

Dogtown and Z-Boys

USA 2001

Director

Stacy Peralta

Producer

Agi Orsi

Screenplay

Stacy Peralta

Craig Stecyk

Director of Photography

Peter Pilafian

Editor

Paul Crowder

Production Designer

Craig Stecyk

Music

Terry Wilson

Paul Crowder

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Productions

Production Company

Vans Off the Wall

Productions present an

Agi Orsi production

Executive Producer

Jay Wilson

Co-producer/Creative

Consultant

Glen E. Friedman

Co-producers

Daniel Ostroff

Stephen Nemeth

Associate Producers

Christine Triano

Debra MacCulloch

Additional Photography

Modi

Paul Stukin

Kevin Roberts

Additional Camera

John Armstrong

Paul Sharpe

Matte Camera Operators

Matt McNeal

Hunter Mahers

Symphony Artist

Jeff Roe

Video to Film Conversion

Richard Greenberg

Tim Carranza

Tim Yee

VT Technical Film Services

Todd Taylor

Visual Effects Editor

John Nicolard

I/O Supervisors

J.W. Kompare

Dennis Webb

Lead Film Recordist

Derrick Quarles

Film Recordist

Robert Davis Oh

Co-ordinator

Kathleen Woolery

Additional Editing

Scott Juergens

Gizi Weibel

Titles/Graphics

Blind Visual Propaganda

Inc

Tenor

Omar H. Crook

Music Supervisors

Debra MacCulloch

Marc Reiter

Music Selection

Supervisors

Paul Crowder

Stacy Peralta

Soundtrack

"Seasons of Wither",

"Toys in the Attic" –

Aerosmith; "Generation

Landslide" – Alice

Cooper; "One Way Out"

– The Allman Brothers;

"Lollipops and Roses",

"Whipped Cream" –

Herb Alpert; "Into the

Void", "Paranoid" – Black

Sabbath; "Godzilla" –

Blue Oyster Cult;

"Aladdin Sane", "Rebel

Rebel" – David Bowie;

"Fast Cars" – The

Buzzcocks; "Gut Feeling"

– Devo; "Harmonica's

Are Shit" – Fila Brasilia;

"I'll Give You Money" –

Peter Frampton; "Funk

49" – the James Gang;

"Ezy Ryder", "Foxey

Lady", "Freedom", "Bold

as Love" – Jimi Hendrix;

"Sidewalk Surfing" – Jan

& Dean; "Achilles Last

Stand", "Hots On for

Nowhere" – Led

Zeppelin; "Six

Underground" – Sneaker

Pimps; "Surfrider" – The

Lively Ones; "Cat Scratch

Fever", "Motor City

Madhouse", "Wang Dang

Sweet Poontang" – Ted

Nugent; "Volare" –

Emilio Pericoli; "Us and

Them" – Pink Floyd; "Bad

Boys" – The Pretenders;

"Maggie May" – Rod

Stewart; "I Wanna Be

Your Dog" – The Stooges;

"Gimme Danger" – Iggy

& The Stooges; "Children

of the Revolution" – T

Rex; "Bad Reputation" –

Thin Lizzy; "Disco

Inferno" – The Trammies;

"Hannah" – Robin

Trower; "Rocky

Mountain Way" – Joe

Walsh; "Old Man" – Neil

Young; "La Grange" – ZZ

Top

Sound Recordists

Alan Barker

Cyrus Faryar

Digital Audio Transfer

John Fennell

Re-recording Mixers

Joe Milner

David McRell

Re-recording Engineer

Paul Hackner

Supervising Sound Editors

Eddie Kim

Dane A. Davis

Skateboard Consultants

Ozzie Ausband

Ray Flores

Narrator

Sean Penn

50s Voice Announcer

Joe Leahy

With

Zephyr Skateboard Team

Jay Adams

Tony Alva

Bob Biniak

Paul Constantineau

Shogu Kubo

Jim Muir

Peggy Oki

Stacy Peralta

Nathan Pratt

Wentzie Ruml

Alan Sarlo

Jeff Ament

Skip Eblom

Glen E. Friedman

Tony Hawk

Jeff Ho

Henry Rollins

Craig Stecyk

Certificate

15

Distributor

Columbia TriStar Films

(UK)

8,162 feet

90 minutes 42 seconds

Dolby Digital

In Colour

[1.33:1]

This documentary, mixing archive footage and present-day interviews, tells how a group of young surfers from Venice Beach, the 13-member Zephyr team, revolutionised skateboarding in California in the mid 1970s by bringing to the sport an aggressive, surfing-inspired style. The group hone their skills – performing never-before-seen mid-air manoeuvres – while skating in dried-out swimming pools during a summer of drought. After achieving a measure of success at the 1975 Del Mar Skateboard Internationals and being the subject of a string of articles by writer-photographer Craig Stecyk for *Skateboarder* magazine, some of the team members become famous.

Whatever happened to the coolest kids in high school? In this documentary about skateboarding in the mid 1970s – a film that positively drips with cool – you get to see the kids who were unbearably hip 25 years ago as they are today, grown men in their forties. Some run successful businesses, one is in prison, one "was last seen in Mexico". Another, Stacy Peralta, directed this film, which, among other things, shows us just how cool he was back then. The Dogtown of the title, we learn, was a seaside slum in Los Angeles, site of a derelict amusement park "where the debris meets the sea." And the Z-Boys were an assortment of amateur surfers from broken homes, including Peralta, who turned Dogtown's Zephyr Surf Shop into their clubhouse-cum-surrogate family, and who inadvertently revolutionised the faded sport of skateboarding during the long afternoons they idled away on the storefront pavement.

Dogtown gained attention at the 2001 Sundance film festival, where it shared the audience award. Peralta's crowd-winning skill lies in his ability to position the audience on the same side as the superstar Zs. You cheer when faster, smoother urethane wheels replace the locking clay wheels that had previously been on skateboards; you immediately recognise – just as the Z-Boys did – the riding potential of smooth, sloped, empty Beverly Hills swimming pools. In the hilarious footage of the tough, long-haired Zephyrs turning up at the 1975 Del Mar Skateboard Internationals – a watershed tournament that saw one of the first public displays of the Z-Boys' high-flying surfing-inspired skateboarding – the team's superiority over the contest's old-school pirouetting 'champions' is staggeringly convincing. And in charting the history of the Z-Boys, the script is all carves and skims and grinds; Peralta assumes we're conversant with the in-crowd's slang and never embarrasses us by suggesting we might need a glossary.

The movie features rapid-fire cuts and sequences filmed in grainy, scratchy black and white, such rough-and-ready devices a strained attempt to convey some of the appealing rawness of the Z-Boys' skateboarding style. The



Cool running: Tony Alva

narration, meanwhile, is lacklustre. "They destroyed the status quo and challenged the sport," says Sean Penn, unable to inject any film-star charisma into this ploddingly written voiceover. But the dull narration is thankfully countered by some well-chosen interviews that offer vivid recollections and even humour, as when one former Z-Boy recounts in a deadly serious, heavy Californian drone: "I've spent about 20 years on summer vacation."

Dogtown sticks strictly to the sport, keeping noticeably mum about the contingent drugs and sex. The film seeks to develop our interest in individual characters, however – an acknowledgement, perhaps, that endless shots of anonymous skateboarding, no matter how acrobatic (the archive footage by fellow surfer Craig Stecyk can be thrilling), would bore non-aficionados. Unfortunately Peralta overstates this strategy not only with a clumsy, television-sitcom-style character line-up of the principal figures in the sport at the beginning of the film, but also, later on, by devoting separate sections to three of the team's most charismatic members. There's the wildly talented Jay Adams; Tony Alva, the Mick Jagger of the sport and the world's first skateboarding star; and Peralta himself, the level-headed, ambitious virtuoso. This said, Peralta's insistent foregrounding of selected personalities in the team allows us to distinguish individual flourishes during the skateboarding sequences, with Adams' unpredictable, graceful antics providing the athletic highlights.

Apparently Art Linson and David Fincher (the team behind *Fight Club*) had bought the rights to Alva's and Adams' life stories, but needed Peralta's to make a movie. Rather than risk a phoney Hollywood treatment, Peralta decided, after 18 years of making specialist videos with his Bones Brigade skateboarding team, to tell his story to a larger audience himself. This may account for *Dogtown's* worst flaw: the shameless self-mythologising, especially when Peralta seemingly interviews himself about just how pioneering – and how cool, how way cool – the Z-Boys were.

Gilda Williams