

# SANTA CRUZ'S GOLDEN MOMENTS ON THE SILVER SCREEN

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By Ann Parker

## ON LOCATION

**A**lthough the second-smallest county in California, Santa Cruz County holds an impressive filming record. Its span of visual appeal and natural geography — from verdant farmland to scenic beaches and the West Coast's oldest amusement park — is what makes it a star.

Christina Glynn, film liaison for the Santa Cruz County Film Commission, pitches both the diversity and manageable size of the county to location scouts: "You can get from old-growth redwoods to the beach in a matter of minutes."

During the last 35 years alone, more than two dozen major feature films have incorporated footage shot right here in Santa Cruz County. We've chosen seven of those films to honor for their outstanding — and not so outstanding — accomplishments. Price-waterhouse wasn't available to oversee the balloting and our statuettes aren't gold-plated (in fact, we don't even have any statuettes). But here are our choices of a few very special films that feature local scenery, extras and locations.

(Warning: plot synopses may contain spoiler information.)

### **HAROLD AND MAUDE** (1971)

Best Cult Film and Best February-December Romance

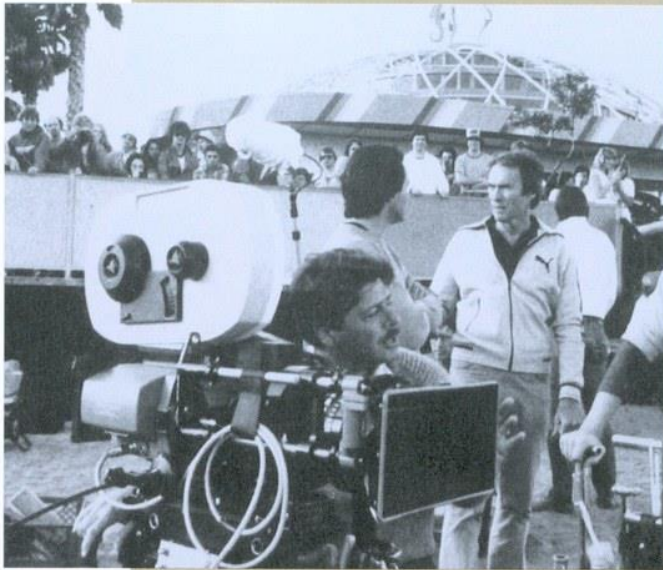
- Both Bud Cort and his 75-year-old co-star, Ruth Gordon, deserved real Oscar nominations for their roles in this hilarious-yet-poignant black comedy directed by Hal Ashby. Cort is deadpan-brilliant as a wealthy, death-absorbed young man who becomes smitten with a woman old enough to be his grandmother but with the soul and fervor of a flower child.

- Several scenes for "Harold and Maude" were shot at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, including one in the main game arcade, where Harold stamps out a coin saying "Harold Loves Maude" and a bearded, wild-eyed Hal Ashby makes a cameo appearance. In another Boardwalk scene, the couple dismounts the now-defunct Trabant ride

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# ON LOCATION



Clint Eastwood sets up the action for a scene in "Sudden Impact," which was filmed in Santa Cruz. In the movie, the town was renamed San Paulo.

and Harold calls out, "That wasn't very scary!" to ride operator Doug Hannum, then the Boardwalk's operations manager. Hannum, who reportedly wasn't pleased about having to run the ride, insisted on wearing sunglasses during the nighttime scene.

- One of the film's best lines is uttered before a Boardwalk panorama backlit by fireworks. Maude tosses Harold's personalized coin gift into the ocean, declaring, "So I'll always know where it is."

Backstory bit:

- Cat Stevens appeared briefly in a cameo and wrote and performed the music for "Harold and Maude," but no soundtrack exists.

## THE STING II (1983)

Awarded to the Giant Dipper: Best Role by a Non-Human in a Shaky Sequel

- Jackie Gleason replacing Paul Newman? Mac Davis standing in for Robert Redford? It's easy to see why this film didn't come close to touching its extremely successful 1973 predecessor, "The Sting." Box office revenues totaled \$68.5 million for the original versus \$6.3 million for "The Sting II."

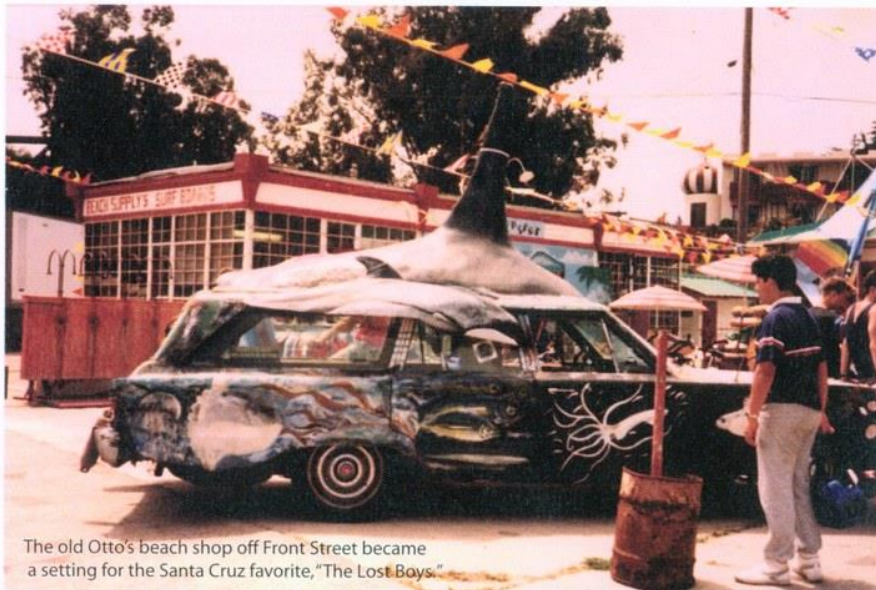
Backstory bit:

One aspect of the sequel worked beautifully, however. When director Jeremy Kagan brought his film crew and stars such as Davis and Karl Malden to the Boardwalk to film a scene using the Giant Dipper roller coaster, the classic coaster stole the show. Since the film was set in New York in the 1940s, the wooden coaster was "dressed" as Coney Island's famous Cyclone.

## SUDDEN IMPACT (1983)

Best Actor/Director and Most Memorable Quote

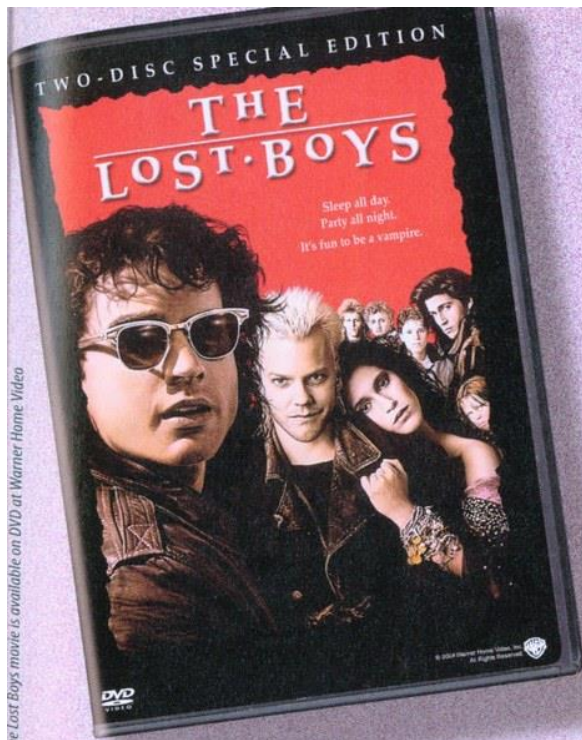
- While on imposed leave, inspector Harry Callahan takes on a multiple murder case in "Sudden Impact," directed by and starring Clint Eastwood. The fourth Dirty Harry film, it was the only one not shot primarily in San Francisco and also was the highest-grossing of the four.



From Judy Bouley collection

The old Otto's beach shop off Front Street became a setting for the Santa Cruz favorite, "The Lost Boys."

The Lost Boys movie is available on DVD at Warner Home Video



Dead trees were brought in to turn the Pogonip Clubhouse area into Grandpa's house in "The Lost Boys." The trees were then trucked to Los Angeles where they were used on set there.

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• Clint Eastwood and his Dirty Harry alter-ego covered much of Santa Cruz during the filming of "Sudden Impact." Savvy locals can spot these locations: Front Street and Pacific Avenue, the Del Mar Theater, Woolworth's, Palomar Inn, Positively Front Street, Beach Street, Santa Cruz harbor, Cooper Street Cafe, Natural Bridges State Park, Main Beach, Stagnaro Bros. seafood market, West Cliff Drive and Seabright Avenue. Harry Callahan drove a mini-bus down Pacific Avenue, tussled in a room at La Bahia hotel and scrambled all around the Boardwalk.

Backstory bits:

• "Go ahead, make my day" was voted the sixth most memorable line in cinema history by the American Film Institute in 2005.

• Most disconcerting scene for locals: Harry shoots the bad guy, who falls from the top of the Giant Dipper, crashes through the glass roof of the carousel and is impaled on the horn of a unicorn. Reality check: The carousel is nearly 100 yards from the Dipper and there's no unicorn on the merry-go-round.

### THE LOST BOYS (1987)

Most Eclectic Appeal: Teen Idols Meet Vampires at the Beach

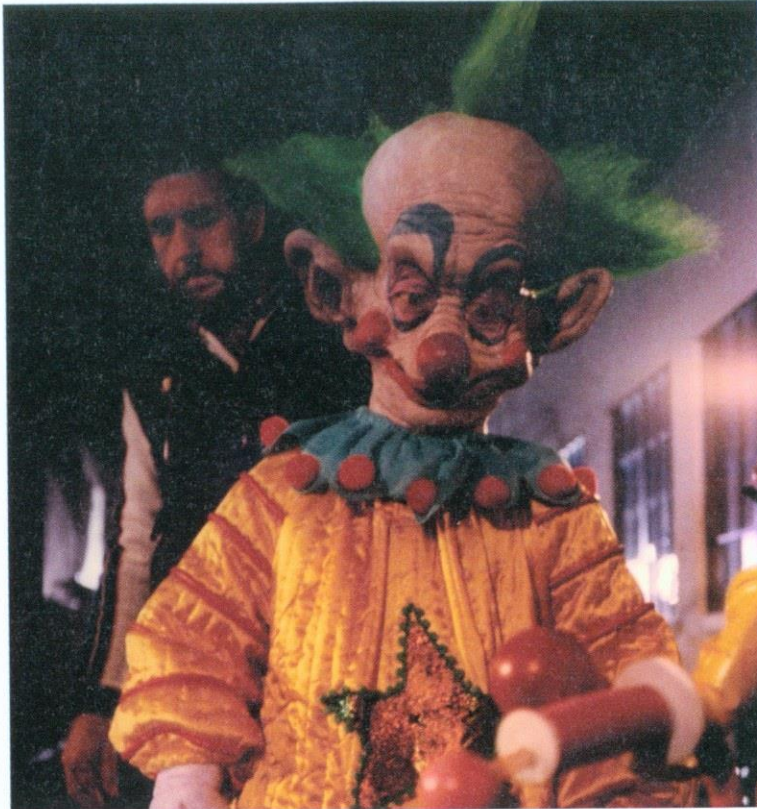
• Who could have guessed that "The Lost Boys" — a tongue-in-cheek, R-rated film about a single mom and her two kids meeting a bunch of teenage vampire bikers — would gross more than \$32 million at the box office? The tagline probably helped: "Sleep all day. Party all night. Never grow old. Never die. It's fun to be a vampire."

• Directed by Joel Schumacher, this film brought the largest number of stars, hired the most local extras and drew more international fans to check out Santa Cruz than any other film shot here. Key locations included Pogonip Clubhouse, Westside locations, Main Beach, Atlantis Fantasyworld and the Boardwalk.

• Stars include Jason Patric and Corey Haim as the newcomer Emerson brothers, Kiefer Sutherland as the vampire gang leader and Corey Feldman and Jamison Newlander as "the Frog Brothers," Edgar and Alan.



Photo by Dan Coyro



From Judy Bouley collection

Costumed Killer Klown takes a break from his cotton-candy killings during filming here.

Backstory bits:

- Young people from as far away as Scotland traveled to work at the Boardwalk after seeing this film.
- Sutherland broke his arm while fooling around on a motorcycle early in the filming and had to wear a black glove to cover his cast.

### **KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE (1988)**

Weirdest Title

• “Killer Klowns From Outer Space” definitely earns the award for weirdest title, one that suits this film. Coulrophobia is a real term, meaning “fear of clowns,” and director Stephen Chiodo played on that fear in creating this modern B-movie cult film. Aliens that look like a cross between a circus nightmare and carnivorous clowns come to earth with plans to take over a small town by wrapping their victims in cocoons of cotton candy and drinking their blood. The colorful killers also trap people in balloons and kill them with pies and popcorn guns — and drive around in a tiny Klown Kar.

• The plot of the film revolves about the quiet little town of “Crescent Cove,” actually Watsonville. But the climax was filmed a few miles north at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk.

Backstory bits:

- The film’s tagline (“In Space, No One Can Eat Ice Cream!”) was a takeoff on the horror film “Alien” (“In Space, No One Can Hear You Scream”).
- To hear the “Killer Klowns” theme song performed by the Dickies go to: <http://www.badmovies.org/movies/killerklowns/killerklowns-song.wav>

### **DANGEROUS MINDS (1995)**

Best Semi-Documentary, Female

• This film, directed by John N. Smith, is loosely based on the true story of LuAnne Johnson, a former Marine Corps officer who hung up her uniform to take on the inner-city high school students of East Palo Alto. Michelle Pfeiffer was cast as the diminutive but tough teacher who connected with her difficult students and encouraged them to learn by using her wits and positive feedback — and rewards such as a visit to the Boardwalk.

Backstory bits:

- This film was shot in Santa Cruz under the working title “My Posse Don’t Do Homework” the name of LuAnne Johnson’s book. Pfeiffer wanted to use the original

## 35 years of Santa Cruz films

(TV = Made for television movie)

Harold and Maude - 1971  
Escape to Witch Mountain - 1975  
The Entertainer (TV) - 1976  
Tilt - 1978  
The Word (TV mini-series) - 1978  
East of Eden (TV mini-series) - 1981  
The Gangster Chronicles (TV series) - 1981  
Heartbeeps - 1981  
The Shadow Riders (TV) - 1982  
The Sting II - 1983  
Sudden Impact - 1983  
When Your Lover Leaves (TV) - 1983  
Creator - 1985  
Hard Traveling - 1985  
Alone in the T-Shirt Zone - 1986  
Brotherhood of Justice (TV) - 1986  
Starman (TV) - 1986  
Back to the Beach - 1987  
Family Sins (TV) - 1987  
The King of Love (TV) - 1987  
The Lost Boys - 1987  
Survival Game - 1987  
Killer Klowns from Outer Space - 1988  
Necessity (TV) - 1988  
A Whisper Kills (TV) - 1988  
Split - 1989  
Stolen: One Husband (TV) - 1990  
Strawberry Road (Japanese) - 1990  
Long Road Home (TV) - 1991  
Bed of Lies (TV) - 1992  
Out on a Limb - 1992  
Steel Heel - 1993  
Dangerous Minds - 1995  
The Redwood Curtain (TV) - 1995  
\$40,000 - 1996  
Glory Daze - 1996  
Somebody is Waiting - 1996  
Thrill (TV) - 1996  
The Aqua Girls - 1998  
Frog and Wombat - 1998  
Homegrown - 1998  
Cirque de Soleil: Journey of Man - 2000  
Fast Women (TV) - 2000  
The Truth About Beef Jerky - 2002  
Kinsey - 2004  
Graves End - 2004  
Annie's Point (TV) - 2005  
The Tripper - 2006

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complaining no one would come to see a movie called “Dangerous Minds.” After the film grossed \$80 million, she wryly admitted that she might have been wrong.

- Michelle Pfeiffer had several challenges during filming: She had just adopted a child and married producer David Kelley — and then discovered she was pregnant. To hide her advancing pregnancy during shooting, she wore multiple layers of clothes.

### **KINSEY (2004)**

Best Semi-Documentary, Male

- “Kinsey” looks at the life of Alfred Kinsey, the American human sexuality behaviorist and author of “Sexual Behavior in the Human Male.”

- The Boulder Creek Country Club housed director/writer Bill Condon, his crew and cast members, including stars Liam Neeson and Laura Linney. Neeson’s response to Boulder Creek: “This is the cleanest air I’ve ever breathed.”

- The crew spent three days filming scenes at Big Basin State Park. Shot in just 37 days, the film covers six decades in Alfred Kinsey’s life.

Backstory bits:

- Once asked his opinion about a Hollywood movie being made about him, Dr. Kinsey replied, “I can’t think of anything more pointless.” 🍷

Sources include: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com), [www.imbd.com](http://www.imbd.com), [www.filminamerica.com](http://www.filminamerica.com), [www.santacruzca.org](http://www.santacruzca.org).

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*Ann Parker is a writer, editor and public relations consultant, who — as PR director of the Santa Cruz Boardwalk for 13 years — was behind the scenes for a number of these films.*