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ON THE ROAD

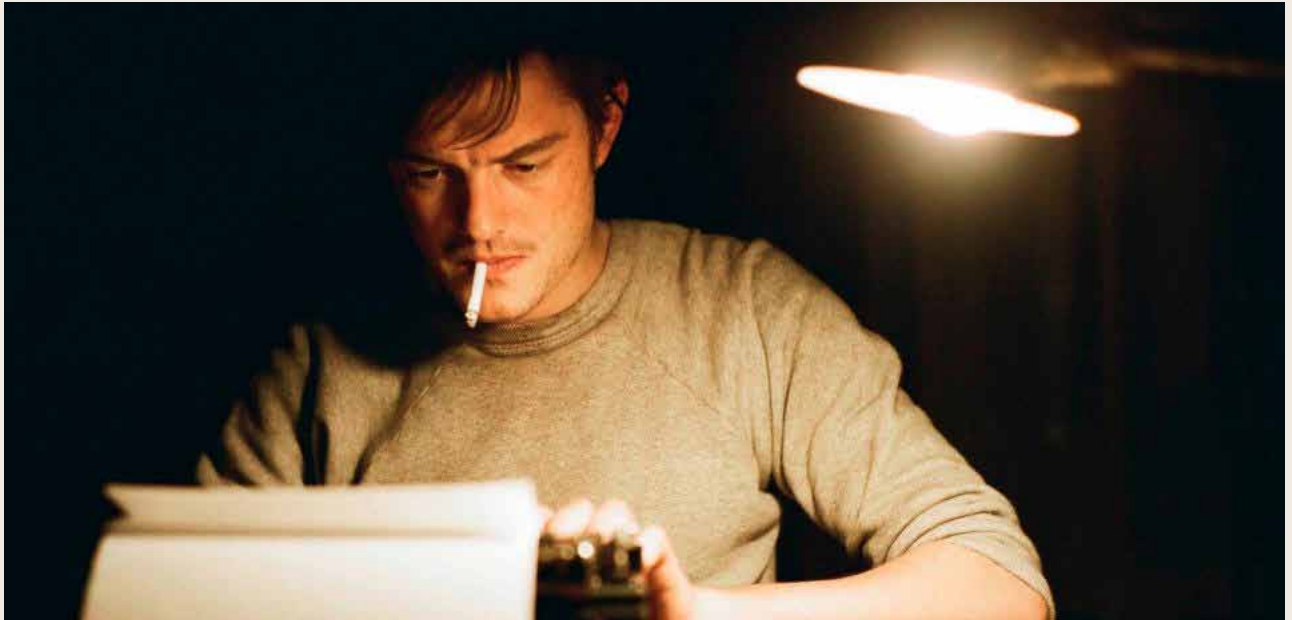
BASED ON JACK KEROUAC'S NOVEL



A FILM DIRECTED BY WALTER SALLES



PERSMAP



regie

WALTER SALLES

release
24 mei

ON THE ROAD

genre

ROAD-MOVIE

origine

U.S.

met

SAM RILEY

GARRETT HEDLUND

KRISTEN STEWART

VIGGO MORTENSEN

KIRSTEN DUNST

TOM STURRIDGE

AMY

ADAMS

ELISABETH MOSS

“The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn...”

- Jack Kerouac (On the Road)

New York, eind jaren veertig. Na de dood van zijn vader ontmoet Sal Paradise (Sam Riley), een aanstormend schrijver uit New York, de losbandige en avontuurlijke Dean Moriarty (Garret Hedlund). Verlangend naar vrijheid vluchten ze weg van de dagelijkse sleur en reizen door heel Amerika. Tussen wanhoop en vervoering experimenteren ze met seks, liefde, drugs, alcohol en muziek. Ze zoeken de beroering, het wilde leven, de losbandigheid – de toppen van hun emoties.

Zelden heeft een boek zo'n cultstatus bereikt als 'On The Road' van Jack Kerouac. Onvergetelijk is het beeld dat hij oproept van wat we de 'Beat Generation' zijn gaan noemen: altijd onderweg, on the road, nooit ergens aankomen, nooit ergens willen aankomen.

Na ruim 50 jaar is deze klassieker nu verfilmd door Walter Salles (THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES) met Garrett Hedlund, Sam Riley, Kristen Stewart, Kirsten Dunst, Amy Adams, Elisabeth Moss en Viggo Mortensen.





WHO'S WHO



NEAL CASSADY REALITE

DEAN MORIARTY LIVRE

GARRETT HEDLUND FILM



Neal Cassady speelde een centrale rol in de 'Beat Generation'. Samen met Jack Kerouac maakte hij de vele en lange autoritten door de Verenigde Staten en Mexico. Deze reizen en zijn losbandige leven vormde de inspiratie voor het schrijven van *On The Road*.



CAROLYN CASSADY REALITE

CAMILLE LIVRE

KIRSTEN DUNST FILM



De schrijfster **Carolyn Cassady** is de tweede vrouw van Neal Cassady. Terwijl hij nog getrouwd is met LuAnne ontmoet hij Carolyn. Na een heftige affaire trouwt hij met haar. Ook Carolyn komt vaak voor als karakter in de boeken van Jack Kerouac en bleef goed bevriend met Jack en Allen.



JACK KEROUAC

RÉALITÉ



Jack Kerouac ontmoette in New York de schrijvers William S. Burroughs en Allen Ginsberg. Samen maakten ze deel uit van 'The Libertine Circle' wat nu bekend staat als de 'Beat Generation'. Hun filosofie was die van reizen en

SAL PARADISE

LIVRE

SAM RILEY

FILM



de aantrekkingskracht van het onbekende. Kerouac wilde het leven van de reiziger vastleggen in een spontane stijl van proza: een oneindige stroom rauwe gedachten en observaties. Zijn boek *On the Road* uit 1957 is hier het beste voorbeeld van. Hij schreef dit boek in minder dan 3 weken op een enorme rol papier van meer dan 40 meter lang. Zelden heeft een boek zo'n cultstatus bereikt als *On The Road*

LUANNE HENDERSSON

RÉALITÉ



De beeldschone en vrijgevochten **LuAnne Henderson** was een van de eerste 'Beat muzes'. Ze trouwde op 15-jarige leeftijd met Neal Cassady. Als Jack haar bij zijn vriend ontmoet valt ook hij als een blok voor haar.

MARYLOU

LIVRE

KRISTEN STEWART

FILM

**ALLEN GINSBERG**

RÉALITÉ



Allen Ginsberg is een Amerikaanse dichter van Joodse komaf die samen met William S. Burroughs en Jack Kerouac het begin vormde van de 'Beat Generation'. Zijn eerste werk: 'Howl And Other Poems' riep heftige reacties op wegens vermeende obsceniteit, maar werd een groot succes.

CARLO MARX

LIVRE

TOM STURRIDGE

FILM





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I've been passionate about *On the Road* for 25 years. **It is the starting point of everything that interests me in life and in cinema.** It talks about the possibility to reinvent oneself, to explore internal and external frontiers that have not been mapped before. It does so with an honesty and a degree of emotional resonance that are hardly comparable to anything else I've read.

I've always had the impression that the world would not be the same if Sal and Dean (the characters of the book inspired from Jack Kerouac and his friend Dean Moriarty) hadn't had the courage to abandon their predictable lives and drift and experiment as much as they did. ***On the Road* is about being 20-years old and not accepting your parents' understanding of what sex, family, and religion should be.**



Neal Cassady and Jack Kerouac who inspired Dean and Sal

“*On the Road* is the starting point of everything that interests me in life and in cinema.”

For Sal, Dean, Marylou, Camille, and the rest of that unique gang, it is about reinventing these concepts, reinventing family, reinventing sex, expanding your understanding of the world, “digging” new forms of music (Jazz). **It is about the necessity to transcend the frontiers of race, colour, and class. It is about truly existing, and finding a new place, in the world.**

It is also about desire. Desire to see what no one has seen. Desire to go where you shouldn't be going. And they did that with **an invigorating sense of humour.** The humour that permeates the book, and that José Rivera has so cleverly transferred to the *On the Road* screenplay is one that makes us laugh in a way that few contemporary stories do.

Which brings me to underline **the modernity of this subject matter.** Having been working on *On the Road* for several years, I'm constantly impressed by the number of young people who approach me in different countries, wanting to know more about the film. The libertarian and visceral essences of *On the Road* are, for me, the explanation for how well the book has transcended time, affecting generation after generation.

In order to prepare for the film, I retraced the journey that is at the center of the book: I drifted through Ame-



Preparatory drawing : a road by night

rica interviewing real-life characters from the book and talking to poets of the Beat generation, whom I found to be younger in spirit than many young people I know.

This process of immersion has reinforced my desire to make a muscular film, constantly in motion, pulsating with energy, freshness....and desire.

The Motorcycle Diaries was about young men whose lives felt too contrived, and so they decided to leave their home and explore a whole new continent. That continent, Latin America, and the people they met in the process would alter their lives forever, and redefine their place in the world. Starting with the same restlessness, Sal, Dean and the other characters of *On the Road* search to explore the continents that we carry within. That exploration would alter the world as much as the journey of *The Motorcycle Diaries*. Would all the behavioral revolutions that affect our

“A muscular film, constantly in motion, pulsating with energy, freshness and desire.”

lives today be the same if the characters at the heart of *On the Road* hadn't had the courage to explore and expand the frontiers of sex, religion, and family? Probably not. This is what makes this journey fascinating: *On the Road* proves that there is always something to be found beyond the point that says, “Do not trespass.”

There's also **an emotional quality that I find extremely touching in this story**. *On the Road* is about sons who refute their fathers' values, and have a hard time being fathers themselves. It is also about the importance of friendship and the pain caused when that friendship is broken. When Sal and Dean part ways, after having explored America and shared so many adventures, it is as if the whole world shatters. I find this



Garrett Hedlund photographed by Walter Salles

Sam Riley

last scene of the book one of the most emotional, moving moments in any story I've read. It will make for a unique film ending.

For more than twelve months we have searched for the actors that could give life to the main characters of *On the Road*. This in-depth process has led us to cast extremely **talented young actors who share our same passion for the material: Garrett Hedlund (Dean) and Sam Riley (Sal)**. Since being cast in *On the Road*, both have been cast in potential blockbusters (such as the forthcoming *Tron Legacy*, in which Garrett stars alongside Jeff Bridges). Around them, we intend to cast a number of well-known actors for specific, unique roles.

I intend to make *On the Road* with the same family that made *The Motorcycle Diaries* possible. Jose Rivera wrote the screenplay, in a close collaboration with me. Long-time friends Eric Gautier and Carlos Conti will be the film's DP and the production designer, respectively.

Rebecca Yeldham, also a long-time friend, (the first person to believe in *The Motorcycle Diaries*, and whom, as a Film 4 director, played a major role in financing and producing the film) will be one of OTR's producers. That Francis Ford Coppola's American Zoetrope has been behind this project for many years reflects **the importance and essentiality of the material**. The fact that a similarly unique production house in Europe, MK2, is now associated with the project, greatly amplifies its reach and adds vitality to our efforts. It will be a privilege to collaborate with producers and artists who have created films that brought me to cinema, and who are continuing to do so today. ■

Walter Salles

John L. Kerroach

ON THE ROAD

Reverting to a simpler style —

Further draft & beginnings —
Nov. 1949

ITINERARY & PLAN



- ① New York Jail
- ② Times Square I
- ③ Road to New Orleans
- ④ New Orleans
- ⑤ Road to Frisco



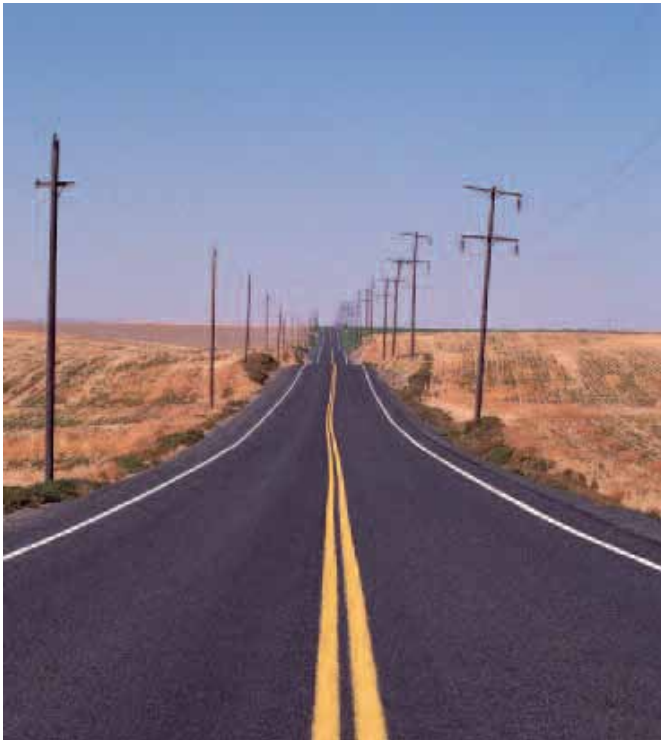
the weather
the various states

SYNOPSIS



New York, the late 1940s. After his father dies, Sal Paradise, an aspiring 24-year old writer, meets Dean Moriarty, a 20-year old ex-jailbird with loose morals and devastating charm. Dean lives with his very beautiful and very outgoing sixteen-year-old wife, Marylou. Sal and Dean hit it off immediately: Dean is fascinated by Sal's obsession with writing; Sal is fascinated by Dean's unfettered freedom. They spend their intense, alcohol-fueled nights dreaming of another world. When Dean returns to Denver, his hometown, Sal quickly decides to join him. But their reunion is not up to his expectations. Now living with beauti-

ful Camille, whom he has promised to marry, Dean goes to see Marylou, whom he still loves, after dark. Between the two women, he still manages to find some time for Carlo, a friend of Sal's he has been having an affair with since his stay in New York. Unable to fit into this quartet, Sal heads for California. That's when he in turn finds love: on a bus, he falls for a young Mexican woman, Terry. Hungering for new experiences, Sal moves in with her and her son in a migrant worker's camp. Despite the hard work in the cotton fields, Sal and Terry carry on a torrid affair. But their happiness is short-lived. When Terry decides to



find the father of her child, Sal hitchhikes to his mother's and moves back in with her in order to write.

In New York, Sal and Dean finally meet up again: accompanied by a friend named Ed, Dean and Marylou turn up at the home of Sal's mother at Christmas. Delighted to see them again, Sal joins them in a total immersion in New York nightlife. Attracted from the start by Marylou, Sal contents himself with her mere presence. Aware of his friend's desire for his wife, Dean invites him to sleep with her one night: embarrassed, Sal refuses. The trio feels the need to get some air. As Ed has to meet his wife in Louisiana, they offer to drive him there.

Entirely broke, the foursome uses their wits to find ways to pay for gas. Once they reach Louisiana, they stay a while at the home of their friend Bull Lee, where Ed finds his wife, Galatea, whom he had abandoned to go on the road with Dean. Writer, family man and junkie, Bull Lee entertains his friends with readings or showing them his unusual inventions. Unable to remain in one place, Dean, Sal and Marylou leave Ed to hit the road for California. For a time they form a merry threesome, travelling naked and freely enjoying themselves. For them this a suspended moment in time, free of all constraints.

But everything changes once they arrive in San Francisco: Dean abandons Sal and Marylou suddenly to return to Camille and their child. Distraught, Sal and Marylou go to a hotel where they finally enjoy their first night of tender, passionate lovemaking. But the next morning, Marylou is gone, leaving only a note: full of tender feelings for Sal, but incapable of knowing Dean is not far with another woman, she has gone back to Denver. Broke and alone, takes a difficult packer's job. Dean finally invites him to the little house where he lives with Camille, who is again pregnant. Sal doesn't have to say anything: Sal has only to see Dean again for Dean to decide to abandon his quiet domestic life. After a wild night listening to jazz, the two men decide to head for NY. On the road they keep trying to stretch their limits, in a quest for more



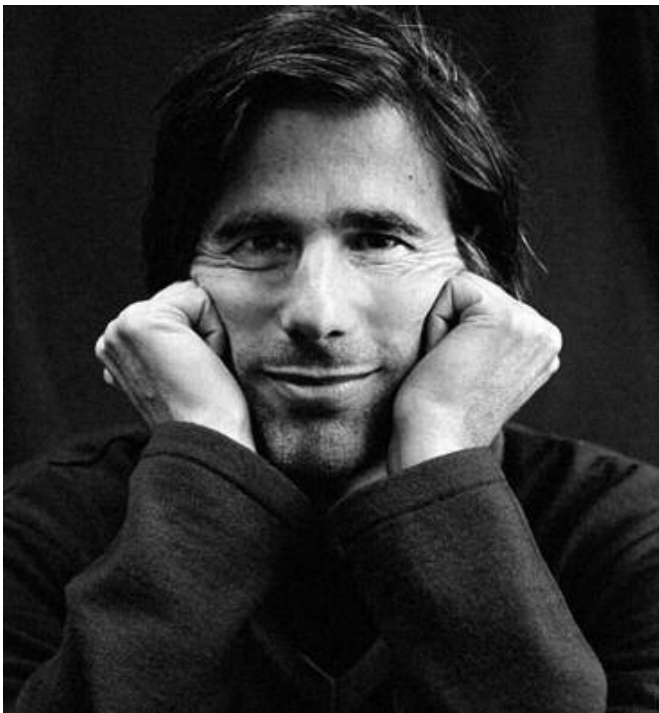
speed, encounters and sensations. Exhausted but happy, the two friends disembark once again at Sal's mother's house.

Their minds full of their recent experiences, Sal and Dean think they can now settle down for a while: Dean takes a small job. Sal goes back to college. But they soon become aware that this life doesn't suit them. Having the feeling that they've scoured the territory of the United States, they decided to discover Mexico. Highly excited, the two men approach Mexico as an earthly paradise of drugs and women. But Sal falls seriously ill. Determined to find his new companion in

NY as soon as possible, Dean abandons him to his sad fate. Aware that, to Dean, the quest for pleasure takes precedence over all else, Sal holds no grudge. Once he gets well, he hitchhikes back to NY where his mother once again takes him in, no questions asked.

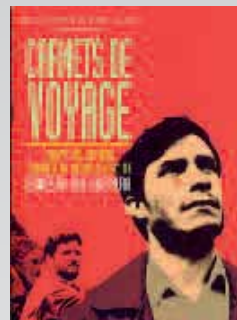
The two former traveling companions lose track of one another. One evening, Sal, who now leads a conventional life, runs into Dean, in tatters. Though moved to see each other again, the two friends have little to say to each other because their live on the road is now behind them. Each goes his separate way. In the days that follow, Saul feverishly writes the story of their wild days on the road.

BIOGRAPHY WALTER SALLES



After an initial career as a documentary filmmaker, Brazilian director, Walter Salles, achieved critical success in 1998 with his second fiction film, *Central Station*, which won him a Golden Bear at the Berlinale. The film is a Brazilian road movie centering on the poignant relationship between an older woman and a young boy. Inspired by his own documentary, *Socorro Nobre* (1995), the film denounces the often-miserable living conditions of the Brazilian population. With his tragic *Behind the Sun* (2001), the director attacked the blind respect for tradition before taking up another cause the following year by producing *City of God* by Fernando Meirelles, a shocking film taking place

in Rio's favelas. Walter Salles returned to the road movie with *The Motorcycle Diaries*, a human portrait that depicts a young Ernesto Guevara's formative years along the routes of South America. The film was selected for competition in the 2004 Cannes Film Festival and won critical acclaim before going on to become an international success (see on following page). With *Dark Water* (2005), Walter Salles completed his first genre film before returning to a more personal work in 2008 with *Linha de Passe*, which once again won him honors at Cannes. ■



Box Office Results for *The Motorcycle Diaries*

Released in France on 8 September 2007, the film sold **790 368 tickets**, or grossed **\$1.4 M**.

The film was also released in over forty countries, including:

USA: **\$17 M gross**

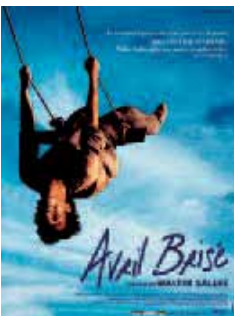
England: **\$3.5 M gross**

Italy: **\$1.5 M gross**

Brazil: **\$2 M gross**

FILMOGRAPHIE

- 1997 *Foreign Land*
- 1998 *Central Station*
Golden Bear, 1998
Berlin International Film Festival
- 2001 *Behind the Sun*
- 2004 *The Motorcycle Diaries*
Official Selection - In Competition,
2004 Cannes Film Festival
- 2005 *Dark Water*
- 2006 *Paris, je t'aime*
(segment « 15th arrondissement »)
- 2009 *Linha de Passe*
Official Selection - In Competition,
2008 Cannes Film Festival



WALTER SALLES AND THE ROAD MOVIE

Walter Salles has already directed three road movies: *Foreign Land*, his first film, *Central Station*, and *The Motorcycle Diaries*. It is no surprise, then, that the director presents the road movie as an influential genre for him:

“Road-movies brought me to cinema. Films like Antonioni's The Passenger and Wenders's Alice in the Cities. I couldn't explain at first why they touched me so profoundly. Little by little, I realized it had to do with characteristics that were particular to this form of storytelling, which is based on the unpredictable.”

The source of these characteristics can be traced back to the novel *On the Road*, a seminal work in the genre. Indeed, emblematic road movies like *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969), *Badlands* (Terrence Malick, 1973) or *Paris, Texas* (Wim Wenders, 1984) were all made after the publication of *On the Road* (1957). By adapting Jack Kerouac's mythical novel, Walter Salles confronts the very origins of the road movie. **In a time where human relationships are increasingly virtual, Salles sees this challenge as nothing short of a reappropriation of the American landscape.**

CAST

The two charismatic protagonists of *On the Road* will be played by two young rising stars: Sam Riley and Garrett Hedlund.

Sal Paradise

SAM RILEY

Sam Riley was revealed to the public with his feverish interpretation of Ian Curtis in *Control* (Anton Corbijn, 2007), which won him numerous awards, including Most Promising Newcomer at the British Independent Film Awards. Having achieved international status with only one film, Sam Riley will return to the screen with the American remake of Géla Babluani's *13 Tzemeti* and will act alongside Helen Mirren in the action film, *Brighton Rock*.

His delicate appearance and withdrawn acting style make him the ideal actor to embody Jack Kerouac's double on screen, Sal Paradise, who is much more of an introvert than his turbulent fellow traveler, but also sensitive and curious, always open to the world and to others. ■

Filmographie :

2007	<i>Control</i> by Anton Corbijn
Prochainement	<i>13</i> by Gela Babluani
Prochainement	<i>Brighton Rock</i> by Rowan Joffe

Dean Moriarty

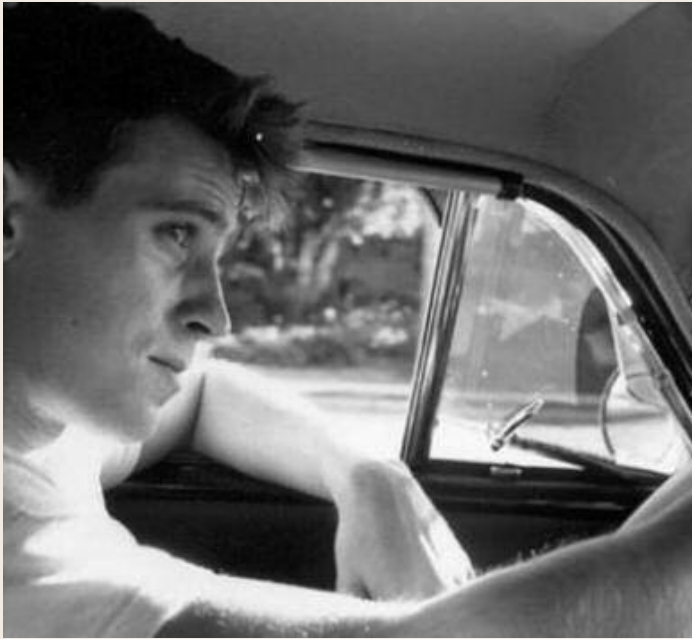
GARRETT HEDLUND

Accustomed to playing supporting roles in large-scale Hollywood productions, Garrett Hedlund will soon be in the spotlight when he shares the screen with Jeff Bridges in the much-anticipated 3D remake of the 80s cult film, *TRON*.

The young actor is very excited about the role and will passionately interpret the complex and fiery character of Dean Moriarty, a selfish and provocative seducer, bursting with energy. ■

Filmographie :

2004	<i>Friday Night Lights</i> by Peter Berg
2004	<i>Troy</i> by Wolfgang Petersen
2005	<i>Four Brothers</i> by John Singleton
2006	<i>Georgia Rule</i> by Garry Marshall
2006	<i>Eragon</i> by Stephen Fangmeier
2008	<i>Death Sentence</i> by James Wan
2010	<i>Tron Legacy</i> by Joe Kosinski



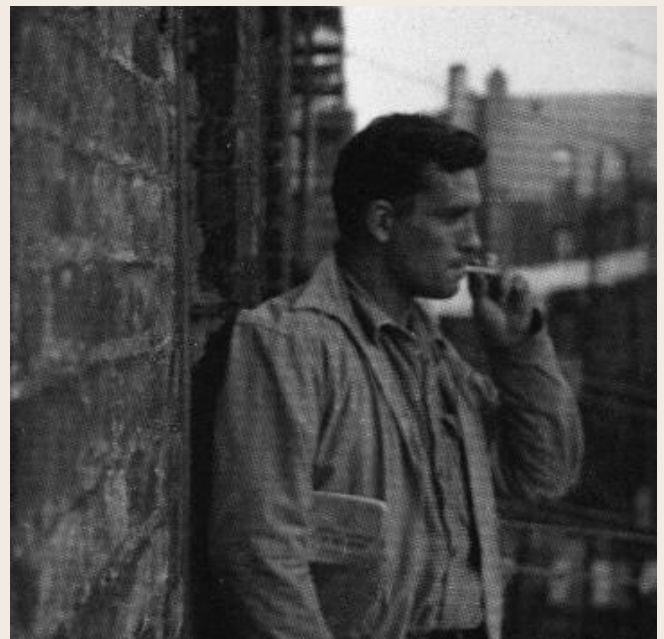
Garrett Hedlund



Neal Cassady



Sam Riley



Jack Kerouac

On screen, Sam Riley and Garrett Hedlund will play Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty, the literary doubles of Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady

CREW



The Motorcycle Diaries by Walter Salles

For his most important crew members, Walter Salles called upon two talented technicians he had already worked with on the set of *The Motorcycle Diaries*.

Director of Photography **ERIC GAUTIER**

Having worked as cinematographer with some of France's greatest directors (Arnaud Desplechin, Olivier Assayas, Patrice Chéreau, Alain Resnais...), Eric Gautier first collaborated with Walter Salles in *The Motorcycle Diaries*, which won him a BAFTA nomination in England and an Independent Spirit Award in the US. Sean Penn was very impressed by the cinematography of the film and contacted him for another great road movie: *Into the Wild*. These two films both share the

common trait of featuring stunning landscapes but, paradoxically, Eric Gautier explains that, “Both Walter Salles and Sean Penn were expecting me to bring something from the French films, something very intimate and close to the characters.”

Since these two prestigious collaborations, Eric Gautier's career has become international. While remaining faithful to the French filmmakers he admires, he is now sought out by directors around the globe, such as Wong Kar Wai for a *Lacoste* commercial, or Ang Lee for his comedy, *Taking Woodstock*. ■

Selected Filmography:

- 1996 *My Sex Life... Or How I Got Into an Argumen*
by Arnaud Desplechin
- 1996 *Irma Vep* by Olivier Assayas
- 1998 *Those Who Love Me Can Take the Train*
by Patrice Chéreau
César for Best Cinematography
- 1999 *Pola X* by Léos Carax
- 2000 *Les Destinées sentimentales*
by Olivier Assayas
- 2000 *Esther Kahn* by Arnaud Desplechin
- 2001 *Intimacy* by Patrice Chéreau
- 2002 *A Housekeeper* by Claude Berri
- 2003 *Son frère* by Patrice Chéreau
- 2004 *The Motorcycle Diaries* by Walter Salles
Independent Spirit Award
for Best Cinematography
- 2004 *Kings and Queen* by Arnaud Desplechin
- 2004 *Clean* by Olivier Assayas
Technical Grand Prize at Cannes Film Festival
- 2005 *Gabrielle* by Patrice Chéreau
- 2005 *One Stays, the Other Leaves* by Claude Berri
- 2006 *Loin du 16^e* by Walter Salles
(episode de *Paris je t'aime*)
- 2006 *Private Fears in Public Place* by Alain Resnais
- 2007 *Into the Wild* de Sean Penn
Lumière Award for Best Technical Achievement
- 2008 *A Christmas Tale* by Arnaud Desplechin
- 2008 *Summer Hours* by Olivier Assayas
- 2008 *Wild Grass* by Alain Resnais
- 2009 *Taking Woodstock* by Ang Lee

Production Designer

CARLOS CONTI

French by adoption, but born in Argentina, Carlos Conti's career has been international, alternating between French productions and collaborations with directors from all over the world (Marc Forster, Emanuele Crialese, Sally Potter...).

Selected Filmography:

- 1993 *My Favorite Season* by André Téchiné
- 1995 *Nelly and Mr. Arnaud* by Clauby Sautet
- 1996 *Pédale douce* by Gabriel Aghion
- 2000 *The Man Who Cried* by Sally Potter
- 2003 *Les Marins Perdus* by Claire Devers
- 2004 *The Motorcycle Diaries* by Walter Salles
- 2006 *The Price to Pay* by Alexandra Leclère
- 2006 *Golden Door* by Emanuele Crialese
David di Donatello Award for
Best Production Design
- 2007 *The Kite Runner* by Marc Forster
- 2008 *Inner Circle* by Laurent Tu



Into the Wild by Sean Penn

ON THE ROAD, A LEGENDARY WORK

With ten million copies sold around the world since first publication, translated into dozens of languages, worshipped by the younger generations, studied in universities, *On the Road* was voted one of the 100 greatest English-language novels of the 20th century by *Time Magazine*.

Writing and Publication: the Rise of the Myth

Largely autobiographical, the novel was inspired by the wild years that Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady (respectively named Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty in the book) spent *On the Road* together. Between 1947 and 1951, the two friends zigzagged across the USA (cf. map) in an unbridled quest for freedom that would inspire young people and the counterculture for decades to come.

Captivated by this experience, Kerouac feverishly wrote a first draft of *On the Road* during long sessions of what he would call “spontaneous prose”. With this impassioned story of his years *On the Road*, Kerouac created a wildly free writing style, partly inspired by his love for jazz and improvisation.



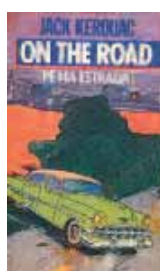
Map of journeys taken by Kerouac in *On the Road*:

Red: 1947

Blue: 1949

Green: 1950

Completed in 1951, the manuscript was initially refused by publishers for being too innovative and sulfurous for the time. Finally, in 1957, Viking Press chose to publish the book. It was an immediate success. The book quickly became a reference for the American youth who saw it as a symbol of freedom and the pursuit of pleasure. Jack Kerouac was dubbed king of the



“The book quickly became a reference for the American youth who saw it as a symbol of freedom.”

beat generation, the countercultural movement that questioned 1950s conspicuous consumption. But the writer did not see himself as the spokesperson of a movement.

Indeed, in *On the Road*, Kerouac never advocates any ideology. It is first and foremost the story of an experience: one that is intense, thrilling, and absolute, but disconnected from all political context.

This is why the work has remained universal and timeless. It has effortlessly transcended generations and borders because its only message is a vibrant call for freedom.

Influences

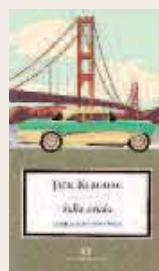
In the wake of the beat generation, a great number of

Jack Kerouac and Canada

Jack Kerouac pays homage to his French-Canadian roots in *On the Road* because most of the conversations between Sal Paradise and his mother are in Joul, a Quebec dialect spoken by the writer's parents. The use of this popular francophone patois is reproduced in the screenplay. It is a sign of the complicity between Sal and his mother.

In 2007, it was discovered that Jack Kerouac had begun to write *On the Road* in Joul, before continuing to write it in English. Later, he wrote two unpublished short stories in his mother tongue which, in a certain sense, foreshadows the work of the celebrated Quebec novelist, Michel Tremblay.

artists over the past 50 years, have claimed to be the direct heirs of Kerouac and, more particularly, of *On the Road*: in literature, Hunter S. Thompson, Thomas Pynchon or, even, Japanese author, Haruki Murakami; in music, Jim Morrison, Bob Dylan, Tom Waits, and Kurt Cobain, to name only a few.





Jack Kerouac

But, the influence of *On the Road* can be possibly felt most acutely in cinema, given that the novel is at the heart of the road movie genre. Without Kerouac's novel, films like *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1968),

The History of *On the Road* in a Few Statistics

4 the number of years Jack Kerouac spent on the road, which he then describes in his novel.

118 the length of the scroll of paper in feet on which Kerouac wrote the first draft of his book.

100 000 the number of copies of *On the Road* still sold today every year in the world, more than 50 years after its publication.

2.2 million the amount paid for the original manuscript in dollars at an auction in 2001

10 millions the number of copies sold since 1957

Paris, Texas (Wim Wenders, 1984), *Thelma and Louise* (Ridley Scott, 1991), or *Into the Wild* (Sean Penn, 2007) would probably never have been made. According to French academic Stéphane Benaïm, a specialist *On the Road* movie, what he calls the genre of American “drifting cinema” is directly linked to Kerouac’s cult novel. If the book’s influence has been so great on cinema,



“On the Road has effortlessly transcended generations and borders because its only message is a vibrant call for freedom.”

one might ask why the book has never been adapted into a film. Yet again, the story behind the rights to adapt *On the Road* is as legendary as the book itself.

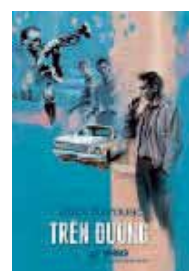
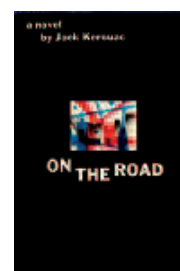
The Adaptation of On the Road: the Legend continues...

Why has no adaptation of *On the Road* ever been made? The question has been fodder for Kerouac fan blogs for several years. After the great success of the first *Godfather*, Francis Ford Coppola bought the rights to the novel in 1972 through his company, American Zoetrope. But, despite his admiration for *On the Road*, published when he was 18 years old, Coppola was never able to bring together all the necessary elements for an adaptation that was equal to his ambition. During

“The seven years between writing and publication seem like a blink of an eye when you consider that Francis Ford Coppola has been working on adapting it to film for nearly 40 years now!”

Blog de **Drake Lelane**
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the following decades, several names were tossed around: Michael Herr (*Apocalypse Now*), Barry Gifford (*Wild at Heart*), or the novelist Russell Banks for the screenplay; Coppola himself, Joel Schumacher, or Gus Van Sant as director; Brad Pitt or Ethan Hawke for the lead... In the end, to the great despair of the fans, none of these projects would see the light of day. Apparently, while watching *The Motorcycle Diaries*, Coppola decided to trust Walter Salles with the project. Touched by this road movie, also an adaptation of a legendary book, the historical owner of the rights to *On the Road* was finally convinced that the project would be in the right hands. Taking up Zoetrope’s torch, today, mk2 is more than determined to complete the adaptation of *On the Road* and bring the legend of the book to the screen. ■



“That’s not
writing,
it’s typing”

Truman Capote
over
‘On the Road’

