slowly, over the years, the layers of truth revealed themselves. In 1976, Lelouch had finished shooting a film and had roughly 9 minutes of footage left over. His inspiration came from a personal experience he'd had when he was running late for an appointment and drove across Paris like a madman to be on time.

City officials refused to close the necessary streets for Lelouch to film his fantasy, so he decided to do it without permission. He reduced the risks by shooting at 5:30 a.m. on a Sunday in August, when virtually all of Paris was shut down for vacation. He mounted a gyrostabilized camera to the front of the car, which was his personal Mercedes-Benz 450 SEL 6.9; a fantastic car, but not a Ferrari. The Benz's self-leveling suspension worked in tandem with the gyrostabilized camera to steady the filming. Since the Benz's engine sounds were on the sedate side, Lelouch later dubbed in those of a Ferrari 275 GTB. The syncing of the action with the audio is quite good, especially considering the analog tools available at the time.

Later, he confessed to being the driver and that he was arrested for his exploits. "The chief of police called me in," recalled Lelouch. "He read me a list of all the offenses I'd committed. When he finished, he gave me a black look and asked for my license. He contemplated it for a few moments, then gave it back with a large smile on his face. He said, 'I promised I would take your license, but I didn't say for how long.' I was stupefied. It was a symbolic punishment. Then he added, 'My children love your little film.'" **Kirk Seaman** kseaman@hagerty.com

Lightning McQueen (Owen Wilson) and a star-studded cast of cameos—celebrity and automotive—helped introduce a new generation to the magic of automobiles.

Photo courtesy of Walt Disney Pictures/Pixar Animation Studios



RELEASED
2006

DIRECTED BY
JOHN LASSETER

STARRING
OWEN WILSON. PAUL NEWMAN.
BONNIE HUNT. MICHAEL KEATON

cars

EARLIER THIS YEAR, NASCAR released a promotional YouTube video in which some of its younger drivers (Connor Zilisch, 19 at the time, was the youngest; Joey Logano was the oldest at 36) were blindfolded and asked to identify die-cast cars. Most struggled to identify miniatures of a late-model Chevrolet Corvette, a '67 El Camino, and a fifth-generation Toyota Supra. However, when presented with Lightning McQueen, the arrogant rookie racer and main character of Pixar's 2006 animated feature *Cars*, all of the drivers instantly identified the anthropomorphic stock car. Admittedly, the NASCAR drivers represent a small sample size, but *Cars* absolutely made an impression on recent generations of automotive aficionados.

Watch the intro sequence and you'll understand the appeal. The movie starts in darkness, with Lightning (voiced by Owen Wilson) doing sports psychology visualization exercises: "Speed. I am speed." He then emerges from his race trailer, light slowly shining on him to reveal a red stock car. Quick cuts of superspeedway racing, MTV style, follow, with howling V-8s and Sheryl Crow's "Real Gone" soundtracking the sequence. Slow down, you're gonna crash. I was 11 when I first saw it, and I was hooked.

Pixar was at the height of its powers in 2006—every movie it had released—*Toy Story*, *Finding Nemo*—was a box-office smash. The animation studio's formula for making movies sticky to both adults and kids is simple but effective: Mix bang-zoom computer animation and star-studded voice talent with relatable characters who are on emotional journeys. *Cars* is no exception, although the strange implications of the *Cars* universe—a car's anatomy seems to be an unholy amalgamation of flesh and steel—are left unaddressed.

But what makes *Cars* brilliant is how it cleverly weaves in so many parts of American car culture. The film's inciting incident is caused by a gang of *Fast & Furious*–style tuner cars, and Lightning ends up stuck in the fictitious Radiator Springs, evoking the many Route 66 towns that were bypassed by the interstate. The flick also does a surprisingly good job of retelling NASCAR history, ranging from the Fabulous Hudson Hornet (voiced by Paul Newman in one of his last feature films) to the blue Plymouth Superbird (voiced by all-time great Richard Petty). The voices of racing legends like Dale Earnhardt Jr., Darrell Waltrip, Michael Schumacher, and Mario Andretti also make cameos.

Even though *Cars* is old enough to legally drive, the opening sequence still gets this 31-year-old author hyped up. Perhaps it's because *Cars* landed at the perfect time to straddle two generations, or maybe because no one else has tried, but there really hasn't been a better entry point to turn a car-curious kid into a lifelong enthusiast. **Chris Stark** editor@hagerty.com

the fast and the furious

RELEASED
2001

DIRECTED BY
ROB COHEN

STARRING
PAUL WALKER, VIN DIESEL,
MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ, JORDANA BREWSTER

THIS IS AN odd thing to say about a series best known for its fakery, but the secret to the success and enduring appeal of *The Fast and the Furious*—and here I'm really talking about the 2001 movie, not so much the blockbuster franchise currently going on its dozenth installment—is its authenticity.

I don't necessarily mean the cars or street races, the details of which entire corners of the internet have devoted themselves to debunking. (No, nitrous doesn't work like that.) Nor does the plot win many points for realism. It should be noted the first film was inspired by real reporting—a 1998 story by Kenneth Li that appeared in *Vibe*—and is far easier to follow than its increasingly unintelligible successors. Still, it's clear from the first few frames that you're not getting a gritty docudrama.

Yet the beating heart of the film is love for

Dominic Toretto (Vin Diesel) and Brian O'Conner (Paul Walker) put modern classics through their paces—with clearly realistic NOS action—on the streets of L.A. in this grounded first entry of the now-fanciful franchise.

Photos courtesy of Universal Pictures

The beating heart of the first film in the blockbuster franchise is in its love of cars and driving, and that feels totally genuine.

cars and driving, and that feels totally genuine. There are indulgent shots of cars; not just hot stuff like Toyota Supras and Dodge Chargers but also workaday Honda Civics modded within an inch of their lives. There's the exuberant talk of NOS bottles and turbos and "double clutching," which, even in its silliness, sounded very much like the car-obsessed chatter that consumed my teenage friends and me at the time. Or maybe we sounded like them. We millennials learned facts about cars from all over—magazines, early web forums, *Top Gear*—but this movie gave us a shared language and style.

And of course there's its star, Paul Walker. He became famous (and then, sadly, infamous) for being a true-blue car enthusiast, and that shines through. He not only drives fast, but with apparent relish. When Walker climbs out of his smoking Mitsubishi Eclipse in an early scene, having just lost a race to co-star Vin Diesel, he's not grimacing or affecting cool-guy detachment. He's beaming. He tells Diesel, "Dude, I almost had you!" He definitely had us.

David Zenlea dzenlea@hagerty.com

Millennials came to know and appreciate cars like the 1995 Mitsubishi Eclipse RS, thanks to their appearance in the movie.

Photo courtesy of Universal Pictures

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STAK AUTO LIFTS

chitty chitty bang bang

RELEASED
1968

DIRECTED BY
KEN HUGHES

STARRING
DICK VAN DYKE . SALLY ANN HOWES.
LIONEL JEFFRIES. GERT FRÖBE

FROM THE MOMENT the opening credits of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* flashed across the screen of our family's television in November 1974, I was smitten. First, it starred my favorite actor, Dick Van Dyke. He played the zany Caractacus Potts, father to towheaded twins Jeremy and Jemima. I identified immediately with the children, making it easy for me to imagine myself right alongside them for their adventures dashing across the gorgeous countryside of Edwardian England. The catchy tunes they sing along the way further engaged my fertile imagination.

Then there was Chitty, a glorious fusion of metal and wood and leather. The gleaming aluminum hood polished to a mirror shine. The rich, varnished wood of the boattail body. The luscious lipstick-red leather seats. All of it dazzled and enthralled me. To this day, I'm a sucker for red interiors, as witnessed by my 1976 Cadillac Eldorado convertible.

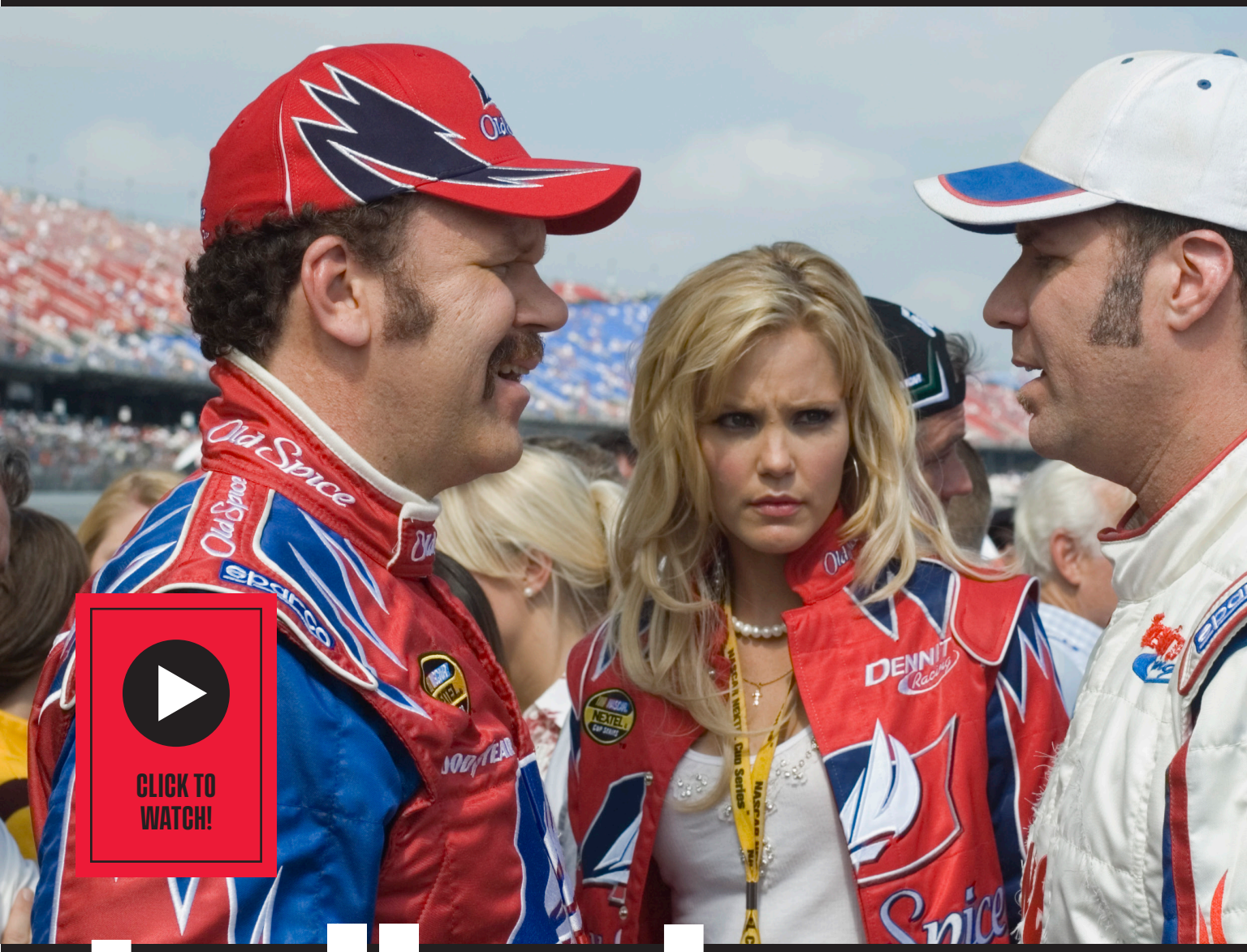
The movie, which debuted in December 1968, is loosely based on the book of the same name, written by Ian Fleming of James Bond fame. Fleming put in writing the bedtime stories he had been telling his son, Caspar. The name came from a series of cars, each named Chitty Bang Bang, raced in the 1920s by the renowned playboy Count Louis Zborowski. Fleming had seen the cars as a boy, raced at Brooklands in England.

The movie revolves around Jeremy and Jemima finding a wrecked race car in a junkyard. The kindly owner allows the kids to play in the car, imagining themselves reliving its racing exploits. When the children learn the car is about to be sent to the crusher, they convince their father—an eccentric inventor—to buy the car and restore it to its former glory. Chitty's license plate, GEN11, hints at the car's magical powers ("genie," get it?). Not only was Chitty self-driving, but it was also self-flying *and* self-motorboating. That magic has stayed with me over the passing five decades. Even now, there's a part of me that believes a gentle tug on the steering wheel can send my car—and my imagination—soaring. *H* **Kirk Seaman**

kseaman@hagerty.com

There were six different versions of Chitty made for the film, all by Alan Mann Racing in England. AMR was part of Ford's international motorsports program, working on the GT40 and the Daytona Cobra coupe.

Photo by Silver Screen Collection via Getty Images



CLICK TO WATCH!

talladega nights

the ballad of ricky bobby

Photo courtesy of Columbia Pictures/Sony Pictures

Shake and bake! Will Ferrell's Ricky Bobby poked good-natured fun at the mid-aughts NASCAR boom—and taught us that if you ain't first, you're last.

RELEASED
2006

DIRECTED BY
ADAM MCKAY

STARRING
WILL FERRELL. JOHN C. REILLY. SACHA BARON COHEN

ATTEND ANY NASCAR race, and you'll likely overhear multiple one-liners and spot references to *Talladega Nights*. Despite hitting theater screens 20 years ago, the movie remains part of stock car pop culture, especially when the tour stops at its namesake raceway in central Alabama (where you'll spot at least one fan dressed up as protagonist Ricky Bobby). Rightfully so. The 108-minute movie is densely packed with hilarious dialogue, slapstick comedy, and witty commentary on a sport that's inherently ridiculous. *This sticker is dangerous and inconvenient, but I do love Fig Newtons.*

Lighthearted as it was, *Talladega* was the product of seriously brilliant comedic minds. Hot off the success of *Anchorman* in 2004, *Saturday Night Live* expats Adam McKay and Will Ferrell set their sights on NASCAR as the arena for their next comedy. In that moment, Ferrell was the funniest guy in Hollywood and stock car racing was the fastest-growing sport in America, ripe for a race to the box office. Of course, it wasn't the first time the Southern sport was lampooned: Burt Reynolds' *Stroker Ace* did that in 1983. Nor was it the first time NASCAR was a silver screen smash hit—*Days of Thunder* pulled in $157.9 million at the box office back in 1990. *Help me, Tom Cruise!* But neither of those efforts had the duo of Ferrell and McKay, who co-wrote the film and who followed up *Talladega Nights* with the even funnier *Step Brothers*.

If by some unlikely chance you haven't seen *Talladega*, the film follows goofball stock car driver Ricky Bobby, portrayed by Ferrell, through a series of peaks and valleys in his NASCAR career. Ricky Bobby is often the butt of the joke, playing a simpleton obsessed with speed. Ferrell is joined by an all-star cast of actors from Sacha Baron Cohen to Amy Adams and a healthy dose of cameos by actual NASCAR drivers. Ferrell's magical on-screen chemistry with John C. Reilly, who plays Ricky Bobby's best friend and teammate Cal Naughton Jr., anchors the film, and the duo provide some of the best laughs.

Over the past two decades, *Talladega Nights* cemented itself in the zeitgeist not just as a successful big-budget comedy, the kind that doesn't get made anymore, but as a perennially appealing sendup of NASCAR culture. That it's still heavily quoted two decades on proves that this potent symbol of middle America can look at itself and laugh. **Cameron Neveu** cneveu@hagerty.com

steve mcqueen

the man & le mans

RELEASED
2015

DIRECTED BY
GABRIEL CLARKE AND JOHN MCKENNA

STARRING
STEVE MCQUEEN, NEILE ADAMS, CHAD MCQUEEN, DEREK BELL

STEVE MCQUEEN: *The Man & Le Mans* is a great documentary about a bad movie. That movie, *Le Mans*, was McQueen's 1971 passion project. Hot off hits like *Bullitt* and *The Thomas Crown Affair*, McQueen had "the juice," as they say in Hollywood. Studios lined up to fund his next project, a love letter to endurance racing.

For *Le Mans*, McQueen wanted to put the audience behind the wheel of a race car to feel the things drivers feel: the rush of the speed and the uncanny umbilical cord that grows between human and machine. "We had the star; we had the drivers," *The Man & Le Mans* consulting producer Hal Hamilton recalled. "We had an incredible array of technical support; we had everything." What they didn't have was a script.

During the 1970 24 Hours of Le Mans race, and for months after, McQueen's crew filmed a squad of professional drivers behind the wheels of legit race cars like the Porsche 917 and the Ferrari 512. McQueen's demands for strict authenticity meant shooting at triple-digit speeds over multiple takes.

The directors and writers sent to France to wrangle a story that a mass-market audience would pay to see were all thwarted by McQueen's vision. The central tension of the documentary is that McQueen imagined a film far different from the one the studio, Cinema Center Films, thought it was buying. The eventual film has the best period racing footage

Steve McQueen's labor of love, *Le Mans,* might have lacked plot and character development, but it featured real-deal race cars strapped with cameras.

Photo courtesy of FilmRise

available but alas, no story to be found. It was a commercial failure.

Forty-four years later, directors Gabriel Clarke and John McKenna used previously unseen footage and period McQueen interviews to tell the harrowing tale of the war that developed between McQueen and the rotating cast of writers, directors, and handlers brought in to rein him in. They largely failed, as many of them described, wistfully, decades later in interviews conducted by Clarke and McKenna.

The documentary is a fascinating and insightful portrait of an artist struggling with a singular concept that he's unable to translate to reality. McQueen had a deep and abiding passion for racing that he wanted to communicate. But he needed others to help him get there, and he couldn't get them to see and feel what he did. His frustration led to all sorts of naughty on-set behavior and production calamities. One driver lost a leg in an accident. Careers were derailed or destroyed. As Clarke and McKenna deftly demonstrate, it turns out that producing a movie with no story makes for one helluva compelling tale. ***H*** **Larry Webster** lwebster@hagerty.com

why bullitt isn't a car movie

A so-so cop flick with a great chase, it's no car movie.

NOBODY COULD brood like Steve McQueen at his peak. In 1968, his film company, Solar Productions, released an excessively broody cops-and-gangsters flick called *Bullitt*, since hailed by many as having the best car chase ever filmed. The smackdown between McQueen's '68 Mustang GT390 and the hitmen's black Charger R/T 440 plays out across the roller-coaster hills of San Francisco, a high-wattage combination that enshrines the sequence as some of the best car action ever committed to celluloid. But *Bullitt* is no car movie—no more than *The French Connection* or *The Seven-Ups*, two contemporary crime flicks that also feature wild chases through bustling cityscapes (with *Bullitt*'s famed stunt coordinator Bill Hickman also driving in both).

McQueen's mission with *Bullitt* wasn't to make a car movie—he tried that a couple years later with the moody *Le Mans*. Rather, it was to make a film that broke cinematic conventions. The late '60s was the beginning of the auteur era of experimental filmmaking, and McQueen wanted to join in with a hyperrealistic, almost documentarian approach to an old-fashioned noir-era detective story. Like a latter-day Sam Spade, McQueen's Lieutenant Frank Bullitt slogs through a convoluted caper with head-scratching twists that are nearly impossible to follow. As the mafia gunsels chase their quarry with a shotgun, an ice pick, and terrible aim, the smarmy bigwigs ride *Bullitt* in a classic working-man-against-the-system cliche that is as old as Jason and the Argonauts.

If *Bullitt*'s main characters are two-dimensional tropes and the story is twisted spaghetti, it's the film's cinema verité style along with McQueen's ice-blue gaze and Lalo Schifrin's jazzy score that gives *Bullitt* whatever lasting cultural significance it has. A hospital surgery scene, shot with real doctors and nurses who move with professional efficiency and speak in low, flat tones as they work, was novel for its day—and heavily cribbed two years later in Robert Altman's *M*A*S*H*. Additionally, *Bullitt* is fun to watch if you want to see what real San Francisco looked like in the mid-'60s, not the Haight-Ashbury psychedelic stereotype so commonly portrayed in film and documentary.

Yet, as with the nearly dialogue-free *Le Mans*, McQueen's personal interests overrode his storytelling skills, the result being a pear-shaped film almost exclusively remembered for its 9 minutes and 42 seconds of car carnage in the middle. Granted, the chase is a corker, if rife with obvious gaffes—the virtually unlimited number of hubcaps that go flying, the green VW Beetle and white Firebird that keep reappearing, the film camera that gets plowed into—which lend a certain amateurish feel to the production. But filming without special effects on city streets was like that back then, and we miss its authenticity today.

The Charger is destroyed at the sequence's fiery conclusion and the story moves on. Which is where today's DVD audience drifts away because, frankly, who cares what happens after the chase? We love the action and the cars, but *Bullitt*'s cars are not characters in the way they are in other films, just a couple of exciting props that are having a brief cameo. They are not on screen long enough for us to make an emotional connection to them and we don't mourn their exit. Which is why *Bullitt* is not a car movie, just a muddled cop movie with a great chase scene. **Aaron Robinson**
arobinson@hagerty.com

McQueen's ride, a Highland Green 1968 Mustang GT390, resurfaced in 2018 after decades in hiding. The car's roughly 10 minutes on screen is sensational, but *Bullitt* is no car movie.

Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.-Seven Arts

Actual size is 40.6 mm

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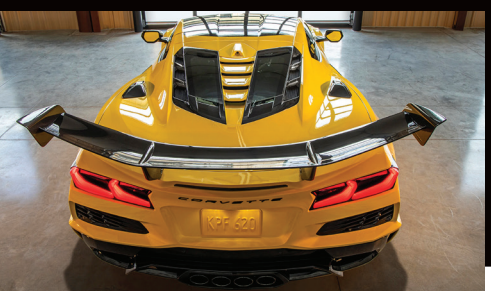

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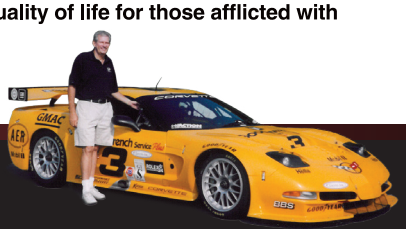

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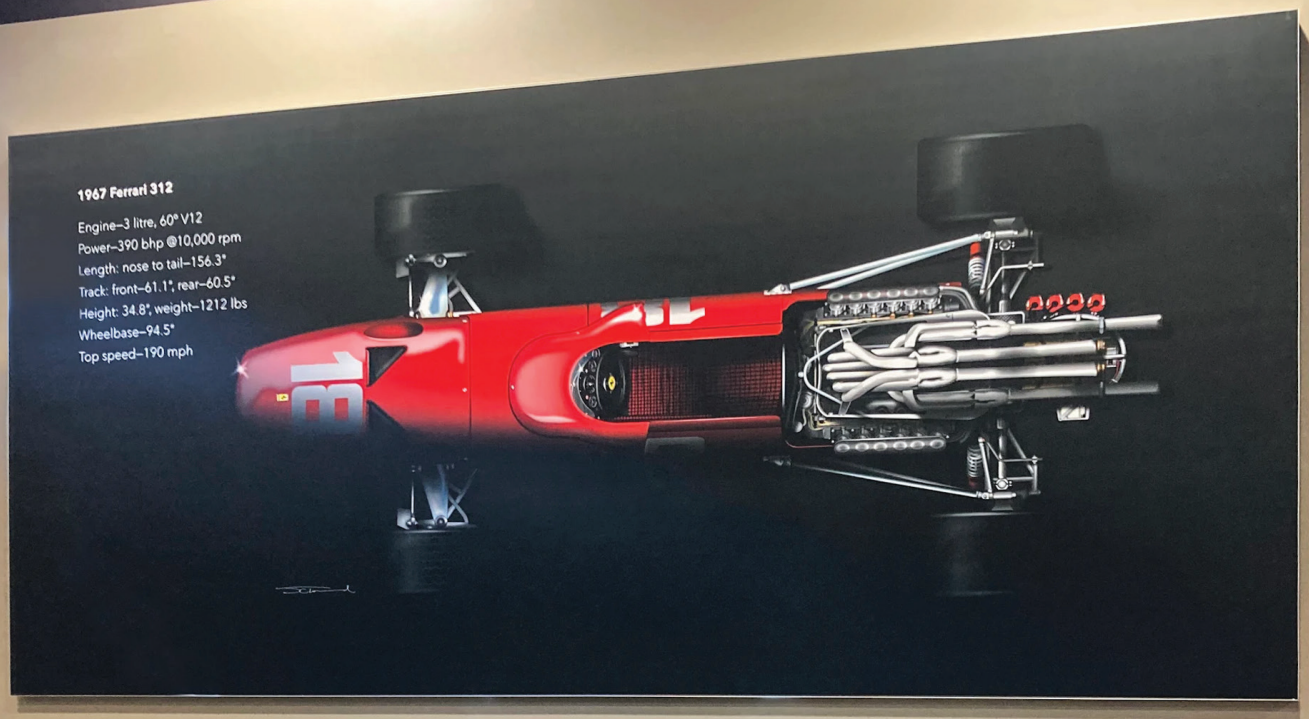

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Director John Hughes, the ’80s teen angst maestro, knew how to cast cars as supporting players.

Hughes of Red

Words by
Lyn Woodward

CLARK GRISWOLD. Aunt Edna. Samantha Baker. Jake Ryan. Gary Wallace. Steff McKee. And, of course, the one and only Ferris Bueller. All characters created by writer, producer, and director John Hughes, who made some of the most popular and enduring movies of the 1980s. Unlike some of the other movies we celebrate in this issue, in Hughes flicks, cars are not central characters, but they sure are supporting stars.

We all know about the famous 1961 Ferrari 250 GT California Spyder that Ferris and friends famously borrow on their day off, and the Family Truckster the Griswold family drives cross-country to Wally World. But even secondary cars, in the background of scenes, are chosen with care and intention and tell us something about the characters and the ’80s worlds they inhabited. Hughes characters, often teens coming of age, lived relatable lives full of angst, joy, disappointment, and lust, with active imaginations, lofty aspirations, and big fantasies to chase in the fictional Chicago suburb of Shermer, Illinois, where Hughes set no fewer than 16 of his films.

Hughes once remarked to P.J. O’Rourke, his former boss and *National Lampoon* editor-in-chief, that “he knew everyone in Shermer, not just the people in his movies. He knew where they lived and what they did for a living.” From extramarital relations to distant cousins, to their innermost desires, Hughes had his entire make-believe world figured out, down to its cars—specifically the sports cars, usually red.

Was John Hughes a car guy? Sadly, we can’t ask him since he died in 2009 from a heart attack at the age of 59. From what we can surmise from his celluloid canon, though, Hughes had great car taste, as we will see by diving into some of our favorite Hughes automotive selections—both the dashing leads and the well-cast supporting actors.

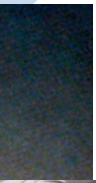
Photos by CBS Photo Archive via Getty Images

CLICK TO WATCH!

Video courtesy of Warner Bros.

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VACATION

1983



STARRING

1981
FERRARI 308 GTS

CLARK GRISWOLD wants to take his family on vacation, but Hughes has other plans, running his fictional lovable loser up every tree possible. Yet somehow, Chevy Chase as Griswold finds a way down, even if it's with a dog tearing at his pant leg. Cover girl Christie Brinkley in a Rosso Corsa Ferrari 308 GTS comes closer than dead Aunt Edna strapped to the roof of the Wagon Queen Family Truckster to sidelining Griswold's family fun quest. Brinkley zooms not only into his rearview but quickly embodies the male fantasy of every rosso-blooded American—at least, the 1980s version. She manages to get Griswold down to his shorts before he's shocked back to reality by a cold motel pool and his wife interrupting the skinny-dipping session.

Before becoming a screenwriter, Hughes wrote ad copy for famed agency Leo Burnett, then picked up a pen in the late 1970s to write for *National Lampoon*. "He wrote so fast and so well, it was hard for a monthly magazine to keep up with him," P.J. O'Rourke recalled in a 2015 piece for *The Daily Beast*. The movie, *National Lampoon's Vacation*, was commissioned from a short fiction story Hughes wrote called "Vacation '58," inspired by a childhood family road trip. It starts: "If Dad hadn't shot Walt Disney in the leg, it would have been our best vacation ever." Sex jokes and humor as off-color as the Metallic Pea wagon follow the Griswolds from the Midwest to Wally World, an obvious facsimile of Disneyland. And while this movie would never be made in the same way today—it's kind of a *Blazing Saddles* for the '80s—laughing out loud at Cousin Dale mistaking the video game *Asteroids* for hemorrhoids will never feel like a crime.

Tom Selleck immortalized the 308 in *Magnum, P.I.* as a symbol of the "Greed is Good" '80s, but *Vacation*, which came out two years earlier than the popular TV show, also deserves credit for establishing the V-8 coupe as aspirational fodder for the common man. This was the decade when everyone imagined they could be rich. You could easily kid yourself into thinking that both the Ferrari and the model were attainable—if only you weren't saddled with family responsibilities. We can almost see those gears turning when Chevy Chase's character first lays eyes on the car and Christie Brinkley.

SUPPORTING ACTOR

The Wagon Queen Family Truckster is a Ford LTD Country Squire wagon that has been replicated so many times, we've seen them at more car shows and auctions than the 308 GTS.

Photos courtesy of Everett Collection/Michael Ochs Archives via Getty Images

SIXTEEN CANDLES 1984

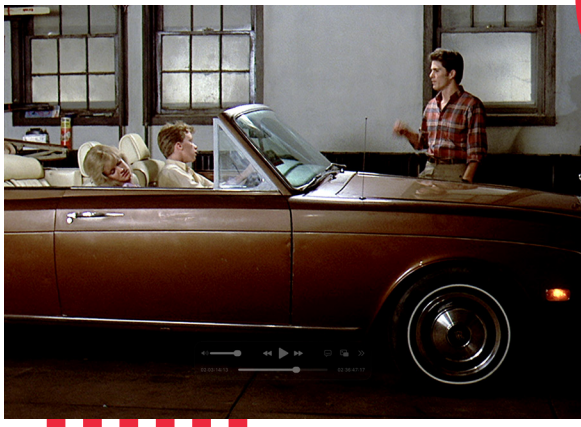
STARRING

1983 PORSCHE 944

"UTTERLY FORGETTABLE." That's how 1980s it-girl icon Molly Ringwald, as sophomore Samantha Baker, judges herself in the mirror on the morning of her 16th birthday. Her family agrees she's forgettable, apparently, as Sam's day is lost in the hullabaloo of her older sister's wedding. "You need 4 inches of bod and a great birthday," Sam decides while on the phone with a friend. In the film, she gets neither. What she does get is over an hour of awkward teenage pining for Jake Ryan, the hot senior in school, played by a dreamy, spiky-haired Michael Schoeffling. Our man Jake drives an even hotter Guards Red Porsche 944.

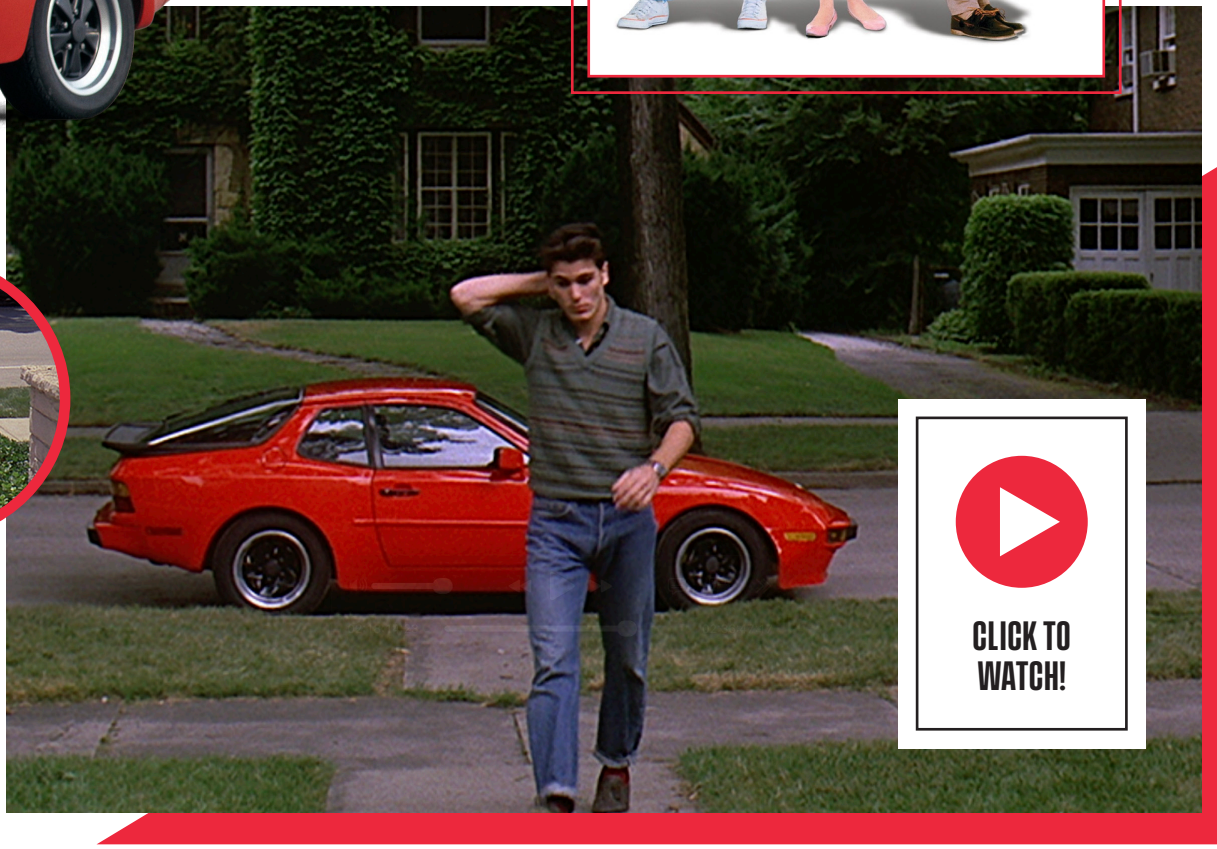
The front-engine, rear-wheel-drive sports car was entry-level for the brand at the time and, thus, appropriately attainable for the sweater-vested prep whose rich dad no doubt paid for the car. The 944 was viewed more favorably than the 924 as an attainable but still high-status Porsche. With its red paint and Fuchs wheels, the car enhances Jake's attractiveness. Not only is he a hunk, but he also comes from a family with means and sophistication. Parents with enough money to buy their son a Porsche, but who are not so ostentatious as to spoil him with a 911.

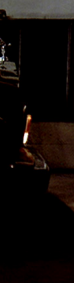
Jake feels trapped by his vapid, hot blonde girlfriend, and Sam offers the quirky self-effacing substance Ringwald would create in her films time and again, making normal girlies with braces and zero booty feel like the Cinderella story could happen for them. The red 944, with its curvaceous fender flares, serves as Jake's white horse, and by the end credits, Sam gets successfully swept away from her forgetful family to an unforgettable ending.



SUPPORTING ACTOR

Shout out to the Rolls-Royce Corniche convertible in which Ted makes out with Jake's prom queen girlfriend. Same with the 1981 Oldsmobile Cutlass, which would have only been four years old when the movie was made and was already chopped up in a pivotal auto shop scene.

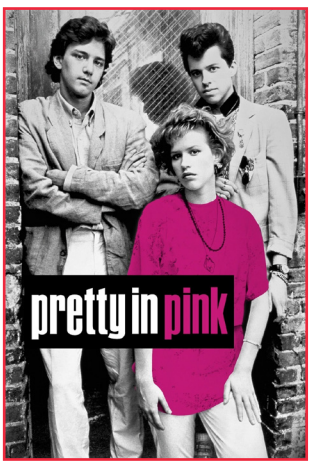




CLICK TO WATCH!

Photos courtesy of Everett Collection/Universal Pictures

PRETTY IN PINK



1986

STARRING

1978
PORSCHE 911

HERE, HUGHES puts the villain in the red sports car for a change. That's Steff McKee (James Spader), an unbearable snob whose wealth is advertised by the fetching cherry-red 911 he drives. McKee's best friend, the similarly affluent Blane McDonough (Andrew McCarthy), pines for Andie Walsh (Molly Ringwald again), a quirky middle-class teen who drives a ratty but fittingly quirky Volkswagen Karmann Ghia. Steff is a duplicitous sort who chides Blane that Andie is beneath his station while simultaneously backhandedly pursuing her via the wealth-and-power dynamic.

Here we see the subtle genius of Hughes' automotive casting. Whereas the 944 in *16 Candles* quietly communicates wealth and status, the 911 driven by Steff absolutely screams privilege.

The brooding Steff leans coolly on his Guards Red 911, looking down his nose at Andie and her quirky pink thrifted outfits. But we're all grown up enough now to know that the high school kid with the $50,000 car (about $150,000 in today's money) who's mean to everyone is just hiding his feelings of jealousy and inadequacy. Blane, our hunky yet human fellow rich kid, sums it up best at the film's close: "You buy everything, Steff. You couldn't buy her, though, that's what's killing you, isn't it? That's it, Steff. She thinks you're sh*t. And deep down, you know she's right." We know Blane's right, too. The kid with the 911 proves to viewers that he's petty in Porsche and that money cannot buy happiness. Or the girl.

SUPPORTING ACTOR
Andie's Karmann Ghia is rattle-can-pink perfection.

Photos by Bonnie Schiffman Photography via Getty Images/Paramount Pictures via Getty Images

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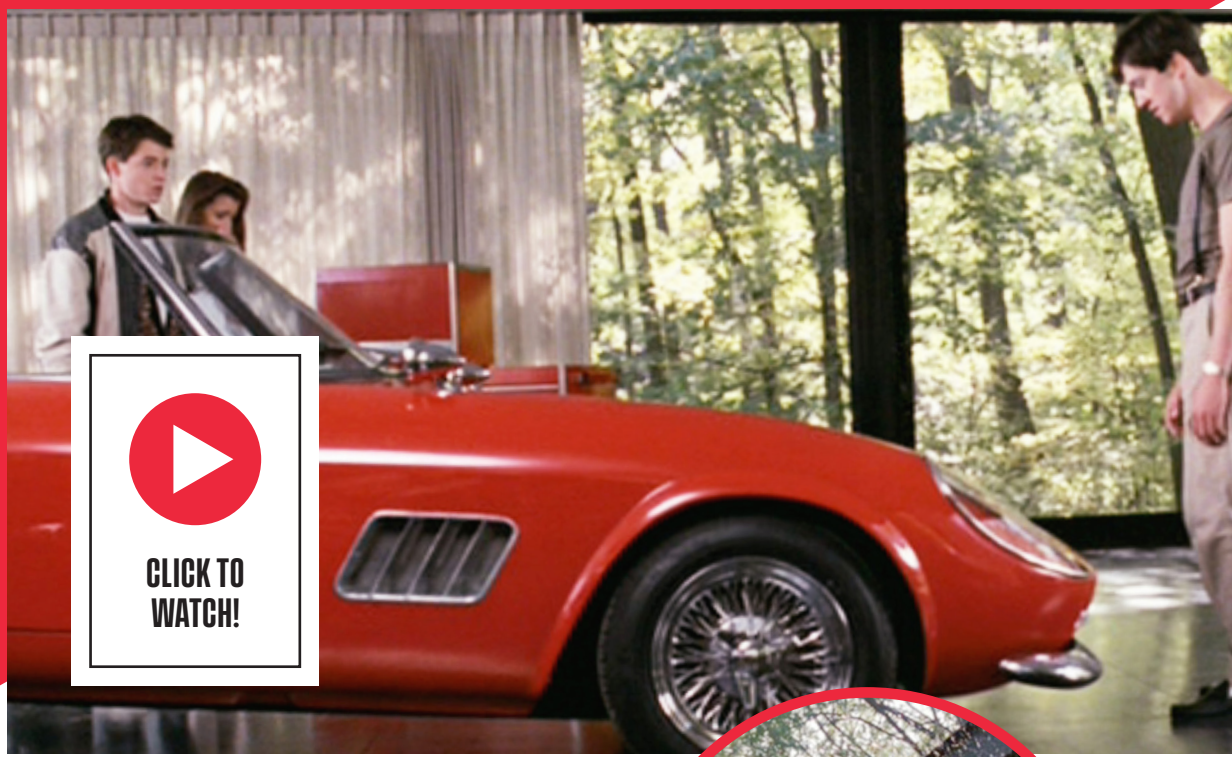
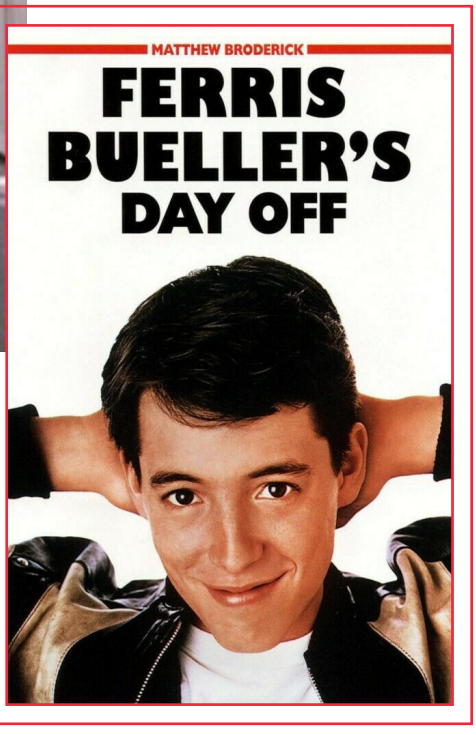


CLICK TO WATCH!

1986

FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF



STARRING

1961 FERRARI 250 GT CALIFORNIA SPIDER

WHEN IT COMES to this most famous of Hughes flicks, everyone thinks of one thing: a Ferrari 250 GT California Spider (actually, a replica) catapulting backward into oblivion.

However, the red car from this flick we still fantasize about is not a Ferrari, it's a German performance sedan. Ferris's dad, Tom Bueller, played by journeyman actor Lyman Ward, drives a Tornado Red 1985 Audi 5000S Turbo Quattro. Bueller senior is an ad guy in downtown Chicago, just as Hughes was. As a creative executive, he wouldn't be caught dead driving a Lincoln or even a more conservative Mercedes. Audi was an upstart driving German performance brand, for people in the know. A car aimed at the sort of enlightened modern man who was emerging in the era. A car for a cool dad. We see this in the scene where Tom finds his supposedly sick but obviously faking it son in bed after the Ferrari plunges to its demise. Bueller senior is no Greatest Generation hardass; he's more than willing to go along.

Dad's best quality, though? He doesn't replace his own son, played by Matthew Broderick, in his heart with a pricey Ferrari, as does his friend Cameron's dad, a fact lost on Ferris until the completion of his masterful story arc.

SUPPORTING ACTOR

Shoutout to the white Pontiac Fiero that Ferris' sister Jeanie (Jennifer Grey) got as a birthday present. Not poor Ferris. "I asked for a car. I got a computer," he laments. How we miss the days when kids understood wheels were better than screens.

Photos by CBS Photo Archive via Getty Images/Video courtesy of Paramount Pictures

STARRING

1974
JAGUAR XK-E SERIES III ROADSTER

SHE'S HAVING A BABY

1988

CLICK TO WATCH!

HUGHES IS credited for calling *She's Having a Baby* the most autobiographical of his movies. Jake, an aspiring writer played by Kevin Bacon (the movie star version of Hughes), gets a job in an ad agency, then spends the rest of the movie questioning his choices. Which are to get married young and start a family while putting his desired career of writing books on hold. Not 10 minutes into the film, Jake's flashy best friend, Davis McDonald, played by Alec Baldwin, gives him an out as they're dressed in their rented tuxes for Jake's wedding.

"You don't have to go through with this. You can walk," Davis says. "You say the word and we are out of here. Marriage will wait. Time won't." The conversation takes place in Davis's red Jag, a perfect vessel for his live-fast, carefree approach to life. His '74 E-Type, from the end of the model's 13-year production run, already looked like an elder statesman in 1988 when this movie hit theaters, but it still oozed timeless class. Hughes perhaps felt the Jag added an unexpected dimension to the best buddy character, who otherwise gives off Lamborghini Countach lady-killer vibes. Jake turns down the offer and embraces adulthood the way Hughes himself did after marrying his high school sweetheart at age 20, then becoming the youngest vice president at ad shop Leo Burnett.

The Jag represents a mirage, an unattainable illusion for both young men. Owning and maintaining a 14-year-old Jaguar was out of reach for an aspiring writer. By the end of the movie, it's clear that Davis has made the wrong choices: He envies Jake and his settled, stable life. To his credit, Davis knows what road Jake will take from the very beginning: "We can split," he says from behind the Jag's wheel, "but you'd be back tomorrow."

Clearly, Hughes was a gifted ad man. Maybe that's why selling the fantasy in his movies always came easy for him, even if his pattern repeated itself, often taking shape as a red sports car. *H* editor@hagerty.com

SUPPORTING ACTOR

A red Nissan ZX lurks in the neighbor's driveway during a weird musical dance number of suburban dads pushing lawn mowers, and Jake takes his bride to the hospital in a silver BMW 325i by the end of the movie. So life doesn't turn out so bad for the fictional ad guy, either.

Photos courtesy of Everett Collection/Paramount Pictures

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There's meeting your heroes and then there's meeting The Jesus.

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MEET BUDDY JOE HOOKER. A STUNT VETERAN WHOSE JOB IT IS TO BE DEATH-PROOF.

First a cowboy and then a gymnast, Buddy Joe followed his father into the stunt business at 13. He has jumped motorcycles, flipped cars, fallen from great heights, and been set on fire. He is an original member of Hollywood's elite stunt club, Stunts Unlimited.

BUDDY JOE, 83, exits a white Toyota Tacoma pickup attached to a rented trailer. Medium height, medium build, fit for a guy his age. When he takes off his thick, stylish black sunglasses, he reveals one of those Hollywood faces—you don't recognize him, per se, but you've probably seen frames of him in dozens of movies. His wife, Gayle Hooker, and son, Kanan, pile out of the truck in his wake.

In the rented trailer sits The Jesus, a 1970 Chevrolet Nova. If you're a movie buff, you might think it's been done up to look like the car from the 2007 flick *Death Proof*—all scarred and tough and the right kind of ratty, hood brandishing a skull graphic with lightning bolts in place of crossbones. The stunt cage, thick steel bars and gaudy welds exposed, is visible through the windows. You'd almost be right. In fact, this is no mock-up—it's an actual stunt car from the movie, and Buddy Joe is the actual stuntman who drove it for the cameras.

Death Proof, written and directed by Quentin Tarantino, is about a stunt driver and serial killer (Stuntman Mike, played by Kurt Russell) who stalks and murders women with cars. In the first half of the movie, the Nova is his weapon of choice. It's a twisted, grotesque film—even by the standards of the man who imagined the fight scenes in *Kill Bill*—but the specific intent with *Death Proof* is to pay homage to the sordid genre of '60s and '70s B movies. Tarantino is obsessed with arcane film history, and he sweats minute details to properly honor his cinematic heroes. Naturally, for *Death Proof*, a production about stuntpeople driving cars to the brink of destruction, Tarantino insisted on two points: 1) an all-star team of Hollywood stunt legends and 2) entirely practical stunts, without the use of special effects or CGI. In his words: "real cars, real sh*t, at full... speed."

On the first point, Tarantino hand-selected Buddy Joe Hooker to be *Death Proof*'s principal stunt driver and double for Kurt Russell. Buddy Joe's IMDB page as a stunt performer and coordinator includes highlights like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *To Live and Die in L.A.*, *Scarface*, *Harold and Maude*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, *Days of Thunder*, the 2000 remake of *Gone in 60 Seconds*, and dozens more. For a sense of the man, consider that his father ran a ranch

that provided horses for Westerns; Buddy Joe got his start as a child, doing stunts with horses. As an adult, he jumped a motorcycle over the spinning blades of a landing helicopter (*Daredevils*), rolled a truck 17 consecutive times down a sand embankment (*Clay Pigeon*), and jumped a car about 120 feet over Burt Reynolds' head into the Arkansas River (*White Lightning*).

Death Proof was a commercial and critical flop. (Roger Ebert, in his 2.5-star review, borrowed from another famous critic to pan Tarantino for "trying to shove art up into the crevices of dreck.") But it made a lasting impression on me, at the time a car-obsessed teenager. It also seemed to stick with Hooker, the stuntman doubling for an actor playing a fictional stuntman. Maybe that's why he took a liking to the Nova.

"I usually don't get attached to cars on set, but from the start, this one just worked well for me," he says, with a hand laid affectionately on the roof.

Production bought and prepped three Novas for the film: one for close-ups and two for stunts. While most stunt cars are prepped in such a way as to hide their safety cages, camera mounts, and general ruggedness, Stuntman Mike's black Nova is presented as the genuine article in the film. One of them, nicknamed The Jesus on set, became Hooker's favorite. "The Jesus had a 350 V-8 stroked to 383, with long-tube headers and a four-barrel carburetor. It had good power and it handled better than the others," Hooker says. He kept an eye on it during production.

"There was an instinct to save it, so before any of the big action sequences, I'd park it a little way's away," he explains with a hearty laugh.

The Nova's rear traction bars are true to '70s drag cars. But *Death Proof*'s production crew fitted them mostly because they look badass.

Stunt drivers are a photographer's delight. No matter what we asked Kanan to do with his car for the camera, he executed it without apparent effort.

The other prepped car, The Cleetus, was destroyed in one of the film's major action scenes via a maneuver called a "cannon roll." At a precise moment and speed, the stunt driver activates a device that fires underneath the car and launches it into the air at an angle, kicking off a series of horizontal rolls that looks astonishing on camera. In *Death Proof*, the scene depicts a ferocious, intentional head-on collision with another car containing Stuntman Mike's prey.

"Right here," Buddy Joe says, crouching slightly to jab his finger under the Nova's rocker sill, just in front of the passenger-side rear tire, "is where we mount the metal tube. In there, we pack a section of telephone pole and some black powder." Buddy Joe, a magnetic and animated storyteller, has rendered photographer James Lipman and me speechless as we hang on his every word. "Gunpowder, really. When it's time, and everything's set up right, I hit the button and the pole blasts out toward the ground, splintering into pieces and sending the car up."

"You hit the button? Aren't you... driving?"

"Well, yeah," he says, gesturing with an imaginary helm held out in front of him. "Some guys like to hold it out there with one hand, but I like to keep both hands on the wheel. So I tape the detonator to my thumb."

For the *Death Proof* cannon roll, Buddy Joe rolled The Cleetus about 160 yards. As it ended, the car slid heinously on its roof in a tempest of screeching metal. He nailed it on the first take, though, and the car stopped almost right in front of the camera. That meant The Jesus was spared, and at the end of production Buddy Joe asked Tarantino if he could have the car. Mostly

THE CAR SLID HEINOUSLY ON ITS ROOF IN A TEMPEST OF SCREECHING METAL... HE NAILED IT ON THE FIRST TAKE.

as a formality, the director sold it to Buddy Joe for about $500.

Buddy Joe's teenage twin sons, Kanan and Houston, tinkered with The Jesus and drove it to high school near The Snake, a famously twisty section of L.A.'s Mulholland Drive. This was a well-thrashed Hollywood movie car, so the brothers had to refresh a lot of the engine components. They added steel inner panels for the doors, where they were previously exposed to minimize weight and the chance of dangerous projectiles. Out went the Plexiglas barrier between passenger and driver, as well as the tractor seat where actress Rose McGowan sat. (Her character, unsecured and locked inside the crash box, is murdered when Stuntman Mike stands on the brakes at high speed.) A normal seat made a lot more sense for a couple of teens trying to score dates.

The Hookers worked on the brakes, too. During filming, the pedal had been set up to brake only the front axle; a separate pedal was installed near the dead pedal to control the rear brakes—ideal for spinning the car and executing 180s. "We kept it in there for a little bit," Kanan said, "but it was only because we wanted to mess around. It's not conducive to much else, though, least of all daily driving." They returned it to stock aside from a bigger brake booster from a C/K-series truck.

Kanan—33, clean-cut, meticulous, and crazy about cars—is now out of the stunt business and working for an off-road mapping technology start-up called onX Offroad based out of Montana. He flew home to California to be with us for the shoot, which we staged near Buellton, in the Santa Ynez Valley northwest of Santa Barbara, where the second half of *Death Proof* was shot. "Reuniting with this car is kind of like going back to my childhood, honestly," he said.

Though the Nova's scenes were filmed in Austin, Texas, bringing it to the Santa Ynez Valley, where the movie's famous Challenger/Charger duel plays, felt right.

Video courtesy of Dimension Films

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A baleful, matte-black paint job says a lot about *Death Proof*'s Chevy: villainous, all business, and not to be trifled with.

"I've always been a gearhead but haven't done much wrenching since moving away. Getting the Nova sorted for today was super nostalgic."

Most adults would be horrified to arm their teenage sons with 400–425 horsepower of Detroit muscle in a car never equipped with airbags. Most mothers, though, haven't stunt doubled for Uma Thurman. "They were born with their father's DNA," Gayle says, "and that natural sense of space and time and movement and body awareness." Both Gayle and Buddy Joe had watched Kanan's and Houston's driving skills develop over the years, a process that included karting and training with friends in the professional stunt world. She looks over at Kanan in the still-adoring way a loving mom regards her adult son. He has unloaded the Nova from the trailer and is busy under the hood checking the coolant level. "He's also in tune with cars. They talk to him."

Beyond all that, Buddy Joe had the confidence the car would be safe in a crash. After all, that's what it was built to withstand, to protect the driver. "Once Kanan was strapped in there, I knew he was pretty bulletproof. Might be something that happened to someone else, of course..." he trails off, throwing an animated wink for good measure.

A BEAUTIFUL ASPECT of film is the way your imagination fills in the gap between reality and the on-screen fantasy. Driving a movie car in real life, like meeting any hero, comes with a risk: closing that gap, washing over it with real, finite experiences.

When I make my way up to the matte-black Nova, a bead of sweat trickles down the back of my neck. For a moment, I remember the gore and terror wrought by this car in the film, and I am unsettled.

Kanan is waiting there for me, key and steering wheel in hand. His T-shirt, emblazoned with the Nova's skull and lightning logo, reads: STUNTMAN MIKE'S PROFESSIONAL DRIVING SCHOOL.

"You ready?" he asks.

Kanan opens the door and explains how to get into the driver's seat. Remember, there's a

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A BEAUTIFUL ASPECT OF FILM IS THE WAY YOUR IMAGINATION FILLS IN THE GAP BETWEEN REALITY AND THE ON-SCREEN FANTASY.

The stunt community is familial and close-knit. Which makes sense, given that lives are constantly on the line.

roll cage to contend with, including a bar that runs horizontally just inside the door. I throw one leg over the thick steel, ducking my head so that it clears the top of the window frame. Using my left hand to hold on to another metal bar, this one wrapped in zip-tied pool-noodle foam and running on the underside of the roof, I not-so-deftly lower myself into the fixed bucket seat. As I swing my other leg—still dangling out of the window—into the car, Kanan warns me to do it slowly. People tend to whack the turn signal at this stage, which is a delicate piece that can easily break off.

The five-point safety harness, set up in both passenger and driver seats, is no joke. Once I'm strapped and buckled in, my position is utterly fixed. The rest of the Nova's interior is similarly unforgiving—everything unnecessary has been stripped out, including the dashboard and rear seat. In place of the headliner is a drilled steel panel designed to reinforce the roof structure; vehicle coordinators were concerned that the huge upside-down slide might wear through the factory sheetmetal.

Mounted above the hub for the quick-release steering wheel are three gauges, which Kanan says were probably bought off the shelf at the local auto parts store. In the middle is the largest readout, the speedometer, flanked by oil pressure and water temperature gauges. The tachometer hangs from a metal bracket on the upper corner of the windshield. A loose tangle of wires curls, exposed, underneath the steering column.

Kanan passes the steering wheel to me through the open window. I slide it onto the hub and carefully but firmly smack it with the fleshy base of my palm. The satisfying click tells me it's secured, but I pull on it to make sure. Quiet on set. Roll sound. Roll camera. Frame. Action!

I twist the key and the boisterous 383 V-8 fires up, bristling at first but soon settling down into a steady idle. Even amid that din, the interior's rumbles and rattles are discernible. (You don't really appreciate what sound deadening does until you spend time in a car that doesn't have any.) The clangorous cabin was in a lot of ways a feature, not a bug. Tarantino wanted everything real for *Death Proof*, not merely the driving. That meant real noises from the cockpit, real engine note, real click from the automatic gear lever sliding from park to drive.

The metal B&M shift handle is sizzling to the touch from sitting out in the California

THE SKULL GRAPHIC AND THE ANGRY DUCK ORNAMENT POINT THE WAY LIKE THEY'RE ON THE PROW OF A DEVIL-MAY-CARE PIRATE SHIP.

sun. I shift the GM four-speed automatic with an overdrive into D and the Nova crawls along, seemingly content. Poking my head out the window, I ask Buddy Joe about the gearbox. "I always preferred, as a stuntperson, an automatic—you are much more free to make a car do things," he explains before twice tapping the Chevy's roof.

On an open stretch of road, I summon a healthy dose of throttle. The Nova roasts its tires without effort through first and second gear. I glance at the rearview mirror to admire the wisps of smoke in my wake. Steering is vague and imprecise on-center, but after a few degrees of input, the truck-spec power assist kicks in and the front end starts catching up with your hands. From there, it's easy, finger-light adjustment, and at speed, it tracks spear straight. Braking requires a firm stomp before the drums bite down, so I learn to keep a healthy distance to the car in front of me.

The engine delivers reliable grunt and burbles sweetly from its dual Flowmaster exhaust, but a small-block Chevy like this is relatively standard fare in the world of modified V-8s; the secret sauce here is how little the Nova weighs. Stock Novas weighed a hair over 3000 pounds and packed easily tunable engines, which is a big reason why V-8 versions were such popular street racers. (Their anodyne styling was another; in 1969, *Hot Rod* magazine lauded the Nova SS 396's "total lack of identification" and declared "the sleeper car era has returned.") With the naked interior and the gas tank gone

Left: If the Nova was parked anywhere in Los Angeles, Kanan would carry the steering wheel around in his backpack, rather than lock the doors.

Left: Inner door panels were one of the only additions the Hookers made since the Nova's days on set. Upper right: On-command burnout capability is table stakes for a Hollywood stunt car.

in favor of a 10-gallon fuel cell, the *Death Proof* Nova clocks in closer to 2800 pounds.

That lack of mass on the rear axle makes the Nova tricky to drive on winding roads. The suspension is unmodified aside from sweet-looking rear traction bars (an old drag racer piece of kit), which means plenty of typical 1970s weight transfer that can sneak up on you if, say, the transmission shifts at the wrong time. Kanan, sitting shotgun, advises me not to overload the front tires and to left-foot brake into corners rather than suddenly lifting off the gas, which can induce an unexpected slide with steering applied.

Despite all that, this is a friendly machine—nothing like its on-screen persona. I understand why Buddy Joe warmed to it on set. As I gaze out over the hood, the skull graphic and the angry duck ornament point the way like they're on the prow of a devil-may-care pirate ship.

For a minute, I feel like a badass. That is, until I imagine what it would be like to intentionally launch this car into the air, at 60-plus mph, and flip several times before landing upside-down. The spectacle on screen is extraordinary, but being this close to it makes Buddy Joe seem superhuman. Later, someone asks him if stuntpeople have a death wish. He doesn't hesitate to respond.

"People ask me that, but no, no, I have a life wish. A survival wish. At no point in my career did I ever do anything, ever, that I thought would kill me. It was all about preparation."

His wife, Gayle, echoes that perspective. "Everybody is working together for a production, and if there's one weak link, just one, it's disastrous. Weeks and weeks of planning happen in anticipation of just a few seconds of action. And despite sensing the risks, stuntpeople and coordinators manage to maintain an element of levity."

KANAN AND I switch seats. He takes me to a particular section of country road, situated right at the high point of a large field and at the base of some hillsides. I recognize it as the location of *Death Proof*'s final chase sequence. At high speed, a '69 Charger and the '70 Challenger smash into each other repeatedly on

these roads, the latter with stuntwoman Zoë Bell (playing herself in the film) frequently strapped to the hood of the car.

Buddy Joe stands on the shoulder, red-tailed hawks soaring overhead, and stares off into the distance toward a dirt road running down the hillside. He doesn't break concentration. I can tell that a memory is playing in his mind's eye.

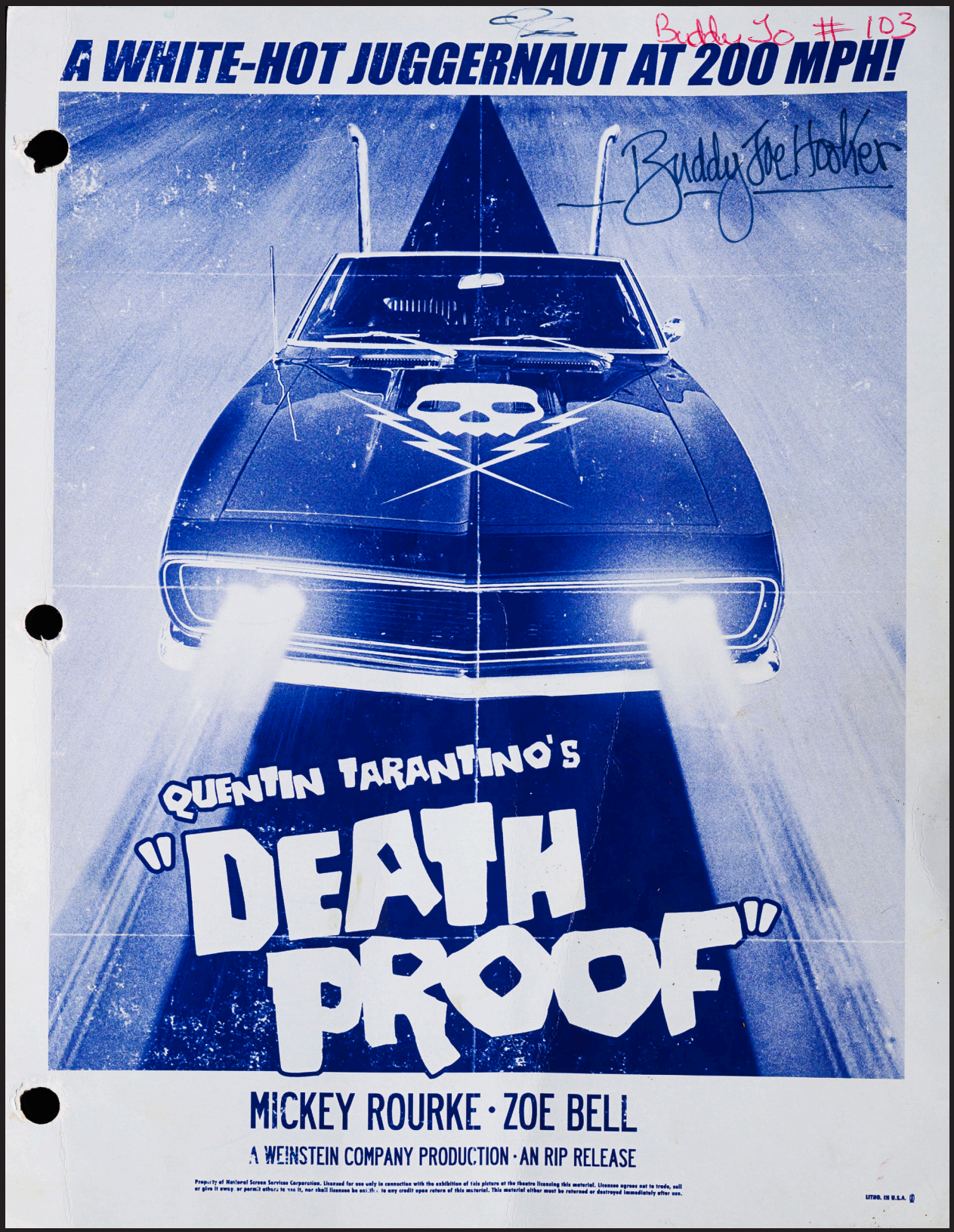
"That whole chase was, for me, among the more nerve-wracking parts of the movie," he says. "I was in the black Charger, so I had a lot of steel around me. My stress of working with what we were doing was considerably less than stunt driver Tracy Keehn-Dashnaw's, who had Zoë lying on the hood of the Challenger to consider. Zoë's only safety was a cable, which was fine, but there were parts of the movie where Quentin wanted me to come alongside of them and whack them. These are old cars! [Stunt/prep/vehicles department] did the best they could with them, but you don't know when an axle is going to break, or a wheel. We even had a couple of those, but it didn't cause any problems other than some shooting time."

Buddy Joe was somewhat reluctant to perform take after take of these rear-end rams and sidelong smashes, but Tarantino kept asking. "I just didn't have it in me to hit that car as hard as he wanted because if something would have happened and I buckled a front wheel on that, the car would flip."

Every time Buddy Joe would slam into the Challenger, an effects guy lying in the back seat of the car would belay out the cable attached to Bell's harness via pulleys routed through the hood, amplifying the appearance that she was being flung around. "She could swivel around and make her legs flail right after I hit her. She did an incredible acting job making it look like I hit her way harder than I did. And she never said a word, unless it was something like 'Can you f***ing go and hit us any harder than that? I didn't even feel it!'"

He also gives full credit to Keehn-Dashnaw, his counterpart behind the wheel. "She's one of the better drivers I've ever worked with. We gauged everything on when Quentin would say, 'Hey, can you guys go faster? I need you to do it faster and hit harder.' We kind of had a mindset where I knew exactly what she was going to do before she did it, and she knew exactly what I was going to do."

Opposite: A very early piece of *Death Proof* concept art, featuring Mickey Rourke and a Camaro. Familiar flavor, different casting.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THE NOVA IS A TREASURED FAMILY CAR, ONE THEY CAN'T THINK ABOUT EVER SELLING.

For the climactic final crash, Buddy Joe in the Charger had to come down the lower road at a steady speed so that, when the Challenger came barreling down the ridge, Keehn-Dashnaw could time the violent crash to happen at a precise location in view of the camera car.

"We were going down this way pretty fast, and the road was kind of wet right where I hit her," Buddy Joe recounts, matter-of-factly, the way you might describe what you did last weekend. "We both spun out, and that wasn't supposed to happen. But Quentin loved it and said, 'OK, let's set the cameras for that instead and go back and do that again.' So now we've got to re-create this maneuver that was initially an accident."

They got it done, and the scene is absolutely thrilling.

Ribbing each other all while rolling with the punches and remaining professional—that comes with the territory in stunts. Stunt drivers don't get the glory; they're not household names. They don't show up on Jimmy Fallon and laugh at his jokes for YouTube clips. They're sleepers, and they get the call when CGI won't cut it.

Buddy Joe, Kanan, and Gayle are standing by the Nova on the side of the road, laughing, teasing, reminiscing. For me, the car is a celebrity, the villain's trademark tool in the louche, edgy kind of movie you watch with your friends when you're 16. For them, the Nova is grounded in the real—a treasured family car, one they can't think about ever selling. Kanan and Gayle were guests on set during the *Death Proof* shoot, and the experience is fixed in their memories. "The car started representing how the boys got to see so much of what their dad did," Gayle tells me. "Later, for a school project, they made a movie where the Nova is their protector, watching out for them."

Since driving the Nova, I've rewatched *Death Proof*. In the parlance of our times, it hits different now. Some of the mystery is gone, the illusion broken. My sense of wonder remains, though—wonder at the stunt drivers, at all the fascinating little nuances of the car and details about the movie I now possess. There's less for me to imagine, sure. But I can't imagine that the badass *Death Proof* Nova could have found a more worthy home than with the Hookers. *H*

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Above: Buddy Joe, Gayle, and Kanan. The Hookers are bonded with the car they call "Death Proof." Below: Tarantino flips the bird.

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Photo by Sunset Boulevard/Corbis via Getty Images

DREAM, DREAM, DREAM.

Francis Ford Coppola's *Tucker* was almost as difficult to create as the actual cars.

Words by **Joe Ligo**

ALL GEARHEADS LOVE a good car movie. The genre has seemingly endless options, from heists to road trips to racing stories. There are also automotive biographies, profiling the lives of people like Enzo Ferrari, Ferruccio Lamborghini, and Henry Ford. One of the best in this category is the 1988 film *Tucker: The Man and His Dream*.

Directed by Francis Ford Coppola (*The Godfather* trilogy, *Apocalypse Now*), the film chronicles Preston Tucker's struggle to launch a car company in the wake of World War II, the forces against him, and the fraud accusations that would ultimately doom his efforts.

Preston Tucker dreamed of building an innovative car centered on passenger safety, a revolutionary idea at the time. His original proposal included a padded interior dash, a

The film has developed a cult following over the years, not just from gearheads but from movie aficionados in general.

windshield made of shatterproof glass, and front fenders that turned with the steering wheel. Some features were too complicated to implement; others were modified, like the turning fenders, which were changed to a single center headlight that turned with the wheel.

As many know, designing and building a car from scratch is an extremely difficult endeavor, and the Tucker Corporation sadly did not survive in the brutal postwar car market. However, the exact reasons why it failed depend on whom you ask. Some blame a cabal of Detroit's Big Three, Michigan Senator Homer Ferguson, and the Securities and Exchange Commission colluding to protect entrenched automakers. Others cite the questionable practices Tucker used to raise capital, such as selling radios and luggage sets to customers to reserve cars before they were built.

Whatever the cause, Tucker was charged with fraud, which essentially shut down operations. Tucker and his compatriots were ultimately cleared of all charges, but the debacle doomed a company that was already on the ropes. But while the curious sedan remained well-known within automotive circles, the public quickly forgot it.

One person who didn't forget was Francis Ford Coppola. His father, Carmine, had been entranced by the Tucker when it was announced back in 1947. Francis and Carmine even got to see the first prototype as Preston Tucker toured the country raising funds. Francis explained later: "It appeared to me like a rocket ship, so different from the other cars. And maybe that instilled in me the desire to understand it better, so ultimately, I made a movie."

But the journey from that childhood experience until his film's debut in 1988 was long and complicated, filled with false starts and crushed dreams, much like Preston Tucker's life. In that context, *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* feels like more than a simple automotive biography; it's an autobiography, too.

Following the success of *The Godfather* in 1972, Coppola bought a Tucker in 1973. Fueled by his childhood interest in the company, he met with Preston Tucker's surviving family in 1976 to buy the rights to the story, intending to turn it into a movie musical.

Much like Tucker, however, Coppola soon found his plans were derailed by financial problems. His 1979 Vietnam War epic, *Apocalypse Now*, went massively overbudget but redeemed itself with an incredible box-office performance, allowing him to celebrate by buying himself a second Tucker.

However, his next film—an experimental musical called *One From the Heart* (1982)—was truly a massive bomb, bankrupting Coppola's Zoetrope Studios and forcing him to take jobs directing other films to pay off his debts.

The dream of a Tucker movie seemed long gone, until Coppola's son Gio insisted they drive one of the cars in a local Fourth of July parade, reigniting his father's passion for the Tucker story. From there, Coppola approached friend and fellow Tucker owner George Lucas, who agreed to finance and produce the film, but convinced Coppola to make it a more conventional biopic instead of a musical.

Top: 22 separate Tuckers were used for filming. Middle: Jeff Bridges as Tucker and Christian Slater as his son, Preston Jr. Bottom: Real Tuckers in the not-so-realistic factory.

Photos courtesy of Lucasfilm Ltd.

LANSING
SPEEDWAY

Much like Tucker, however, **Coppola's plans were soon destroyed** by financial problems.

AS PREPRODUCTION BEGAN, however, tragedy struck in 1986 when Gio was killed in a boating accident. Adding to the tragedy, Gio had shown great promise of following in his father's footsteps, having worked with him on several films. Francis called him "My best friend and collaborator; he was perfect."

While still grieving his son, Coppola began working with Lucas on the Tucker project. Both the Tucker Automobile Club of America and the Tucker family were heavily involved, with Preston Tucker's surviving family contributing interviews, family photos, and home movies to the production.

Coppola had originally wanted Marlon Brando to play Preston Tucker and later considered Jack Nicholson and Burt Reynolds. By the time production started, however, he instead cast Jeff Bridges. Joan Allen was cast as Tucker's wife, Vera, and a young Christian Slater was cast as the oldest son, Preston Jr.

As far as factual accuracy, Coppola admitted to taking dramatic license, which is necessary with almost any adaptation of a true story. Multiple people were condensed into single characters, timelines were compressed, and antagonists were exaggerated (like Homer Ferguson) or full-on fabricated (like Tucker Corporation chairman Robert Bennington) to give the story stronger villains. The overall changes are too numerous to list, although the Tucker Automobile Club of America has an excellent summary on its website.

True car nuts will see that the "assembly line" is not super realistic either, as it's little more than an elevated wood track where

A widely distributed publicity shot (opposite) with Preston Tucker was faithfully re-created in the movie with Jeff Bridges (above).

Photo by Paramount Pictures via Getty Images; Photo courtesy of TACA

finished Tuckers are sitting, surrounded by pallets of unpainted body panels. There are no stamping presses, welders, paint booths, or other elements you'd expect to see in a car factory, which no doubt would have cost a lot of time and money to replicate. Also, with outdoor scenes filmed in California, the geography doesn't always do a convincing stand-in for Preston Tucker's home state of Michigan.

Quibbles aside, the combination of the music, sets, and costumes immerses the viewer in the story. Unlike some period films, there are very few instances where the present-day gaffes like a suspiciously modern haircut or a too-recent piece of slang slip through. And compared with modern films, where even the simplest scenes are shot on green screen with computer animation added later, it's refreshing to watch something real. The factory is real (at least the building), the cars are real, the tools and crowds and racetrack were real, too. Seeing these scenes and knowing they were done in-camera and not just in computer software makes the film feel authentic.

The cinematography is quite good as well, using both innovative techniques and updating some old Hollywood tricks. For instance, during Preston Tucker's first visit to the Dodge Chicago Plant, Jeff Bridges walks straight from his dining room into the factory in a single moving shot. Coppola and his cinematographer, Vittorio Storaro, pull off several clever transitions like this throughout the film, which add to the jazzy, high-energy feel of Preston Tucker being a man always on the move.

Another beautiful touch is the incorporation of various murals throughout the film, showcasing grand American industrial scenes like railroads and factories. Sometimes, however, the effect is a little too on-the-nose, such as during a court recess when Preston Tucker paces in front of a mural of Nikola Tesla, another "ahead-of-his-time" inventor betrayed by the establishment.

That theme of man versus establishment runs throughout the movie, and not only because it is a convenient story archetype for Coppola and Lucas. As part of the New Hollywood movement after the collapse of the old studio system in the '60s and '70s, young directors like Coppola and Lucas were always butting heads with executives who wanted to profit

Following the success of *The Godfather* in 1972, **Coppola bought a Tucker** in 1973.

from their art but hated ceding creative control to people they didn't understand. Tucker's story became a vehicle for that personal frustration, as Coppola said in the DVD commentary during a boardroom argument:

"All my life, from the time I started trying to do things... there's always those guys at the end of the table, whether they were faculty or studio heads. They just were always on you, and to no end, no reason really. It was just more about who gets to control things. It was nothing about who has the better idea, or who could do something more beautiful. And they're good at working together and making partnerships, so they always seemed to have the power."

It's here that Coppola probably takes the most dramatic license, implying that Senator Homer Ferguson and Detroit's Big Three conspired to shut down Tucker's innovative new car. It's a bold assertion, but it's likely exaggerated. True, Ferguson was no fan of Tucker and generally did everything he could to protect Michigan's auto industry, but the evidence of outright collusion is thin. Realistically, the failure of the Tucker Corporation was due more to Preston Tucker's oversized ambitions and the Big Three's massive economies of scale, as opposed to a deliberate conspiracy.

What Coppola does get right, however, is Detroit's resistance to change. During Preston Tucker's final monologue in the courtroom—a scene completely fabricated for the movie—he soliloquizes about the legacy of American ingenuity and the danger of crushing new ideas, going so far as to suggest that if established businesses continue to stifle innovation, "One day, we're going to find ourselves at the bottom of the heap instead of king of the hill, having no

George Lucas (left) and Francis Ford Coppola shared a love for Tucker: the car, the man, the legend.

Photo by Sunset Boulevard/Corbis via Getty Images

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Francis Ford Coppola was entranced by the Tucker since he was a child. Here he poses with his personal Tucker 48, #1037, at his California home in 1990.

idea of how we got there, buying our radios and our cars from our former enemies."

Like some of the other moments, it's a little too obvious. The thought would have seemed preposterous in the 1940s—even to Preston Tucker—and it feels like the film's creators added it more as a "told you so" moment for their 1980s audience. Given that they were on the tail end of Detroit's Malaise Era, they certainly could relate. Looking at Detroit's current retreat and China's ascendance to the top of the world's EV market, it's a message that continues to ring true today.

Despite its poor box-office performance, most critics liked the film, praising the lavish period details, Bridges' performance, and Coppola's ability to make a straightforward story that was less dark than his previous works. Famous film critic Roger Ebert was somewhat harsher, criticizing Coppola for making Preston Tucker too optimistic, too naive, and too shallow, choosing to blame his failure on outside forces rather than examining the man's shortcomings. That's valid, but the film succeeds without that deeper introspection.

Bridges does a spectacular job of capturing the irrepressible optimism of an inventor riding high on his own idea. Through every obstacle, every betrayal, and every delay, he bounces back with renewed conviction that he has to build his car. He is driven to near madness, sure; in one scene, Bridges punched a car body so hard that he broke his hand, but he can never, ever be depressed.

Surrounded by his ever-loyal friends and family, Tucker is impervious to what the world throws at him—and that is the true message of the film. Coppola says it multiple times during the DVD commentary that the family is the key: "This movie has everything I like. It has a family, it has kids, it has music, it has happiness... it has the gadget, the garage, the cars. The family eating together..."

At the end of the film, after losing his factory and his company, Preston Tucker is surrounded once more by friends and family. They drive away from the courthouse in a parade of

Tuckers—which really did happen—and the text on-screen explains how Tucker's innovative ideas eventually were adopted by modern cars, proving he was right all along. As closing music swells to a crescendo, the screen fades to black, and it says, "For Gio, who loved cars."

Although George Lucas had put up the initial money to make *Tucker*, after filming finished in July 1987, he convinced Paramount to pick up most of the tab and distribute the film. It is possible that Paramount's upcoming distribution of Lucas and Steven Spielberg's blockbuster *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, plus the studio's courting of Coppola for a third *Godfather* installment, helped grease the skids for *Tucker*. However, executives did demand that the title be punched up to include "The Man and His Dream" in it—another example of the studio meddling that irritated the filmmakers so much.

The film debuted on August 12, 1988, but failed to crack the top 10 pictures in either that month or September, lagging movies like *Cocktail*, *Die Hard*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, and *Coming to America*. Ultimately, it took in a mere $19.65 million, failing to earn back its original budget and racking up another disappointment for Coppola.

However, the film did significantly increase the value of the surviving cars. Prices were already in the five-figure range by the mid-'80s and jumped even higher after Coppola brought this unique story to the masses. He mentions in the DVD commentary, recorded in 2000, that the cars were then selling for $500,000. Today prices have gone as high as $2.9 million. Coppola even parted with one of his own Tuckers recently, which sold for $1.55 million and included a tour of his vineyard plus a complimentary wine tasting.

Despite its lukewarm reception, the film has developed a cult following over the years, not just from gearheads but from movie aficionados in general. Demand was high enough that a remastered 4K Blu-ray was released a few years back, which looks absolutely gorgeous.

Tucker: The Man and His Dream will never reach the same heights as *The Godfather* or many of Coppola's other movies, but like the car itself, it's a miracle the film was even made at all. And like the cars, the world is a better, more interesting place because of it. *H* editor@hagerty.com

The movie, which was praised for its set and costume design, also raised the profile of the 47 surviving Tucker automobiles.

Photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures

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CAR CINEMATOGRAPHY 101

Almost everyone has the tools to make great car movies, but few people really know how to use them.

THE LEGENDARY chase scene in *Bullitt* was filmed using German newsreel cameras that weighed approximately 30 pounds and shot 24 frames per second. If you happen to be reading this on an iPhone made in the past decade or an equivalent Android, you are holding a half-pound camera capable of shooting at 60 frames per second. So if you want to take and share compelling videos of your cars, you already have the gear—you just have to know how to use it. Let **Isaac Shapiro**, whose full-time job is to create videos for Hagerty's social media channels, be your guide.

CLICK FOR TUTORIAL!

GET SET UP LIKE A PRO

Your phone's default settings compromise quality for space and control for ease of use. Let's change that.

TAKE THE COMPROMISES OUT OF YOUR CAMERA

"The iPhone does a lot of things for you that it thinks are correct when in reality it's making it worse," Shapiro says. The phone's default settings strike a compromise between quality, ease of use, and preserving hard drive space—which are fine for recording your grandkids opening a birthday present but fall short of what's needed for high-level car cinematography.

Shapiro's specific recommendations quickly get into the technical weeds (see the video above for step-by-step instructions), but they have three simple goals: Increase the quality of the recording, give you more control, and make the video look more "natural" and less, well, like it was shot on a phone.

Here's what Shapiro adjusts (again, follow along with the video above to do it yourself).

ASPECT RATIO

The proportions of the video or, even more simply, how you hold your phone. Think about where you intend for your video to be watched—probably on your friends' and family's phones, which are usually held vertically, not on your 80-inch flat-screen television (horizontal).

FORMATS

How you want the video saved. The phone defaults to a space-saving format. Setting it to "most compatible" allows for a larger, but higher-quality, file.

RECORD VIDEO

Here you're setting resolution and frame rate. In simpler terms, how much detail do you want to record? Shapiro goes for 4K (2160x3840) resolution, 60 frames per second—which is equivalent to an ultra-high-resolution Blu-ray disc. Note: This will take up considerable space on your phone.

AUTO ADJUSTMENTS

Shut off several "auto" features, including HDR and Auto FPS.

MACRO CONTROL

Many phones have a second "macro" lens for capturing objects up close. This setting lets you, rather than the phone, decide when to use it.

GRID & LEVEL

Fills your screen with a grid and level, which can help you make sure cars are aligned properly.

EXPOSURE -0.3 TO -0.7

The iPhone camera's default exposure is very bright, which can improperly render darker car colors and generally make things look artificial. Shapiro compensates by telling the phone to "underexpose."

Photo by Nejc Soklič

IT'S NOT "CLUTTER"

Rather than zooming in past obstructions, use them to frame your shot. It subtly guides the viewer's focus toward the subject and creates a more appealing shot.

CLICK TO WATCH!

DON'T JUST STAND THERE!

Now the camera is set up correctly, but you need to know where and how to point it. Subtle tweaks in how you frame a shot can dramatically improve it. Hagerty's social channels have developed a visual language all their own, yet Shapiro's advice for capturing footage essentially stresses cinematography fundamentals. See if you can identify some of his recommended shots (exemplified in the video on this page) in your favorite movies. The overall goal, he says, is movement. "Dynamic shots are king. Don't just stand there and swivel the camera."

PARALLAX

Foreground and background are moving at different speeds. Adds visual interest.

DOLLY

Replicates a wheeled platform moving toward or away from the subject.

TILT

Angling the camera creatively can add depth to your scene.

MATCH

Two shots that look similar save for one detail.

REVEAL

Open with your camera purposely blocked by something—a wall, another car, a tree, etc.—and then slowly show your subject.

THROUGH

Shoot through another object (e.g., a detail of another car) onto your subject.

Many of these shots run against what we think of as "clean" composition. The people and stuff standing between you and the subject aren't clutter—they're what makes the video interesting. "Clean shots are boring," Shapiro says.

THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

Any director can tell you that movies are really made in the editing room. This is where you trim out boring footage, crop to focus on key details, and stitch together multiple videos into one movie. It's also where you can compress the video (i.e., pare down the resolution and/or frame rate) so that it can be easily shared. Now you may be thinking, "Why did I go through the trouble of recording

Photo and video by Isaac Shapiro

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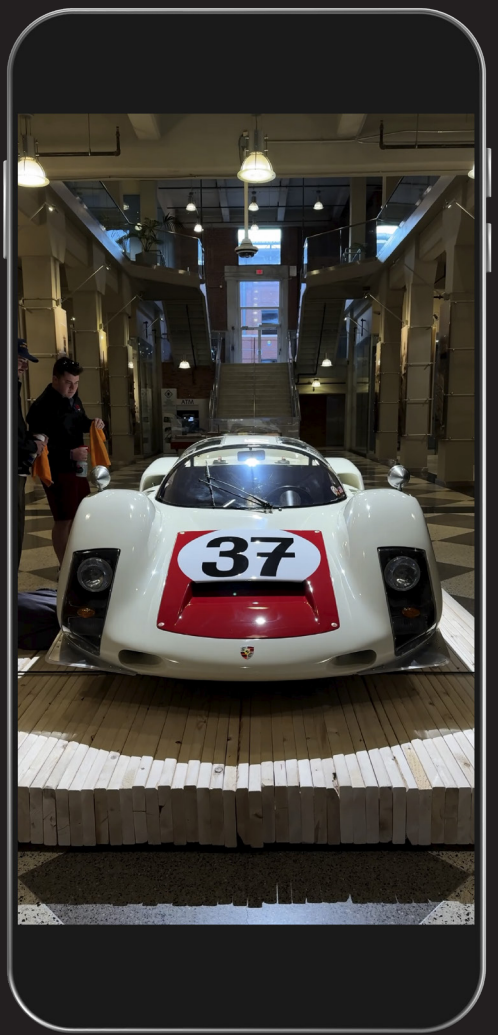

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

Shapiro's video of a 1966 Porsche 906 at a shop in North Carolina exemplifies the importance of movement—the car is still but he never is.

CLICK TO WATCH!

a high-quality video only to shrink it back down?" The answer, again, comes down to control: Starting with a big, rich video allows you to choose what to remove.

Most editing can be done on the phone. Two popular applications are CapCut and Edits, respectively associated with TikTok and Instagram. They're useful even if you're not planning to post on those platforms (of course they both have ways of encouraging you to do just that).

EXTRAS

Your phone alone and a steady hand will serve you well. But we all love gadgets. The most useful is a gimbal, which will stabilize your shot. Wireless microphones can help improve audio quality, particularly if you want certain sounds and voices to be heard above the din (e.g., if you'd like to interview someone at a racetrack). Shapiro recommends these, but there are plenty of options out there.

OSMO MOBILE 7P

A simple gimbal and tripod for your phone that retails for about $100.

DJI MIC 2

Small wireless microphones that easily clip on people. About $200 with charging case.

MAKE IT YOURS

The most powerful piece of equipment on you is neither your phone nor whatever gizmo you've attached to it—it's what's between your ears. What are you trying to communicate? "Envision the final product while you're shooting," Shapiro advises. He acknowledges doing that isn't easy. Start by becoming a student of the videos that attract you. "Is the video interesting? Why are you watching it? Apply that to your own stuff," he says. ishapiro@hagerty.com

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How much is movie magic worth?

Success at the box office can certainly carry over to the auction block.

Words by
Andrew Newton

PUTTING VALUE ON fame is ultimately subjective, but it can be measured. For instance, whether Harrison Ford is a better actor than Brad Pitt is a matter of opinion, but there's no disputing the fact that films Ford has headlined have grossed more over the course of his career ($4.87 billion vs $2.68 billion, per IMDB).

The same applies to vehicular celebrities. We editors have already named our favorites in this issue, but our Valuation team looked at the subject through their own unique lens: They exhaustively tracked down sale prices of cars with on-screen appearances in film, then compared it to the value of a standard version of that car at the time of the sale.

Below are the films that have made the biggest difference, as compared to what a similar but non-famous example would have sold for.

SOLD FOR

$3,740,000

Bullitt 1968

IF THERE'S A single car chase scene that's more famous than all the others, it's the one with Frank Bullitt (Steve McQueen) wheeling and hill-hopping a 1968 Highland Green Mustang GT fastback around San Francisco, in hot pursuit of the shotgun-wielding bad guys in their black Dodge Charger. After filming, the hero car (aka the one used mostly for beauty shots, not the one banged up in all the stunts) wound up in private ownership. In 1974, a New Jersey man named Robert Kiernan answered an ad in the back of *Road & Track* and bought the movie Mustang for $6000. (McQueen himself tried to buy "his" car back from Kiernan, to no avail.) Kiernan's wife even used the car to commute to work. When the clutch went out in 1980, the family parked it.

It stayed with them for the next three decades, still in scruffy, unrestored condition. After Hagerty broke the story of the car's existence in 2018, it went on a bit of a PR tour with Kiernan's son Sean before crossing the block at Mecum's Kissimmee mega-auction in 2020. Its $3.74M final price made it the most valuable Mustang ever sold at auction. At the time, a Mustang in the same configuration and in #4 (fair) condition was worth a little over 40 grand.

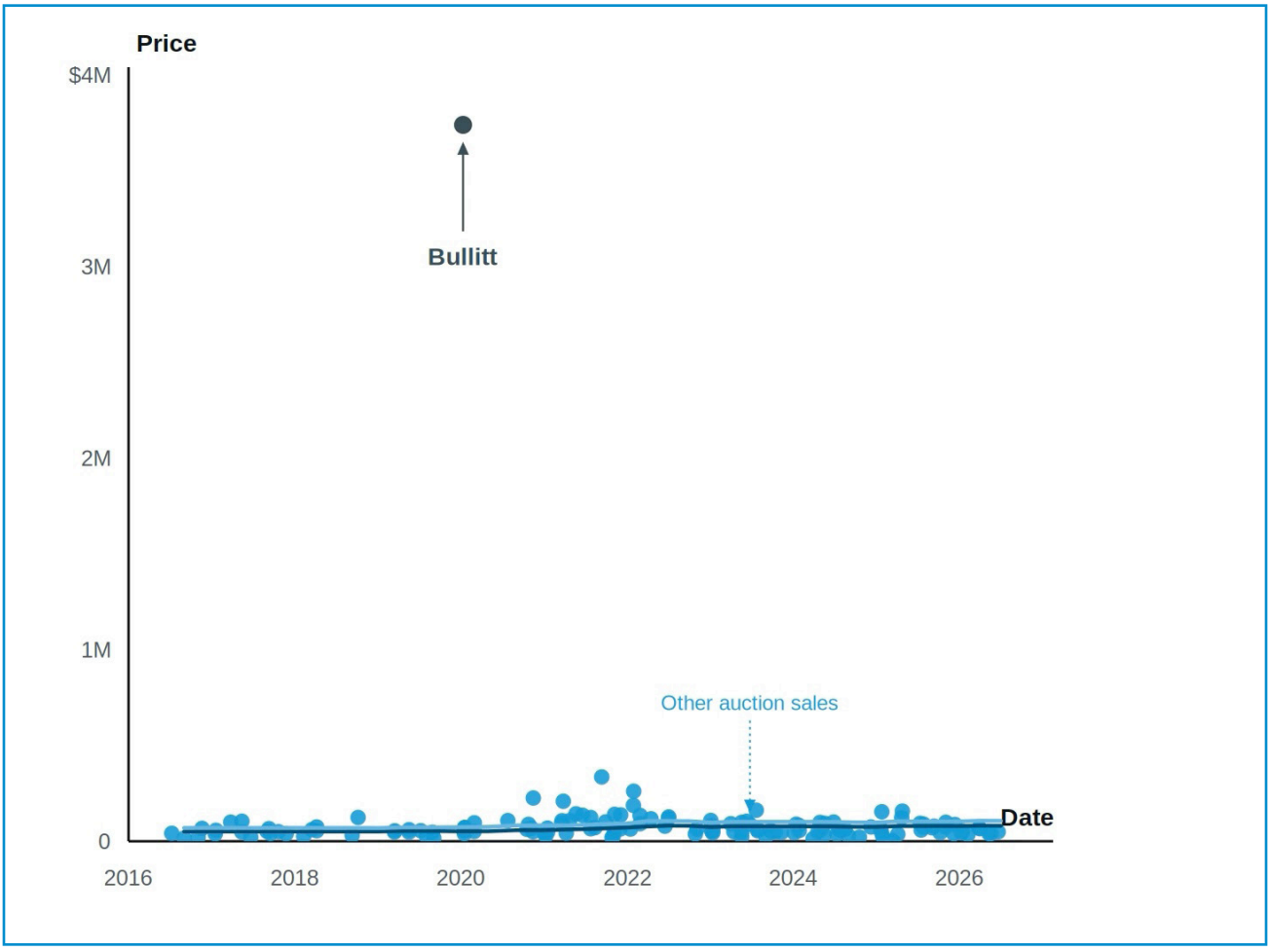
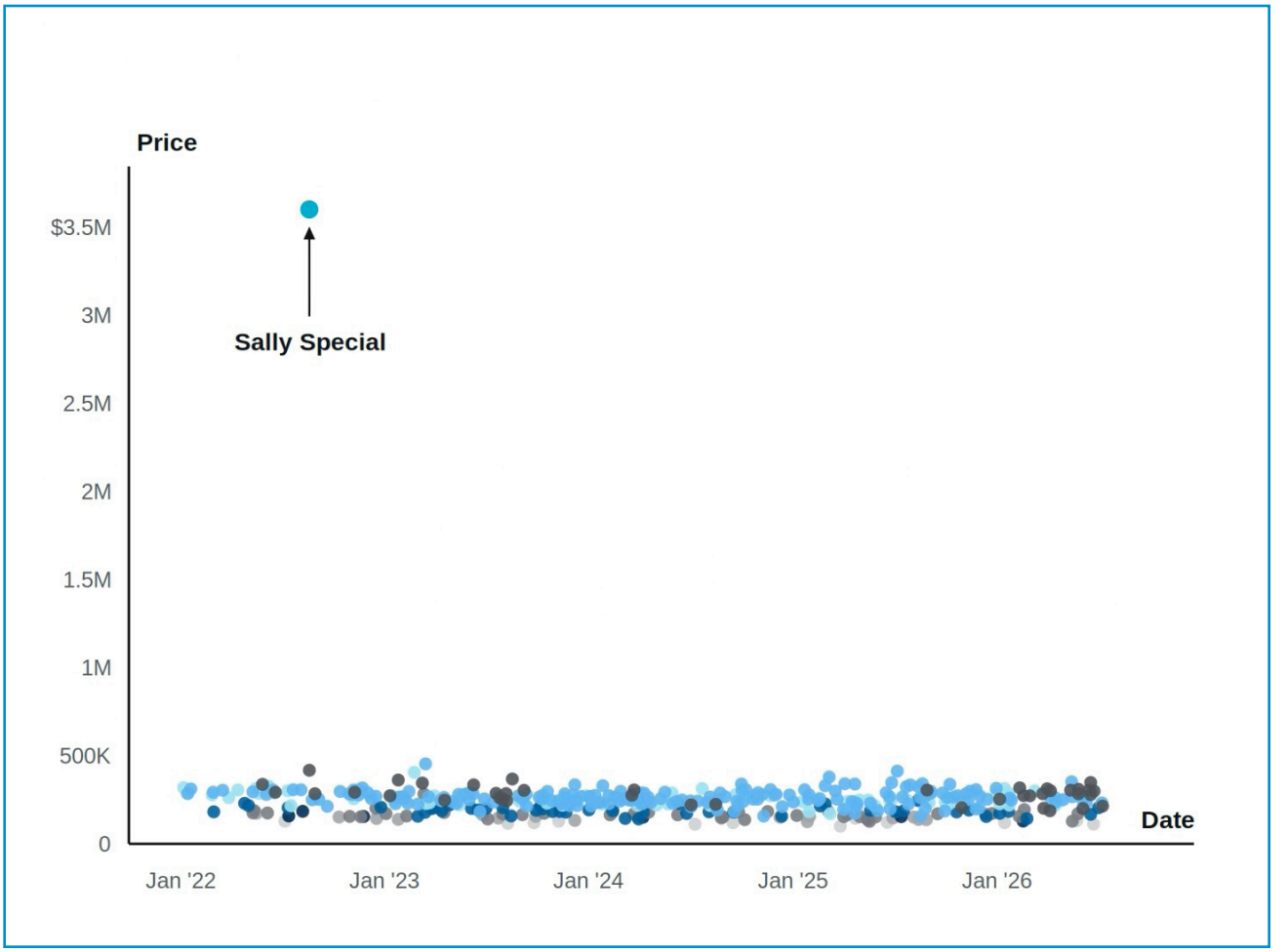


Photo courtesy of Hagerty Drivers Foundation



SOLD FOR

$3,600,000

Cars 2006

THERE ARE A couple of caveats for this entry. First, the obvious: Sally Carrera wasn't a real car. Nor was Lightning McQueen, Doc Hudson, or any of the other computer-generated, anthropomorphized automobiles in Pixar's wildly successful kids' flick. What the car in question is instead is a collaboration between Pixar, Style Porsche, Porsche's Sonderwunsch team, and Porsche Cars North America that brings the movie character into the physical world as a real-life 911. Based on a contemporary Carrera GTS, it's dripping in special touches, including the paint and interior colors, modifications to the body, special wheels, and special headlights.

The other caveat with the so-called Sally Special is that this was a charity auction, with proceeds going to organizations including Girls Inc. and the UN Refugee Agency. The charity element, along with the fact that this is a special-build 911 with unique specs, contributed plenty to the $3.6M final price when the Sally Special sold at RM Sotheby's Monterey auction in 2022. But the movie connection was a factor, too. For reference, the MSRP for a 911 Carrera GTS in 2022 was less than $140,000.

Photo courtesy of RM Sotheby's

SOLD FOR

$1,980,000

Risky Business 1983

THE PRODUCTION TEAM for this racy coming-of-age comedy enlisted multiple Platinum Metallic (brown) Porsche 928s to use for filming. This one, though, got the most screen time, and it isn't the one that rolled down a hill into Lake Michigan. It's also reportedly the car in which Tom Cruise, starring in the breakout role of his career, learned to drive a stick shift.

Aside from the history, it's a fairly standard if very clean example of Porsche's famous front-engine GT, complete with phone dial wheels and a Cork leather interior. In September 2021, when it crossed the block at a Barrett-Jackson auction in Houston, a '79 928 in #1 (concours, or best in the world) condition was an $80,000 car in our price guide. Thanks to the movie connection, it brought $1,980,000.

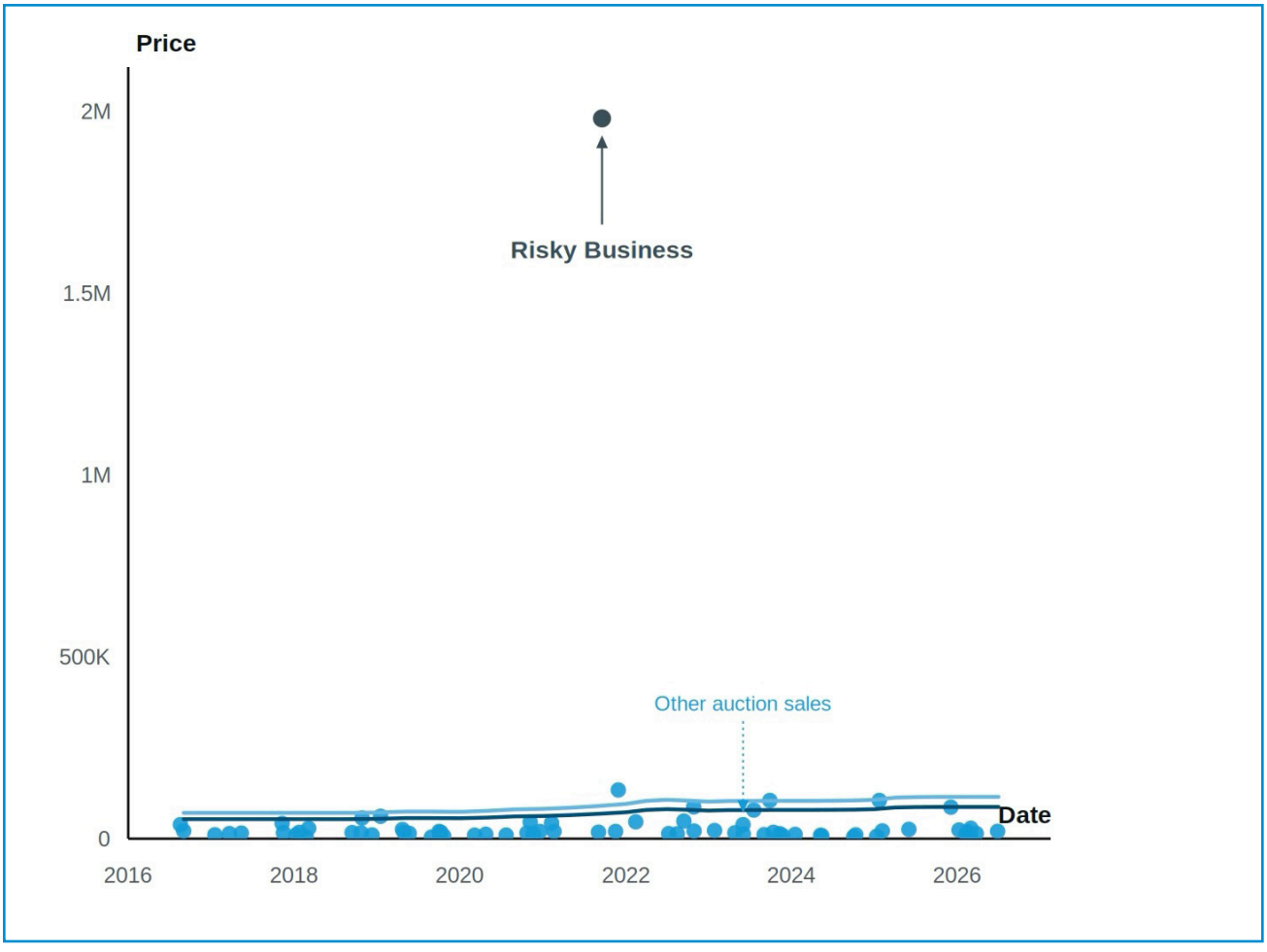
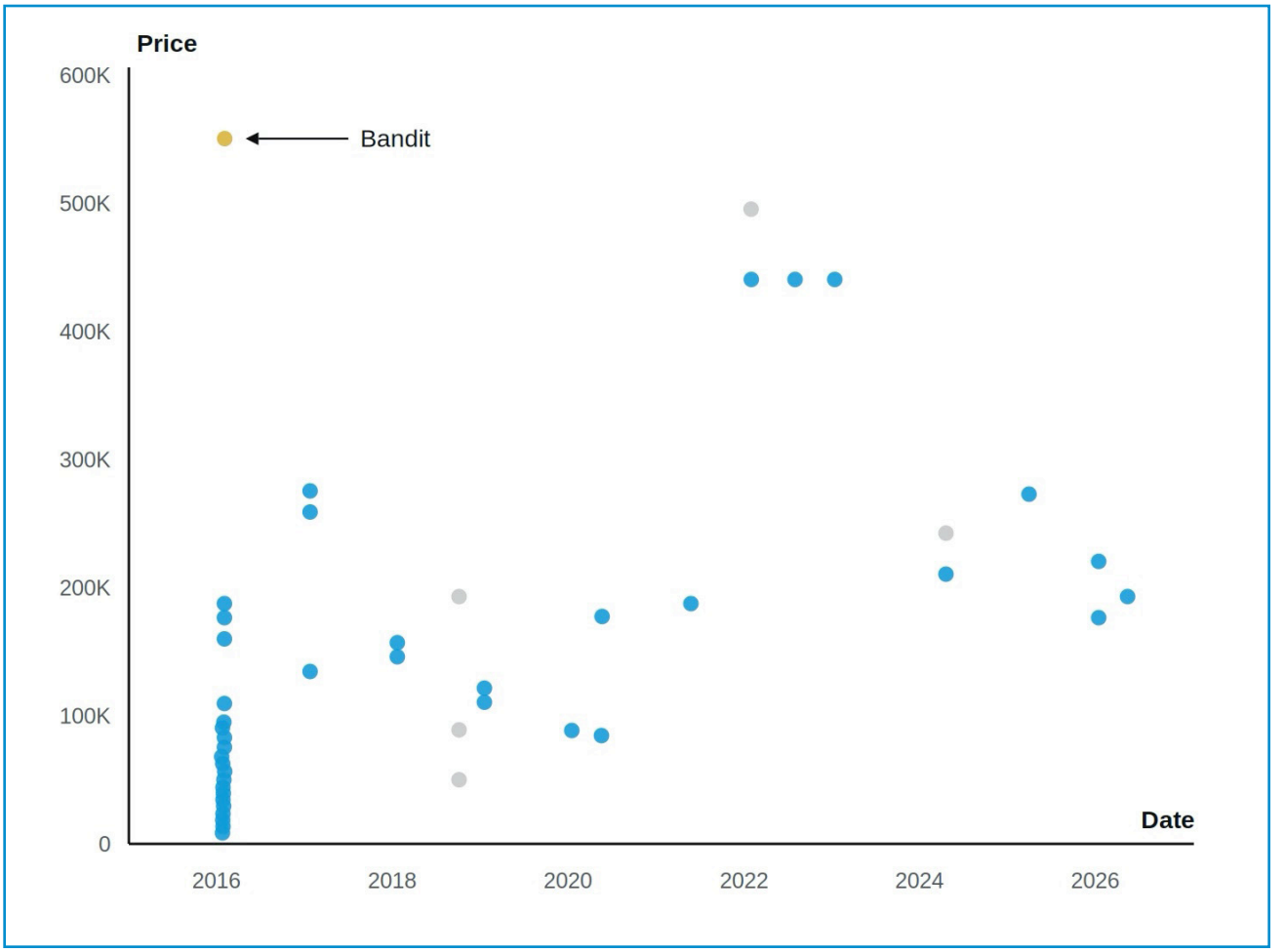


Photo courtesy of Barrett-Jackson



SOLD FOR

$550,000

Smokey and the Bandit 1977

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN Firebirds and the famous Hal Needham–directed action comedy is a strong one. So strong, in fact, that "Bandit era" is a car hobby colloquialism that applies to all late '70s Firebirds, especially black-and-gold Trans Ams. The images of Bandit flying over creeks and sliding around dirt roads made the car more famous than Burt Reynolds' mustache.

Speaking of Reynolds, he took a personal liking to the Pontiac pony car and owned multiple examples over the years. A few have sold for big six-figure prices. More valuable than his personal cars, however, and the most expensive Firebird ever sold publicly, is a car more closely associated with the actual film. A '77 Trans Am retained by Universal Studios in period and used as a promo car to gin up interest in the movie sold for $550,000 at Barrett-Jackson Scottsdale in 2016. At the time, the condition #1 value for the model in our price guide was less than a tenth of that amount. // anewton@hagerty.com

Photo courtesy of Barrett-Jackson

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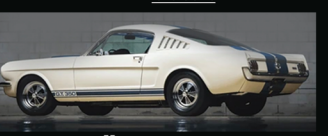

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AFTER THE CREDITS ROLL

The Aston Martin DB5 from *Goldfinger* is lost to history, but Joe Kaminkow created a fine replica, replete with all the Bond trickery.

WHEN THE EDITORS asked me to add my favorite movie cars and car movies to this issue, it sounded like an easy task. But no sooner would I come up with a suitable top three than another two, three, or 10 popped to mind.

Ultimately, I landed on three cars and three films I'd call the greatest of all time. The first car choice was easy: the Aston Martin DB5 from the James Bond franchise, which made its debut in 1964's *Goldfinger* and quickly became as iconic as Bond himself. The DB5 was advanced for its time even without the cinematic extras, but it's the Bond gadgets—machine guns, ejector seat, revolving license plates—that sealed its place in movie history.

My second pick is the Mustang from *Bullitt,* the 1968 film starring Steve McQueen. Its 10-minute, 53-second chase scene once held the record for the longest in film history—a mark since obliterated by *Gone in 60 Seconds,* which lasted an astonishing 40 minutes. (You might have read in this issue that Aaron Robinson doesn't consider *Bullitt* to be a car movie; I see his point but respectfully disagree). The Bullitt Mustang, like McQueen himself, carries an effortless, unforgettable swagger. It's one for the ages and had disappeared some time after filming. But in 2018, Hagerty was the first to report that it had been rediscovered, and we partnered with Ford to show the car to the public at that year's Detroit auto show.

Car No. 3 is one we all know: the stainless steel 1981 DeLorean DMC-12 from *Back to the Future.* The Hagerty Drivers Foundation inducted the actual movie car, working flux capacitor and all, into the National Historic Vehicle Register, securing its place in the Library of Congress and in automotive lore. Hagerty displayed it at the 2021 Amelia Concours. The crowds loved it.

Choosing the best movies of all time was a little harder, since a great car doesn't automatically make a great movie—though it certainly helps. So for this list, I focused on films where the cars are part of something with real weight and gravitas.

With that in mind, my third pick came easily: *Le Mans,* the 1971 racing epic starring Steve McQueen. He plays an American driver competing against a German rival at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The film is gripping from start to finish, and McQueen—an accomplished racer in his own right—brings an authenticity that still resonates. But the real star, at least for me, is his Porsche 917K, with Gulf livery. Seeing this car in person in recent years creates an almost out-of-body sensation!

My No. 2 pick might surprise you: *Tucker: The Man and His Dream,* starring Jeff Bridges as visionary Preston Tucker, who battles the Big Three, the government, and the media to bring his revolutionary Tucker 48 to life. I won't spoil the ending, but it's a heartbreaker in the best David-vs.-Goliath sense. Though only 47 Tuckers remain, I love seeing them every time and wonder "what if?"

And that brings me to my top pick for the greatest car movie of all time: *Ford v Ferrari,* which feels like it came out last year but actually hit theaters in 2019. Starring Matt Damon and Christian Bale as two of my favorite real-life automotive legends, Carroll Shelby and Ken Miles, the film traces the backstory behind Ford's epic 1966 sweep at Le Mans. The racing scenes are terrific and the performances are top-notch. They largely used replicas for the racing scenes in the movie, but I have been fortunate to see all three of the real Ford GT40s in person and to sit in the winning No. 2 car.

I'd love to hear your thoughts on my picks. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this issue. With a big bucket of popcorn, of course.

Until next time, never stop driving!

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Photo by James Lipman

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