Olli, Fall, 20232 Classics American Novels on Screen and Television

“The Great Gatsby, “ 1974

The Cast:

* [Robert Redford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Redford) as [Jay Gatsby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay_Gatsby)
* [Mia Farrow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mia_Farrow) as [Daisy Buchanan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daisy_Buchanan)
* [Bruce Dern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Dern) as Tom Buchanan
* [Sam Waterston](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Waterston) as [Nick Carraway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Carraway)
* [Karen Black](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen_Black) as Myrtle Wilson, George's wife
* [Scott Wilson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_Wilson_(actor)) as George Wilson, Myrtle's husband
* [Lois Chiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lois_Chiles) as Jordan Baker
* [Edward Herrmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Herrmann) as Ewing Klipspringer
* [Howard Da Silva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Da_Silva) as Meyer Wolfsheim
* [Kathryn Leigh Scott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathryn_Leigh_Scott) as Catherine Wilson, Myrtle's sister
* [Regina Baff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regina_Baff) as Miss Baedecker
* [Vincent Schiavelli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincent_Schiavelli) as Thin Man
* [Roberts Blossom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roberts_Blossom) as Mr. Gatz
* [Beth Porter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beth_Porter) as Mrs. McKee
* [Patsy Kensit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patsy_Kensit) as Pammy Buchanan

Production[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)&action=edit&section=3)]

**Development**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Robert Evans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Evans) planned on making *The Great Gatsby* with his wife [Ali MacGraw](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_MacGraw) as Daisy as it was her favorite book. [Truman Capote](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truman_Capote) was hired to write a script that turned out to be unusable despite Capote's $300,000 fee.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-Kid_Stays_in_the_Picture-3) Evans made a deal with [Broadway producer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatrical_producer) [David Merrick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Merrick) as producer of the movie, and it was Merrick who bought the rights for between $350,000 and $500,000 from [F. Scott Fitzgerald](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F._Scott_Fitzgerald)'s daughter.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-New_Perspectives-4)

**Casting**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)&action=edit&section=5)]

Evans originally sought [Warren Beatty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_Beatty) for the role of Jay Gatsby, but Beatty turned him down, reluctant to act opposite MacGraw. With Beatty out, Evans offered the role to [Jack Nicholson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Nicholson), but Nicholson also reportedly was wary of acting with MacGraw and was unable to make a financial deal.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-Sundance_Kid-5)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-6)

Evans then sought 49-year-old [Marlon Brando](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlon_Brando) for the role coveted by 38-year-old [Robert Redford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Redford), who broke through to superstardom in 1973, the year *The Great Gatsby* remake was lensed.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-7) Although Brando was too old for the part, he had reestablished himself as a box office star with the twin successes of [*The Godfather*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Godfather_(film)) and [*Last Tango in Paris*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Tango_in_Paris). Incensed at his loss of income when he surrendered his profit participation points for $100,000 to Paramount before the release of *The Godfather*, Brando personally negotiated his deal, demanding an unprecedented salary reportedly as high as $4 million salary, frankly revealing that the high salary would recoup his losses from the sale of his points. [Gulf + Western](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_%2B_Western) CEO [Charles Bludhorn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Bludhorn), whose conglomerate owned Paramount, vetoed any such deal on the grounds that the two movies were separate entities. Brando refused to be in [*Godfather II*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godfather_II) when his salary demands were not met.

[Robert Redford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Redford), who had bid on the rights to the novel himself but lost out to Merrick was hired after Paramount failed to land the three sought-after stars, but filling the role of Daisy Buchanan proved difficult. MacGraw subsequently lost the part after she left Evans for [Steve McQueen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve_McQueen). MacGraw and McQueen approached producer Merrick through their agents and offered themselves as a package, but McQueen was turned down on the grounds that Redford already was cast. Without McQueen as her co-star, she dropped the project, although Evans claimed it was he himself who terminated her participation in the movie.

[Candace Bergen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candace_Bergen) and [Katharine Ross](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katharine_Ross) reportedly were offered the role. [Mia Farrow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mia_Farrow) sent a cable to Evans asking him to consider her for the role, and director [Jack Clayton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Clayton) liked the idea of casting her. [Faye Dunaway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faye_Dunaway) wanted the role so badly she offered to do a screen test, but Clayton was not interested in her.

**Screenplay**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Truman Capote](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truman_Capote) was the original screenwriter but he was replaced by [Francis Ford Coppola](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Ford_Coppola). Coppola had just finished directing *The Godfather*, but was unsure of its commercial reception and he needed the money. He believes he got the job on the recommendation of [Robert Redford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Redford), who had liked a rewrite Coppola did on [*The Way We Were*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Way_We_Were). Coppola "had read Gatsby but wasn't familiar with it." He checked himself into a hotel room in Paris ([Oscar Wilde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Wilde)'s old room) and started. He later recalled:

I was shocked to find that there was almost no dialogue between Daisy and Gatsby in the book, and was terrified that I'd have to make it all up. So I did a quick review of Fitzgerald's short stories and, as many of them were similar in that they were about a poor boy and a rich girl, I helped myself to much of the authentic Fitzgerald dialogue from them. I decided that perhaps an interesting idea would be to do one of those scenes that lovers typically have, where they finally get to be together after much longing, and have a "talk all night" scene, which I'd never seen in a film. So I did that – I think a six-page scene in which Daisy and Gatsby stay up all night and talk. And I remember my wife telling me that she and the kids were in New York when *The Godfather* opened, and it was a big hit and there were lines around the block at five theaters in the city, which was unheard of at the time. I said, "Yeah, yeah, but I've got to finish the Gatsby script." And I sent the script in, just in time. It had taken me two or three weeks to complete.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-8)

On his commentary track for the [DVD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DVD) release of *The Godfather*, Coppola refers to writing the *Gatsby* script, adding "Not that the director paid any attention to it. The script that I wrote did not get made."

[William Goldman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Goldman), who loved the novel, said in 2000 that he actively campaigned for the job of adapting the script, but was astonished by the quality of Coppola's work:

I still believe it to be one of the great adaptations... I called him [Coppola] and told him what a wonderful thing he had done. If you see the movie, you will find all this hard to believe... The director who was hired, Jack Clayton, is a Brit... he had one thing all of them have in their blood: a murderous sense of class... Well, Clayton decided this: that Gatsby's parties were shabby and tacky, given by a man of no elevation and taste. There went the ball game. As shot, they were foul and stupid and the people who attended them were foul and silly, and Robert Redford and Mia Farrow, who would have been so perfect as Gatsby and Daisy, were left hung out to dry. Because Gatsby was a tasteless fool and why should we care about their love? It was not as if Coppola's glory had been jettisoned entirely, though it was tampered with plenty; it was more that the reality and passions it depicted were gone.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-9)

**Filming**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)&action=edit&section=7)]

The [Rosecliff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosecliff" \o "Rosecliff) and [Marble House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marble_House) mansions in [Newport, Rhode Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newport,_Rhode_Island) and an exterior of [Linden Place](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linden_Place) mansion in [Bristol, Rhode Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol,_Rhode_Island), were used for Gatsby's house while scenes at the Buchanans' home were filmed at [Pinewood Studios](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinewood_Studios) in [Buckinghamshire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buckinghamshire), England. One driving scene was shot in [Windsor Great Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windsor_Great_Park), UK. Other scenes were filmed in [New York City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City) and [Uxbridge, Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uxbridge,_Massachusetts).

Reception[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)&action=edit&section=8)]

The film received mixed reviews, being praised for its faithful interpretation of the novel but also criticized for lacking any true emotion or feelings towards the [Jazz Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jazz_Age). Based on 37 total reviews collected by Rotten Tomatoes, the film has an overall approval rating of 41%, with an average rating of 5/10. The critical consensus reads: "*The Great Gatsby* proves that even a pair of tremendously talented leads aren't always enough to guarantee a successful adaptation of classic literary source material."[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-10) Despite this, the film was a financial success, making $26,533,200[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-Gross-2) against a $7 million budget.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-Gross-2)

[Tennessee Williams](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee_Williams), in his book *Memoirs* (p. 78), wrote: "It seems to me that quite a few of my stories, as well as my one acts, would provide interesting and profitable material for the contemporary cinema, if committed to...such cinematic masters of direction as Jack Clayton, who made of *The Great Gatsby* a film that even surpassed, I think, the novel by Scott Fitzgerald."[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-11)[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-12)

[Vincent Canby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincent_Canby)'s 1974 review in *The New York Times* typifies the critical ambivalence: "The sets and costumes and most of the performances are exceptionally good, but the movie itself is as lifeless as a body that's been too long at the bottom of a swimming pool," Canby wrote at the time. "As Fitzgerald wrote it, *The Great Gatsby* is a good deal more than an ill-fated love story about the cruelties of the idle rich...The movie can't see this through all its giant closeups of pretty knees and dancing feet. It's frivolous without being much fun."[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-13)

[Stanley Kauffmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanley_Kauffmann) of *The New Republic* wrote: "In sum this picture is a total failure of every requisite sensibility. A long, slow, sickening bore."[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-14)

*Variety*'s review was likewise split: "Paramount's third pass at *The Great Gatsby* is by far the most concerted attempt to probe the peculiar ethos of the Beautiful People of the 1920s. The fascinating physical beauty of the $6 million-plus film complements the utter shallowness of most principal characters from the F. Scott Fitzgerald novel. Robert Redford is excellent in the title role, the mysterious gentleman of humble origins and bootlegging connections...The Francis Ford Coppola script and Jack Clayton's direction paint a savagely genteel portrait of an upper class generation that deserved in spades what it received circa 1929 and after."[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-15)

Roger Ebert gave the movie two and a half stars out of four. Comparing film to the book details, Ebert stated: "The sound track contains narration by Nick that is based pretty closely on his narration in the novel. But we don't feel. We've been distanced by the movie's overproduction. Even the actors seem somewhat cowed by the occasion; an exception is Bruce Dern, who just goes ahead and gives us a convincing Tom Buchanan."[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-16)

The author's daughter, [Frances "Scottie" Fitzgerald](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frances_Scott_Fitzgerald), who sold the film rights, had reread her father's novel and noted how [Mia Farrow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mia_Farrow) on-set looked the part as her father's Daisy, while Robert Redford also asked advice to match the author's intent, but her father, she noted, was more in the narrator, Nick.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-17) However, after viewing the film, Fitzgerald's daughter criticized Farrow's performance as Daisy.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-Tredell_2007_p._101-18) Although she praised Farrow as a "fine actress," Scottie noted that Farrow seemed unable to convey the "intensely Southern nature" of Daisy's character.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-Tredell_2007_p._101-18)

Awards and honors[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)&action=edit&section=9)]

The film won two [Academy Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Awards), for [Best Costume Design](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Costume_Design) ([Theoni V. Aldredge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theoni_V._Aldredge)) and [Best Music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Original_Score) ([Nelson Riddle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Riddle)). It also won three [BAFTA Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BAFTA_Awards) for [Best Art Direction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BAFTA_Award_for_Best_Production_Design) ([John Box](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Box)), [Best Cinematography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BAFTA_Award_for_Best_Cinematography) ([Douglas Slocombe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Slocombe)), and [Best Costume Design](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BAFTA_Award_for_Best_Costume_Design) (Theoni V. Aldredge). (The male costumes were executed by [Ralph Lauren](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Lauren), the female costumes by [Barbara Matera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Matera_(costume_designer)).) It won a [Golden Globe Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Globe_Award) for [Best Supporting Actress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Globe_Award_for_Best_Supporting_Actress_%E2%80%93_Motion_Picture) ([Karen Black](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen_Black)) and received three further nominations for [Best Supporting Actor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Globe_Award_for_Best_Supporting_Actor_%E2%80%93_Motion_Picture) ([Bruce Dern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Dern) and [Sam Waterston](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Waterston)) and [Most Promising Newcomer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Globe_Award_for_New_Star_of_the_Year_%E2%80%93_Actor) (Sam Waterston).

The film was nominated by the [American Film Institute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Film_Institute) for inclusion in the 2002 list of films, [AFI's 100 Years...100 Passions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AFI%27s_100_Years...100_Passions).[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-19)

| **Award** | **Category** | **Recipient/Nominee** | **Result** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Academy Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/47th_Academy_Awards) | [Best Costume Design](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Costume_Design) | [Theoni V. Aldredge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theoni_V._Aldredge) | Won |
| [Best Original Score](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Original_Score) | [Nelson Riddle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Riddle) | Won |
| [British Academy Film Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/24th_British_Academy_Film_Awards) | [Best Cinematography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BAFTA_Award_for_Best_Cinematography) | [Douglas Slocombe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Slocombe) | Won |
| [Best Costume Design](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BAFTA_Award_for_Best_Costume_Design) | [Theoni V. Aldredge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theoni_V._Aldredge) | Won |
| [Best Production Design](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BAFTA_Award_for_Best_Production_Design) | [John Box](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Box) | Won |

Charts[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)&action=edit&section=10)]

The soundtrack was released by Paramount Records (L45481)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Chart (1974)** | **Position** |
| Australia ([Kent Music Report](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kent_Music_Report))[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_note-aus-20) | 22 |

See also[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)&action=edit&section=11)]

* [List of American films of 1974](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_American_films_of_1974)

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  2. ^ [Jump up to:***a***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_ref-Gross_2-0) [***b***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_ref-Gross_2-1) [***c***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Gatsby_(1974_film)#cite_ref-Gross_2-2) [*The Great Gatsby*, Box Office Information.](http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/1974/0GRGT.php) [Archived](https://web.archive.org/web/20120413224957/http:/www.the-numbers.com/movies/1974/0GRGT.php) April 13, 2012, at the [Wayback Machine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wayback_Machine) The Numbers. Retrieved May 22, 2012.
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