

# Six Degrees Of Roger Corman

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There's no corner of pop culture that Roger Corman hasn't touched — or taken inspiration from. Here's a quick look at just three areas where the connections he's made might surprise you.

## Oscar Connections

Roger Corman took home an honorary Oscar of his own in November 2009, but his operation has long been producing Academy Award winners. Some examples:

- **Francis Ford Coppola** (Best Director, *The Godfather Part II*) Got his start when Corman hired him to turn old Soviet sci-fi footage into the 1960 film *Battle Beyond the Sun*.



John Shearer/Getty Images

Sandra Bullock at the 82nd Annual Academy Awards.

- **Jack Nicholson** (Best Actor, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, 1975) Made his screen debut in Corman's *The Cry Baby Killer* (1958).

- **Janusz Kaminski** (Best Cinematography, *Schindler's List*, 1993) He shot *The Terror Within II* for Corman just two years before his Oscar for Steven Spielberg's drama.

- **James Horner** (Best Score and Best Song, *Titanic*, 1997) Wrote an epic score for the 1980 space opera *Battle Beyond the Stars*; Corman has recycled it in countless films.

- **Sandra Bullock** (Best Actress, *The Blind Side*, 2009) Corman's 1993 environmental thriller *Fire on the Amazon* is one film she doesn't brag about. Maybe it's the sexy nude scene.

## Corman's Best Cameos

Corman enjoys appearing in the films of former proteges. Some standout roles:

- **The Howling** directed by Joe Dante (1981) In a barroom scene, Corman spoofed his own tightwad image, checking the coin return of a pay phone for loose change.

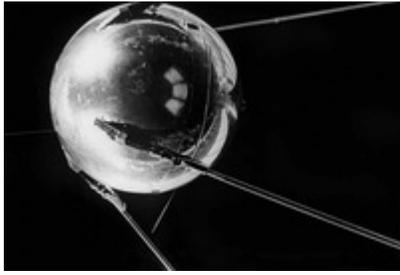
- **The Silence of the Lambs**, directed by Jonathan Demme (1991) Corman looked authoritative as the head of the FBI in this Best Picture winner.

- **Philadelphia**, directed by Jonathan Demme (1993) Corman aced the key role of a canny businessman whose testimony on the witness stand puts Tom Hanks in a bad light.

- **Apollo 13**, directed by Ron Howard (1995) Corman played a congressman quizzing NASA about cost-containment.

- **Looney Tunes: Back in Action**, directed by Joe Dante (2003) Corman was cast as a film director peeved by Daffy Duck's shenanigans.





OFF/AFP/Getty Images  
Sputnik 1, photographed in 1957.

## An Eye On The Headlines

Corman has always found inspiration in the big events of the day. Some examples:

- ***War of the Satellites*** (1958) When the Russians launched Sputnik, Corman conceived this outer-space quickie. Shot in three weeks, it screened in drive-ins soon thereafter.
- ***The Intruder*** (1962) Corman tackled the serious issue of school desegregation when few others dared. William Shatner stars as a stranger who arrives in a small Southern town to stir up trouble.
- ***The Wild Angels*** (1966) Corman's inspiration was a magazine cover depicting a biker funeral. The Hells Angels played themselves, and this classic biker flick led directly to 1969's *Easy Rider*.
- ***Quake*** (1992) San Francisco's Loma Prieta earthquake prompted this woman-in-distress thriller. As soon as the ground stopped shaking, Corman sent a crew to shoot authentic footage of the rubble.
- ***The Hunt for Noriega*** Circa 1990, when Panama's deposed military dictator eluded his captors, Corman sprang into action. A writer was hired, but the deal got canceled one day later when Noriega was found.

*Beverly Gray, formerly Corman's story editor, is the author of the unauthorized biography Roger Corman: Blood-Sucking Vampires, Flesh-Eating Cockroaches, and Driller Killers.*

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