

The Day the McGreevy Kid Met the Utica Kid

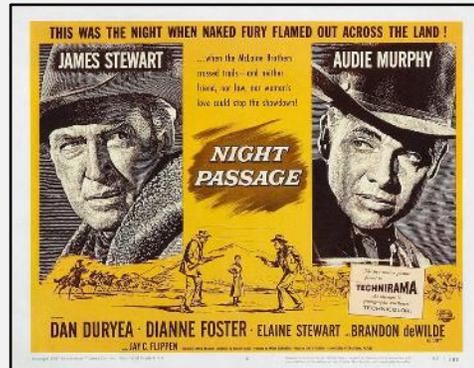
Comments? Comments are welcome. Just use the link below to our message board.
<https://www.audiemurphy.com/msgb/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=4816>

Introduction by Richard Rodgers

ARMED ONLY with a notepad, pencil, and a killer-smile, a Colorado teenager – Donna McGreevy – coolly challenged the Utica Kid – better known as Audie Murphy – with a steady hail of bulleted questions in the early afternoon of July 16, 1957 at the Utica Kid’s Denver hotel room. When the meeting ended, no blood had been spilled although shots had been fired from the camera of a Denver Post photographer and reporter who happened to be close by.

As it turns out, Ms. McGreevy had been selected by the *Denver Post* with a few other local teenagers to interview Audie Murphy who arrived in town for the world premiere of his twenty-first movie, *Night Passage*.¹

Although just a teenager, Ms. McGreevy asked some surprising and noteworthy questions. It was obvious she came prepared for the meeting. Audie, to his great credit, provided some excellent



Just who was the Utica Kid?

Audie co-starred as the gun-slinging but likeable Utica Kid in the western, *Night Passage*. Grant McCain, played by James Stewart, who is the Utica Kid’s older brother and has been fired by a Colorado railroad for not being able to prevent payroll robberies. The Utica Kid just happens to be a member of the same gang responsible for these thefts too. Things get bad for the railroads after three months of successive train robberies. McCain is eventually called back by the railroads on an under-cover mission to secretly deliver a payroll of \$10,000 which leads to a final confrontation between him and his younger brother, the Utica Kid.

¹ The movie trailer for *Night Passage* can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4gCFpP2aWQ>

answers characterized with his unique sense of humor, charm, and honesty.

Fortunately, nearly sixty-three years later, Audie Murphy Research Foundation researcher and correspondent, M. D. Marks, located a copy of the personal scrapbook belonging to McGreevy. What follows is Ms. McGreevy's account and interview.

HE'S FOR REAL
By Donna McGreevy

I saw and spoke to Audie while he was here in Denver for the world premiere of NIGHT PASSAGE. I noticed, in particular, his behavior towards fans, reporters, and dignitaries. It was the same toward all; he was polite and helpful. He signed autographs for all who asked them. He posed for pictures and answered questions. He kidded with everyone.

Audie arrived in Denver on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad's "Prospector"^{2,3}, renamed NIGHT PASSAGE SPECIAL for the occasion. He arrived at 8 a.m. (Rocky Mountain time) at the Denver Union Station on July 16. Audie was met at the station by official premiere hostesses, fans, reporters, and photographers.



A young Donna McGreevy stands happily with Audie Murphy at the Brown Palace Hotel on the afternoon of July 16, 1957, after she conducted an interview. Photo contributed from the collection of M. D. Marks

After autographs, pictures, and interviews, he was rushed to a car and went to the Civic Center and formed a parade.

At 1:30 p.m. some teenage reporters, sent by the Denver Post, and I interviewed Audie in his Brown Palace Hotel room. Audie's manager and his horse trainer were there also. I took a seat next to Audie, and the reporters sat

² The Denver Rio Grande Railroad was an American Class railroad which was founded in 1870 and a 3-foot gauge railroad. Audie's arrival on this train was appropriate to the spirit of the movie and the railroad's western heritage. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denver_and_Rio_Grande_Western_Railroad.

³ A video tribute to the Denver and Rio Grande Railway can be viewed on YouTube at the following URL ... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmxp4kZXdqw>

across from him. Audie then settles down to answer questions.

THE INTERVIEW

Me: "Were you tired when you arrived?"

Audie: "Not too. We had a nice trip in from Salt Lake City (Utah). We came through the mountains ... beautiful scenery."

Me: "How long are you staying here?"

Audie: "I'll be here through Wednesday night. Then I'll try to grab a couple of days in Littleton (Colorado, a suburb of Denver where he races his horses.) Then on Saturday, I will be at Boulder for a rodeo. I don't know what I'll do there. It was sort of a spur-of-the-moment-deal."

Audie's manager: "You'll probably lead the parade."

Audie: "I don't know what I'll do there if they put me on a horse. I haven't any western clothes."

Audie's manager: "You've given them the idea you don't own any western clothes. You mean you don't have any with you."

Audie: "I don't have any! Just blue jeans. I'm not Roy Rogers."

Post reporter: "What are you going to do at the premiere?"

Audie: "I don't know. It starts at 8:30 p.m. tomorrow night. I don't even know what theater it's at."

Audie's manager: "It's at the Paramount. You have to be there at 8 p.m."

Audie: "Neither Jimmy (Stewart) or I sing or anything, so I don't know what we will do when we get up there in front of all those people. You ought to try that sometime."

Me: "How do you like Colorado?"

Audie: "I love it! The mountains are beautiful. We don't have anything like them in Texas."

Me: "Why did you choose Colorado for racing your horses? Why not Dallas?"

Audie: "They don't have any racing in Dallas. Nowhere in Texas for that matter."

Post reporter: "Do you have a ranch?"

Audie: "Yes, as a matter of fact I do. I have a little farm in Arizona."

Me: "A little 17,000 acres, isn't it?"

Audie: "In Arizona that's little." (We must remember he's from Texas)

Post reporter: "How many horses do you own?"

Audie: "I don't know exactly how many we do have. We have 10 at Centennial (Littleton's race

track). They multiply so fast I can't keep up with them. Dallas, how many horses do we have anyway?" (Dallas Clarke is his horse trainer.)

Dallas: "I don't know either – about 35 – I reckon."

Me: "Have you tried singing, or anything like that?"

Audie: "I tried to play the piano once. I couldn't do it, so I quit. I leave the singing to Tab Hunter and Jeff Chandler."

Me: "What is your favorite song?"

Audie: "'Eyes of Texas' naturally. I really don't have a favorite. I like all kinds of music."

Me: "Who is your favorite singer?"

Audie: "I don't reckon anyone can beat Perry Como."

Me: Do you have a favorite among your movie roles?"

Audie: "No, none. I guess the closest is THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE. It wasn't a hit; it was a classic in art though. The book used to be required reading in school."

Post reporter: "Is there anything about the movies you dislike? Making them – I mean?"

Audie: "Uh, yes. I hate to work; an actor has to do that every once in a while. You may only work 5 to 10 minutes a day, but you have

to be there all day anyway. Sort of "hurry-up and wait." It's pretty nerve-wracking."

Me: "Have you considered doing a Broadway play?"

Audie: "Yes, I have. If the right part came along and I had time. I make three pictures a year – two for U.I. and one for myself."

Me: "Have you considered producing or directing?"

Audie: "I find it an interesting thought for the future."

Me: "Who is your favorite actor and actress?"

Audie: "I like all the actresses, naturally. I think James Cagney, Joel McCrae, Dan Duryea, and James Stewart are hard to beat."

Post reporter: "Why did you choose to race Quarter Horses? Why not Thoroughbreds?"

Audie: "I like Quarter Horses. I may race Thoroughbreds later on."

Post reporter: "What do you think of Universal Military Training?" (U.M.T. is the Army's 6-month training [program for] 6-year service [members] with

[service] at home
periodically)⁴

Audie: "It's a good plan. I think I'd rather
get it all over at once."

Post Reporter: "Have you done any TV
work?"

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Post reporter: "Do you have any advice
for people trying to get
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Audie: "Well, I certainly don't suggest
they pack up and come to
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Post reporter: "How long have you been
in Hollywood?"

Audie: "Let me see now. Since about
1946. I made a picture with Alan
Ladd. I had a bit part. The
picture was BEYOND GLORY.
Then I just starved for three
years."

Post reporter: "Did you go to college?"

Audie: "No, I'm sorry. I really am sorry."

Me: "Do you still sleep with a gun under
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The interview concluded here but not
before Donna managed to impress the
reader – and probably the Utica Kid –
with her rapid-fire draw on details
concerning several topics including his
ranch in Arizona and habit of sleeping
with a gun.

⁴ A Cold-War program proposed in 1945 by President Harry Truman, Universal Military Training would require a mandatory training period followed by six years of service in the military by every young man. For more information, see <https://www.istor.org/stable/24445419>

It is the Foundation's belief that the pair parted on friendly terms although it would probably come as a great surprise to them that city slickers and common folk, a more than half a century later, are still sharing the tale of the day the McGreevy Kid met the Utica.

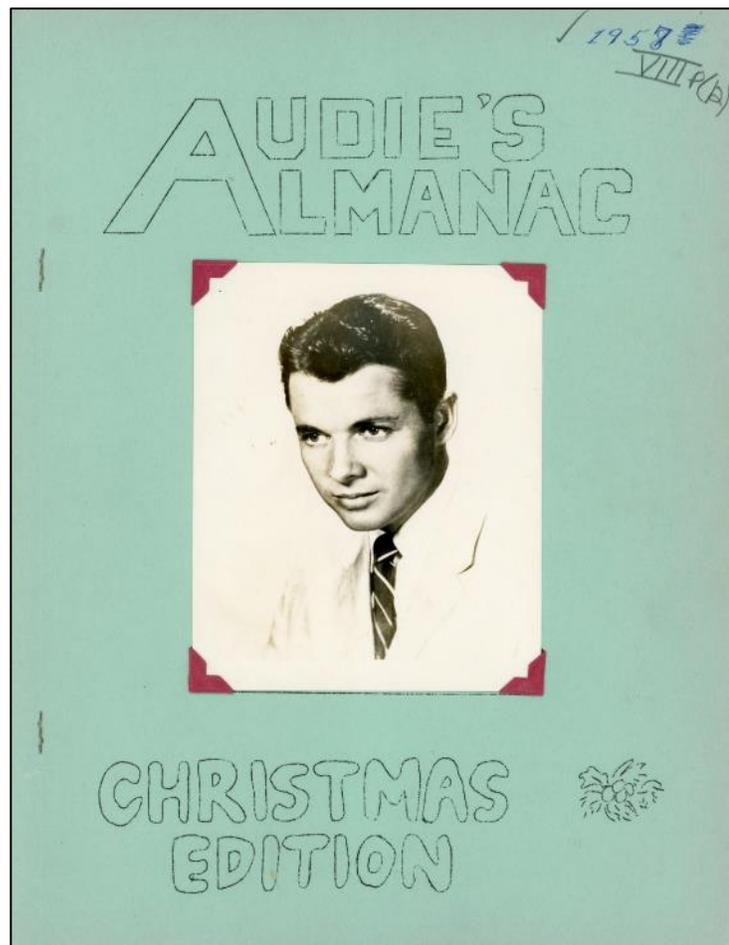
– *Richard Rodgers*

Appendix A: Audie's Almanac, Christmas Edition 1957

Editor's Note: This copy of *Audie's Almanac* contained the interview of Donna McGreevy. The Almanac was a fan club publication organized by Ms. Margaret Walters. This specific copy of the Almanac was acquired by M.D. Marks and contributed from her collection to the Audie Murphy Research Foundation. The relevant pages found in the Almanac concerning Ms. McGreevy's are below. While this article is not about the Almanac, the extra detail is provided by the Audie Murphy Research Foundation to help establish the provenance for the article and source of the Almanac. Original scanned pages of the interview begin page 15 of this edition of *Audie's Almanac*.

About the Editor and Publisher of Audie's Almanac

Ms. Margaret Walters was born in Roanoke, Virginia on February 21, 1921. In the 1950's, with written permission received from Audie Murphy, she launched *Audie's Almanac*, a fan-club based publication. Her ambition, according to a "Meet the Members" column in one of its editions, was "To have the best fan club in existence."



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Later on (4 to 6 P.M.) Audie and James Stewart were guests of honor at a reception given by the governor of Colorado.

Appendix B: Night Passage Clippings and Photos

Editor's Note: We can't resist adding a few bonus photos and clippings on Night Passage. Please indulge the Audie Murphy Research Foundation as we attempt to spoil our fan base.

Starts TODAY! DOORS OPEN 1:00
50c to 2 p.m.

**THE SAGA OF THE MCLAINE BROTHERS
AND THE SAVAGE FURY OF THEIR BLOOD FEUD!**

JAMES STEWART
as the Tall One,
who wandered alone
with an empty holster
and an empty heart!

AUDIE MURPHY
as the Quiet One,
who rode with violence
and lived by the law
of the loaded gun!

UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL presents
NIGHT PASSAGE

Color Cartoon and Latest News!

Colorado COOL THEATRE

Color Cartoon and Latest News!

Color Cartoon and Latest News!

Movie advertisement from the Greeley (Colo.) Daily Tribune, July 24, 1957. Contributed by M. D. Marks

Governor Johnson Will Act in Film

DENVER —(AP)— Colorado Gov. Johnson, who has had many roles in his varied career, will add another soon—a movie actor.

The Democratic chief executive said Thursday he accepted an invitation of Universal-International Pictures to be an actor for a day in a picture being filmed in Durango, Colo., Sept. 24-Oct. 2.

He will play the role of a section hand, a throwback to his youth, in "Night Passage." The film will star James Stewart and Audie Murphy.

Johnson said he worked as a section hand at Grant, Neb., for the Burlington Railroad before he became a railroad telegrapher. Johnson also served in the Colorado Legislature and was a veteran member of the U.S. Senate before returning to Colorado and the statehouse, a place he occupied before going to Washington.

An interesting historical fact concerning the filming of Night Passage which appeared in the Coloradan (Fort Collins, Colo.) on September 21, 1956. Contributed by M. D. Marks



Universal-International publicity photo of Audie Murphy, as the Utica Kid, from the 1957 movie, Night Passage. Photo from the Sue Gossett Collection



The Utica Kid and Grant McCain stare each other down in a Universal-International publicity photo from the 1957 movie, Night Passage. Photo source from the Sue Gossett Collection

For more information visit the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Website at www.audiemurphy.com



Movie still photo with Elaine Stewart, Audie Murphy, and Brandon Wilde in the 1957 movie, Night Passage. Source: from the Lillian Bailey Collection.



Movie still photo with Elaine Stewart and Audie Murphy in the 1957 movie, Night Passage. Source: from the Lillian Bailey Collection.