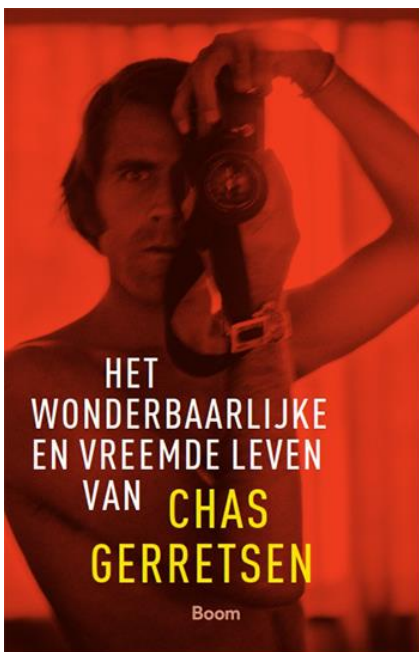


SANTASADŌ

Chas Gerretsen - The Strange and Wonderful Life of Chas Gerretsen

HISTORY



Chas Gerretsen was born in 1943 in the Netherlands and grew up in a small-minded environment in which he quickly felt oppressed. Heavily influenced by adventure books and Hollywood movies, he left his home at age sixteen, and traveled all around the world. His travels took him from crocodile hunting in Australia to becoming a cowboy in Texas. But he would become world famous as a photographer.

In 1968, he walked into South Vietnam during the Tet Offensive, where he became a combat photographer. In 1973 Chas traveled to Chile, where he photographed the coup d'état, and the famous portrait of Augusto Pinochet and his generals. These photographs earned him the prestigious Robert Capa Gold Medal, Chas is the only Dutch recipient of this honor so far. When he arrived in Hollywood, Chas photographed hundreds of the stars of his generation,

like John Travolta, David Hasselhoff, Jodie Foster, Natassja Kinski, and Michael Douglas.

In 1976, Francis Ford Coppola asked Chas to join him in the Philippines – in typical Hollywood fashion, asking a combat photographer for a war movie – for the shooting of the iconic film *Apocalypse Now*. Here, he documented Coppola's struggles with the bad conditions, and with his star-studded cast of Marlon Brando, Dennis Hopper, and Martin Sheen. The role of Dennis Hopper as a war photographer in the movie was based on Chas Gerretsen.

Nowadays it is hard to conceive Chas' approach to life. Traveling all over the globe, confident that he would meet someone to hang out with, find a job somewhere, and get something to eat. Chas Gerretsen wrote a straightforward autobiography without much added drama, the events in his life were extraordinary enough to impress without any embellishment.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chas Gerretsen led an incredible life. He escaped the narrow-minded thinking of his Dutch hometown, leaving at the age of sixteen. Chas travelled the world and lived in places like Argentina, Australia, Burma, Cambodia, Chili, Colombia, Hollywood, Pakistan, Texas, Thailand, and Vietnam. His photographs and contributions to *Apocalypse Now* have been recently rediscovered, and in 2021, Prestel/Penguin Random House has published a photography book of his work on the movie. A retrospective exhibition of his work is on display at the Dutch Photo Museum in Rotterdam.

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