

cinéSARNIA Winter 2009 presents:
One Week



One Week
Director: Michael McGowan
Country: Canada
Year: 2008
Language: English
Runtime: 94 minutes
Format: Colour/35mm
Rating: PG

Principal Cast: Joshua Jackson, Liane Balaban,
Campbell Scott
Canadian Distributor: Mongrel Media

Four years ago, *Saint Ralph* warmed the hearts of Festival audiences and established director Michael McGowan as one of Canada's most promising new talents. With *One Week*, consider that promise fulfilled. Maintaining the fine balance between sharp humour and satisfying emotion that he struck in his debut, McGowan broadens his canvas to take in the vast glory that is Canada.

Joshua Jackson plays Ben Tyler, who has recently been diagnosed with a terminal illness. At first Ben can't believe his situation, but when the reality sinks in, he decides he needs to act radically. Although engaged to the beautiful – if slightly acerbic – Samantha (played by the delightful Liane Balaban of *New Waterford Girl*), Ben is overpowered by the need to capture some unknown yet vital experience before the darkness descends. He needs to hit the road, and to do it alone. Setting his sights on a cross-Canada road trip, he indulges in one heck of an impulse buy – a vintage motorcycle – and sets out for the West.

Travelling from Toronto on the Trans-Canada Highway, Ben takes in some of the nation's iconic landmarks. This typically means anything claiming to be the "world's biggest." It is a testament to the generosity of McGowan's filmmaking that he can raise both a laugh and a tear when Ben visits roadside attractions like the world's biggest goose in Wawa, Ontario. He pushes on. As Samantha tries to reclaim her fiancé in a series of increasingly concerned calls from Toronto, Ben rides west, hitting the intoxicating open spaces of the Prairies and the shock of the Rocky Mountains as he aims for the Pacific Ocean. Along the way he has a hilarious encounter with a highway philosopher, played by Canadian rock icon Gord Downie, and strikes up a touching, tentative relationship with a young woman in Banff.

The cross-Canada road trip is a rite of passage for Canadians and a privilege that tourists fly across oceans to experience. Never has it been filmed so grandly, nor brought so beautifully into a story of inspiration.

Michael McGowan was born in Toronto. After creating the stopmotion children's television show *Henry's World* (02), he wrote and directed his debut feature, *Saint Ralph* (04), which was recognized with an award for Outstanding Achievement in Direction by the Director's Guild of Canada in 2005 and received a Writer's Guild of Canada award for best feature film. It was also the winner of the 2005 Film Circuit People's Choice Award and was named one of Canada's Top Ten films of 2004. *One Week* (08) is his second feature film.