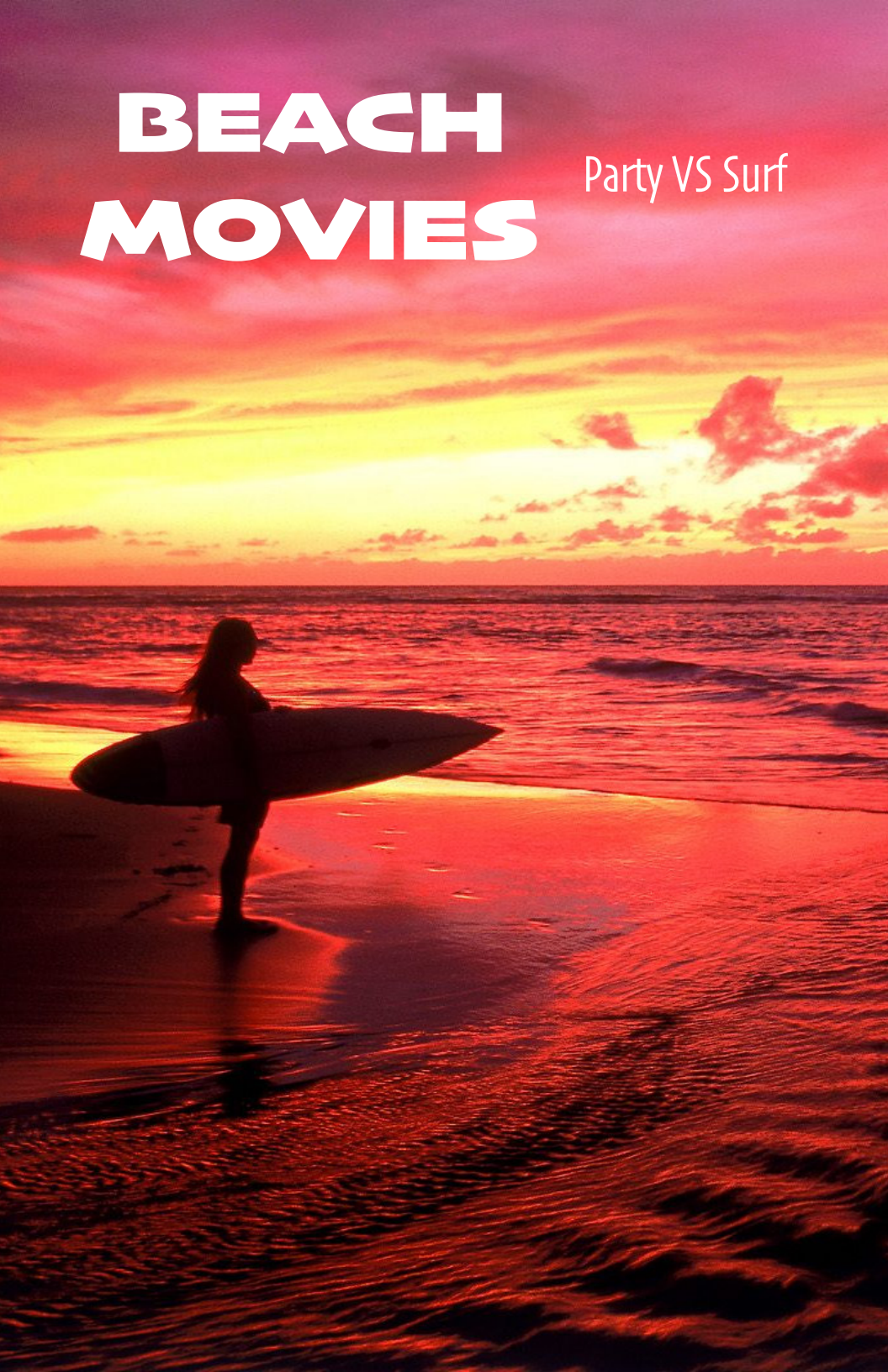


# BEACH MOVIES

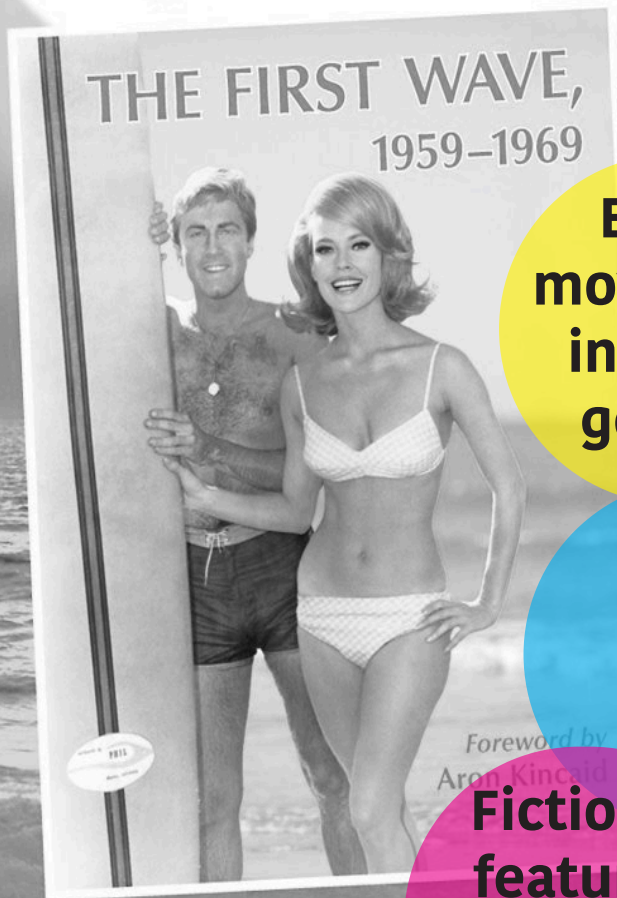
Party VS Surf



During the mid-1960s, one of cinema's most successful kinds of film was the beach-movie genre.



# Hollywood Surf and Beach Movies



**Beach  
movies fall  
into two  
genres:**

**1960s  
Beach  
Party  
Films**

**Fictional  
features  
focused on  
surfing**

*Thomas L. Isacoff*

The 1960s type of surf movies would be the campy entertainment feature, also termed "beach party films" or "surfploitation flicks" by true surfers, having little to do with the authentic sport and culture of surfing and representing movies that attempted to cash in on the growing popularity of surfing among youth in the early 1960s.



# Muscle Beach Party



The surf movies and television shows of the late 1950s and early 1960s were filled with innocent, sun-soaked fun. But were their safe storylines and conventional morals the key to their appeal?

Film and media scholar R.L. Rutsky thinks not. He finds undercurrents of nonconformity in seemingly squeaky-clean films like **Gidget** and **Beach Blanket Bingo**. Rutsky sees the movies as:

**“A BRIDGE TO THE COUNTERCULTURAL EXPLOSION”**

embodied in later films like *Cool Hand Luke* and *The Graduate*. Though their exteriors are laden with mainstream sexuality, the movies tempt audiences with the undercurrents of nonconformity embodied by surf culture.





*These low-budget, hastily produced features celebrated California's beaches, surfing, and teen culture.*

# BEACH PARTY

*One series of films starred Frankie Avalon (1940-) and Annette Funicello (1942-) as "Frankie" and "Dee Dee"—two wholesome teens who descended upon the beach with dozens of their friends every summer. The group lived free from the interference of parents and without financial worries. They spent their days surfing, partying, dancing, skydiving, and enjoying other innocent entertainments.*







Teenagers were also drawn to the music of surf movies.

Frankie Avalon, Annette Funicello, and Fabian were just a few of the teen stars whose sanitized rock provided the films' soundtrack.

**"The very idea of a beach party suggests teens listening to rock-and-roll music and dancing in a way that was already seen by the guardians of morality as heavily sexualized, and doing so in the titillating attire of swim trunks and, especially, bikinis,"** Rutsky writes.



At the time, surfing was still a new phenomenon associated with **BEATNIKS** and **DROPOUTS**—a lifestyle choice that confused parents and tempted teenagers. That lifestyle is on **FULL DISPLAY** in surf movies, which appropriate Beat elements like bongo drums. These films also feature characters, such as Gidget's Big Kahuna, who have opted out of the conformist, workaday culture of the 1950s, and whose **SURFING SKILLS, FREE-FLOWING FRIEND GROUPS,** and **LEISURE ACTIVITIES** were especially appealing to teenagers.




Whether you're a Downtown-dweller who's never been on a board or a beach bum who rides waves every morning, there's no denying the pull of the surf. A sport with humble origins that's grown to be one of the world's most awe-inspiring (not to mention dangerous) feats of athleticism, surfing has an undeniable mass appeal—as either a workout, a relaxing way to spend a summer beach day, or an all-consuming, risky search for the ultimate thrill.





**Regardless of which camp you fall into, surf movies illustrate the pure kinetic pleasure of wave riding and introduce us to the characters who define the sport and its culture.**

**EVERYTHING WILL KILL YOU**

A man in a dark wetsuit is crouching on a surfboard, riding a large, curling blue wave. The scene is dynamic, with white foam from the wave's crest. The background shows a clear blue sky and distant land.

***THE FILMS  
EMBRACED  
A SENSE OF  
WILDNESS AND  
FREEDOM.***

**SO CHOOSE SOMETHING FUN**