

The 1970s and 1980s were the decades in love with zany comedies, involving car and truck races and the world of CB radio. Cannonball Run, released in 1981, was one of the most popular in the genre. The critics didn't take to this kind of movie but the public did and it's still a favorite today. It was a follow up to Cannonball and it spawned two sequels of its own, including Cannonball Run 2.

The star was Burt Reynolds, who was much in demand at the time. He plays a washed up race driver called J.J McClure, who participates in an illegal race across America. The race is fiercely competitive with the drivers trying to outwit each other and the police in pursuit. Veteran actor Dom DeLuise plays McClure's mechanic and the two friends join the race in an ambulance, converted from a Dodge van. Farrah Fawcett's role is as a photographer along for the ride. Cannonball Run is truly a star studded affair. Peter Fonda has a cameo appearance, based on his biker character in Easy Rider.

Other parts are played by Sammy Davis Junior, Dean Martin and martial arts action hero, Jackie Chan, who was not well known at the time. One of the funniest performances is by Roger Moore. He plays a character who suffers from the delusion that he is famous actor Roger Moore! This results in the character imagining himself as James Bond. For people that want to catch the movie again or for the first time, there is a digitally remastered release on DVD. It has a widescreen format and extra features include an interview gallery, animated biography and theatrical trailer. Cannonball Run 2 from 1984 is also available on DVD.

It is a surprise to many people that this comedy adventure was inspired by an actual event. Screenwriter Brock Yates took his own experience of organizing the Baker Sea to Shining Sea Memorial Trophy Dash, a race between New York City and Redondo Beach, California, which ran for several years. Yates had introduced the race as a protest against the USA speed limit at the time, which was 55 mph. The underhand tricks, employed by characters in the movie, were based on true events. Cannonball Run is a fun movie. It can be said to be of its time but it still continues to entertain. It was one of the first films to show bloopers during the final credits, something that is commonplace today.