



## Drive-in Movie Memories

**Kurt Kuenne** | UNITED STATES, 2001 | 57 min. / 35mm | English

A stirring and hauntingly evocative jaunt down memory lane, *Drive-in Movie Memories* recreates an era of movie watching where the movie was of secondary importance, but how one watched made all the difference. Kurt Kuenne, who directed the documentary for drive-in experts, Don and Susan Sanders, doesn't just tell the history of the drive-ins, he shows it. *Drive-in Movie Memories* doesn't just inform, it recreates. The strength of the documentary is not in its educational value, but in its ability to make the viewer feel what it must have been like to steer into a drive-in theatre on a warm summer night, to roll down the window and feel the breeze drift through the car, to fend off the mosquitoes with one hand while digging into popcorn with the other. *Drive-in Movie Memories* celebrates the communal atmosphere of outdoor moviegoing, a pastime which stands in stark contrast to the dark, lonely experience of our air-conditioned, modern theatres.

Interviewing movie fanatics from film critic Leonard Maltin to a girl who made out with Elvis at a drive-in, the Sanders uncover a vast reservoir of nostalgia and yearning for a significant feature of mid-century Americana. One interviewee remembers attending a drive-in during a snowstorm in Alaska, while others recall the opening night of *Blazing Saddles*, when, for a promotion, only patrons on horses were allowed into the lot.

The film also traces the eccentric history of the drive-in, beginning with businessman Richard Hollingshead, who tried unsuccessfully for much of his life to patent the graded parking lot he invented for the experience. Such events as the boom of B-movies (an astounding number of which had the word "Beast" lurking somewhere in the title), to attract teens in the 60's, and the abortive endeavor to install pornography at the drive-in, (which could be seen across whole neighborhoods and distracted more than a few drivers into embarrassing accidents), are also highlighted.

Kuenne's stirring score for the documentary complements an impressive array of film footage and photography to really bring the drive-in experience to life. *Drive-in Movie Memories*, exceptionally entertaining and fun, provides a rare glimpse of an American icon—by the end you will agree with the filmmakers that it's high time for drive-ins to make their comeback.