

Still classics 25 years later

A Gen-Xer riffs on the greatest hits of 1983.

BY JAY DYCKMAN

IT WAS 1983. Everyone wanted a Swatch watch. Vanessa Williams won Miss America. Reagan tagged the USSR an “evil empire.” And, more important, the nation was introduced to the McNugget.

But most of all, there were the movies. This was the year that produced several of the most iconic films of the '80s. Watching these movies as a young Gen-Xer had such an effect on me that they practically infiltrated my DNA.

On the 25th anniversary of these cinematic gems, here's a rundown of 1983's best, including why they were, and always will be, classics. So grab a McNugget, and let's stroll down memory lane ...

The Big Chill

The cast of this movie, including Kevin Kline and Glenn Close, is like an all-star team of '80s actors. With its group of college buddies reuniting after several years, *The Big Chill* was more like *The Big Party*, funeral notwithstanding. As someone who hadn't even been to college yet, it was very encouraging to see that “old people” still knew how to have a good time. Sadly, I am now one of these “old people” and can safely say that not one of my single friends from college has asked me to help her get pregnant. Not even close.

2008 observation: Kevin Costner, as the corpse viewed briefly at the beginning of the film, did more with this role than he did in *Waterworld*.



Tom Cruise and Rebecca De Mornay get cozy.

Risky Business

The ultimate high school male fantasy: beautiful women, joy rides in Dad's Porsche and a very understanding Princeton University admissions officer: Tom Cruise, in the role that made him famous, genuinely captured the angst of suburban high school existence. And then there's the underwear dance.

2008 observation: The movie lets you see Cruise dancing on a couch, but in a cute, career-enhancing way.

Trading Places

Great for one reason: Eddie Murphy, the ultimate comedian of our generation, in probably his best role. It was a spot-on look at the era's wealth gap, but funny!



Dan Aykroyd and Eddie Murphy swap lives.

And it all began with a \$1 bet on what would happen if the rich and the poor switch places — still the

greatest wager in film history.

2008 observation: If the movie were made today, would Murphy also play Dan Aykroyd and Jamie Lee Curtis?

National Lampoon's Vacation

Chevy Chase plays Clark Griswold, a devoted father who leads his family across America for a vacation. I love this movie because I lived this movie. My family took that same vacation. I, too, fought with my



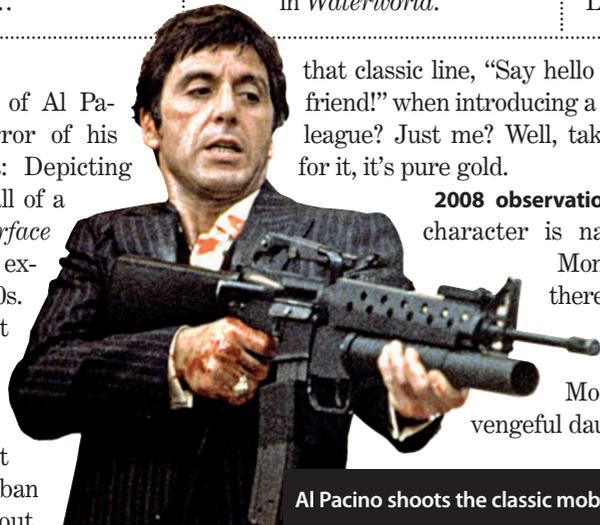
The Griswold family bonds on the road.

sister in the back seat between stops at inane tourist attractions and visited relatives I didn't know or care to know. This movie nailed the hysterical torture of family vacations.

2008 observation: Oh, god. I am Clark Griswold.

Scarface

The brilliance of Al Pacino. The horror of his Cuban accent: Depicting the rise and fall of a gangster, *Scarface* embodied the excesses of the '80s. Nowhere was it more evident than in Pacino's swagger. And who hasn't used a bad Cuban accent to shout



Al Pacino shoots the classic mobster movie.

that classic line, “Say hello to my little friend!” when introducing a shorter colleague? Just me? Well, take my word for it, it's pure gold.

2008 observation: Pacino's character is named Tony Montana. Could there be a sequel starring Hannah Montana as a vengeful daughter?



Jennifer Beals' iconic look

Flashdance

Featuring the stunning Jennifer Beals as a young blue-collar woman who dreams of becoming a professional dancer, *Flashdance* was the movie that launched a thousand bare shoulders. It was the perfect '80s fairy tale, an inspiration for all girls who dreamed of becoming a dancer, or perhaps a welder. And who hasn't attempted to re-create at least some portion of her dance audition at a friend's wedding reception? What a feeling, indeed!

2008 observation: I'm not sure my mother has forgiven my sister yet for turning an entire closet full of clothes into *Flashdance* sweatshirts. **W**

JAY DYCKMAN was 10 in 1983 and is thankful that movie theaters rarely asked to see *ID*.