

Paris Texas [12] 1984|USA|145 min

UK release date	23rd August 1984
Director	Wim Wenders
Screenplay	Sam Shepard
Cinematographer	Robby Müller
Cast	Harry Dean Stanton (Travis Henderson); Natassja Kinski (Jane Henderson); Dean Stockwell (Walt Henderson); Aurore Clément (Anne Henderson); Hunter Carson (Hunter Henderson)

A man walks alone in the desert. He has no memory, no past, no future. He finds an isolated settlement where the doctor, another exile, a German, makes some calls. Eventually the man's brother comes to take him back home again. If you see a lot of movies, you can sit there watching the screen and guessing what will happen next, and be right most of the time. That's not the case with "Paris, Texas." This is a defiantly individual film, about loss and loneliness and eccentricity. We haven't met the characters before in a dozen other films.

The characters in this movie come out of the imagination of Sam Shepard, the playwright of rage and alienation, and Wim Wenders, a West German director who often makes "road movies," in which lost men look for answers in the vastness of great American cities. The lost man is played this time by Harry Dean Stanton, the most forlorn and angry of all great American character actors. We never do find out what personal cataclysm led to his walk in the desert, but as his memory begins to return, we learn how much he has lost. He was married, once, and had a little boy. The boy has been raised in the last several years by Stanton's brother (Dean Stockwell) and sister-in-law (Aurore Clément). Stanton's young wife (Nastassja Kinski) seems to have disappeared entirely in the years of his exile. The little boy is played by Hunter Carson, in one of the least affected, most convincing juvenile performances in a long time. He is more or less a typical American kid, despite the strange adults in his life. He meets Stanton and accepts him as a second father, but of course he

thinks of Stockwell and Clément as his family. Stanton has a mad dream of finding his wife and putting the pieces of his past back together again. He goes looking, and finds Kinski behind the one-way mirror of one of those sad sex emporiums where men pay to talk to women on the telephone.

"Paris, Texas" is more concerned with exploring emotions than with telling a story. This isn't a movie about missing persons, but about missing feelings. The images in the film show people framed by the vast, impersonal forms of modern architecture; the cities seem as empty as the desert did in the opening sequence. And yet this film is not the standard attack on American alienation. It seems fascinated by America, by our music, by the size of our cities, and a land so big that a man like the Stanton character might easily get misplaced.

This is Wenders's best work so far -- because it links the unforgettable images to a spare, perfectly heard American idiom. The Sam Shepard dialogue has a way of allowing characters to tell us almost nothing about themselves, except for their most banal beliefs and their deepest fears. It is true, deep, and brilliant.

After: Roger Ebert, January 1984

Coming Soon....

Monday 20th Nov at 2.30pm: Churchill (PG)

at 7.30pm: Clash (15)

Sunday 26th Nov at 6.30pm: Hamlet from The Royal Exchange Manchester

www.buxtonfilm.org.uk

Buxton Film is a Registered Charity no. 1165040



admin@buxtonfilm.org.uk



@buxtonfilm



BuxtonFilm