

Richard Gere: “My life in film”

The actor looks back on 35 years of notable movies, from *An Officer and a Gentleman* and *Chicago* to his latest film, **Arbitrage**, available to rent on Box Office this month

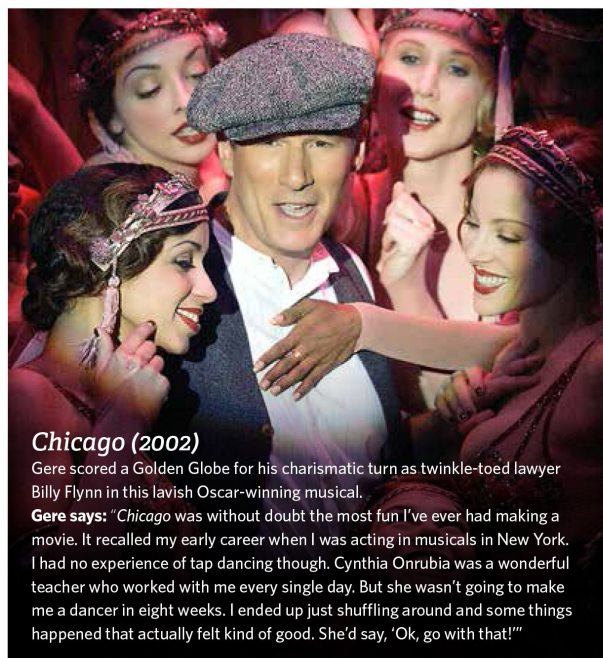
Richard Gere battled Louis Gossett Jr. in *An Officer and a Gentleman*, fell in love with Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, interrogated Edward Norton in *Primal Fear*, was cheated on by Diane Lane in *Unfaithful* and tap danced beside Renée Zellweger in *Chicago*. But in all five cases, his co-stars earned Oscar recognition, while he was overlooked. In fact, he's never been nominated for an Oscar. Ever.

And now his performance as a corrupt Wall Street bigwig in his latest film *Arbitrage* is being hailed as his best yet. “It’s nice for people to say ‘Good job’.” And it’d be nice for my son if his dad gets recognition,” says Gere, 63, when asked about his award hopes for his meatiest role since *Unfaithful*. “*Arbitrage* speaks to the times. It’s a world I don’t think has been well examined.” Here the star, who’s made over 40 films, recalls his most famous on-screen moments...

Days of Heaven (1978)

Gere’s first leading role was as hot-tempered farm labourer Bill in writer and director Terrence Malick’s (*The Tree of Life*) feature, which has since become one of the most critically acclaimed films of all time.

Gere says: “Everyone working on *Days* was a kid really. We were new to it all – even Terrence, who’d made one movie before but nothing of that scale. He didn’t have the language to express what he was looking for. It was like, ‘Come on Terry, help me out. I’m trying it all!’”



Chicago (2002)

Gere scored a Golden Globe for his charismatic turn as twinkle-toed lawyer Billy Flynn in this lavish Oscar-winning musical.

Gere says: “*Chicago* was without doubt the most fun I’ve ever had making a movie. It recalled my early career when I was acting in musicals in New York. I had no experience of tap dancing though. Cynthia Onrubia was a wonderful teacher who worked with me every single day. But she wasn’t going to make me a dancer in eight weeks. I ended up just shuffling around and some things happened that actually felt kind of good. She’d say, ‘Ok, go with that!’”



Pretty Woman (1990)

In perhaps his most famous role, Gere plays a wealthy businessman who falls in love with an LA prostitute, played by Julia Roberts in her breakthrough performance. Originally intended to be a cautionary tale about class divides and prostitution, the film became less moralistic and more fun, and is largely considered the most successful romcom of all time.

Gere says: “I’m always stunned by how much it’s touched people. Of all the movies I’ve made, that’s the one that has spoken to people. It had the right tone and quality. It’s a piece of magic.”



An Officer and a Gentleman (1982)

This is the movie, about the troubled relationship between a Navy flight-school trainee (Gere) and his sergeant (Louis Gossett Jr.), that made Gere a household name. The actor was convinced the film’s feel-good ending, in which he carries co-star Debra Winger out of the factory where she works, was too schmaltzy. Millions disagreed.

Gere says: “I argued against it from the start. I was trying to make a very real, tough movie and that scene didn’t fit at all. Even after we shot it I didn’t think it’d work, that it was too sentimental. Then I saw it weeks later, with the music, and it gave me goosebumps. I was definitely wrong.”

Unfaithful (2002)

In Adrian Lyne’s (*Fatal Attraction*) erotic adult drama, Gere strayed from his usual type of role and played a cuckolded husband opposite Diane Lane.

Gere says: “The director gave me the script and asked me which part I wanted to play. I said, ‘In my younger days it would’ve been the other one. But I’ve played that part already. Let me play the husband. That’s a new territory to explore’. It was an interesting process.”



Primal Fear (1996)

This intense thriller launched the careers of two future Oscar nominees – Laura Linney (*Kinsey*) and Edward Norton (*American History X*) – and earned Gere widespread critical acclaim.

Gere says: “The scenes between Laura and I are some of my favourite man-woman scenes ever. And Edward came out of nowhere. We tested him twice because his first test was so good we thought it was a fluke. It wasn’t – he was just great.”



Arbitrage (2012)

Gere’s new film sees him play a crooked billionaire hedge fund manager who accidentally kills his lover in a car crash and desperately tries to cover his tracks. It won him a much-deserved Golden Globe nomination and is his fieriest, most challenging performance for years. The film was critically acclaimed and a big hit with audiences worldwide.

Gere says: “Filming was so intense. In between takes we all made a real point of being relaxed. The director (Nick Jarecki) and I talked about it at the start. I said, ‘This is how I like to work: easy and slowly and with a lot of tea.’”

Arbitrage from Wednesday, 6 February **first on Box Office**

WHY? See if the silver fox can finally get an Oscar nomination for his captivating role in this slick and shady drama.