

Film Review: Daniel Radcliffe Finds a Beat in ‘Kill Your Darlings’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 1, 2013 - 4:18pm

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CHICAGO – The movies has been berry berry good to 1950s Beat Generation poet Allen Ginsburg. For the sixth time since 2009, his persona is actualized on celluloid – this time by Harry Potter himself, Daniel Radcliffe – in the coming-of-age part of the poet’s story, “Kill Your Darlings.”



The title refers to the rejection of past heroes, in this case to forge the new Beat Generation of literary influencers after World War II. There is a murder as well, one of the weaker subplots of this intriguing before-the-beginning overview of Ginsburg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs and their support system. Radcliffe is up to the task, he puts a terrific spin on the Ginsburg sensibility, including a surprising sidebar involving his family. First time director (and script co-writer) John Krokidas shows a frenetic flair in using the camera as a storyteller, but doesn’t maintain the quick-cut pacing as the atmosphere grows more terse. In a sense there are two stories, and each one saps strength from the other.

The young Allen Ginsburg (Daniel Radcliffe) is bound for Columbia University in New York City. He is the son of poet and teacher Louis Ginsburg (David Cross) and mother Naomi (Jennifer Jason Leigh), who suffers from mental illness episodes. This home life affects Allen as he begins his freshman year, and he starts deviating from conventionality, aided by fellow students Lucien Carr (Dane DeHaan), Jack Kerouac (Jack Huston) and William Burroughs (Ben Foster).

They seek to invent a “new vision,” fueled by intellectual curiosity and copious amounts of nicotine, alcohol and other substances. This situation becomes troubling when an old mentor, David Kammerer (Michael C. Hall), allows an infatuation with Lucien Carr to get out of hand. The Beat Generation is born through experimentation, free expression and even murder.

“Kill Your Darlings” continues its limited release in Chicago on November 1st. See local listings for theater locations and show times. Featuring Daniel Radcliffe, Dane DeHann, Jack Huston, Ben Foster, Elizabeth Olsen, Michael C. Hall, David Cross and Jennifer Jason Leigh. Written by John Krokidas and Austin Bunn. Directed by John Krokidas. Rated “R”

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Allen Ginsburg (Daniel Radcliffe), Lucien Carr (Dane DeHaan) and Jack Kerouac (Jack Huston) in ‘Kill Your Darlings’

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics



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