

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Wolves of Wall Street: Who is the biggest investment villain?

**Lead**  
In Martin Scorsese's 'The Wolf of Wall Street', the bankers of the late 1980s once again storm the silver screen. Investment fraud has become a bit of a cinematic tradition - and here we bring you an overview of the top Wall Street villains, fictional and not so fictional...

### **Gordon Gekko in 'Wall Street'**



Even if the most exciting Wall Street thriller was not to be seen in the cinema, but on CNN in 2008, the species personified by ice-cold ultra-capitalists in braces became internationally famous in 1987 mainly thanks to Oliver Stone's 'Wall Street'. As financial shark Gordon Gekko, Michael Douglas played to the hearts of all emerging young bankers who henceforth appeared at work in their Brooks Brothers shirts, dreaming (well, some of them) of amassing great wealth through insider information. In this case, Gekko was no fantasy figure, but heavily inspired by the fallen stock market millionaires Ivan Boesky and Carl Icahn. The dubious fame of Gordon Gekko and his 'greed is good' philosophy even affected the asset management centres of the new millennium - although Oliver Stone no doubt originally meant his film to be a radical critique of the capitalist mentality.

### **Patrick Bateman in 'American Psycho'**



With his 1991 novel 'American Psycho', Bret Easton Ellis shocked America. It's the fictional diary of 27-year-old Wall Street investment banker Patrick Bateman and his life spent between expensive restaurants and nightclubs, indulging in endless small talk, interspersed by acts of extreme, sexual violence and cannibalism - a metaphor for the turbo-capitalism and moral decline of the 1980s. Although the book was initially considered unfilmable because of the shockingly violent scenes, including rape and necrophilia, 'American Psycho' did finally come to the big screen in 2000 with Christian Bale in the lead role. It was generally well-received, and seen as more of an ironic retro look at the foibles of the 1980s than a sex-and-violence thriller.

### **Jordan Belfort in 'The Wolf of Wall Street'**



Martin Scorsese's 'The Wolf of Wall Street' is another film based on a true story - as the cheating millionaire Jordan Belfort, played by Leonardo DiCaprio, was a genuine character who roamed the stock market floors of the late 1980s; and spent time in prison for fraud. As with Gordon Gekko, the unscrupulous Belfort enjoys a hedonistic lifestyle, complete with fast money, fast cars, fast women and fast drugs. And as with Oliver Stone's original 'Wall Street', the disturbing question arises as to whether the audience perhaps sees the 'bad guys' as heroes: role models for achieving financial success through greed and selfishness.

### **Gallery**



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