

# Entertainment Weekly

## Battlestar

### Sex Pistol

A biopic of a taboo-busting pinup queen proves naughty and nice.

BY ÇEMILE KAVOUNTZIS

**The Notorious Bettie Page**

Gretchen Mol, Chris Bauer, Jared Harris  
R, 90 mins., 2006

Even in the domineering stilettos and restricting corsets for which she is best remembered, Bettie Page gave off a dimpled sweetness. As a model, she had one high heel planted in the world of bubbly pinups and the other in the

only-whispered-about fetish underground. Gretchen Mol, in the title role, gives an outstanding performance in director Mary Harron's biopic. Working mostly in black and white, interspersed with some color scenes, Harron and Guinevere Turner (who co-wrote *Notorious* with Harron) give the film a documentary feel, and place Page in the larger landscape of 1950s sexuality, New York City police raids, and the Kefauver U.S. Senate hearings on juvenile delinquency. One need only look at the extra "Presenting Bettie Page," an archival silent short of



Mol in kitten-with-a-whip mode

#### IF YOU LIKE...

...rebellious women, *Bettie Page* director Mary Harron did a bang-up job on **I SHOT ANDY WARHOL**, her 1996 film starring a fantastic Lili Taylor (below) as Valerie Solanas, a feminist polemicist (author of *S.C.U.M. Manifesto*), playwright, and sometime actress who really did shoot Andy Warhol. —Ken Tucker



the real Page doing a striptease, to see how adeptly Mol captures the ingenuousness of Page's mannerisms. The title of a making-of featurette promises "An Inside Look at the Pin-Up Queen of the Universe," yet doesn't offer a single photograph of the real Bettie Page. However, despite this oversight, Harron and Turner's intelligent commentary on the continued relevance of its larger issues, such as censorship, government investigations, and artistic freedom, provides this pretty picture with its point of view and force. **B**