

ON THE ROAD, 1998, beta pal, 45'
A film by Dumitru Budrala

Original language: Romanian, subtitles: English, German



Every autumn, shepherds from Transylvania set off with their flocks in search of green grass. They follow an ancient route, which takes them hundreds of miles away from home. During his journey, the master of a flock is murdered in a forest. His youngest son must take over one thousand sheep, five donkeys, seven dogs, and four shepherds. Sleeping in the open, marching through villages and fields, fighting bad weather and truck drivers' prejudice, he learns to be a master.

Shepherds in the Carpathian Mountains take their flocks thousands of miles away from their home village for winter. This "Sheep-Route" is somewhat similar to the Silk-Route or the Salt-Route and the shepherds are confronted with many difficulties during this dangerous journey (wild animals, thieves, bitter cold).

In March 1997, the master of a large flock was robbed and murdered in the middle of a forest. His son's attempt to reconstruct the murder ended with the discovery of his father's corpse. But the film is more than the reconstruction of the story of a murder: it reveals the strange, archaic, closed and isolated world, untouched by any ideology.

It takes the shepherds months to get back home and on their way they have to deal with a range of unexpected incidents and events. People in this film are strange characters. Town people might consider them wild. For seven months they keep walking, never less than 30 km a day (but they might as well walk 50 km), and sleep in the open air, among their sheep

AWARDS

- Silver Medal International Film Festival **Kalamata**, Greece- 2000
- Grand Prize "**Angel from Prohor**" Belgrad Film Festival- 1998
- The Great Prize for Documentary Film International Film Festival **Da KINO** 1999 Bucharest
- Grand Prize, **FILM.DOC**, Sfintu Gheorghe, Romania, 2004

PARTICIPATIONS International Festivals

1998

- "From Baltica to Balcans" - Holland PREMIERE
- Łódź Festival - Poland

1999

- Cinema du reel, Paris
- Gottingen Film Festival - Germany
- International Documentary Film Festival Parnuu - Estonia

2000

- Golden Horse, Taipei

REVIEWS

J'ai beaucoup aimé la dernière production de Astra Film-Sibiu par Dumitru Budrala et Simona Bealcovschi, "On the Road", qui représente avec un sens de participation intense la vie des pasteurs en transhumance. Ce qui m'a particulièrement frappé est la narration et la manière dont la mort du père a été vécue par le fils, le sens de continuité de l'activité traditionnelle et la description essentielle - comme est le caractère de la culture pastorale - de la vie soit à travers des images soit par la voix des protagonistes.

Antonio Marazzi, Professeur, University Padova, Italy

"On the Road" gives an intimate insider view of Transylvanian shepherd life. At once both impressionistic and descriptive, the shepherds speak frankly about their lives encountering ice storms, erotic passions and the battle for right-of-way with transport trucks. I highly recommend this film for anyone concerned with interactions of traditional life and modern commerce.

Curt Madison, Professor, University of Arizona

"On the Road" is the first accomplished Romanian documentary I had the chance to see. For the first time I see a Romanian documentary where the pictures are as important as the words, where the cinematography is not an aesthetic exercise but it serves a purpose which has something to do with the reality the film attempts to capture and not with the director's opinions and beliefs. A truthful film!

Liviu Tipurită, Film director, Romania

“On the Road” is a very good film, a complex research of the shepherds from the Carpathian mountains and their treks, both in the past and the present. The approach does not stop at the mere ethnological or sociological perspective; it penetrates the intimate aspects of these people’s lives.

Bozidar Zecevic, Film critic, Yugoslavia

While I was watching this film, I felt I was “*on the road*” together with the directors, every step of the way. Walking, at first, and then running with enthusiasm. It is an ethnography film, but it is also an essential moment in the development of film-making in Romania. No more propagandistic talk about nationalism and beautiful landscapes. Reality is revealed at last, a tough but also human reality. I think it is the best Romanian documentary I have seen.

Mircea Săucan, Film director, Israel