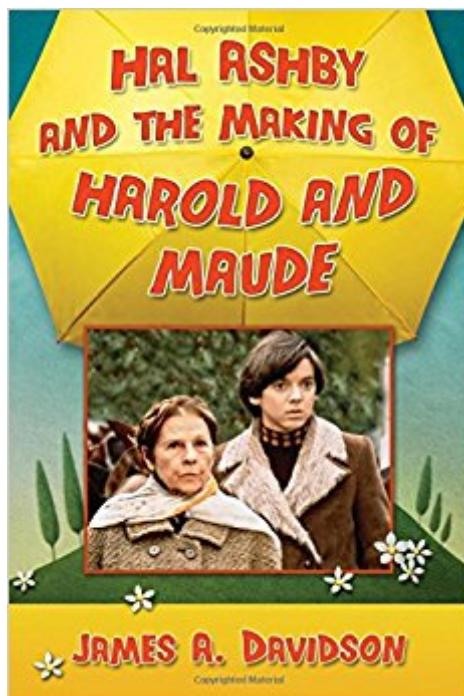


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# Hal Ashby And The Making Of Harold And Maude



## Synopsis

The original script was sold to a major Hollywood studio virtually overnight; the screenwriter was working as a pool boy and driver for the producer; the director was considered an "acid freak" by the studio heads; the star was a 74-year old actress who didn't know how to drive a car. The film flopped upon release and later became one of the great cult successes of all time. This is the fascinating, never before told story of the making of *Harold and Maude*, shot guerrilla-style in the San Francisco Bay Area by a crew of "New Hollywood" filmmakers in the winter of 1971.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The story behind the film is engagingly told"--The Huffington Post/I>"the well-researched back story of the unlikely 1971 cult classic"--Acting Solo; "the story behind the film is engagingly told"--The Huffington Post.

James A. Davidson has written a number of articles for Images Film Journal and Taste of Cinema and is co-owner of Second Sight Video & Multimedia. He lives in Martinez, California.

Being a fan of the Movie *Harold and Maude* for many years and watching it several times, I thought I knew a lot about this movie. James A. Davidson's book taught me so much. This book is entertaining, and being from the Bay Area I loved reading every word of it. I felt as if I was learning about my own friends. Reading about how the scenes in the movie were made, the background

stories, the personalities of Ashby et. al. I just finished the book and now I am ready to watch the movie again through knowledgeable eyes. I know it will make it that much more fun to watch. Well, written and flowing. A great read.

I so loved reading about all the details and intricacies of producing this amazing movie. If you ever enjoyed this movie you will probably enjoy this book. However, if your life was changed by watching this movie, and you've gone back to see it again and again, this is a MUST-READ.

There are so many great films from the 70s that younger people may have overlooked; "Harold and Maude" is among the top. And this book by James A. Davidson reinforces why; director Hal Ashby and writer Colin Higgins perfectly captured the alienation and confusion of the times, in a hilarious, yet poignant film. Davidson's thorough research helps show why Ashby was so underrated as a director; and there are so many details I don't think anyone has heard before; Elton John as one of the first choices to play Harold?

This book provides an interesting overview of the making of the movie, and I'm certain any fan will enjoy learning more about the circumstances under which the movie came about. However, the book contains quite a bit of filler, as well as information that is repeated or not particularly interesting or relevant. I would have liked to see the book edited with a little more care. The quality of writing is not great, but it's very well researched and it helped me identify some of the film locations which I visited last month with a friend.

I wish the book had more interviews and funny stories, The problem is nearly everyone who worked on the film is dead. I'm glad I read it, I loved the movie when it came out. I learned a lot about it, I just wish it had more stories.

Easy to read and full of great info on a Classic! I hope this author writes on more cult films.

Best movie of all times!

As a fan of film history, it is so wonderful to find that someone has finally dedicated a book to the making of one of my all-time favorite films, "Harold and Maude". In James A. Davidson's book, "Hal Ashby and the Making of Harold and Maude," he has

produced a well-researched and VERY detailed work which gives the reader the all-important back story of every facet that came together to make this beloved film, which we find, was fraught with circumstances that could have resulted in its being a "total failure". The book provides what it took to get Colin Higgins' "college project" to the "right people" and along with providing biographies of Colin Higgins, Hal Ashby, Bud Cort, Ruth Gordon, Vivian Pickles and others, in front of and behind the camera, I also enjoyed finding out about the well-loved Bay Area locals and the history of how the props that were used in the film came to be, like the railroad car that was Maude's home and the opulent "Chasen Mansion". If you love reading "behind-the-scenes" books, then I would HIGHLY recommend *Hal Ashby and the Making of Harold and Maude*! It a welcome addition to ANY film history collection, and will greatly enhance your appreciation of "Harold and Maude"--especially, if, like me and others, you have seen the film MANY, MANY times!!!

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