

# REEL CRITIQUE

## MOVIE REVIEWS

**Bring It On**  
Starring Kirsten Dunst and Elisha Dushku  
Rated: PG-13  
Directed by Peyton Reed

The energetic *Bring It On* will disappoint adolescents looking for another cotton-candy, cutesy teen flick. It could not be described as poignant or revolutionary, especially considering the entire movie revolves around cheerleading, but *Bring It On* delivers more than mere displays of tan, athletic bodies writhing to songs like "Everybody Dance Now."

Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed Torrance Shipman, charmingly played by Dunst, is the good-intentioned captain of the acclaimed Rancho Carne High School cheering squad. Shipman's glittering world is shattered by the startling discovery that her squad's award-winning hip-hop dance moves have been stolen, handspring for handspring, from a spicy, less-affluent cheer squad from across town. Sweet and sunny Shipman must get down and dirty to help her squad create an original routine to perform at Nationals.

For cynical viewers who cringe at the release of generic, often inane, teen movies, do not discount *Bring It On* right away

— Jason Bennyhoff

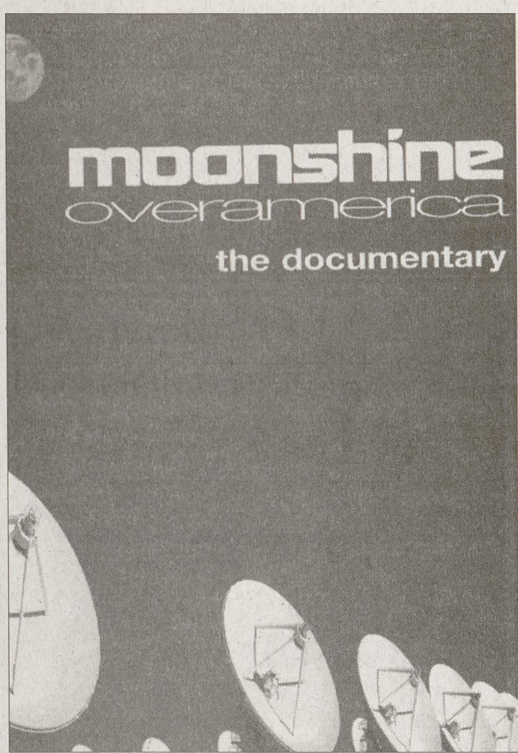
it has more to offer than recent releases like *She's All That* and *Boys and Girls*. Refreshingly, *Bring It On* neglects to include any half-baked, emotional subplots to pull the heartstrings. Each character is honestly one-dimensional. There are no attempts to create quasi-depth in the protagonist with "parents that were never there," bouts with eating disorders or scars from dysfunctional relationships, which are always conveniently solved by Freddie Prinze Jr. types. Instead, *Bring It On* has fun with its stereotypes and boldly plays each one out to the hilt. The tracks doing the DJ of *Micro's* prestige find itself feeling its infected to put in a certain amount of time for the duration of the film.

*Bring It On* presents a more entertaining script than the trailers reveal, the shameless display of wealth and attractive people intermingled with some wickedly gratifying black humor is a winning combination. Clueless meets *Election* with a lot more eye candy. Though it will not be shown at the Cannes Film Festival, *Bring It On* is a quality pleasure worth seeing.  
Grade: B+

— Brooke Holbert

**Moonshine Over America 99: The Documentary**  
Directed by Thomas Rail

Thomas Rail works for a record label, but Spike Lee could learn a thing or two about documentaries from him. Unlike Lee's non-documentary *Kings of Comedy*, this film chronicles the entire Moonshine tour and gets plenty of interviews with the artists. By showing the location of every show and individual shots of crowd members this documentary manages to throw in local interest for viewers. Bryan-College Station residents who attended the shows may even find themselves in the first five minutes of the film because it begins with the dates



**The Art of War**  
Starring Wesley Snipes and Donald Sutherland  
Directed by Christian Duguay

Every summer, Hollywood holds onto its small-budget action movies until the end of the summer and then floods the market in hopes of recouping the money spent on these films. More often than not, these movies are sub-par and spend only a week or two at the multiplex before being dropped for more profitable features. Regretfully, considering the talent involved, *The Art of War* is one such film. It has gunfights, it has explosions, it even has martial arts, but this film fails to provide the most important ingredient of movies — entertainment.

Snipes plays a top-secret agent employed by the United Nations who is only called in the most dire of circumstances. Bond must have turned off his secret pager watch, and unfortunately, Snipes produces less-flashy results. The opening of this film — complete with a "dramatic" plunge from a high-rise is such a blatant rip off of the Bond films, it is insulting.

This movie struggles to find its own tone and pace. The editing is so choppy it kills any chance of developing flow in the film, and the way this story crosses genres is almost mind-boggling. It is part action, part political thriller, part human interest, but it never really connects with any of these themes. In fact, for a very similar story, one would do much better just to rent Snipes' own *Rising Sun*. It is much better.

Considering the promise shown by blossoming director Christian Duguay (*The Assignment* and *Screamers*), this film is a real disappointment. After showing such genius with smaller-budget films, Duguay never really seemed to get into this film and seems to have lost sight of the heart of the story, if there ever were one.

Snipes is a non-entity in this film. His character could have been played just as easily by nearly anyone else.

Several moments actually click in this clumsy film, but for the most part, it just makes a person wish for originality instead of another film cut from an old and antiquated formula. (Grade: D+)

— Matt McCormick

A = instant classic    B = a cut above    C = average  
D = don't buy it        F = burn in effigy

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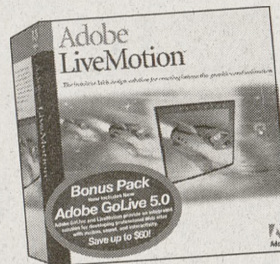
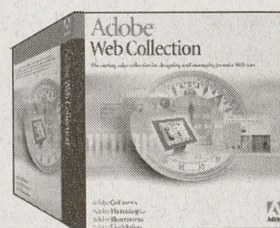
The film combines a great soundtrack with concert footage and behind-the-scenes looks at the performers' lives on tour. This alone would have been good, but the multiscreen editing gives the film a music-video feel while being reminiscent of the definitive concert documentary *Woodstock*.

The only disappointment in this film is the relative lack of concert footage with original sound. Many of the concert scenes are overlaid with the film's soundtrack music, rather than the music that was being performed at the time. However, the soundtrack is excellent, and given the overpowering volume of the concerts (which often distorts the sound during recording) the producers can be excused for choosing clarity over live music.

The best part of the film is its interviews with the stars. These give the viewer background on the performers and a connection with them. Perhaps the most poignant moment is Omar Santana's description of overcoming a debilitating eye disorder to play in the dark clubs.

The viewer also gets numerous shots of the crowds, especially the "beautiful people," but the best of these moments are the choice comments by rave-goers, "Keoki never shows," among them. While this film may not be available in the local video store, concert fanatics of all kinds will find looking for it worthwhile. (Grade: A)

— Jason Bennyhoff



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— Jason Bennyhoff

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— Jason Bennyhoff

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