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ISSUE #5, JUNE 2019

**GIRLS,
ON FILM
THE WORK
ISSUE**

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BIG BUSINESS
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LOST IN AMERICA
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ABOUT THE ZINE

Welcome to the Issue #5 of *Girls, on Film*, the zine that is hopelessly devoted to 80s movies! In each issue, we discuss a handful of movies related to a particular theme. This time, we discuss movies about jobs and working. So, let's get down to business. Here's what's on the agenda:

WORKING GIRL Melanie Griffith schemes her way up the corporate ladder and falls for Harrison Ford in the process.

BABY BOOM Diane Keaton is a successful executive who unexpectedly inherits a baby.

9 TO 5 Three secretaries (Lily Tomlin, Dolly Parton, and Jane Fonda) get revenge on their sexist boss.

BIG BUSINESS Lily Tomlin and Bette Midler are a mismatched set of twins who butt heads when a CEO considers selling part of her company.

GUNG HO Michael Keaton tries to convince his buds that the Japanese work ethic isn't so bad.

LOST IN AMERICA A yuppie couple quit their jobs and escape the rat race in a luxury RV.

QUICKSILVER Kevin Bacon is a hot shot stock trader who loses everything and becomes a bike messenger, bike-dancer, and crime fighter.

PRINCE OF BEL AIR Mark Harmon is a pool boy living the playboy life in Bel Air, until he falls for Kirstie Alley.

ABOUT THE GIRLS

STEPHANIE MCDEVITT (FOUNDER/EDITOR) was born at the dawn of the 80s and has great appreciation for all movies, music, and fashion that came out of this radical decade. You can find her celebrating at 80s dance parties.

JANENE SCENZA (FOUNDER/EDITOR) has written a buttload of zines. She spent much of her teens combing musty video stores for every 80s movie she could find. There were lists...

KIM ROBINSON (GUEST WRITER) has been an avid fan of pop culture since she was an arts and entertainment editor for her college newspaper in the 90s. Also born on the cusp of the best decade ever, she has always been a rabid consumer of 80s music, fashion, and film, and has made a career in the field of arts and culture. She can also sometimes be seen at local 80s dance parties.

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SERIOUS HAIR: WORKING GIRL (1988)

SCREENPLAY BY KEVIN WADE • DIRECTED BY MIKE NICHOLS • ESSAY BY STEPHANIE MCDEVITT

Mike Nichols' 1988 comedy, *Working Girl*, tells the story of a secretary who dreams of being an executive. She doesn't have an ivy league education. She doesn't have any experience outside of her secretarial jobs. She certainly doesn't look the part. But, in order to climb the corporate ladder, all she needs to do is find the first step.

Tess McGill is a Staten Island girl trying to make it in the Big City. Her dreams of becoming more than just a secretary seem to be delayed by her inability to control her temper when her male bosses attempt to pimp her out to their friends under the guise of career opportunities. After a particularly bad incident in the back of a limo

with Kevin Spacey, Tess loses her cool and gets transferred one last time.

In her new secretarial position, Tess works for Katharine (Sigourney Weaver), a polished, confident woman from New England, who is the same age as Tess. Tess is excited at the prospect of having a mentor, a woman who can help her climb the ranks and get out of the secretarial pool. In their brief scenes together, Katharine explains to Tess that she needs to look professional to move up in the world. Tess ditches her tacky jewelry and heavy makeup and eventually cuts her hair.



JACK IS DOUBLE FISTING!



LADY IN RED.

Tess comes up with a brilliant idea to acquire radio stations (honestly the mergers and acquisitions part of this plotline is pretty boring, so I'm not going to get into the weeds of the business deal) and brings it to Katharine. Katharine is impressed and promises to give Tess full credit for the idea when she takes it to Jack Trainer (Harrison Ford), the guy who will make the deal happen. However, when Katharine goes on a ski vacation, breaks her leg, and ends up in the hospital for six weeks, Tess accidentally sees a file on her computer taking credit for Tess's idea.

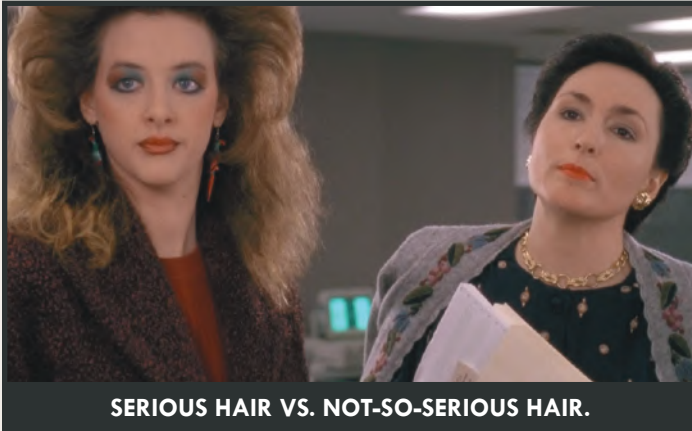
Tess decides that this is her chance. With her new serious hair and determined attitude, she pretends to be another executive working in Katharine's division of the company. She contacts Jack on her own and presents her idea. He thinks it will work, and he needs some good business luck of his own right now, so they move forward with the attempted merger.

Meanwhile, Tess's best friend Cyn (Joan Cusack) is getting married and when Tess shows up at her engagement party, she comes face to face with her cheating boyfriend, Mick (Alec Baldwin). Mick thinks that he can make a few grand romantic gestures (proposing to Tess in front of a huge crowd of people) and she will forget about having walked in on him with another woman. She doesn't accept his proposal and he gets pissed. They break up and now Tess is caught in between the life she wants and the life she had.

In the midst of all of this, Tess starts to fall for Jack, and Jack for Tess. They eventually end up in bed together, which was a pretty obvious plot point from the beginning, and then Tess finds out that Jack is Katharine's boyfriend. Jack promises her that it's over and even tells Tess he loves her, but with Katharine about to come back to work, Tess needs to find a way to complete the merger without blowing her cover.

Working Girl is a great movie. It tackles misogyny, sexism, and classism in the workplace with humor and empathy, and in the end, our hero prevails. The only flaws I found within the film is that it pits the two lead women against each other as if there is only room for one woman in the boardroom, and it follows the obvious movie tropes of the two leads falling in love. But, it was 1988. Harrison Ford was one of the biggest stars around, and to not have him in a romantic role would have probably hurt the box office returns.

Critics loved the movie. It ended up nabbing six Oscar nominations, including Best Actress and Actor for Griffith and Ford, and Supporting Actress for Weaver and Cusack. The supporting roles were key to this movie. Oliver Platt, Olympia Dukakis, Nora Dunn, Philip Bosco, and Alec Baldwin all play important parts. Weaver plays Katharine perfectly. It was always hard to tell if her interactions with Tess were sincere or underhanded and mean. Joan Cusack is great as Tess's best friend. Her hair is always high, her



makeup is super colorful, and her accent is thick. One of my favorite parts of the movie comes as Tess and Cyn are looking through Katharine's closet and find a dress that cost \$6000. "\$6000?" Cyn says, "It's not even leather!"

Melanie Griffith was not the original actress the producers had in mind for this role. Griffith had started acting as a child (even acting alongside her mother, Tippi Hedren), and by the time 1988 rolled around, she'd become a tabloid sensation due to her relationships and drug and alcohol issues. She'd also done a few movies in which she played sexpot characters, so the combination of her public work and her private struggles made producers reluctant to hire her.

But Tess turned out to be the perfect role for Griffith. Tess's story was her story too. They were both looking for a step up and a way out of their current career situations. As Griffith told a re-



porter at the time, "Just because you don't have the credentials that people say are necessary doesn't mean you can't do the job." She was referring to Tess but could have easily been talking about herself. The movie did bump Griffith's career, but a brief Google search shows that she's still better known for her relationships instead of her acting as at least three articles referred to her as a "four-time divorcee."

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of *Working Girl* last year, *Hollywood Reporter* reunited all the major players for an oral history. It's a good read and gives an interesting look at the making of the film. For instance, they shot the opening scene on the Staten Island Ferry illegally. The actors were surrounded by people headed into Manhattan for work and recorded it. No one not associated with the movie knew about it.

There is also a wealth of information about the casting decisions that went into this movie. Not only did producers not want Melanie Griffith for Tess, they were heavily favoring Shelly Long for the part (but had also discussed Demi Moore and Michelle Pfeiffer). Furthermore, they had originally cast Alec Baldwin in the Jack Trainer role and did not want to pay for both Harrison Ford and Weaver (he was coming off *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* and she had just done *Alien*). However, they also didn't want to have a movie starring two lesser-known actors, so they recast Baldwin as Mick, hired Ford and Weaver, and finally decided on Griffith to complete the cast.

Working Girl is definitely worth checking out. The story is well written, the cast turns in terrific performances, and I found myself invested in the movie outcome despite the fact that it was about mergers and acquisitions.

WATCH THIS MOVIE: *Working Girl* is available on Amazon Prime Video and online rental.



HAVING IT ALL: BABY BOOM (1987)

WRITTEN BY NANCY MEYERS AND CHARLES SHYER • DIRECTED BY CHARLES SHYER • ESSAY BY JANENE SCENZA

Baby Boom is a nice movie. Nancy Meyers movies usually are (see *Father of the Bride*, *The Intern*, *It's Complicated*, etc.). Meyers writes pleasant commentaries on white, upper-middle-class life, particularly related to marriage and parenting, presumably written from experience. (Meyers even worked on *Baby Boom* while pregnant with her second child with husband and collaborator Charles Shyer).

Baby Boom is like a companion movie to *Working Girl*, which was released the following year. The workplace comedies even open with similar shots of women in suits and comfortable sneakers hurrying to their New York City offices. In

Baby Boom, journalist Linda Ellerbee adds reporter-like narration about professional women defying tradition (though it's old news now) before honing in on one in particular: JC Wiatt (Diane Keaton), the "Tiger Lady."

Where Tess McGill, Melanie Griffith's character in *Working Girl*, was eager to move up in the corporate world, JC Wiatt is already on top. She's an ivy-league-educated executive with a huge corner office at a Manhattan consulting firm. JC is devoted to her job and does it well.

Things are looking so bright for JC, she might as well wear shades. She manages the company's

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most important account – a food brand appropriately called The Food Chain – and her boss, Fritz (Sam Wanamaker), announces that she's up for partner. However, before making his decision, Fritz wants to know that JC is willing to commit 100% to the job at all times (something she already does), with no chance of spouses or children gumming up the works.

By his own admission, Fritz had it easy. His wife cared for their children and the house, and even though he can't remember all of his grandkids, he can still consider it "having it all."

JC can't have it all. Not if she wants the family life, too. Because, even though Linda Ellerbee told us that professional women are defying tradition, there remained an expectation that they still be the primary caregiver. But, JC doesn't mind. She doesn't have plans to marry or make a baby with her live-in boyfriend, Steve (Harold Ramis), an investment banker and fellow workaholic. She is already married to the job.

Kudos to the writers for not vilifying her for it, either, as mainstream movies and TV so often do. (So much for progress...). Though, it is rather curious to give her the nickname "Tiger Lady," implying a ferocity better suited to someone like Miranda Priestly in *The Devil Wears Prada*. Diane Keaton is a smart, hardworking woman. But she's not a cut-throat. No one in the movie really is.

Also, gender politics aside, Fritz is setting the bar for advancement pretty damn high for anyone in JC's position who might, at any time, have a life outside of the company. Can you imagine being on-call all day, every day for the rest of your career? Tom Hank's character, David Brasner, the hot shot ad executive who unexpectedly had to care for his ailing father in the 1986 comedy *Nothing in Common* came to mind while I was re-watching this movie. No way he could keep up either. And besides, wouldn't you expect more flexibility the higher up you move in the compa-

ny? Seems like an unrealistic and unnecessarily complicated way to set up a story.

We know to expect a baby. And sure enough, by the power of cinematic convenience, JC unexpectedly inherits one – a squishy infant named Elizabeth -- from her recently deceased, very distant cousins that she hasn't seen in 40 years.

I love how this exchange goes down. JC gets a call in the middle of the night and she can barely hear the caller who tells her that she's has been named in the will and can collect her inheritance at the airport. There, she is greeted by a British woman lady who quickly hands Elizabeth off so she can catch a connecting flight to Florida. No vetting necessary. Of course, it was the 80s.



EFFICIENCY PARENTING.

Elizabeth didn't even have to wear a seat belt. The yuppies adorably malfunction around the baby while the old men grow concerned about JC's new distraction. She nearly gives Elizabeth up for adoption to a Bible Belt country bumpkin couple who preferred a boy, but she has a change of heart. And eventually, JC gets the hang of parenting, though she does it alone when Steve declines the offer to play dad and politely exits without a hitch.

She interviews nutty nannies and enrolls in silly, elite Mommy and Me classes while working late into the night. She struggles to find a balance,



KENNY IS MOVING UP THE FOOD CHAIN.



JC MOVES UP THE BABY FOOD CHAIN.

but she'll never do the "5 to 9" again. Not like her smug subordinate, Kenny, played by James Spader in a not-really-antagonist bit part. So, Fritz moves him up the food chain (get it?) and demotes JC to dog food, indefinitely holding off on the offer for partner.

JC makes her own polite exit and the movie detours into a sitcom-ish rom com (minus the laugh track). She moves with Elizabeth to a quaint country home in Vermont to do... *je ne sais quoi?* She passes the dull winter months making loads of baby food and dealing with ceaseless, expensive home repairs. Eventually, she breaks down in spectacular fashion – as Diane Keaton often does – and embarrassingly confesses all of her anxieties to Dr. Jeff Cooper (Sam Shepard), the local vet (and future love interest).

JC desperately wants to go back to NYC, but opportunity comes knocking when she sells her applesauce to some tourists (including an unrecognizable Chris Noth), inspiring her to start her own baby food business. Pounding the pavement and making headlines, JC soon gets back on top. She is invited back to the boardroom at her old company where Fritz and the others make a very generous offer to buy her company. In the end, JC must decide what, for her, is "having it all."

I like *Baby Boom*. Diane Keaton carries the whole movie and she is wonderful. Some have called

it a beautiful little fantasy. Nancy Meyers movies usually are. As bad as things get for JC, they are never really devastating. Even with all money blown on pricey home repairs, she never goes pitifully broke.

Baby Boom and *Working Girl* feel very 1950s. They featured strong female characters involved in wacky antics, flanked by charming male supporting characters. In fact, Harrison Ford's character in *Working Girl* could have been played by chiseled-chin dreamboat, Gary Cooper in another lifetime. They're pleasant comedies with outstanding casts. Probably just as they would have been in the 1950s.

Baby Boom was turned into a TV series for NBC, but it lasted less than one season. Sam Wanamaker reprised his role as Fritz (Vermont never happened) and twins Kristina and Michelle Kennedy returned as Elizabeth while Kate Jackson, of *Charlie's Angels* fame, played JC Wiatt.

There's no news of a remake or a musical (both seem inevitable for 80s titles these days). In the meantime, get your working mom fix from the Canadian TV series, *Workin' Moms*, on Netflix.

WATCH THIS MOVIE: *Baby Boom* is on Amazon Prime Video and on Hulu. Or, rent online.



A CUP OF AMBITION: 9 TO 5 (1980)

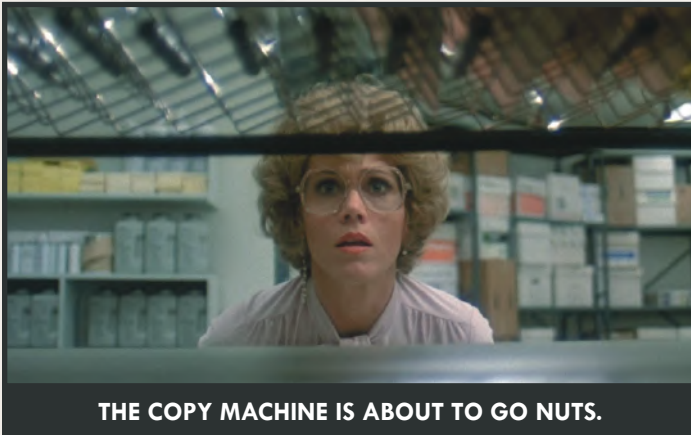
WRITTEN BY PATRICIA RESNICK (STORY) AND COLIN HIGGINS (SCREENPLAY) • DIRECTED BY COLIN HIGGINS
ESSAY BY STEPHANIE MCDEVITT

Have you ever thought about taking out your boss? Or maybe just dreamed about torturing your boss for a little while, just enough to get revenge for all those times they treated you unfairly. Well, the ladies of *9 to 5* are right there with you.

9 to 5 is a look at women in the workplace as they struggle with harassment, bullying, and sexism. The movie tries to provide a political message about women's rights, but most of that is lost in the farce that plays out on screen. It's a fun movie to watch, but some might think it falls a little short in its social commentary.

9 to 5 brings us back into the secretarial pool where Violet (Lily Tomlin), a widowed mother of four, has been toiling for a promotion for the past 12 years. She's been passed over by male employees several times, and despite her performance and great ideas, she is still expected to get the boss coffee and train new employee Judy (Jane Fonda) on her first day.

Judy shows up totally green to the business of business. This is her first job -- a job she was forced to get due to her divorce. Her husband left her for his secretary, and she had to move to a new place (by the airport) and figure out a way to survive. Violet introduces her to Mr. Hart (Dabney



Coleman), the “sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot” boss. Welcome to office life, Judy!

Violet also introduces Judy to Doralee (Dolly Parton), Mr. Hart’s secretary. The rumor mill indicates that Doralee is sleeping with Mr. Hart, but it turns out that he lied about the affair. Doralee is a married woman and is forced to fight off Mr. Hart and his grabby hands on several occasions. He even goes so far as to practically tackle her, but Doralee prevails and walks away from his assault without physical damage (although I’m sure there is plenty of emotional and mental damage).

After a particularly tough day at work where Violet is denied a promotion once again, Judy loses a battle with an out of control copy machine, and Doralee learns about the rumors Mr. Hart has been spreading, the ladies all meet up at a bar and drink their sorrows away. They eventually move the party to Doralee’s house where they share some weed and narrate their dreams of torturing Mr. Hart. Each woman has her own fantasy sequence in which they shoot him, poison him, or tie him up.

The next day at work, Violet is once again instructed to get Mr. Hart’s coffee. While talking to another co-worker, she accidentally mixes up the sweetener and a box of rat poison (the boxes look the same except for the little skull and crossbones on the rat poison). Without realizing

it, Violet actualizes her fantasy and serves Mr. Hart the poisoned coffee. While he never drinks the coffee, Mr. Hart does fall out of his chair, hit his head, and get taken away in an ambulance. Once Violet realizes what she did, she assumes he was poisoned and freaks out. Hijinks ensue!

The women embark on a journey to cover up accidentally poisoning their boss by stringing him up to a garage door opener and holding him captive in his house for three weeks so they have time to prove he’s been embezzling money from the company (which he was). While Hart is out of the office, they take the chance to change company policies to include a daycare center in the office, part-time work, flexible hours, job sharing, and equal pay for women.

9 to 5 was a huge hit. Released in 1980, it was the **second highest grossing movie that year** after *The Empire Strikes Back*. Critics loved it, but Roger Ebert gave what I thought **was a weird review**. He was enamored with Dolly Parton, who, in addition to writing and recording the title track, made her acting debut in this movie. And I agree with him, she was great! But, Ebert goes out of his way to make sure the readers know he is not commenting on her body or her sex appeal. Ebert says, “Because there have been so many Dolly Parton jokes (and doubtless will be so many more), I had better say that I’m not referring to her sex appeal or chest measurements. Indeed, she hardly seems to exist as a sexual being in this movie.”

First, I would disagree and say that she is a sexual being in this movie, her character just isn’t a willing participant in her sexualization. She’s being objectified on a regular basis and she is trying to defend against it without losing her cool or her job. I’m sure many women can relate. Second, why even bring it up? Ebert sexualizes her by stating just how unsexual he thought she was. Simply complimenting her performance would have been enough to make his point.

GIRLS, ON FILM: THE WORK ISSUE

Anyway, *9 to 5* was originally conceived by Jane Fonda, who, according to *Rolling Stone*, was inspired by her friend Karen Nussbaum who runs an organization called *9to5*, which advocates for working women. Fonda's production company produced the movie, and while she was cast as Jane, it took some time to get both Parton and Tomlin under contract. Apparently, the producers were betting on Carol Burnett as Violet and Anne Margaret as Doralee.



CHEERS TO TORTURING THE BOSS!

The original script, written by Patricia Resnick, was much darker and included scenes in which the ladies actually try to kill Mr. Hart. Fonda thought the script was too dark and wanted it to be a comedy to make the social commentary appeal to a broader audience. When Director Colin Higgins was hired, he refused to write with Resnick. He took her script and changed it into the movie we have today. This is why Resnick is credited for story and Higgins for the screenplay. In her *interview with Rolling Stone*, Resnick says this was heartbreaking, but chalks it up to the business of writing movies. To me, this plays as if he took her idea, messed around with it, and found a great deal of success, similar to the men in *9 to 5*.

In the movie, Mr. Hart returns to the office and plans to turn the women into the police. However, the Chairman of the Board shows up and notes that, with all the new policies in place, there has

been a decrease in absenteeism and a 20 percent increase in company productivity over six weeks. Of course, he gives Hart credit for all of these improvements but then insists that Hart transfer to a different job in Brazil. So, all their hard work does lead to Hart's exit, just not in the way they had hoped.

Despite their attempts to expose Hart as a criminal and overall terrible person, the ladies are thwarted by another male authority figure. Hart's crimes against the company are never revealed, and although we eventually learn that he gets kidnapped in Brazil and is never heard from again, Violet, Judy, and Doralee have to settle for the small victory of simply not having to deal with him anymore. At the end of the movie, Hart is still in good standing with the company. Furthermore, the Chairman of the Board nixes their equal pay policy. Getting rid of the terrible boss and having all of their other policies remain in place is a win, but it's definitely not the larger win I was hoping for (although it's more realistic).

Like most of the movies that appear in our zines, this one seems to be getting a reboot. *Jane Fonda has confirmed* that there is a script in the works (with Rashida Jones in talks to co-write it), and that Fonda, Parton, and Tomlin all plan to appear in the movie. I think it would be interesting to see a current remake. Things have changed for women in the workplace, but also things haven't really changed for women in the workplace. Harassment, sexism, bigotry, and unequal pay still exist, and while women have become more vocal about these injustices, we're still a long way from solving any of these issues. I'd love to see how Violet, Doralee, and Judy would handle this today.

WATCH THIS MOVIE: *9 to 5* is available to stream on Amazon Prime Video. Also on DVD and Blu-Ray or rent online.



A MODERN 'COMEDY OF ERRORS': BIG BUSINESS (1988)

WRITTEN BY DORI PIERSON AND MARK REID RUBEL • DIRECTED BY JIM ABRAHAMS • ESSAY BY KIM ROBINSON

Big Business is a fun and frothy 80's romp through the classic switched at birth trope with a new twist: twins! Iconic actresses and comediennes Bette Midler and Lily Tomlin do double duty in this film as a mismatched set of twin sisters combatting business intrigue and numerous love interests.

Directed by Jim Abrahams, *Big Business* is a modern day riff on William Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*. The film opens in 1940s rural West Virginia in the small town of Jupiter Hollow. Wealthy businessman Hunt Shelton and his wife Binky rush to the town's provincial hospital after

she starts to go into labor while they are traveling through West Virginia. They intercept a local, poor couple, Garth and Iona Ratliff, who are also expecting a bundle of joy. In a fun coincidence, each couple has a set of twin girls whom they each name Rose and Sadie.

The birth scene has some truly hilarious one-liners that I did not pick up on when I watched this as a child! My favorite has to be this exchange between the small town doctor:

Dr. Parker: It'll just be a little prick.
Mrs. Shelton: That's what got me into this mess.

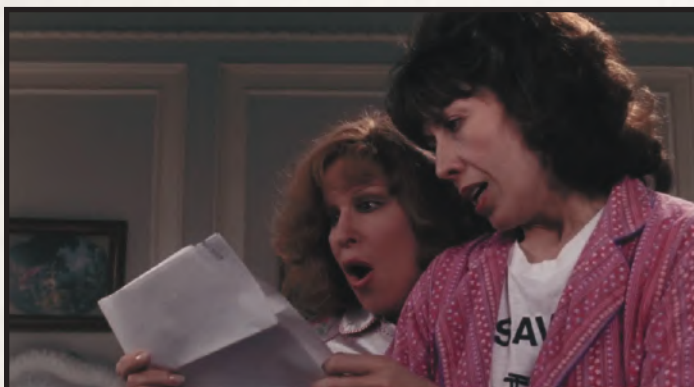
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The shenanigans really begin when the harried hospital nurse mixes up the red-headed and brunette twins, with a mix-matched pair going home with each family.

Our film picks up (in a rather abrupt transition) in 1980s New York City, where our first set of protagonists Sadie (Bette Midler) and Rose Shelton (Lily Tomlin) run Moramax, a large and powerful corporation. The filmmakers missed an excellent opportunity to squeeze in an 80's style montage of the twins growing up -- it would have smoothed the transition to modern day (and would have been hilarious).

The Shelton sisters' are in the midst of negotiating a deal to sell Hollowmade -- a small furniture-making company that employs much of Jupiter Hollow and was purchased by their father at the start of the film -- to an Italian investor. The deal would see the town decimated for strip-mining. Sadie, the dominant twin and CEO of Moramax, is ready to divest the firm of the hick town while the soft-spoken Rose is hesitant.

The action then switches to the idyllic town of Jupiter Hollow, where our other protagonists, spitfire Rose Ratliff (Tomlin), who is a foreman at Hollowmade, and her starry-eyed sister Sadie (Midler), are fighting to save their hometown from those "turkey buzzards in business suits."



ROSE AND SADIE DISCOVER THE SALES CONTRACT.

In a series of scenes that feature every stereotype you can think of in a rural small town in the 80s, the Ratliff's make their way to New York to protest the planned sale at a quarterly meeting of the corporation's shareholders.

What follows is a series of rather unbelievable near misses, love interests popping out of the woodwork, and for some unexplainable reason, an incredible amount of yodeling leading up to a "climactic" confrontation of the four sisters at the famous Plaza Hotel.



DOUBLE VISION.

Overall, while not the most memorable workplace comedy from the 1980s, *Big Business* does have some fun moments and features several stand-out performances. (The movie was **originally written** with Barbara Streisand and Goldie Hawn in mind to play Rose and Sadie, respectively).

The film also features a young (and disturbingly violent and mercenary) Seth Green (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* alum) as Sadie Shelton's spoiled son. It also stars a shirtless Fred Ward (of *Tremors* fame) as the earnest, mini-golf playing beau of Rose Ratliff, along with 80's legends Edward Herrmann (*The Lost Boys*, *Gilmore Girls*) Michael Gross (also from *Tremors*), and his sister, Mary.

The glimpses into the 80s workplace, rife with oversized shoulder pads, fabulous hairstyles, and

sharp heels were a fantastic touch that make up for a somewhat lackluster film. When you meet Sadie Shelton for the first time tearing through the headquarters offices of Moramax, she has several scathing critiques of her employee's fashion choices snarling to one unfortunate soul, "Is this how we dress for the office?! You look like a blood clot!" Truly, Bette Midler's over the top facial expressions and hilarious one-liners throughout the film (along with the again unexplained yodeling) make hers a standout performance.



ROONE TEES UP.

Tomlin and Bette Midler were nominated for an American Comedy Award for "Funniest Actress in a Motion Picture," though Midler won.

Big Business is a light-hearted and nostalgic look at the corporate world in the 1980s that absolutely overplays the mistaken identity angle, mines the city mouse/country mouse trope a little too much, and misses the opportunity to explore the disturbing implications of being switched at birth while skirting over the potential repercussions for the hospital. Can anyone say lawsuits?!

While the final confrontation was rather anticlimactic and clichéd (although it featured a great Joan Collins spoof), in the end everyone gets their "man" and their happily ever after. There is nothing more 80s than an unrealistic happy ending, which leaves me to wholeheartedly recommend *Big Business* despite its flaws.

WATCH THIS MOVIE: Look for *Big Business* on Amazon Prime video. Also available to rent online or purchase on DVD and Blu-Ray.



ISN'T SHE DIVINE?

The film was also a homage to New York in the 80s as the setting was a great trip back in time, featuring a recreated Plaza Hotel, F.A.O. Schwartz in its heyday, and classic seedy 1980s Manhattan. Also, the soundtrack is an unexpected pleasure featuring hits such as "Higher Love" by Steve Winwood and George Benson's "On Broadway."

The film received a lukewarm critical reaction upon its release in June, 1988. Film critic Roger Ebert was particularly harsh, noting that the film contained an "endless and dreary series of scenes in which the various twins just barely miss each other " and that "all of the life seems to have escaped the film."

Still, *Big Business* would go on to gross slightly more than \$40 million at the box office. Both Lily



IT'S JUST CARS GUNG HO (1986)

SCREENPLAY BY KEVIN WADE • DIRECTED BY RON HOWARD • ESSAY BY STEPHANIE MCDEVITT

In 1986, Ron Howard released *Gung Ho*, a movie about what happens when a Japanese auto company attempts to move into an American factory filled with American line workers. While the possibility of a deep look at differing workplace cultures and values exists, the result is a shallow “comedy” that offers little more than stereotypical characters in sitcom situations. I was disappointed in *Gung Ho*. Howard had a decent cast and a promising premise, but he just didn’t take it anywhere meaningful.

Gung Ho follows the story of Hunt Stevenson (Michael Keaton) as he tries to reopen the car

factory in Hadleyville, PA, which had previously shut down and sent the town spiraling into an economic depression. The shops and restaurants are closing and people are starting to move away to find work. The town sends Hunt to Japan to try to convince the Assan Motor Company to come to America and set up shop in the newly retooled factory.

Despite giving one of the worst job pitches, Hunt wins over the Japanese executives, and the factory is set to reopen. In addition to getting all his friends back to work, Hunt snags a promotion and is now the liaison between the line workers



HUNT IS LYING!

and management. But there's only one problem here: Hunt is a lying jerk.

Cultural conflicts are abound in the factory. The Japanese management tells the guys they can't listen to music, they can't read the newspaper in the bathroom, and, if they take time off, it will count against their pay. The Japanese workers don't understand why the Americans don't want to work as a team and take pride in what they do. The line workers start to get angry and Hunt is left to fix the problems.

While Hunt is trying to deal with the line workers, Oishi Kazihiko (Gedde Watanabe, aka **Long Duk Dong**) is trying to ward off the criticism of his boss back in Japan. Oishi was sent to work in the American factory after he failed in his previous position, and in Japan, that means he shamed himself, his workers, and his family. He was forced to endure a physically, emotionally, and mentally draining management boot camp, all while wearing ribbons of shame. This job in America is his last chance to prove himself.

During a dinner with his Japanese bosses, Hunt tries to explain that they need to adapt their management style to American ways, but instead they try to fire him. Hunt talks his way out of getting fired by making a deal with them. If the Americans can make as many cars as their top producing Japanese factory did in a month,



COLD SWIMS ARE GOOD FOR BUSINESS.

he would keep his job and the guys would get a raise. Unfortunately for Hunt, this means they have to make 15,000 cars this month, a number that is not possible in a regular 40 hour work week.

Hunt goes back to the guys and relays the message. They all realize that making 15,000 cars isn't going to happen. When one of them asks if they will get a smaller raise if they just make 13,000 cars, Hunt lies and says yes, so the line workers all think they'll be fine if they only make 13,000 cars. You can probably guess that this doesn't turn out well in the end.

Meanwhile, Oishi's boss is unhappy with their production, but he is also unwavering in the Japanese work mentality. Oishi is starting to see the American work style as a more attractive and reasonable option. He realizes that work shouldn't be his whole life, and he wants to spend time with his family. However, if he starts to play by American rules, he'll be ruined.

Will Oishi fail his boss, company, and family? Will Hunt manage to squirm his way out of his lies? Do I care about any of this? The answer to the last question is, unfortunately, not really. I found it very hard to care about most of the characters in this movie because they are all pretty shallow and stereotypical. Hunt is the worst. He lies to his friends, he lies to his boss, and he is super



THE LINE WORKERS ARE GOING CRAZY.

mean to his girlfriend. The American line workers and Japanese businessmen were all one note with very little depth, which is a shame because Ron Howard assembled a decent cast, including George Wendt, John Turturro, Mimi Rogers, and, obviously, Clint Howard.

The most developed character in the movie was Gedde Watanabe's Oishi. His internal struggle of trying to come to terms with his desire to run his factory according to American standards, while feeling guilty for betraying his Japanese roots, was well played.

One of my favorite scenes was when we see how Oishi's wife and kids had assimilated into American culture by watching MTV, eating Jimmy Dean sausages, and playing G.I. Joe. When his boss comes from Japan and meets with him at his house, Oishi's son, dressed in American military camouflage, shoots a toy gun at them and Oishi claims the boy belongs to the neighbor.

Critics didn't like the movie, and most agreed that it was poorly written. According to [Vincent Canby of the New York Times](#), the original idea for this movie came when Edwin Blum saw a *60 Minutes* episode about the opening of Nissan plant in Tennessee. "The idea that the United States' once-dreaded military foe was now in a position to compete with us economically, on home ground, and possibly to teach us a thing or two

about know-how, struck Mr. Blum as richly comic material for a film." However, the final result, as written by Babaloo Mandell and Lowell Ganz is "more cheerful than funny, and so insistently ungrudging about Americans and Japanese alike that its satire cuts like a wet sponge."

[Roger Ebert pointed out](#) that the movie not only portrayed both the Americans and Japanese in shallow stereotypes, but also that the movie felt unrealistic. He said, "from what I read, this is not the way the Japanese run their auto factories in this country. Couldn't the movie find humor in a more realistic treatment, instead of depicting the Japanese [and Americans] in such insulting, one-dimensional details?"

The movie might not have been well received by critics, but it seems to have done okay at the box office, making more than double its original budget. It must have been popular enough because later that same year Paramount attempted to turn it into a TV series. [Gung Ho the TV show](#) only lasted nine episodes. Gedde Watanabe and Clint Howard both appeared in all of them, although their characters had different names. Scott Bakula played Hunt Stevenson in only his third television role.

I haven't seen the show yet, but I would be curious to see how it played as a sitcom. The movie often resembled a sitcom, and I wonder whether it would have performed differently had it originally been conceived as a TV show. If any of our readers decide to watch and compare the two, please let me know.

WATCH THIS MOVIE: *Gung Ho* is available to stream on Amazon Prime video or rent online. Also available on DVD and Blu-Ray.



#WINNEBAGOLIFE: LOST IN AMERICA (1986)

WRITTEN BY MONICA JOHNSON AND ALBERT BROOKS • DIRECTED BY ALBERT BROOKS • ESSAY BY JANENE SCELZA

Lost in America was one of what seemed to be a lot of 80s movies about dropping out of the rat race. I even wrote about two others for this issue: *Quicksilver* (a burned out stock trader becomes a humble bike messenger) and *Baby Boom* (a working mother passed over for a well-deserved promotion moves to the country and starts her own business). Like *Baby Boom*, the protagonists in *Lost in America* drop out because one of them is passed over for a promotion. But, where *Baby Boom* was a darling little fantasy, *Lost in America* is biting satire.

At the heart of the movie is middle-aged, Cali-

ifornia yuppie couple David and Linda Howard (Albert Brooks and Julie Hagerty). David, an advertising executive, expects to be promoted to senior vice president, only to learn that someone else got the job and he will instead be transferred to his company's New York office. It's not a demotion by any means; he would keep his six-figure salary and work for a major client. His boss even spoke highly of his work. But to David, it's an insult. He blows up at his boss and the man who would have been his boss in New York, and quits his job. Then, he goes to Linda's workplace and tells her that she has been cheated in life and convinces her to quit her job, too.

GIRLS, ON FILM: THE WORK ISSUE

In the heat of the moment, they decided to sell everything they own and live life on the road just like *Easy Rider*. Except, instead of cocaine and motorcycles, David and Linda have a nest egg and an air-conditioned RV.

The movie opens on the eve of David's anticipated promotion. They're surrounded by boxes and ready to move to their bigger, more expensive house they just bought. (Yes, it's all very count-your-chickens-before-they-hatch). But, neither David nor Linda seem too enthused about the new house. Their conversation about the move and the house makes it sound like they're just going through the motions, upgrading to whatever lifestyle they've been told the family of a senior VP is supposed to have.

Linda confides in a coworker that she finds her life to be quite dull. With every promotion, there is always some assurance that things will be different, but the result is more of the same. For David and Linda, achieving the American Dream has become soulless procedure.

Naturally, they're ripe for an experiment in spontaneity, though they take it to the extreme. We see them excitedly imagining their new, liberated future, and it's full of endless possibilities. They browse real estate listings, delighted by the thought of owning a charming and far less expensive house somewhere in New England. They seem almost astonished to discover that they could find one with better features than their current, more expensive home.

Ultimately, David proposes that they sell everything they own and back out of the sale on the new house in order (David calls the \$15K deposit they would lose the best \$15K they ever spent) to finance a simple, nomadic life, exploring the country in a new, top-of-the-line RV. He tells Linda that they're going to "touch Indians" and "see

the mountains and prairies and whole rest of that song" and other pseudo-spiritual baloney.

Sound familiar? Monica Johnson and Albert Brooks wrote a movie that pokes fun at #vanlife before #vanlife was even a thing! All that David and Linda are missing is the overly-curated social media.

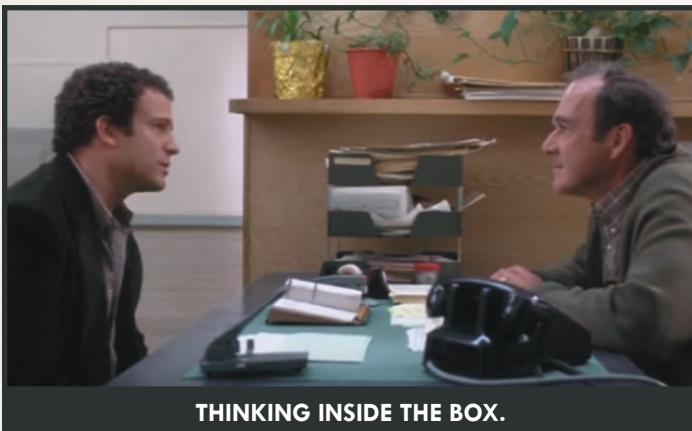


Their plan unravels in record time. They only get as far as Las Vegas when Linda, in a seemingly hypnotic state, gambles away the entire nest egg. David makes a hopeless pitch to the casino manager (Garry Marshall) to refund their money and then create an ad campaign to promote the hotel's generosity. But the casino manager, because he's not a complete idiot, can't see how it will do anything but encourage people to demand refunds from the casino every time they lose.

The sequence is one of a string of funny little sequences. It follows with Linda and David yelling at each other at the Hoover Dam as tourists stare. Linda gets mad and jumps in a car driven by the guy that played Ox in *Revenge of the Nerds*. A brief chase ensues as David comes to her rescue. But, the best scenes occur later in the movie when David and Linda take up temporary residence at a trailer park in small-town Safford, Arizona. With barely enough money for a tank of gas, they decide to find jobs in town.

Wispy Julie Haggerty was a perfect counter to deadpan Albert Brooks as Linda frequently tries to make the best of one terrible situation after the next (though she is the reason most of the terrible situations happen). On their first morning at the trailer park, Linda wonders whether everything might be a “blessing in disguise, but David shuts that notion down pretty quickly. “It’s *something*,” he tells her, “but it’s not a blessing.” So much for enlightenment...

Linda finds a job as an assistant manager at a fast food restaurant. Her boss is a teenager named Skippy. David meanwhile checks in with the local employment office for leads. A counselor tells him that there is an opening for a crossing guard. David asks if there might be an “executive box” or a “white-collar box” that might contain leads for far more respectable, higher paying jobs. The counselor, probably like most people, has a good laugh at that. “Oh, you mean the \$100,000 box?!” he replies. David takes the crossing guard job.



He is taunted by kids at his stop. Then, a magnificent vision from his former life appears: a Mercedes. The driver is lost and asks for directions to the interstate. David is so envious; he takes a minute to smell the interior as he pokes his head in to give directions. (**Fun fact:** the Mercedes driver is played by the film’s executive producer

and Albert Brooks’ manager, Herb Nanas.

David and Linda are broke, living in a trailer park, and working menial jobs. Eventually, they realize that the quickest way out of their situation is to speed right through every other state to New York City and beg for David’s job back.

Lost in America is a great little film, though at first it was hard to watch and not imagine Marlin (Albert Brooks’ character in *Finding Nemo*) reciting all of David’s lines. The movie was generally well-received by critics and audiences alike, though it wasn’t a huge commercial success. Criterion added it to their collection in 2017.

Brooks, who co-wrote and directed the movie, explained in a recent **interview** his inspiration for the movie. “It was to add some realism to the whole idea of *Easy Rider*. I mean that was such a big influence in the 60’s and the idea of dropping out. But as time went on, that idea didn’t work exactly as it was supposed to. So I thought it would be funny to have a story about dropping out and then dropping back in two weeks later.”

Silly as the couple may be, their motivations -- lack of professional mobility; the high cost of living; and doing everything in life so by-the-book -- were (and are) commonplace. But, like the modern-day minimalists, it’s hard to relate when the ones complaining are, like David and Linda, well off financially to begin with. (Of course, their inability to relate is what makes them so funny). And that was especially true in the mid-1980s, when America was mired in a pretty awful recession. Nowadays, they’d be a meme.

WATCH THIS MOVIE: *Lost in America* is available on DVD and Blu-Ray, or rent online. A 2-part bootleg is also on DailyMotion.



LET IT RIDE: QUICKSILVER (1986)

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY TOM DONNELLY • ESSAY BY JANENE SCENZA

Do you love movies about bike messengers?! Then I've got a movie for you! *Quicksilver* is practically a lipstick-stained love letter to bike messengers. Writer/director Tom Donnelly, who made his feature film debut with this movie, even worked as one while writing the script. The subject is already a hard sell for mainstream audiences, so you really have to do it right. (Spoiler alert: this movie was a commercial flop!)

Quicksilver was the first movie Kevin Bacon did after the madly successful teen dancehall drama, *Footloose*. Here, he puts on an ugly wig and fake mustache to become hot shot stock trader Jack Casey.

Jack gambles everything on a risky trade and, just like a game of roulette, he loses it all. He even wipes out his parents' savings. Completely devastated, Jack abandons generic Wall Street (the location was meant to be an unnamed urban location, though it was clearly filmed in New York City and San Francisco). He transforms into normal-looking Kevin Bacon in a raspberry beret (the kind you find in a second hand store), and spends purgatory working as a humble bike messenger for the Quicksilver Express.

Jack's father, his former business partner, and his snooty new girlfriend all weirdly seem to ignore what kind of impact losing all that money

might have on Jack (how he isn't on the verge of suicide is anyone's guess). They just want to know when the wunderkind is going to stop slumming and get back to the trading floor. He tries to explain that his mojo is gone. And besides, he likes his new job, particularly the independence it allows, even if there isn't much money in it.

The employees at the Quicksilver Express are an eclectic bunch. Jack's friend, Hector (Paul Rodriguez) rattles off the silly nicknames and former professions of the other riders to mysterious newcomer, Terri (Jami Gertz). A boxer. A ballet dancer. Former professors. A college kid. Louie Anderson, for some reason.

Hector is the lovable, ethnic American Dreamer. His wife is about to have a baby and he wants to start a food cart business. Paul Attanasio brilliantly **described** them as "street kids from the ecumenical rosters of Central Casting." Still, this, and the sort of homely NYC feel to the movie (at least the parts obviously shot there) are easy set-ups for some decent light character drama. But other things get in the way.

For one, *Quicksilver* is loaded with corny 80s filler like stunt showcases and seemingly every bicyclist's favorite thing to do in 1986 – **bike dancing** – all set to catchy pop songs. This especially seemed to annoy film critic Roger Ebert, who **accused** the filmmakers of prioritizing soundtrack sales over storytelling. Indeed, the soundtrack

includes big names like Giorgio Moroder; Ray Parker, Jr.; Thomas Newman; John Parr; and Roger Daltrey. But, these scenes are so out of place that they come off as hilarious. I honestly wish Michael Sembello would have started singing about a **steel town girl on a Saturday night looking for the fight of her life** as Jack and his girlfriend bike-danced around their loft.

Then, one movie becomes two movies with the introduction of a ruthless drug dealer (Rudy Ramos as Gypsy) who half-heartedly chases Jack around the city after Jack witnesses a hit-and-run. I liked the thriller aspect, though that's probably because it was the most engaging part of this crazy story. Can you imagine how the pitch meeting for this movie went? We've got a stock broker who loses his job, becomes a bike messenger, bike-dancer, and crime fighter. What?!

Laurence Fishburne appears briefly in the movie doing his usual streetwise cool dude as Voodoo, a bike messenger who delivers drugs for Gypsy. When Gypsy accuses him of skimming profits off the top, Voodoo, who is otherwise a realist, stupidly assumes that the gun-toting drug dealer will be okay with simply cutting ties and letting Voodoo start dealing on his own. Oh Voodoo... if the *Miami Vice* pilot has taught us anything, it's that drug dealers aren't really swayed by the whole "free enterprise" thing.

As if Jack doesn't have enough shit to deal with



JACK CASEY AND HIS AWFUL GIRLFRIEND BIKE-DANCE.



COWBOY DAN HITS ROUGH TIMES.

after losing his parents' life savings and everyone hounding him about what he's going to **do with his life**, he is also in the wrong place at the wrong time when Gypsy gets his revenge. And with Voodoo out of the picture, Gypsy turns to sweet, innocent Terri, to do his dirty work.



HECTOR INTRODUCES TERRI TO THE CREW.

Terri is my second least favorite thing about *Quicksilver* (Kevin Bacon's ugly haircut and mustache combo in the opening of the film is the first), which is unfortunate because I normally love Jami Gertz in whatever stupid part she plays. Terri is *Quicksilver*'s lone female rider. They keep her background vague, though they seem to hint that she's a runaway from a broken home. She works for Gypsy because she needs the money.

Most of the time, I can't tell if Terri is supposed to be a naïve kid pretending to be a street tough or if she's just a complete idiot. Case in point: she shows up at the *Quicksilver Express* looking for a job as a bike messenger, and she doesn't even own a bike! She winds up buying one from Hector. The other characters all seemed to settle on her being an idiot because they mansplain EVERYTHING to her. Even Jack, who warns her about the obvious dangers of working for a gun-toting drug dealer.

And because there are two movies, there must also be two resolutions. In one story, Jack re-

turns to the trading floor to help a friend and try to regain his confidence. The scene hilariously attempts to make all the urgent hand signaling and incoherent yelling seem about as exciting as a championship game. In the other story, Jack dodges Gypsy's car and soon, his bullets, in an attempt to rescue sweet, stupid Terri.

Quicksilver might have worked fine if it was just a character drama, or just a cheesy 80s showcase, or just a thriller. But, just being one of these things wouldn't leave bike messengers with much of a love letter now would it?! People were reminded of the movie's existence in 2012, when another forgettable bike messenger film – *Premium Rush*, a movie that not even Millennial darling, Joseph Gordon Levitt, could make exciting - released in 2012.



LOOK WHAT I CAN DO!

Needless to say, critics **hated *Quicksilver***. Even the *Harvard Crimson* panned it! But, the movie wasn't all bad. It has a great cast, especially scene-stealing Paul Rodriguez as Hector. And the filmmakers really tried to capture the thrill and the danger of the ride. I highly recommend watching it if ridiculous 80s movies are your jam.

WATCH THIS MOVIE: *Quicksilver* can be streamed on Amazon Prime video. It's also available to rent online or watch on DVD.



NOT SO FRESH: PRINCE OF BEL AIR (1986)

SCREENPLAY BY DORI PIERSON AND MARC REID RUBEL • DIRECTED BY CHARLES BRAVERMAN
ESSAY BY STEPHANIE MCDEVITT

Mark Harmon has already made appearances in two out of the four previously published issues of *Girls, On Film*, and I'm bringing him back for the Work Issue. Harmon starred in the 1986 made-for-TV movie *Prince of Bel Air*. He plays a mostly-shirtless pool boy who loves the ladies. But wait, could he settle down for the right girl? Read on to find out more.

Prince of Bel Air tells the story of ladies man Robin (Mark Harmon) as he struggles to grow up and deal with the fact that he has fallen in love. You see, Robin had been living it up, sleeping with every girl he talks to (including his married clients), running his pool cleaning business, and jet

setting in his buddy's private plane. He seemed to have it made.

One day while working on Stanley's (Robert Vaughn) pool, Stanley asks Robin to take his son under his wing for the summer. Stanley implies that his son, Justin (Patrick Labyorteaux), doesn't have a lot of experience with the ladies, and wants Robin to let him work for him for the summer to learn from his womanizing ways. Robin obviously doesn't want any part of this, but he hires Justin to be his assistant and off they go to clean pools.

At first, Justin hinders Robin's game. How is

GIRLS, ON FILM: THE WORK ISSUE

Robin supposed to get with all his clients with this kid hanging around? However, when they arrive back at Stanley's house to clean his pool, there is a hot piece swimming laps. Turns out it's Justin's cousin, Jamie (Kirstie Alley). Robin takes an instant shine to her. She looks nothing like all the other girls he's been with. She has brown hair! Can you believe it?

In a bizarre twist, Jamie calls him to set up a date! Well, kind of. Jamie is an artist and she wants Robin to come over and pose for some pictures. Jamie makes small figurines and puts them in diorama-like cases. She gets Robin to come over so she can take a Polaroid and then make a figurine of him. Robin takes this opportunity to hit on her and ask her out on a date and, of course, she accepts.



THE FLIRTY PHOTO SHOOT

Much to the chagrin of Robin's buddies, he and Jamie start spending a lot of time together. They joke about never seeing him and they all want to know when they're going to meet her. They convince Robin to bring her on a trip to Catalina, and Robin and Jamie agree to go, but then spend the whole weekend trying to escape his friends.

While Robin and Jamie are getting serious with their relationship, Robin starts to get serious about the rest of his life. He cleans up his pool shop, he tells his two dopey shop boys, Darryl and Willard (played by the terribly underused Don

Swayze (Patrick's bother) and Dean Cameron) that they have to take work more seriously, and he starts to turn down invitations from his buddies.

While Robin has started to act more like an adult, Justin has hit his stride in the female department and gets a girlfriend. Stanley is thrilled that Robin seems to have taught the kid how to be successful with women. Everything seems to be going according to plan, except for one little thing. Stanley doesn't want Robin dating Jamie anymore. He doesn't think he's good enough for her.

Robin gets pissed, but for some reason, this leads him down a destructive path where he both realizes he doesn't want to be tied down and seems tired of his old life. He makes some bad decisions and Jamie catches him with another woman. Will they work it out in the final five minutes of the movie? Well, I won't give it away, but if it ends like the other Mark Harmon movies I have written about for GoF, you probably won't be disappointed.

Prior to *Prince of Bel Air*, I wrote about Mark Harmon movies *Stealing Home* and *Summer School*. *Prince of Bel Air* is pretty much an earlier draft of *Summer School*. It was a made-for-TV movie released the year before *Summer School* and uses several of the same actors. In addition to Harmon and Kirstie Alley, Dean Cameron and Patrick



ROBIN IS MAD AT JUSTIN'S SHIRT.

Labyorteaux are in both movies.

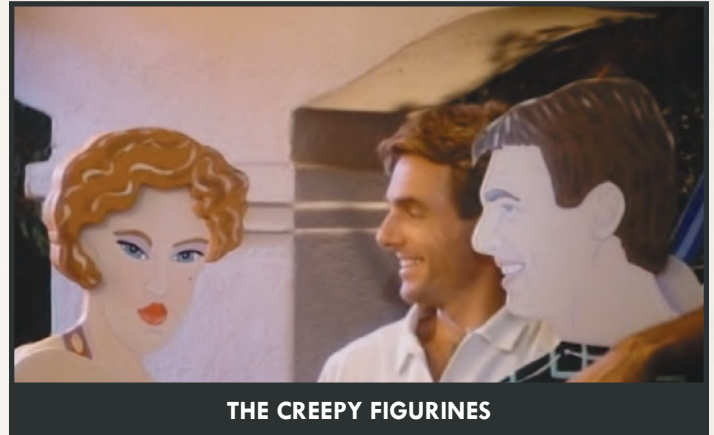
The plot line is pretty much the same, too; an immature ladies man meets a woman he actually falls in love with and he grows up in the process. *Summer School* even recycled the character's name, Robin, for Kirstie Alley's character. I will say that *Summer School* is the better of the two movies, which is maybe why it was released in theaters and *Prince of Bel Air* wasn't.

Overall I found this movie to be pretty misogynistic, predictable, and, at times, boring. And, as I said above, I was a little confused by Robin's antics at the end. He gets mad at Stanley for telling him he shouldn't date Jamie, but then he sabotages everything. I get ruining the relationship if he had agreed that he wasn't good enough for her, or if he really felt that Jamie was suffocating him. But it doesn't seem that he thinks either of those things. It appears that Robin is simply an asshole.

And Jamie's no picnic either. Yes, she's smart and she works diligently on her art (which I will get to in a minute), but she is constantly giving Robin a hard time about his immature ways. At one point she asks him, "Do you always live life like a beer commercial?" It's a good line, but kind of a harsh judgment from someone who admits she needs to have more fun in her life.

Maybe Jamie feels like she is too good for Robin, or that he'll never really abandon his womanizing behavior so she needs to protect herself, but either way, she never really seems happy with him. This is supposed to be a romcom. Couldn't the characters have been a little nicer to each other? Maybe then they would have been happier together.

Let me get back to Jamie's art. We see some of her figurines and paintings, and, in the end, there is an exhibition of lifesize figures she made, including the one of Robin. I thought most of



the art in the movie was kind of creepy. It turns out, all of it was made by [Laurie Pincus](#), who is an actual artist. Her website displays her large portfolio and impressive resume. I couldn't figure out how recent her work was, but her resume lists exhibitions as recent as 2009. She also has a shop where you can [buy a print](#) of one of the paintings shown in the movie.

Prince of Bel Air aired in 1986, which is the same year Mark Harmon was named [People's Sexiest Man Alive](#). Given that Harmon was often shirtless and wearing short shorts, it's apparent the movie makers were trying to cash in on his sex appeal. Maybe that's why this TV movie has some staying power. There is a [Prince of Bel Air Facebook page](#), but no posts, and you can still [buy prints](#) of the movie's poster.

If you're interested in watching Mark Harmon's entire film library, you should check this one out. It's definitely not his best. There are some glimpses of the greatness that will come from both Dean Cameron and Patrick Labyorteaux in *Summer School*. Overall, this movie is pretty mindless and I'm sure it fit well in the Monday night TV movie line-up.

WATCH THIS MOVIE: *Prince of Bel Air* is available to stream on Amazon Prime video.

GIRLS, ON FILM

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO 80'S MOVIES