

While I can't begin to imagine how the story of the late porn star Linda Lovelace will translate into a mainstream movie, starring Amanda Seyfried and several other top stars, I believe that it's in the right hands and won't exploit her tragic life. If directors Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman ("Howl," "The Celluloid Closet"), working off a script by Andy Bellin ("Trust"), do manage to pull it off, it will be fun to watch entertainment reporters attempting to explain what made Lovelace more worthy of a biopic than, say, such contemporaries as Seka, Veronica Hart, Vanessa del Rio, Annette Haven and Gloria Leonard. These women not only were prettier than Lovelace and demonstrably better actors, but they also possessed the same skill that she made famous in "Deep Throat." So did tens of thousands of other actresses and amateurs of both genders. What distinguished "Deep Throat" was that it was the first feature to base its narrative – and, unlike today's porn, it did tell an actual story – on a particular sexual skill. It also differed from the "loops" collected in "**42nd Street Pete's 8mm Madness**" and other early grindhouse fare by having a distinct comic voice and actors who were in on the gag. (Sorry, pun intended.) It wasn't an immediate sensation, however. By attempting to censor "Deep Throat," government bluenoses turned it into a *cause celebre* for open-minded couples and celebrities, willing to wait in line to see it without fear of embarrassing themselves or having a social stigma attached to them. Some ambitious reporters may also attempt to contextualize "Deep Throat," by looking back at the sexual revolution of the 1960-70s and why it still has resonance today. Let's beat them to it by checking out some historically significant titles from After Hours Cinema.

Many soon-to-be porn stars entered the business by performing in short films that left no time or budget for such things as plot, character development, exposition, drama, moralizing or comedy. Sex was the only thing that interested customers who frequented the booths in the back of 42nd Street bookstores and arcades, as well as those outlanders who ordered 8mm loops from the ads in the back of skin mags. As "42nd Street Pete" explains in his introduction, they would arrive in small white boxes and customers couldn't be absolutely sure what they bought until they watched it. Depending on length, technical proficiency and whether they were in black-and-white or color, a loop could cost anywhere from \$25 to \$100, or much more, if certain kinky stuff was specifically requested by collectors. It's how Lovelace got her start, as dictated by her physically and emotionally abusive husband, Chuck Traynor. Here, at least, Pete doesn't go into detail about the actors' motivations, but a taste for exhibitionism played less a role in their decision than avoiding poverty, copping their next fix and keeping their lover/pimp in business. The guiding principle was to convince the rubes they were having a good time and encourage them to keep dropping quarters into the slot to see where it led. The movies included in "**Sex on the Sunset Strip: Grindhouse Triple Feature**" represent the next stop on the porn food chain, "one-day wonders." Four or five times longer than the average loop and shot on 16mm, these films allowed for some plot and character development, as well as some comedy, moralizing and variety in the sexual encounters. Many were populated by actors who looked as if they might have been recruited that morning in the Haight-Ashbury or from the Charles Manson Talent Agency. The young women rarely were shown wearing bras and the guys had crossed "Go to Barber" off their to-do lists. "Trapped in the House" and "Love Freestyle" avoided prevailing anti-pornography laws by not showing penetration or engorged genitals in the group gropes. "See Me, Feel Me, Take Me," which looks as if it might have taken more than a day to produce, offers plenty of hard-core action and outdoor locations. The two-DVD sets include informative booklets and liner notes.

Well before crowds thronged to see "I Am Curious (Yellow)" and "Deep Throat," Americans lined up to see the ground-breaking Swedish sensation, "I, a Woman," which would quickly spawn two sequels. Viewed from a distance of almost 50 years, "I, a Woman" doesn't look hot enough to have caused a sensation in Manhattan, Kansas, let alone Times Square. Of course, things were much different in 1965 America than they are in 2012 ... except, perhaps, inside the homes of the many Republican presidential candidates and their rabid supporters. (Even Barry Goldwater would have been tarred as liberal by these mopos.)

European erotica retained an arty sheen throughout the 1970s, thanks primarily to Radley Metzger, who introduced "I, a Woman" to American audiences and would go on to make groundbreaking soft-core films

set in exotic locations, with sophisticated characters and discernible narratives. Released here in 1968 and 1970, the still-tame "**I, a Woman, Part II**" and "**The Daughter: I, a Woman, Part III**" extend the story of Siv Holm, an increasingly sexually liberated literary invention who ditches her perverted husband when his behavior and demands become oppressive. She's played by different women in the trilogy, all three physically striking and extremely classy brunettes. In "III," Siv's daughter is confronted with Swedish racism, when the pretty blond falls both for an African-American ex-pat and his sister, a go-go dancing lesbian. The gallery of vintage trailers is infinitely more sexually explicit than any of the "I, a Woman" series.
– Gary Dretzka

<http://moviecitynews.com/2012/05/the-dvd-wrapup-the-grey-golf-in-kingdom-norwegian-wood-we-were-here-my-perestroika-42nd-st-petes-8mm-madness-more/>