

Interviews: 1980s Icons Anthony Michael Hall, Louis Gossett Jr.

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 29, 2011 - 12:30am

- [An Officer and a Gentleman](#) [2]
- [Anthony Michael Hall](#) [3]
- [Breakfast Club](#) [4]
- [Dead Zone](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Interview](#) [7]
- [John Hughes](#) [8]
- [Louis Gossett Jr.](#) [9]
- [Molly Ringwald](#) [10]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [11]
- [Richard Gere](#) [12]
- [Saturday Night Live](#) [13]
- [Sixteen Candles](#) [14]

CHICAGO – Two actors who made a mark in film during the 1980s did it at different points in their lives. Anthony Michael Hall was a teen idol, channeling director John Hughes in “The Breakfast Club” and “Sixteen Candles.” Lou Gossett Jr. won a mid-career Oscar for his role in 1982’s “An Officer and a Gentleman.”

Both men made an appearance at the 2011 Chicago Wizard World Comic Con, interacting with admirers and signing autographs. HollywoodChicago.com got the opportunity to interview each of them about their lives and careers then and now.



Anthony Michael Hall of “The Breakfast Club,” “Sixteen Candles”



Anthony Michael Hall at Chicago Wizard World Comic Con, August 2011

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

HollywoodChicago: In last year's Vanity Fair Article, it was said that once John Hughes moved on, you pretty much never heard from him again. What is your perspective on him now, two years after his passing?

Anthony Michael Hall: I always tip my hat to John, he put me on the map. He was my mentor, my big brother and a great collaborator. He always empowered people on the set, made them feel comfortable and was so prolific as a writer he always encouraged people to add things. I wouldn't be standing here if it wasn't for him. I love him and I miss him.

HollywoodChicago: What did your teenage self, that guy doing all those movies back then, teach you best on the essence of being an actor?

Hall: I immediately thought of The Beatles when you asked that, the song 'Act Naturally.' I was very natural at that point, then it became a craft and I had to learn the craft. And then it became a job. When I think back upon it, there is something to be said about being natural. It is a great start for being an actor.

HollywoodChicago: You credit your 'Saturday Night Live' experience as part of your learning process as an actor and improviser. On the flip side, what was difficult about being a teenager on that aggressive show?

Hall: I think it was the competitive nature of comedy writers, comics and that kind of collision of talents. And at the same time, doing the show was like theater plus rock and roll all together. Comedians are a tough group, at times I didn't know who was writing for me, so I ended

up writing a lot of stuff myself. Despite the fact the show wasn't great that year, it was a great experience. The doing it was awesome.

HollywoodChicago: You did six years of the 'Dead Zone' on the USA network. What opportunities for growth did you experience in episodic television?



Hall: It was a re-education for my entire skill set in production over the years. I actually had two mantras for myself. One, was to make every episode better than the last one as an actor, and two, treat each episode as if it was a 50 million dollar movie. To respect the process and everybody there that were committed to making it a great show.

HollywoodChicago: What projects excite you now, and what can we expect from you coming up?

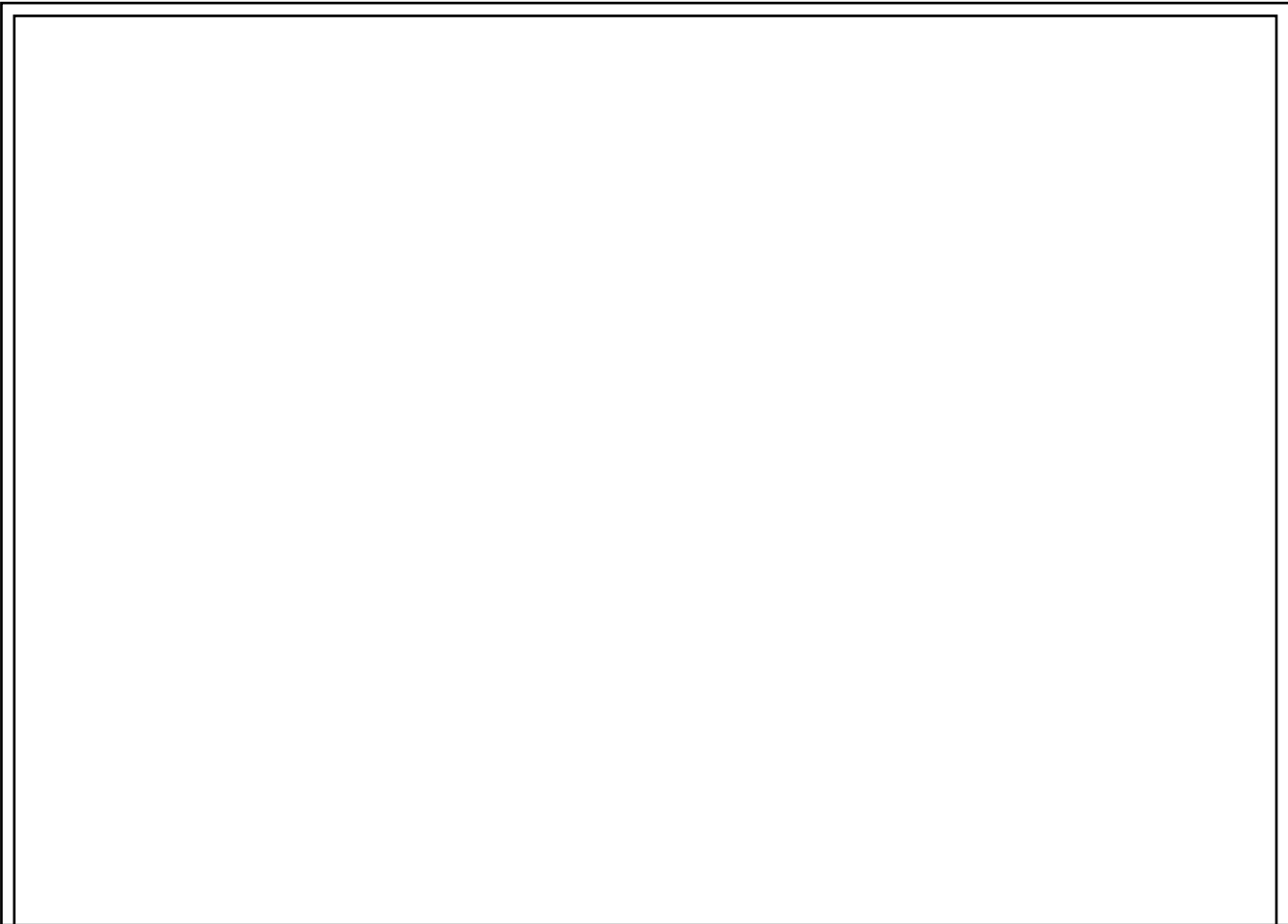
Hall: I'm doing an action film in Palm Springs called 'Night Crew.' I'm also producing a film with Michael Uslan of the Batman films called 'The Lost Shield.' I have a great cinematographer, Andrzej Sekula, who also shot 'Pulp Fiction.' I'm going to produce, direct and act in it. It's an ensemble, and my intention is to go into the direction of my hero, Clint Eastwood, and make my own films. It's a lofty aim, but you have to start somewhere.

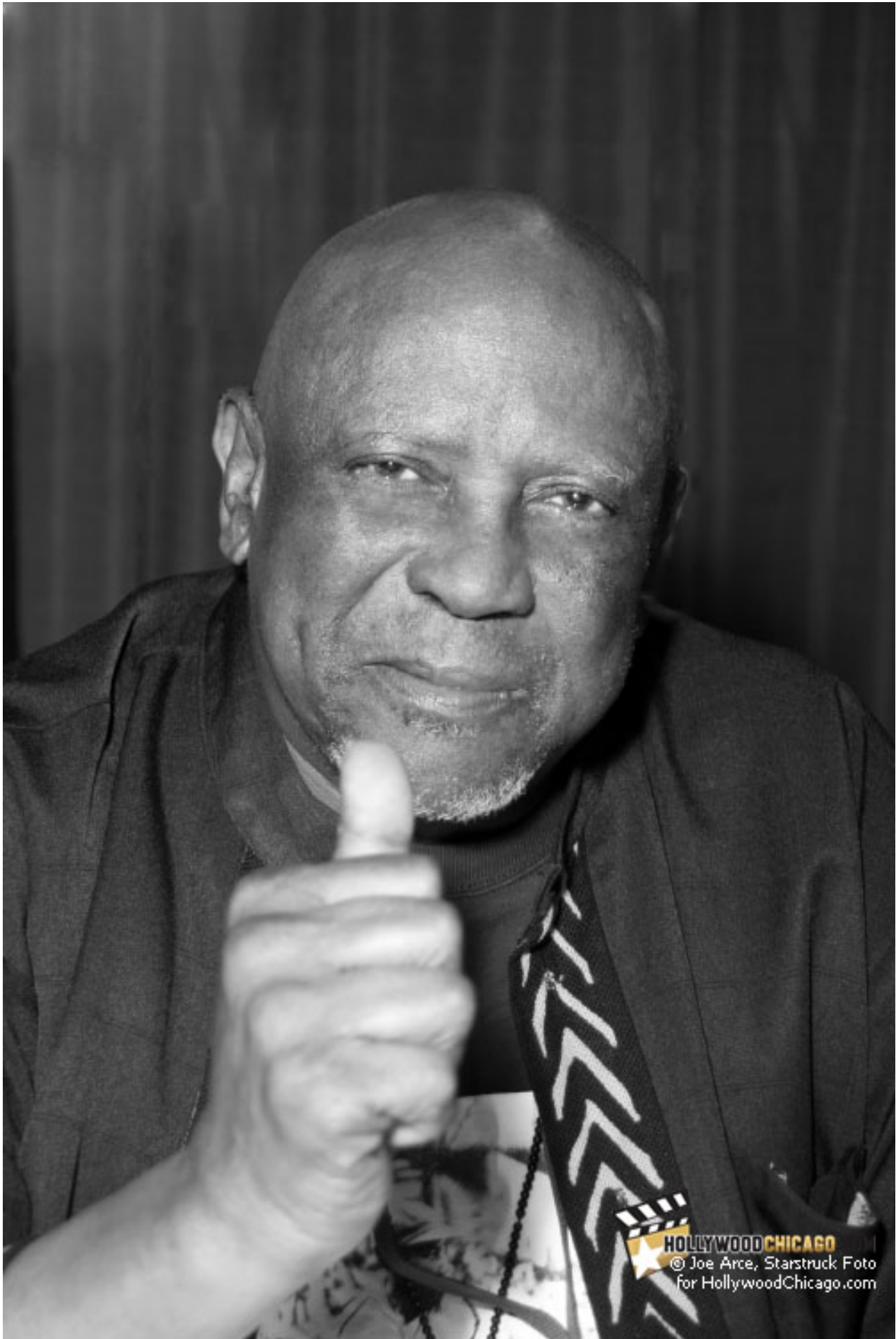
HollywoodChicago: You seem like the type of actor that constantly evolves. What is the most recent thing you've learned in your education as an actor?

Hall: To stay hungry. I've had a lot of challenging times in the last couple of years, and have gone through my own crisis of confidence. In every decade of my life, I had to prove myself, and I still do. That's fair to say for any man in any business, but for me I had to re-invest in the notion of show business.

Also what I've learned is to balance my life with other things, I direct commercials, I have my own production company and I'm developing projects. So I think building out my collaborations, staying creative in other ways and connecting to people at events like here is important for me.

★ **Louis Gossett Jr. of "An Officer and a Gentleman"**





Louis Gossett Jr. at Chicago Wizard World Comic Con, August 2011
Photo Credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Photo for HollywoodChicago.com

HollywoodChicago: What quality do you believe won you your first Broadway role at the age of 17, with no acting beyond high school?

Louis Gossett Jr.: I just happened to be the right person for that part at that age. I looked just like the writer, and it was his autobiography. My high school teacher told me to audition because they couldn't find anybody in the business. What could I lose?

HollywoodChicago: You have a Chicago connection by originating the role of George in 'Raisin in the Sun.' What did you learn about this city while working on the Lorraine Hansberry classic, and of course what did you observe about Sidney Poitier in doing the play and film?

Gossett: Sidney was great, and we both learned it's really cold in the winter in Chicago. [laughs] We were doing the show at the Blackstone Theater and staying across the street, and it was still hard to get across.

HollywoodChicago: Once you got out of the cocoon of specific stage work, how difficult was it to compete for roles on episodic television and the movies in the 1960s and 1970s?

Gossett: It was easy for me, because many of the theater people I worked with moved into that area, and would recommend me for jobs. We knew each other very well, and worked the town by going to my old stage contacts.

HollywoodChicago: In your perspective, how important was the miniseries 'Roots' in American cultural history, and how do you believe it still makes an impact?



Louis Gossett Jr. in 'An Officer and a Gentleman'
Photo credit: Paramount Home Video

Gossett: It still makes an impact, because at the time it was world shattering. To finally do something that everyone saw, to have the courage to say what the show said and to do it so beautifully, that's what people attached to. Now that it's out there, everyone can say, 'have I got a story for you.'

HollywoodChicago: You won your Academy Award playing a military man and have played military men several times since. How did you best capture the pride of playing that occupation the best?

Gossett: When I did my research on a military base, you get the point immediately, and it stays with you forever. For my role in 'An Officer and a Gentleman,' I went down to the Marine Corp drill instructors school in Camp Pendleton in San Diego for their 30 day training course. They said if I did it wrong, they'd kill me, so that's how I got the Oscar. [laughs]

HollywoodChicago: Finally, which of your roles in you long career, after you did the research, taught you the most about yourself?

Gossett: 'Enemy Mine.' It was a very simple self-examination role, being satisfied with who you are and what you believe.

The next Chicago Wizard World Comic Con is scheduled for August 9-12, 2012. [Click here](#) [15] for details on locations and ticket information.



[16]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [17]
Senior Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [16]

© 2011 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 24 2024 - 10:31pm):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/16915/interviews-1980s-icons-anthony-michael-hall-louis-gossett-jr>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/an-officer-and-a-gentleman>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/anthony-michael-hall>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/breakfast-club>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dead-zone>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/interview.html>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/john-hughes>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/louis-gossett-jr>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/molly-ringwald>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/richard-gere>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/saturday-night-live>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/sixteen-candles>
- [15] <http://www.wizardworldcomiccon.com/wizcon.html>
- [16] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>