KINONIK

AMERICAN FLYERS (1985)

Directed by John Badham

WEDNESDAY July 29nd 7PM

SATURDAY August 1st 2PM / 7PM



John Badham's **AMERICAN FLYERS** (1985) sends two estranged brothers racing across Colorado on bicycles while each waits to learn which of them inherited the aneurysm that killed their father.

Lean, handsome young Costner is one picture from stardom and wearing a mustache you'll never recover from. He plays Marcus, an ersatz Olympian cum tenacious doctor of sports medicine who obsessively quantifies performance and views the world composed purely of winners and losers. He can't stand that his younger brother David is in the wind, and convinces him to take his cycling seriously by competing in the Hell of the West, a three-stage race through the Colorado National Monument that was shot against the backdrop of the famed Coors Classic.

Drafting on the success of **Breaking Away**, Steve Tesich wrote **American Flyers** years before he coined the phrase "post-truth" in a polemic against the deceitfulness of the Reagan administration. You'd never know it from watching this film though, which wears a specifically 80s aesthetic of patriotic optimism like a jersey cut from lycra.

That's no small wonder, because it was shot by the cinematographer of Flashdance with the production designer of Blade Runner and John Badham at the helm; perhaps the most quintessentially 80s director there was. One can imagine him giving his actors notes on set, "That was good, but can you do it again a little bit more like Matthew Broderick?"

This first-generation scope print from the director's personal collection is an extremely good-looking, delightfully nostalgic, and somewhat puzzling cultural artifact. What makes it worth a night at the movies now is how much of 1985 it carries without appearing to notice, and how much of it echoes forward to our current moment.