



AUTO FOCUS

Video killed the TV star in this unsettling biopic about Hogan's Heroes actor and homemade porn addict Bob Crane (Greg Kinnear)—a sad, voyeuristic *E! True Hollywood Story* dramatization. My major gripe is that the ending—much like the unsolved murder that ended Crane's life—is abrupt and unsatisfying. —Jim Radosta

BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE

Rather than jumping on an anti-gun soapbox, renegade filmmaker Michael Moore instead delves deeply into the roots of the problem: Why the hell do so many Americans shoot each other? His evaluation reveals a country immersed in hateful xenophobia, corporate domination and paralyzing fear. Of course, one can't help but wonder whether a great deal of that paranoia stems from watching documentaries like this. —JR

8 MILE

It's hard to keep track of the rapid evolution of Eminem. Within two years he's gone from Vanilla Ice wannabe to GLAAD pariah to critics darling to Oscar candidate. His first lead role is a kinder, gentler version of himself—Jimmy Smith Jr., aka "Bunny Rabbit," an aspiring Detroit rapper

with a trailer trash mama (Kim Basinger) who enters talent shows in which contestants cut down on their opponents' masculinity to gain audience approval. It's unfortunate that there isn't much more to this *Rocky/Purple Rain* clone than predictable posturing, sullen sulking and misguided misogyny. —JR

FRIDA

At least it looks good. Director Julie Taymor's take on the life of the famous painter and her husband, Diego Rivera, has loads of visual pizzazz, effortlessly evoking the feel, color and sounds of Old Mexico. But the overwrought acting and soap opera script are in constant battle with the film's more thoughtful impulses. *Frida* (Salma Hayek) was indeed a hellcat in



Aw, how can you hate a guy like this? The thoughtful, wistful Eminem in *8 Mile*.

real life, but here she's the dreaded clichéd Latin spitfire brawling in cantinas, noisily swapping tongue with the fetching Ashley Judd and generally screaming and carrying on. Edward Norton apparently rewrote the script—more evidence that actors should be barred from becoming screenwriters. —Gary Morris

JACKASS THE MOVIE

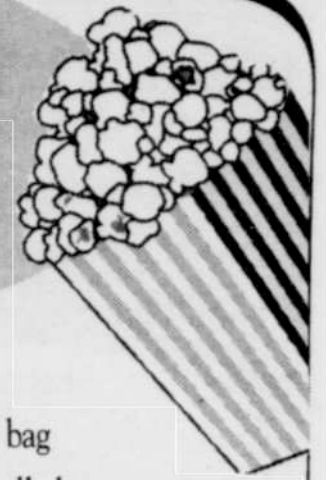
Sure, I could go on and on about how this big-screen version of MTV's "don't try these stunts at home" program hardly qualifies as a movie. I could chastise these dudes for the utter lack of respect they show their digestive systems, their bodies, their fellow human beings. But why bother? It's strangely entertaining, and the homophobic subtext (can you say "anal fixation?") makes it worth the nausea. —JR

PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE

There's silly, and then there's stupid. There's quirky, and then there's absurd. Writer/director Paul Thomas Anderson (*Boogie Nights*) bravely walks this tightrope but ends up splattered all over the concrete in his pointless exercise about a loose cannon (an impressive Adam Sandler) who falls for a fellow

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- ☹️ dud, bottom of the bag
- ☹️☹️ only if you're really hungry
- ☹️☹️☹️ good effort, pass the salt
- ☹️☹️☹️☹️ mmmm, tasty!
- ☹️☹️☹️☹️☹️ get the big tub o' corn

loser in love (Emily Watson) while being pursued by the Mormon Phone Sex Mafia. —JR

REAL WOMEN HAVE CURVES

Alternatively bittersweet and hilarious is this first feature from archaeologist-turned-filmmaker Patricia Cardoso about Mexican immigrants and their first-generation daughters. America Ferrera makes an unforgettable debut as Ana, an 18-year-old who wants to go to college but whose mother (Lupe Ontiveros of *Chuck & Buck*) has serious plans for her to work in her older sister's sweatshop. Cross-generational issues, body image and culture clashes all collide in a refreshingly unforced way. —Lisa Bradshaw



eating out

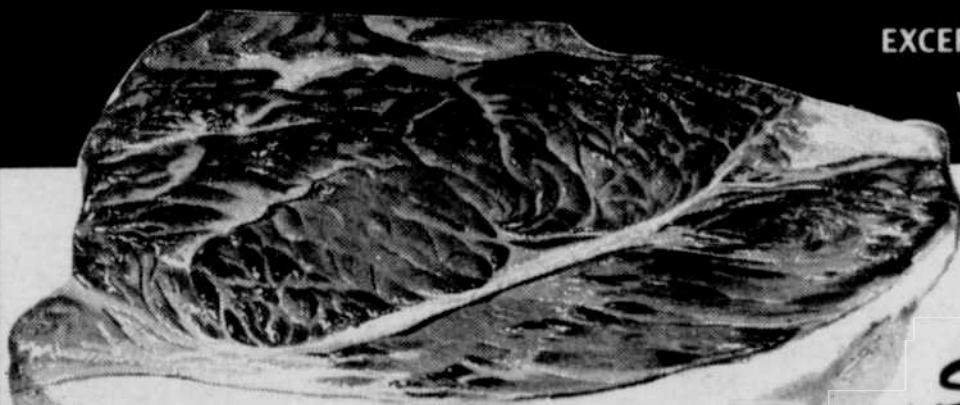


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