Easy Rider

Easy Rider is the story of two men, Billy and Wyatt, that gain a large amount of cash that they attained from a drug deal with a connection in L.A. The two are considered to be “free wheeling potheads” that decided to ride their motorcycles across the country to New Orleans to party at Mardi Gras before they retire in Florida with their brand new fortune. They make the trip across the country with their riches concealed in Wyatt’s (aka Captain America) stars-and-stripes gas tank and meet an assortment of different people on the way. They pick up a hitchhiker and take him to a town that they end up getting arrested in where they end up meeting a drunken lawyer by the name of George Hanson. George gets them out of jail and joins them on the trip to New Orleans. Once arriving in New Orleans they begin to party by picking up some hookers and tripping on acid. The party ends badly and Then Billy and Wyatt end up retiring in Florida with two different opinions of their trip. Billy thinks that they had attained the American dream, and Wyatt knows that they had done nothing of the sort.

The major credits of this film are mainly Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda. The story was written by both of them, as well as Terry Southern, and they star in the film as the leading characters Billy and Wyatt. The film was also directed by Dennis Hopper and produced by Peter Fonda. Other credits include Jack Nicholson as George Hanson, Toni
Basil as Mary and Karen Black as Karen. The hitchhiker is played by Luke Askew and Phil Spector plays the connection from L.A.

Easy rider was nominated for two Academy Awards, one for the screenplay, and one for Best Supporting Actor for Jack Nicholson. Jack Nicholson’s role as George is what launched his career into being the huge star that he is today. This movie was one of the top grossing movies in the 60s because of bringing nineteen million dollars at the box office with a budget of under half a million. It’s known for capturing the spirit of the times and introducing Hollywood to the power of young audiences and socially relevant movies. The rugged and raw aspect of the movie reflected the preparation that they took to make the movie. Only half of the script was written and the rest was improvised. Jack Nicholson, Dennis Hopper, and Peter Fonda were all actually smoking marijuana on screen, which gave the stoned acting such a realistic effect. Some of the scenes were also shot on 16mm film instead of 35mm because it was demo footage shot a year before production began that they used in the final cut. This movie was also one of the first films to make extensive use of previously released musical tracks rather than a specially written film score. Easy Rider still remains one of the most influential movies to come from the 60s because of its trailblazing legacy and the portrait of the chaotic times represented for that period as well.