

YFA TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED IN 35MM BY THE YALE FILM STUDY CENTER

MONDAY
JUNE 12, 2017
7:00PM • WHITNEY
HUMANITIES CENTER

AIR FORCE ONE

PRESENTED WITH
SUPPORT FROM
PAUL L. JOSKOW
'70 M.PHIL., '72 PH.D.



In the fall of 2016, the *Wall Street Journal* ranked “The 44 Fake Presidents from Best to Worst,” and twenty years after he created the role, Harrison Ford’s President James Marshall edged out Jed Bartlett (“The West Wing”), Thomas Whitmore (INDEPENDENCE DAY), and forty-one others as the top fictional president in film and TV. Considered the last (and one of the best) of the ten-year cycle of “DIE HARD on a _____” films that followed that subgenre-defining film’s release in 1988, AIR FORCE ONE (1997) pits the president of the United States against a gang of terrorists onboard the presidential jet. The film is arguably the high water mark of director Wolfgang Petersen’s American period, which began with THE NEVER-ENDING STORY in 1984 and concluded, at least so far, with POSEIDON in 2006. Petersen, born in Emden, Germany, in 1941, began his career directing West German theatrical productions, and worked his way, through several short films in the late 1960s, into television, including a stint directing episodes of the iconic and long-lasting “Tatort,” a German crime series that has been on the air continuously since 1970 and has as of 2017 produced more than 1000 episodes. It was while directing a 1973 episode of the show that he met Jürgen Prochnow, three weeks his junior, with whom Petersen has since worked on two TV shows and four films, including both Petersen’s biggest critical success, DAS BOOT (1981), and tonight’s film, AIR FORCE ONE.

No. 12
SEASON 3

DAS BOOT was a phenomenon, spawning multiple releases in theatrical, television, and the home video market, from its original 150 minute cut to a five-hour TV version broadcast in three 100-minute episodes. Nominated for six Academy Awards (still a record for a German film), DAS BOOT propelled Petersen into the ranks of big-budget Hollywood directors, through science fiction (ENEMY MINE in 1985) and suspense (SHATTERED in 1991) to the action realm, where he found his greatest success, beginning with IN THE LINE OF FIRE in 1993.

After DIE HARD but before AIR FORCE ONE, a series of action films pitting a lone hero against long odds in a confined space filled cinema screens, including “DIE HARD in a boarding school” (TOY SOLDIERS), on a battleship (UNDER SIEGE), on a commercial airliner (PASSENGER 57), and in an NHL arena (SUD-DEN DEATH). AIR FORCE ONE borrows from the genre, but is also strong enough to stand on its own.

While it is a riveting, non-stop action film, AIR FORCE ONE has also been praised for avoiding the habit of some of its contemporaries, including Michael Bay’s THE ROCK (1996) and Simon West’s CON AIR (1997), of slicing its action up with a flurry of impossibly quick cuts. Eric Lichtenfeld, in his book *Actions Speak Louder*, notes that Petersen presents a climactic scene “over just two shots that run more than fifteen seconds. With a more leisurely pace, Petersen keeps the energy of the action within the frames, rather than simulated by intense editing. This allows the viewer to appreciate the destruction not only as one grand effect, but also as a progression of smaller well-delineated events. Again, Petersen bests directors such as Bay and West, who overcut their catastrophes.”

DIRECTED BY **WOLFGANG PETERSEN**
WRITTEN BY **ANDREW MARLOWE**
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **MICHAEL BALLHAUS**
(1997) 124 MINS.

STARRING **HARRISON FORD, GARY OLDMAN, GLENN CLOSE, WENDY CREWSON, LIESEL MATTHEWS, XANDER BERKELEY, WILLIAM H. MACY, DEAN STOCKWELL, AND JÜRGEN PROCHNOW**

DID YOU KNOW: HARRISON FORD INSISTED THAT HIS CO-STAR GARY OLDMAN PUNCH HIM IN THE FACE WITH AN ACTUAL BLOW WHEN THE SCRIPT CALLED FOR IT. OLDMAN WAS RELUCTANT, BUT FORD INSISTED, AND WHEN HIS FACE BECAME TOO SWOLLEN, DIRECTOR PETERSEN HAD TO DELAY THE SHOOTING OF CERTAIN SCENES TO ALLOW THE SWELLING TO SUBSIDE. DESPITE THE VIOLENCE INFLICTED ON HIS MOVIE STAR LOOKS, FORD AND MANY OF THE CREW REFERRED TO THE SHOOT AS “AIR FORCE FUN.”

NEXT UP: CELEBRATE THE LEGACY OF THE LATE JONATHAN DEMME WITH A 35MM SCREENING OF HIS 2008 FEATURE **RACHEL GETTING MARRIED**, WHICH BROUGHT ANNE HATHAWAY HER FIRST ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATION, ON **TUESDAY, JULY 18 AT 7:00 PM.**