



DESTINATION TIME TRAVEL: PLAYING WITH TIME IN FILM AND TV

Donnie Darko

Donnie Darko

Director: Richard Kelly

©/Presented by: Pandora Inc.

Production Companies: Flower Films,

Darko Productions

Executive Producers: Drew Barrymore,

Hunt Lowry, Casey La Scala, William Tyrer,

Chris J. Ball, Aaron Ryder

Producers: Sean McKittrick, Nancy Juvonen,

Adam Fields

Line Producer: Tom Hayslip

Unit Production Manager: Betsy Mackey

Production Co-ordinator: Kim Percival

Location Manager: John Agoglia

Post-production Supervisor: Cynthia Nicoletta

1st Assistant Director: Richard L. Fox

2nd Assistant Director: Heather Grierson

2nd 2nd Assistant Director: Casey Mako

Script Supervisor: Rebecca E. Asher

Casting: Joseph Middleton, Michelle Morris

Written by: Richard Kelly

Director of Photography: Steven Poster

Camera Operators: Dave Chameides,

Steve Gainer, Richard Crudo, Dick Montagne,

Michael Scott, Bing Socolsky

Steadicam Operator: Dave Chameides

Visual Effects Supervisor: Marcus Keys

Visual Effects: Amalgamated Pixels

Additional Visual Effects: Kelly Carlton

Special Effects Co-ordinator: Robbie Knott

Graphic Artist: Jay Kelly

Film Editors: Sam Bauer, Eric Strand

Production Designer: Alexander Hammond

Set Designer: Julia Levine

Set Decorator: Jennie Harris

Storyboard Artist: Andrew Garcia-Price

Costume Designer: April Ferry

Costume Supervisor: Joe Markham

Department Make-up Head: Lynn Barber

Special Effects Make-up: Thomas Surprenant

Department Head Hair: Lori McCoy Bell

2nd Hair: Merribelle Anderson

Hairstylist: Cammy Langer

Titles/Opticals: Pacific Title

Main Title Design: Kelly Carlton

Music: Michael Andrews

Score Vocalists: Sam Shelton, Tori Haberman

Music Supervisors: Manish Raval, Tom Wolfe

Music Editors: Shannon Erbe, Micdi Productions,

Jennifer Barak

Score Recorded and Mixed by: Todd Burke

Choreography: Marguerite Pomeroy-Derricks

Sound Design: Michael Payne

Production Sound Mixer: Coleman Metts

Lead Re-recording Mixers: Chris David,

Chuck Michael

Supervising Sound Editor: Victoria Rose Sampson

Dialogue Editors: Victoria Rose Sampson,

Nancy Tracy

Effects/Background Editor: Jeff K. Brunello

ADR Recordist: Chad Blinman

ADR Mixer: Matt Beville

ADR Editors: Victoria Rose Sampson, Nancy Tracy

Foley Artists: Edward Steidel & Company

Foley Mixer: Shawn Kennelly

Foley Editor: Dan Scolnik

Stunt Co-ordinator: Mickey Giacomazzi

Stand-ins: Wes Hall, Jeanna Phillips

Special Thanks: Eli Roth

Cast:

Jake Gyllenhaal (*Donnie Darko*)

Jena Malone (*Gretchen Ross*)

Drew Barrymore (*Karen Pomeroy*)

Richard Kelly on 'Donnie Darko'

Is there anything about Donnie's story that is autobiographical?

Yes (laughs). All of it. Not literally. I didn't grow up seeing rabbits. A jet engine never fell on my house, but there's plenty of me in the character of course. That's undeniable.

I grew up in a suburban Virginia town not unlike it's presented in the film: there was a woman named Grandma Death who stood by the side of the road near where I grew up, and she would open and close her mailbox; I was driving in my car with my dad, and we almost ran over a homeless person and I swerved to dodge him at the last minute; I got in arguments with my teachers about the curriculum; I used to sleepwalk when I was a kid. There's just a lot of stuff from my childhood embedded in the narrative of the film.

It was Jake Gyllenhaal's breakout role. Can you tell us about his casting?

Originally it was gonna be Jason Schwartzman. He had to withdraw for scheduling issues, and when Jake walked in the room it was clear that he was the one.

It's an instinctual thing with me, and right away it was like: 'You got the part.'

He's played a lot of tortured men since who could almost be grown-up Donnie Darkos, in the likes of Jarhead, Nightcrawler, Enemy and Zodiac. What do you think of his career since?

He's had an extraordinary career. He's one of our greatest actors. I'm incredibly proud of the work that he's done, and I'm amazed at how he's continued to evolve as an artist. I continue to be amazed by his evolution.

Drew Barrymore's production company played an important part in the release of the film. Can you tell us anything about that?

When you're going to put together a film like this there is always an essential element, and that's usually a movie star who has enough value to raise enough money for your budget. And Drew Barrymore was the essential element. When she agreed to sign on, with her company producing and obviously her playing the supporting role as Karen Pomeroy, that got us our funding.

What was the atmosphere on set like when you were making the film?

Terrifying (laughs). We shot the film in 28 days, which was obviously the length of the tangent universe [in the film]. We were living in the terrifying reality of this ambitious film, and we didn't have enough time, and we didn't have enough money, and I was a first-time director.

I was trying to tell this incredibly ambitious story with limited resources, and everyone was under a tremendous amount of pressure, and we had to deliver it. There was a lot of scepticism. When you've got a 25-year-old first-time director with this script that is incredibly unusual and provocative, a lot of people are nervous and sceptical and afraid.

There was an atmosphere of fear but also a passionate desire to pull it off, and everyone had faith that we were doing something that had potential for greatness. That's filmmaking. It was an incredibly intense experience. It was not a relaxed environment: high pressured but filled with a lot of passion and love.

James Duval (*Frank*)
Beth Grant (*Kitty Farmer*)
Maggie Gyllenhaal (*Elizabeth Darko*)
Mary McDonnell (*Rose Darko*)
Holmes Osborne (*Eddie Darko*)
Katharine Ross (*Dr Lillian Thurman*)
Patrick Swayze (*Jim Cunningham*)
Noah Wyle (*Dr Kenneth Monnitoff*)
Alex Greenwald (*Seth Devlin*)
Gary Lundy (*Sean Smith*)
Seth Rogen (*Ricky Danforth*)
Stuart Stone (*Ronald Fisher*)
Daveigh Chase (*Samantha Darko*)
Patience Cleveland
(*Roberta Sparrow/Grandma Death*)
David Moreland (*Principal Cole*)
Jolene Purdy (*Cherita Chen*)
Arthur Taxier (*Dr Fisher*)
Mark Hoffman (*police officer*)
David St James (*Bob Garland*)
Tom Tangen (*man in red jogging suit*)
Jazzie Mahannah (*Joanie James*)
Kristina Malota (*Susie Bates*)
Marina Malota (*Emily Bates*)
Carly Naples (*Suzy Bailey*)
Tiler Peck (*Beth Farmer*)
Lisa K. Wyatt (*Linda Connie*)
Rachel Winfree (*Shanda Riesman*)
Jack Salvatore Jr (*Larry Riesman*)
Lee Weaver (*Leroy*)
Phyllis Lyons (*Anne Fisher*)
Ashley Tisdale (*dorky girl*)
Alison Jones (*dorky sister*)
Jerry Trainor (*lanky kid*)
Joan Blair (*mystery woman*)
Sarah Hudson (*friend*)
Fran Kranz (*passenger*)
Scotty Leavenworth (*David*)
USA 2001©
113 mins
Digital

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The film was released six weeks after 9/11. Did the sombre mood in America affect the box office?

Absolutely. I don't think anyone was in the mood to just go to the movies, and if they did want to it was probably for something that was happy. I think this is a very challenging, disturbing film in a lot of ways, and that's not what people wanted to experience in the shadow of such a catastrophic tragedy. I'm just enormously grateful the film made it to theatres at all, because for a long time that was not gonna happen.

Did Patrick Swayze have any qualms about playing such an unlikeable character?

I think he was really nervous about playing the role, but he was also ready to take a risk. He trusted me and he saw the scope and the ambition of the project and was pretty courageous in taking that role. It was unfortunate that the movie wasn't a bigger success, because I wish he would've gotten a bigger boost from it. He was a really terrific actor and a good guy.

What were you hoping to achieve with the look of the film?

I wanted to seduce the audience from the opening shot. That's the goal of any filmmaker – or it should be the goal of any filmmaker. I've always been a very visual person. That's the greatest pleasure in filmmaking for me, the visual design strategy. Every shot is very meticulously designed.

Were there any other filmmakers who influenced the look of the film?

Many influences. So many filmmaking influences I can't even begin to list all of them. I would say growing up it was the holy trinity of Zemeckis, Spielberg and Cameron. Those are the three big childhood influences. When I got to USC I started to expand beyond that holy trinity, but those were the foundational guys from my childhood.

What does Donnie Darko have to say about the world now?

I think the movie continues to resonate with younger people. It seems to be something that's become like a rite of passage for teenagers now to discover the film. Because a teenager in 2016 is still responding to this film, that's meaningful in some way.

I'm honoured people are still responding to this film and that they are identifying with Donnie as a character and also the ideas and the complexity of the narrative. You can see that people are still hungry for challenging narratives and that people are OK with mystery.

Interview by Lou Thomas, bfi.org.uk, 14 December 2016