

Funny Pictures

Humor may be in the eye of the beholder, but it's the director's vision that makes it come to life. Here they are at work on some of the most amusing movies ever made.



WILD AND CRAZY GUYS: (opposite) Sam Wood directs Chico, Harpo and Groucho Marx (as Otis B. Driftwood) in *A Night at the Opera* (1935). The famous stateroom scene, with 15 people revolving in and out, was improvised after the original version was scrapped. (above) Rick Moranis fights off a monster from another world in *Ghostbusters* (1984). Ivan Reitman (seated) accomplished the rare feat of blending a special-effects picture with a clever dialogue movie.





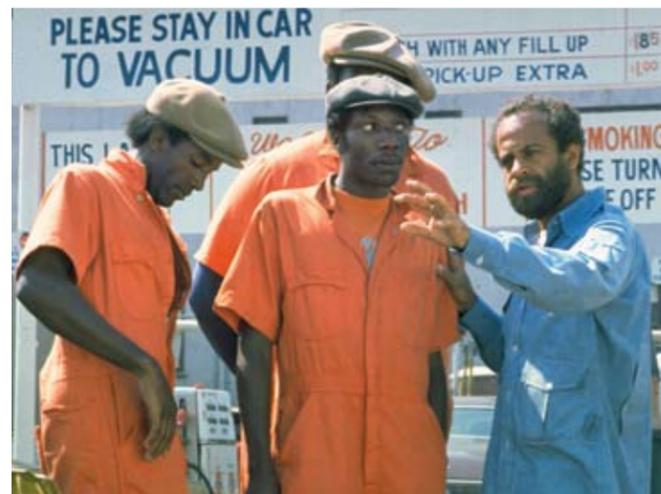
FAST TALKER: For *His Girl Friday* (1940), Howard Hawks (seated) reworked the male lead in *The Front Page* for Rosalind Russell (center) as a hard-boiled reporter. Hawks encouraged fast-paced ad-libbing and pioneered overlapping dialogue by turning overhead mikes on and off while shooting a scene.



KICK IN THE PANTS: William Wellman demonstrates how he wants Fredric March to kick Carole Lombard in *Nothing Sacred* (1937), the first screwball comedy shot in color. He said of Lombard, "She was the only woman I've ever known who could say four-letter words and make it come out like poetry."



LONG LUNCH: Bill Murray, with Andie MacDowell, lives the same day over and over again in Harold Ramis' *Groundhog Day* (1993). Ramis said the original idea was for him to be stuck for 10,000 years, but it turned out to be about 10. During filming, Murray was bitten twice by the groundhog.



NO WAX: Michael Schultz's (right) *Car Wash* (1976) juggled a dizzying array of characters as they pass through a Los Angeles car wash in a single day. Much of it was filmed at an actual car wash near MacArthur Park, and for years the billboard above it announced that it was featured in the film.

PHOTOS: (TOP, LEFT): COLUMBIA PICTURES; (BOTTOM, RIGHT): UNIVERSAL PICTURES



HARD ROCK: Before *Wayne's World* (1992), Penelope Spheeris had directed only low-budget films. Based on a *Saturday Night Live* skit, Dana Carvey (above) and Mike Myers play hosts of a public access TV show. The film often breaks the fourth wall with characters speaking directly to the audience.

PHOTOS: (TOP, AMPAS); (BOTTOM, LEFT) PARAMOUNT; (BOTTOM, RIGHT): FRANK MASI/WARNER BROS. PICTURES



BARTENDER: Todd Phillips shows Bradley Cooper how to mix a drink on the set of *The Hangover* (2009), shot in Las Vegas. Phillips reduced his usual fee and received part ownership of the film. Due to its box-office success, he called it his *Star Wars*.



SCHOOL DAZE: Woody Allen directs a scene from *Annie Hall* (1977) in which he returns to his childhood classroom. It was a technique Ingmar Bergman used in *Wild Strawberries*. For Allen, the film was a turning point where he abandoned “just clowning around and the safety of complete broad comedy.”



LOST BOYS: Wes Anderson (in jeep) shoots Adrien Brody, Owen Wilson and Jason Schwartzman in *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007). Anderson was inspired to make the film after Martin Scorsese screened Jean Renoir’s *The River* for him, which was filmed in India.



GIRL TROUBLE: Sydney Pollack and Dustin Hoffman often argued about behavioral choices on *Tootsie* (1982), but the differences helped refine the tone of the cross-dressing comedy. “We fought for the first half hour of the day, and when we started shooting we didn’t fight and did the scenes.”



THEY ALL LAUGHED: Peter Bogdanovich directs Barbra Streisand and Ryan O’Neal in *What’s Up, Doc?* (1972), his reworking of Howard Hawks’ *Bringing Up Baby*. He said Streisand didn’t get the humor but had a good time anyway. O’Neal’s mannerisms were modeled after Harold Lloyd.

PHOTOS: (TOP) MGM; (BOTTOM, LEFT) COLUMBIA PICTURES/PHOTOFEST; (BOTTOM, RIGHT) EVERETT COLLECTION



GROWING PAINS: To help Tom Hanks play a 30-year-old man who’s really a 12-year-old boy in *Big* (1988), Penny Marshall filmed David Moscow (right) playing the “grown-up” scenes. Then Hanks copied his behavior. Marshall was the first female director to direct a movie that grossed \$100 million.

PHOTOS: (TOP) FOX SEARCHLIGHT/EVERETT COLLECTION; (BOTTOM) AMPAS



LIVE LAUGHS: When George Cukor (right) adapted *Born Yesterday* (1950) for the screen, he rehearsed it like it was still a stage play. The crew built a 300-seat theater and William Holden (left), Judy Holliday (center) and Broderick Crawford gave six performances so Cukor could fine-tune the jokes.



DUNGEON MASTER: Rob Reiner directs William Goldman's twisted fairy tale *The Princess Bride* (1987) with Cary Elwes (bottom) out to rescue his beloved Robin Wright Penn. Elwes is held captive in "The Pits of Despair" by the Albino (Mel Smith), who tells him, "Don't even think about escape."



FIRST DATE: Having started as a gagman for Hal Roach and DP for Laurel and Hardy, George Stevens (center) displayed his keen sense of timing in *Woman of the Year* (1942). The story of a columnist (Katharine Hepburn) and a sports writer (Spencer Tracy), it was the first of nine films for the team.



TOO HOT: Billy Wilder directs femme impersonator Tony Curtis in *Some Like It Hot* (1959). The film was originally going to be shot in color, but after several screen tests, it was changed to black and white because of a glaring green tint around the heavy makeup required by Curtis and Jack Lemmon.

PHOTOS: (TOP) 20TH CENTURY FOX/EVERETT COLLECTION; (BOTTOM) AMPAS; (OPPOSITE) EVERETT COLLECTION



UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS: Running away from her broke husband, Claudette Colbert takes a train to Florida and gets the upper hand on millionaire Rudy Vallee in Preston Sturges' *The Palm Beach Story* (1942).