



But I'm a Cheerleader

Jamie Babbit

USA, 1999

90 minutes ■ Colour/35mm
 Production Company: **Ignite Entertainment/Kushner-Locke Company**

Executive Producers: **Michael Burns, Marc Butan**

Producers: **Andrea Sperling, Leanna Creel**

Screenplay: **Brian Wayne Peterson**
 Cinematographer: **Jules La Barthe**
 Editor: **Cecily Rhett**

Production Designer: **Rachel Kamerman**
 Sound: **Shawn Holden**

Music: **Pat Irwin**
 Principal Cast: **Natasha Lyonne, Clea DuVall, Cathy Moriarty, RuPaul Charles, Mink Stole**

Print Source: **Ignite Entertainment, 6762B Lexington Avenue, Hollywood, CA 90036, USA. T (323) 860-0565 F (323) 860-0575**

Foreign Sales Agent: **Kushner-Locke Co., 11601 Wilshire Boulevard, 21st Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025, USA. T (310) 481-2000 F (310) 481-2101**

Production: **Ignite Entertainment, 6762B Lexington Avenue, Hollywood, CA 90038, USA. T (323) 860-0565 F (323) 860-0575 E Apsperling@aol.com**

Megan is the very model of a classic cheerleader. She is pretty, popular, a top student and dates the captain of the football team. And she is really really nice. Really.

But just as she is getting ready to lead the team to victory in the playoffs, Megan comes home to a rude surprise from her parents. A gay intervention! Mike (played by a very funny, out-of-drag RuPaul) has come from True Directions, a homosexual rehabilitation camp, at the call of her parents who suspect the worst.

The evidence is overwhelming. She's a vegetarian, idolizes Melissa Etheridge, loves Georgia O'Keefe, doesn't like kissing her boyfriend and hugs her friends too much. Obviously a lesbian!

She is shipped off post-haste to the camp to change her ways. It is run by the abusive, ultra-feminine Mary Brown (in a larger-than-life turn by screen legend Cathy Moriarty). Her "programme" bears a close resemblance to other 12-step affairs, but with hilarious differences. Megan of course has big issues with the first step, admitting you're gay – because she doesn't actually believe she is a lesbian.

Until she meets Graham, a sexy tomboy who goes along with camp activities only because Daddy has threatened to cut off her trust fund. Unnatural desires for the girl well inside her, coupled with clandestine escapes to the local town's tough gay bar, and Megan comes to learn to love the lesbian inside.

There is a horror and pathos to these rehabilitation camps – they actually exist, a potent symbol of continuing homophobia around us – that can only be confronted by humour and their own patent absurdity. So director Jamie Babbit has created a surreal, highly aestheticized environment to play out her cheerleader's downfall, including luridly "feminine" colour schemes for the girls and an amusing collection of hyper-masculine activities for the boys. The kids are great, especially Natasha Lyonne as Megan and Clea DuVall as Graham, and the film sparkles with an in-your-face radicalism and laugh-out-loud humour.

■ **Noah Cowan**

Jamie Babbit graduated from Columbia University in New York City in 1993. She has directed several short films and has worked as script supervisor for John Duigan's *Sirens* (94) and David Fincher's *The Game* (97). *But I'm a Cheerleader* (99) is her first feature film.

Sponsored by

BENSON & HEDGES

