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## The not-so wild ones

**H**ollywood loves a biker gang — nothing gives small-town America a shiver down its spine like a bunch of Hells Angels tooling into town on their big choppers promising mayhem and destruction. It began with Marlon Brando in 1954's "The Wild One" — though we would later find out that the "dangerous" pretty boy Brando played could be placated with a plate of doughnuts.

Biker heroes found their ultimate expression in "Easy Rider" (1969), Dennis Hopper's revolutionary ode to the counterculture. The new flick "Hell Ride," opening Friday, is a modern biker movie with Hopper in the cast for street cred. But too often Hollywood thinks a noisy engine and a leather jacket are all you need to be tough. Here are some examples that ended up with flat tires.

### INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL (2008)

**The biker:** Shia LaBeouf rides out of the steamy mist as Mutt Williams, to claim the mantle of adventurer from his mom's old boyfriend — some geezer named Indy. Mutt isn't impressed.

**Crazy or cuddly:** Cuddly. Despite a costume stolen almost stud for stud from Brando's getup in "The Wild One," LaBeouf looks more like a



member of the Village People than a dangerous criminal.

### DEVIL'S ANGELS (1967)

**The biker:** Indie film legend John Cassavetes is the leader of a gang that makes a deal with the local sheriff for safe hiding — which works fine until Cassavetes falls for the guy's daughter.

**Crazy or cuddly:** Cuddly. Cassavetes supposedly used his fee from this movie to finance "Faces" the following year, and it's hard to be scared of a biker with auteurism on his mind.

### WILD HOGS (2007)

**The biker:** John Travolta suits up with the likes of Tim Allen and William H. Macy for a



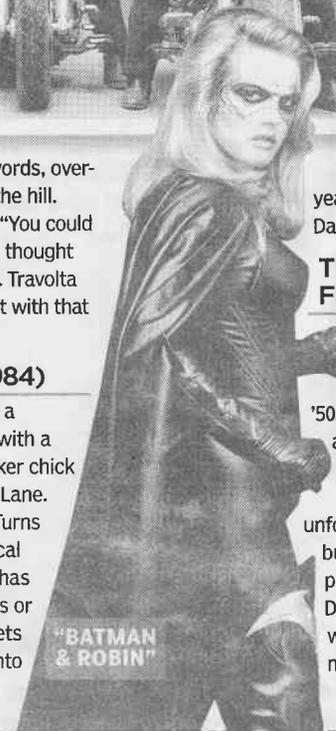
little road trip — in other words, over-the-hill men heading over the hill.

**Crazy or cuddly:** Crazy! "You could hurt yourself, grandpa," is the thought most moviegoers kept having. Travolta could *maybe* pull it off, but not with that gang backing him up.

### STREETS OF FIRE (1984)

**The biker:** Michael Paré is a brooding, dangerous outlaw with a fast bike and a yen for the biker chick to end all biker chicks, Diane Lane.

**Crazy or cuddly:** Cuddly. Turns out this is a rock 'n' roll musical fantasy. Any biker gang that has to dance on rain-drenched streets is incapable of striking fear into anyone.



### BATMAN & ROBIN (1997)

**The biker:** This credibility-crushing edition in the "Batman" franchise topped Robin and the Batnipples by having Valley Girl Alicia Silverstone ride in on a girlie motorcycle so ridiculous even the Joker wasn't laughing.

**Crazy or cuddly:** Crazy. Watching Robin and Batgirl trade quips while spinning the wheels on their toy bikes ruined for years the possibility of taking "The Dark Knight" seriously.

### THE LORDS OF FLATBUSH (1974)

**The biker:** Sylvester Stallone and other members of a Brooklyn gang in the '50s are joined by Henry Winkler as the wimpily named Butchey Weinstein.

**Crazy or cuddly:** Cuddly, unfortunately. Not a bad movie, but this led directly to Winkler playing the Fonzy on TV's "Happy Days." And after the Fonzy, no one would be scared of a guy on a motorcycle ever again.

Michael Giltz