

ANNIE HALL CIRCUMNAVIGATES SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA IN A TWIN BEECH:

AMELIA EARHART

The Final Flight

with

Diane Keaton as Amelia Earhart

Bruce Dern as George Putnam

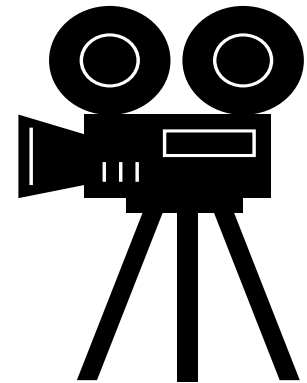
Rutger Hauer as Fred Noonan

Written by Anna Sandor

Directed by Yves Simoneau

Produced by Turner Network Television (TNT)

Two hours (with commercials)



Some of the aerial photography is spectacular. She does not get captured by the Japanese. Her difficulties in learning to master the airplane and her lack of expertise in radio navigation are well portrayed.

There. Never let it be said that we couldn't find something good to say about this boring attempt to capitalize on the current round of Ameliomania. Loosely based on Doris Rich's gossipy and error-strewn biography of AE, the film perpetuates much of the book's Smithsonian-endorsed mythology – Amelia the whiny proto-feminist, Putnam the manipulative huckster, Noonan the alcoholic, Mantz the consummate pro, etc. (The characterizations aren't necessarily inaccurate. They're just matched to the wrong people.)

In the film, a short and chunky Amelia practices in her little Beech 18 (adorned with what looks like a basketball hoop for a loop antenna) over the dry and barren mountains of southern California, then takes off on her world flight against a backdrop of the dry and barren mountains of Miami. Guided by her perpetually pickled navigator, that blond Irishman with the Dutch accent, Fred Noonan, she presses on over the dry and barren mountains of South America, Africa and Asia.

Back home, her oddly aged husband with the bushy gray mustache agonizes interminably while Earhart suffers through a fictional engine failure and assorted hissy-fits. Finally Amelia reaches the dry and barren mountains of Lae, New Guinea, which has somehow become populated with Asian children. There, she makes a breathtaking takeoff from the paved runway and, as do all pilots of overgross aircraft embarking on long distance flights, buzzes the field in celebration. Aboard the air-conditioned *Itasca*, the Coast Guard is busy modeling modern-day uniforms unaware that the gyro has failed in Fred Noonan's polished brass nautical sextant causing the flight to become hopelessly lost (swear to God). As Amelia sobs off into the sunrise the film ends with a left-handed compliment to TIGHAR as an endpiece caption somewhat desperately reminds the audience that "To this day, no trace of her plane has ever been found." Uh huh.

