



Boogie Nights

Paul Thomas Anderson

USA, 1996

147 minutes ■ Colour/35mm
 Production Company: **New Line Cinema**
 Executive Producer: **Lawrence Gordon, Michael De Luca, Lynn Harris**
 Producer: **Lloyd Levin, John Lyons, Paul Thomas Anderson, Joanne Sellar, Daniel Lupi**

Screenplay: **Paul Thomas Anderson**
 Cinematographer: **Robert Elswit**
 Editor: **Dylan Tichenor**
 Production Designer: **Bob Ziembecki**
 Sound: **Stephen Halbert**
 Music: **Michael Penn**
 Principal Cast: **Mark Wahlberg, Julianne Moore, Burt Reynolds, Don Cheadle, William H. Macy, Heather Graham, Nicole Parker, Philip Seymour Hoffman**

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Paul Thomas Anderson has created nothing less than an epic portrait of the United States of America at a turning point in its history. Spanning the late seventies and early eighties, Anderson follows the exploits of a hardcore adult film outfit, and especially its most famous star, from the troupe's magical beginnings, through its meteoric rise and to its inevitable decline and fall. The various stories within the film – much like Altman's *Nashville* – point to larger, grander philosophical ideas about society's self-perception. And Anderson pulls it off with just so much style. (Says one character: "Do you know what this is? Real Italian Nylon.")

Proceedings begin in a classic seventies disco, where Eddie Adams – in an astonishingly nuanced performance by Mark Wahlberg; a true manchild here – is "discovered" by producer Jack Horner (the great Burt Reynolds). Horner plucks Adams, soon renamed Dirk Diggler, out of his Orange County life and makes him the newest star in his pantheon, joining his wife Amber Moore (Julianne Moore of *Safe*), Reed Rothchild (John C. Reilly of *Georgia*) and Roller-girl (Heather Graham of *Drugstore Cowboy*). Horner believes that the adult film can be made into an art form that can both titillate and entertain, and his loyal crew, led by the cuckolded Little Bill (Bill Macy of *Fargo*), follow him down any path.

It is Diggler/Adams, though, who comes up with the greatest concept of them all – a porno James Bond, complete with action sequences and explicit rolls in the hay. The

series is huge and makes Dirk Diggler a household name. But drugs and the bizarre mechanisms of this dysfunctional family take their toll and the family that literally fit so very well together begins to break apart.

Anderson covers a lot of ground here and, underneath all the bell bottoms, come shots and lines of crystal meth is a powerful, incisive exploration of what happened to decent people when the greedy eighties took control.

■ **Noah Cowan**



Paul Thomas Anderson developed a passion for filmmaking at a young age, and he began his career as a production assistant on various television movies, videos and game shows in both New York and Los Angeles. After working in a similar capacity for several independent films, Anderson wrote and directed a short film entitled *Cigarettes and Coffee* (93), which was screened at the Sundance film festival. He then attended the Filmmakers' Workshop at Sundance, where he developed his script for *Hard Eight* (96), his first feature. *Boogie Nights* (97) is his second feature film.

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