

= Lipstick and Dynamite , Piss and Vinegar : The First Ladies of Wrestling =

Lipstick and Dynamite : The First Ladies of Wrestling (often referred to as Lipstick and Dynamite) is a 2004 documentary film about the early days of women 's professional wrestling in North America . It was directed by Ruth Leitman , who interviewed The Fabulous Moolah , Mae Young , Gladys " Kill ' Em " Gillem , Ida Mae Martinez , Ella Waldek and Penny Banner for the film . The film premiered in 2004 in Toronto and was screened at various film festivals across the United States . The film also had a limited release in theaters in 2005 . Reviews for the film were mixed .

= = Synopsis = =

The documentary tells its story by focusing on the careers of six women ? The Fabulous Moolah , Mae Young , Gladys " Kill ' Em " Gillem , Ida Mae Martinez , Ella Waldek and Penny Banner . It begins by describing the beginning of wrestling in the 1930s . By the 1940s , American men had to leave the country to fight in World War II , leaving females to take over the sport . At first , women 's wrestling was seen as a side @-@ show , and it was banned in several states . The film mostly focuses on these years ? the 1940s ? along with the 1950s and 1960s , better known as the " heyday of women 's wrestling " , when the sport became more accepted and popular . The six women are interviewed and tell their stories of why they entered wrestling . They also share tales of being exploited financially , unruly fans , and being physically abused . The film splices in archival footage of their matches , television clips , and footage from a 1951 movie entitled Racket Girls in between interviews . The film also covers their post @-@ wrestling occupations : lion @-@ tamer , detective , nurse , and yodeler . The film ends with footage from the Gulf Coast Wrestlers Reunion , where they meet to swap stories .

= = Production = =

Although Leitman was not a fan of professional wrestling , she was the first to develop the idea of a documentary about the beginnings of female wrestling . The objective of the film was to give back to the female professional wrestlers of the 1940s ? 1960s . The stars hoped the film would help " set the record straight " about the early days of women 's wrestling , when it was taboo for girls to join the business .

Penny Banner helped put the film together , as she had connections in both the Ladies International Wrestling Association and the Cauliflower Alley Club , which helped the director locate older stars to use in the filming .

Kelly Hogan , an old friend of Leitman 's , offered to provide music for the film and soundtrack , and recorded songs with the combo , The Corn Sisters , Carolyn Mark and Neko Case . While recording , Case discovered that Ella Waldek was her great @-@ aunt , which was previously unknown to her . After providing music for the film , they began promoting it at all of their shows .

Leitman also produced the film with the productions companies 100 @-@ to @-@ One Films and Ruthless Films .

= = Release = =

The film had its world premiere in Toronto in April 2004 during the Hot Docs Film Festival , and it had its United States premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York City in May 2004 . It had several other screenings , as well , including at the Atlanta Film Festival in June 2004 and the Chicago and Hamptons Film Festivals in October 2004 . In early 2005 , the film played at the Sarasota and Miami Film Festivals .

The film , distributed by Koch Lorber Films , had a limited theatrical release in the United States during the course of 2005 . In its first weekend , it made \$ 4 @,@ 046 . At the end of eleven weeks , it had appeared in three theaters and grossed \$ 25 @,@ 378 . The film was released on DVD in September 2005 .

To help promote the film , The Fabulous Moolah and Mae Young were interviewed on Late Night with Conan O'Brien . They also promoted the film on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno . Several magazines also advertised for the film , including Entertainment Weekly , Details , FHM , and O.

= = Critical response = =

The Atlanta Journal @-@ Constitution gave the film a positive review , citing it as " a dynamite documentary " and rating it a B + . Similarly , Karie Bible of IGN called the film a " fascinating look " and a " valentine to wrestling and to the women who introduced the sport across America " . Liz Braun of the Toronto Sun called the film " a glimpse of the wild and woolly pre @-@ feminist world these capable women inhabited " and invites readers to " have a look . " The Los Angeles Times ' Kenneth Turan commented that the " uneasy , unnerving air of the carny hangs over this film , and it gives off a pungent whiff of how rough , rowdy and raucous , how inescapably down and dirty , these women 's world could be . "

Other reviews were mixed , with the film scoring a 62 % at Rotten Tomatoes and an average rating of 6 @.@ 4 / 10 from critics . Roger Ebert praised Leitman for doing " an extraordinary job of assembling the survivors from the early days of a disreputable sport " and rated the film with two and a half stars out of four .

Stephen Holden of The New York Times called the movie " more of a scrapbook than a coherent history " . The San Francisco Chronicle 's Peter Hartlaub stated that the film " doesn 't succeed in its attempt to make a feminist statement , with too many of the wrestlers sounding like male athletes who talk in excruciating detail about high school football seasons that everyone else forgot . " Echoing that statement , Russell Scott Smith of the New York Post stated , " Unfortunately , the filmmakers let the ladies prattle on too long about issues that would only matter to the most rabid wrestling aficionados . "