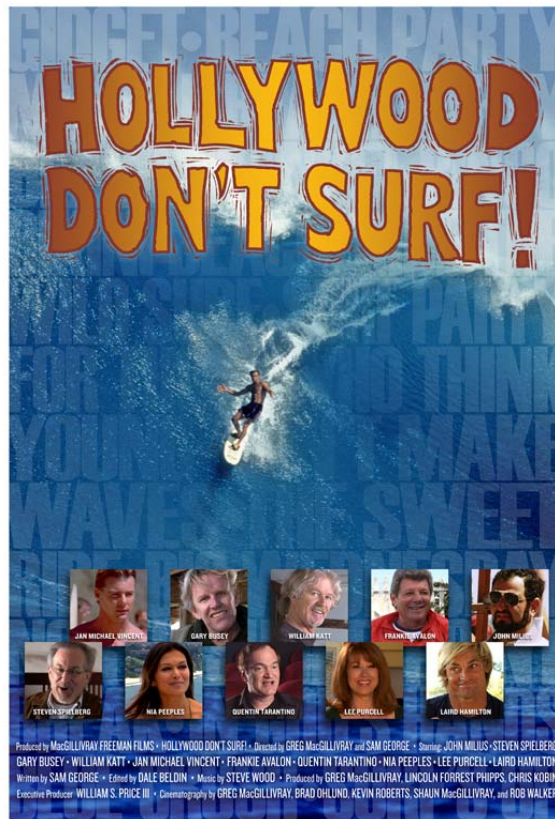


# HOLLYWOOD DON'T SURF!

A MacGillivray Freeman Film



## Production Notes

Photos available at: <http://www.hollywooddontsurf.com/sample.html>

Rating: Not yet rated

Run time: 81 mins.

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# MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN FILMS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## Greg MacGillivray's Feature Documentary "Hollywood Don't Surf!" To Premiere At The 2010 Cannes Film Festival

Outrageous, cinematic retrospective explores fifty years of Hollywood surfing movies featuring Quentin Tarantino, John Milius, Steven Spielberg, Stacy Peralta, Gary Busey, Jan-Michael Vincent, Greg MacGillivray, Lee Purcell, Nia Peeples, Pamela Anderson, big wave legends Laird Hamilton, Greg Noll with Frankie Avalon and real-life 'Gidget' Kathy Kohner

LAGUNA BEACH, Ca. (April 28, 2010)—A unique combination of filmmaking glamour, sexy beach action, big wave legends, Hollywood myths and iconic California pop culture kitsch, **MacGillivray Freeman's** new feature documentary *Hollywood Don't Surf!* has been officially selected to premiere as a sneak preview at the **2010 Cannes Film Festival**. A comedic romp examining fifty years of Hollywood surfing films—with a tight focus on the overly ambitious production and near-disastrous release of John Milius' 1978 *Big Wednesday*—*Hollywood Don't Surf!* celebrates the culturally significant, remarkably enduring and always hilarious relationship between Hollywood and surfing.

"*Hollywood Don't Surf!*" is really about how Hollywood's superficial view of surfing culture has influenced popular culture and the story of what happened when real surfers tried to change that," said producer/ director **Greg MacGillivray**.

"So many Hollywood filmmakers have tried to capture the essence of surf culture on the big screen, only to be rebuffed by surfers and critics alike," added director/writer **Sam George**. "*Big Wednesday* was no exception, but now more than thirty years later, the film has become one of the most highly regarded surfing movies ever with a worldwide cult following."

"No one is better qualified to bring big screen adventures and the strange but fascinating mix of surfing, beach sub-culture and Hollywood movies to life than Greg MacGillivray, or tell the story with such compelling insight and expert detail than waterman and surfing expert Sam George," said producer **Lincoln Forrest Phipps**. "It's surfers versus the studios—and an explosive tale for surfers and non-surfers alike."

*Hollywood Don't Surf!* features rare surfing footage such as Thomas Edison's 1906 Hawaiian surfing footage and excerpts and behind-the-scenes shots from numerous surfing films including *Gidget*, *Beach Party Movies*, *Ride the Wild Surf*, *Big Wednesday*, *North Shore*, *Point Break*, *In God's Hands* and *Blue Crush*. Interviews with Hollywood luminaries and surf stars alike feature **Quentin Tarantino**, **John Milius**, **Steven Spielberg**, **Stacy Peralta**, **Greg MacGillivray**, **Gary Busey**, **Jan-Michael Vincent**, **William Katt**, **Lee Purcell**, **Greg Noll**, **Laird Hamilton**, **Peter Townend**, **Robert Englund**, **Frankie Avalon** and real-life 'Gidget' **Kathy Kohner**.

*Hollywood Don't Surf!* marks a return of sorts for producer/director Greg MacGillivray to the world that helped launch his filmmaking career. Better known as the two-time Academy Award-nominated producer/director of such IMAX films as *Everest* and *The Living Sea*, MacGillivray began his career making surfing documentaries including *The Performers*, *Free and Easy*, and the cult classic *Five Summer Stories*. In 1977, Warner Bros. hired him to produce the second unit surfing sequences for *Big Wednesday*.

*Hollywood Don't Surf!* is a **MacGillivray Freeman Films** production produced by **Greg MacGillivray**, **Lincoln Forrest Phipps** and **Chris Kobin**, directed by **Greg MacGillivray** and **Sam George**, written by **Sam George**, executive produced by **William S. Price III**, edited by **Dale Beldin**, with music by **Steve Wood** and **Honk**.

ICM is representing the film worldwide. *Hollywood Don't Surf!* will be screened in the Cannes Classics program at the prestigious Palais des Festival as well as during the festival's Cinéma de la Plage showcase screenings.

###

**FEATURING:**

Quentin Tarantino  
Steven Spielberg  
Gary Busey  
William Katt  
Greg MacGillivray  
Laird Hamilton  
Peter Townend  
Frank Avalon

John Milius  
Stacy Peralta  
Jan-Michael Vincent  
Lee Purcell  
Nia Peeples  
Greg Noll  
Robert Englund  
Kathy Kohner

and

Robert « Wingnut » Weaver  
Rick Dano  
Steve Pezman  
Kevin Thomas

Paul Holmes  
Denny Aaberg  
Chris Mauro

**THE PRODUCTION TEAM:**

Directed by GREG MACGILLIVRAY and SAM GEORGE  
Written by SAM GEORGE  
Story by SAM GEORGE, GREG MACGILLIVRAY,  
LINCOLN FORREST PHIPPS, and CHRIS  
KOBIN  
Produced by GREG MACGILLIVRAY, LINCOLN FORREST  
PHIPPS and CHRIS KOBIN  
Music Scored by STEVE WOOD  
Edited by DALE BELDIN  
Executive Producer WILLIAM S. PRICE III  
Interview Photography by BRAD OHLUND, GREG MACGILLIVRAY,  
SHAUN MACGILLIVRAY, and ROBERT  
WALKER  
Action Photography by JACK MCCOY, BUD BROWNE, GREG  
MACGILLIVRAY and JIM FREEMAN  
Sound Mixing KEN TEANEY  
Editorial Assistants ROBERT WALKER, MATTHEW MULLER, and  
JASON STEARNS  
Musicians NATE WOOD

## Production Information

### Hollywood's 50-Year Love Affair with Surfing

It's no surprise that Hollywood's pop culture movie-making machine has long been fascinated by surfing—the pursuit of mavericks, adventurers, daredevils, hedonists or even spiritual seekers. Pitting themselves against the awesome power of nature's waves, or finding inner peace in the serene solitude and beauty of the ocean environment, surfers lead a laid-back, live-for-the-moment existence scheduled only by wind and tides. Surfing is also, as some anonymous wit has famously said, “the most fun you can have with your shorts on.”

Surfing is by turns mystical, sexy, glamorous and, today, a worldwide lifestyle industry generating an annual revenue of \$8 billion and a professional sport in which top athletes like 9-time world champion Kelly Slater earn millions of dollars. Not to mention big wave legend Laird Hamilton, a house-hold name even to those who have never been “tubed” or spent time at the beach.

But while Hollywood played a key role in creating surfing's first wave of popularity, surf-themed dramatic movies have rarely met with success at the box office. Meanwhile, Hollywood has had an uneasy relationship with real surfers, who always felt it never captured the essence of their lifestyle and either derided or vilified such films.

It is deliciously ironic, therefore, that this sneak preview of *Hollywood Don't Surf!*—a new documentary from producer/director Greg MacGillivray and writer/ director Sam George—should be screening in the “Classics” program of the 2010 Cannes Film Festival, a category traditionally reserved for the celebration of a particular movie or aspect of movie-making. In this case, the film being shown is not an homage but a roast—as well as a tribute to those who helped make the Hollywood myths and legends from the studios to the beach while helping shape and define Southern California's iconic beach sub-culture as the ultimate “place in the sun.”

*Hollywood Don't Surf!*, a comedy-documentary and cinematic retrospective, explores Hollywood's attempts at what might be called the “surf-ploitation” genre and its more serious dramatizations. Clips from 1960s kitsch classics like *Muscle Beach Party* and *For Those Who Think Young*, are laughable at face value but campy, fun fare nonetheless with endless bizarre mis-portrayals and faux-innocence. The film's in-depth focus on the 1978 Warner Bros. release *Big Wednesday* finds mischievous mirth in the misadventures of its making. More recent features—*North Shore*, *Blue Crush*

and *Point Break* among them—all reveal their own moments of hilarious ham-handedness. Commentary from Hollywood actors and directors are contrasted with the reactions of real surfers and beach culture insiders, all to great humorous effect. The net result is a light-hearted critique that is true to the surfing spirit of pure irreverent fun.

Producer and co-director of *Hollywood Don't Surf!*, Greg MacGillivray, has worked both sides of the line in the sand between Hollywood and the surf scene. Before becoming a two-time Academy Award-nominated producer/director of IMAX films, MacGillivray and his partner the late Jim Freeman worked repeatedly in Hollywood as second unit camera on various studio features such as Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, and *The Towering Inferno*. MacGillivray also produced the second unit surfing sequences for *Big Wednesday*. But it was as a core surf documentary filmmaker that MacGillivray found his start in the movie business. MacGillivray's *A Cool Wave of Color* and the MacGillivray Freeman productions *The Performers*, *Free and Easy*, and *Five Summer Stories* are regarded as '60s and '70s classics among surf film aficionados. "I always felt that making surf-related movies for a general audience was a real challenge," says MacGillivray about why he was interested in making *Hollywood Don't Surf!* "The feeling of surfing is impossible to describe in words, which is why Hollywood's attempts to make movies about it have always fallen flat. The joy of it, the art of it, are things that are impossible to explain."

### **The Early Days**

Surfing has fascinated filmmakers since the earliest days of the silver screen. In the early 1900s Thomas Edison shot footage of surfing at Waikiki to make a film promoting his newly designed movie camera. In the 1930s surfing sequences figured in the Hollywood movies *Bird of Paradise*, starring Dolores Del Rio, and *Waikiki Wedding* with Bing Crosby. But it was in the late 1950s that moviemakers really started to take an interest in surfing as a subject, and it was no coincidence that Malibu was the crucible. The hub of the developing surf lifestyle in California's post-war years, Malibu was also home to many Hollywood stars and moguls, such as the Zanucks. Darryl F. Zanuck was founder of 20th Century Fox and his daughter Darrylin and son Richard both were surfers at Malibu. Interestingly for the Cannes audience, Richard "Dickie" Zanuck and screenwriter Peter Viertel are credited with introducing surfing to France at Biarritz in 1956 when they brought a surfboard to the Basque country for the location filming of *The Sun Also Rises*.

Then, as now, Hollywood was obsessed with the young movie-going demographic, but the successful films of the day were mostly about alienated, disaffected youth. *The Wild One* (Marlon Brando, 1953), *Rebel Without A Cause* (1955) and *Rock Around The Clock* (Bill Haley and His Comets, 1956) were all aimed at a generation that defied authority and the conventions of 1950s life in suburban America. But when a young Kathy Kohner told her screenwriter father, Frederick, about the surf scene at Malibu, which he turned into the best-selling novel *Gidget*, and then a screenplay, Columbia Pictures saw an opportunity. Here was a story about fun in the sun, a healthy outdoor way of life (in minimal clothing) and a spectacular new sport—surfing. Straitlaced society might view surfers as beach bums, but hey, they were saltwater-washed and harmless enough.

When the movie *Gidget* was released in 1959 it was the big summer hit of the season, and nothing about the surfing world would ever be the same again. Where before there were only a few hundred surfers on the coast, thousands, even hundreds of thousands, took to the waves. As *Hollywood Don't Surf!* writer and co-director Sam George tells it, “It was as if *Gidget* had opened the gates to the sacred city and the barbarian hordes swarmed in.”

The established surfing community detested *Gidget* and its corny portrayal, even as many of them found themselves employed making surfboards catering to the sudden new demand. One of them was legendary '60s big-wave rider Greg Noll. In *Hollywood Don't Surf!* he says about *Gidget*: “If that’s what surfing was really like I’d rather have been a goddam dog-catcher,” which pretty much sums up the general sentiment. But there was yet more humiliation to come. During the subsequent few years, Hollywood released dozens of “surfploitation” or “waxploitation” films—low budget, but often highly successful—and many of them far worse. So began the laugh-packed disconnect between Hollywood and surfing—a clash of cultures—that *Hollywood Don't Surf!* so hilariously dissects.

### **Hollywood Post-*Gidget***

Surfers themselves could afford to ignore Hollywood in the post-*Gidget* years as the swelling popularity of surfing created a growing audience for its own media—magazines and movies both. Interestingly, special interest surfing movies preceded magazines and even *Gidget* itself. From the early '60s on, though, 16mm documentary surf films made by surfers for surfers were produced in a steady stream. Screened in high school auditoriums or larger venues, surf film nights became cultural gatherings of the tribe, eagerly awaited. One such film, *The Endless Summer*, a surfing adventure travelogue, became so popular that it went on to have a 35mm release in theaters across the country—

thumbing its nose at Hollywood's efforts and beating it at its own game. It now stands as one of the most successful documentaries of all time. *Hollywood Don't Surf!* also touches upon other, more recent documentaries that have met with broad success, including *Step Into Liquid* and *Riding Giants*, which feature some of the most spectacular action surfing ever captured on film. But it's with Hollywood's dramatic renditions—and their risible failure to hit the right mark—that *Hollywood Don't Surf* most concerns itself.

### **The Rise and Fall—and Rise Again—of *Big Wednesday***

Warner Bros.' *Big Wednesday* was supposed to be the film that would turn the tide on Hollywood's hokey depictions of surfing—a film with a relatively big budget of \$6 million and a writer/director, John Milius, who had a string of successful screen credits. Milius was a surfer himself and had worked with Denny Aaberg, a core Malibu local, to develop the script. Milius was committed to using real surfers as stunt doubles, actors who could surf and second camera units filled with the best talent from core surf movie-making. In Hollywood there was a great deal of interest in this novel approach—and in the subject matter. Fellow “new wave” writers and directors Steven Spielberg and George Lucas paid particular attention to Milius's movie-in-the-making. Lucas offered script notes and Spielberg visited the location sets in California and in Hawaii, although he admits in *Hollywood Don't Surf!* that it was mostly because he knew there'd be dozens of pretty girls in bikinis working as extras.

In the surf community, expectations were high—perhaps too much so. But when *Big Wednesday* was released, even though the action surfing was the best ever presented in a Hollywood production, surfers were generally disappointed. The film tended to lapse into overblown melodrama, was much too sentimental for the iconoclastic crowd, and had an orchestral soundtrack that was more Dr. Zhivago than Z-Boys. And there were those high-minded monologues about surfing and friendship and the meaning of life. Surfers recoiled. Perhaps the timing was bad—longboard surfing, which made up most of the action, was out of fashion and there was no nostalgia for it; the Vietnam War was over but it was too recent to be reminded of its pain. Whatever the reasons, *Big Wednesday* bombed at the box office and was rejected by hard-core surfers too.

Thirty-plus years after its 1978 release, though, it bears a second look. Now accepted by a younger generation of surfers as a cult classic, *Big Wednesday* has been embraced as one of the best surf films ever made. In *Hollywood Don't Surf!* comic tales about making the film, from Milius himself, to cast and crew—whether from the beach or from Burbank—provide side-splitting humor and supreme

irony in the mismatched meeting of the film studio and the surf scene. Actor Gary Busey in particular, the only one of the three principal actors who did not surf, gives testimony that is especially funny—about surfers, surfing and the making of the film itself.

Despite *Big Wednesday*'s initial failure at the box office, Hollywood has every few years made further attempts to wrap surfing into a dramatic feature. Most have hinged on the theme of a neophyte breaking into the top ranks of pro competition or, echoing *Big Wednesday*, culminating in a giant swell that must be challenged. None have proved to be much more successful, or more believable, but all contain unintentional comic relief that adds more grist to the mill for *Hollywood Don't Surf!*

Writer Sam George, a former editor of *Surfer* magazine, knows exactly which screws to turn for illuminating the dichotomy between real surfing and Hollywood's versions of it. He also has astute judgment. Sean Penn's performance as the '70s surfing stoner Jeff Spicoli in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* is just one example in *Hollywood Don't Surf!* that even surfers can get a chuckle from simply because it is so true to form. Here at least was one stereotype that was believable. But it was a rare exception. Meanwhile, the music soundtrack gives constant cues to the 50-year cultural timeline with bites interspersed in the original score by Steve Wood from Dick Dale, James Brown, The Beach Boys, The Doobie Brothers, The Doors, Pete Townshend, Pablo Cruise, Jason Mraz, Smashmouth and more.

Surfing today is very different from what it was in the late 1950s when *Hollywood Don't Surf!* starts its 80-minute journey on the screen. From a few hundred surfers mostly in Hawaii, California and Australia, surfers can now be found in the multi-millions, riding waves in more than 80 countries around the world. More than 60 nations are affiliated with the International Surfing Association. For its pop culture history, perspective, and above all, its humor, this film will have widespread appeal for the surfing community, cinemafiles and general audiences alike. Which is, of course, what Hollywood always hoped for from the beginning. But Hollywood *IS* California at times—or at least it latches on to certain ideas, trends, sports or lifestyles like surfing and gives them a mystique that fascinates the rest of the world. No matter how silly or ridiculous most surf films may be, few will deny that they helped trigger dreams of endless summers of sun and surf, sexy beach parties galore, and bigger Wednesdays, and ultimately led to a huge population explosion in California.



## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

When producer/director Greg MacGillivray was approached by producers Lincoln Forrest Phipps and Chris Kobin with the idea of making a documentary about *Big Wednesday*, he already had a lot on his mind, and on his schedule: MacGillivray's latest IMAX 3-D production, *Arabia*, was in post-production after four arduous years in the making and shot in the sun-scorched deserts of Saudi Arabia, while his company was already ramping up for its next spectacular large-screen 3-D format film, *To The Arctic*, headed for shooting on, and beneath, the polar ice cap. Even so, MacGillivray was intrigued. After all, despite his 30 years specializing in IMAX documentaries and with some three dozen such films to his credit including two Academy Award-nominated films, *The Living Sea* and *Dolphins*, MacGillivray remained an ardent surfer and he'd begun his filmmaking career making surfing documentaries. Plus, he'd been producer of the second unit action surfing sequences for *Big Wednesday*, the 1978 Warner Bros. dramatic feature that was a box office bomb but that has since achieved cult classic status in the surfing community.

*Big Wednesday's* writer/director John Milius had given Phipps and Kobin his approval for their documentary, and he'd told them he wanted MacGillivray involved—an obvious nod to his former top notch A-Team second unit director for *Big Wednesday*. Producer Lincoln Phipps, who already had a history with MacGillivray on *The Living Sea* and was a surfer himself, jumped at the chance to reconnect with the king of IMAX films. The director short list evaporated into one very quickly. “Phipps brought in half the budget of \$800,000 via a founding partner of Texas Pacific Group, Executive Producer William S. Price, III—a bona fide surfer with roots in California and Hawaii—which is pretty low budget compared to what I've been doing lately,” said MacGillivray. “So I said I'd put in the other half of the money and I'd work for free, but I wanted to make it as a comedy.” In fact, MacGillivray had a larger vision for the project: using *Big Wednesday* as a touchstone for how, during more than 50 years, Hollywood has been unable to make a surf-themed dramatic feature that depicts surfing and surfers authentically.

“*Big Wednesday* to me is an interesting film but it's a flawed film,” MacGillivray explained. “So I said let's not just glorify it, let's tell the true story about how difficult it is to make a film about surfing and how comical it can be. Let's make fun of *Big Wednesday* and the making of it, and let's focus on the fun times everyone had working on it and give people a good comedy. Let's focus on that and the laughs, almost as if Mel Brooks was making this movie. I said let's try that— if it's not funny it's going

to fail and if it is funny it's going to succeed. And so that's what we were going for—making fun of Hollywood and its other efforts—even *Big Wednesday* and its motley crew of renegade surfers.

Adds Phipps, “We look at *Big Wednesday* and John Milius through an entirely different lens; through a prism that both celebrates the film as much as it holds John and his now-redeemed surfing “epic” to a much higher critical, but ultimately fascinating level. After all, Milius is one of the few filmmakers who could actually surf and who is still a surfer at heart. However, no one is immune from a serious ribbing and in the film it's open season—no one is spared. That's how surfers are, anyway—humor first, well actually, waves *then* humor!”

MacGillivray admitted he was preoccupied with his IMAX films and the tens of millions invested in their productions. But he tapped into his company's in-house talent pool, reached out to his network in the surf scene and assembled a crew that could get the job done. First he enlisted the two key players: Sam George, a former editor of *Surfer* magazine, to be writer and co-director, and film editor, Dale Beldin, with whom MacGillivray has worked for years. Said MacGillivray: “I shot a lot of it and Shaun, my son, and my film crew of Brad Ohlund and Rob Walker worked on it, and that became the team. We got terrific cooperation with all the surfers and interviewed probably twice as many as are in the film— and what we got from them was much of the comedy. There's still much to do to complete the film, probably three months more work, to get the music right and the narration right. But we had the offer of a preview screening at Cannes, so we felt we should take advantage of it.”

### **Articulating the vision**

Sam George was well qualified to take the project and run with it. “Greg MacGillivray contacted me and said let's come up with a concept in which we can examine *Big Wednesday* but in a broader context—the whole saga of *Big Wednesday* set in a timeline of 50 years of Hollywood's attempts to make surf movies,” said George, who also co-wrote *Riding Giants*, the 2004 Sony Pictures surfing documentary that opened that year's Sundance Film Festival. “One of the reasons why I think Greg brought me in on the project is because I have a good working knowledge of a lot of surfing cultural products, for want of a better term. I was very familiar with all the Hollywood movies and it was really a matter of just going through all the old movies to pick what we'd need, and then knowing where to get archival photos of Malibu in the early days of surfing, that kind of thing.”

Perhaps the most important archival footage for *Hollywood Don't Surf!*, however, was secretly stashed away in the basement of MacGillivray Freeman Films' Laguna Beach, Calif., offices. “What

really galvanized the project was when Greg revealed to producer Phipps that he had six hours of never-before-seen, behind-the-scenes footage that he'd shot on the set of *Big Wednesday*," explained George. "He had it digitized and we took a look at it and it was all really great. That was a gold mine. That made the research aspect much easier because we weren't starting from ground zero. Another great thing was that Denny Aaberg, the co-writer of *Big Wednesday*, and Peter Townend, who was a stunt double surfer in it, are both major media pack rats. They had collected everything connected with *Big Wednesday*—newspaper clippings, reviews, posters, photos. Denny still even had his original script. So those guys were a real valuable resource."

Having assembled or at least identified all of the essential building blocks for the foundation of *Hollywood Don't Surf!*, George set out to obtain the interviews needed to fill in the gaps and provide the commentary that would make the project come to life with laughs. "When it came to do the original interviews, the obvious interview candidates, the surfers, that was a little simpler," said George, who knew exactly where and when to find many of the subjects he'd need—at the bi-annual surf industry gathering held at the San Diego Convention Center. "We began by going to the Action Sports Retailer trade show and dragging people off the show floor to an interview room we'd set up with lights and camera." More such interviews were conducted at the Surfing Heritage Foundation, a surfing museum in San Clemente, Calif., and at beachside locations in the Los Angeles area. "We shot a lot of them along the Malibu coast, which we thought was most appropriate," added George, referencing that *Big Wednesday* was set at the fabled beach and surf spot.

### **Interviewing the Hollywood players**

The final piece of the puzzle needed for the picture was to gather interviews from Hollywood actors and celebrities, writers and directors—commentary that would be key to bringing Hollywood insider perspective to the project. "John Milius had the connections with people like Steven Spielberg and Quentin Tarantino and the other Hollywood people," said George. "That opened up a lot of doors for us because it let people know that we were doing a film about filmmaking as much as about surfing. That also gave us easy access to all the actors who were in *Big Wednesday*—Gary Busey, Billy Katt, Lee Purcell and others. There is a funny story about doing the interview with Gary Busey, which we had decided to do at the Malibu Pier. We went to pick him up as arranged in a limo, but at the last minute he decided he wanted to bring his surfboard with him. Then he realized that no real surfer would ever drive up to Malibu in a limo with board sticking up out of the roof. So we cancelled the limo, threw his board

in the back of my pickup truck and went that way with Gary saying that was perfect, much better, the real surfer style.”

But there was one notable absence among the must-have interviews with the film’s stars. Jan Michael Vincent’s much publicized battles with alcohol and drugs had driven him away from Hollywood and out of the film business. “Jan Michael Vincent was the biggest challenge and the least likely interview, we felt, because of the direction his personal life had gone,” said George, who went on a mission to track him down. “We managed to find out where he was and went back East to a location that has to remain undisclosed and spent a few days with Jan and his wife, and we got it shot. It turned out to be the interview we were the most happy with.”

Finally, George and the MacGillivray team obtained the interviews with Hollywood heavy hitters that would add an extra element of credibility—and more fun—to the story of surfing and Hollywood’s love-hate relationship. “We went to visit Steven Spielberg at Amblin Pictures on the Universal lot, which made us surfers and filmmakers feel very prestigious,” said George. “In terms of general pop culture, having people like Spielberg and Quentin Tarantino discussing surfers and surf culture is something that’s really interesting. Quentin talked about the AIP [American International Pictures] beach party pictures, about John Milius and his place as the poet laureate of the Hollywood new wave of the late ’60s, about John’s motivation to make a film that was the way he looked at his life, and his [Tarantino’s] own earlier days when he worked as a kid in a video store at Manhattan Beach where *Big Wednesday* was a huge rental hit. That was very cool.”

Finally satisfied that they had all the elements needed for the comic documentary, George and film editor Dale Beldin dug in for the final phase. Added George: “It was just a matter of accessing all of that great material and shaping the story.”

## Synopsis

When it comes to depicting the surf scene, Hollywood just can't seem to get it right. *Hollywood Don't Surf!* is a comic documentary about the clash of cultures resulting from Hollywood's every attempt to make a dramatic feature film about surfing and surfers. Beginning with the 1959 hit *Gidget*, which compelled thousands to take up surfing and sparked the first wave of its boom in popularity, to later films like *North Shore*, *Point Break* and *Blue Crush*, *Hollywood Don't Surf!* documents how Hollywood has consistently missed its mark with real surfers—setting the stage for some serious fun.

With clips from 50 years of Hollywood releases, and interviews with surfers, surfing journalists and cultural commentators, along with a star-studded array of Hollywood actors, writers, directors and film critics, *Hollywood Don't Surf!* picks up speed as a lighthearted romp with its focus on the multitude of “beach party” movies of the early to mid-'60s. These were roundly ridiculed and reviled by surfers.

*Hollywood Don't Surf!* pays particular attention to 1978's *Big Wednesday*, highly anticipated in the surfing community because it was written and directed by a surfer who was also a Hollywood insider, starred actors who could surf, and employed some of the best surfers in the world as stunt doubles. Even so, on its release *Big Wednesday* was a commercial failure and largely panned in the surf scene, although it achieved cult classic status among younger generations of surfers some 25-plus years later. Misadventures during the making of *Big Wednesday* provide some of the best moments in *Hollywood Don't Surf!*

Still, Hollywood has not been deterred in its occasional attempts to capture the elusive essence of surfing's appeal. *Hollywood Don't Surf!* revisits the surf-themed dramatic features that followed in *Big Wednesday*'s wake and finds humor in the flaws of all.

Noting that some of the most successful big-screen releases have been surfing documentaries such as *The Endless Summer* (1965), *Step Into Liquid* (2003) and *Riding Giants* (2004), *Hollywood Don't Surf!* concludes that the experience of surfing is impossible to define in a dramatic script and that *Big Wednesday* has become a cult classic not because it's about surfing but about the enduring friendships formed in the common bond of surfers riding waves.

## In Their Own Words—Excerpts from the *Hollywood Don't Surf! Interviews*

### **Steven Spielberg on John Milius encouraging him to try surfing:**

“I wasn’t a water guy. John kept saying to me, look, you’ve got good balance, you could do it, just get on this board and I’ll take you out. And I said, John, I’ve just made *Jaws*, it’s in the theaters right now, and somewhere out in that ocean is a shark with my name on it. I’m not going out there, there’s a price on my head, they’re out there circling, trying to find me.”

### **Steven Spielberg on *Big Wednesday*:**

“John Milius mythologized surfers in a wonderful way, not unlike the way Sam Peckinpah mythologized the Western hero with *The Wild Bunch*.”

### **Quentin Tarantino on surfers’ reactions to *Big Wednesday*:**

“I hate f---en surfers. Surfers don’t deserve a movie like *Big Wednesday*. That movie is so much cooler than any of them.”

### **Gary Busey on John Milius offering him the part of Leroy The Masochist in *Big Wednesday*:**

“I said to him you mean this is what the movie’s about—*surfing*? I got right in his face and said, John, I’m from Texas and Oklahoma. I play football. *That* is a collision sport. *This* [surfing] is for sissy boys.”

### **Laird Hamilton, renowned contemporary big-wave rider:**

“Surfing is the antithesis of making movies Hollywood-style. The act of surfing is living in the moment, the purest form of truth. Here’s the wave, you’re on it—there’s not much else going on and there’s no make-believe about it. Capture the feeling of what surfing’s like? It’s like trying to describe a color with words.”

### **Greg Noll, pioneering big-wave rider and surfboard maker, on *Gidget*:**

“It not only made you want to puke, if that was the way surfing really was, I’d rather have been a dog-catcher.”

### **Nia Peeples on “surfploitation” films:**

“I remember being 10 or 11 years old watching those movies and thinking, Oh this is kind of goofy; people having fun at the beach—they’re dancing, there’s music, there’s surfing. When I watch them now, with my 10-year old, I realize that the entire movie is about getting in the girls’ pants. That’s it. It’s about sex!”

### **Stacy Peralta, surfer, writer/director of *Dogtown and Z Boys* and *Riding Giants*:**

“When you look at old pictures of surfers on the beach in the 1950s, there are always guitars and ukuleles—it’s a beautiful romantic atmosphere. How could Hollywood look at that those photos and somehow translate them into some grotesque surfing musical? I remember thinking to myself, where are they plugging in their amps? And nobody ever danced like that.”

### **Rick Dano, surfer and actor, on “surfploitation” films:**

“They were just so gut-wrenchingly bad, horrible, like bad sushi.”

**Steve Pezman, Publisher, *The Surfers Journal*:**

“Hollywood is always trying to de-code surfing or explain it. When you do a little bit of that well, surfers are grateful for it. And when you do it wrong they just vilify you for it.”

**Chris Mauro, former editor of *Surfer* magazine:**

“Surfers don’t speak in monologues. I don’t know why Hollywood insists that there has to be this monologue every time that will sum everything up.”

**Stacy Peralta**

“We don’t do monologues. Surfers talk in small words like *stoked* and *gnarly* and *bitchin*. That’s about as deep as we go.”

**Spicoli**

“Awesome!”

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

**Greg MACGILLIVRAY (Producer/Director)**—With a filmmaking career that spans more than 40 years, Greg MacGillivray is best known as one of the world’s preeminent producer/directors of giant-screen IMAX Theatre films. He has produced and/or directed more than 35 giant-screen films, including two Academy Award-nominated films, *The Living Sea* and *Dolphins*, and the 1998 blockbuster hit *Everest*, which is the highest-grossing IMAX Theatre film of all time. Early in his filmmaking career, Greg worked in Hollywood, directing and photographing for Stanley Kubrick on *The Shining* and filming for the Academy Award-nominated *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and the Academy Award-winning *The Towering Inferno*. He is the only director with three films—*To Fly!*, *The Living Sea* and *Everest*—in the IMAX Hall of Fame. In 2004, Greg and his wife Barbara created the non-profit MacGillivray Freeman Films Educational Foundation dedicated to the conservation of the world’s natural and cultural heritage through giant-screen films and companion educational programming.

**Sam GEORGE (Writer/Director)**—Acknowledged as one of surfing’s leading experts and aficionados, Sam George has been writing about the sport for more than 25 years. He co-wrote 2004’s *Riding Giants*, the award-winning big wave surfing documentary chosen to open the 2004 Sundance Film Festival. He wrote and co-directed *Pipeline Masters* and *The Lost Wave: An African Surf Story*, which won both the Audience Award at the 2007 Malibu Film Festival and the Most Innovative Documentary Award at the Huntington Beach Film Festival. Sam also wrote the 2008 Sundance hit *Made in*

*America*, a Stacy Peralta-directed documentary offering wrenching portrayal of the long-running feud between the Crips and the Bloods, South Los Angeles' most notorious African American gangs.

***William S. PRICE III (Executive Producer)***— William S. “Bill” Price, III is a co-founder and partner emeritus of TPG Capital, LP (formerly Texas Pacific Group), a private equity fund founded in 1992 with over \$30 billion in assets under management. TPG deals include Ducati motorcycles, Punch Taverns Group, Del Monte Foods, Petco, J. Crew, Continental Airlines, Gemplus, Grohe and Seagate. TPG has owned various wine industry assets including Beringer, Chateau St. Jean, St. Clement, Meridian, Stags Leap Winery and wineries in China and Turkey. Bill owns Durell Vineyards with 150 acres of pinot noir, chardonnay and syrah in Sonoma County. He founded Three Sticks Winery in 2002 and bought minority stakes in Buccella and Kistler Vineyards. He is a founder of The Vincraft Group, a winery acquisition fund which recently purchased the Kosta Browne Winery. Prior to forming Texas Pacific Group, Mr. Price was Vice President of Strategic Planning and Business Development for GE Capital and an attorney at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher. Mr. Price serves as board chairman for Common Sense Media and the Gladstone Institutes. He also serves on the boards of the California Mentor Foundation, the Dignity Fund, Unitus Capital, Justgive.com and the California Academy of Sciences.

***Lincoln Forrest PHIPPS (Producer)***—Lincoln Phipps forged an alliance with MacGillivray Freeman Films to develop and produce *Hollywood Don't Surf!* under his Pacific One Productions banner. His previous company UK/LA Management partnered with Sting's manager Miles Copeland/Firststars managing British recording artists and helping bring Sting's music to MacGillivray Freeman's hit *The Living Sea*. He then went to Paramount Features Legal and also worked with Ronald Shusett, executive producer of such blockbuster films as *Alien*, *Total Recall* and *Minority Report*, in a development capacity. Next he landed at Dennis Davidson and Associates DDA MediaTek as COO, a division of the leading provider of marketing services and pre-eminent PR firm for international film clients. He produced the rock and roll theatrical production *Be Bop A Lula* with John Densmore of the Doors, Adam Ant and Lori Depp prior to the play's revival at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2009. Phipps was also an appointee to the Governor's Office of Governor Schwarzenegger and currently serves on the board of Americas Film Conservancy (AFC).



**Chris KOBIN (Producer)**—Chris Kobin has written and produced nine films, including *Payback*, an ABC Made-for-Television Movie that reunited actors Edward Asner and Mary Tyler Moore, *Slasher: An IFC Original*, directed by John Landis, premiering at the South by Southwest Film (SXSW) Festival, *The Girl Next Door*, premiering at the Slamdance Film Festival, *Snoop Dogg's Hood of Horror* premiering at 8 Films To Die For and *2001 Maniacs* starring Robert Englund.

**Steve WOOD (Music By)**—Steve Wood has been scoring films with Greg MacGillivray since Greg's surfing cult classic *Five Summer Stories* in 1975. Since then, he has worked on over twenty IMAX Theatre films including *The Living Sea*, *To Fly!*, *The Magic of Flight*, *Everest*, *Dolphins* and most recently *Grand Canyon Adventure* with Dave Matthews Band, and *Arabia 3D*. He worked with Sting on both *The Living Sea* and *Dolphins* and George Harrison on *Everest*. Wood had also worked with Kenny Loggins, The Pointer Sisters, Michael McDonald, David Crosby, and Graham Nash. Woods' music has also been featured in a variety of Hollywood films and he has an extensive body of work in the commercial field including his work with Stevie Wonder on a Clio-award winning television spot. Scoring giant-screen films has allowed Wood to develop his interest in and knowledge of diverse ethnic music including Indonesian, Caribbean, Chinese, Tibetan, Arabic, Greek and Irish styles. For the last several years, Wood has produced music extensively for Sony Classical, including two CDS of music with Mario Frangoulis and a CD with opera legends Salvatore Licitra and Marcelo Alvarez.

**Dale BELDIN (Editor)**—Dale Beldin has been editing films since 1972, in every format that's come along since: 16mm, 35mm, Imax, video, and digital. Best known for editing *The Making of Michael Jackson's THRILLER*, Dale went on to edit five comedy feature films for director John Landis, including *Beverly Hills Cop 3*, *Innocent Blood*, and *Blues Brothers 2000*. Beyond the feature film world, Dale also edited several music videos for performers Michael Jackson, David Bowie, and Donna Summer. In the documentary realm, he edited the award winning ABC Special *Two Cops* and *The Biography of Oscar (75 Years of the Academy Awards)*. Dale also worked on several Imax projects produced and directed by Greg MacGillivray, including *Behold Hawaii*, *Dolphins*, and *Top Speed*. In 2002, Beldin trained to be a Court Appointed Special Advocate for the Los Angeles Children's Court. This volunteer organization works with abused and neglected children that have been placed in the county's foster care program.