

ZOOM

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Moment of spoof

The comedy "Airplane!" wasn't the first movie to lovingly spoof a genre — everyone from Abbott & Costello to Mel Brooks had done it before.

But somehow the Zucker brothers (David and Jerry) and Jim Abrahams turned it up to 11 with that mashup of the "Airport" movies, "Zero Hour" and Monty Python's sensibility.

"Superhero Movie" (opening Friday) is the latest offspring of "Airplane!" and checks another item off the list of movies waiting to be spoofed.

(Slasher movies? Check. Disaster movies? Check. "Benji," "Lassie," "Flipper" and other animal movies? Hmmmm.)

Here are five landmarks in the movie spoof genre.

Michael Giltz



▲ AIRPLANE! (1980)

The setup: Start with airplane disaster movies. Throw in pop cultural references like "Saturday Night Fever" and "From Here to Eternity" with feverish abandon. Add veteran actors like Lloyd Bridges and Leslie Nielsen.

The punch line: Massive box office success, spinoffs, sequels, deals for TV shows. Surely this is the gold standard of movie spoofs.

■ TOP SECRET! (1984)

The setup: Cross Elvis musicals with a World War II spy flick. Put Val Kilmer in the lead, don't forget the flying cow, and whatever you do, make sure the title has that exclamation point!

The punch line: Solid proof that the Zuckers and Abrahams weren't one-joke wonders.



► I'M GONNA GIT YOU SUCKA (1988)

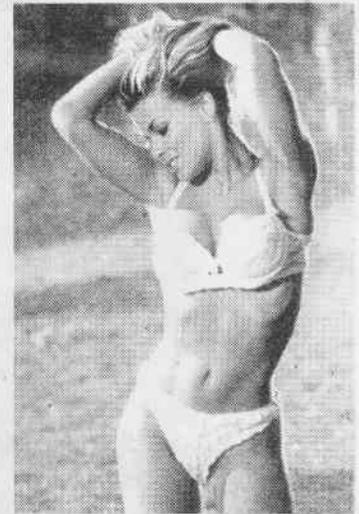
The setup: Keenen Ivory Wayans wrote, directed and starred as Jack Spade avenging the death of his brother, and taking on Mr. Big with the help of Jim Brown, Isaac Hayes and even Chris Rock — as a guy eating ribs in a restaurant.

The punch line: The blaxploitation sendup launched a comedy dynasty, with Wayans overseeing the landmark TV show "In Living Color" and his siblings exploding in popularity.

► SCARY MOVIE (2000)

The setup: This parodies "Scream," itself a knowing parody of slasher movies. The Wayans clan is behind it, and like so many gross-out comedies today, the "Scary Movie" franchise was always sure to include at least one scene that would push the envelope of bad taste.

The punch line: Yes, you can spoof a spoof.



■ THE KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE (1977)

The setup: A homemade "Saturday Night Live" without censors. This string of comedy shorts by the Zuckers and Abrahams ("That's Armageddon," "Catholic High School Girls in Trouble") showed they could make hay with talented actors like Donald Sutherland and George Lazenby who were ready to make fun of themselves.

The punch line: When Mel Brooks and Monty Python were lovingly skewering the films they admired, these guys were frat boys in the back row throwing popcorn. Soon, those smart-aleck comments would make them rich and famous. ♦

