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Desperately Seeking Paul McCartney



What can be said about obsessions...they are obsessive! They consume, they define, they oftentimes mark our lives in ways that even we don't see. One can spend a good part of one's life chasing down a thought, a memory, looking for that all-too elusive "closure" that comes when you have 'issues' with an aching festering need. Ruth Anson is a lady with a great big obsession, so big in fact she made a movie about it called **Desperately Seeking Paul McCartney**.

In the early 60s, Ruth was a young television reporter living and working in Los Angeles. Bright-eyed, high-haired, cute-as-a-button Ruth interviewed presidents, actors and celebs, and got the chance to talk to Paul McCartney in 1966. During that interview, Ruth asked what had to be one of the most frequently asked questions lobbed at the "cute" Beatle: Did he have any plans to marry? The ever cheeky McCartney replied, "No, unless you want to right now" (I'm paraphrasing, but you get the gist). Ruth held onto that "proposal" for years. It became her obsession, a "Paul-asked-me-to-marry-him" mantra she repeats throughout the 90 minutes or so of this film. (Technically, Paul never asked Ruth to marry him, but when you're obsessed, technicalities don't matter much.) And it all starts when she pitches her obsession as a film idea to an independent producer. The plot revolves around her tracking down McCartney to see if he remembers the encounter.

Desperately Seeking Paul McCartney is called a comedy-documentary with good reason. First of all, Ruth is charming, a "handsome woman" as producer Marc Cushman says, and she never loses her good humor during all the cringe-inducing embarrassments she endures, which are usually set up by Cushman, claiming it all makes for a better movie. At times, Ruth does seem like a crazed old Beatle groupie. At one point, she shows her scrapbook to a McCartney impersonator. The book features pictures of her head pasted onto pictures of McCartney's band mates. She makes an interesting Ringo, as she laughingly points out.

But then there are times you think this is just a sweet lady who is having fun and the whole thing is a put-on. The first production assistant quits because she is asked by Cushman to arrange an intervention with Ruth's friends and family. Then Cushman leaves everybody at the Grammys with fake press passes and a decal he recently received for contributing \$25 to a police fund. The idea is you show the decal at the Grammys and the police might let you in.

I wasn't all that sure any of this was for real. I believe Ruth had that encounter with Paul (we see the film footage over and over again), but from that point on, everything else is up for grabs with how much 'reality' we are really getting here. What comes across most is that Ruth Anson is a fun, engaging soul, maybe a little too old to be running around and crashing the Grammys. She's a smiling lady who bears the full weight of intervention confrontation and sheds a few tears, but presses on with her quest. And really, how can any movie go wrong when the last words of wisdom come from Ron Jeremy?! **Desperately Seeking Paul McCartney** is probably not in your Netflix's queue at the moment, but for a fun time away from the latest special effects Hollywood carnage or range of chick flicks, Ruth and her obsession might just be what the doctor ordered.

~ Ralph Greco, Jr.

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