**English 11/12 Honors: Tolkien Name:**

**Mr. Fisher**

***On the Road:* What’s My Name Again?**

(From the article, “**Who’s Who: A Guide to Kerouac’s Characters”** on beatdom.com)

[*All comments made by Mr. Fisher are in italics and brackets. Everything else are sections from author Davis S. Wills]*

Anyone who knows anything about the Beat Generation knows that while [*poet Allen*] Ginsberg may have been the movement’s publicist, [*author Jack*] Kerouac was its archivist. Yet his books are called novels, not autobiographies or non-fiction texts. We can pretty much go through each one of Kerouac’s books and find other sources to verify the accuracy of an event, but all the names, and some of the places, are fictitious. [*That being said, a surprising amount of this is 100% accurate!*]

These pseudonyms fool no one [*I’m sure they fool someone*], however, and are deliberately transparent. Writing in dangerous times [*hyperbolic much?*], Kerouac’s publishers demanded he change names to avoid lawsuits and prosecution, and given the furor surrounding “Howl” [*a Ginsberg poem*] and *Naked Lunch* [*by William Burroughs]*, it’s probably for the best that he did.

But nowadays we are surrounded by books, websites, and documentaries about The Beat Generation, and anyone that takes an interest is soon provided with a view of the players in the movement. Their personalities were all unique, and after learning a few key facts, we can take a look at Kerouac’s novels again and remove the masks, revealing the true participants in the fables of the Beat Generation.

**On the Road Name:** Sal Paradise

**Real Name:** Jack Kerouac

**Bio:** There are dozens of books out there about Kerouac, and his novels are effectively one giant autography, so I’m going to pass on writing a short bio. [*Kerouac really did write one giant autobiography, and On the Road is its most famous chapter. Kerouac was from Lowell and grew up in a French Canadian family with French, not English, as his first language. He was a handsome man, but quiet and an observer. Still, he attracted his share of admirers. Kerouac always said he was straight, but his friends thought he was actually bisexual, and famous author Gore Vidal claims to have once slept with him. Kerouac was also very religious, and as he got older, became a political conservative, often clashing with his Beatnik friends (especially Allen Ginsberg, who was always Kerouac’s biggest fan and supporter regardless of the severity of their disagreements). Unfortunately, Kerouac battled severe depression most of his life, and drank himself to death by the age of 47. According to Kerouac, On the Road "was really a story about two Catholic buddies roaming the country in search of God. And we found him. I found him in the sky, in Market Street San Francisco (those 2 visions), and Dean (Neal) had God sweating out of his forehead all the way. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY OUT FOR THE HOLY MAN: HE MUST SWEAT FOR GOD. And once he has found Him, the Godhood of God is forever established and really must not be spoken about."]*

**On the Road Name:** Sal’s Aunt

**Real Name:** Gabrielle Kerouac

**Bio:** Kerouac’s mother. She remained a huge influence on his life, living with him for much of his adulthood. Her harsh Catholic worldview marked her son with a constant guilt about life. She seems an altogether unpleasant figure, and outlived her own son.

**On the Road Name:** Laura

**Real Name:** Joan Haverty

**Bio:** Haverty was Kerouac’s second wife.

**On the Road Name:** Dean Moriarty

**Real Name:** Neal Cassady

**Bio:** Cassady perhaps the only person on this list more famous for his most noted alias – Dean Moriarty. The legendary Holy Goof inspired so much of the Beat movement and literature, despite having no famous literary output of his own. He was Ginsberg’s lover and “secret hero of these poems”. One of the few Beats who also became a Hippie icon (He drove the bus for Ken Kesey’s Merry Pranksters).

**On the Road Name:** Mary Lou

**Real Name:** Luanne Henderson

**Bio:** Poor Luanne was integral to the story of On the Road. At fifteen, she married Cassady, and three years later was dumped for Carolyn. Yet not long after that Carolyn was dumped again for Luanne. She was one of the early women to influence the Beats.

**On the Road Name:** Camille

**Real Name:** Carolyn Cassady

**Bio:** She was the wife of Neal Cassady and friends with Ginsberg and Kerouac. Cassady married the Holy Goof even after finding him in bed with Ginsberg and his first wife. She was immortalized in On the Road, and wrote her own memoirs, called Off the Road.

**On the Road Name:** Amy Moriarty

**Real Name:** Cathy Cassady

**Bio:** Daughter of Neal and Carolyn Cassady.

**On the Road Name:** Joanie Moriarty

**Real Name:** Jamie Cassady

**Bio:** Daughter of Neal and Carolyn Cassady

**On the Road Name:** Inez

**Real Name:** Diana Hansen

**Bio:** Another of Cassady’s women, Hansen was introduced to the Adonis of Denver by Kerouac, and was soon pregnant. Cassady took Kerouac to Mexico to get a divorce from Carolyn, to make the baby ‘legitimate’, but soon went back to Carolyn.

**On the Road Name:** Old Bull Lee

**Real Name:** William Burroughs

**Bio:** Burroughs should need no brief biography printed on the pages of Beatdom. If you are reading this, then you know his story and his work. If you don’t, then no few lines is enough – buy his books and books about him. *[He’s right. He’s one of the most original and controversial authors in American history. His most famous book, Naked Lunch, is famous both for its sexual content and popularity with hippies in the 1960s. He, along with Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, are easily the most famous Beats.]*

**On the Road Name**: Jane Lee

**Real Name:** Joan Vollmer (Adams)

**Bio:** Vollmer was the most famous woman of the Beat Generation, but for all the wrong reasons. She was ferociously intelligent, and held her own with the men during the early all-night discussions in New York, but is now known as Burroughs’ wife, whom he shot and killed in 1951; she also may have slept with Kerouac.

**On the Road Name:** Remi Boncoeur

**Real Name:** Henri Cru

**Bio:** Cru dated Edie Parker before she married Kerouac, who was also his friend. Cru is famous as Remi Boncoeur in On the Road, who inspired Kerouac’s seminal trans-American journey. Kerouac and Cru wrote an unproduced screenplay together in San Francisco.

**On the Road Name:** Carlo Marx

**Real Name:** Allen Ginsberg

**Bio:** As with Burroughs, if you don’t know much about Ginsberg, then perhaps you ought to go and do some more reading. This short biography could never do him justice for his role in poetry, and in the Beat Generation. *[Again, he’s right. Ginsberg is the greatest of the Beat Poets, and is one of the greatest poets in American history. He was as influential as any poet I can think of, and 20th century poetry has not been the same since he published “Howl.” Ginsberg was openly gay (a rarity in the 1950s), Jewish by birth, an atheist, and a socialist. The guy was interesting! Seriously, if you don’t know Allen Ginsberg, you should look him up.]*

**On the Road Name:** Chad King

**Real Name:** Hal Chase

**Bio:** Introduced Cassady to Kerouac and Ginsberg, thus creating the inspiration for so much Beat literature.

**On the Road Name:** Ed Dunkel

**Real Name:** Al Hinkle

**Bio:** A friend of Neal Cassady from Denver.

**On the Road Name**: Galatea Dunkel

**Real Name:** Helen Hinkle

**Bio:** The wife of Al Hinkle. ‘A stolid mother Earth figure of indeterminate age’.

**On the Road Name:** Tom Saybrook

**Real Name:** John Clellon Holmes

**Bio:** The ‘quiet Beat’, Holmes is widely considered to have written the first Beat novel. *Go* was the story of his friendship with Kerouac & co. Perhaps Holmes is most famous for when Kerouac used the word ‘Beat’ to describe to him the nature of their generation.

**On the Road Name:** Elmer Hassel

**Real Name:** Herbert Huncke

**Bio:** Huncke was a hugely influential figure on the life of Burroughs, and became known in his own right as a writer and sub-culture icon. He was a long time drug addict and relentless criminal.

**On the Road Name:** Sam Shepard

**Real Name:** Frank Jeffries

**Bio:** One of Kerouac’s Denver friends, Jeffries travelled with Kerouac and Cassady to Mexico City.

**On the Road Name:** Roland Major

**Real Name:** Allen Temko

**Bio:** Temko was an architectural critic and writer, who was portrayed in On the Road as against ‘arty’ snobs, but essential snobbish himself.

**On The Road Name:** Damion

**Real Name:** Lucien Carr

**Bio:** Carr was central to the Beat movement. He was the embodiment of Beat – intelligent yet wild, well read but crazy. He introduced Kerouac to Ginsberg. “Lou was the glue,” Ginsberg quipped. He killed David Kammerer and sought refuge with Burroughs and Kerouac.

**On the Road Name:** Rollo Greb

**Real Name:** Alan Ansen

**Bio:** Ansen was big influence on several of the Beats. He was never well known outside the Beat circle, but he made an impact on Kerouac, Burroughs, Ginsberg and Corso. He appeared in both *On the Road* and *Naked Lunch*.

**On the Road Name:** Ed Wall

**Real Name:** Ed Uhl

**Bio:** Uhl was a friend of Cassady’s from Denver.