

VIDEO

Whatever Happened to Jack Kerouac? (Virgin)

A great film. A celebration of everything Kerouac, the good and the down right bad. A celebration also of the Beat Generation, where white Jewish and Catholic boys decided to become black, decided, as Mailer called it, to be the "white negro," the outsider, giving the cultural fingers to white middle class society. The romanticism still lingers. Kerouac is the hipster saint, remembered for his brash brilliance and loved even in his decay. And decay he did.

This film is a series of interviews with people like Corso, Ginsberg, McClure, Ferlinghetti, film clips of

America in the 50s (taken from Rudy Burkhardt's *Climate of New York*), archive shots of Ginsberg and Neal Cassidy, and two very wild television spots of Kerouac. The first is from *The Steve Allen Show*, with Kerouac reading *On the Road*. He looks good and sounds better: simply wonderful stuff. The second, shot a week before his death, is from William F Buckley's 1968 talkshow. Here Kerouac is fat, drunk and real funny. Arguing with some hippie fool (Ed Sanders) about everything under the sun, he looks exactly like De Niro did playing Jake La Motta in *Raging Bull*, saying things like "I've always voted Republican."

So much good stuff going on: William Burroughs saying how Kerouac got him writing, and how *Naked Lunch* was his idea for a title. Corso being ultra cool, with dentures missing and great lines like "Spirit is a hard tough baby." Shots of the beat

On the Road

Jack Kerouac

Explosive epic of the Beat Generation

Wild and unrestrained EVENING STANDARD



mafia falling in homosexual awe at the glory that was Kerouac. Kerouac reading from *Dr Sax*, with all its crucifixion imagery and the heavy Catholic guilt that was to swallow him up.

A video beyond cool, and a must for everyone who had skyrockets going off in their head when they read *On the Road*.
Kerry Buchanan

Signal 7 (Virgin)

A fine portrait of working class America directed by Rob Wilson and produced by Francis Ford Coppola. Shot in a realist style with a grainy documentary feel. "Signal 7" is cab driver talk for driver-in-trouble, in this film the trouble is both physical and spiritual.

The action takes place during one night, just driving their fares and sitting around telling a series of rambling sexual jokes, which help to

romanticise their existence. At times it's like reading Bukowski, except nobody drinks.

The story centres on one driver Speed and his friend, both of whom want to become actors. Both audition for the role of Lefty in Clifford Odet's Marxist work *Waiting for Lefty*. This is the film's highlight, with the play's director going over the top in his desire for "truth" — imagine yourself as an eggshell a real life union problem: when the cab drivers lose their own union, they lose their own strength, and go back to the sexual romanticism of the dirty joke. Best of which is one told by some young Mexican girls.

Visually the film is an exercise in the architectural beauty of modern America, the urban landscape full of darkness and stabs of neon. A modern American art film, dedicated to John Cassavettes, one of the greatest realist movie makers around. Highly recommended.
Kerry Buchanan

bad shit, like Mungo Jerry and even the Moody Blues, the world's most pretentious band. At the same time there are a few gems and surprises. First off, Steppenwolf looking very cool and definitely born to be wild; Santana with 'Black Magic Woman' with great percussion playing; Jimi Hendrix wriggling his tongue during 'Wild Thing'. A major clip is the Grateful Dead's 'One More Saturday Night' with all the Chuck Berry and Little Richard references intact.

Interesting in a historical sense, and even more so politically. The only black act is Ike and Tina, and great as they are, there was so much happening in black music during this era that to exclude this movement is a political decision, not a musical one.

Kerry Buchanan

From a Whisper to a Scream (Roadshow)

There have been many attempts to film the nasty-but-fun ideology that was EC comics. The two *Creepshow* movies gave it a go but lost out to commercial influences. Big budget flicks just can't do justice to the spirit of lowdown and dirty horror gore fiestas. This one's more like those 70s' Amicus anthologies I used to educate myself with at the midnight movies at Kingsland.

Four stories linked by good old Vincent Price telling us about the evilness of a town called Oldfield. The first story is the best, with Guy Return of the Living Dead Gulager in the role of his life. A twisted soul who dreams of meathook romances, has a sister who needs ice baths and then ice picks, and unnatural desires for dead people. But he gets it when his demon love child returns to say "Hi Daddy!"

Another great story is about a geek at the freak show who eats glass, but due to circumstances beyond his control, gets real cut up over a girl. The last story stars Cameron Mitchell, the greatest living actor in memory (check out *Tool Box Murders* for emoting) as an American Civil War soldier who finds out that war is hell.

Certainly more like EC than anything I've seen recently; great to see Vincent Price back in horror, even if it might be his last one. And let's not forget Cameron Mitchell, cinema lovers.
Kerry Buchanan

Seize the Day (Vestron)

Camus in *Le Mythe De Sisyphé* has this metaphor about life. "Man" pushes a rock up a slope, and as he reaches the top, the rock rolls back down. The world is full of losers, but in American culture they're called tragic heroes.

A film about the great American jerk caught up in the great American nightmare, a grand spectacle of failure. Robin Williams plays Tommy Wilhelm, whose life goes on the skids, he loses his salesman job, his wife and kids, his money. His self image dissolves like condensation on a Budweiser can.

Williams is great in this tough role. Life might be rough, but he has choices, and he makes bad ones. He's a complete fool, and Williams in the crumpled salesman suit and the ubiquitous Camel hanging from the top lip, looks perfect.

I haven't seen such a depressing film since Bambi's mother died in Disney colour. Don't expect any uplifting end here, it's trauma all the way.

Kerry Buchanan

MTV Closet Classics (Vestron)

No wonder a lot of people hate MTV if this is any example of the stuff they play. There's some real

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