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I recently read an article, (presumably written by an old person) suggesting that no great films have been made since 1975. The era before special effects, in other words.

However, applying Douglas Adams' Tech Theory (anything made after you turn 35 is the work of the devil), I'd move the deadline to 1980, the year I turned 18 and was allowed to watch any film I wanted.

So, as a crash course in films/culture (of the 1970s), and with the risk of causing depression, what would I recommend to the average 35-year- old?

I've sort of cheated already by making Mr Vickress watch **"The Wild Bunch"** (1968) because it has the best pause before action moment in film history, and **Little Big Man** (1970) which deals with Custers Last Stand (more of that elsewhere).

It also features the slightly mis-remembered phrase "a mighty copulation". You never know when that might come in handy.

Let's work by category:
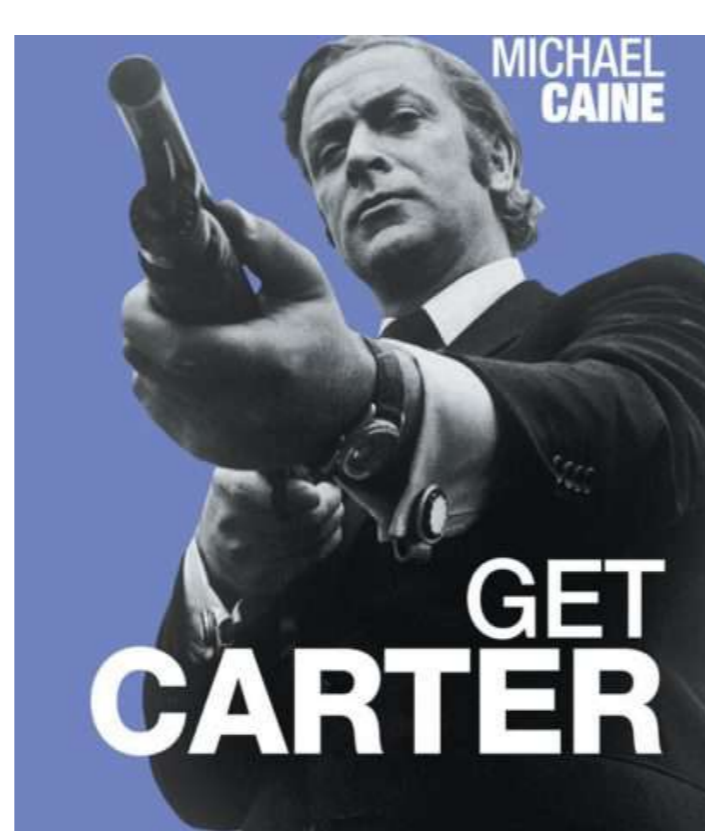
Crime

Get Carter (1970): British film noir set in a Newcastle on Tyne caught between decaying Victorian industry and fading 60s optimism. (Fantastic credit sequence of an electric train travelling up the east Coast mainline.)
Incessant smoking and casual misogyny are something of a shock. And there's Britt Eckland. Otherwise, it's grim (up north).

Electraglide in Blue (1973)
Somewhat obscure, this is another tale to upset the snowflakes. The "hero" (a short motorbike cop in Death Valley) comes up with the classic phrase:

"I'm going to do for you what they did for me when I got back from Vietnam: absolutely nothing". Always useful in management meetings.

At the more populist level, you've got **The Godfather** series, which goes on a bit.

War films

Where Eagles Dare (1968)

Not actually in the 70s which explains its relatively positive outlook. The criticism used to be that Clint Eastwood's machine gun never ran out of bullets. Things have moved on. Now the complaint is that the plane that flies them into Bavaria couldn't have come from any Allied airfield held in 1943 (even with extra fuel tanks). Who cares.
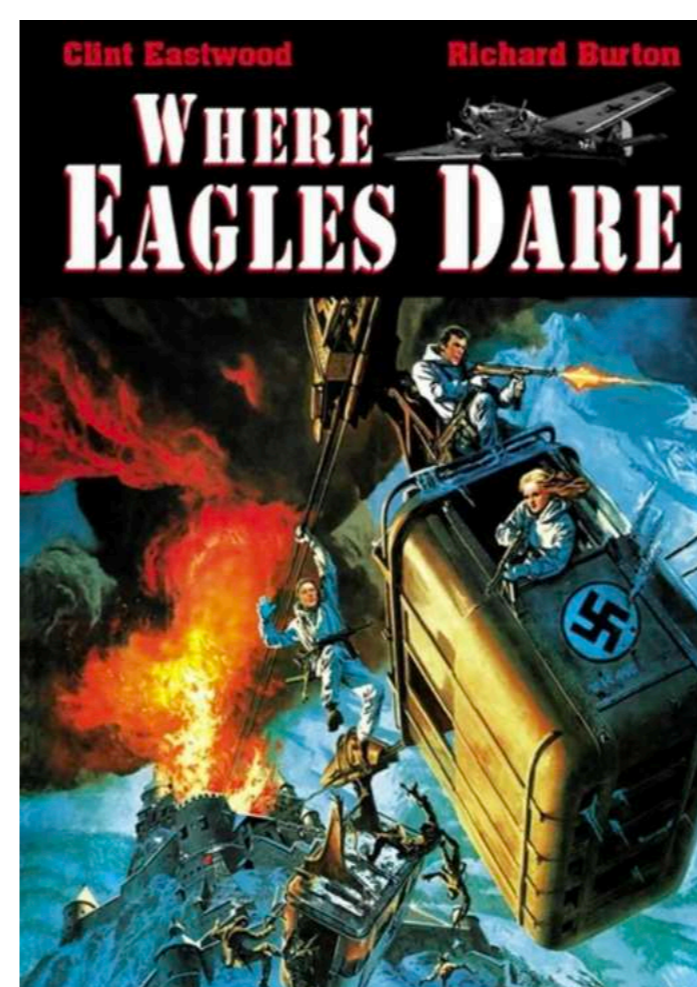
Ice Cold in Alex (1958)

Proof that Britain knew it was falling apart before the 70s. Hollywood could never have made a film about an alcoholic officer having a nervous breakdown during the retreat from Tobruk. But he was saved by the love of a good woman and a German spy. Stiff (but quivering) upper lips at their best.

Apocalypse Now/Platoon etc

All very cathartic for the US, but actually quite hard to relate to from an English perspective. Lots of axes being ground.

Westerns

The Outlaw Josey Wales (1976)

My personal favourite: I even went to the pictures to see it. Just about redemptive.

Heaven's Gate (1980)

Nearly outside the time window. The film that allegedly bankrupted the studio and ended the career of director Michael Cimino (of Deerhunter fame). The set pieces are astonishing. Who knew you could shoot a scene of somebody on a train struggling to put his boots on? The end of the American dream? Bizarrely, the film also gets the credit for me asking the current Mrs Duckett to marry me. You never know when it's all about to fall apart.

Romance(?)

Emmanuelle series – without a doubt.

The days when porn was at least moderately erotic.
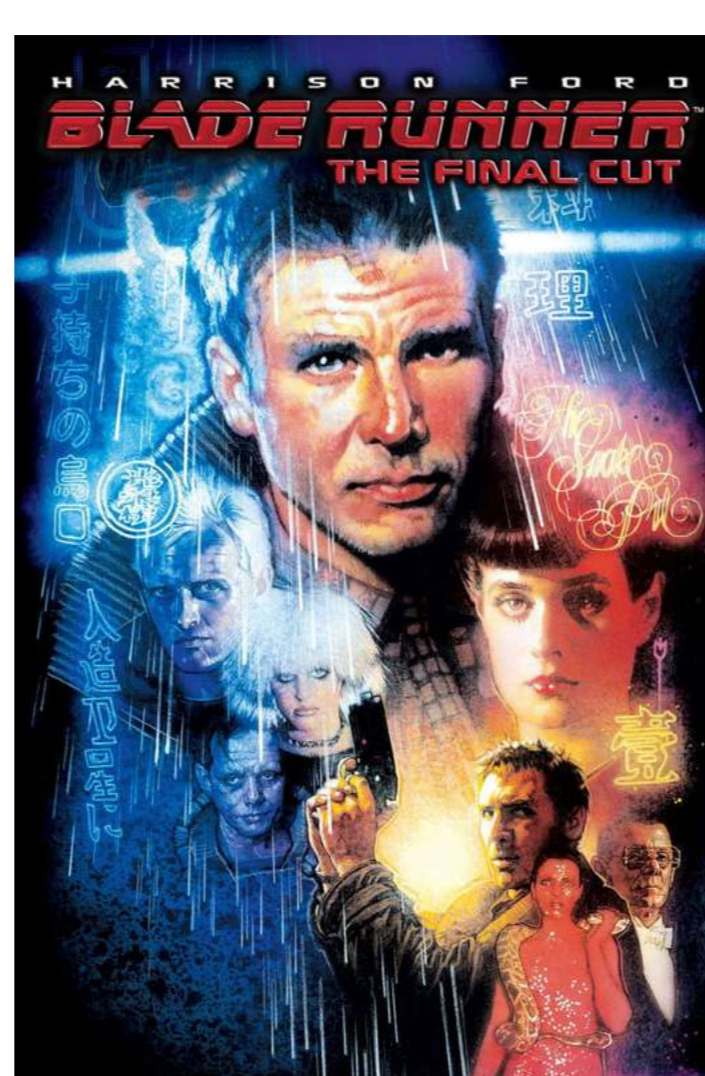
Science Fiction

Whilst Star Wars came out in 1977, arguably these films belong to the next decade. Blade Runner (1982) bridges the gap between 70s despair and 80s tech, but that's another story.

Do you think that does the trick?