

PAUL THOMAS ANDERSON



ON SCREEN

Week Three

Welcome to *Paul Thomas Anderson on Screen*

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Welcome to Week 'Three of *Paul Thomas Anderson* on screen, when we confront one of Anderson's first true epics, in the form of 1999's *Magnolia*.

We've talked before about the success of films leading to a grace period for a filmmaker when it comes to studios and, in particular, finance.

Such was the case for Paul Thomas Anderson, in the wake of the critical and commercial smash success of *Boogie Nights*. He was the darling of the studio and of the cinema-going world and was given *carte blanche* to make whatever he wanted to make.

Knowing that being in such a position was rare and might never come again, he turned to the ideas that had begun to percolate during the long edit for *Nights*, and created the massive, multi-character extravaganza that is *Magnolia*.

Featuring a career-best performance from tiny, couch-jumping, possibly mad movie star Tom Cruise, alongside some reliably brilliant Anderson regulars, it is a brave, thrilling, odd and heartbreaking *tour de force*, which also makes excellent use of songs old and new by the peerless Aimee Mann.

Burt Reynolds was intended to be invited back, but his continuing fallout with his *Boogie Nights* director on the press tour is said to have put paid to that idea. Everyone else showed up to exercise their 'A' Game.

In the end, Paul Thomas Anderson would retain his right to make his passion projects, but perhaps no better has been made of an unexpected success than this film.

FILM WEEK THREE

Magnolia (1999)

That Moment (1999)

Mark Rance