

PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON



ON SCREEN

Week Two

Welcome to *Paul Thomas Anderson on Screen*

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Welcome back to *Paul Thomas Anderson on screen*, where it is time, within the bounds of film education, to get a little freaky.

That's right, it's time for *Boogie Nights*.

Once again, the original inspiration for Anderson's second feature came from a short film – in this case, the mockumentary *The Dirk Diggler Story*, which the director made when he was still in high school.

Almost ten years would pass before Anderson would revisit the idea, now armed with the goodwill of *Hard Eight*'s reception, a budget five times the size of that debut film, and, again, a murderer's row of talented actors in front of the camera.

It would go on to be a film that solidified Anderson's reputation as a filmmaker and became not only a box office success (more than doubling its budget) but a *talking point*, a film that, due to its subject matter, was endlessly discussed and debated.

It also provided Burt Reynolds, once the biggest movie star in the world, with a chance to remind us precisely how accomplished an actor he was, leading to an Academy Award nomination, although only following a protracted period during which he turned the role no less than seven times, on-set altercations with Anderson, and later misgivings about having taken the film at all.

Like *Hard Eight*, however, for all its edginess, for all its often less than erotic sex, it is a film about people in search of connection and the many ways that they fail to make it.

FILM WEEK TWO

The Dirk Diggler Story (1988)

Boogie Nights (1997)