

THE BADLANDS COLLECTIVE  
*presents*



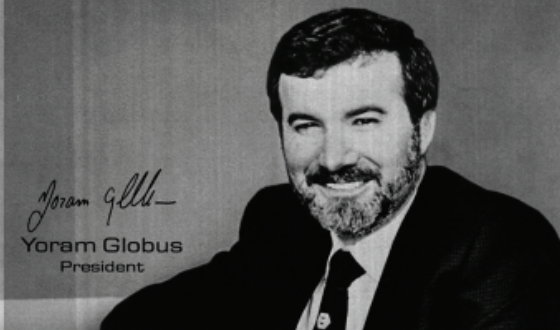
A TRIBUTE TO  
**CANNON**



THE COMPANY OF THE FUTURE



Menahem Golan  
Chairman



Yoram Globus  
President

Sleaze. Schlock. Hustling.

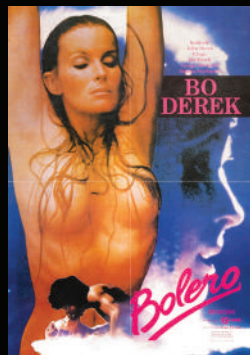
These are some of the words that come to mind when people think of the heyday of the Cannon Group. And these words are valid, but so are some others.

Adventurousness. Invention. Independence.

In May 1979, cousins Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus took over the ailing Israeli film studio Cannon, and throughout the 1980s they set about a course of domination of the international film market. "We came to America to make American movies, and to bring them to the world not via major companies," said Golan. And in this they were successful. But the foreign outsiders were always regarded as crass and shady by the establishment, who nicknamed them 'The Go-Go Boys' and 'The Bad News Jews.'

Golan and Globus had grown up on cinema and had a real passion for it. They prided themselves on going to movies rather than playing tennis or lapping the Hollywood cocktail party circuit. Before becoming a mogul, Golan had started his career as a director, at one point working for Roger Corman, and in total directing over 40 movies, including the Oscar-nominated *Operation Thunderbolt* (1978) about the Entebbe airport raid. But their love of cinema was all-opportunities, and their *modus operandi* was by-any-means-necessary.

They popularised the ninja craze, with movies like *Enter the Ninja* (1981) and the *American Ninja* series. They violently exploited the class division and social paranoia of the Reagan era, with vigilante action pictures like Charles Bronson's *Death Wish* sequels and a range of Chuck Norris pictures, including the *Delta Force* and *Missing in Action* franchises. Their *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1981) and *Bolero* (1984) were essentially just excuses for Sylvia Kristel and Bo Derek to stay topless. Their musical *The Apple* (1980) was a chintzy attempt at something like *Tommy* that was laughed off the screen by critics, their breakdance film *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo* (1984) has gone down in infamy as one the most opportunistic sequel titles in film history, and their version of *Hercules* (1983) had Lou Ferrigno throwing a bear from land into outer space. In a recent documentary about Cannon, one participant offered this description of *Ninja III: The Domination* (1984): "[It] managed to take *The Exorcist*, a ninja movie, and combine it with *Flashdance*."





# A TRIBUTE TO CANNON

## #1 - Cannon and Hard-Boiled Authors

Prince Charles Cinema, Monday 14 September, 2015



**BARFLY (1987)**



**52 PICK-UP (1986)**

6.25pm Cannon trailers; 6.45pm intro; 6.50pm BARFLY (99 mins)

8.30pm intermission / Cannon trailers; 8.50pm intro; 8.55pm 52 PICK-UP (111 mins); 10.45pm finish

Great Hollywood lore: *Barfly* was made because director Barbet Schroeder marched into Cannon's offices and threatened to cut off his fingers if they didn't finance it. A poignant, darkly comic **Charles Bukowski**-scripted tale of boozy self-destruction, it satisfied Cannon's desires for marketability (it was a barroom brawl picture starring matinee idols Mickey Rourke and Faye Dunaway) and for respectability (written by a celebrated author, realised by a quality team.) Loose, tough, sad, sweet and moving, the film is also notable for cinematographer Robby Müller's invention of the now ubiquitous Kino Flo lighting kit, which enabled him to shoot the dingy saloon interiors with a luminous clarity.

*52 Pick-Up's* marketable elements similarly include a lurid potboiler premise and the casting of popular stars, with Roy Scheider as a businessman drawn into a seedy world of bribery, murder and vice, and Ann-Margret as his tough, loyal wife - but rather than a throwaway piece of exploitation, it's an expert one, written by genre master **Elmore Leonard** (who called it his favourite film adaptation of his work) and directed by John Frankenheimer, the smart Hollywood craftsman of *Seconds* and *The Manchurian Candidate*. Twisty, twisted and jolting, this does justice to the traditions of both classic film noir and of Golan-Globus action-sleaze.

## #2 - Cannon and Konchalovsky

Regent Street Cinema, Sunday 20 September, 2015



**RUNAWAY TRAIN (1985)**



**SHY PEOPLE (1987)**

2pm - Cannon trailers; 2.20pm intro; 2.25pm RUNAWAY TRAIN (110mins)

4.15pm intermission / Cannon trailers; 4.30pm intro; 4.35pm SHY PEOPLE (118 mins); 6.35pm finish

Nobody in the Cannon stable typifies the moments when the studio crossed between exploitation and art quite like director Andrei Konchalovsky. A Russian émigré to America, Konchalovsky started his career writing Tarkovsky movies like *Andrei Rublev* only to later wind up directing the Sylvester Stallone or Kurt Russell cop flick *Tango & Cash*. In between, he made the two masterpieces we're showing in this double-bill.

Both of these films have genre trappings: *Runaway Train* is a prison-break movie, *Shy People* a backwoods adventure. And they both feature scenery-chewing melodrama. But they go through and beyond sensation to become serious, transcendent studies of primordial emotion. *Runaway Train* - quite simply one of the best action movies ever made, with a screenplay by Akira Kurosawa and Oscar-nominated leading performances from Jon Voight and Eric Roberts - works on the level of adventure, as the leads try to escape from the relentless eponymous train, and also becomes an epic meditation on masculine brutality and doom. *Shy People*, which has an astonishing score by Tangerine Dream, and a Barbara Hershey performance that won Best Actress at Cannes in 1987, but which was wounded by a botched distribution deal at the height of Cannon's financial troubles and is still unavailable on DVD, is a culture clash drama of passions, values and ghosts, which Roger Ebert called "[one] of the great lost films of recent years."

# A TRIBUTE TO CANNON

## #3 - Cannon and Christopher Reeve Brixton Ritzy Cinema, Sunday 27 September, 2015



### STREET SMART (1987)

11am Cannon trailers; 11.15am intro; 11.20 STREET SMART (97 mins)

1pm intermission/trailers; 1.15pm intro; 1.20pm SUPERMAN IV (93 mins); 2.55pm finish



### SUPERMAN IV: THE QUEST FOR PEACE

The conventional wisdom is that Christopher Reeve only agreed to star in *Superman IV* if the studio would fund his passion project, the gritty thriller *Street Smart*. If that's true, it's revealing about the Faustian pacts showbiz players have to make for their dreams to come true, but an inside source of ours tells us it might be more legend than fact. Regardless, this double-bill of Reeve films for Cannon shows a lot about their mode of production - how they both gave opportunities to talented people and also exploited their name recognition, and how both their overspending and underspending brought about the beginning of the end for the company.

Both of these films deal with journalistic integrity: In *Street Smart*, Reeve plays a Manhattan scribe who fabricates a story about a pimp, only to get his karmic payback when a real pimp (Morgan Freeman, in a rare villainous role) tries to use Reeve as an alibi and draws him into his world of threat. In *Superman IV*, we see digs at Rupert Murdoch in the form of the crass publisher 'David Warfield' taking over the Daily Planet and spreading opportunistic rumours about the Man of Steel.

This is about where the similarities end: *Street Smart* is tough, low-budget and gripping; Freeman's terrifying work earned the actor his first Oscar nomination; and if the story ends a little neatly, teetering on racial scapegoating and letting the moral greys of Reeve's character off the hook, it's at least a journey of some urban texture, with a combination of real New York settings and Toronto stand-ins creating a vision of the Big Apple. *Superman IV*, which features Supes trying to rid the world of nuclear weapons, and which is sometimes witty, adventurous and fun, showed Cannon both overextending themselves on a large-budget franchise film and condemning themselves by trying to cut corners. Milton Keynes (!) stands in for Metropolis, some of the superimposition effects work is unconvincing, and the villain, Nuclear Man, played by Mark Pillow, is a hulking, emotionless, unthreatening dud. While we can laugh about it now, and appreciate it as a telling piece of film history, nobody was laughing at Cannon when *Superman IV* was internationally derided as a typical Cannon B-picture, underperformed at the box-office, and not only failed to help Cannon from the financial doldrums but actually hastened its demise.

## Commercial breaks



In addition to the 35mm feature films we'll be playing in this season in tribute to Cannon, we've also managed to source some 35mm trailers to play as our guests take their seats. So not only will you get to see some of the greatest Cannon films, you'll also get a taste of the full range of varied, sometimes terrible, films they produced.

Trailers we'll be showing include *Treasure of the Four Crowns*, *Revenge of the Ninja*, *Ninja III: The Domination*, *Missing in Action*, *Missing in Action 2*, *Rappin'*, *Lifeforce*, *American Ninja*, *Invasion USA*, *King Solomon's Mines*, *Runaway Train*, *The Delta Force*, *Hercules 2*, *Murphy's Law*, *Dangerously Close*, *Invaders from Mars*, *American Ninja 2*, *Superman IV*, *Missing in Action III*, *Hero and the Terror*, *Cyborg*, *River of Death*, *Delta Force 2*, *New Year's Evil*, *Death Wish 2*, *The Company of Wolves*, *Cobra*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*, *52 Pick-Up*, *Over the Top*, *Masters of the Universe*, *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, *Captain America*, *Street Knight*, *Hellbound*.

# DEEPER INTO CANNON

## From the archives

Out of many worth highlighting, here's a random dozen Cannon titles you might want to check out to get a flavour of their varied back catalogue.

### SCHIZOID (1980)

In a sign of the dual impulses to come, one of the early Golan-Globus productions for Cannon both cashed in on the slasher craze and featured great actors like Klaus Kinski and Christopher Lloyd.

### THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN (1982)

Golan, Globus and director Boaz Davidson remade their Israeli sex comedy smash *Lemon Popsicle* for American audiences but forgot to change the cultural references. A coming of age film that has been both praised as moving and rejected as bizarre.

### LOVE STREAMS (1984)

John Cassavetes's penultimate film, impossible without the financing of Cannon, is mournful, desperately witty and legitimately a masterpiece.

### BREAKIN' 2: ELECTRIC BOOGALOO (1984)

The legend itself, more referenced for its title than actually seen.

### AMERICAN NINJA (1985)

Michael Dudikoff isn't a name heard much by the mainstream, but the fresh-faced star led this unlikely ninja hit to a 4-film franchise.

### INVASION U.S.A. (1985)

The Cannon movie where Chuck Norris defended the homeland rather than fighting the terrorists abroad.

### KING SOLOMON'S MINES (1985)

Less a classic adventure adaptation than a shameless attempt to cash in on Indiana Jones. Sharon Stone was cast by mistake when Golan asked for "That Stone woman!" He meant Kathleen Turner from *Romancing the Stone*.

### FOOL FOR LOVE (1985)

One of the great directors financed by Cannon was Robert Altman, who adapted this Sam Shepard play and cast Shepard alongside Kim Basinger, Harry Dean Stanton and Randy Crawford.

### TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2 (1986)

Creator Tobe Hooper refused to make another chilling horror classic, and instead played up the satirical aspects, turning this into a gory comedy. "Bubba's got a girlfriend!" *TCM 2* performed respectably at the box office, but Golan and Globus were horrified at the bait-and-switch.

### TOUGH GUYS DON'T DANCE (1987)

Written and directed by Norman Mailer, starring Ryan O'Neal and Isabelle Rossellini, the pedigree was there for a hit, but this was a commercial and critical bomb, albeit one that has its cult devotees.

### BLOODSPORT (1988)

After saturating the market with Chuck Norris and Charles Bronson flicks, the declining Cannon Group had a brief ray of box office hope in a new action star: Jean-Claude Van Damme.

### MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE (1988)

He-Man on the big screen! Financially disastrous at the time, but iconic, in its own way, to this day.

### Further research: Documentaries

*BBC Omnibus: The Last Moguls* (1986, dir. Christopher Sykes)  
*The Go-Go Boys: The Inside Story of Cannon Films* (2014, dir. Hilla Medalia)  
*Electric Boogaloo: The Wild, Untold Story of Cannon Films* (2014, dir. Mark Hartley)

### Further research: Books

*Hollywood a Go-Go* (Andrew Yule, 1987, Sphere Publishing)  
*Cannon Cinemas: An Outline History* (Philip Turner, 1997, Brantwood Books)



# CANNON

## IN THE U.K.

To illustrate just what a wide influence Cannon once had, consider this: if you went to a cinema in the UK in the 1980s, chances are you went to a Cannon Cinema.

In 1985, Golan and Globus bought the Classic Cinemas chain and the Star circuit of cinemas, making them the UK's second largest exhibitor, with 170 screens. And then, in May 1986, they bought Thorn-EMI Screen Entertainment, giving them control over Elstree Studios and the 300-screen ABC Cinemas chain, making them the UK's largest single exhibitor with over 40% of market share.

Despite caution from their UK chief executive Barry Jenkins over the expense of such a move, Golan demanded that signage on all Cannon-owned sites be changed to reflect the new brand, and so 'Cannon Cinemas' became a UK high street fixture. Their site at Salford Quays was the UK's second-ever multiplex. The rapid rise of Cannon in the UK was controversial, with figures such as David Puttnam warning they would be "filling the country's cinemas with cheap and exploitation fodder," but others welcomed that someone was investing in cinema exhibition at a time of home video boom and record lows for UK cinema attendance, plus of course Cannon showed a range of mainstream studio films rather than simply booking their own titles.

By the early 1990s, with the demise of Cannon, the chain was taken over by MGM/UA, and in turn by Virgin Cinemas in 1995. But many sites were slow to change their signage in these takeovers, and some 'Cannon Cinemas' marquees lingered on the fronts of cinemas well into the 1990s.



*FIND US ONLINE*

**www.badlands-collective.com**

@badlandsfilm

*THE BADLANDS COLLECTIVE  
IS*

PHILIP CONCANNON @phil\_on\_film

IAN MANTGANI @mant\_a\_tangi

CRAIG WILLIAMS @craigfilm

*SPECIAL THANKS*

PAUL VICKERY  
SHIRA MACLEOD  
DAVE WINSTANLEY  
PAUL RIDD  
DAVID FREEMAN  
FRIEDER HOCHHEIM  
ISABEL STEVENS  
JAMES BELL  
TOM HUDDLESTON  
HARRY GUERRO  
MATT PALMER  
FLEUR BUCKLEY  
TOM VINCENT  
JONATHAN SLOMAN  
BARRY JENKINS  
PHILIP TURNER  
ANNETTE BRADFORD  
REBECCA NICOLE WILLIAMS  
ANDREA MÜLLER  
ROBBY MÜLLER  
MATTHEW TURNER  
EMERSON FORDE  
CATHERINE BRAY  
MICHAEL LEADER  
DAVID COX  
ANTON BITEL  
JOE WALSH  
STEVE BARKER  
MICHAEL PIERCE  
AVALON LYNDON  
SONYA WILLIAM  
MARIA CABRERA  
NATALIE PETROU  
CORRINA ANTROBUS