



TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED IN 35MM BY THE YALE FILM STUDY CENTER

LONE STAR

SUNDAY
JANUARY 21, 2018
2:00PM • WHITNEY
HUMANITIES CENTER

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM
PAUL L. JOSKOW '70 M.PHIL., '72 PH.D.



After getting his start as a novelist in the mid-1970s, John Sayles moved into film, like many directors of the era—including Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Jonathan Demme, and Ron Howard—by working for producer Roger Corman. Sayles made his feature debut, *RETURN OF THE SECAUCUS 7* (1979), using money earned writing scripts for Corman, including Joe Dante's *PIRANHA* (1978). Sayles' film, about a group of friends spending a weekend together and the entanglements that ensue, earned positive reviews and found a spot on many top ten lists at the end of the year.

By the mid-1990s, Sayles had established himself as a skilled storyteller with a distinctive style and an eye for humanist, politically engaged stories about American society, from historical dramas like *MATEWAN* (1987) and *EIGHT MEN OUT* (1988) to the allegorical fantasy *BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET* (1984) and the relationship drama *PASSION FISH* (1992). Made in 1996, *LONE STAR* finds the director, actors, and story coming together in a way that mark a high point in Sayles' career. In addition to being the most commercially successful film of all of Sayles' films by far, grossing more than \$12 million, the film was a hit with critics, who praised the film's combination of social history and mystery story.



Rob Salem of the *Toronto Star* described it as "Sayles' best film," while other critics like Kenneth Turan of the *Los Angeles Times* noted the way the film doesn't abandon the director's interest in capturing the social fabric of contemporary America, but instead "integrates Sayles' concerns with the heightened tension and narrative drive the thriller form provides." By telling the story of the town of Frontera, Texas through both a contemporary lens focusing on Chris Cooper's Sheriff Sam Deeds, and in flashbacks to 1957, where Cooper's father Buddy is played by a young Matthew McConaughey, Sayles examines the changing relationships among not only the Anglo minority in Frontera, but also the Mexican, African American, and Native American populations of the town.

LONE STAR marks the third of five collaborations between Sayles and actor Chris Cooper since 1987, when Cooper made his film debut in Sayles' electrifying union drama *MATEWAN*. Other cast members from the Sayles family of collaborators in *LONE STAR* include Joe Morton and New Haven native and Yale Drama alumnus Stephen Mendillo '71. Mendillo is joined by fellow Yale Drama alum Frances McDormand '82, in her only Sayles film to date. Kris Kristofferson, himself born in the frontier town of Brownsville, Texas, had been acting since the early 1970s, but *LONE STAR* brought him his first role as an outright villain. Kristofferson made "an awfully good bad guy," as critic Ken Tucker called his performance as Sheriff Charlie Wade, and Kristofferson would continue to work with Sayles on *LIMBO* (1999) and *SILVER CITY* (2004). 1996 was the year Matthew McConaughey hit it big, enjoying the popularity and exposure that would allow for the existence of a "McConaissance" twenty years later. After making a memorable debut in Richard Linklater's *DAZED AND CONFUSED* in 1993, the summer of 1996 brought his well-reviewed performance in *LONE STAR*, released in June, followed a month later by his highly anticipated starring role in Joel Schumacher's John Grisham adaptation, *A TIME TO KILL*.

WRITTEN, DIRECTED, and EDITED BY **JOHN SAYLES**
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **STUART DRYBURGH**
MUSIC BY **MASON DARING**
PRODUCED BY **COLUMBIA PICTURES**
(1996) 133 MINS.

STARRING **RON CANADA, CHRIS COOPER,**
KRIS KRISTOFFERSON, MATTHEW
MCCONAUGHEY, FRANCES MCDORMAND,
JOE MORTON, AND ELIZABETH PEÑA

DID YOU KNOW: IT WAS FATE: IN 1996, THE *LONE STAR* FILM & TELEVISION AWARDS, PRESENTED BY THE DALLAS/FORT WORTH FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION, WENT TO *LONE STAR* FOR BEST FILM, BEST SCREENPLAY, BEST ACTOR (COOPER), BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR (RON CANADA), AND BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS (FRANCES MCDORMAND).

NEXT UP: DIRECTOR FRITZ LANG'S FIRST SOUND FILM, AND THE FILM HE DEEMED HIS BEST WORK, *M* STARS PETER LORRE AS THE SERIAL KILLER HANS BECKERT, PURSUED BY MEMBERS OF BERLIN'S CRIMINAL UNDERWORLD. IT SCREENS ON 35MM ON **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31 AT 7:00 PM.**