

BIG DADDY'S 52 GREATEST MOVIES EVER!

The 24 Rock song list was so popular I decided to see if I couldn't do the same for movies. One for every week. I'm going to go through my own collection and start in alphabetical order. All movies must be at least 5 years old to pass my standard passage of time. Please send your suggestions. REMEMBER, none of the flicks below are definites yet, just under consideration.

A

- **AIRPLANE...** If you sit and and watch this with a clicker and click for every laugh, I swear it has more yuks per minute than any comedy ever made. It's the beginning of the incredibly underrated careers of Abraham, Zucker & Zucker, plus Leslie Neilson, who has, since this flick, become an American comedy treasure. AND DON'T CALL ME SHIRLEY!
- **ALIENS...** Might be the greatest action/adventure flick ever. Weaver is totally believable, Paxson portrays a total wimp that you never see in these type of movies, and the alien itself is hands down THE MOST REALISTIC, SCARIEST MONSTER EVER.
- **ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN...** What a taut, exciting, suspenseful thriller considering there's not an ounce of violence (or even a threat of it in the entire flick. Obviously, Redford & Hoffman are well cast, but what a supporting lineup! Robards, Warden, Crouse, Alexander, Holbrook, Beatty.
- **AMERICAN GRAFFITI...** Watch this coming of age classic and you wish Lucas had never thought of STAR WARS. Not that I don't like the original, but GRAFFITI is so . . . human! As fun as Howard became as a director, we forget what an ease he had as an actor. And I don't know if Dreyfuss was ever any better than this and I dig him in everything he does.
- **ANGEL HEART...** Doubt if this will make the Final 52, but I am such a Mickey Rourke fan that I have watched this countless times. Directed by the underrated Alan Parker, with a great score, this is as good as any occult film ever made, except for maybe . . . uh . . . one. And more on that film later.
- **ANIMAL HOUSE...** Often I sit on the beach and listen to parents bitch about the behavior of their kids, I wait a few minutes and then switch the topic to ANIMAL HOUSE. Within seconds everyone is discussing their favorite moments. Why do some people conveniently forget that they pretty much did all the crazy crap (granted, sometimes dangerous) that they are bitching that their kids do? This movie so captures a time in my life (And I didn't even go to college, my ANIMAL HOUSE days were spent in Jersey shore rentals), that it actually makes me wistful while I'm laughing. Anyone who wouldn't want to be this age again IS A LIAR! FOOD FIGHT!
- **ANNIE HALL...** Because of Allen's recent weird moral judgments in his own life, it is now difficult to view HALL without seeing how hypocritical he was the entire time, so it kind of ruins it now for me. But make no mistake about it, it was groundbreaking at the time, it still has a ton of classic jokes, and that unforgettable moment from Christopher Walken.
- **THE APARTMENT...** Big Jack Lemmon, Shirley Maclaine, and Billy Wilder fan, so how can you go wrong with this classic American romantic comedy? It's also got a subtle dark side which gives it a deeper edge.

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- **APOCALYPSE NOW...** Although, they should have sent the totally under prepared Brando home the second he showed up on the set at that weight (What the hell, they had already replaced Keitel with Sheen), it's still a magnificent, compelling, psychedelic story and according to many Vietnam vets I have spoken to over the years, it really nails it. Duvall's raid on the village is one of the most startling pieces of film EVER.
- **APOLLO 13...** Heroic, inspirational, educational, AND FUN! Fantastic cast. When Ed Harris (who's the director of the mission) overhears some NASA PR dweeb talking to another dweeb about how they were going to spin the failure of the mission to get to the moon, Ed Harris turns to them and says "I beg to differ, sir, but I believe this is our finest hour." Because those astronauts had every right to be dead.
- **ATLANTIC CITY...** Extremely depressing (this is almost exactly how I saw AC at that time), but Burt Lancaster's amazing performance keeps you coming back for more. And Susan Sarandon's lemons!

B

- **THE BAD NEWS BEARS** (The ORIGINAL of Course)... Whoever thought anyone could make a realistic movie about little league baseball and still be funny? It's all here, particularly the crummy parents and coaches. Matthau, at his absolute prime, and a brilliant script from the son of Burt Lancaster, Bill, who married the daughter of Ernie Kovacs. Talk about bloodlines. Completely and joyfully politically incorrect.
- **BANG THE DRUM SLOWLY...** Heartbreaking, but tremendous flick starring the very young Robert DeNiro as a dying major league catcher and Michael Moriarty as the pitcher who befriends him. Seek this one out.
- **BLAZING SADDLES...** The Godfather of all parody movies, it is Mel's classic. I can still, to this day, recite entire passages. Ya gotta love a comedy that doesn't have one redeeming quality. And what a theme song!
- **BLUE VELVET...** I'm not a good enough writer to accurately describe the importance of this flick. Weirder than weird, funny, scary, completely unique, it influenced an entire generation of filmmakers. Absolutely not for everyone. Hopper called Lynch in the middle of the night after he had read the script (Lynch didn't even send him one) and said, "you don't understand, I AM Frank Booth!" Lynch was scared NOT to give him the role. PABST BLUE RIBBON!
- **BODY HEAT...** Did you know that before their first incredibly hot nude scene that Turner & Hurt went and introduced themselves to the crew totally naked? Just to break the ice. Break it? It was positively melting! An updating of DOUBLE INDEMNITY that really works. Look for a small, but memorable bit, from my main man, Mickey Rourke.
- **BOUND...** Why I must admit the lesbian angle adds an awful lot, the fact is, BOUND is a terrific thriller with many an unexpected plot twist with an over the top performance from the always good Joey Pants. Let's face it, sex is a major part of the movie biz and always will be, and it doesn't get much sexier than Gershon (who has the strangest career ever) & Tilly.

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- **THE BOURNE IDENTITY...** At the moment, the youngest movie being considered. (Remember, each movie has to be at least five years old) Exciting, thought provoking, sad, suspenseful, and, this is important to me with an espionage thriller, not an ounce of humor. I would have never thought of casting Damon and he's perfect. And as much as I love the next two, IDENTITY gets the nod because of Franka Potente's character, which, unfortunately, gets killed off at the very beginning of SUPREMECY. How these movies get ignored at Oscar time is a travesty and is a real indicator how the Academy Awards have lost touch.
- **BOYZ IN THE HOOD...** What a tremendous cast. Great coming of age story, except what's at stake here isn't your virginity or your choice of college, it's your LIFE. Gooding Jr. gets out of the car at the end of the flick because he actually had a Dad (Fishburne) that had drilled sense into him.
- **BREAKING AWAY...** Hilarious, heartbreaking, exhilarating, a perfect coming of age film about four young guys who didn't go to college living in a college town. Underrated ensemble piece. REFUND? REFUND!
- **BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI...** One of the first movies I remember seeing in the theater and damn if that bridge going down isn't as exciting to see today as it was then. A bit too long, and absolutely WAY too British (but I guess that's the point, eh?), but a real work of art with tremendous performances from Holden and Guinness.

C

- **CADDYSHACK...** I was fortunate to end up at this Comedy Writing seminar at the Tribeca film Festival a few years ago where the legendary Harold Ramis was speaking. (Go ahead and google Ramis and tell me he is not the unsung Comic Genius of the last 30 years.) Anyway, Ramis tells this story at the seminar. Although he had written ANIMAL HOUSE, STRIPES, MEATBALLS, he had never directed before. And Rodney had never been in a movie before. Come the first day of shooting and Ramis and Dangerfield and the rest of the cast and crew are sitting around having no idea how to get the movie started. No one's saying anything. And all of a sudden Rodney goes, "you know what is the worst thing about oral sex? the view." Everyone breaks up and off they go to make one of the ten greatest comedies of all time.
- **CASABLANCA...** So far, the oldest flick on this list ('42), and the only B&W. I could write endlessly of the perfection of this wartime flick, but in the end, the whole damn thing knocks you out because at it's core it's the timeless tale of a tough guy who's had his heart ripped out by a beautiful woman. Bogart of all people!
- **CHINATOWN...** When you have Nicholson, Polanski, Towne, Goldsmith, Dunaway and Huston all at their very best, how can you not end up with possibly the greatest detective thriller ever made?
- **CHRISTMAS STORY...** "You'll shoot your eye out, kid!" I had already read every word that the late, great Jean Shepherd had ever written, so I was thrilled they not only didn't blow this one, they created a classic for all times.

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- **CITIZEN KANE...** Look, it is NOT the greatest movie ever made, OK? However, the concept of having everything, yet having nothing at all, has never been portrayed better. Much has been made of the ahead of it's time cinematography by Gregg Toland and the direction and screenplay by Welles, but it's his performance as Kane that really makes this flick.
- **THE COMMITMENTS...** Too many years ago that I care to remember, I was a "drummer" in a rock band. (I use that drummer word with all apologies to Bonham, Moon, Grohl) In fact, the legendary Spins Nitely was the star of the band. We were five grubby, Southwest Philly neighborhood kids who had never been in a band before. I think in the three years I was in that band, we made \$17. Did that stop us from having the time of our lives? I think NOT! This flick COMPLETELY captures the unmitigated joy of making music, being in a band, felling like a God for five minutes. A real diamond from Alan Parker, an underrated director. By the way, talk about full circle, I ended up opening for the Commitments at the Keswick Theatre a couple years ago.
- **THE CONVERSATION...** Dark, moody, paranoiac, slow, brilliant, but not for everyone. Maybe Hackman's best performance ever (and that's saying a lot) and another classic flick from John Cazale who only made five films before he tragically passed away from cancer at 42. All five were nominated for Best Picture and four of them will end up being nominated for my 52.

D

- **A DAY AT THE RACES...** Released in 1937, it's at the moment, the oldest movie being nominated. Great bits, music and the legendary Dr. Hugo Hackenbush! Was there ever a more unique entertainer than Harpo? Tough call when I say this, but it's my fav Marx Brothers movie ever.
- **DEAD ZONE...** Won't make the 52, but this is my favorite Walken performance ever. I have watched it countless times. Is the only romantic lead that Walken is ever given? And this isn't saying much, but not only is it the best film adaptation of a King novel, it's actually BETTER than the book. THE ICE IS GOING TO BREAK!
- **DINER...** What a cast and what a film debut from Barry Levinson.
- **DOG DAY AFTERNOON...** Pacino's first film after GODFATHER II and this one really pushed him over the top. A gay bank robber? Who knew? It's also the first time I noticed Charles Durning who's still going strong AT 85 as Denis Leary's Father in RESCUE ME. Another one of the five films that John Cazale made. WYOMING?
- **DO THE RIGHT THING...** Geez, the OPENING CREDITS might be the best ever. Tremendous cast, screenplay, cinematography, soundtrack. I saw it in the theatre on opening night and it was TENSE. Spike Lee's best.

E

- **E.T. ...** Here's the problem with ET. When it came out, I was as swept up by it as anybody. When that bike lifts in the air, well, what kid hasn't dreamed of that? Perfect storytelling. Stunning score. However, it's still basically a kid's flick and I'm just not sure that, as terrific as it is, that a kid's flick will make the 52. Maybe that's a separate list, I don't know. It's not like it isn't a classic. Stay tuned.

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- **THE EXORCIST...** Plays what is a ridiculous concept completely straight and the end result might be the single scariest film of all time. Cool move making the Mother of the possessed child a real bitch. A real event when originally released and it still holds up magnificently.

F

- **FAIL SAFE...** Got screwed over because Kubrick made Columbia release the vastly inferior (is there an unfunnier dude than Peter Sellers?) **STRANGELOVE** before this cold war classic and the public ignored it at the time. Moviegoers now see it as the tense gem that it is. Great cast headed by Fonda, Larry Hagman (yes, THAT Larry Hagman), Ed Binns, and a nasty Walter Matthau, back when he took such heavy roles. One of the most unforgettable endings of all time.
- **FARGO...** Of course it's brilliant and funny and wild, but what I will always respect the most about **FARGO** is the fact that the first thing the film tells you is that "it's based on a true story" and it wasn't! They just said it for the hell of it. There's no one quirkier than the Coen Brothers. They miss more often than connect, but when they hit their mark, you end up with unique flicks like this. And the performance of Macy might be the most uncomfortable character ever. Almost unwatchable he is, he's that great.
- **FAST TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH...** Sean Penn's greatest performance ever, Mr. Hand, Phoebe Cates ripping off that red bikini top, Jennifer Jason's Leigh's amazing, gutsy performance, a terrific soundtrack, a terrific cast, it's got it all. Who doesn't love this film?
- **FRENCH CONNECTION...** Amazing car chase, an Oscar winning performance from Hackman, New York at it's grittiest, a completely unique and never talked about score by Don Ellis, with the entire flick played for real, unlike so many cop thrillers today that are laced with idiotic jokes.

G

- **GET SHORTY...** A rarity where I love the Elmore Leonard book and the movie was every bit as good. Funny, sexy, it's as good as any movie about making movies ever written. Is Dennis Farina always hilarious or what?
- **THE GODFATHER...** If I looked at my collection of movies and asked myself "which of these movies have I watched the most?", this would be it. Much has been written about how Coppola ultimately ended up glorifying these people, but whatever . . . It's **THE GODFATHER!**
- **GODFATHER II...** Let's get this straight, it is not better than **GODFATHER 1** as my former colleague Steve Fredericks and I used to argue about. In fact, the scenes in Cuba severely slow it down, so it's not even close to **GODFATHER 1**, but make no mistake about it, it's still a pretty damn great film. DeNiro. Cazale, and Pacino are excellent as usual, but Michael Gazzo as "Frankie Five Angels" and the late, great Bruno Kirby as a young Clemenza really steal the show.

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- **GOLDFINGER...** Yeah, I know it's a silly film, but when i was a kid I wanted to be James Bond more than anyone else in the world! Won't make the 52, but I had to mention it because besides being a hell of a lot of fun, it's, seriously, one of the most influential films ever. That whole bit that our film heroes do when they toss off a humorous line after a killing comes from Bond. "Shocking!" says James after he kills the bad guy by flipping an electric fan into the tub. Even the Bourne series has to tip it's hat to it's usage of exotic locales to the Bond series. And it's not like I'm some Bond freak, GOLDFINGER is the only Bond film I own. Oh, did I forget to mention the incredible title song!
- **THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY...** Like all Leone flicks, it's way too long, but there's so many moments of greatness, and any flick that has Morricone's ECSTASY OF GOLD in it HAS to be included.
- **GOODFELLAS...** Cool that, alphabetically speaking, it immediately follows THE GODFATHER'S, since the two are polar opposite mob films. So dynamic and exciting that Scorsese himself ripped it off with inferior carbon copies with CASINO and THE DEPARTED. Fantastic score and mark this down as the first film ever where when Deniro was on the screen, I was watching someone else. Of course that someone else was Joe Pesci who wins the only Oscar that film garners. "HOW THE FUCK AM I FUNNY!?" In fact, the F-bomb is dropped 236 times, over half of them by Pesci.
- **THE GRADUATE...** Still hard to believe they got away with this storyline in '67. Sometimes i think the real story of this flick is the fact that Hoffman only got the role after Warren Beatty and Redford passed. And either one of those guys would have made it a completely different film. Did you know Anne Bancroft was only six years older than Hoffman? Great supporting cast (my man Murray Hamilton!) and that legendary S&G score.
- **GROUNDHOG DAY...** A perfect romantic comedy with more of a darker edge than usual. Which is why Murray got the part to begin with. Harold Ramis considered Hanks, Travolta, among others, for the part, but decided against them because they were "too nice." Supposedly, Murray and Ramis argued so much during the filming, they have never talked since. I GOT YOU, BABE!

H

- **HALLOWEEN...** Saw it in NY on Christmas Day in '78 (long story) in the only theatre it was playing in the country. Big surprise the theatre was practically empty, which only made it that much scarier. What makes it all work is that at no point in the film do any of these teenagers even know there is a killer in town. Because of this, there's no "what the \$#@! is she going down the steps for" scenes. And of course, no horror film is worth its weight in scares without a terrifying soundtrack.
- **HANNAH AND HER SISTERS...** Although there's some good ones here and there, this is the last truly great Allen film with him actually in it. And a happy ending!
- **HEAVEN CAN WAIT...** Since the original film centered around boxing (HERE COMES MR. JORDAN), Warren Beatty was originally just gonna direct and produce this remake and it was gonna star Muhammed Ali! Ali turned it down, so Beatty quickly changed the sport to football and starred himself. What a great cast. Grodin and Cannon alone are worth the ticket.

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- **HOOSIERS...** Yeah, ordinarily I'm not that big on the midwest with cornfields and all that, but what can I tell you? I'm a hoops junkie and I have watched it countless times. The satin uni's, the black sneaks, the small gyms, it all works. As great as Hopper is as Frank Booth, THIS might be his best and most understated work. Brilliant score from a hero of mine, Jerry Goldsmith. And the romance between Hackman and Hershey doesn't get in the way, unlike the ridiculous Amy Madigan in FIELD OF DREAMS.

I

- **ITS A MAD MAD MAD MAD WORLD...** The Big W!!! Was the first movie I ever saw on the Wildwood boardwalk(The Strand!). Is it the only comedy ever to have an intermission. Seems like every great comic ever appeared in it, but here's a few of my particular favorites. Winters, Silvers, Falk, Ceasar, Adams, Shawn, Durante, Fell, Ford, and a million others. Great Gold soundtrack also. Anyone know where I can get the movie poster of it?
- **IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE...** We take it for granted, don't we? What a unique idea and a much darker film than people realize. Ah, the love of a son for his father, that's the root of the whole film and that aspect of it is often ignored.

J

- **JAWS...** The greatest action adventure movie ever made. Period. Saw it on the Ocean City boardwalk when it was originally released. Can you think of a better venue? JAWS was also the last movie (not counting special one-off "concert" films) to ever play the Tower. The TLA attempted to run a special summer series there and it was a disaster. So much so, that one summer afternoon, me, my brother and his wife were the ONLY ones in the 5000 seat theatre! I used to ride waves drunk in the ocean at night, but after this movie I never went in the ocean at night again. AND THAT'S A FACT. Someday I'm gonna buy the Mayor's (Played by the always great Murray Hamilton) blazer, the light blue one with the little anchor's on it.

K

- **KILL BILL VOL. 1...**Of course, it's stupid. This movie makes you think there's some Hit Men Local 98. And sometimes I feel a little bit guilty blowing the violence off as "cartoonish." BUT IT'S JUST SO MUCH FUN! (By the way, "Kill Bill Vol. 2 blows!")
- **KING KONG...** If you've been keeping score, THIS 1933 flick is now the oldest to be nominated and the fact that it's a monster movie is even more impressive. Totally kicks ass on any of the remakes.

L

- **THE LAST DETAIL...** A little known amazing performance from Jack Nicholson. Was made between EASY RIDER and CHINATOWN and it's the first f-bomb profanity laden performance ever really captured on the screen.

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- **LAWRENCE OF ARABIA...** An "epic" can mean many different things, but make no mistake about it, LAWRENCE is the greatest "epic" ever? Quite possibly the greatest cinematography and soundtrack pairing ever! One of the few films on this list with no love interest at all. In fact, unless some of the camels are female, there's barely any women in it at all. You must see it on the big screen and although you can say that about many films, none more than this one.
- **THE LIMEY...** I love Terrence Stamp. In ANYTHING! And this may be his greatest performance ever as a man out to avenge the death of a daughter that he never really knew (maybe). Luiz Guzman, Peter Fonda, Barry Newman and Lesley Anne Warren & Nicky Katt make for a dynamite supporting cast in yet another Soderbergh flick. Moody, slow and terrific.
- **LOST IN TRANSLATION...** I admit that this one isn't for everyone, but it was released at the right age for me, and anyone who has ever spent any time on the road, you should connect as deeply with it as I did. And all right, Scarlett is awesome!

M

- **MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE...** The '62 version with Sinatra, Lawrence Harvey and (if you only know her from "Murder, She Wrote", you won't believe it), the positively evil Angela Lansbury. The weirdest political assassination thriller you'll ever see, it still holds up and THIS is Frank's greatest role ever, NOT "Eternity." Only marred when it forces in Janet Leigh as a love interest. (Not that I don't understand a movie producer wanting Janet Leigh hanging around the set)
- **MANHATTAN...** At times, I wanna tell the entire cast to just stop your whining and SHUT UP!, but the Gershwin music, the jokes, the amazing B&W photography, overcomes all the bullshit moralizing from Allen. And as you know, it ended up being TOTAL bullshit as far as Allen is concerned.
- **THE MATRIX...** The most ridiculous dialogue in a movie, like EVER, and the two worst sequels of all time, but dag, what an exciting film. Effects and a look you never saw before, a hip soundtrack, a role that did not require Reeves to speak, an underrated, gutsy performance from Carrie-Anne Moss, and a hilarious, villainous turn from Hugo Weaving.
- **MEAN STREETS...** Too many religious overtones and it doesn't hold up as great as it once did, but if you were around when it was released, the dialogue blew you away, It's hard to believe today, but you just didn't hear people on the screen talk the way you did on the corner. And to watch DeNiro, Keitel, David Proval (who would turn up years later on THE SOPRANOS as Richie Aprile) in their early youths is tremendous fun. Scorsese's tremendous feel for using the right song at the right moment is on display right at the beginning of his career. Without giving away the ending, I will tell you that Springsteen uses the same ending for JUNGLELAND and he has credited this film as being a tremendous inspiration.
- **MIDNIGHT COWBOY...** Depressing, funny, psychedelic, but in the end it's one of the best "buddy" movies ever. Hoffman (who was robbed of an Oscar by John Wayne in "True Grit") and Voight are magnificent together. The only X-rated movie ever to win an Oscar. (It's since been stripped of that rating) Saw it with my mother at these tiny bowling alley thin theatre called the Eric Rittenhouse which for some reason always got the best flicks first. I'M WALKING HERE!

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- **MIDNIGHT RUN...** On hand, it's admirable that there wasn't a sequel, on the other hand, I could have watched DeNiro & Grodin make five more films together, their chemistry was that good. Just so much fun to watch and what a supporting cast! Farina, Kotto, Pantoliono, Ashton, all at the top of their game. "Watch your cigarettes around this guy, Jack."
- **MILLERS CROSSING...** "What's the Rumpus?" Arguably the Coen Brothers greatest work and for some unknown reason this film has fell through the cracks. A tricky, complex, fun script, beautifully shot by Barry Sonnenfeld, with a lush Carter Burwell score. Another top rate cast headed by Gabriel Byrne and Albert Finney, joined by Buscemi, Turturro Marcia Gay Harden, Jon Polito (A West Catholic grad that my brother did shows with) and J. E. Freeman. You'll never hear "Danny Boy" ever again without thinking of this film. Seek this one out!
- **MOONSTRUCK...** A perfect romantic comedy, especially for guys, because one of the main plot lines of the movie is "why do men chase women?" This movie gets it. Great cast and score and it's my fav Cage performance. "HE TOOK MY HAND!"

N

- **THE NATURAL...** Saw it twice the day it opened. Absolutely stunning. Forget the fact that you might be able to call it the best sports movie ever made, it's one of the best movies ever MADE, period. Newman's magnificent score, the cinematography, the amazing ensemble cast. Other than the fact that it might be ten minutes or so too long, it's freakin' perfect! Imagine never knowing your Dad and you find out it's Roy Hobbs!
- **NATURAL BORN KILLERS...** It won't make the 52 because; to quote Stone's ex, "all that amazing talent to produce this ugliness?" However, it's a stunning film and had major shock value when it came out. Plus Rodney!
- **NETWORK...** And isn't it amazing that this and KILLERS are next to each other alphabetically? They both deal with the power of celebrity and the blurry line that separates real news from entertainment. However, NETWORK is the classic of the two. If I had to name one film that amazingly predicted the future (while it was extremely entertaining along the way), NETWORK would be that film. Over talky, but that's part of its charm. I WANT YOU TO GO TO THE WINDOW!
- **NORTH BY NORTHWEST...** It's just too much damn fun!

O

- **ODD MAN OUT...** James Mason stars as a wounded IRA man on the lamb. An absolute B&W classic that to this day I have never talked to one person who has ever seen it besides me.
- **ON THE WATERFRONT...** When the proverbial gun is put to my crotch, and I'm asked, what is the greatest drama ever made, THIS one is always mentioned immediately. THIS is Brando's finest performance, not STREETCAR. Steiger, Cobb, Marie-Saint, Malden, brilliant B&W, and what a score (his only!) from Leonard Bernstein. I COULD HAVE BEEN A CONTENDER!

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- **ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST...** Bizarre operatic western that's almost impossible to watch from beginning to end, but it's great moments are untouchable. Henry Fonda (as a role reversal bad guy), Charles Bronson and the ridiculously gorgeous Claudia Cardinale. A must see.
- **ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST...** Geez, what to say about this one? I read the book AND saw the play before I saw the movie and BOTH of them are WAY superior. The movie plays it for belly laughs whenever it can, and the book and play barely had a laugh in it. Having said all that, it's still a deep and complex and, yes, funny flick. Yes, Jack's great, but the Chief and all the side characters such as Billy Bibbitt and Martini steal the show for me. One other problem with CUCKOO. I had someone very close to me spend YEARS in a facility like this, and because of that, I really don't think I'll ever be able to watch this movie ever again.
- **ONE FROM THE HEART...** Do you know this flick routinely appears on "WORST movie of all time" lists? Directed by Coppola, it bankrupted his studio and many would say he was never the same director again. (Although, I dig THE OUTSIDERS & RUMBLE FISH which he made right after HEART) It's the story of two bored lovers living in Vegas set to the music of Tom Waits, so you know I'm a sucker for the film right there since Waits is one of my all-time musical idols. It's a love story and my wife and I saw it up NY right before we got married, so I guess it's got that going for it too. A few years ago, it got re-released as a "lost classic" on DVD and someone from the Prince Theatre in downtown Philly heard me mention on my radio show that I had many vintage posters and stills from the film. Well, they were showing the film on the big screen and asked me to lend them my stuff to put in the lobby, which I did. When I showed up they had off it displayed in the lobby and all of it had these little stickers on it that said "FROM THE COLLECTION OF BIG DADDY GRAHAM." which made it appear like I was some major art collector or Dennis Hopper or something. Really got a hoot out of that!
- **ORDINARY PEOPLE...** It really steams me when you hear the biggest crime in Oscar history was when ORDINARY "stole" the Best Picture Oscar from RAGING BULL. Look, I love BULL as much as the next guy and it's absolutely gonna make the 52, but to tell you the truth, ORDINARY IS the better picture. BULL may have more classic scenes and that amazing DeNiro performance, but it rambles on at the end. PEOPLE is the one psychiatry film that works for me because that kid absolutely has a great reason to be in the headjam he's in. A dead brother, and the all time Mother from Hell, played to perfection by Mary Tyler Moore. In fact, when I salute the All Time Movie Villains, she's right up there with Hannibal Lecter. And who wouldn't want a father like Donald Sutherland in this film? Of course, Timothy Hutton, who holds the whole film together with his stunning portrayal as the troubled suicidal kid, also deservedly won the Oscar. Not a bad note in the entire perfect film.

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P

- **PLATOON...** Not nuts about the ending, but the rest of it is as good as a war movie gets. I love when Keith David is talking to Charlie Sheen, who's cleaning latrines and says to him, "what's a nice white boy like you doing here anyway?" Sheen replies that he wanted to do his part, that he didn't think it was right that wars were always fought by the poor. David turns to him and says, "Damn, You gotta be rich to even THINK like that!" PLATOON is still probably the only 'Nam movie directed by a guy (Oliver Stone, which is who Sheen is basically playing) who actually served there. Yeah, that's Johnny drama playing the severely disturbed soldier.
- **PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM...** Directed by Herbert Ross, which makes it the only Woody Allen movie ever NOT directed by Allen. And it shows. And it's based in San Fran, which also makes it unique for an Allen movie. "You can reach me at Frozen Tundra 7-4756."
- **PSYCHO...** Has the horrible tacked on ending with the psychiatrist explaining to us what we just saw (like we're a bunch of idiots who didn't understand it on our own), but the rest of it is just brilliant. My older sister took me to this on a Saturday evening at the Benn Theatre (PSYCHO is the FIRST movie I ever saw at night), then ditched me when she got in the theatre to hang with her boyfriend. So you can imagine how scared shitless I was! Holds up great today and that opening scene with Janet Leigh, HELLO!
- **PULP FICTION...** Won't make the 52 because Tarantino ruins the film every second he's on the screen. And those endless scenes between Willis and his ridiculous girlfriend don't help matters much either, but the rest of it? Just too much fun and how Samuel L. didn't win an Oscar for this is beyond me... *Here's what Vice President Bill Matz has to say about PULP:* Samuel L. Jackson's role alone makes this movie one of the most entertaining and re-watchable flicks of all-time. Add to that Tarantino's classic out-of-order story telling, the Uma Thurman and Travolta story, and the ridiculously zany sodomy scenes and Pulp Fiction becomes, easily, a top ten on anybody's list. Some complain about the length and Bruce Willis' time on screen, but I don't have a problem with either aspect. And how many movies, 15 years after their debut, have fans to this day debating just WHAT THE HELL WAS IN JULES' BRIEFCASE???

Q

- **THE QUIET MAN...** Corny as hell, but impossible not to love. Top three Wayne performances and Maureen's not too bad on the eyes, is she? Next time you watch it, check this out. Wayne puffs two times on every cigarette in the movie, then flicks it away.

R

- **RADIO DAYS...** Little known Woody Allen film that is a real gem. It's a salute to an era when families huddled around the radio for entertainment. It's also a story that revolves around a time period when families were forced to live together longer due to financial restraints, which this country may be moving towards again. Not a bad note in the film. It's perfect. That's Seth Green playing a young Woody.

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- **RAGING BULL...** Amazing how awesome this film is when you consider there's not a nice person in it. When pressed, I'll say that DeNiro in this movie gives the greatest performance by any actor EVER. Fans chat about the weight DeNiro put on and ignore the terrific shape he put himself in as a boxer. "Don't overcook it. It defeats its own purpose."
- **RESERVOIR DOGS...** Tarantino's most perfect movie. Would make a great play considering most of it takes place in one room. Amazing cast, and as always, great choice of oldies. By the way, never got the title. WHY AM I MR. PINK?!
- **ROAD WARRIOR...** Brilliant stunts, Gibson at his best, and damn, if it doesn't look like the world is heading that way. And I love that kid with the boomerang. I AM THE AYATOLLAH OF ROCK AND ROLLAH!
- **ROCKY...** Imagine how BETTER of a classic this would be if the fight scenes has been more realistic. Leaving that out of it, it's a beautiful, beautiful film. Seeing our streets the way they're supposed to be seen. The pre-steroid Stallone is just perfect as the lovable, lonely lug. And of course Bill Conti's score is only one of the Top Ten soundtracks EVER and it infuriates me when other cities use it at sporting events to pump the crowd up. IT'S OUR SONG!
- **RUTHLESS PEOPLE...** Another gem from the Abrahams, Zucker & Zucker team that brought you AIRPLANE and the NAKED GUN series. Features Danny DeVito at his best, a smoking Anita Morris (Stones fans might remember her from the SHE WAS HOT video) and a young, bleach blonded, hilarious Bill Pullman.

S

- **SAVING PRIVATE RYAN...** I don't like the last 30 minutes of it at all, but the first 40 are so mindboggling, I have to at least nominate it. I love all the "minor" characters like Sizemore, Burns and crew.
- **SCARFACE...** Yeah, it's too long, it's ridiculously violent, it's become way too trendy, but Pacino's performance is memorizing from beginning to end. And the supporting cast never gets enough credit. Loggia, Pfeiffer, Abraham, Harris Yulin, Bauer, all great. WHO SAYS YOU WAS A COP, MEL.
- **SCHINDLER'S LIST...** An amazing film that unfortunately for its subject matter is difficult to watch on any repeated basis. And it took nerve to put on the ending with all the real people. That could have easily NOT worked. Although, he's always working, I often wondered is Ralph Fiennes didn't regret taking the role of a Nazi monster because he never became the big star that he was predicted to be. Who can forget the girl in the red coat?
- **SE7EN...** With the possible exception of BLUE VELVET, is there a darker film on this list? Why then, do I find it so irresistible to watch? Is there something wrong with me? Freeman & Pitt are perfect together, and Spacey? Terrific. The single most shocking ending EVER.
- **SEX, LIES & VIDEO TAPE...** Terrifically sexy first film from Steven Soderbergh starring an absolutely smoking Laura San Giacomo and a weird as always James Spader. Seek this one out!

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- **SEXY BEAST...** Ben Kingsley's best performance and that's saying a lot! He plays a mobster who won't allow his ex-con buddy to start a new crime free life, played expertly by Ray Winstone. Look for Ian McShane from DEADWOOD, he's even darker in this! The cockney accents are so severe, you MUST watch this with subtitles.
- **SHAMPOO...** If you were single and unattached like I was when I saw this flick, and you didn't wanna BE Warren Beatty, well then you're either batting for the other team, or you are a dead man!
- **SHANE...** Not big on Westerns, but Alan Ladd and Jack Palance are extraordinary and the cinematography is breathtaking. COME BACK, SHANE!
- **SID & NANCY...** Gary Oldham's finest performance and that's saying a lot. Somehow, through all the depravity and sordidness and drugs, it's a great love story, despite the fact that Webb's performance of Nancy is so annoying you wanna shoot her right up on the screen. As in with a gun, not skag. I thought the Sex Pistol's were awesome and I loved that whole time period. Used to go up NY and hand around the Mudd Club and all that, thinking I was a punk rocker. Silly, eh? But the music was sure great! BORING, SIDNEY, BORING!
- **SILENCE OF THE LAMBS...** I was opening up for Manhattan Transfer at Resorts and my wife and I decided to go see the 430 show in Pleasantville which would give me enough time to be backstage by 730. BIG MISTAKE. The movie shook me down to my socks and I really had to shake it off before I went on. Hopkins is only on the screen for 25 minutes and it feels like two hours. (By the way, that's the shortest screen time ever for a Best Actor Oscar) Not a Foster fan, but she's dynamite in this. So's Ted Levine as Bill. Howard Shore's score really makes the movie happen. I don't like it how they turn Hannibal into a superman at the end of the flick and I hated that they ended the movie on a dumb joke, but this one's a horrifying winner.
- **SINGING IN THE RAIN...** All the corniness works because it was written that way intentionally. Incredible color and of course one of the great dance scenes ever. One great song after another and amazing color.
- **SIXTH SENSE...** No, I didn't see the ending coming and it's still a terrific film to watch even AFTER you know it. Fun seeing all the Philly street scenes. Absolutely bone-chilling scary in some parts. The scene where the always great Toni Collette breaks down and cries in the car destroys me. Only the moment at the funeral where the kid was poisoned doesn't work for me. People love to point out that all of Night's other films suck, but if he had only ever made this one film, it be a wonderful accomplishment.
- **SLAPSHOT...** One of the funniest movies ever made and at the same time an almost sad look at a man (Paul Newman) who doesn't know when to give it up. And it accurately portrays small town Pa also. But make no mistake about what it truly is, HILARIOUS!
- **SOME LIKE IT HOT...** Marilyn at HER hottest and Lemmon & Curtis are terrific together. Screwball, romantic comedies don't get better than this and one of the best last lines ever delivered by the wonderful Joe E. Brown.
- **STAR WARS...** The last time I watched it I wasn't all that impressed, but when it was originally released, I, and the rest of the world, saw it about ten times in the theatre, so I have to give it its props. One in a million soundtrack from the amazing John Williams.

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- **THE STING...** So much fun to watch heavyweights like Newman, Shaw, Durning and Redford going at it, eh? I'm an Edward Hopper fan, so you can imagine how much I love these sets. Had never heard the song SOLACE before this movie and it's now one of my all time instrumentals.
- **SUNSET BLVD...** Just like Bruce's GLORY DAYS, this flick's lesson is to be careful about hanging on to the past. William Holden's narration throughout is compelling and Swanson's swan song down the steps is unforgettable. Yes, that's Jack Webb as Artie Green.

T

- **TAXI DRIVER...** "You talking to me?" I was so stunned the first time I saw it at the Eric Milgram that I just sat there and watched it again. Which back in the day you could do. I swear to you I can recite entire passages from it to this day. The absolute best piece of art on loneliness EVER. A friend of mine was once working in SF and he hated it. He was just homesick beyond belief. I sent him an ad that I found in the Village Voice where anyone with a mohawk haircut could get half price admission to a midnight showing of TAXI DRIVER at this Greenwich Village theatre. (Imagine sitting in THAT theatre!) My buddy opened his mail and realized he had no one out there to share this joke with and quit that very day and flew home. True story.
- **TENDER MERCIES...** Duvall won an Oscar as a washed up alcoholic country song writer who gets a second chance, and boy, did he deserve it. Wilford Brimley, as always, excellent in a supporting role.
- **TERMINATOR...** Absolutely perfect sci-fi flick where all the characters have an exact reason to be doing what they are doing. Could anyone have found a more ideal role for Arnold and Michael Biehn's performance is, as always, underrated. I have continued to love these characters through T3, the TV show, and I can't wait for the new one (with Christain Bale) to hit the theatres. I'LL BE BACK!
- **THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY...** You're lucky if a comedy has one classic moment, this one has about ten! The underrated Matt Dillon steals the show for me. BRETT FAVVVVVVVV-RAAAAAH!
- **THREE DAYS OF THE CONDOR...** The reason I love the "Bourne" series so much is that there's not a bit of humor in them. That's the way I like my thrillers. I never got movies like BEVERLY HILLS COP or LETHAL WEAPON. What are they? Comedies with killing in them? But I love GOLDFINGER, which is guilty of the same thing, so whatever floats your boat, right? CONDOR is directed by the late, great (he was a terrific actor too) Sydney Pollock and stars Redford who at this point in his career always had a knack for picking tight scripts. Marred by the fact that Faye Dunaway's role is in it for no good reason, but it all still clicks.
- **THIS IS SPINAL TAP...** The record signing with no one there, the props that don't work, whenever anything like this happens in real life, it's become a real "spinal tap" moment. Is there a better character actor out there than Christopher Guest? Here's to Nigel Tufnel and amps that go to 11!

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- **TITANIC**... The love story is forced at times, it's WAY too long, Billy Zane almost single handedly (no pun intended) sinks the film, but geez, when the ice finally does hit that ship, it's fantastic filmmaking.
- **TO LIVE & DIE IN LA**... Again, another cop thriller just the way I like them, with no humor. Great cast includes William Petersen, Willem Defoe, Dean Stockwell, John Turturro and another outstanding car chase directed by William Friedkin.
- **TRAFFIC**... What a cast! Clever interweaving of plot lines that tell the tragic story of just how pointless the war on drugs is if it doesn't start at home. Benicio Del Toro in a role of a lifetime. And as usual, Luiz Guzman turns in a quality performance. Love that dude.
- **TRAINING DAY**... Denzel deserved the Oscar, no question, he dominates the screen like Pacino in SCARFACE, but Ethan Hawke gives an amazing performance going toe to toe with him. And that scene where he's gonna get blown away in the tub? Dag!!! Throw in supporters such as Macy Gray, Scott Glenn, Snoop, and Eve Mendes in the buff? What a flick!
- **TRUE ROMANCE**... Incredible cast and a lot of (although extremely violent) fun, TRUE contains TWO absolutely classic scenes. The verbal confrontation between Walken and Hopper and the fight scene between Patricia Arquette and Gandolfini. Written, but not directed, by Tarantino.
- **TWELVE (12) ANGRY MEN**... What can be said about 12 Angry Men other than it might very well be the best movie ever made? This was Sidney Lumet's first directing gig, and in my opinion, his very best. The casting was brilliant, with Henry Fonda playing the perfect hero, and Cobb, Marshall, and Begley playing spectacularly believable villains. Cobb single-handedly steals the movie for me, as he portrays a stubborn father who refuses to change his mind. Another great thing about this movie: it basically takes place in one room, and never loses your attention. Now THAT'S the mark of a great film. *(Written by my producer Josh Winters)*

U

- **UNFORGIVEN**... Not a Western fan, but damn, this one's a classic. How come no one ever nominates Clint as an actor? He got robbed again this year with GRAN TORINO. UNFORGIVEN's final 25 minutes are as great as SAVING PRIVATE RYAN'S first 25 and I've watched those minutes countless times. DESERVES HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS.
- **USUAL SUSPECTS**... Have no idea what any of it's about, but the cast is electric and the ending is one for the ages. Underrated score by John Ottman. Keyser Soze!

V

- **VERDICT**... Newman's greatest performance, which is saying A LOT. After 12 ANGRY MEN, this is my fav courtroom drama. With James Mason, Jack Warden, and Charlotte Rampling as the treacherous woman in Newman's life who gets punched out harder than any woman has ever been punched out on screen.

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W

- **WEST SIDE STORY...** The best musical ever filmed, despite a couple monumentally bad choices of casting. Another gem from the great Robert Wise.
- **WHAT'S UP DOC?...** Peter Bogdonavich's salute to 40's style slapstick comedies with Streisand, Ryan O'Neill and the late, great Madeline Kahn.
- **WHEN HARRY MET SALLY...** The finest Woody Allen movie ever made without Allen having anything to do with it. (Does that make sense?) God, I loved the late great Bruno Kirby. I'LL HAVE WHAT SHE'S HAVING!
- **WITNESS...** Shot in Philly and Lancaster county, a real gem of a crooked cop thriller starring Harrison Ford, a gorgeous Kelly McGillis and Craig Shoemaker.
- **THE WIZARD OF OZ...** Seriously, who doesn't know every word? And if you really stop and think about it, it's one of the strangest films ever made, even to this day.

Y

- **Y TU MAMA TAMBIEN...** From Mexico, starring the amazingly curvy Ana Lopez Mercado as a woman with a secret who somehow ends up with two teenage boys on one of the oddest and most moving road trips ever.

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What a headache. Finally, after six months, and THOUSANDS of phone calls and e-mails, here they are. I left off some of the greatest films ever. Remember, every movie had to be at least five years old and there were no animated films. There were some odd movies like THE CONVERSATION that got left off, despite their brilliance, because they are just not the kind of film that I watch over and over again. And in the end, I went with the flicks that I have watched over and over and over again. Thanks so much for your participation in this. Remember, these are in alphabetical order, I am not ranking one film over another.

AIRPLANE	KING KONG
ALIENS	LAWRENCE OF ARABIA
ANIMAL HOUSE	MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE
ANNIE HALL	MILLER'S CROSSING
APOCALYPSE NOW	MOONSTRUCK
BLAZING SADDLES	THE NATURAL
BLUE VELVET	ON THE WATERFRONT
BOURNE IDENTITY	ORDINARY PEOPLE
BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER KWAI	PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM
CADDYSHACK	PSYCHO
CASABLANCA	RAGING BULL
CHINATOWN	RESERVOIR DOGS
THE COMMITMENTS	SCARFACE (1983)
DOG DAY AFTERNOON	SCHINDLER'S LIST
DO THE RIGHT THING	SE7EN
THE EXORCIST	SILENCE OF THE LAMBS
FAIL SAFE	SLAPSHOT
FAST TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH	SOME LIKE IT HOT
THE FRENCH CONNECTION	TERMINATOR
GET SHORTY	TRAFFIC
THE GODFATHER	TRAINING DAY
GODFATHER II	TWELVE ANGRY MEN
GOODFELLAS	THE VERDICT
THE GRADUATE	WEST SIDE STORY
HOOSIERS	THE WIZARD OF OZ
IT'S A MAD MAD MAD MAD WORLD	
IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE	
JAWS	