

## Best Supporting Gears



Photos courtesy of Paramount Home Entertainment.

No one seems to appreciate gears more than a Hollywood cinematographer. What image better serves a strong, visual narrative than the steady motion of two gears meshing in unison? Whether depicting a brief moment from the industrial revolution or highlighting the intricacies of a clock tower, gears have always been an aesthetically-pleasing addition to a film's production design and cinematic vision.

Through the years, gears have racked up more screen time than Tom Hanks, Meryl Streep and Paul Newman combined. The Addendum staff had just enough free time to wade through hours of footage searching for films that include our favorite machine element.

**2007 Academy Award-Winning Gears:** *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*—Based on the Broadway musical of the same name, gears play an intricate role in the barber's chair the title character constructs to carry out his murderous revenge plot. Merely looking for a quick shave and a "little taken off the top," the unsuspecting customers get more than they bargain for when a musically-inclined Johnny Depp offers his rather unique "cutting" services. *The Golden Compass*—This kid-friendly, epic adventure revolves around an alethiometer that can reveal the answer to any question asked of it. Gears are responsible for turning the needles

on the device, giving its supernatural sensibilities some mechanical credibility. *There Will Be Blood*—Gears are prominent on the derricks used by Daniel Plainview (Daniel Day-Lewis), an egotistical tyrant creating an oil empire at the expense of the people around him.

**Fantasy Gears:** *The Princess Bride* (1987)—When the sword-fighting hero Wesley (Cary Elwes) gets strapped into a diabolical torture device known as "The Machine," viewers are treated to a menacing medieval device that boasts gears spinning in various directions. *Army of Darkness* (1992)—Armed with only a chainsaw and some dry wit, Ash (Bruce Campbell) is sucked into a wormhole and sent back to 1300 A.D. to fight an army of zombies. During his journey, he faces some rather archaic equipment from the Middle Ages that boasts a variety of gearing elements. *Labyrinth* (1986)—If you can look away from David Bowie's ridiculous costume long enough in this musical Muppet adventure, you'll find gears scattered throughout the numerous twists and turns of the gigantic maze (true story).

**Symbolic Gears:** *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994)—The gears featured in the Coen Brothers screwball comedy provide an ongoing visual feast on circular motion. Gears spin, kids hula-hoop and the corporate powers that be

run around in circles for the duration of this witty, motion picture that explores the insanity of big business. *The Paper* (1994)—Ron Howard's enthusiastic look at journalism begins with computer-animated gears symbolizing the daily grind of life at a newspaper. Editors break deadlines, obsess over story ideas and ignore family and friends in pursuit of the latest headlines.

**Gear Directors:** Director Terry Gilliam (*Brazil*, *12 Monkeys*, *Time Bandits*) has been quoted as saying he understands gears, pulleys, carts and wheels, but doesn't understand the electronic revolution because he "can't get his hands on it." It's no surprise many of his films include gears and gearing in the production design. Jean-Pierre Jeunet & Marc Caro (*City of Lost Children*, *Delicatessen*), before going their separate ways, this French directing team tackled industrial elements in both their short animated films and full-length features. With gears as an obvious backdrop in certain scenes, the directors had been accused by many critics of being interested more in the machinery in their films than in humanity.

Have you noticed gears prominently displayed at the local Cineplex? Drop us a line at [publisher@geartechnology.com](mailto:publisher@geartechnology.com) with some of your favorites.