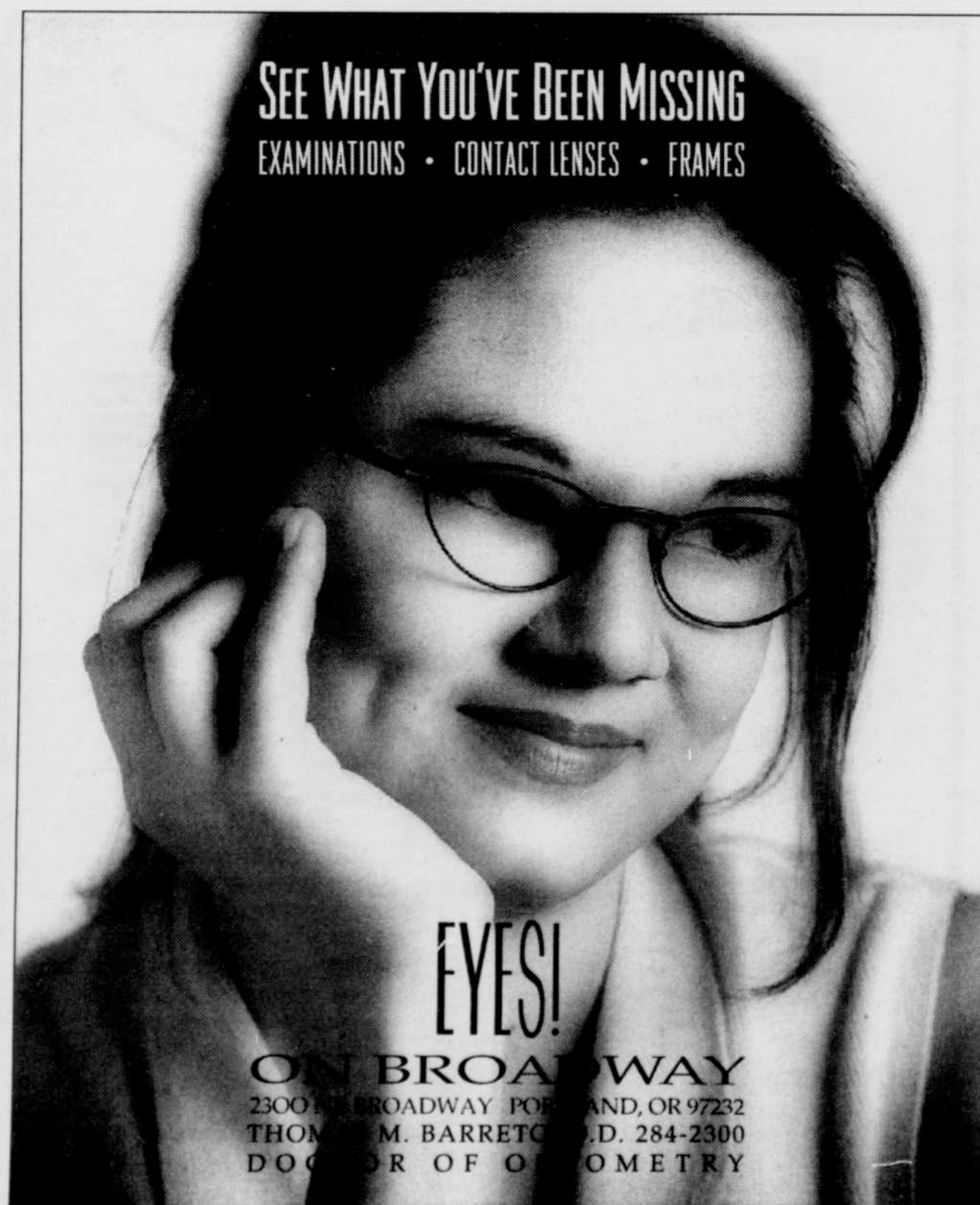


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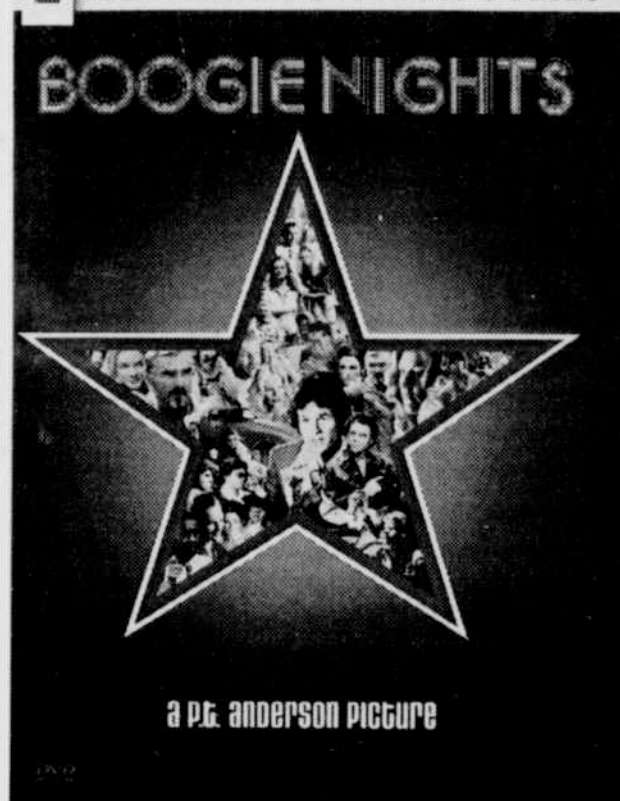
Huddle 'round the flickering screen

A great way to survive a Northwest winter
is to retreat to your cave with a stack of videos

BOOGIE NIGHTS

If I were GLAAD, I wouldn't hesitate to shower writer-director P.T. Anderson with awards. In both his 1997 film *Boogie Nights* and the current *Magnolia*, he's found a prominent place in sprawling ensemble stories for a unique, interesting, well-written gay character. These are certainly among the most human, nonpatronizing on-screen depictions of gay men I've seen in any film, ever.

NEW LINE PLATINUM SERIES



Boogie Nights, though it doesn't entirely live up to its hype, is definitely worth a look now that it's available for rental. The main character, porn star Dirk Diggler, is played by former *Advocate* cover star Mark Wahlberg. The film follows Diggler and his surrounding entourage of pornographers as their fortunes fade from the heights of the '70s to the depths of the '80s.

In a subplot, Phillip Seymour Hoffman—who's won well-deserved acclaim for his diverse roles in *The Big Lebowski*, *Happiness*, and *Flawless*—plays a boom-mike operator who develops a disastrous crush on Diggler. The devastating crush-confession scene in *Boogie Nights* is alone worth the price of the rental.

Anderson not only knows how to write great characters, gay or otherwise; he's also a compelling, original filmmaker. Rent *Boogie Nights* as a primer, then see how far he's come with *Magnolia*, which opens in theaters in January. —Christopher McQuain

DOG DAY AFTERNOON

If you're looking for proof that even mainstream Hollywood cinema was more adventurous in the 1970s than most films are today, look no further than Sidney Lumet's *Dog Day Afternoon*. Released in 1975 and starring a then somewhat restrained Al Pacino, the film portrays a family man who attempts bank robbery to pay for his male-to-female transgendered lover's sex change operation. Beyond its brave dismissal of the prevalent social, sexual and political mores of its time, this is simply one of the best action-caper blockbusters ever made.

Lumet and screenwriter Frank Pierce entirely avoid the concessions too commonly made by action films in which character and story

often suffer for the instant gratification of explosions and gunshots. Instead, as the intensity of the hostage situation mounts, he makes every character—Pacino's desperately torn average guy, his distraught lover (Chris Sarandon), each bank employee, each cop outside the building—entirely human. Audience loyalty isn't divided between good and bad guys; we care about everyone and remain riveted until the truly unpredictable ending.

Lumet's career has reached its nadir in the '90s—he made *A Stranger Among Us* and *Gloria*—but *Dog Day Afternoon* is a hopeful reminder that entertainment and intelligence needn't be mutually exclusive. —CM

FEMALE TROUBLE

Many fans of notorious queer film director and shockmeister John Waters consider his first feature, 1973's *Pink Flamingos*, to be his definitive statement. But for my money, it's his subsequent movie *Female Trouble*, released in 1975, that truly delineates his hilariously twisted vision.

Unlike *Pink Flamingos*, which seems not so much a fully realized film as a series of shocking vignettes, *Female Trouble* follows a direct plot line: the life and times of one Dawn Davenport.

Dawn is played by 300-pound drag queen Divine, who was a perennial Waters star. The film recounts Dawn's life as a Baltimore teenage delinquent with a foot-high beehive hairdo, her stint as a grouchy single mother and, finally, her quest for fame, glamour and fortune through a life of publicity-seeking criminality.

Female Trouble is very nearly as filthy as *Pink Flamingos*, but remains much less infamous and less widely seen. Waters' satire reaches some great heights here, as he butchers sacred cows from Christmas to motherhood to our judicial system. If you're in need of a hearty laugh and don't mind setting aside, for 90 minutes or so, any morals or conscientiousness you may have, *Female Trouble* is the video pick for you. —CM

MA VIE EN ROSE

Ludovic likes to wear dresses. He also enjoys applying makeup, wearing his hair long and daydreaming about marrying his schoolmate Jerome. To innocent eyes,

